Sligo Family Resource Centre Annual Report 2025

www.sligofamilyresourcecentre.org

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

TUSLA

pobal
government supporting communities

Contents

Introduction 2
2. Information and Services 3
3. Parenting Supports 4
4. Family Support Service 2
5. Services to Adults with Learning Disabilities 3
7. Intercultural Supports and Activities 5
8. Social Prescribing for Health and Wellbeing 5
9. Adult Supports 7
10. Interagency & Networking 7
11. Voluntary Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers 2024 8
12. Funding 11
13. Planning and Governance 10
14. Continuous Professional Development 11
15. Other Highlights in Pictures 1

Introduction

Sligo Family Resource Centre (FRC) has been in existence since 1995. Based at 49 The Mall, Sligo this FRC is one of 136 (as of February 2026) FRCs in the country. The FRC Programme is Ireland's largest national family and community-based support programme core funded by Tusla Child and Family Agency (CFA). This Centre provides a range of universal and targeted services in meeting the needs of individuals, families and the wider community in Sligo.

Mission of Sligo FRC is to:

> *To support individuals, families, and communities to achieve their full potential and strengthen community wellbeing*

Objectives:

- Promote access to inclusive supports and services.
- Encourage participation in community learning and development.
- Nurture children's holistic development in a safe and positive environment.
- Support individuals and families in times of need.
- Empower minority groups to engage in their wider community.

This year, Sligo FRC celebrated its 30th Anniversary having first opened its doors in a building in Stephens Street in 1995. The event was marked with a celebration in the FRC on 03 October with the Mayor of Sligo Cllr Donal Gilroy, public representatives, Frank Feighan TD, Cllr Marie Casserley, former chairpersons, Family Support Agency staff member, Sligo FRC staff and service users in attendance.

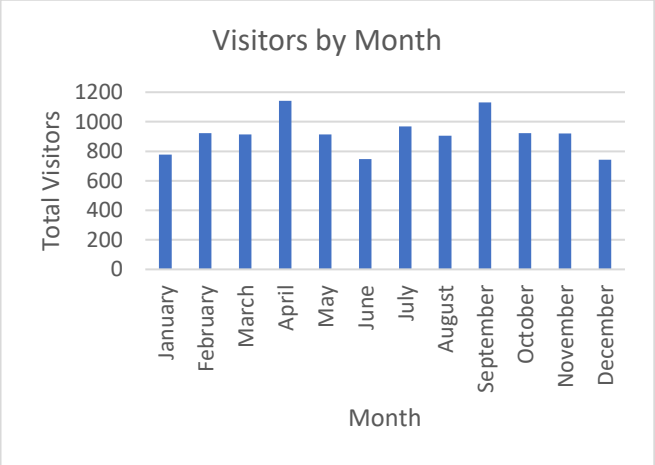
Efforts to relocate the building continued into 2025 with little success while the current building continued to deteriorate. Other premises were explored but as the FRC requires a building central to Sligo Town with an outdoor space (a requirement for the creche), options are limited. This issue was highlighted at the 30th celebrations where we received strong support from the local representatives. The need for a purpose built FRC in Sligo Town was subsequently raised at the Sligo County Council monthly meeting in November and arrangements were made with the Council to meet with FRC Directors in 2026.

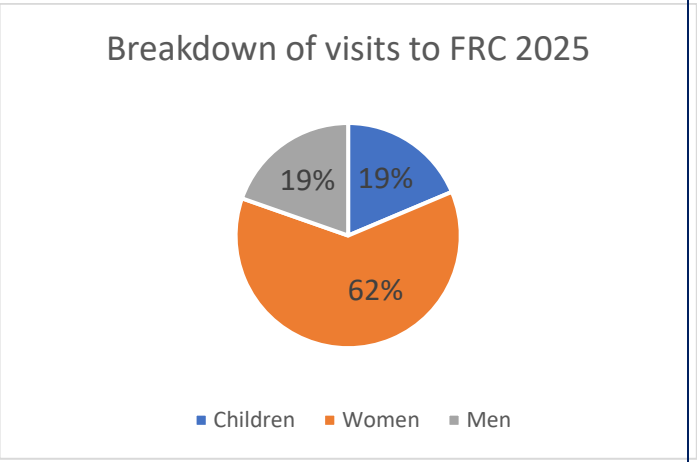
A statistical analysis of every aspect of Sligo FRC's work is made annually through the FRC's SPEAK (Strategic Planning Education and Knowledge) recording system. This annual report is intended to give the reader a flavour of the various services, events and activities offered by the FRC in 2025. All our Annual Reports are available on the Sligo FRC website if the reader wishes to see the work carried out by the FRC since 2004.

2. Information and Services

Sligo FRC welcomes all members of the community to avail of its programmes and services and/or to find out more about other services or opportunities in Sligo. There were 11,010 documented visits to the FRC in 2025, the breakdown is outlined below.

In addition to those who came directly through our doors, we have used the Avalon Centre (70 adults /70 children attendied the St Patricks Day event), Summerhill College (36 adults / 40 children at Family Cookery Camps) Glasshouse Hotel (80 adults at International Women's Day), Markievicz House Countess Café (18 adults), Sligo Education Centre (51 adults – information evening on anxiety), Northside Community (12 adults for Living Well Programme), Mail Coach Road (8 adults for HFME), Beach Trips (43 adults and 57 Children) 37 children attended Holiday Camps in Sligo Sports Complex, Sligo Rovers, Cúl Camp, Motion Kids Dance, Ballymote FRC, Screen Health Centre, Mental Health Unit SUH (40 adults availing of the Social Prescribing service), Ballyshannon Health Centre (35 adults also Social Prescribing) as well as the homes of families and individuals with whom we work. These (388 plus adults and 204 plus children) are not counted in the footfall to the FRC outlined below.





April and September were the months with the highest FRC footfall with the majority of visits made by women (62%)

In order to get information out to the public, Sligo FRC uses word of mouth, fliers, window/noticeboard displays, video/reels, emails, website and information sessions (mainly undertaken by the Social Prescribers). In addition, we use Messager, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to disseminate information.

Social media usage for Sligo FRC is outlined below

Facebook followers: **4,423** up from 4,037 in 2024 (an increase of 8.7%) and 3,696 in 2023,

Instagram followers: **780** up from 699 in 2024 an increase of 10%) and 596 in 2023

Social Prescribing:
https://www.facebook.com/SocialPrescribingSligoandSouthDonegal

Facebook Followers: 736 Instagram Followers: 598

Business facilities at the Centre are available for hire at subsidised rates to facilitate meetings for community groups and organisations. In 2025, we accommodated meetings on three evenings with the support of CE participant based in the Northside Community Centre. These groups had previously met in St Michael's, and we were able to support them when that facility closed.

In December 2025, due to the continued deterioration of the building, staff were relocated to one of the multi-purpose rooms in the middle floor. This had a negative impact on our service delivery as it resulted in one less room available for meetings, programmes, services etc.

3. Parenting Supports

Parent and Toddler Music sessions continued to run on Tuesday mornings 10:30 – 11:30. Facilitated by Oksana Hushpit, a total of 48 sessions with 29 adults and 35 children took part.

The **Dads' Group** is delivered in collaboration with Sligo Springboard Resource House Project. In 2025, the group met on four occasions, with seven fathers participating.

Breastfeeding supports: Sligo FRC runs a Breastfeeding Group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. This group is facilitated by one of Sligo FRC's CE participants. The HSE Lactation Consultant attends one meeting/month. Sligo FRC continues to support the ***"We're Breastfeeding Friendly Sligo"*** initiative, in partnership with Lifestart, CYPSC and the HSE.

Baby Massage Classes were offered to Mums with babies aged 4 -12 months. One of our CE participants was trained to facilitate these through a Parenting Support Champions initiative. Three sessions were completed in early 2025 with six parents and their babies. We were delighted when that participated went on to employment, but it meant we were no longer able to facilitate these classes.

Access visits: We provided space for six parents to meet with their children for access visits during the year – eighteen visits took place during the year, all supervised by the Tusla CFA team.

In 2025, we hosted two **information evenings** in February and October entitled *Understanding and Supporting Your Anxious Child* for parents in collaboration with Sligo Education Centre. The speaker was Dr Sharyn Byrne, Clinical Psychologist. 51 parents attended.

Fantastic workshop. It was just what we needed and we feel confident to help support our child.

Camps/Activities for children

It is a very good Initiative and a great way of inclusion and diversion for our children.

This year, again, we ran a number of camps for children. In addition to the Camps rolled out in the FRC, we secured funding from Sligo Leitrim CYPSC for Camps for children living in IPAS centres - in total 37 children attended Camps with this funding - they included the Avalon Centre, Sligo Sports Complex, Sligo Rovers, Cul Camp, Motion Kids Dance.



Camps facilitated by Martha Van Der Meulan, Megan O Kelly and Oksana Hushpit were hosted over the holiday periods at Easter and during the summer. 38 children took part in these.

We facilitated four Family Cookery Camps in the Home Economics room in Summerhill College. 30 parents with 41 children took part. There were facilitated by the Home Economics student from ATU St Angela's and staff who are trained in the Healthy food Made Easy (HFME) programme

I got to try different foods I never thought I would try

Another new initiative was the Saturday Morning Cookery Classes facilitated by dietician Liz Raftery. It ran over 6 weeks and 14 children took part. Feedback and interest in these classes was so good we decided to run it again in early 2026.

It was such a joy to take part in the Family Cooking Camp. The atmosphere was full of kindness and positivity, we explored wonderful new dishes, and I was touched to see my child grow more confident and

In 2025 three staff member trained to roll out the **Rainbows Programme,** a peer group support for children and young people experiencing grief due to bereavement, parental separation, or family breakdown. With the support of 3 volunteers, we rolled out two nine-week programmes during the year – one for children aged 9-10 who experienced bereavement and one for

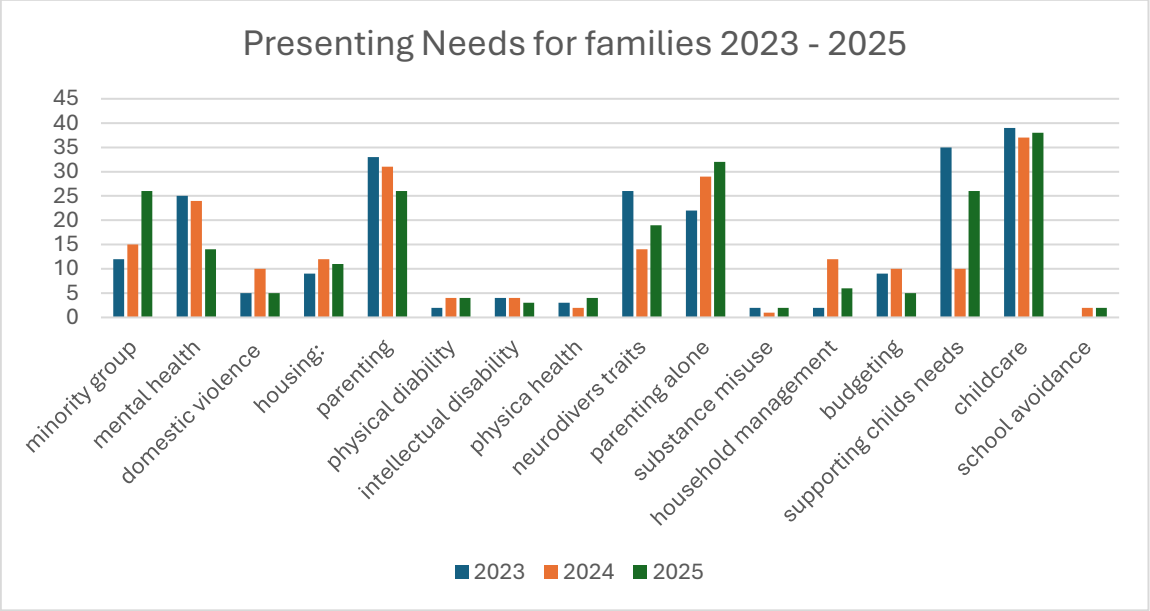
children aged 8-9 who had experienced parental separation group .16 children took part.

4. Family Support Service

The **Family Support Service** including Footprints crèche is funded by Tusla Partnership Prevention and Family Support (PPFS) office and Department of Children Disability and Equality (CDE) under Pobal.

In 2025 the Service provided home based targeted family support to 60 families (on average 22 families /week) in north Co. Sligo, north Co. Leitrim, and Sligo Town (Child and Family Support Network CFSN area 1).

Presenting needs of families are collated each year – these are shared at the CFSN Areas 1 & 3 (of which we are members) meetings, where emerging needs are discussed and ways to address them are suggested. Challenges around school attendance were added in 2024 due to the increase in the number of families referred to the Service experiencing this issue. Below is a breakdown of the presenting needs identified by the Service over the past 3 years.



Parenting programmes: Parents Plus Programmes are regularly undertaken with parents on a one-to-one basis by the FSWs. In addition, Sligo FRC rolled out two on-line Parenting When Separated programmes with facilitators in the Mid-West. This Project is led out my Limerick's Northside FRC.

Decider Skills was rolled out in St Edwards School in the autumn with two FSWs facilitating a group of sixth class children.

The Family Support Workers engaged with a number of **Meithals** throughout the year. 18 parents with 15 children took part in Meithals over the year.

Footprints Crèche is a service open to all families in Sligo and the surrounding area. It provides sessional care for up to six children per session up to 6 years of age. It may be availed of on a once off or continuous agreed basis to facilitate parents to attend appointments, training, employment, counselling etc.

In 2025, the creche provided childcare to thirty children from thirty families. 23% of the children were from one-parent families, 50% come under the heading of inclusion i.e. disability/parents moved to Ireland recently and 10% were linked in with the FRC Family Support Service. Referrals from social work are always given priority.

The annual picnic in Doorley park took place in June and the Christmas visit by Santa in early December. There were also trips to the library and play time in the garden.

Staff changes occurred when after 19 years, Rose McCrann the Creche Supervisor retired and was replaced and with additional funding received we were able to recruit a part-time childcare worker.

"A really interesting useful workshop Sharyn explained everything extremely well - great tips - really informative and easy to digest"

Supporting your Child with Anxiety – Information evenings with Dr Sharyn Byrne were held in February and October – over 50 parents attended.

5. Services to Adults with Learning Disabilities

One to One support: This service support fifteen adults living in the community. Their work includes advocating, educational and employment supports, emotional support including mental health, health and wellbeing, self-care and personal safety. Staff report any safeguarding concerns promptly and attend relevant multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings as required.



Over the years, this service has built a very good relationship with the local *MLSETB* hairdresser and hairstyling course. Both parties gain from the relationship while the students get to practice their skills, the women have their hair cut and styled free of charge.

Some of the work undertaken by the DSWs includes arranging appointments and accompany service users to meetings with their job coaches in *Employability Northwest*. In addition, one service user availed of the *New Wave Workability Programme* while another service user attends ATU

Disability Service Training

Project WAVE, (a two-year program designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities, providing a comprehensive approach to social, academic, and vocational needs).

'The Countess Café' in the foyer of Markievicz House has been run by the Disability Service since October 2012. Since then, the Café has offered work experience to 92 adults with Intellectual disability and mental health issues. Today the Café offers a safe and supportive environment for eleven trainees with mild to medium-intellectual disability each week. At present it has 39 people on a waiting list to start their work experience in the Café. In February 11 adults graduated following a two-year work placement in the Café – celebrations were held in the Café and attended by graduates and their families.



Social Club activity Summer

Countess Café also provides a quality onsite catering service to HSE staff and the public including catering for up to 75 meetings and training sessions in Markievicz House. The Cafe is managed by three staff members, DSWs provide back-up assistance when required.

In addition to the everyday work of the Cafe, the trainees took part in workshops in HACCP, handwashing, fire training, first aid, manual handling and CPR.

The **Social Club** was established to enable the people we work with to engage in adult-type social activities in the evenings. The social club activities in 2025 include:

- Workability Workshop
- Meal in Riverside hotel and the Belfry
- Matilda, Hawkswell Theatre
- Cinema
- Pizza making workshop
- Santa in the FRC
- Christmas dinner in the FRC
- Pitch & Putt
- Visit to the Alpaca Farm
- Irish dancing workshop
- Easter celebrations & dinner
- Innisfree boat tour
- Mindfulness
- Talk from dental hygienist & mental health learning disability nursing team
- Bowling - Four
- Pitch 'n putt
- Duffy's Circus
- Halloween meal
- Visit to the circus

7. Intercultural Supports and Activities



St Patricks Day 2025

Sligo FRC remains actively involved in working with cultural and ethnic minorities. During 2025, there continued to be new families and adults moving into the local International Protection Application Services (IPAS) centres.

Along with those people who moved from Ukraine, Sligo FRC continued to support many of them with English language using innovative ways in doing this including: regular English language classes, Work-Ready English, English club, parent and toddler/baby English class and English language teen and pre-teen holiday camps. We were successful in securing funding from Department of Justice Home Affairs and Migration to continue with employing a tutor to undertake this work.



Tuesday Morning Women's Group

St Patricks Day was a big event for us with Aremoja Women's Kitchen supplying the food this year, and Lili Percussion providing the entertainment. Up to 130 adults and children attended this event which was held in the Avalon Centre.

Swim and Gym vouchers were distributed to adults and children living in IPAS centres throughout the year.

The **Migrant Women's Group** is made up of women who live in the local IPAS centres and women from Ukraine. They continued every Tuesday morning, and activities included crafts, mindfulness sessions and outdoor green therapy, walk and talk trips.

I like the atmosphere and the fact that there is something new every time. (participant in the Women's Group)

We were lucky to have had a good spell of sunny weather in August and we were able to organise 3 days at the beach – 32 families with 43 adults and 57 children availed of this opportunity.

In December there was a trip to Moviloo Hawkswell Theatre, Ballymote where 15 families with 43 children watched a Christmas film and visited Santa.

8. Social Prescribing for Health and Wellbeing

This service is offered in Co Sligo including Sligo FRC, Tubbercurry FRC one day a week, in Grange Primary Health Care – two days/month, Screen Primary Care Centre and

Ballymore FRC one day a month. While in Donegal the service is offered one day per week and covers South Donegal. It is based in the Health Centre in Ballyshannon.

Each participant who avails of the service is provided with adequate time with the Social Prescriber to discuss what matters to them and are then linked into an activity or support that matched their needs.

"Social Prescribing helped me to focus while I was going through a rough period. I enjoyed the sessions and found it took my mind off other issues during this time"

In South Donegal 35 people were referred to the service with links made with Men's Shed, Community Gardens, St. Vincent de Paul, Donegal Sports Partnership, Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, Bundoran Library, Bundoran Community Centre, Donegal Education and Training Board, Donegal Local Development and TUS scheme supervisor, local Garda station, ALONE, Living Well Co-ordinator, DFRC, MABS, Donegal Volunteer Centre, Active Retirement Groups, Donegal Intercultural Platform.



Social Prescribers attending a promotional event in Sligo Town

Meanwhile in Co Sligo, 148 referrals were made to the Service who were directed/signposted to the services and activities – the activities are listed below

Activities they were directed to include:
Social: Men's Shed; Connect Café Coffee Mornings; Women's Groups; Women's Shed; No.45 Community Hub; Active Age Groups; Music Hobby Group; Music 4 Life Programme; Pottery Clas; Sewing Class; Knitting; Singing Group; Choirs; Cookery Classe; Community Garden; Art Workshop.
Physical Activities: Walking Groups; Fitness classes; Swimming; Pilates; Zumba; Sligo Lawn Bowls; Chair Yoga; Sligo/Tubbercurry Parkrun; Activator Pole; Outdoor Gym; Somatic Yoga; Games 4 All; Holistic Belly Dance; Stronger 4 Longer Programmes; Social Dancing
Wellbeing supports: Breath-work; Meditation; Affirmations; Nature Retreat; 90 minutes for me programme; Arts and Culture: Culture Night Events; Comedy Night Tickets; Cultural Companions @ Hawks Well; Sligo Global Kitchen event; Drama Groups (Tubbercurry/Cliffoney) Theatre Groups

Another aspect of the work Is the promotion of the service: in addition to the distribution of leaflets and posters to various stakeholders, the Social Prescribers undertook information sessions to exercise groups, HSE personnel including Occupational Therapists, psychiatry for older people, adult community ID nurses mental health ID services, older persons groups, ATU students, family support workers, attended Connect Café in Tubbercurry FRC, created a promotional video and participated in the Galway University and HSE evaluation of the Social Prescribing Service nationally.

9. Adult Supports

Support to the Most Deprived funded by the European Union and Department of Social Protection, this service is designed to support those who are struggling by donating food hampers to these families and individuals. In 2025 we distributed 282 food hampers to 876 people.



Healthy Food Made Easy: A Community Cooking Programme

Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) is a community cooking programme developed under the HSE Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme. It is an active programme in which participants improve their cooking skills, eating behaviours and nutrition knowledge. In 2025, 79 adults registered to attend the 6-week programme. By the end of the year, HFME programmes were run in the Sligo FRC; Dochas Group, Ballytivnan and Men's Shed in Mail Coach Road (MCR). Eleven programmes were facilitated with 53 participants completing.

These programmes are coordinated by the Disability Support Service Coordinator who with Fiona Boyle roles these out.

"I really enjoyed the programme and increasing my calcium intake as a result"

The **Living Well Programme** is a self-management programme for adults with long-term health conditions. The Sligo FRC DSS coordinator is trained in this programme and co-facilitated two programmes in 2025 with 30 participants. Both programmes were run in MCR.

Zumba classes continued into throughout 2024 with numbers dropping toward the end of the year.

In September, we ran a series of **Mindfulness Sessions** with Megan O' Kelly for adults – nine women took part in these over 6 weeks.

10. Interagency & Networking

Sligo Family Resource Centre works in collaboration with a wide range of organisations at local, regional, and national level to support families and communities. In addition, Sligo FRC is represented on a number of committees and boards throughout County Sligo. Through this involvement, we advocate for the needs of families and individuals and contribute to policy and practice developments aimed at improving quality of life.

- Aremoja
- ATU St Angela's
- ATU Sligo

- Avalon Centre
- Barnardos
- Child and Family Support Network (CFSN) areas 1 and 3
- Childcare managers network
- Child Protection Conferences (CPCs)
- Children and Young People's Service's Committee (CYPSC)
- CYPSC Learning and Development sub-group
- Early Years Managers' network
- Family Support Workers Network Sligo/Leitrim
- Family Resource Centre (FRC) National Forum
- Foróige
- Health Service Executive (HSE) Disability Services and Primary Care
- Intercultural Workers Network Sligo Leitrim
- Mail Coach Road (MCR) Community centre
- Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings
- MSLETB
- Northwest Regional Forum of FRCs
- Parenting Support Champions (PSCs)
- Professional Meetings
- Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Sligo County Library
- Sligo Education Centre
- Sligo Leitrim FRC managers' meetings
- Sligo Public Partnership Network (PPN)
- Springboard Resource House
- Tusla Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS)
- Tusla Commissioning Office
- We're Breastfeeding Friendly Sligo

11. Voluntary Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers 2024

Sligo FRC is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors who oversee the work of the Centre and strategically guide the services. Nineteen full and part-time staff were employed to manage and implement the work and ensure services are provided to the highest standard. Nine staff are presently employed through a CE training scheme.

The Voluntary Board of Directors 2025 was made up of seven volunteers. The executive sub-group meets for employment/staff matters or specific issues. Sub-groups of two to three board members are established for specific, short-term pieces of work.

Chairperson: Phil Brennan
Treasurer: Pamela Hunter **Secretary:** Elizabeth King
Directors: Sonya Coffey. Michelle Doherty, Mary Heery, Sharon Boles, Connor O' Neill

Disability	**Intercultural Support**	**Family Support**	**Administration**
Karen Casey Helen Powell Caroline Cunningham Allanah Queenan Fiona Boyle Jade O Flanagan Sharon Nicholson Tracey Brooks	Sadaf Cooney	Charlotte Bussmann Aishling Kelly Charmaine Davidson Norah McLoughlin Jade O Flanagan Ciana Harrison Wiktoria Dzialak Lucy West	Liz King Cathy McGowan Noreen McGoldrick, Jackie O Brien Karolina Bernacka Jess Rochfort
Caretaker	**Housekeeper**	**Those who left:**	**On Leave**
Michael Coyle Ann Clarke	Natalia Volodina	Craig McKenna Rose McCrann Therese Harrison Brogan Natalia Volodina	Lorraine Johnson

The two CE supervisors, Sarah Cleasby and Sarah McCaffrey, employed by Youth Work Ireland North Connaught have an office in the Sligo FRC and contribute greatly to the overall work of the FRC through their supervision of the CE staff, filling in for them on occasion to cover breaks etc. and generally utilising their skills for the benefit of the FRC as a whole.

Volunteers

Reception

Theo Osho
Farah
Lana Althar

Rainbows

Aoife Molloy
Mairead Doyle
Katheryn Tracey

Students

- Sara Guinan - Home Economics BA ATU St Angela's started 15 January for 16 weeks
- Caitlin Hegarty - Social Studies Ballinode College started 04 February for 2 weeks
- Nicole Cunningham - Ursuline College x 3 days 13, 14 17 February
- Rohan Cooney – Youthreach Ballyshannon – 2 weeks
- Sarah Cooper – University of Carlow, Pittsburgh USA
- Iwanu Taiwo 2 weeks August 2025
- Milo Kilcoyne - TY Summerhill College
- Ben Kisby – TY Summerhill College

Team Building

Sligo FRC prioritises team building activities within the staff as it recognises that **a strong team through forming bonds and connections** enhances the work of the FRC thereby making what we do more effective. Sligo FRC had a number of team building events during the year including the Wednesday Lunch-time walk, team lunches for people leaving, annual team event which this year included a Town Treasure Hunt and Team Building Exercises followed by lunch in the Glasshouse Hotel, trip to the Hawkswell to support a staff member starring in *Charlien and the Chocolate Factory* and FRC breakfast on the last day before the Christmas break.

In September we circulated the Work Positive Questionnaire (WPQ) to all staff members. This was adapted from the HSE (WPQ) to help identify ways to improve employees' health safety and wellbeing and in doing so to develop a healthy workplace.

Using AI (Chat GPT) to analyse the results the findings were as follows:

Overall Workplace Health based on the survey:

- Psychological Safety – Very High
- Team Support – Very High
- Leadership Support – High
- Role Clarity – Very High
- Workload Pressure – Moderate but manageable
- Bullying Risk – Very Low

Conclusion

The 2025 Staff Survey reflects:

- A supportive and respectful workplace
- Strong leadership and teamwork
- Clear roles and shared purpose
- Manageable workload pressures

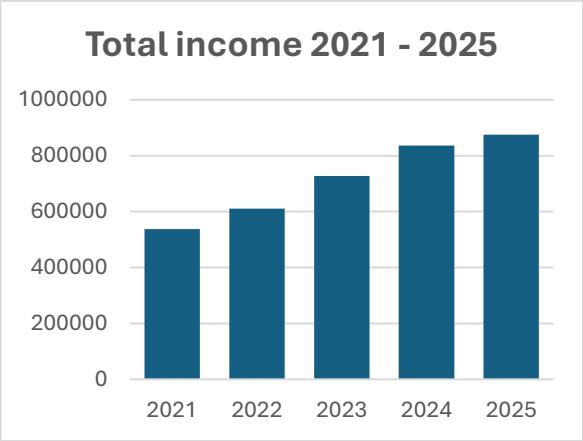
12. Planning and Governance

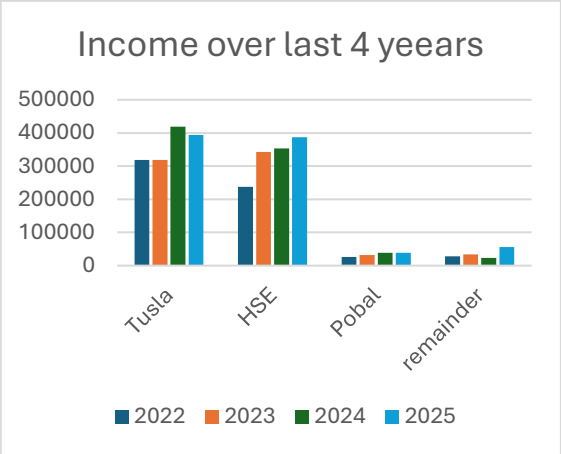
All registered charities are obliged to abide by the Charities Governance Code for the Charities Regulator to ensure they have the minimum standards to effectively manage and control their charity.

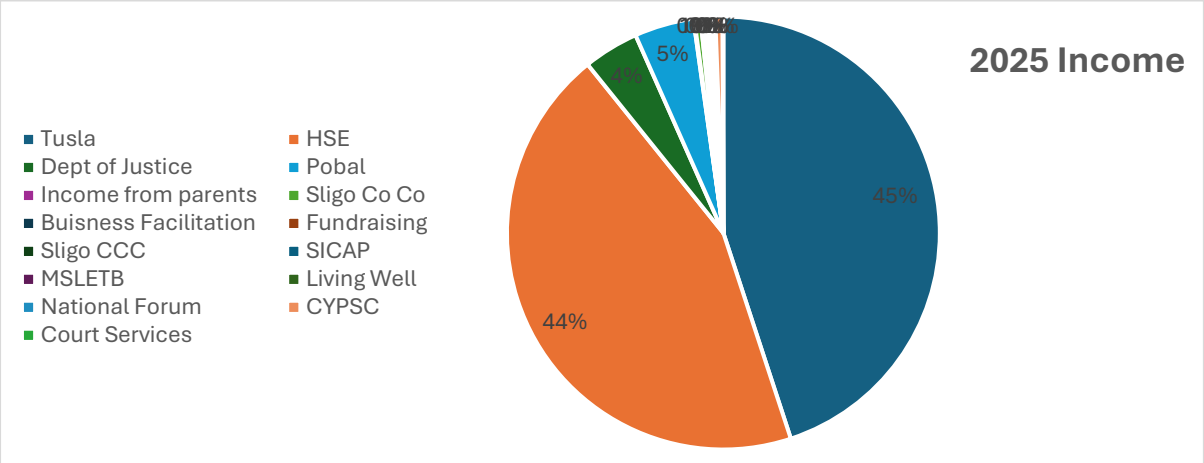
Sligo FRC Board of Management continues to oversee policies and procedures updating and renewing as necessary to ensure Sligo FRC achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable transparent way and in accordance with the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

13. Funding

Here is a breakdown of the funding received over the past five years. As is evident there has been a steady increase in funding since 2021, much of this is due to the Pay Restorations paid out by Tusla and HSE in 2024 and 2025







14. Continuous Professional Development

Staff are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development and are allocated 3 training days per year (pro-rate) to support this. CPD may include upskilling (e.g. Parents Plus or Decider Skills), attending workshops, seminars or information sessions all aimed to enhance their skills and knowledge.

A number of staff applied this year for membership of CORU, the regulating body for health and social care professionals.

15. Other Highlights in Pictures





International Women's Day 08 March 2025





Staff leaving



Holiday Camps



Footprints on the move!





Staff Team Building



Beach Trip August 25



Breastfeeding Group & Mobile Library



Family Cookery Camp



Roundy birthdays celebrated!





Celebrating Sligo FRC 1995 - 2025



Bird watching in Lissadell with Women's Group



Santa visits





Day before Chirstmas Eve: Staff Team buiilding event with breakfast and Quiz