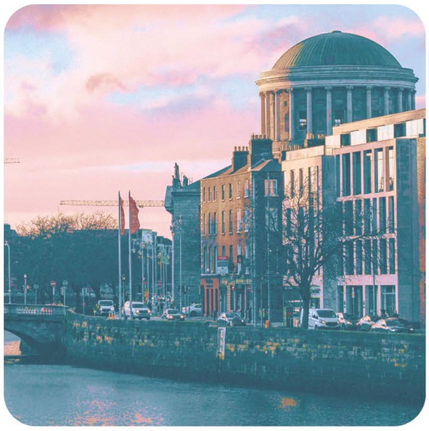
Independent Advocacy

An idea whose time has come



# Annual Report & Financial Statements 2025

Sage Advocacy

# It is only afterward that a new idea seems reasonable

ISAAC ASIMOV



# Sage Advocacy

## Annual Activity Report

January 1 – December 31, 2025

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SAGE ADVOCACY CLG COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

**Find Sage Advocacy on Social Media:**

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# Chair Report

**SAGE'S Annual Report for 2025 covers the first year of our second Statement of Strategy, *The Next Stage (2025 – 2027)*. This strategy envisaged a considerable increase in demand for our services over the period and clearly indicated a need to double our staff in order to meet this increasing need.**

As Chairman I am pleased to report that our Information & Support Service dealt with 8,946 Information and Support calls and our Regional Advocates dealt with 3,693 cases; many of a complex and time-consuming nature. Our supports to clients involved in court proceedings under the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) legislation rose to 591 reports submitted to the Circuit Courts this year; an indication of de facto recognition by the courts of the role of independent advocacy while we await formal legislation.

I am also pleased to report that our need for additional funding and staff was clearly recognised at State level. I would like to record my sincere thanks to the outgoing HSE CEO, Bernard Gloster, and the incoming HSE CEO, Anne O'Connor, for both the funding and their recognition of the vital role that Sage now plays in the health and social care sector. We wish Mr Gloster the very best as he takes his leave after many years of dedicated service and we look forward to working with Ms O'Connor as she steps into her new role. Additional support, through the HSE, is enabling us to expand our services to acute hospitals and transitional care cases and to develop the necessary support and organisational infrastructure required to deliver the continuum of interrelated services we provide: information and support; independent advocacy; safeguarding; systems and policy change.

Sage is not just the national advocacy service for older people and survivors of institutional abuse. It is more than that. It now plays an increasingly important role in the provision of health, social care, legal, financial and human rights practice in Ireland and there is a growing awareness that independent advocacy is a practice whose time has come.

The growing recognition of the unique role that Sage Advocacy now plays places increasing responsibilities on our organisation. We need


to be accountable for the best possible use of resources, to record our work accurately, implement information & communications technologies effectively, analyse and critically appraise data and explain our work, and the value of it, in such a way as to ensure necessary ongoing public funding and attract the attention of all those for whom the statement 'Nothing about you / without you' has an immediate and pressing relevance.

The detail set out in this report relates to our day-to-day activities; our 'bread and butter', so to speak. These, and examples of our work, are helpful in understanding the range and continuum of our services. I think it is also important to record that during 2025 the Board and Executive of Sage commenced work on some strategic issues that we consider vital to the future of our organisation and the development of our practice. These include: oversight and regulation of independent advocacy; skills, qualifications and continuous professional development; the development of an integrated information management system to support decision making and accountability; developing a framework for assessing the value for money and social return on public funds provided to Sage.

> **Independent advocacy is a practice whose time has come**

Sage Advocacy is now funded, to differing levels, through three government departments: the Dept of Health (via the HSE), the Dept of Education and Youth, and the Department of Justice. I want to express my appreciation to all government Ministers and Ministers of State and their officials and related agency staff who have supported us during the past year. I also want to record my deep appreciation of the work of my colleagues on the Board and on our two Committees: Policy, Practice & Performance; Compliance, Regulation & Audit. Their collective wisdom and experience has been a great support both to the myself as Chair and to the Executive.

The Senior Management Team led by our CEO, Bibiana Savin, working with Mary Warren, Helen Fitzgerald and Paula Bruen, have faced and dealt with some extraordinary challenges during the past year; the least of which was the move across the Liffey to larger offices. They, and all our staff, whether they work in the field across our six regions or at a national or home office desk, are the people on whom we and all our clients most depend.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I want to thank all those who put their trust in Sage during 2025. People who found the courage to pick up the phone and ask for help and support, family members who referred relatives and friends to us, professionals who asked for guidance and changed their approach as a result, the Courts who insisted that the voice of the relevant person be heard in any proceedings about them, survivors for whom telling their story was reliving a nightmare. It is for them that we go to work in the morning and it is because of them that we remain focused in the face of all organisational, funding and policy challenges.

**MARK MELLETT**

# A Year in Numbers

Sage Advocacy

2025

**12639**
PEOPLE
*(cases & queries)*
SUPPORTED

**3693**
Individual Advocacy Cases

**8946**
Information & Support Calls

**42%**
of clients referred to Sage lived in a nursing home

**1053**
cases addressing legal issues

**1614**
cases addressing financial issues

## TOP 5 ISSUES PRESENTING

1. Legal
2. Financial
3. Acute hospital
4. Desire to move residence
5. Planning ahead

**3351**
cases closed (up by 22% on 2024)

**448201**
miles travelled by staff in 2025

**410**
Survivors of Institutional Abuse supported
*(cases & queries)*

**89080**
visits to the Sage Advocacy website

**552**
Calls received relating to Assisted Decision-Making (up by 142% on 2024)

**70**
Staff Members
*(December 2025)*
*Full year WTE: 58*

**36%**
increase in complex cases (699 – up from 513 in 2024)

Personal Attributes / Character

# Sage Advocacy Staff Must:

Sage Advocacy

- Be approachable, friendly and easy to talk to; non- judgemental; sensitive to others; involving and inclusive
- Be collaborative, supportive and capable of working in a collegiate way
- Be conscious of and take responsibility for meeting deadlines
- Be respectful of people, their privacy and of their relationships with family members/social and work networks
- Be resilient and able to handle challenging people and situations including those involving people who have experienced considerable trauma in early life, have been suddenly bereaved or are experiencing complex grieving and people who are survivors of institutional abuse
- Be self-aware and assured without being arrogant or egotistical
- Be proactive and willing to take initiative regarding raising advocacy awareness among health and social care services personnel and all other providers of services to the public
- Value individual autonomy, self-determination and personal empowerment
- Be curious, creative and innovative, open to exploring different ways of doing things and problem solving while understanding the wider context and possible implications of different approaches
- Be vigilant, attentive to instances of poor quality and standards and the status of vulnerable adults, older people and healthcare patients
- Be open to self-review, to receiving feedback and accepting support, supervision and mentoring
- Be independent and free from any conflicts of interest
- Be compassionate as well as passionate about enabling vulnerable adults, older people and healthcare patients to have their voice heard

# 2025 AT A GLANCE

## Sage Advocacy's Year In Review

### Mayo Social

**16 APRIL, 2025**

Mayo Social is an initiative supported by the HSE, Mayo County Council, Sage Advocacy, Castlebar Social Services, St Brendan's Village – Mulranny, St Vincent de Paul, Mayo Abbey and others to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society. The steering group organised a successful seminar on housing and care in April 2025 and is currently exploring a range of housing with care initiatives in the county. See P42 for more on this story.


### Launch of Voice Matters

**7 MAY, 2025**

The launch of Voice Matters in May 2025 was attended by a wide range of stakeholders and heard a keynote address by Chief Justice Donal O'Donnell. Two years on from the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making Acts, this scoping document presents Sage Advocacy's experience of this landmark legislation in practice. See P40 for more on this story


### Summer School, Athlone **23-24 JULY, 2025**

The 2025 Sage Advocacy Summer School took place at the Athlone Springs Hotel. The programme included presentations from Martina Larkin on the Legal Support Unit's work, Damian O'Farrell on supporting survivors of institutional abuse, and Mervyn Taylor on media and sector change. Dr Michael Browne explored quality assurance and measuring impact, while Helen Fitzgerald, Patricia O'Dwyer, and advocacy teams provided inspiring updates on care transitions and Garda Detective Sergeant Niall Smith brought focus to the topic of fraud awareness.

# 2025 AT A GLANCE

## Sage Advocacy's Year In Review

### Strategic Workstreams

**CALLS FOR EOI**

In 2025, Sage Advocacy commenced projects to advance a number of key strategic priorities, with work commissioned following Calls for Expressions of Interest in fields of Data and Quality Audit; Regulatory considerations (preparation of discussion document on the Regulation of Independent Advocacy); and the review and analysis of Service Delivery Processes. Additional workstreams were commenced following tenders in relation to Audit and to Evaluation of Sage Advocacy's Public Value, Impact, and Social Return on Public Investment. With selection processes opening late in 2025, much of this work has been commissioned for completion in 2026. Among the projects completed in 2025 in the Data and Quality Audit stream, was an assessment of the advocacy data lifecycle, addressing both frontline data capture by advocates and downstream analytical outputs. The consultant identified key data quality issues, and potential, and proposed targeted improvements. In parallel, the consultant recommended operational enhancements. Additionally, the consultant developed an advanced analytics methodology to extract business insights from case data, including lifecycle timeline analysis, case duration and rating progression, flow charts, text mining, demand forecasting, stakeholder network analysis, and spatial analysis.

**REQUEST FOR TENDER**

A Cyber-security Maturity Assessment of Sage Advocacy's Microsoft 365 environment and equipment by Code in Motion in late 2024 had strongly advised of the need to engage a managed IT / Cyber-security Service provider. A tender document was completed with Code in Motion in June 2025. Savenet were successful in their response to the tender and were appointed in September 2025.


### Spirit of Sage Videos

**DECEMBER, 2025**

This year saw the production and release of two videos for the home page of Sage's website – one featuring the voice of Chair, Mark Mellett; the other featuring Project Manager: Survivors of Institutional Abuse, Damian O'Farrell. These short, engaging pieces powerfully sum up the Spirit of Sage – and offer a useful introduction for clients, families and stakeholders who are getting to know our work.

### Office Launch

**24 SEPTEMBER, 2025**

Our new offices were opened in September by Minister Jack Chambers. See P44 for more on this story.

### Christmas Dinner

**11 DECEMBER, 2025**

Our Christmas Dinner took place in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin. We welcomed many of our board members and professional suppliers to the celebration and appreciated the warm words of welcome from our Deputy Chair, Leisha Daly, and greetings sent from Chicago by our Chair, Mark Mellett. It was a great way to round off an epic year.

# Sage Advocacy Data in Detail 2025

# Our Reach In 2025

**8,946**
Information & Support calls to Sage Advocacy

**3,924**
Referrals for Independent Advocacy

**601**
Waitlist increased from 445 at year end in 2024 to 601 at year end 2025, a 35% rise leading to increased demands on the service

**1,053**
Legal Issues presented as either a primary issue or arose during case work

**1,614**
Financial issues presented as either a primary issue, or arose during case work

**699**
Highly complex cases rose from 513 in 2024 to 699 in 2025. A 36% increase in complex cases

## KEY POINTS FROM 2025

**Referrals increased from 3,145 in 2024 to 3,923 in 2025**
A **25% rise** in people seeking advocacy support, marking the highest annual demand ever recorded

**Cases increased from 3,086 in 2024 to 3,693 in 2025**
A **20% increase**, further increasing demand on the service

**Some 8,946 Information & Support calls were received in 2025**
Incoming and outgoing calls increased by 24.5% from a total of 14,749 in 2024 to 18,359 in 2025

**Waitlist increased from 445 at end-2024 to 601 at end-2025**
A **35% rise**, despite record case closures. Demand is outpacing capacity

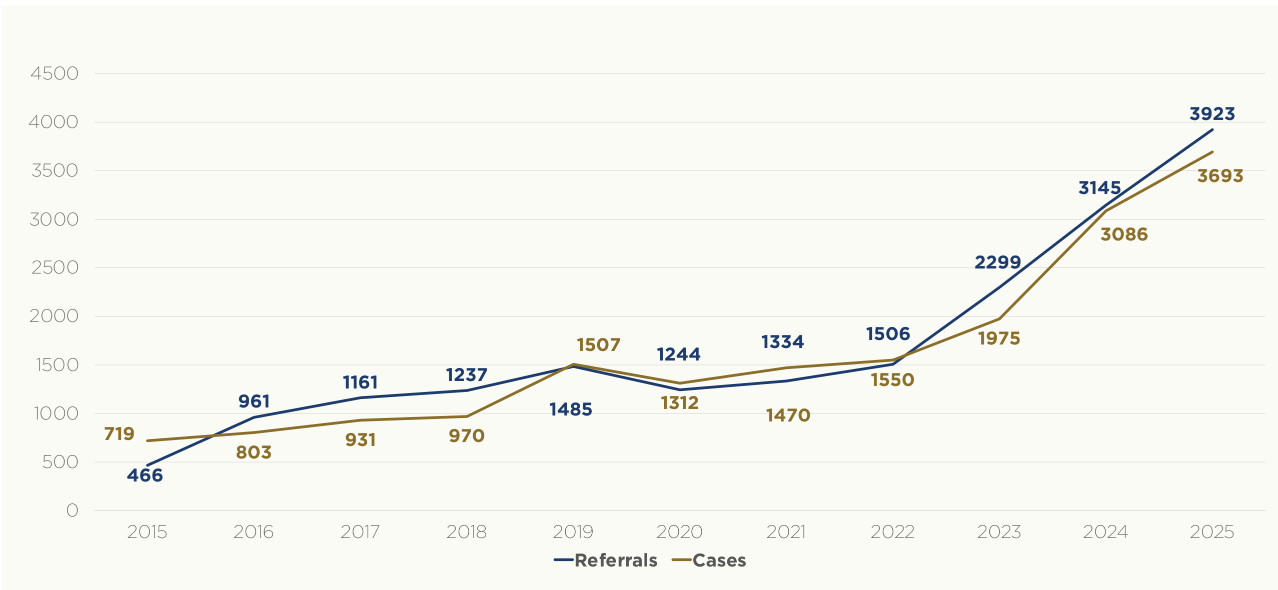
**Red-rated cases rose from 513 in 2024 to 699 in 2025**
A **36% increase** in high-complexity cases

**Assisted Decision-Making (ADM) related calls increased from 228 in 2024 to 552 in 2025**
A **142% increase**, showing the impact of the ADM Act on the Information & Support service

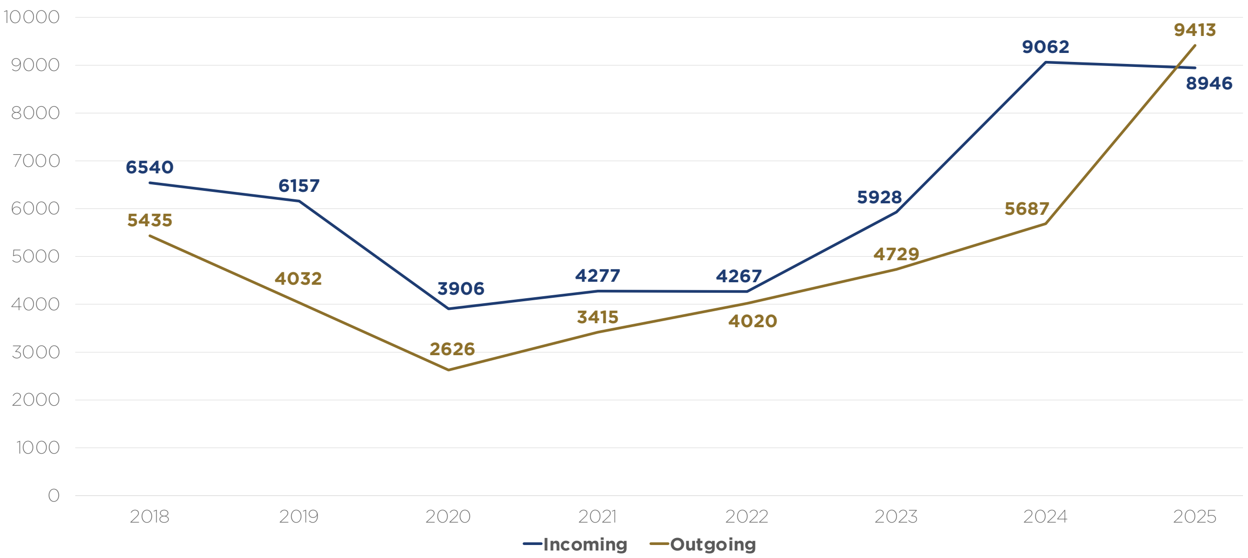
**Advocacy case closures rose from 2,753 in 2024 to 3,411 in 2025**
A **24% rise**, showing the service is processing more cases than ever, even as demand continues to outpace capacity

**"Client's wishes given effect" outcomes rose from 665 in 2024 to 776 in 2025**
A **17% increase**, demonstrating strong advocacy impact despite escalating volume and complexity

# Annual Referrals And Casework

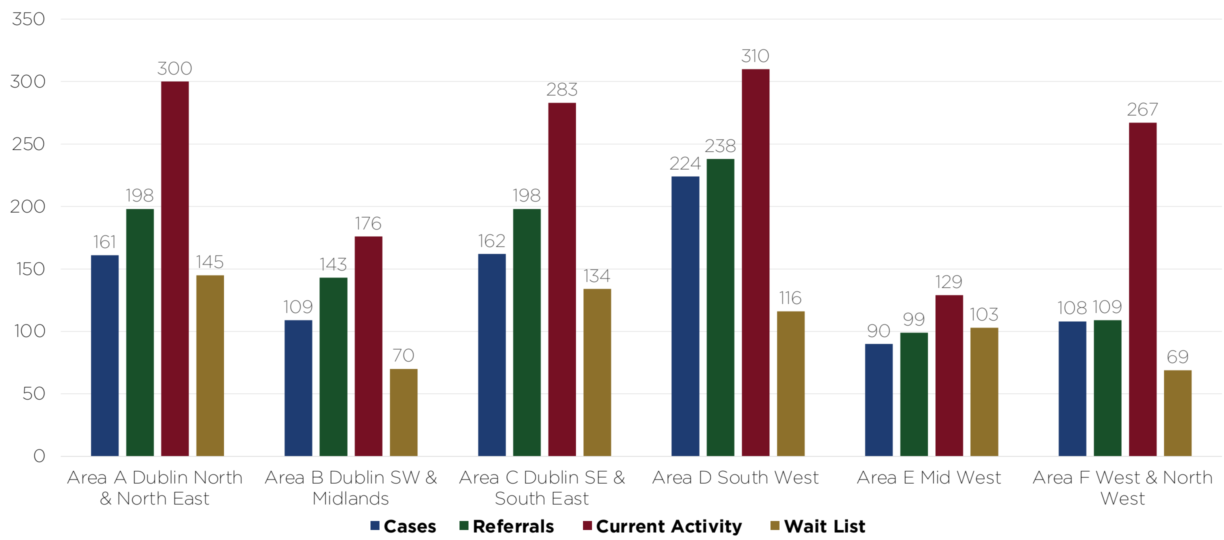


# Incoming and Outgoing Calls dealt with by the Information & Support Team

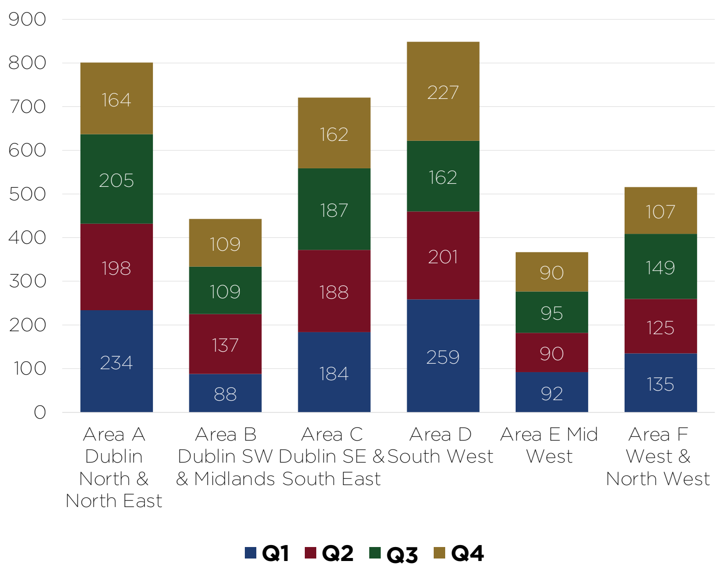





# Case Activity Year End 2025



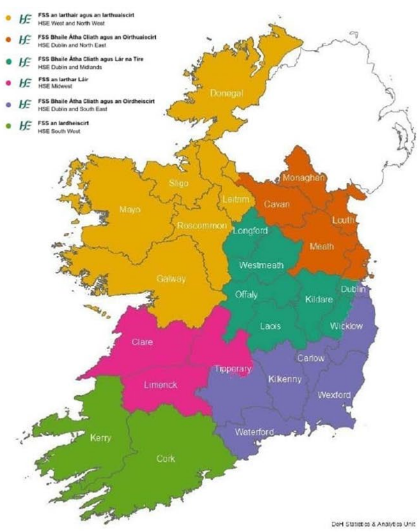
# 2025 Quarterly Cases by Regional Health Area




| Area | 2024 Total | 2025 Total | % Increase |
|---|---|---|---|
| Area A – Dublin North & Northeast | 720 | 801 | +11.2% |
| Area B – Dublin SW & Midlands | 411 | 443 | +7.8% |
| Area C – Dublin SE & Southeast | 525 | 721 | +37.3% |
| Area D – South West | 751 | 849 | +13.0% |
| Area E – Mid West | 207 | 367 | +77.3% |
| Area F – West & Northwest | 430 | 516 | +20.0% |



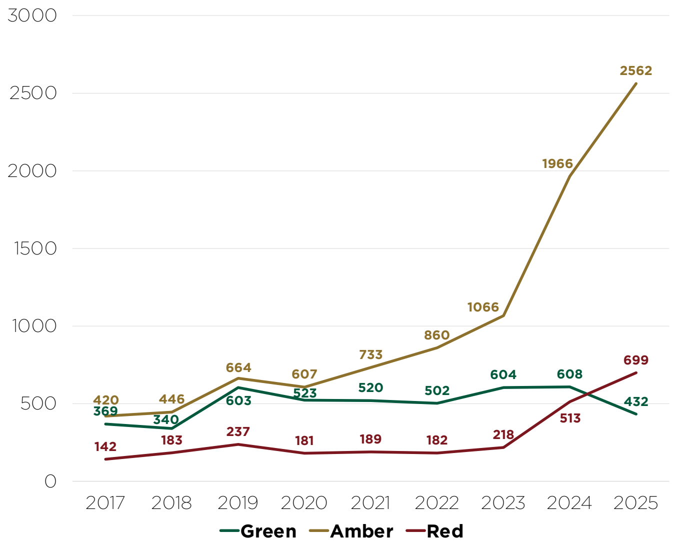
# Percentage Increase by Regional Health Area

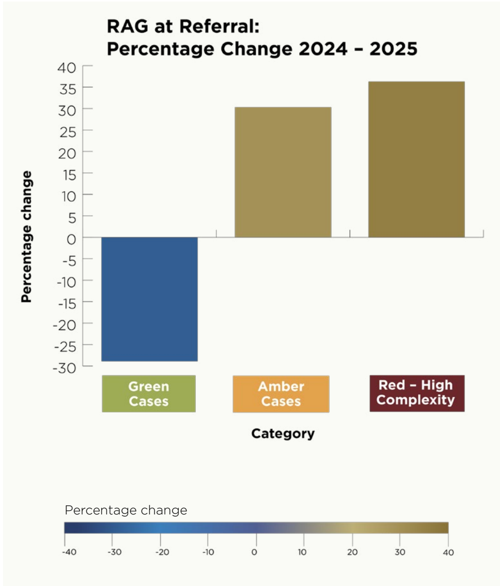



| | |
|---|---|
| **Dublin & North East** | **11.2%** |
| **Dublin & Midlands** | **7.8%** |
| **Dublin & South East** | **37.3%** |
| **South West** | **13%** |
| **Mid West** | **77.3%** |
| **West & North West** | **20%** |

# Annual Red, Amber and Green Rating at Time of Referral

**RAG at referral (2024 ▸ 2025): Red +35.3%, Amber +30.3%, Green -28.9%** – increase in higher-complexity referrals, cases open longer, contributing to the increase in the waitlist over all.

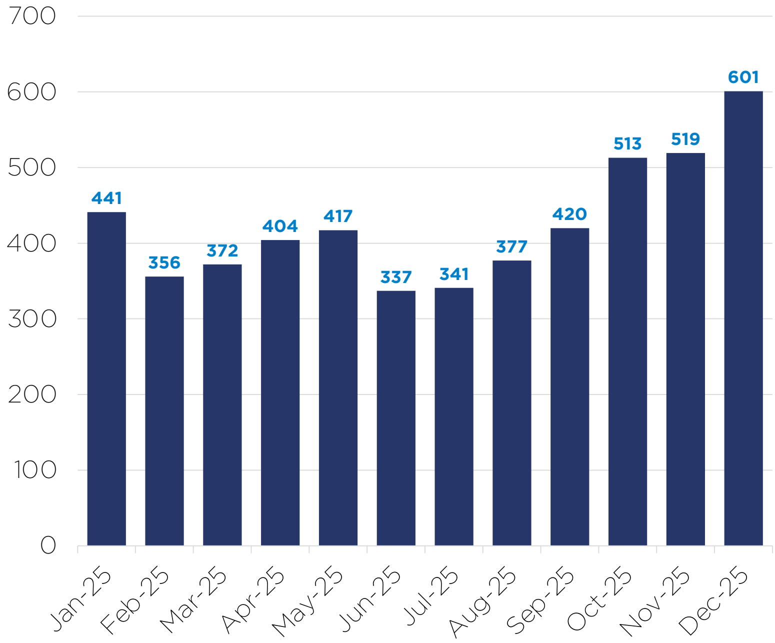


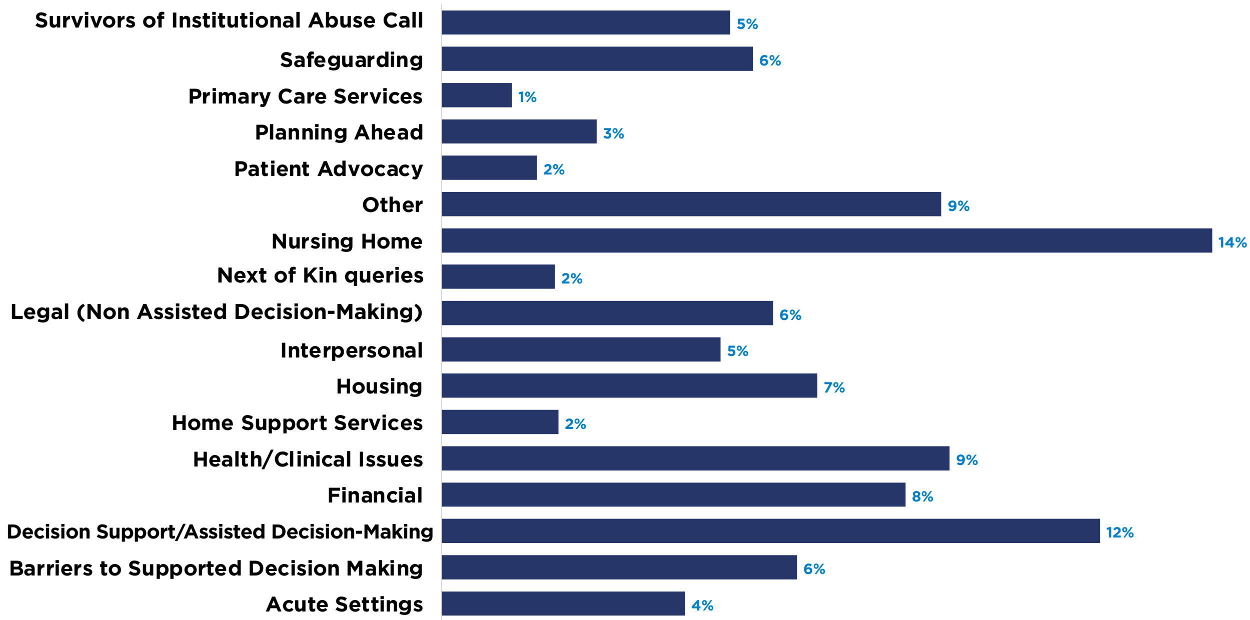



# Waitlist for Independent Advocacy

**End-2024 ▸ End-2025:** The **waitlist** rose from **445** to **601** contacts (**+35%**).

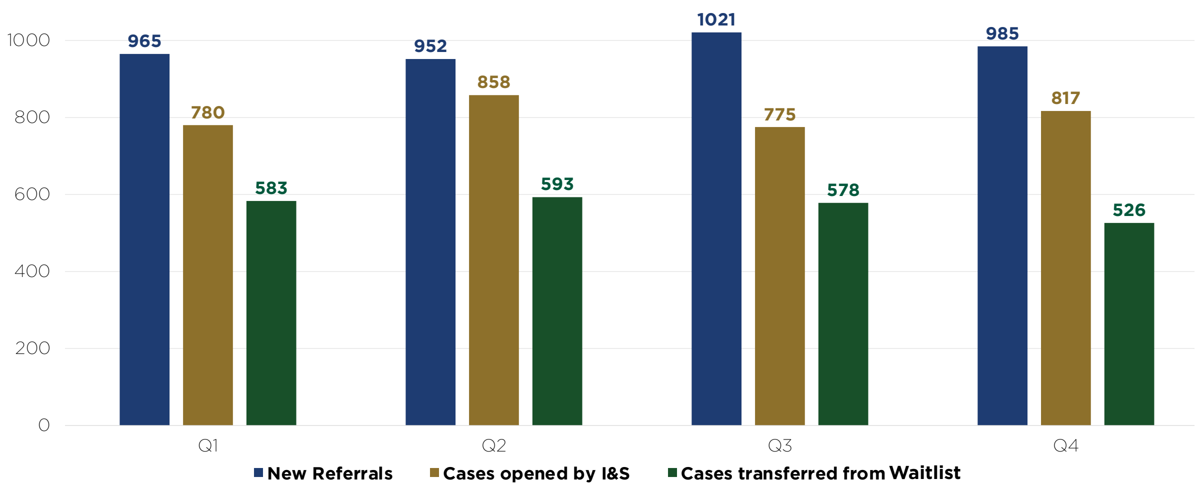


# Information & Support Calls to Sage 2025

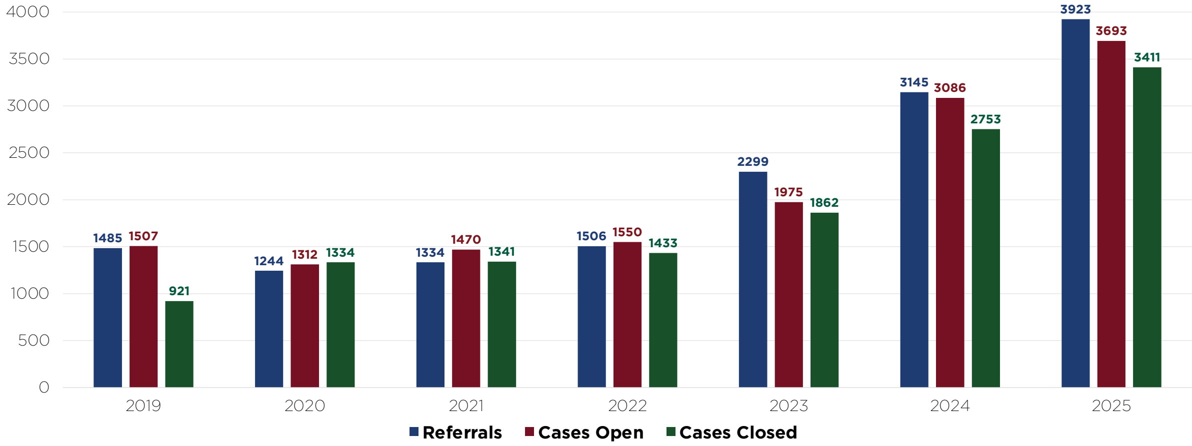





# Cases Created and Transferred by Information & Support



# Yearly Referrals, Cases Opened and Cases Closed



# Issues Presented to Information & Support: Increase 2024-25

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nursing Home** +342 304 → 646 | **DSS / ADM** +324 228 → 552 | **Barriers to Supported Decision-Making** +216 82 → 298 | **Financial** +216 173 → 389 |
| **Housing** +205 110 → 315 | **Safeguarding** +169 92 → 261 | **Legal (non-ADM)** +137 141 → 278 | **Acute Settings** +131 73 → 204 |

**Nursing Home**
Additional charges, how to make a complaint, notice to quit, wish to leave the nursing home, upfront fees, general financial concerns

**Decision Support Service (DSS) / Assisted Decision-Making (ADM)**
Increase in Decision-Making Representative Order (DMRO) queries

**Housing**
Increase in issues of housing access/ tenure insecurity

**Safeguarding**
Increase in financial abuse and coercion concerns. Slight increase in neglect concerns

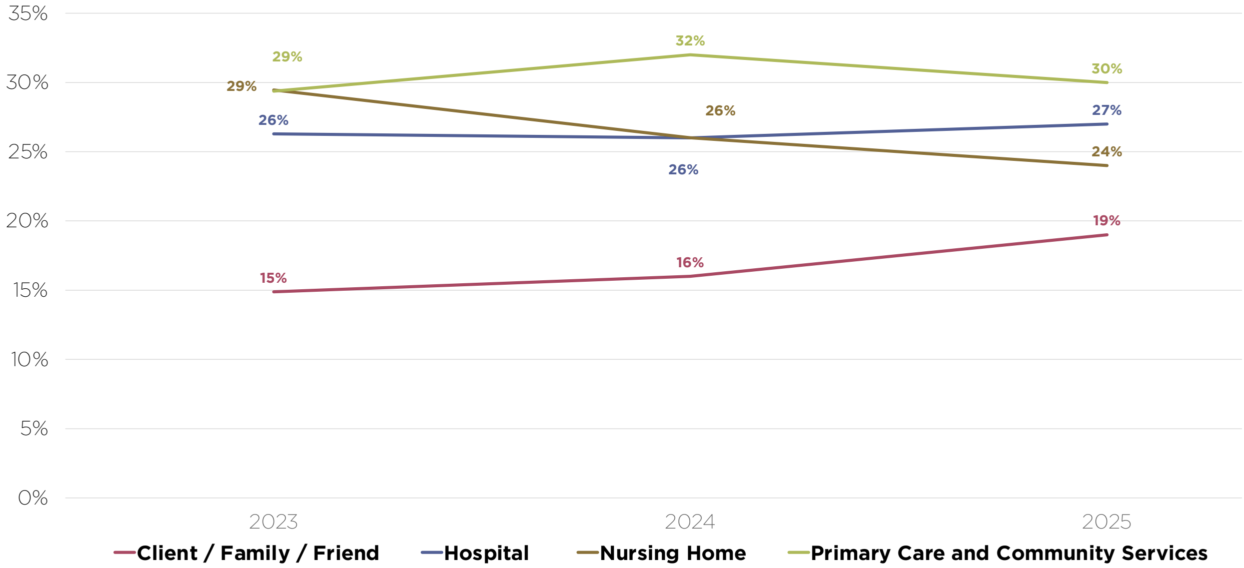
**Barriers to Supported Decision-Making**
Capacity/consent/planning barriers surfacing earlier in the journey

**Financial**
Debt, benefits, Fair Deal/fees, banking issues, financial management support

**Legal (non-Assisted Decision-Making)**
Advice on court hearings, access to solicitors for concerns including evictions, land and property issues

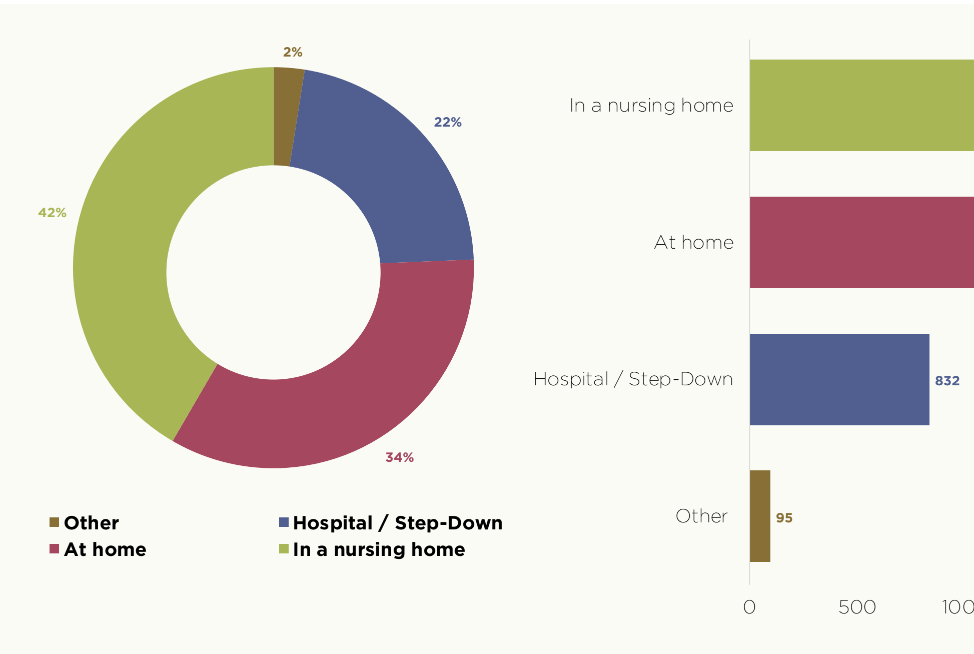
**Acute Settings**
Discharge issues, support to make a complaint, issues relating to social admissions

# Source of Referrals Annually



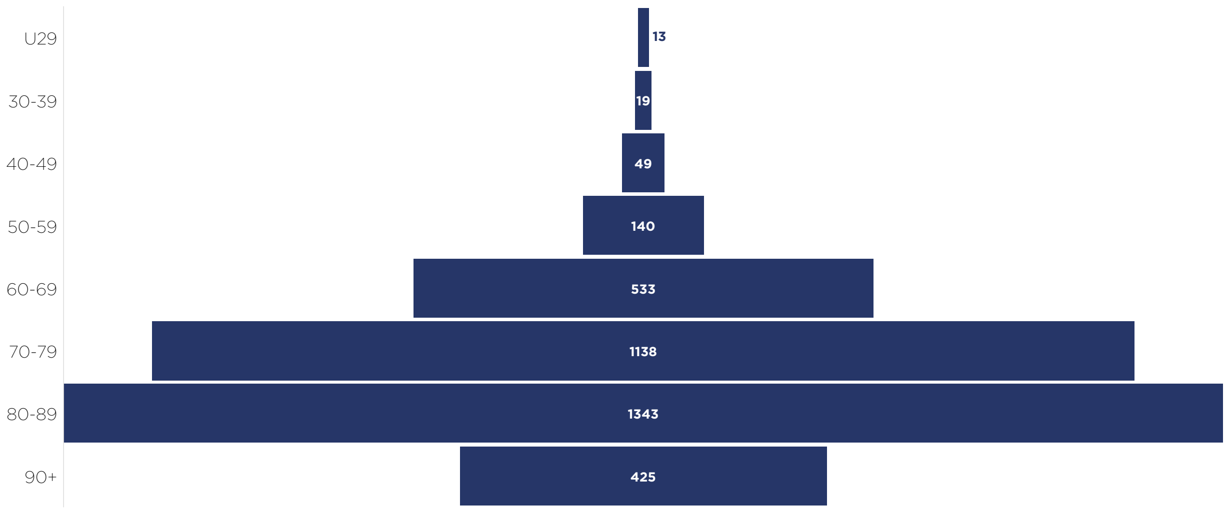



# Location of Client at Time of Referral 2025

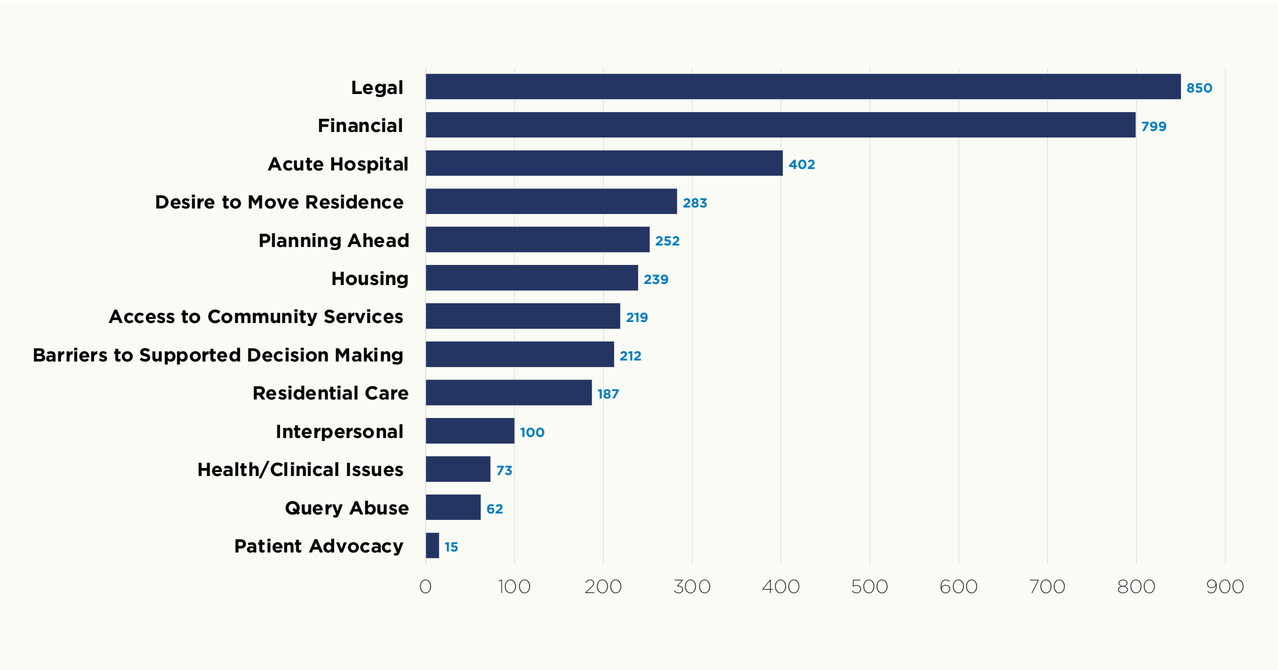



| OTHER | |
|---|---|
| Homeless | 22 |
| Prison | 2 |
| Friends home | 1 |
| Hotel | 1 |
| Sheltered Accommodation | 13 |
| Supported Living | 33 |
| Disability Services | 14 |
| IPAS | 1 |
| Acute MH facility | 6 |
| Emergency Acc | 1 |
| Hospice | 1 |

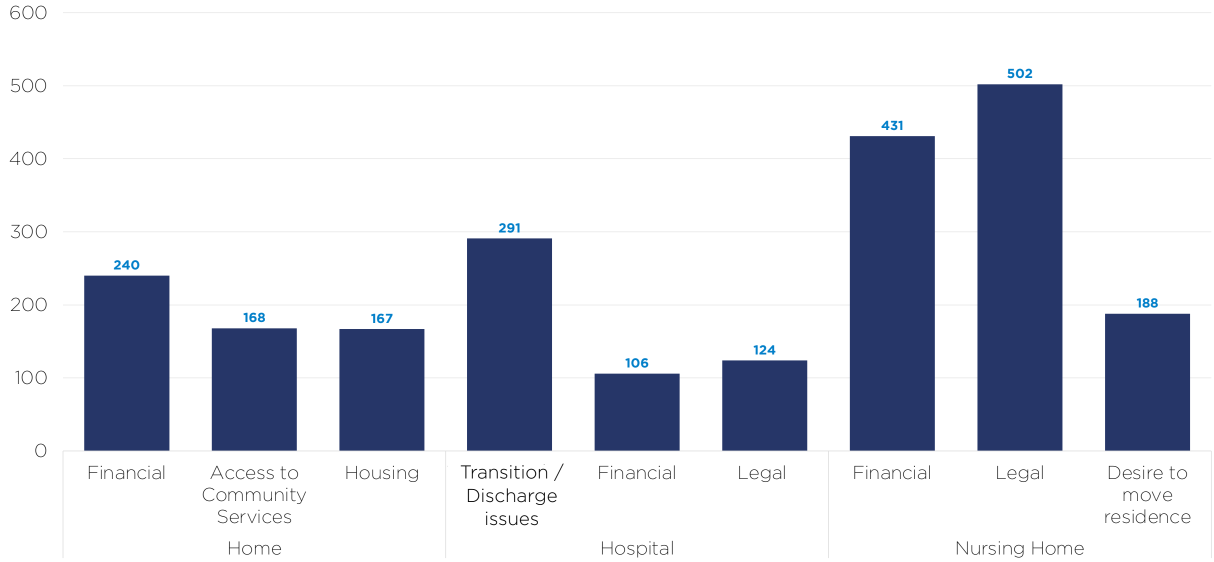
# Age Range of Clients 2025




# Primary Issue Presented to Sage 2025

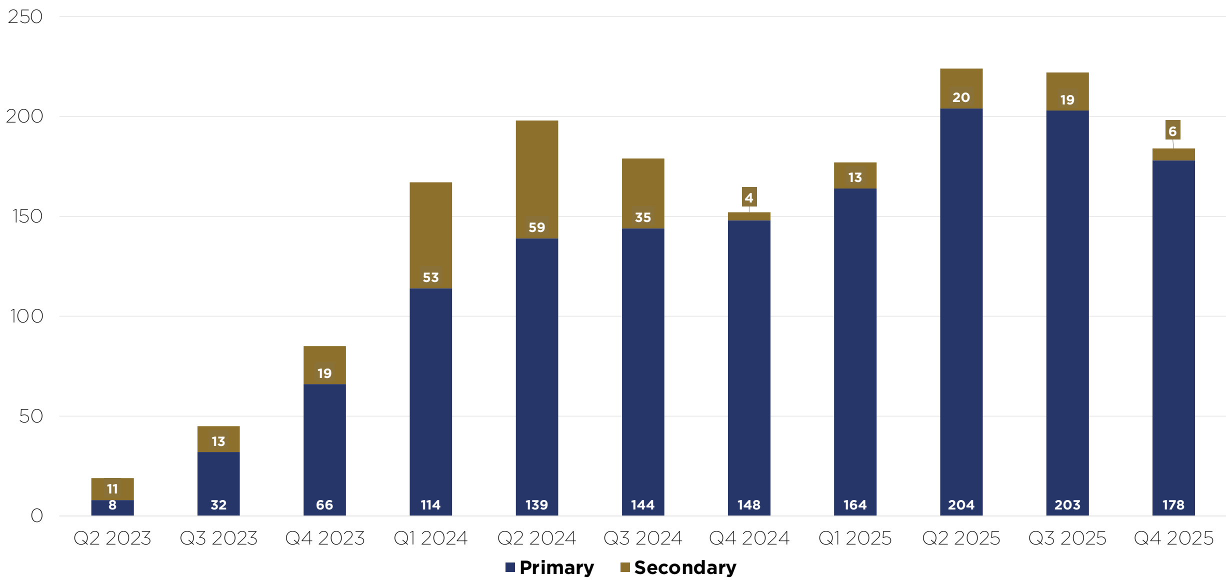


# Primary Issue Based on Location 2025






# Part 5 Assisted Decision-Making Application Referrals



# Independent Advocacy Reports Submitted to Courts and Circuit Courts Nationally from 2023 to end of 2025

| | |
|---|---|
| Independent Advocacy Reports Submitted to Courts | 1050 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bray | 31 | Letterkenny | 1 |
| Carlow | 12 | Limerick | 33 |
| Castlebar | 31 | Monaghan | 1 |
| Cavan | 3 | Mullingar | 7 |
| Clonmel | 5 | Naas | 51 |
| Cork | 90 | Nenagh | 3 |
| Dublin | 582 | Portlaoise | 9 |
| Dundalk | 18 | Sligo | 1 |
| Ennis | 9 | Tralee | 18 |
| Galway | 63 | Trim | 46 |
| Kilkenny | 12 | Tullamore | 9 |
| Killarney | 3 | Waterford | 9 |
| | | Wexford | 9 |

# Length of Time (LoT) Cases Are Open

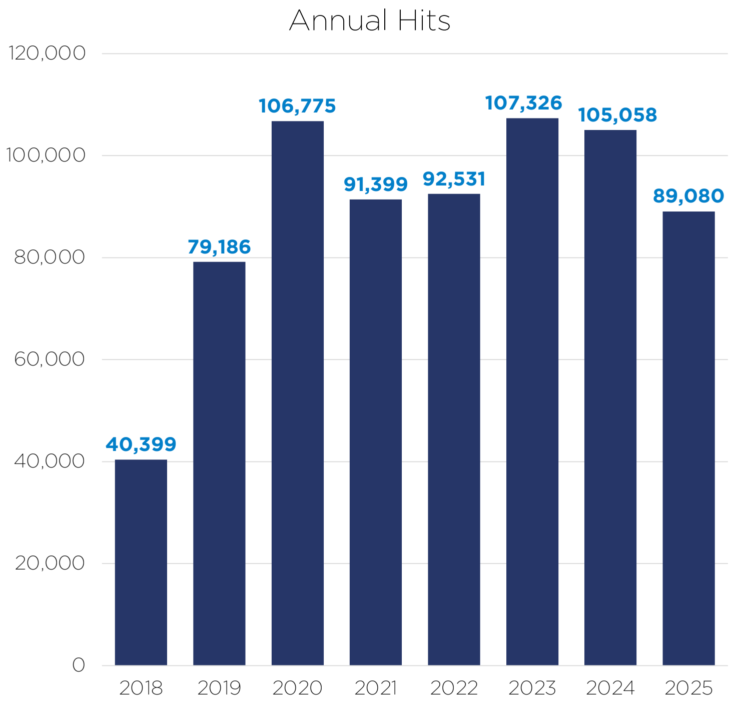
- 790 cases were closed in Q4 2025
- The average length of time cases are open is four months
- The length of time cases are open has trended upwards
- The longest case that closed in Q4 2025 had been open for 3 years, 3 months. The primary issue related to a client living in nursing home care who had difficulties with financial management. The client had difficulty with a lack of engagement from their solicitor. Family abroad did not wish to support. Due to fluctuating capacity, there was a need to wait for the implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act.

After implementation and various delays (family; learning from stakeholders about the Decision-Making Representative Order (DMRO) process), a DMRO was granted for financial management support by a member of the Decision Support Service panel to contribute towards cost of care.

| LoT | No. of Cases | Highest Primary Issue |
|---|---|---|
| < 3 months | **345** | Legal |
| 3-6 months | **206** | Legal |
| 6-12 months | **183** | Legal |
| 1+ Years | **56** | Financial |



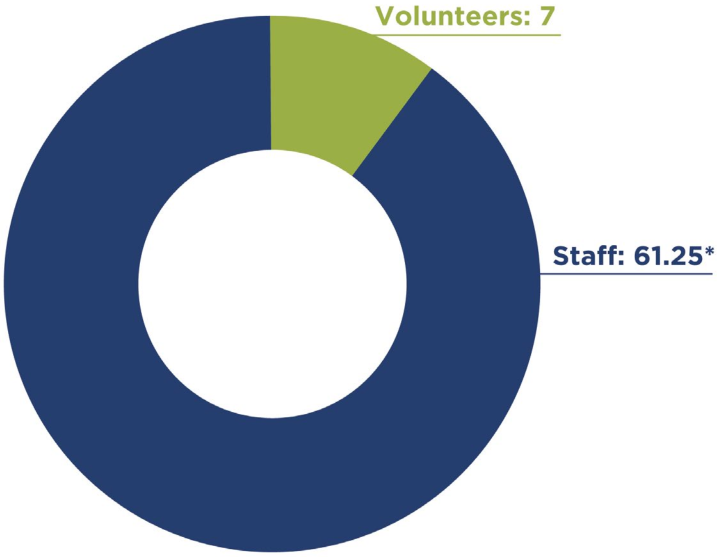
# Website



# Cyber Security & Data Protection Unit: Data Protection

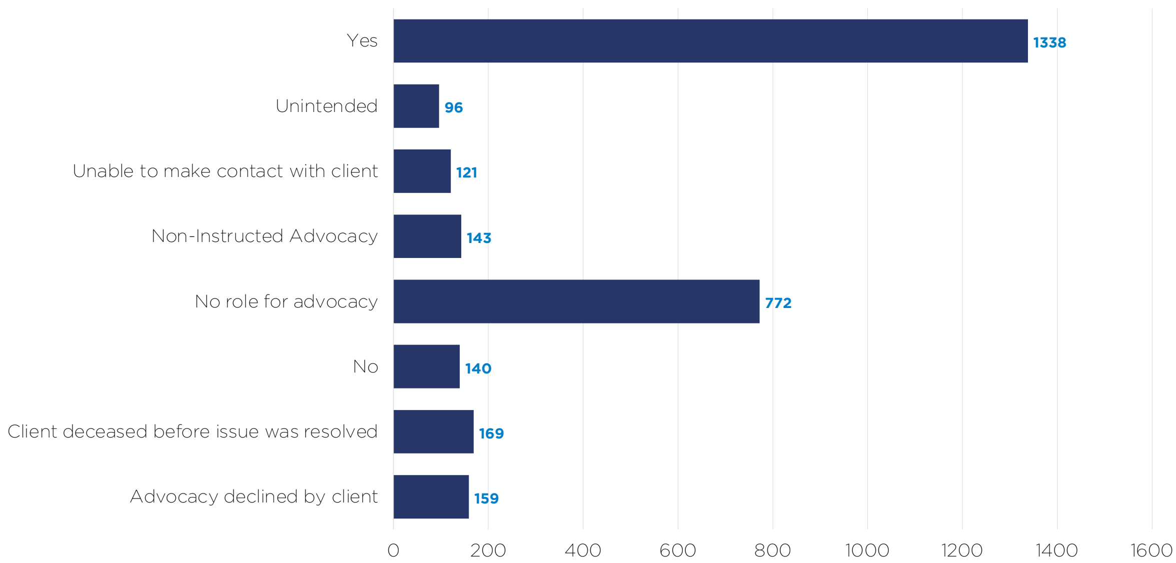

# Cyber Security & Data Protection Unit: Compliments & Complaints

# Staff & Volunteers 2025




* *Per Annual Financial Statements – WTE average over the whole year: 58*
*Number of staff 31st December 2025: 70 staff*
*Average number of staff over the whole year: 61.25 (This does not take into account WTE)*

# Outcomes for the Client 2025



# Systemic Issues Identified

## FINANCES

| Access | Control | Debt | Financial Management Support (other figures) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 434 | 425 | 165 | 93 |

## PRACTICE

| Supported Decision-Making Challenges | Communication | Lack of positive risk taking | Non-engagement of service | Ongoing complaints | Staff Training Issues | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 103 | 207 | 66 | 60 | 17 | 33 | 73 |

## CARE ISSUES

| 24hr supervision | Care Plan | Contract of Care/ charges | Home Support Services | Korsakoff's | Lack of options | Refusal of service | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | 191 | 189 | 101 | 13 | 76 | 26 | 56 |

| Funding Issues | Resource Issues | Funding/Resources (Other) figures |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | 113 | 25 |

| Transitional Care Funding | Deprivation of Liberty | Assisted Decision-Making |
|---|---|---|
| 45 | 61 | 113 |

# Sage Advocacy Complex Case Studies 2025

## Transitional Care: Moving On, Empowered By Advocacy



**MANUS (81) had been placed in a step-down facility after hospitalisation and his discharge to a sustainable place of living/place of care had stalled due to his home and belongings having been destroyed in an arson attack by local teenagers.**

Manus's house was uninhabitable, and all of his identification, financial and legal records, and personal correspondence had gone up in smoke.

Manus was isolated, reticent about information-sharing, and conflicted about his next steps. Before accessing independent advocacy, Manus was in limbo in transitional care, shut down, uncertain and lacking the support to explore what the options for moving on with his life might be. He had full decision-making capacity but, amid these difficult and unforeseen circumstances, was unable or unprepared to engage with the discharge process and he did not wish to consent to the nursing home placement that his medical team had proposed to him.

At the client's request, the advocate contacted Manus's local TD, a key contact who had lately lost track of him due to not having been updated on his location after leaving hospital. The TD helped to reconnect Manus to his existing support system.

Manus told the advocate that he did not consent to the move into long-term care and that he wished to explore alternatives. The advocate examined the viability of a wide range of potential avenues and worked through them with Manus. They looked at the feasibility of a return home, which involved a conversation around what had happened there and the state that things were in. They looked at the potential for placing alternative accommodation on the land, such as a mobile home, and they investigated the possibility of accessing social housing.

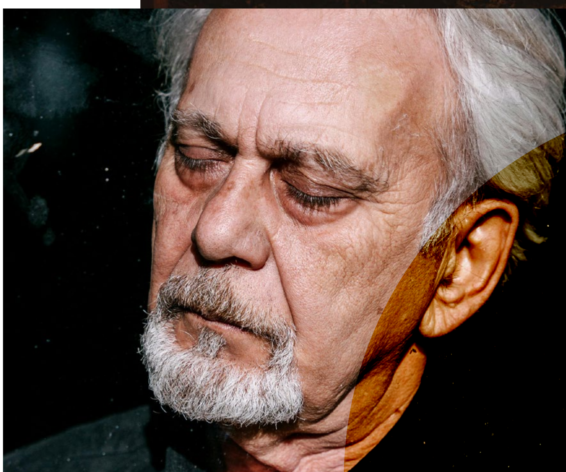
Manus advised the advocate that he had no access to his pension and no financial documentation. In order for any next move to be progressed, there was a need for Manus's financial affairs to be retrieved and brought up to date. The advocate supported him to access his bank accounts and to request statements and replacement cards. In liaison with the TD, they helped him get a replacement PPS number. The advocate assisted Manus to reapply for a pension. Since not all bank accounts had been disclosed in Manus's original welfare support applications a reassessment found there was no pension entitlement since his means exceeded the statutory threshold.

With input from his multi-disciplinary team indicating that independent living or social housing were not supported on clinical grounds, Manus began to consider and come to terms with the idea of seeking a long-term care placement in his own area. He consented to progressing a Fair Deal application in respect of his local nursing home and authorised the required property folio search. Issues arose as Manus was not listed as the owner of the home that he maintained was his own; and a reluctance to divulge the source of unexplained lodgements to his bank account created another sticking point in the application process. The advocate liaised with Sage's Legal Support Unit in relation to the issue of a contested property title. After discussion about the avenues that were open for him to pursue this, Manus decided that he would not take this forward. While taking action on this may have been of benefit to Manus, the advocate can act only on the client's express instruction, in line with their will and preferences. The advocate also engaged with the bank to clarify the financial position, within the framework of Manus's consent and wish for privacy.

The administrative processes were painstaking and, at times, fraught. With the advocate acting at all times within the strict confines of the client's expressed consent, there were challenges in relation to stakeholders' expectations around information sharing.

Manus remained conflicted and nervous about the move to long-term care and, at a late stage in the discharge planning he became distressed and said that he no longer consented to the planned move. He wished to consider different nursing homes and, meanwhile, stay where he was for Christmas. His request to remain in the step-down facility was agreed to and, after taking that time, Manus then felt that he was ready and agreeable to moving to the local nursing home that he'd applied for and been accepted into.

Manus made the move in the New Year, returning to his home area to his new place of care.





**Stakeholder engagement by the advocate to resolve client issues included liaison with:**

| Medical Social Worker | TD | An Garda Síochána | Social Welfare | Two Banks | Land Registry Ireland | Nursing Home Support Office | Sage Advocacy Legal Support Unit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|



# The Right to Liberty: Going home

**THE Director of Nursing (DoN) in a nursing home made a referral for advocacy on behalf of Anna, who had been a resident with them for a year and had expressed a desire to return home. The DoN said that there was family conflict on the issue since long-term care had been indicated for Anna following a hospital stay, in light of self-neglect and mobility issues.**

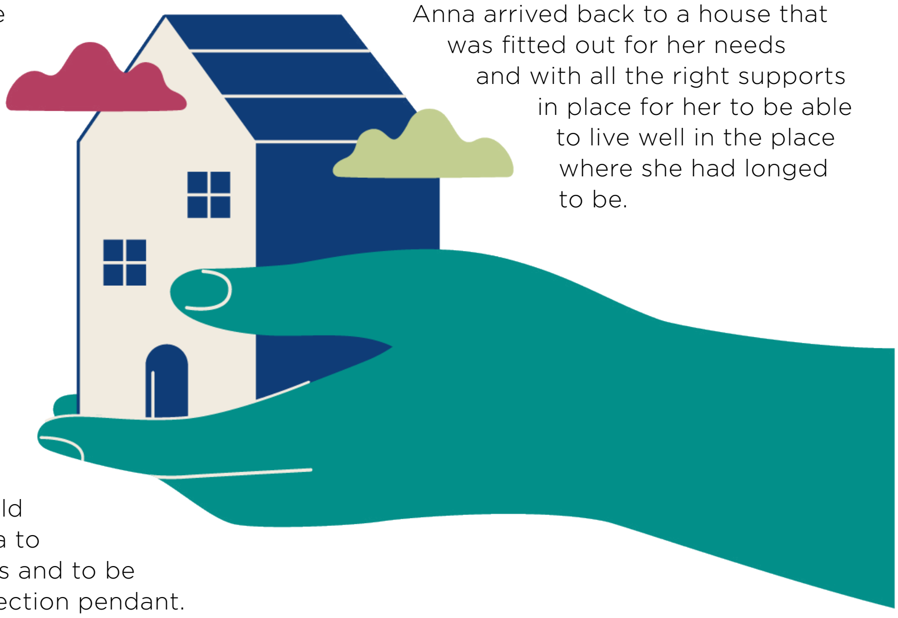
When the advocate met Anna, she was categorical in her wish to return home and insisted that she wouldn't need any support there. In case Anna felt that perceived support needs would stand in the way of her being able to return, the advocate explained that their role was to support her in pursuing her wish and, if resources were needed in order to bridge any gaps, to assist in sourcing them. Anna was then comfortable to discuss what support might be needed, such as a home care package and, also, addressing the difficulty presented by the fact that her bedroom and bathroom at home were upstairs.

Anna also talked about the emotional barriers she faced in relation to putting her plans into action, explaining that her adult daughter was living in the house. Anna's husband agreed with their daughter's assessment that nursing home care was for the best. Anna felt unable to take action in this context. With her permission, the advocate contacted the family to discuss Anna's plan to move home. Her husband said that he would help make it happen but his daughter said that she would block the move.

The advocate noted that the house was not in the daughter's name and explained to her the legal position and her mother's rights in relation to deprivation of liberty. The daughter came on board with the processes that needed to be set in train for Anna to get back home.

The advocate arranged and accompanied Anna to an Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment; and it was confirmed by the OT report that installation of a stair lift and a hospital bed would be the only modifications needed to the home.

The advocate requested and received a Common Summary Assessment Report (CSAR) from the nursing home in order to apply for a home care package. They helped Anna to complete this application, and the home care package was approved. The advocate also assisted Anna with making her successful application for a home adaptation grant, with the stair lift installation going ahead in preparation for her return. They set up a home visit with a public health nurse to link Anna in with primary care as she had no prior connection. The nurse confirmed that she would make a referral for Anna to receive Meals on Wheels and to be provided with a fall detection pendant.



The nurse also referred Anna to a primary care OT to support her mobility and she undertook to manage the home care package in accordance with Anna's expressed preference for late morning calls.

Anna's wishes were listened to throughout the process and she took full involvement in the planning. Being able to bring her family on board with her move provided a sense of emotional resolution for Anna and everything proceeded from there in a way that she felt happy and comfortable with. Anna arrived back to a house that was fitted out for her needs and with all the right supports in place for her to be able to live well in the place where she had longed to be.



**If resources were needed to bridge any gaps, the advocate would also assist in sourcing what was required…**

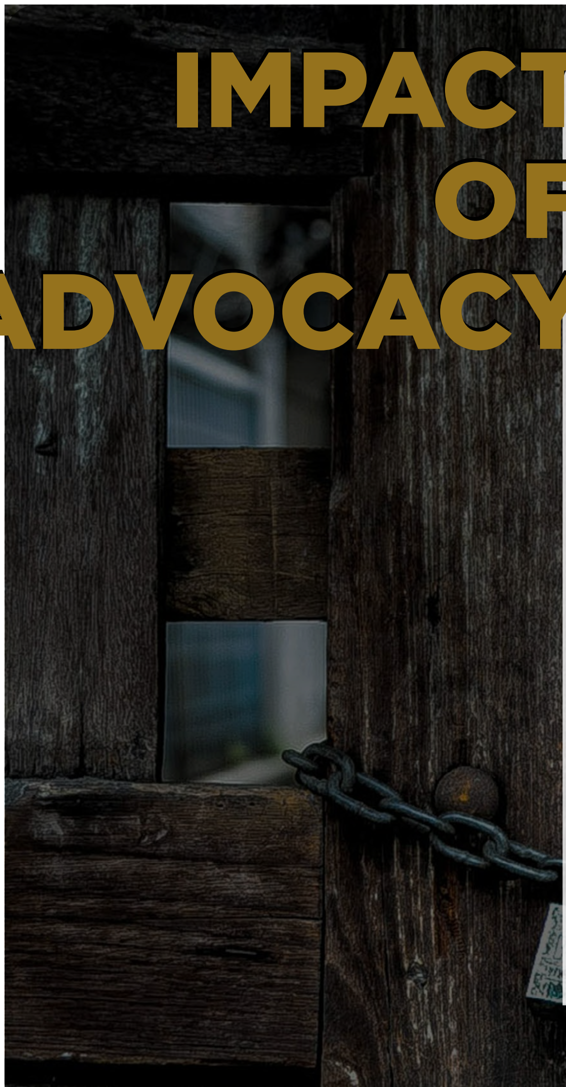


# Escape from Abuse and Control: To be heard and heeded in court

**SEAMUS was referred by his son's solicitor in the course of his son making a Part 5 application to be appointed as Seamus's Decision-Making Representative. As the advocacy process developed, it became clear that the son was engaged in significant abuse of Seamus and his adult niece with complex needs.**

During the advocate's initial visit, Seamus voiced his distress and said he believed his son intended to take over his property and have him and his niece put into nursing homes against their will.

The advocate contacted the Legal Aid Board in order to link in with Seamus's own solicitor and arranged for a joint visit. At the time of the joint visit, the advocate and solicitor found that Seamus had relocated to another property out of fear of his son. The discussion that took place during that visit uncovered a litany of abuses by the son. Seamus and his niece were being deprived of food in their home; the son had taken over a number of rooms in the house; and he had seized financial control of Seamus's bank account, using his funds to pay for bills as well groceries yet withholding access to food.



# IMPACT OF ADVOCACY

- **Stopped son from succeeding with a coercive abuse of process that aimed to force client and his niece into care facilities**
- **Ensured that the court gained a clear picture of the will and preference of the client, as the "relevant person" in an application for a decision-making representation order**
- **Client supported to attend court in person where his voice was heard and the impact on his life of the matters discussed were seen**
- **Extensive abuse brought to light and Safeguarding team brought in to take up client's case and support his transition home**
- **Son compelled to vacate client's house**
- **Son's control of client's finances removed**
- **Suitable Decision-Making Representative appointed from DSS panel to ensure client's voice is heard and his wishes respected**

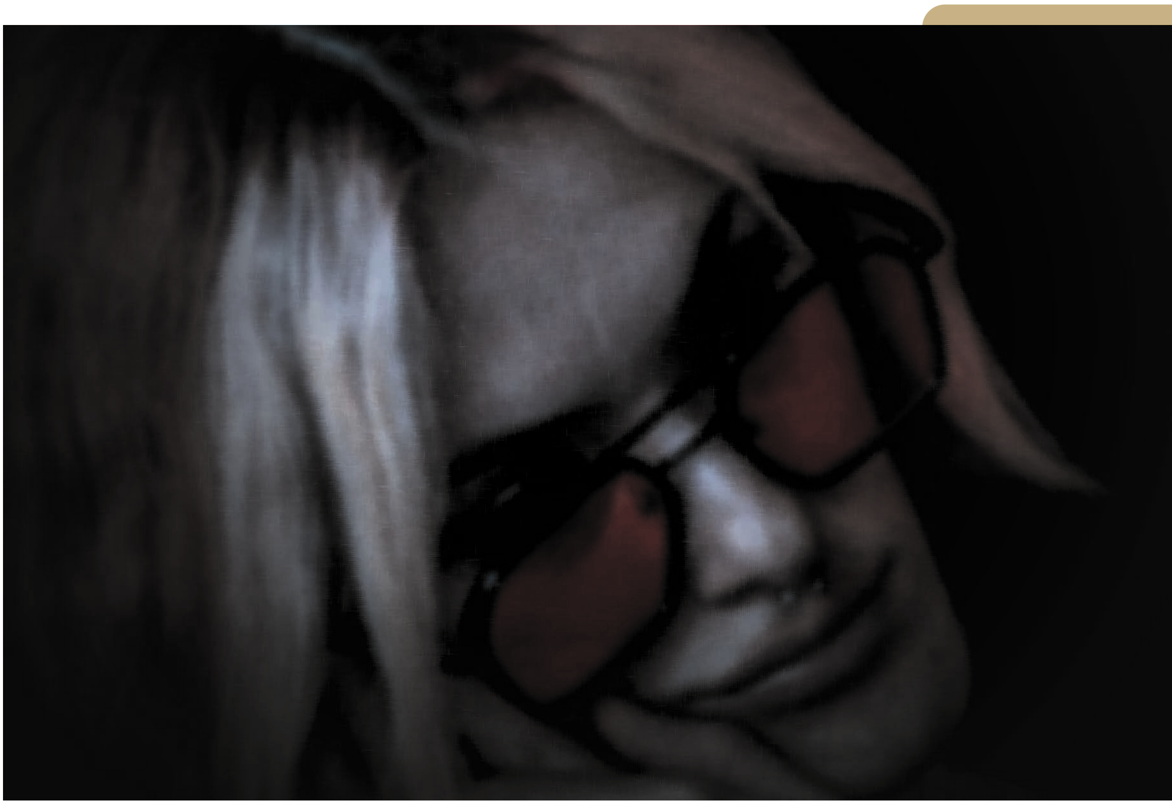
With Seamus's consent, and after follow-up with Sage Advocacy's Regional Manager and Legal Support Unit, the advocate made a referral for safeguarding to the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Team.

The advocate also sought the perspective of the person whose property Seamus had fled to, who Seamus considered as his main source of support.

Based on the information gathered, the advocate prepared a report for the court in respect of the son's application to be Decision-Making Representative.

The advocate accompanied Seamus to the court hearing, at which the court brought the son's solicitor's attention to the serious issues raised in the Sage Advocacy report and suggested that the solicitor go outside the court to speak to their client. The solicitor returned to the court with the news that the son had agreed to withdraw the application.

The court instructed that the son sign a caretaker agreement and vacate the property within three weeks to allow Seamus and his niece to return to their home. The case was then to be reviewed at the end of that period to ensure he had complied. In relation to providing Seamus with a decision-making support arrangement, the court sought an appropriate appointment to be made from the Decision Support Service's (DSS) panel of trained experts, to ensure that his voice, rights and wishes remained central in the matters requiring decision. The court directed – in order to ensure the appointment of a panel member with the right skills, awareness and compassion – that a briefing document be prepared to include input from Seamus's solicitor and the advocate in relation to the risks and abuses that he and his niece had been exposed to.





# Enduring Trauma, Battling Stigma

**JAMIE self-referred for advocacy as a Survivor of Institutional Abuse. They were suffering from an eating disorder, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation but experiencing multiple barriers to accessing the support that they needed.**

They found social interactions extremely overwhelming and struggled with the norms of support worker and therapeutic relationships to the extent that these relationships in the past had repeatedly broken down on them. Jamie was socially isolated with no family ties since being removed to State care following abuse in the home. They spoke of how they had received compensation for an incident of peer-inflicted sexual abuse in one of the residential institutions that they had lived in as a child, but Jamie said they still longed for justice in relation to abuse experienced at the hands of carers in two residential placements.

Growing up in institutions, Jamie had attended a specialist school following an Autism Spectrum Condition diagnosis that they still felt conflicted about. Jamie felt stigmatised by what had been written in their psychologist report, feeling that it made them sound incapable of mastering basic daily living skills. Education, personal achievement, and the ability and affordability to live independently were what Jamie hoped for and wanted to prioritise in order to feel that their life had dignity and meaning. All they wanted, they said, was to be a "proper person".

Jamie had taken steps into adult education in pursuit of a career dream, but suffered setbacks and discouragement when they found they didn't have strategies to deal with the technological requirements and pressures of assignment hand-ins. Lifelong negative experiences with services had left Jamie feeling unsupported and not listened to.

They experienced particular behavioural distress in interactions with their local primary care centre, where anxiety about GP visits had come out as anger directed at reception staff. Jamie felt undermined and dismissed in many areas of their life, particularly in relation to gender identity. They believed that their decision to transition was not being taken seriously and they experienced this disregard as a fundamental blow to their sense of self. Previous support relationships, counselling and advocacy relationships, political interactions and attempts to pursue justice with An Garda Siochána (AGS) had all broken down for Jamie. As to the relationships, they spoke of not being compatible with others – they felt that they always ended up alone and unsupported and all of what they were dealing with had brought them to the brink, with a suicide plan and date in the diary.

The advocate linked Jamie in with suicide prevention support and Jamie ruled out the plan in favour of working with the advocate to create a backup plan for self-fulfilment so that if they don't realise their very fixed dream career plan they are not left feeling hopeless. The advocate researched services available to Jamie to support with social and transgender issues. The advocate accompanied them on a visit to a local provider that offers outreach case worker support to LGBTQ+ clients who face marginalisation due to their autistic traits, such as differences in communication and social interaction. The advocate made a referral for Jamie to engage the support of One In Four with pursuing their complaint to AGS about their childhood abuse experience. The advocate also engaged with the Primary Care Social Worker to explore what proactive strategies and reasonable adjustments might be explored to bridge the perpetual breakdown in therapeutic relationships, ensuring that Jamie can access the care and support that they deserve. The advocate supported Jamie to attend the GP and to compose a letter for the GP to attach to a referral for psychiatric support and review. Outreach was also made to Jamie's college support service to request support with the assignment submission system. Jamie now benefits from a weekly intervention to help them manage the technology.

As a result of advocacy, Jamie's circle of support has been expanded and their voice is being heard. The advocate has been a listening ear to them, with a consistent aim to support them to make decisions; to reflect the reality of their situation as they move through it; and to promote hopeful but realistic expectations of outcomes. While Jamie's trauma is ever-present and there are no magic solutions against a backdrop of prolonged mental health waiting lists, the attachment of an outreach caseworker has been vital to enabling Jamie to work through this period of their life and to find in it some kind of meaningful support and a sense of belonging and achievement.



**I want to be a proper person. To find some justice… and to be able to manage living independently**

# Sage Advocacy
# A Day In The Life

## A Regional Advocate's reward is in the successful outcome of a client living safely and in comfort

**Hello! I'm Rebecca Carolan and my role in Sage Advocacy is as a Regional Advocate covering three counties.**

When looking at a making a career change I was inspired to join Sage Advocacy by my previous experiences with another advocate when I worked as the manager of a nursing home. My years of working with older people and vulnerable adults motivated me to continue in this line of work – and my compassion and dedication to these populations keep me passionate and energetic in my role.

A typical day starts with some administrative work in my home office (such as checking the diary for the day's planned client visits or meetings and responding to email correspondence) before I head out on the road.

Many types of issues can arise in just one day, a lot depends on the nature of the client and the presenting issues. Clients can require support in anything from basic planning ahead (such as creating an Advance Healthcare Directive or Enduring Power of Attorney); to Fair Deal (Nursing Home Support) applications; to support around elder abuse issues.

I support multiple clients, so I try to prioritise tasks according to need. Some cases require more instant action than others. Cases that involve safeguarding concerns need to be addressed with particular urgency.

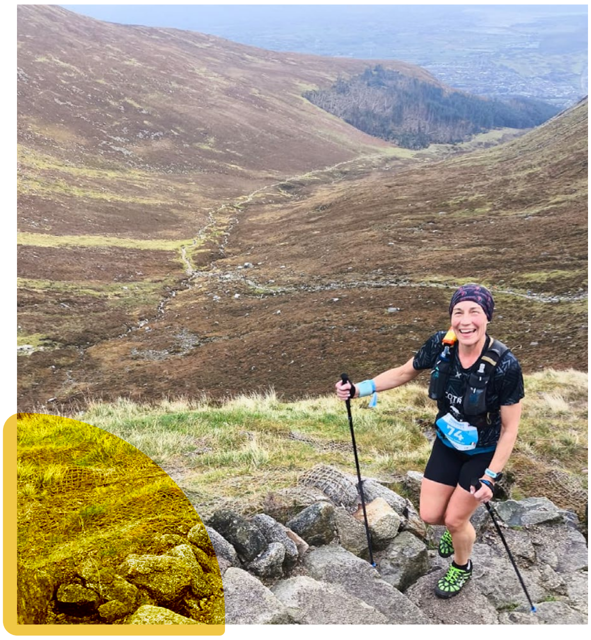
The most challenging part of my day can arise when visits with clients are difficult. For example, if the client is unable to communicate their wishes in relation to a specific issue; or if a client expresses safeguarding concerns, immediate action is necessary. In such instances, it's all about ensuring that the client is safe and protected before I leave.

The most rewarding moments in my role occur when the support I have given to a client concludes with a positive outcome, whereby the client is now living in a safe and comfortable environment of their choice and they are no longer exposed to previous risks.

I build trust and support with clients by listening to and communicating well with them, in an open and transparent manner; by following through on plans made with them; and by striving to achieve the best possible outcome.

As part of the team in Sage Advocacy, I have constant access to various supports. It may just be the ability to pick up the phone to a colleague with knowledge and experience of a particular issue that has arisen; or it might be the support I get from the learning shared across the team at our monthly regional meetings. The team manager is always available as are many other members of the national team and the range of expertise to draw on is fantastic. It's also possible to seek support through external supervision and employee assistance support.

One example of a time when I felt my advocacy made a real difference for someone was in the case of a client who was living in squalid conditions with no community supports and who was given two weeks convalescence in a nursing home following a hospital admission. The client did not want to return to the house they had been living in as they knew they would not manage and would become unwell again. They wanted to remain in the nursing home. However, on assessment for the Nursing Home

Support Scheme, it was determined that their care needs could be met in the community. The client was very upset about this and with my support he submitted an appeal to the Nursing Home Support Scheme. After some lengthy work on his behalf, the appeal was upheld and the client was able to apply for Fair Deal funding and is now happily living in the nursing home of their choice.

My advocacy work involves a lot of interaction with other professionals and with clients' family members. I always ensure that the client is at the centre of all interactions and that their will and preference is at the forefront of all actions taken. Sometimes it is necessary to challenge other professionals or family members in order to advocate for the client. It is important to remain professional at all times.

The tools or resources that help me most in my daily work are my diary (for planning the day-to-day); and Sage's policies and procedures (for guidance when needed). My network of contacts in various professions and organisations are an invaluable help when working with such a variety of client issues.



**The client is at the centre of all interactions and their will and preference is at the forefront of all actions taken**

# Sage Advocacy
# A Day In The Life

## A Regional Advocate going the extra mile to meet clients' needs...

**MY NAME is Martina Durkan and I am a Regional Advocate across Waterford and South Tipperary.**

A day in the life of a Sage Advocate involves navigating complex social care systems and complex healthcare systems to ensure the voice of older people and vulnerable adults are heard – in line with our motto, **Nothing about you; without you** – collaborating on cases with service providers and professionals where it is possible, and challenging them where necessary; always ensuring the will and preference of the person is represented.



No one day is the same! A typical day involves balancing direct client support with administrative and systemic advocacy. At the start of the day, I'm checking and responding to emails. Many of the emails come direct from those we work with daily: Directors in Nursing homes; Nursing Home Support Scheme Office; Public Health Nurses; Medical Social Workers; Discharge Teams; Older Persons teams; and many other Stakeholders. If a Court Report date is confirmed (in relation to an application for a Decision-Making Representative Order) and multiple visits are already done, the draft report will be submitted to our Legal Support Unit team and Regional Manager. Liaising with our Information, Support and Advocacy Coordinator is significant so that we're informed of new referrals and if any of the triaged referrals on the waitlist need to take priority. There are often online scheduled meetings to attend.

The first visit of the day may be determined by the client's setting. Early mornings in hospitals can be chaotic with rounds and investigations taking priority, so scheduling a hospital visit to maximise its value to the person is key. When visiting a person in their home, clear communication around timings ensures arriving at a convenient moment – maybe after carer/other service visits to ensure confidentiality in the conversation.

There are many reasons we carry out home visits but on one particular day, the purpose of my visit with a client who had 24-hour care needs was to capture their voice in a court report in relation to a proposed Decision Making Representative Order sought by their daughters with a view to managing their mother's decisions around finances and property. To sustain my client's required high-level care in the home, a decision needed to be made to sell a field in the client's name. I introduced myself to John and explained to him the reason for my visit. I could see the excellent set-up there for John to be looked after in his home and familiar surroundings. While John did not have full insight into the reason for my visit, it was clear in his body language how content and comfortable he was in his home; sitting in his chair, with blankets on his knees, watching television. John spoke to me about the people in the photos on the mantelpiece and I could see that he had great love and trust for all of them. I took notes of phrases used by John that could be referred to if required in court. After spending about an hour with John, I left to my next visit.

I rely on Google Maps to get me to unknown destinations. While doing so on this day I was greeted on a narrow country road by a traffic jam made up of a family of pheasants who were in no rush whatsoever! I soon arrived at a nursing home where I was to meet a number of residents.

### Serious safeguarding concerns

One of the residents I was visiting, Nora*, had been receiving support to gather documents for submission to the Nursing Home Support Office. When she received her bank statements, her balance was significantly lower than she had expected, and she asked to meet her advocate to discuss this. Nora's sons lived abroad, and she valued the confidentiality of speaking with an advocate. We reviewed her Credit Union and bank statements together. A €20,000 transfer had been made from her Credit Union account to her bank account while she was very ill in hospital and could not have made the withdrawal herself. I was informed then that Nora's niece had been in possession of her bank cards and was collecting her pension.

With Nora's consent, I contacted the local credit union and spoke with the manager. The manager stated that the request had been presented by her niece, who said Nora was unwell and needed access to her finances. I requested a vulnerable adult notice to be placed on the account and to report that this instruction had not come from the account owner. There was also no sign of Nora's pension in any of her bank accounts.

Nora became very upset about this betrayal by a close relative. I advised her that fraud had been committed and I had an obligation to report this to An Garda Siochána. Nora agreed and I made the call. A pulse number was obtained and a follow-up visit by gardaí was planned. Nora asked me to invite the Assistant Director of Nursing to her room so that she could update her. During this joint meeting, we discussed making a referral for HSE Safeguarding & Protection Team. Nora stated that she would ask her solicitor to liaise with her niece.

I contacted the Department of Social Protection's Safeguarding Unit in relation to having Nora's pension redirected, and the bank's Vulnerable Customer Unit in order to freeze her cards and block online access. I supported Nora with writing a letter to make this request and to ask for all future correspondence to be sent for her attention to the nursing home. Nora became very upset and I stayed with her to provide support. We agreed to pause further steps for the time being. I assured her that I would follow up in a few days and that I remained available to her for calls if needed in the meantime.

### Inherent Jurisdiction amid extreme self-neglect

Shelia had been admitted to an acute hospital following a period of significant vulnerability while living alone in the community. There had been increasing self-neglect concerns, with a high risk to her health and wellbeing, as well as reports of individuals calling to her home seeking money and at times staying there. The family had reached out to various services but found it difficult to access support. A transition to long-term care was recommended, and an Inherent Jurisdiction Court Order was put in place.

The Medical Social Worker had sent the referral to Sage while Sheila had been in hospital, to be followed up by the advocate in the long-term care facility. We had the meeting in Shelia's room. I introduced myself and my role and asked Sheila if she was settled and content in her current surroundings. She told me that she really liked it, she loved her room, the staff and the food. Sheila expressed that she does not have access to any money. I asked Shelia for consent to contact her niece who is collecting her pension and request she bring it to her. The option of redirecting the pension was also discussed.

I spoke to Sheila's niece who said that she had requested to become her aunt's agent when people had started to call to Sheila's house, taking advantage of her. I informed the niece that while it is appreciated that she is doing her best to safeguard Sheila, that she also has a right to access her finances. Shelia consented to additional follow-up to ensure her wishes were adhered to and to support with the process as required.

While on route to my next meeting in the acute hospital setting to discuss a complex discharge case with the multi-disciplinary team (MDT), I grabbed my lunch. This is the time of the day when I catch up on calls and check emails.

### A multi-disciplinary team meeting in hospital

In the hospital, I met the medical social worker who had submitted the a referral to Sage and met with Frank ahead of the MDT meeting, in order to ascertain his views and wishes. As I was advised by the social worker that Frank had a hearing deficit, I suggested that he could use the hearing enhancement device that I had brought in, which he did. I explained that I was there to attend a meeting to discuss issues related to their discharge back home or to long-term care.

Frank explained his difficulty with hearing staff within the busy ward environment. He stated that he had found staff became frustrated if he asked them to repeat their questions. As a result, Frank said that he found it less distressing to just agree with them. Using the hearing-enhancing device, Frank found that it improved the communication between us. Frank told me that he did not feel physically well enough to attend the MDT meeting, but was very clear in his wish to return home.

I presented Frank's wishes and outlined the services that were already in place in the community. Between lack of communication and sub-standard communication efforts, Frank's voice had got lost in the discharge planning process. The role of the advocate was paramount in this case – having clarified Frank's wishes, these were then acknowledged and successful plans were put in place for discharging Frank back home.

A day like the one described above may lead to driving approximately 200kms. On arrival back home, I will set aside time for updating the casework notes on Salesforce.

# Sage Advocacy
# A Day In The Life

## No two days are the same in the role of an Information, Support & Advocacy Coordinator

**THERE is nothing typical about a day in Information & Support – that's what makes the work so enjoyable and challenging. Our weeks are divided into days focused on providing Information & Support over the phone and by email; and days that are focused on managing the wait list for our designated regions.**



Our calls and email queries are typically from older clients; clients who have spent time in Institutions in Ireland; family members; and professionals. We also process referrals that are made online or by email and assign them to the coordinator for the area for triage. On average, we answer between 80-100 calls a week.

The triaging process on wait list focused days includes contacting referrers and clients to better understand the role for advocacy and to provide any other information to the client that may be helpful while they wait for their case to be assigned to an advocate.

### Types of queries

Queries vary widely but commonly include:

- Survivors of institutional abuse querying status of Department of Education enhancements
- Queries relating to Decision-Making supports and the application processes
- Barriers to supported decision making within a client's family and their rights
- Access to services and entitlements
- Housing
- Long-term care; Fair Deal queries, concerns/ queries re nursing home policies/care
- Safeguarding issues
- Finances – barriers to accessing services/ challenges with engaging with institutions
- Family conflict impacting an older person
- Requests from professionals seeking advocacy support for a client

### Prioritisation and triaging of new referrals

We assess referrals based on urgency of the issue or the risk to a potential client. Immediate risk, or time-sensitive matters are prioritised. We liaise with referrers where needed to clarify the advocacy ask and ensure our service is most appropriate to support them.

### Tools and systems to manage the workload

The technological tools of the job are Salesforce, Outlook and Excel/Word

When a referral is received, a client contact is created on Salesforce. Any interactions relating to this client, including triage notes from calls with the client or referrer are noted on the client file. This ensures all client information is up to date at all times and any required actions are tracked. Tracking the status of the referral, if it is ready to assign or if outstanding information is required, helps with efficient wait list management.

### The greatest challenge

Demand on the service is at its highest so one of the most challenging aspects of the role is managing a high volume of phone calls, referrals and triages within the limits of available time and resources.

### A rewarding role

Many clients contact us feeling uncertain or anxious about a difficult situation. Being able to listen, acknowledge their concerns and take a referral for in-person support from an advocate means that by the end of the call the client feels heard, reassured and supported.

### Maintaining calm and focus when triaging urgent or complex cases

We rely on our fellow team members for peer support when dealing with challenging calls or complex cases. We try to keep the focus on the client and always bring the discussion back to the will and preference of the person at the centre of the support.


Taking a break after a particularly challenging call can help.

### Working with regional teams to ensure clients get the support they need

Efficient triaging ensures cases are ready to be assigned as soon as advocates have capacity, which is essential for clients to receive timely support. I work closely with Regional Managers and advocates, keeping them updated on cases, highlighting those that may need prioritising, and flagging urgent referrals so we can respond quickly. Regular communication and collaboration help make sure clients get the support they need as efficiently as possible.

### An intervention that made a real difference

A call came in from a member of the public who was very distressed. The caller's sibling was in hospital and their partner was in another hospital as they were palliative. The caller's sibling was being prevented from leaving hospital to visit their partner and the rationale for the blockage was not being communicated by the medical team. We advised that the caller's sibling had the right to leave the hospital but this could be against medical advice and this should be clarified. We explained how a complaints process within the hospital structure would work and that this again was an option. The caller advised they felt reassured having spoken to us and would request a meeting to discuss options given the time-sensitive nature of the situation. We received a call a few days later from the original caller to thank us for our advice as their sibling was supported to be with their partner before they passed away.

### The vital skills for this role...

- Active listening and empathy
- Clear and concise communication
- Strong organisational and time management skills
- Ability to assess risk and prioritise
- Emotional resilience
- Critical thinking skills
- Ability to absorb and process large swathes of information on the job

### Up-to-date knowledge

We keep our knowledge up to date through ongoing communication with colleagues and engagement in internal learning opportunities. We regularly seek clarification or updates from team members when legislation, policies or processes change.

Regional team meetings are very valuable as they provide space to discuss emerging issues and share learning from advocate case work.

### Advice for anyone considering an Information & Support role?

Be prepared for a role that is both demanding and deeply rewarding. You need strong organisational skills and the ability to listen carefully while managing competing priorities. We have a wonderful, supportive team in Information & Support that make a difference to our clients even though we are not the team delivering the in-person advocacy support. The work we do plays an important role in making sure clients receive the support they need.

# Key Milestones 2025
# Voice Matters Launch

## 7 May, 2025, Wood Quay Venue

READ THE REPORT

*Bibiana Savin, Dr Michael Browne, Patricia Rickard-Clarke*

*Chief Justice Donal O'Donnell*

**THE launch of Voice Matters in Dublin in May 2025 was attended by a wide range of stakeholders and heard a keynote address by Chief Justice Donal O'Donnell.**

Two years on from the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making Acts, this scoping document presents Sage Advocacy's experience of this landmark legislation in practice. It examines the organisation's experience of implementation; suggests how application of the legislation can be further encouraged; and proposes process and system improvements needed to ensure that the rights enshrined in the Acts can be accessed and enjoyed to the fullest.

The event in Wood Quay Venue was opened by the law's great champion, Patricia Rickard-Clarke. Ms Rickard-Clarke provided a powerful account of the journey of the formation of the Act, from 2006 to present, placed in parallel with the development of Sage and its achievements along the same journey. Ms Rickard Clarke's address illuminated the breadth and depth of the contribution that Sage has offered to this radical shift in human rights law in Ireland – where the lurking 1871 Lunacy Act has been put to bed once and for all!

Attendees then heard from Legal Support Unit Lead, Martina Larkin, who presented an overview of Sage Advocacy's experience of the new legislation in practice.

Ms Larkin gave attendees a picture of the organisation's process development in relation to this work; and set out some of the issues encountered that present challenges to effective implementation.

Research and Policy Coordinator, Dr Michael Browne, set out the implementation issues that need to be addressed – and he outlined a series of interventions that would ensure that this groundbreaking law can operate effectively and to the fullest. Opposite you will find a visual summary of the issues highlighted by Dr Browne's research and in the observations reported to him by staff on the front line of implementation; plus the recommended actions on each point.

| Issue | What needs to be done |
| --- | --- |
| It is clear that independent advocacy plays a critical role in the implementation of the ADMC legislation but there is no formal recognition here in law for independent advocacy practice | **Legislative provision in Ireland for independent advocacy practice** is required as a matter of some urgency with related integrated state funding. |
| The experience of Sage Advocacy is that some professionals, (both legal and health and social care) appear not to be fully au fait with the underlying principles of the legislation and what is required to implement these. | There should be more emphasis on **continuous professional development and training** in all relevant agencies around ADMC principles (Part 8 of the legislation) and their implementation. |
| For many of the people where an intervention under the legislation is required, there is likely to be a safeguarding dimension and a related need to ensure that the most appropriate and least restrictive support is put in place. | There should be a stronger focus on **positive adult safeguarding** as an overarching consideration in all interventions under the legislation. |
| It is regularly the case that a Decision-Making Representative Order (the most restrictive intervention) is sought for a person when a less restrictive option would be adequate. | A proactive **information campaign** is required to make the public and professionals more aware of the various options under the legislation. |
| There are instances, especially in the case of nursing home residents, where a person is unable to bring an application to the court themselves but where nobody is willing to do so. | This matter needs to be reviewed from a legal and human rights perspective in order to **ensure that no relevant person is excluded**. |
| Although there is a requirement in the legislation for the relevant person to attend court for the hearing and be supported to do so, relatively few people actually attend either in person or via video-link. | There is a need for more **specific guidance** as to who is responsible for ensuring that the relevant person is aware of their right to attend the court hearing and for the provision of support to do so. |
| The ADMC process would be enhanced by having jointly agreed mechanisms for collaboration between HSE safeguarding social workers and independent advocates. | Agreed **mechanisms for joint working** should be put in place. |
| There is a dearth of statistics publicly available relating to attendance at court by Relevant Persons as well as in the areas of legal representation and independent advocacy. | The Courts Service should develop mechanisms for gathering **statistics and reporting** in relation to these matters. |
| Some courts have a clear understanding of the legislation while others (e.g., those who only hear a small number of applications) are not yet fully au fait with its provisions. | Consideration should be given to reducing the **number of court locations** dealing with ADMC applications in order to ensure more efficiency. |
| It is not at all clear how well the respective DSS Codes of Practice are being adhered to in practice. | The DSS should put in place a mechanism to **capture actual practice** under the various Codes. |
| There is a clear issue with the slow pace of discharge from wardship and a need to address the contributory factors. | The Wards of Court Office should ensure that all **wards are given the supports that they require** to enable them to avail of the review process. |
| The requirement for the Enduring Power of Attorney to be signed by attorney/s in the presence of the donor is not always practical | The Minister should make a Regulation providing for the interpretation of 'in the presence of', to **include online presence**. |
| There are issues around Advance Health Care Directives, in particular, the fact that the Register is not yet in operation. | The Minister should fast-track the making of a Regulation under Section 84(12) to **operationalise the AHD Register** already set up by the DSS. |
| The consent of the court is required under Section 36 of the Act by way of ex parte application by someone not on the specified list which delays the process. | There is a strong argument that **ex parte applications should be taken by the Registrar of the Court** and not by the court itself. |
| Circuit Court Rules confirm that a capacity application may be signed by the applicant or their solicitor where a person cannot give instructions – not all solicitors adhere to this. | More **discussion and guidance** is required around this matter. |
| There are strong arguments for people being legally able to indicate their place care arrangements when they have capacity to do so. | **Place of care legislation** should be introduced to complement the provision for an Advance Health Care Directive in the ADMC legislation. |
| There is a need for a national forum of key organisations to address interorganisational and operational issues arising. | **A National ADMC Stakeholders' Forum** should be established with an independent chair. |

# Key Milestones 2025
# Mayo Social

## 16 April, 2025, Lough Lannagh Centre



**MAYO Social is an initiative supported by the HSE, Mayo County Council, Sage Advocacy, Castlebar Social Services, St Brendan's Village – Mulranny, St Vincent de Paul, Mayo Abbey and others to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society.**

**The steering group organised a successful seminar on housing and care in April 2025 and is currently exploring a range of housing with care initiatives in the county**. It has recently submitted a proposal to government for research led project to explore the further development of meals-on-wheels and related social services throughout the county.

Mayo Social hopes that the learning from its work will encourage other developments nationally and lead to the establishment of a National Social innovation Fund to help meet the challenges of an ageing society and economy.As part of the initiative's April seminar, the Big H, in Lough Lannagh Centre, the initiative also released the results of a Red C Poll that it had commissioned, which indicated that nine out of ten adults would not choose to live in a nursing home; and that people want the State to be more assertive in housing – including CPOs for vacant properties. See infographic opposite for detail.

The results of the poll speak to an urgent need to address the housing needs of older people through the development of 'wrap around' rather than 'send around' services – enabling older people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Big H seminar was attended by Dr Michael Browne, Research Adviser to Sage Advocacy, who recorded and detailed its findings for a report that will be used to inform the work of Mayo Social and which can be found on **www.mayosocial.ie**.

**92%** say that housing with supports for older people is **URGENTLY NEEDED**

The majority of people (54%) would only consider moving if their health deteriorated

Over 70% of older adults would find it emotionally difficult to leave their homes

Sage Advocacy

Mayo Social.

MAYO SOCIAL
RED C POLL
November 2025

**74%** support the use of **Compulsory Purchase Orders** to bring vacant/derelict homes back into use

**Only 6%** believe adequate independent-living options exist

The preferred option for care across all demographics is a carer making a daily home visit

**44%** Men

Women **35%**

**20%** would choose to move home to somewhere with onsite support

**61%** are unaware or unsure if they know about different types of housing available to older people in Ireland

**77%** agree that not many people plan ahead properly for where they will live if they become frail and in need of support

**Only 8%** would choose to live in a nursing home

Men **6%**

Women **2%**

# Key Milestones 2025
# Office Launch

## 24 September 2025, Merchants Quay


**ON SEPTEMBER 24, Sage Advocacy celebrated the official opening of its new office at Merchants Quay.**

Minister Jack Chambers TD was guest of honour at the event, joining staff, volunteers, board members, friends, collaborators and stakeholders for a morning of reflection and celebration.

Minister Chambers acknowledged the vital role that Sage Advocacy plays in underpinning the rights and voices of older people, vulnerable adults, and survivors of institutional abuse. His words reinforced the importance of what Sage Advocacy does — and the value of the work that staff carry out across the country each day.

Sage's Chair, Mark Mellett, noted that the growth being experienced by the organisation was not simply about numbers, but about a "coming of age" of independent advocacy as an essential part of our democracy. He also pointed to the road ahead, where sustained government commitment will be needed to meet the forecast doubling of demand for services over the coming years.

CEO, Bibiana Savin, talked about the importance of strengthening advocacy and continuing to build on recent progress.

The ribbon-cutting on the new office by the minister offered a memorable moment – with a thick, sage-coloured bow to mark new beginnings in the new space and to recall the organisation's roots and the path it has travelled to where it is today.

The new office provided the perfect setting for the celebration – bright, modern, and welcoming – a space that reflects Sage's growth and is designed to support even greater collaboration. It was a milestone occasion and there was a sense of great momentum for the times ahead in Merchants House.


# Legal Support Unit Developments



**IN 2025, Sage Advocacy's Legal Support Unit (LSU) consolidated its role as a core organisational function, providing legal expertise to support advocacy practice across the organisation. In addition to voluntary and pro bono input, the LSU employed 6 people at the end of 2025 – an increase from 3 earlier in the year – thanks to funding from the Department of Justice, the Department of Education and the HSE.**

The year was marked by consistent provision of legal support internally alongside significantly increased demand, particularly arising from the ongoing implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act and the growing demand for Sage Advocacy to support people having their voice heard independently during related Court processes.

The Unit reviewed, supported and coordinated 591 Independent Advocacy Reports being submitted to Circuit Courts across the Republic of Ireland during the year, representing a 42% increase on this work comparted to 2024. Alongside this, the LSU provided in-depth legal support to advocates in complex cases, contributing to the quality, consistency and rights-based practice across advocacy casework.

The work of the LSU covered a wide range of areas including Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) legislation, human rights law, housing and property issues, mental health law, enduring powers of attorney, deprivation of liberty, safeguarding issues including reporting obligations and victim rights, access to justice, probate and social welfare issues. This support was delivered through case consultations, phone and email advice, case management group participation, joint visits and tailored training. The LSU also played a significant role in workforce development, delivering induction training, monthly legal information sessions and structured practice development initiatives to strengthen advocacy induction and shared learning across the organisation.

At a systemic level, the LSU contributed to policy development, stakeholder engagement and rights-based advocacy at national and international levels including submissions to Government Departments, engagement with statutory bodies such as the Courts Service, Legal Aid Board and IHREC, and participation in UNCRPD-related processes. Through this work, the LSU supported Sage Advocacy's broader mission to promote access to justice, protect the rights of people at risk and influence policy and practice in line with human rights standards.

# Sage Advocacy Structure, Governance and Management

# Governance and Board

Sage Advocacy clg is governed by a Constitution and a Board, which is chaired by Vice Admiral (Rtd) Mark Mellett DSM PhD. Mark is former Chief-of-Staff of the Defence Forces and is also chair of MARA the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority. The Deputy-Chair is Leisha Daly. Leisha is Head of Government Affairs & Policy for J&J Supply Chain in EMEA and for J&J Campus Ireland. The Company Secretary is Bríd de Buitléar. Sage Advocacy is publicly funded through the Health Service Executive and the Department of Education. It has also received funding from the Department of Justice. The work of the board and staff is supported by two standing committees (Planning, Policy & Performance – Compliance, Risk & Audit) and an Independent Complaints Review Panel.

| Board Member | Appointment | Resignation/ Retirement/ Other | Board Meeting Attendance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mark Mellett **Chair** | 01/09/2022 | | 6 of 6 |
| Leisha Daly **Deputy Chair** | 20/04/2023 | | 5 of 6 |
| Bríd De Buitléar **Secretary** | 06/02/2020 | | 5 of 6 |
| Ailis Quinlan | 20/04/2023 | | 5 of 6 |
| William Anthony Lloyd | 01/09/2022 | 24/06/2025 | 0 of 3 |
| Bridget Clarke | 20/04/2023 | | 3 of 6 |
| Gerard O'Dwyer | 20/04/2023 | | 4 of 6 |
| Helen Burke | 06/02/2020 | | 5 of 6 |
| Michele Clarke | 30/04/2024 | 12/10/2025 | 5 of 5 |
| Patricia Rickard-Clarke | 01/09/2017 | | 6 of 6 |
| Timothy Dalton | 06/02/2020 | | 5 of 6 |
| Vincent Sheridan | 20/04/2023 | | 5 of 6 |
| Donal O'Driscoll | 24/06/2025 | | 2 of 4 |

# Sage Advocacy Staff 2025

Alan Wolohan
Alison Kennedy
Alicia Byrne-Keane
Andrea Breen
Ann Griffin
Ann Roddy
Anne Clifford
Anne O'Shea Clarke
Bibiana Savin
Breda Stanley Pickford
Caroline Hanley
Catherine Gilmartin
Cathy Vaughan
Cheryl Mellett
Ciara Gallagher
Ciara McKay
Colleen Creagh
Damian O'Farrell
Derek Meates
Desmond Bell
Eibhlín Kilroy
Elaine Howard
Elaine Howley
Eleanor Roche
Emer Meighan
Fergal Graham
Geraldine Jolley
Helen Fitzgerald
Holly Foley
Hugh Cassidy
Isabella Boughalem
Jacintha Hopkins
Jamie Sherlock
Jane Gogarty
Jennifer Connolly
John Kerrigan
Juby Varghese
Karolyn Ward
Lara Gallagher
Laura Flynn
Lisa O'Connor
Lorraine Dolan
Lucy O' Brien
Marisa Sousa
Marja Huhta
Martina Durkan
Martina Larkin
Mary McCarthy
Mary Warren
Maureen Finlay
Mervyn Taylor
Michael Browne
Michael Cahillane
Michael Quinn
Noelle Ryan
Orlaith Lennon
Patricia O'Dwyer
Patricia 'Trish' Moran
Patrick Taylor
Paula Bruen
Paula Dempsey
Rebecca Carolan
Regina McCormack
Shane Clancy
Sheena Moran
Sheila Hunt
Sinead Robotham
Sinéad Galligan
Sorcha McCauley
Stephanie Monahan
Thérèse McKenna
Trish Martyn
Victoria Monkhouse

**Volunteers**

Philip Gargan
Bernie Dowling
Bríd Leahy
Nini Murray
Carmel Gartland
Pat Fullam
Aileen Heaphy



# Committee Membership

**Planning, Policy & Performance Committee**

| Membership | Appointment |
|---|---|
| Leisha Daly (Chair from 11/2025) | 10/10/2023 |
| Michele Clarke (Chair up to 10/2025) | 15/04/2024 |
| Bridget Clarke | 10/10/2023 |
| Bill Lloyd (Retired 24/06/2025) | 10/10/2023 |
| Independent Member, Renee Summers | 20/11/2025 |
| Independent Member, John Dwane | 20/11/2025 |

**Compliance, Risk & Audit Committee**

| Membership | Appointment |
|---|---|
| Vincent Sheridan (Chair) | 13/11/2023 |
| Tim Dalton | 13/11/2023 |
| Bríd De Buitléar | 13/11/2023 |
| Claire Kelly | 04/03/2024 |
| Independent Member, Colm Nolan | 13/11/2023 |

* The Chair (Mark Mellett) is not formally listed as a member of the committees; however, the Terms of References state that the Chair of the Board may attend any or all committee meetings.

**Independent Complaints Review Panel**

| Membership | Appointment |
|---|---|
| Marie Tighe (Chair) | 2023 |
| Wally Young | 2024 |
| Angela Tysall | 2025 |

# External Committees

**Sage Advocacy are Members of the following External Committees:**

| Stakeholder | CTEE/GROUP |
|---|---|
| Age Friendly | South Dublin County Council Age Friendly Alliance |
| Dementia Alliance | Dementia Alliance Group Wexford |
| Dept Health | Department of Health Advisory Group on the Establishment of the HSE Health Regions |
| DNIC | Dublin North Inner City Local Community Safety Partnership |
| Dub Sth PPN | Public Participation Network |
| Education Training Board | Survivors of Institutional Abuse supports group |
| Fingal | Fingal Public Participation Network |
| Head of Quality and Safety | Mid West Interagency Safeguarding Committee |
| HIQA | Expert Advisory Group on Health Technology Assessment |
| HIQA | Ionising Radiation Working Group |
| HIQA | National Care Experience Programme |
| HSE | Assisted Decision Making (Capacity Act) Steering & Oversight Group |
| HSE | Assisted Decision Making Implementation Group – South East |
| HSE | HSE Cork University Hospital working/discussion group Advanced Health Care Directive and Mortality Rates in Emergency Department |
| HSE | HSE National Patient Safety Alert Committee |
| HSE | Paient Engagement Forum |
| HSE | Safeguarding Committee |
| HSE | Sligo University Hospital Watch Committee |
| HSE | South Leitrim Safeguarding Team |
| HSE | Sage/HSE Information Sharing Group |
| HSE | Transitional Funding Group for Mayo |
| HSE Aging Well Together | Aging Well Together |
| HSE Cavan/ Monaghan | ICPOP Dementia Working Group |
| HSE Cavan/ Monaghan | Specialist Palliative Care Team |
| HSE Monaghan | Moving Forward Together Working Group |
| HSE SPT | Safeguarding Committee CHO6 |
| ICPOP | Living Well at Home Laois/Offaly |
| ICPOP | Living Well at Home Longford/Westmeath |
| ICPOP | Sligo Leitrim Steering Group |
| Living Well | Louth and Meath Living Well at Home Meeting |
| Mayo Frailty Group | Mayo Frailty Group |
| Mayo PPN | Mayo Public Participation Network Secretariate Committee |
| Mayo Social group | |
| MDT Group Mayo | Multi Disciplinary Team Group Mayo |
| Muintir Na Tire | Community Alert Group |
| National | Recommendation 65 on Mental Health Advocacy Working Committee |

# Compliments and Complaints

| Compliments / Complaints | 2025 |
|---|---|
| Compliments | 55 |
| Formal Complaints | 0 |
| Informal Complaints | 19 |
| Grievances | 5 |
| Request for a review of a complaint | 0 |

Since working with Regional Advocate (RA), I feel like living again, I have a whole new life again. I was always put down by people, I owe my life to RA, she made me feel like I am worth it. I am going around smiling and people are asking me 'Why?' RA listened to me, I will promote Sage to everyone

I wanted to pass on my thanks and praise to one of your staff members. They have been supporting my father recently and could not have been more helpful, supportive and provided a wealth of information. They are a credit to Sage Advocacy, thanks

I understand what you're saying to me. People come here and don't explain anything, but you've told me everything. I usually tell people to speak to my son or daughter, but I like you and I'm glad you came to see me

The Court asked the Advocate to pass its gratitude to Sage: "The reports provided by Sage are integral to decisions and often help us arrive at a decision in an otherwise complex case... Invaluable"

When nobody else would help me, when TDs and councillors wouldn't listen or even reply, you helped me, I can't believe I am going to finally have my own place and now have hope of having a life

# Data Protection

| Data Protection Type | 2025 |
|---|---|
| Service Access Request | 13 |
| Request for Erasure | 0 |
| Data Breach | 1 |
| Data-sharing re Safeguarding | 2 |
| Garda Request for CCTV | 1 |

# Submissions

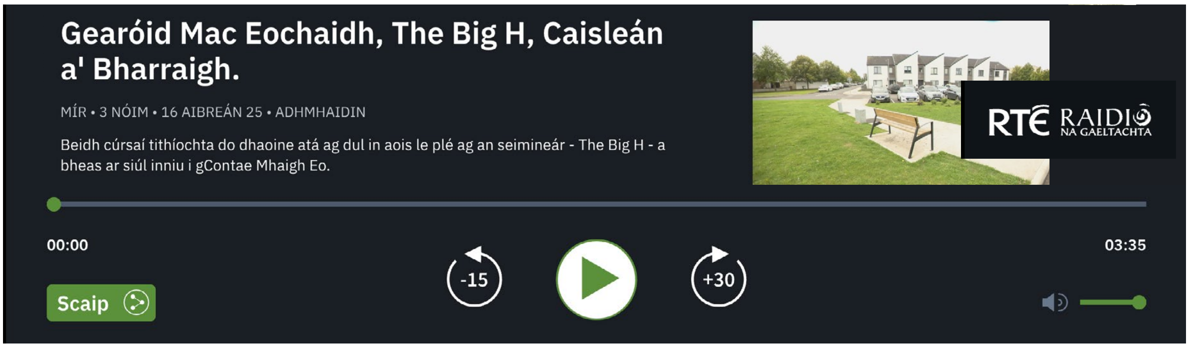
| **Submissions 2025** |
|---|
| HIQA on Use of AI in Health and Social Care *02/05/25* |
| Submission to the Housing Policy for Older People Policy Group, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage *16/05/25* |
| Department of Health on Protection of Liberty Safeguards Consultation *29/05/25* |
| Submission on Ireland's Reporting Process under the UNCRPD *30/06/25* |
| Covid-19 Evaluation *01/07/25* |
| Ireland's Reporting Process under the UNCRPD *01/07/25* |
| 'Staying in Control': A Guide to Staying in Control of Your Money, Benefits and Assets *04/07/25* |
| Stakeholder Consultation on a new Strategy to support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland *15/08/25* |
| National Strategy for Improving Community Safety *26/11/25* |
| Development of Protection of Liberty Safeguards Legislation Discussion Paper Addendum *(no date)* |
| Sage Advocacy Pre-Budget 2026 Forum *(no date)* |

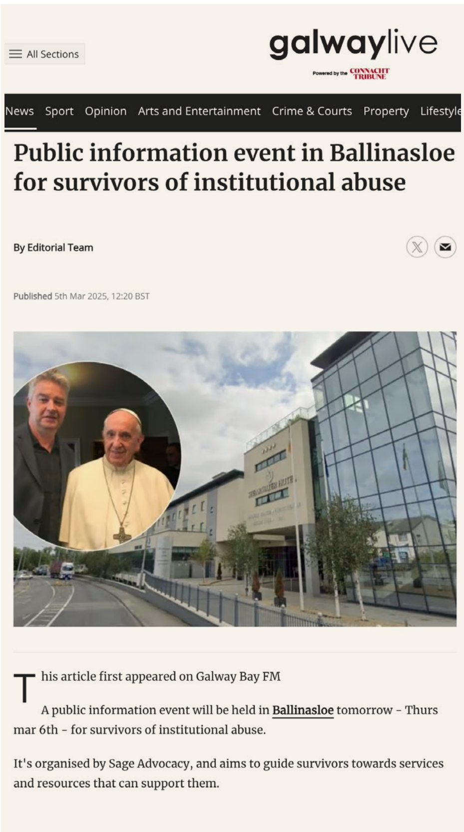
# Media Coverage

Sage Advocacy gained widespread national and regional media coverage throughout 2025. Among the stories that captured the attention of Ireland's print, digital and broadcast publications was the Mayo Social seminar, The Big H, held at Lough Lannagh Centre, Co. Mayo, in April. Gearóid Mac Eochaidh spoke to RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta on behalf of the project, which is supported by Sage; and there was detailed coverage of the story elsewhere on RTÉ, as Béarla.

A wide range of regional publications gave space to the many public information events held in support of Survivors of Institutional Abuse in 2025, while CEO Bibiana Savin provided the Sage perspective on stories including those covering the August publication of the Data Protection Commission's Adult Safeguarding Toolkit.

In late August, The Farmers Journal brought focus to the rising cases of abuse of older people in rural Ireland through the lens of Regional Advocate, Ann Griffin. Sage's Chair, Mark Mellett spoke in depth to Morning Ireland in December in relation to the urgent housing needs of older people in Ireland, while there was also extensive regional coverage of this issue and the related Red C Poll commissioned by Sage.





All Sections

galwaylive

News Sport Opinion Arts and Entertainment Crime & Courts Property Lifestyle

## Public information event in Ballinasloe for survivors of institutional abuse

By Editorial Team

Published 5th Mar 2025, 12:20 BST

This article first appeared on Galway Bay FM

A public information event will be held in Ballinasloe tomorrow – Thurs mar 6th – for survivors of institutional abuse.

It's organised by Sage Advocacy, and aims to guide survivors towards services and resources that can support them.


RTÉ | 100

News Sport Entertainment Business Lifestyle Culture Gaeilge

## Mayo initiative looks at opportunities for older population

Updated / Friday, 18 Apr 2025 19:21

Different services and community focal points have evolved beside units for older people at St Brendan's Village, in Mulranny, Co Mayo

By Pat McGrath
Western Correspondent

A conference in Co Mayo has heard calls for a new approach when it comes to accommodating and caring for the country's increasing older population.

**THE IRISH TIMES**

Ireland

## ‘Paralysis’ in sharing information on vulnerable adults between healthcare groups is addressed by new toolkit

Misunderstandings arise due to lack of clarity in how the GDPR applies, says Data Protection Commission


Commissioner for Data Protection Des Hogan, assistant commissioner Clare Barry, Tim Hanly of the HSE's National Safeguarding Office, Bibiana Savin of Sage Advocacy and DPC deputy commissioner David Murphy at the launch of the safeguarding guidlines

Laoise Murray

Fri Aug 01 2025 - 14:47 · 2 MIN READ

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) has launched an adult safeguarding “toolkit” to address misunderstandings about how to protect the data of at-risk adults in health and social care settings.

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has caused “paralysis” where people are concerned that they shouldn't share data even if they can, DPC chairman and commissioner for data protection Des Hogan said.

For example, residential care centres may not receive relevant health information about prospective residents, leading to “a whole suite of issues that would unfold once the resident is already settled in there”, said Bibiana Savin, chief executive of Sage Advocacy.

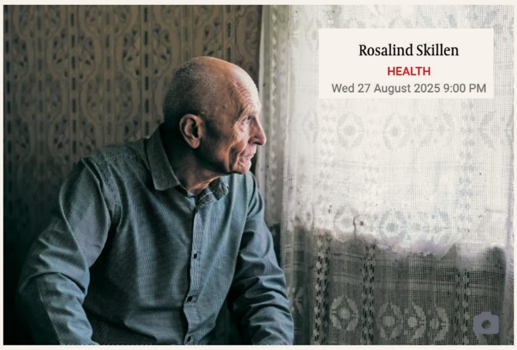
**IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL**

LAGE AGRIBUSINESS FARM SCHEMES PROPERTY BUILDINGS PEDIGREE NORTHERN I

## Elder abuse cases on the rise in rural communities

Health officials and campaigners are calling for better resources and protections to safeguard the vulnerable as elder abuse figures grow.

Rosalind Skillen
HEALTH
Wed 27 August 2025 9:00 PM



Elder abuse is becoming more common in rural areas. \iStock

A grandchild helpfully volunteers to collect his grandfather's pension for him every week – isn't he good? He collects the pension, drives to the grocery store, does the shopping... except, he never really does the shopping. The only food grandson brings back is Weetabix, and any time a visitor calls into grandfather's house, that's all there is. Weetabix, with no milk.

This is one of the many cases of elder abuse in Ireland that Ann Griffin has worked on throughout her career at Sage Advocacy, a national advocacy service for older people. Changing official documents, adding signatures on bank accounts, or taking money from an older relative's purse without permission – these are all examples of elder abuse, Ann explains. Working

## 90% believe housing with supports for older people urgently needed - survey

CLIP • 5 MINS • 03 DEC 25 • MORNING IRELAND

Mark Mellett, Chairperson of Sage Advocacy, on the need for Ireland's housing plan to consider the needs of older people.


00:00 05:27

-15 +30

Share


Public wants housing plans to include supports for older people to live in their own homes. *(File image)*

## Mayo public want more supports to help older people remain living in own homes

THERE is an urgent need to address the housing needs of older people through the development of ‘wrap around’ rather than ‘send around’ services - enabling older people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

These findings are reflected in a new RED C survey commissioned for Mayo Social by Sage Advocacy, the national advocacy service for older people and survivors of institutional abuse.

# Structure

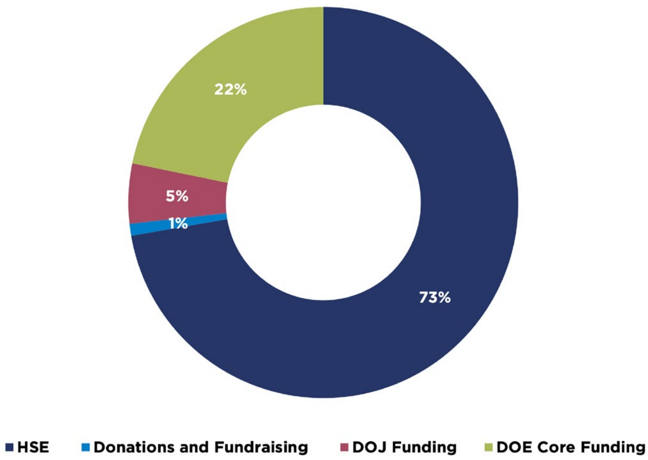
## FINANCIAL REVIEW:

### Income

In 2025, Sage Advocacy had four sources of funding: the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and Donations.

The Department of Justice represents a new source of income for Sage Advocacy in 2025.

During 2025, Sage Advocacy also received additional funding from the HSE arising from the implementation of the WRC Section 39 Wage Agreement. This funding was awarded in line with the wage agreement approved by Government in 2023 and 2024. The funding is recurring in nature and will be maintained each year in accordance with the terms of the wage agreement.




### Expenditure



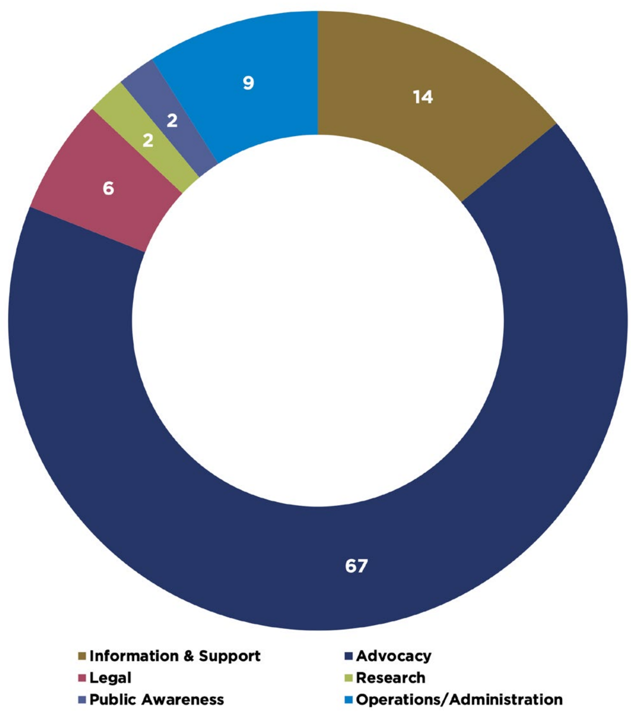
Sage Advocacy's charitable expenditure is analysed between Direct Costs and Support Costs.

Direct costs are those directly attributable to the delivery of the charity's services and include staff salaries and related overheads required to support staff and operate the services.

Support costs comprise office and organisational overheads that support the charity as a whole.

Direct and support costs are apportioned across Sage Advocacy's six key activity areas: Information & Support, Advocacy, Legal, Research, Public Awareness, and Operations/Administration, as detailed in Note 5 to the financial statements.

Total audit costs, which are included within support costs, amounted to €14,760 in 2025 (2024: €6,580).




### Reserves Position and Policy

To ensure strong financial controls and effective internal management of resources, Sage Advocacy operates a Board-approved reserves policy. The policy provides for the maintenance of reserves equivalent to 25% of average annual expenditure, which the Board considers sufficient to meet the costs of an orderly wind-up, should this become necessary, and to cover approximately three months of budgeted expenditure.

As at 31 December 2025, Sage Advocacy held reserves of €2,907,582.In 2024, the HSE approved an enhancement to the Service Level Agreement (SLA) of €2,000,000 to fund the delivery of enhanced advocacy services up to Quarter 1 of 2026. The unutilised balance of this enhancement grant at 31 December 2025 will be applied in 2026, together with the approved additional core funding from 2026, to continue funding the ongoing enhanced advocacy work.

### Staff Training and Development

Below is a list of the larger items of expenditure from 2025.

## TRAINING PROGRAMMES

| | Cost | Who benefited |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Safety Awareness with CPL Institute Training and Compliance Solution | €300 | Admin Staff |
| Manual Handling Training with WTA (Workplace Training and Compliance) | €495 | Admin Staff |
| Conflict Management (QQI Level 6) with Quality and Qualifications Ireland | €555 | Advocate |
| Certificate in Continuing Professional Development in Advocacy (QQI Level 6) with UCC | €550 | Advocate |
| Dementia Awareness and Communication with St. James' Hospital Foundation | €494.34 | Advocate |
| Advanced Diploma in Medical Law with King's Inn | €2550 | Advocate |
| Support & Supervision | €2254 | Advocates |
| Care Transitions with Irish Hospice Foundation | €700 | Advocates |
| Executive Coaching with Lime Tree Management Consulting | €14469 | All Staff |
| Display Screen Assessment Training with WTA (Workplace Training and Compliance) | €2310 | All Staff |
| HR Essential Trainings and HR Performance Management with Peninsula | €17613 | All Staff |
| Written Communication with ARK Speaking and Training | €750 | All Staff |
| AAT Level 2 & 3 In Accounting with ICS Learn (International Correspondence Schools Ltd) | €411 | Admin Staff |
| Social Welfare Law Training with Trinity College Dublin School of Law | €245 | Legal |
| Advanced Diploma in Judicial and Quasi-Judicial Decision-Making with King's Inn | €5250 | Management |
| Impactful Project Management with Impactful Project Management | €4666.01 | Management |
| Transformative Leadership with Irish Management Institute (IMI) | €3300 | Management |
| Microsoft Project Training With (Business Brains) Tazoa Ltd | €1270 | Management |
| AI Essentials for HR Professionals with CMG Training | €499 | Management |
| AI Essentials for Finance & Accounting with CMG Training | €545 | Management |
| Critical Thinking: Problem-solving and decision-making in a complex world with The Economist | €788 | Management |
| Maintaining Compliance with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code with The Wheel | €85 | Management |
| | | **€59688.35** |

## MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR PROFESSIONAL BODIES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Membership to IMI | €2995 | All Staff |
| The Wheel Membership | €725 | All Staff |
| ACA (Chartered Accountants Ireland) | €636 | |
| Legal | €1997 | |
| | | **€6353** |
| | **TOTAL** | **€66041.35** |

# Sage Advocacy
# Financial Statements 2025

Company Registration Number: 610824
Charity Number: CHY 22308
Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20162221

# SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

## ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

## SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

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## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directors** | Mark Mellett<br>Leisha Daly<br>Bríd Treasa De Buitléar<br>Patricia Rickard-Clarke<br>Bridget Clarke<br>Ailis Quinlan<br>Helen Burke<br>Timothy Dalton<br>Gerard O'Dwyer<br>Vincent Sheridan<br>Donal O'Driscoll (appointed 24 June 2025)<br>William Anthony Lloyd (resigned 24 June 2025)<br>Michele Clarke (resigned 21 October 2025) |
| **Company Registration Number** | 610824 |
| **Charity Registered Number** | CHY 22308 |
| **Charities Regulatory Authority Number** | 20162221 |
| **Registered Office and Principal Address** | 9A Merchants House<br>27-30 Merchants Quay<br>Dublin 8 |
| **Company Secretary** | Bríd Treasa De Buitléar |
| **Chairperson** | Mark Mellett |
| **Independent Auditor** | RBK Business Advisers<br>Termini<br>3 Arkle Road<br>Sandyford<br>Dublin 18 |
| **Principal Bankers** | Allied Irish Bank<br>Capel Street<br>Dublin 7 |
| **Solicitors** | Hayes Solicitors<br>Lavery House<br>Earlsfort Terrace<br>Dublin 2 |

# DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT
# FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

The Directors present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the charity are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Charity's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of Sage Advocacy Company Limited by Guarantee present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 2025.

The Charity is a registered Charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

The Charity is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

**Directors and Secretary**

The directors (the only company members) who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, are outlined in the table below.

| Board member | Date of appointment | 2025 Status |
|---|---|---|
| Mark Mellett | 01/09/2022 | Active |
| Leisha Daly | 20/04/2023 | Active |
| Bríd De Buitléar | 06/02/2020 | Active |
| Patricia Rickard-Clarke | 01/09/2017 | Active |
| Bridget Clarke | 20/04/2023 | Active |
| Ailis Quinlan | 20/04/2023 | Active |
| Helen Burke | 06/02/2020 | Active |
| Tim Dalton | 06/02/2020 | Active |
| Donal O'Driscoll | 24/06/2025 | Active |
| Gerry O'Dwyer | 20/04/2023 | Active |
| Vincent Sheridan | 20/04/2023 | Active |
| Bill Lloyd | 01/09/2022 | 24/06/2025 Resigned |
| Michele Clarke | 30/04/2024 | 12/10/2025 Resigned |

As at the date of approval of this report, there were 11 directors. The directors are Charity trustees within the meaning of the Charities Act 2009.

In accordance with the Constitution, the directors retire by rotation and being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretary who served throughout the financial year was Bríd Treasa De Buitléar.

The work of the Board and staff is supported by two standing committees:
- Planning, Policy & Performance
- Compliance, Risk & Audit

**Transactions Involving Trustees**

No members of the Board of Directors received any remuneration of expense during the year (2024: €Nil) in their capacity as director or trustee which is completely voluntary in nature.

**Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards**

The Charity engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Sage Advocacy Company Limited by Guarantee subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2014
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

**Principal Activities and Objectives**

Sage Advocacy is the National Advocacy Service for Older People & Survivors of Institutional Abuse. It also provides supports to vulnerable adults and healthcare patients in situations where no other service is available to them. It works to ensure that people have easy access to information, support, independent advocacy and safeguarding services in all settings: homes, day centres, respite facilities, congregated care settings / nursing homes, hospitals, hostels, hospices and in the process of transition between them.

The charity's objectives are to:

- To consolidate its role and significantly develop its capabilities as a social institution providing support and advocacy for older people, vulnerable adults and healthcare patients in increasingly complex situations.
- To promote awareness and understanding of the role of independent advocacy.
- To contribute to the development of an integrated health and social care system by promoting greater collaboration across the voluntary, community and statutory sectors.
- To expand its services to survivors of institutional abuse.

**Achievements in the Year**

During 2025, Sage Advocacy significantly expanded its services in response to increasing demand.

This expansion focused particularly on:

- Increased awareness of Sage Advocacy's work through enhanced engagement with funders and key stakeholders, resulting in a 25% rise in referrals and a 20% increase in cases in 2025.
- Strengthened independent advocacy capacity within acute hospital settings, improving support for patients in complex healthcare environments.
- Provided targeted support to patients experiencing delayed transfers of care, ensuring continuity and quality of advocacy during critical transitions.
- Ensured that patient voices were effectively represented in complex healthcare decision-making processes, achieving a 17% increase in "client's wishes given effect" outcomes.
- Expanded awareness and delivery of court-related advocacy work, completing a total of 1,050 independent advocacy court reports from 2023, until the end of 2025.
- Increased support for survivors of institutional abuse, with one-to-one advocacy cases rising from 95 in 2024 to 167 in 2025, alongside over 345 information & support calls delivered throughout the year.
- Enhanced organisational capacity and service delivery through workforce growth, increasing staff numbers from 50 in 2024 to 70 by the end of 2025.

## Business Review and Financial Results

### Business Review

Sage Advocacy experienced a year of significant growth in 2025, primarily arising from additional funding of €2 million from the HSE, awarded at the end of 2024.

This funding was provided to:

- Expand Sage Advocacy services nationally
- Address increasing demand for advocacy services
- Develop independent advocacy capacity in key acute hospitals
- Support advocacy in the area of delayed transfers of care

The expansion of services is reflected in staff growth during the year.

Staff numbers increased from 50 staff (46.65 WTE) as of December 2024 to 70 staff (67.25 WTE) as of December 2025. Average numbers increased from 43 in 2024 to 58 in 2025 as per Note 8.

### Financial Results

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 show a deficit of €567,340.

The Trustees consider this deficit to be expected and appropriate in the context of the funding received and the timing of related expenditure. Funding of €2 million, received at the end of 2024, was awarded as once off funding to support the planned expansion of Sage Advocacy services for the period January 2025 to March 2026.

Due to delays in recruiting suitably qualified staff on fixed term contracts, the full amount of this funding will not be expended by March 2026, as initially envisaged. The HSE has approved an extension of the timeframe for the utilisation of this underspend and has also confirmed its commitment to funding the expanded service on an ongoing basis.

Accordingly, the Trustees are satisfied that the reported deficit does not indicate an underlying financial weakness and that Sage Advocacy continues to operate on a going concern basis.

At the end of the financial year 2025, the Charity has gross assets of €3,253,384 (2024: €3,609,996) and gross liabilities of €345,802 (2024: €135,074). The net assets of the Charity have decreased by €567,340.

### Income

In addition to ongoing funding, Sage Advocacy secured two new funding streams in 2025:

- Department of Justice funding of €200,000 to develop the Legal Support Unit (LSU). The LSU provides legal information, support, advice and guidance to Sage Advocacy staff involved in the provision of advocacy, safeguarding and support services.
- HSE West & North West provided €75,000 in funding to the Mayo Social Project, which focuses on developing long-term care solutions and establishing structured supports that enable individuals to continue living within their communities.

**Expenditure**

Total expenditure increased by 42% (€1,262,694) in 2025 compared to 2024, reflecting the organisational growth.

- Staff costs increased by 43%, driven by:
  - Growth in staff numbers
  - Implementation of two Section 39 WRC pay agreements:
    - April 2023 - March 2024
    - October 2024 - October 2026

    For some staff, these agreements resulted in pay increases of up to 14%.
- Sage Advocacy also experienced growth in organisational and operational costs in line with the expanded service delivery.
- A significant investment was made in staff supports and mentoring, with expenditure in this area increasing by 49% year on year, reflecting the charity's commitment to staff wellbeing and service quality.

**Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

a. Lack of multi-annual guaranteed funding streams: There is a significant risk that annually renewed funding streams will be insufficient to meet growing demands. This may compromise the organisation's ability to sustain current service levels across core-funded programmes.

b. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining experienced and committed staff: There are challenges in attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff, given the nature of difficult working environment and the offer of limited contracts which are funding dependent. This may lead to operational inefficiencies and increased pressure on existing personnel.

c. ICT system failure: Failure of ICT systems could result in the loss or compromise of critical data required for internal operations and funding reports. This includes risks related to data breaches, loss of client confidentiality, reduced service quality, and significant reputational damage.

d. Reputational risk and external factors: Sage Advocacy could face reputational damage arising from service delivery issues or external influences such as political developments or public events. Such risks could undermine stakeholder trust and impact funding, partnerships, and service uptake.

e. Injury or illness of Sage representative during work activities: There is a risk of staff or volunteers experiencing injury or illness in the course of their duties. Potential impacts include staff absence, burnout, complaints and associated legal liabilities.

f. The absence of legislative provision for adult safeguarding and independent advocacy, along with the lack of formal recognition of independent advocacy as a discipline in its own right, represent additional external challenging factors relevant to Sage Advocacy.

**Risk Management**

a. The organisation has strengthened its governance, compliance and financial oversight through active relationship management with funders and key stakeholders, alongside ongoing scenario planning to support funding sustainability. A reserves policy is currently in development as recommended by the auditors, while strong governance practices ensure compliance with grant agreements under the oversight of the Compliance, Risk and Audit Committee.

b. Organisational structure and human resource capacity have been enhanced through the identification of key roles, succession planning, and the provision of external supervision and mentoring of staff. A comprehensive performance management framework has been implemented, supported by the introduction of a pension scheme and a clearly defined Senior Management Team structure that meets weekly. Formal handover processes and structured exit interviews have been established, while operational capacity has been strengthened through the expansion of the Legal Support Unit and the ICT unit and the introduction of new roles such as Safeguarding Lead, Training and Education Coordinator, Operations and Governance Coordinator and Service Support Coordinator. The Delegation Protocol was updated and approved by the Board in December 2025.

c. Significant progress has also been made in ICT, data protection, and information security. This includes the further development of data management and control guidelines, as well as the use of encrypted laptops and smartphones. Cloud storage and backup systems are in place., supported by a Disaster Recovery and Contingency Plan. An internal ICT team and external consultants, Savenet, provide ongoing support in maintaining these standards. Targeted staff training is being delivered regularly, and an AI Policy was approved by the Board in February 2026.

d. Workforce development and organisational performance continue to be prioritised through structured external supervision, access to external mentoring, and ongoing implementation of an updated probation & performance review form. Oversight is provided by the Planning, Policy and Performance Subcommittee, while staff retention and engagement are supported through salary increases (Section 39 WRC Payment Agreements uplifts), formal exit interviews, and formal integrated induction processes. The organisation remains focused on delivering practical and meaningful outcomes for clients who require support. Communications are actively managed through an internal team that monitors national media and social media, complemented by external communications and media support suppliers. Social media activity is closely monitored to manage the associated risks.

e. Staff welfare, safeguarding and risk management are supported through a comprehensive suite of organisational and service policies, as well as structured support (including Employee Assistance Programme), supervision and management systems. Towards the end of the year, the additional supports, introduced included regular practice development sessions focused on three separate streams: legal issues (including Court reports), engagement with survivors of institutional abuse and care transition issues.

f. Sage Advocacy commissioned the preparation of a Discussion Paper on the Regulation of Independent Advocacy which will enable the organisation to explore options and potential approaches in engaging with government, relevant stakeholder organisations and potential regulatory bodies on this issue.

**Achievements and Performance**

A detailed review of the charity’s achievements and performance during the year is included in the Annual Report, demonstrating how Sage Advocacy has delivered public benefit and advanced its charitable objectives.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

Sage Advocacy is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for setting strategic direction and ensuring good governance.

Day-to-day Senior Management Team, who meets weekly. In addition, the Service Management Group meets fortnightly. This includes six Regional Managers, Information & Support Manager, Information Systems Lead, LSU Lead, SIA Project Manager, CEO, Asst CEO & Deputy CEO.

**Key Senior Management Personnel (2025)**

- Bibiana Savin - Chief Executive Officer (appointed 1 July 2024)
- Mary Waren - Deputy CEO, Operations & Governance
- Helen Fitzgerald - Assistant CEO, Case Management & Support
- Paula Bruen - Financial Controller
- Martina Larkin - Legal Support Unit Lead.

**Post Balance Sheet Events**

There were no significant post balance sheet events.

**Accounting Records**

To ensure that adequate accounting records are kept in accordance with Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, the directors have employed appropriately qualified accounting personnel and have maintained appropriate computerised accounting systems. The accounting records are located at the company's office at 9A Merchants House, 27-30 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8.

**Disclosure of information to auditors**

In accordance with Section 330 of the Companies Act 2014, so far as each of the persons who are Directors at the time when this Directors' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware, and
- that Director has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditors are aware of that information.

**Independent Auditor**

The independent auditor, RBK Business Advisers, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm, were appointed as auditors in September 2025 and have indicated their willingness to continue in office. Approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf by:

Approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf by:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mark Mellett** | **Vincent Sheridan** |
| Chairperson | Director |

Date: 21/04/26

## DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT
## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

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

Irish Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Companies Act 2014 and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland) as modified by the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” issued in October 2019.

Under company law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as to the financial year end and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statement have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the charity keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the Charity, enable at any time the assets liabilities, financial position and surplus or deficit of the charity to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors’ report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

Approved by the Board of Directors and signed on its behalf by:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mark Mellett** | **Vincent Sheridan** |
| Chairperson | Director |

Date: 21/04/26

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sage Advocacy Company Limited by Guarantee for the year ended 31 December 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' as modified by the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in October 2019.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Charity as at 31 December 2025.
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard as issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Service Authority ("IAASA"), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (CONTINUED)

### Other information

The Directors are responsible for the other information, the other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit;

- we have obtained all the information and explanation which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit;
- the accounting records of the Charity were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited;
- the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records;
- the information given in the Director's Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Director's Report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the Directors' report.

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

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (CONTINUED)

**Responsibilities of Directors for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the Directors (who are also the Directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

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

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

1. Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
2. Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion of the effectiveness of the Charity's internal control.
3. Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
4. Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
5. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SAGE ADVOCACY COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (CONTINUED)

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

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

**Ronan Kilbane**
for and on behalf of
**RBK Business Advisers**
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Termini
3 Arkle Road
Sandyford
Dublin 18

Date:

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

| | Note | Unrestricted funds 2025 € | Restricted funds 2025 € | Total funds 2025 € | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | | | | |
| Donations and legacies | 4.1 | **18,991** | **-** | **18,991** | *37,066* |
| Charitable activities<br>- Grants from goverments and other co-funders | 4.2 | **-** | **3,652,548** | **3,652,548** | *5,411,557* |
| **Total income** | | **18,991** | **3,652,548** | **3,671,539** | *5,448,623* |
| **Expenditure on:** | | | | | |
| Charitable activities | 5.1 | **-** | **4,200,123** | **4,200,123** | *2,959,820* |
| Governance costs | 5.3 | **-** | **38,756** | **38,756** | *16,365* |
| **Total expenditure** | | **-** | **4,238,879** | **4,238,879** | *2,976,185* |
| **Net income/(expenditure)** | | **18,991** | **(586,331)** | **(567,340)** | *2,472,438* |
| **Net movement in funds for the financial year** | | **18,991** | **(586,331)** | **(567,340)** | *2,472,438* |
| **Reconciliation of funds:** | | | | | |
| Total funds beginning of the year | 14 | **227,056** | **3,247,866** | **3,474,922** | *1,002,484* |
| Net movement in funds | | **18,991** | **(586,331)** | **(567,340)** | *2,472,438* |
| **Total funds at the end of the year** | | **246,047** | **2,661,535** | **2,907,582** | *3,474,922* |

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year.
All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

## BALANCE SHEET
## AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

| | Note | | 2025 € | | 2024 € |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fixed assets** | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 9 | | **82,998** | | *71,321* |
| | | | **82,998** | | *71,321* |
| **Current assets** | | | | | |
| Debtors | 10 | **498,509** | | *2,422,703* | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 18 | **2,671,877** | | *1,115,972* | |
| | | **3,170,386** | | *3,538,675* | |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 11 | **(345,802)** | | *(135,074)* | |
| **Net current assets** | | | **2,824,584** | | *3,403,601* |
| **Total net assets** | | | **2,907,582** | | *3,474,922* |
| **Charity funds** | | | | | |
| Restricted funds | 14 | | **2,661,535** | | *3,247,866* |
| Unrestricted funds | 14 | | **246,047** | | *227,056* |
| **Total funds** | | | **2,907,582** | | *3,474,922* |

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Directors and signed on their behalf by:

**Mark Mellett**
Chairperson

**Vincent Sheridan**
Director

Date: 21/04/26

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

| | Note | 2025<br>€ | *2024*<br>*€* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cash flows from operating activities** | | | |
| Net cash generated by operating activities | 17 | **1,613,980** | *105,661* |
| **Cash flows from investing activities** | | | |
| Purchase of tangible fixed assets | 9 | **(58,660)** | *(37,640)* |
| **Net cash used in investing activities** | | **(58,660)** | **(37,640)** |
| **Cash flows from financing activities** | | | |
| **Net cash provided by financing activities** | | **-** | **-** |
| **Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year** | | **1,555,320** | **68,021** |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year | 18 | **1,115,972** | *1,047,951* |
| **Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year** | 18 | **2,671,292** | *1,115,972* |

## 1. General Information

The financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows, and the related notes constitute the individual financial statements of Sage Advocacy Company Limited By Guarantee for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Sage Advocacy Company Limited by Guarantee is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Ireland and its company registration number is 610824. The CRA (Charity Regulatory Authority) number is 20162221 and the CHY (Revenue) number is CHY 22308. The registered office of the Charity is 9A Merchants House, 27-30 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8 which is also the principal place of business of the Charity. The nature of the Charity's operations and principal activities are set out in the Directors' Report.

The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the charity.

## 2. Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charity’s financial statements.

### 2.1 Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The financial statements of the charity have been prepared on the going concern basis, under the historical cost convention, in accordance with The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice Applicable to Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Companies Act 2014.

Sage Advocacy Company Limited by Guarantee meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The company has applied the Charities SORP on a voluntary basis as its application is not a requirement of the current regulations for charities registered in the Republic of Ireland.

## 2. Accounting Policies (continued)

### 2.2 Going Concern

The Charity holds surplus funds as at 31 December 2025. The Charity was in both a Net Current Asset and a Net Asset positions as at 31 December 2025.

The viability of the Charity has always been and continues to be predicated upon continued financial support and funding from the HSE and other funders which constitutes the majority of the organisation's annual funding each year as outlined in note 4.2. The HSE has committed to continue to provide this funding for the financial year ended 31 December 2026 and at the date of approval of these financial statements the Directors have no reason to believe this funding will be withdrawn for the financial year ended 2027. Conversations will continue with HSE and the other funders on exploring sustainable funding going forward.

Sage Advocacy has continued its relationship with its key funder, the Health Service Executive and relationship management and funding arrangements were arranged through the Office of National Director Operational Performance and Integration. This centralised relationship is important in order to sustain a more long-term and considered relationship between the HSE and Sage Advocacy.

In line with our financial controls, management completes a cash flow forecast on cash position where cash is monitored against the approved cash reserve requirement. The directors also continue to monitor costs. Sage Advocacy is of the view that, notwithstanding the challenges, that the company will be able to continue in operation for the foreseeable future and that it is and will continue to be a going concern.

Based on committed grant income over the next 12 months and cash at bank, the directors are satisfied that the company has adequate resources to continue for at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements and it is appropriate to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of the financial statements.

### 2.3 Fund Accounting

The following are the categories of funds maintained:

**Restricted funds**
Restricted funds represents income received which can only be used for particular purposes, as specified by the donors. Such purposes are within the overall objectives of the charity.

**Unrestricted funds**
Unrestricted funds consists of General and Designated funds.

- General funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Board, in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.
- Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that the board has, at its discretion, set aside for particular purposes. These designations have an administrative purpose only, and do not legally restrict the board's discretion to apply the fund.

## 2. Accounting Policies (continued)

### 2.4 Income

Income is recognised by inclusion in the Statement of Financial Activities only when the Charity is legally entitled to the income, performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, the amounts involved can be measured with sufficient reliability and it is probable that the income will be received by the Charity.

**Income from Charitable Activities**

Income from charitable activities include income earned from the supply of services under contractual arrangements and from performance related grants which have conditions that specify the provision of particular services to be provided by the Charity. Income from government and other co-funders is recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income because it is fulfilling the conditions contained in the related funding agreements. Where a grant is received in advance, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, it is accrued in debtors.

Grants from governments and other co-funders typically include one of the following types of conditions:

- Performance based conditions: whereby the Charity is contractually entitled to funding only to the extent that the core objectives of the grant agreement are achieved. Where the charity is meeting the core objectives of a grant agreement, it recognises the related expenditure, to the extent that it is reimbursable by the donor, as income.

-Time based conditions: whereby the Charity is contractually entitled to funding on the condition that it is utilised in a particular period. In these cases the charity recognises the income to the extent it is utilised within the period specified in the agreement.

In the absence of such conditions, assuming that receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured, grant income is recognised once the charity is notified of entitlement.

Grants received towards capital expenditure are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities when received or receivable, whichever is earlier.

## 2. Accounting Policies (continued)

### 2.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any Value Added Tax which cannot be fully recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the company in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs are incurred on those functions that assist the work of the company but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Salaries and associated costs which can be attributed to specific projects are charged accordingly. Support costs also include governance costs.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the company and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the company.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories in the note to the financial statements on a basis designed to reflect the use of resources. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned on an appropriate basis e.g. floor areas, per capita or estimated usage.

### 2.6 Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at historic cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

*Cost*
Tangible fixed assets are recorded at historical cost or deemed cost, less accumulated depreciation (and impairment losses if applicable).

*Depreciation*
Depreciation is charged on tangible fixed assets using the straight-line method, so as to write off their cost less residual amounts over their estimated useful economic lives.

The estimated useful economic lives assigned are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fixtures, fittings and equipment | - | 20% | Straight line |
| Computer equipment | - | 25% | Straight line |

### 2.7 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Income recognised by the Charity from government agencies and other co-funders, but not yet received at financial year end, is included in debtors.

## 2. Accounting Policies (continued)

### 2.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks and other short term highly liquid investments with original maturity of three months or less. Cash and cash equivalents are initially measured at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost.

### 2.9 Creditors and Accruals

Creditors and accruals are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

### 2.10 Taxation

No charge to current or deferred taxation arises as the charity has been granted charitable status under Sections 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

### 2.11 Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Where there are a number of similar obligations, the likelihood that an outflow will be required in settlement is determined by considering the class of obligations as a whole. A provision is recognised even if the likelihood of an outflow with respect to any one item included in the same class of obligations may be small.

Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to passage of time is recognised as a finance cost within expenditure on Charitable activities.

### 2.12 Contigent Liabilities and Assets

Contingent liabilities, arising as a result of past events, are not recognised when (i) it is not probable that there will be an outflow of resources or that the amount cannot be reliably measured at the reporting date or (ii) when the existence will be confirmed by the occurrence or non-occurrence of uncertain future events not wholly within the Charities control. Contingent liabilities are disclosed in the financial statements unless the probability of an outflow of resources is remote.

Contingent assets are not recognised. Contingent assets are disclosed in the financial statements when an inflow of economic benefits is probable.

### 2.13 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity. Annual contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the income and expenditure account in the period to which they relate.

## 2. Accounting Policies (continued)

### 2.14 Financial instruments

The Company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

## 3. Critical Accounting Estimates and Areas of Judgement

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below:

***Leases***

Determining lease commitment - Company as a lessee. The company holds a lease for its business premises at 27-30 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8. The company has determined that the risks and benefits of ownership related to the leased property are retained by the lessor. Accordingly, the lease is accounted for as an operating lease.

***Useful economic lives of tangible fixed assets***

Estimating useful lives of tangible assets. The company reviews annually the estimated useful lives of tangible assets based on the asset’s expected utilisation, market demands and future technological development. It is possible that the factors mentioned may change in the future, which could cause a change in estimated useful lives.

## 4. Income

### 4.1 Income from Donations and Legacies

| | Unrestricted funds 2025 € | Total funds 2025 € | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other donations | 18,991 | **18,991** | *37,066* |
| *Total 2024* | *37,066* | *37,066* | |

### 4.2 Income from Charitable Activities

Grants from governments and other co-funders:

| | Restricted funds 2025 € | Total funds 2025 € | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Health Service Executive | 2,666,895 | **2,666,895** | *4,414,567* |
| Department of Education | 813,445 | **813,445** | *996,990* |
| Department of Justice | 172,208 | **172,208** | - |
| **Total 2025** | 3,652,548 | **3,652,548** | *5,411,557* |
| *Total 2024* | *5,411,557* | *5,411,557* | |

## 5. Expenditure - Charitable Activities

| | **Restricted funds 2025 €** | **Total funds 2025 €** | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct Costs | 3,583,908 | **3,583,908** | *2,524,302* |
| Support Costs | 616,215 | **616,215** | *435,518* |
| Governance costs (Note 5.3) | 38,756 | **38,756** | *16,365* |
| **Total 2025** | 4,238,879 | **4,238,879** | *2,976,185* |
| *Total 2024* | *2,976,185* | *2,976,185* | |

### 5.1 Charitable Activities

| | **Direct Costs €** | **Support Costs €** | **2025 €** | *2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information & Support | 498,541 | 73,086 | **571,627** | *502,556* |
| Advocacy | 2,342,033 | 467,265 | **2,809,298** | *1,888,183* |
| Legal | 243,764 | 19,480 | **263,244** | *111,692* |
| Research | 96,435 | 7,707 | **104,142** | *71,097* |
| Public Awareness | 66,074 | 21,741 | **87,815** | *119,561* |
| Operations / Administration | 337,061 | 26,936 | **363,997** | *266,731* |
| | 3,583,908 | 616,215 | **4,200,123** | *2,959,820* |

### 5.2 Support Costs

| | Charitable activities 2025 € | Total funds 2025 € | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Volunteer Expenses | 589 | **589** | *1,077* |
| Staff Expenses | 329,223 | **329,223** | *268,590* |
| Insurance | 30,423 | **30,423** | *24,023* |
| Rent | 90,606 | **90,606** | *44,003* |
| Light & Heat | 14,021 | **14,021** | *6,281* |
| Phones & Internet | 23,413 | **23,413** | *20,245* |
| Stationary & Photocopying | 18,828 | **18,828** | *7,777* |
| ICT Support | 84,316 | **84,316** | *43,212* |
| Depreciation | 24,796 | **24,796** | *20,310* |
| **Total 2025** | 616,215 | **616,215** | *435,518* |

### 5.3 Governance costs

| | 2025 € | *2024 €* |
|---|---|---|
| Legal & Professional Fees | **22,283** | *8,245* |
| Audit fees - Statutory Audit Only | **14,760** | *6,580* |
| Board & Committee Costs | **1,713** | *1,540* |
| | **38,756** | *16,365* |

## 6. Net Income

| | 2025 € | *2024 €* |
|---|---|---|
| **Net income is stated after charging/(crediting):** | | |
| Depreciation on tangible fixed assets | **24,796** | *20,306* |
| Loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets | **22,187** | - |
| Auditors's remuneration: | | |
| -audit services - statutory audit only | **14,760** | *6,580* |
| | **61,743** | *26,886* |

## 7. Auditors Remuneration

| | 2025<br>€ | 2024<br>€ |
|---|---|---|
| Fees payable to the Charity's auditor for the audit of the Charity's annual accounts | **14,760** | *6,580* |
| | **14,760** | *6,580* |

## 8. Staff Costs

The staff costs comprise:

| | 2025<br>€ | 2024<br>€ |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | **2,966,118** | *2,076,247* |
| Social security costs | **265,914** | *186,862* |
| Pension costs | **70,478** | *41,142* |
| | **3,302,510** | *2,304,251* |

**Number of employees**

The average number of persons employed during the financial year was as follows:

| | 2025<br>Number | 2024<br>Number |
|---|---|---|
| Administrative | **5** | *4* |
| Advocacy Service | **38** | *29* |
| Information and Support | **8** | *7* |
| Legal/ Research / Public Awareness | **7** | *3* |
| | **58** | *43* |

## 8. Staff Costs (continued)

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period fell within the bands below were:

| | **2025 No.** | *2024 No.* |
|---|---|---|
| In the band €60,001 - €70,000 | **5** | *1* |
| In the band €70,001 - €80,000 | **2** | *1* |
| In the band €80,001 - €90,000 | **1** | - |
| In the band €90,001 - €100,000 | **1** | - |

Two WRC Section 39 payments were applied to staff salaries in 2025.

No Directors received any remuneration during the period. No directors' expenses have been incurred during the year.

The key management personnel of the company comprise the CEO, whose total remuneration amounted to €91,235 (2024: €71,665).

The pay of key management personnel is set by approval of the Board.

No directors or any other persons related to the company had any personal interest in any contracts or transactions entered into by the company during the financial period.

All of the amounts stated above were recognised as an expense of the company in the financial year. No amount was capitalised into assets.

## 9. Tangible Fixed Assets

| | Fixtures, fittings and equipment € | Computer equipment € | Total € |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cost or valuation** | | | |
| At 1 January 2025 | **52,625** | **79,217** | **131,842** |
| Additions | **6,654** | **52,006** | **58,660** |
| Disposals | **(35,348)** | **(10,715)** | **(46,063)** |
| At 31 December 2025 | **23,931** | **120,508** | **144,439** |
| **Depreciation** | | | |
| At 1 January 2025 | **23,024** | **37,497** | **60,521** |
| Charge for the year | **5,929** | **18,867** | **24,796** |
| On disposals | **(13,680)** | **(10,196)** | **(23,876)** |
| At 31 December 2025 | **15,273** | **46,168** | **61,441** |
| **Net book value** | | | |
| At 31 December 2025 | **8,658** | **74,340** | **82,998** |
| *At 31 December 2024* | *29,601* | *41,720* | *71,321* |

## 10. Debtors: Amounts Due Within One Year

| | **2025** € | *2024* € |
|---|---|---|
| **Due within one year** | | |
| Trade debtors | **480,353** | *2,402,848* |
| Prepayments | **18,156** | *19,855* |
| | **498,509** | *2,422,703* |

## 11. Creditors: Amounts Due Within One Year

| | **2025** | *2024* |
|---|---|---|
| | **€** | *€* |
| Bank overdrafts | **585** | - |
| Trade creditors | **49,094** | *42,535* |
| PAYE/PRSI | **117,299** | *61,724* |
| Pension accrual | **24,956** | *10,061* |
| Accruals | **77,754** | *20,754* |
| Deferred income | **76,114** | - |
| | **345,802** | *135,074* |

Trade, other creditors and accruals are payable at various dates in the next 12 months in accordance with the suppliers' usual terms and conditions.

Tax and social insurance are repayable at various dates over the coming months in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions.

An analysis of deferred income is set out below:

**Deferred income**

| | **2025** | *2024* |
|---|---|---|
| | **€** | *€* |
| Deferred income at 1 January 2025 | **-** | - |
| Resources deferred during the year | **76,114** | - |
| Amounts released from previous periods | **-** | - |
| **Deferred income at 31 December 2025** | **76,114** | - |

## 12. Pension Costs - Defined Contribution

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

## 13. State Funding

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agency** | **HSE** |
| Purpose of grant | Funding core services as agreed in SLA |
| Term | Annual (01/01/2025 - 31/12/2025) |
| Total fund | €2,666,895 |
| Funds due at financial year end | €480,353 |
| Funds deferred at financial year end | €48,322 |
| Received in the financial year | €2,186,542 |
| Capital grant | No |
| Restriction on use | Yes - Fund to be expended in line with SLA agreement |

**Note 2**
The charity is compliant with Circular 44/2006 “Tax clearance procedures: grants, subsidies and similar type payments”.

**Note 3**
The charity is compliant with Circular 13/2014 "Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds".

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agency** | **Department of Education** |
| Purpose of the Grant | Development of Services to Survivors of Institutional Abuse |
| Term | Period to 31/12/2025 |
| Total fund | €813,445 |
| Funds due at financial year end | €Nil |
| Funds deferred at financial year end | €Nil |
| Received in the financial year | €813,445 |
| Capital Grant | No |
| Restriction on use | Yes - Fund to be expended in line with grant agreement |

**Note 2**
The charity is compliant with Circular 44/2006 “Tax clearance procedures: grants, subsidies and similar type payments”.

**Note 3**
The charity is compliant with Circular 13/2014 "Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds".

**13. State Funding (continued)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agency** | **Department of Justice** |
| Purpose of the Grant | To fund Legal Support Unit (LSU) |
| Term | Period to 31/12/2025 |
| Total Fund | €200,000 |
| Funds due at financial year end | €Nil |
| Fund deferred at financial year end | €27,792 |
| Received in the financial year | €200,000 |
| Capital grant | No |
| Restriction on use | Yes - Fund to be expended in line with grant agreement |

**Note 2**
The charity is compliant with Circular 44/2006 “Tax clearance procedures: grants, subsidies and similar type payments”.

**Note 3**
The charity is compliant with Circular 13/2014 "Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds".

## 14. Statement of Funds

### Statement of funds - current year

| | Balance at 1 January 2025 € | Income € | Expenditure € | Balance at 31 December 2025 € |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted funds** | | | | |
| General funds | **227,056** | **18,991** | **-** | **246,047** |
| **Restricted funds** | | | | |
| Restricted trust funds | **3,247,866** | **3,652,548** | **(4,238,879)** | **2,661,535** |
| **Total of funds** | **3,474,922** | **3,671,539** | **(4,238,879)** | **2,907,582** |

### Statement of funds - prior year

| | *Balance at 1 January 2024 €* | *Income €* | *Expenditure €* | *Balance at 31 December 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted funds** | | | | |
| General funds | *189,990* | *37,066* | *-* | *227,056* |
| **Restricted funds** | | | | |
| Restricted trust funds | *812,494* | *5,411,557* | *(2,976,185)* | *3,247,866* |
| **Total of funds** | *1,002,484* | *5,448,623* | *(2,976,185)* | *3,474,922* |

## 15. Summary of Funds

### Summary of funds - current year

| | Balance at 1 January 2025 € | Income € | Expenditure € | Balance at 31 December 2025 € |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unrestricted funds | **227,056** | **18,991** | **-** | **246,047** |
| Restricted funds | **3,247,866** | **3,652,548** | **(4,238,879)** | **2,661,535** |
| | **3,474,922** | **3,671,539** | **(4,238,879)** | **2,907,582** |

### Summary of funds - prior year

| | *Balance at 1 January 2024 €* | *Income €* | *Expenditure €* | *Balance at 31 December 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unrestricted funds | *189,990* | *37,066* | *-* | *227,056* |
| Restricted funds | *812,494* | *5,411,557* | *(2,976,185)* | *3,247,866* |
| | *1,002,484* | *5,448,623* | *(2,976,185)* | *3,474,922* |

## 16. Analysis of net assets between funds

### Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

| | Unrestricted funds 2025 € | Restricted funds 2025 € | Total funds 2025 € |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | - | 82,998 | **82,998** |
| Current assets | 246,047 | 2,924,339 | **3,170,386** |
| Creditors due within one year | - | (345,802) | **(345,802)** |
| **Total** | 246,047 | 2,661,535 | **2,907,582** |

## 16. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

### Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

| | *Unrestricted funds 2024 €* | *Restricted funds 2024 €* | *Total funds 2024 €* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | *-* | *71,321* | *71,321* |
| Current assets | *227,016* | *3,311,659* | *3,538,675* |
| Creditors due within one year | *-* | *(135,074)* | *(135,074)* |
| **Total** | *227,016* | *3,247,906* | *3,474,922* |

## 17. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

| | **2025 €** | *2024 €* |
|---|---|---|
| Net (expenditure) / income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities) | **(567,340)** | *2,472,438* |
| **Adjustments for:** | | |
| Depreciation charges | **24,796** | *20,306* |
| Loss on the sale of fixed assets | **22,187** | *-* |
| Decrease/(increase) in debtors | **1,924,194** | *(2,390,511)* |
| Increase in creditors | **210,143** | *3,428* |
| **Net cash generated by operating activities** | **1,613,980** | *105,661* |

## 18. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

| | **2025 €** | *2024 €* |
|---|---|---|
| Cash at bank and in hand | **2,671,877** | *1,115,972* |
| Bank overdraft | **(585)** | *-* |
| **Total cash and cash equivalents** | **2,671,292** | *1,115,972* |

## 19. Analysis of changes in net debt

| | At 1 January 2025 € | Cash flows € | At 31 December 2025 € |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash at bank and in hand | **1,115,972** | **1,555,905** | **2,671,877** |
| Bank overdraft | **-** | **(585)** | **(585)** |
| | **1,115,972** | **1,555,320** | **2,671,292** |

## 20. Contingent liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities at the year end.

## 21. Capital commitments

The charity has no material capital commitments at the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

## 22. Operating lease commitments

Operating leases charged in arriving at the net income attributable to the company amounted to €24,075. Obligations payable as at 31 December 2025 on operating lease agreements in place at that date, amounted to €938,925 analysed as follows:

| | **2025** € | *2024* € |
|---|---|---|
| Within one year | **96,300** | *22,500* |
| Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years | **385,200** | - |
| Later than 5 years | **457,425** | - |
| | **938,925** | *22,500* |

## 23. Legal status

The charity is exempt from including the word "Limited" in its name by virtue of Section 1180 of the Companies Act 2014. The charity is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. Under the guarantee each member has undertaken to contribute, in the event of a winding up, an amount not exceeding the sum of €1.00. This guarantee continues for one financial year after individual membership ceases.

## 24. Related party transactions

The related parties of the company are considered to be the Directors, their close family members and entities which they control or in which they have a significant interest as well as members of the company.

*Transactions with Key Management Personnel*
Other than as set out at Note 8 there were no transactions with key management personnel during the current financial period.

## 25. Post balance sheet events

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the period end.

## 26. Financial instruments

The carrying amount for each category of financial instruments is as follows:

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| | € | € |
| **Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost** | | |
| Trade debtors | **480,353** | *2,402,848* |
| Cash at bank and in hand | **2,671,877** | *1,115,972* |
| | **3,152,230** | *3,518,820* |

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| | € | € |
| **Financial liabilities** | | |
| Trade creditors | **49,094** | *42,535* |

## 27. Comparatives

Comparative amounts have been regrouped for the year ended 31 December 2024 on a basis consistent with current year presentation.

## 28. Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on

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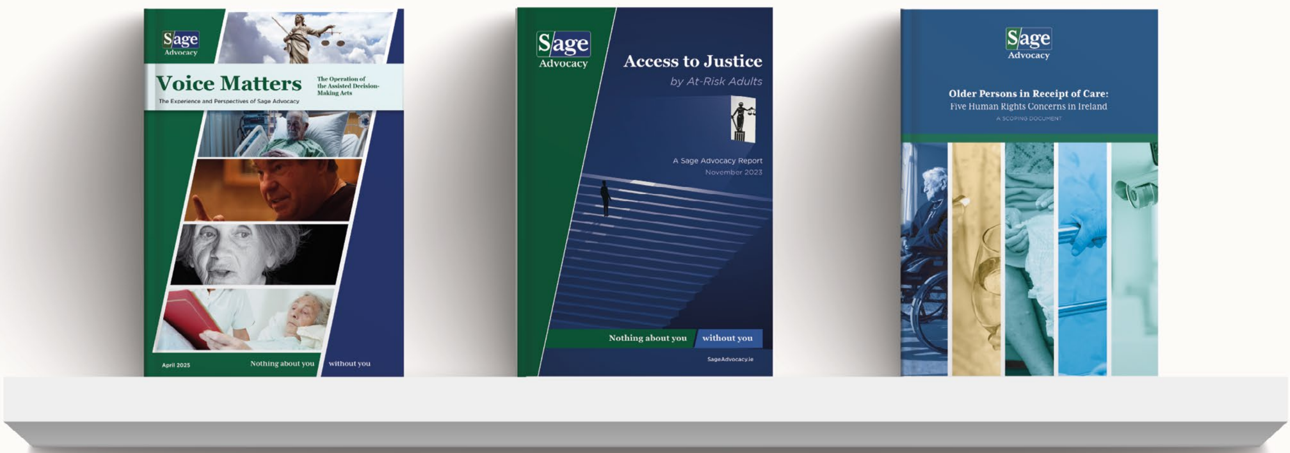
THE NEXT STAGE – STATEMENT OF STRATEGY

THE ROLE OF AN INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE

MAKING A DMR APPLICATION

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ACCESS TO JUSTICE

FIVE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES


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# Notes

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