



*Congregation of the
Sisters of Mercy
Northern Province
Republic of Ireland*



**Annual Trustee Report 2024 -
April 2025**

Annual Trustees' Report 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Our Mercy Mission.....	3
Purpose/Objects, Activities & Achievements	4
Financial Review NI.....	23
Review of Objectives for 2023	27
Future Plans & Objectives for 2024	28
Structure, Governance & Management.....	29
Safeguarding	32
Reference & Administrative Details	37
Independent Auditor's Report	38

The Trustees, comprising of the Provincial Leader and Team, present this Annual Report and the audited Financial Statements of the Sisters of Mercy of the Northern Province for a period of 16 months, beginning 1st January 2024 through to 30th April 2025. The Trustees of the Charity are responsible for the life and mission of the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province. They confirm that the Annual Report and Financial Statements comply with the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and the provisions of the Statements of Recommended Practice (Charity SORP FRS 02) – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (October 2019).

Signed and dated by the Provincial Leader and another Team Member.

Signed:

Date:

Introduction: Our Mercy Mission

WHERE OUR MISSION BEGAN

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is an international Roman Catholic Religious Congregation founded in Dublin in 1831 by Catherine McAuley. Influenced by her Christian faith, she used her inheritance to set up a centre in Baggot Street, Dublin, Ireland from which she and her early companions responded to the needs of people who were disadvantaged.



House of Mercy,
Baggot Street, Dublin

The founding Sisters established schools and hospitals and cared in whatever way possible for the needs of the people who were poorest in society.

OUR MISSION TODAY

The Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province is one of the six Provinces of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and has members in eight counties in the Republic of Ireland, where 136 Sisters reside in various locations. There are also 106 members who reside in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the last century, Government provision in healthcare and education improved and while the Sisters continue in to support access to education for all, the work and mission of the Sisters has become more varied.

Motivated by the Christian vision of a world of equality, justice, peace and care of the earth, the Charity has consistently worked for justice and responded to unmet needs. Sisters are committed to prayer while also being involved in pastoral care, eco-justice and spirituality. As the age profile of the Sisters has increased, the need to care for older Sisters has become a necessity for the Charity.

Our Mercy Mission

Constitutions
of the
Sisters of Mercy
No. 104 (1985)

“The mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is to bear witness to the compassionate and merciful love of God.

Our administration of temporal goods must express the Gospel call to justice, charity and almsgiving.

We use these goods for our common life, for the various apostolates of mercy and for the needs of the Church, especially the poor and deprived.”

Purpose/Objects, Activities and Achievements

Charitable Purposes

- ❖ Advancement of Religion
- ❖ Relief of Poverty

The Charity aims to support the religious and other charitable works carried out in the name of the Charity and to care for the Sisters throughout their lives.

The purposes and objects of the Charity are fulfilled through the following activities and ministries:

1. *Congregational Living* – the Advancement of Religion
2. *Healthcare and the Compassionate Care of the Sick and Those in Need*
3. *Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other Charitable Activities including Collaboration and Support of Other Groups.*
4. *Positive Impact Investments*
5. *Heritage and Upkeep of Listed Assets*

Public Benefit

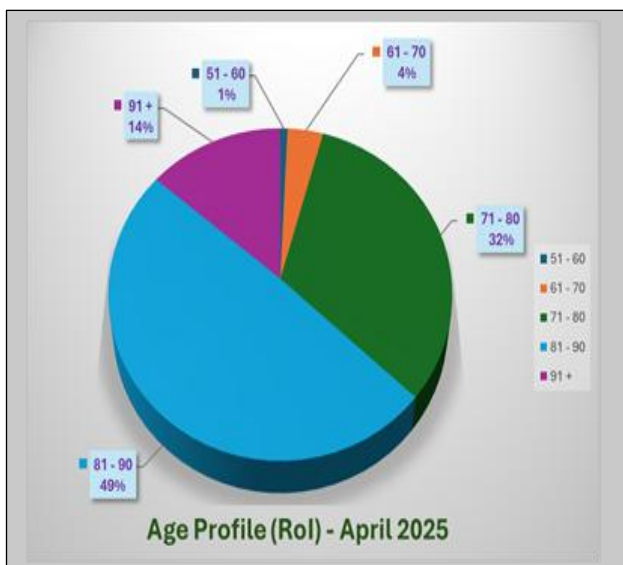
Public Benefit is delivered through religious activities, prayer, ministry activities, the prevention and relief of poverty, support to other charities who alleviate poverty, the promotion of holistic wellbeing, impact investments, overseas aid, ecological awareness and a variety of services provided to families, refugees, older people, children, and to people experiencing hunger and poverty.

Congregational Living and the Advancement of Religion

The Charity is a religious congregation and so the nurturance of faith and the development of spirituality are of central importance. This underpins all aspects of the life and work of the Charity. The Sisters are committed to daily personal prayer and a communal prayer pattern in their local communities.

All aspects of the Charity's work involve the advancement of religion and the Trustees ensure the Charity's commitment to this fundamental purpose. Congregational Living and the Advancement of Religion are the essential dynamics that permeate the Charity. In our community living and ministry in local parishes where Sisters reside, members actively participate in the life of the parish faith communities. Through this living and praying, Sisters from the Charity support people spiritually and practically.

Salaries, stipends, and pensions of the Sisters are donated to the Charity. Consequently, Sisters have no independent means of support. Their lives and earnings are devoted to the furtherance of the Charity's objectives. Sisters freely give their services in various ministries and do so well beyond retirement age. Hence the work of the Charity includes the provision of living accommodation, the upkeep, up-skilling and retraining of Sisters so to enable them to continue their service to the public.



The Trustees are cognisant of the aging demographic of its members, the promotion of the objects of the Charity, property requirements and prudent management of finances. Residential accommodation is kept under review ensuring a continuum of care appropriate to members' needs. The Charity provides designated Assisted-living at houses in Tullamore, Dundalk, Kells and Ballyshannon.

Faith Development - Parish & Prayer Ministry

As a Religious Congregation, faith and spiritual development, parish work and prayer ministry are of prime importance to the Trustees. A number of Sisters seek to respond to the hunger for God in society by promoting faith development, engaging in inter-faith dialogue and nurturing spirituality.

Many of the Sisters, even in retirement, are actively involved with people and clergy in their local parishes, in ministries aimed at facilitating a deepening of faith and relationship with God. The Sisters collaborate with others also, in community activities, supporting and encouraging the development of leadership among the people and campaigning for services for older people. Home visitation of the sick and housebound, prayer and scripture groups, bereavement support, retreats, guided prayer, and the offering of experiences in creative forms of prayer are some of the services offered to people in the business of everyday life in the 21st century. In this report two particular Faith ministries are highlighted.

Sisters also offer emerging spiritual development programmes through Creation Spirituality and Ritual, Higher Consciousness, Sacred Dance, Mindfulness and Practices for Wellness, and seasonal reflection days.

Parish Liturgy

Church Music

Sacramental Programmes

Céili Community

Parish Ministry

Diocesan Liturgy

Prayer Guidance

St Vincent de Paul

Family Support

Marriage Tribunal

Scripture Prayer

Bethany House of Prayer, Dundalk

“Bethany” House of Prayer, Dundalk is a centre of peace and tranquillity. The founding Sisters, members of the Charity, respond spiritually to the needs of those who come in-person. They also offer a ‘Prayer by Telephone’ ministry 9:00 am – 9:00 pm daily to all who phone, seeking a listening ear, a prayer and/or guidance.

The “Garden Room” at Bethany is open for personal prayer Monday to Friday 9:30 am – 5:30 pm with an average of fifty people visiting weekly. In this reporting period, counselling was offered to thirty clients and spiritual direction to eighteen others.

Bethany leads a Cancer Prayer Support Group, Scripture Prayer weekly monthly and ‘Prayer Around the Cross’ with young adults.

Parish and Diocesan Ministry, Donegal

A Sister in the Charity contributes to Parish of Mary Immaculate, Stranorlar in formal and informal ways and is well-known to parishioners. Her involvement in Liturgy includes:

- Member of Parish Liturgy Team
- Organising singers and musicians for weekly Masses
- Rehearsing the Parish Choir
- Chair of Parish Pastoral Council
- Contributor to Diocesan Pastoral Plan
- Member of Diocesan Music Group

Scripture Prayer

A Member of the Charity leads a weekly period of Guided Prayer for adult members of St. James Parish, Athboy. Those who attend this programme every week of the year are people who wish: -

- to develop their faith
- to draw more closely to Jesus Christ
- to learn how to pray in a more contemplative way
- to embrace the practice of Lectio Divina
- to prepare to celebrate the Sunday Liturgy more fully

This Sister has developed a sacred space in the parish Church building for these reflective mornings. As well as preparing the space, she also prepares resource materials both in literature and audio, to assist the participants in their growing understanding and in their experience of group guided prayer.

Success of the programme is reflected in the high attendance rate of members. When a participant is unavoidably absent, they receive the support materials to continue to ensure their practice in this faith formation process and prayer method.

H **Healthcare and the Compassionate Care of the Sick and Those in Need**

Many Sisters engage in wellbeing activities: healthcare, care and visitation of the dying and the bereaved, provision of spiritual and psychological therapies and the promotion of wellbeing of body, mind and spirit. This is at the heart of Mercy life and ministry.

The Charity also has a duty to care for its older and frail Sisters who are in need of care. The Trustees continue to ensure that these Sisters, who have selflessly dedicated their lives to the furtherance of the Charity's objectives without any personal remuneration, are cared for in their older age.

Ministry

Constitutions
of the Sisters of Mercy
No. 43 (1985)

"Catherine McAuley generated in her Sisters a deep concern and compassionate care for the sick and dying. This concern engages us in the compassionate care of the sick, manifesting to them Christ's healing love."

The Trustees are committed to

- i) enabling Members to actively engage in healthcare ministries.
- ii) ensuring Sisters receive the appropriate level of care they require.
- iii) maintaining and reviewing Community houses for Sisters.

Members are involved directly in compassionate care of the sick and those in need by

- i) being part of a Health Care Team for the Charity's care of Sisters
- ii) acting as 'Mercy Companions' to those in nursing and residential care
- iii) developing and providing wellbeing programmes to the wider community
- iv) offering therapeutic programmes through art and other media
- v) undertaking chaplaincy roles in care facilities
- vi) faithfully visiting people in the wider local communities who are sick or lonely
- vii) accompanying individuals in need to medical appointments

Members of the Charity offer care support to individuals in the wider communities where they live. Some Sisters have established more formal ministry entities in support of wellbeing and care. Other members are volunteers in care support facilities and still others are independent providers who ensure their registration with professional development requirements.

Sample of Health and Wellbeing Activities these 16 months

Two members of the Charity spearhead New Life Directions (NLD) providing personal, psychological and spiritual development opportunities for individuals, families and communities. NLD works with community, voluntary and statutory organizations.

In the 16 months, NLD delivered programmes on the following:-

- Personal and Community development
- Stress Management
- Negotiating Menopause and Midlife
- Trauma Healing and Recovery
- Empowering Strength and Resilience
- Capacitar Multi-Cultural Wellness Education

In partnership with Statutory Agencies e.g. HSE and Louth Meath Education and Training Board NLD facilitated gatherings with Lifestyle Development Group Drogheda and Blaney Blades Women's Groups, Castleblayney . NLD also collaborated with Capacitar Ireland Association and Capacitar Europe, Israel and Palestine Network.

With HSE, NLD offered Zoom sessions with participants from Ardee, Dundalk, Dunleek and Slane. Classes sponsored by Louth, Meath Education and Library Board and 'Age and Opportunity' promoting activities for seniors.

Other Members of the Charity have offered a variety of supports e.g. Complementary therapies (Culog Laytown), Chaplaincy (Care Choice Nursing Home, Trim) 'Wellness Evenings' to Community Groups (Killybegs, Ballyshannon, Ardara, Carrick)

Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other

Charitable Activities including Collaboration and Support of Other Groups

One hundred and thirty-six Sisters engaged in the Charity's commitment to the relief of poverty. Activities ranged from the practical to systemic, from the local to global, from the personal to environmental, from the Charity's founding ministries to collaboration with other agencies who also address poverty in all its many forms.

Historically, the Sisters of Mercy were involved in the provision of formal education from the establishment of the Congregation. This work of Mercy endured for the first 170 years of the Charity. School Trusteeships have been transferred to CEIST to ensure school communities are places where Christian faith, justice and responsibility are nurtured.

The Charity's ministry engagements involve education in the broadest sense:

Ministry
Constitutions
of the Sisters of Mercy
No. 43 (2023)

"Our foundress, fostered in her Sisters a deep compassionate concern for the sick and dying poor, for those at risk in society and for the spiritual needs of those around her.

This concern urges us to be in solidarity with those who are poor and oppressed, with those who are displaced or excluded, and to bring rich and poor together in mercy, justice and service."

CEIST: In 2007 the Catholic Education and Irish Schools Trust (CEIST) was set up as the overall Trustees Body for Secondary Schools of the Sisters of Mercy and other Religious Congregations. There are 107 Schools in the Trust – 11 of which were under the auspices of this Charity. CEIST networks with other Catholic Trusts involved in formal education.

In 2023 CEIST undertook restructuring to enhance its effectiveness. The principal Trustee of the Sisters of Mercy Northern Province Charity is a member of CEIST Ltd.

EDUCENA: The Educena Trust Foundation works with CEIST Trust in resourcing the trusteeship of Catholic Post-Primary education in Ireland, optimising the financial resources that will be needed in the future.

- ✚ promotion of right relations at every level
- ✚ the examination of root causes of injustice in the communities in which we minister;
- ✚ awareness raising re the care of the Earth;
- ✚ the mistreatment of immigrants;
- ✚ the oppression of women;
- ✚ human trafficking;

Education: – Wider Engagement

The Charity's ministry engagements involve education in a broader sense than formal education e.g.

- ✚ promotion of right relations at every level.
- ✚ the examination of root causes of injustice in the communities in which we minister.
- ✚ the mistreatment of immigrants.
- ✚ the oppression of women.
- ✚ human trafficking.

Education: - Care of the Earth

Among and beyond membership of the Charity, ongoing education and awareness-raising in relation to the socio-ecological and environmental realities of our time include:-

- ✚ Provision of Regular Webinars connecting ecology and theology
- ✚ Green Sod Ireland Land Trust – European Rewilding Network
- ✚ Charity's eco-website to guide members throughout the year.
- ✚ Ecology Group to steer priorities.
- ✚ Commitment of Charity to Tree-planting.
- ✚ Support of Glór na Mara Ecology Initiative

Members' supportive ministries

Members of the Charity and communities of Sisters are actively involved with statutory and voluntary agencies to help alleviate those in difficult or challenging circumstances. A sample of engagements are:

CASA

Befriending and socially supporting those who live with disabilities.

St VINCENT de PAUL

Supporting materially poor in towns throughout Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Meath, Offaly Westmeath.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IRELAND

Contributing to roundtable on Migration, cause, Effects and Response.

INTERFAITH FORUM, Dublin

Building understanding, respect and co-operation between faith groups and liaising with City Council.

MIGRANT SUPPORT










Befriending of families living in Direct Provision.

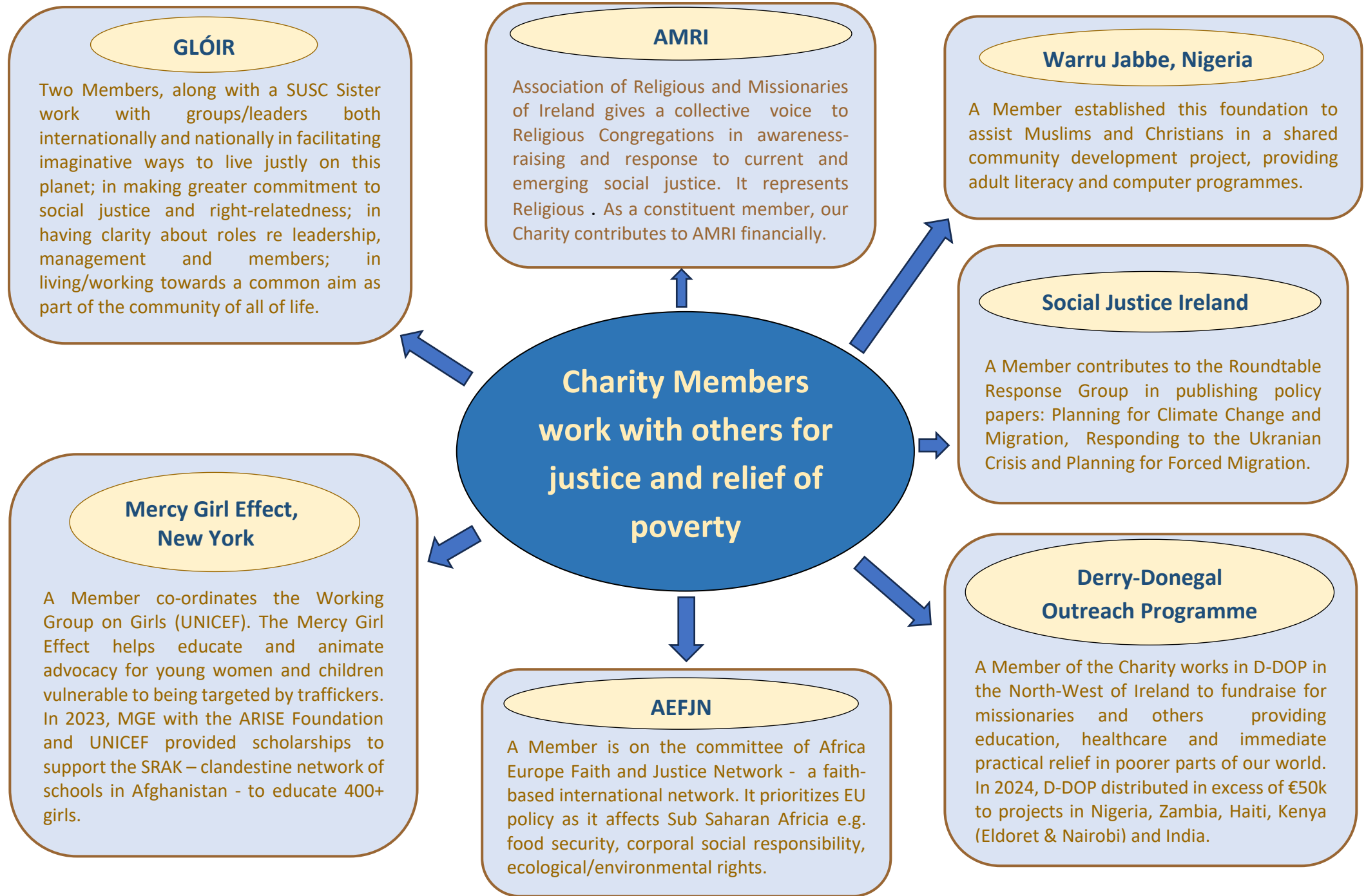
Support of Other Charities

The Charity appreciates that use of finances is a support to ministries. Through disbursements, the Charity assists others who are working to break the cycle of poverty. The Charity also supports those who are committed to overseas development projects.

The Charity connects its efforts on a global scale with the network of Sisters of Mercy Congregations throughout the world. Samples of this work are referenced in this report.

In the period of this Report, financial contributions that the Charity made to others who are also working to alleviate poverty not only in charities based in the Republic of Ireland but to international charities also.

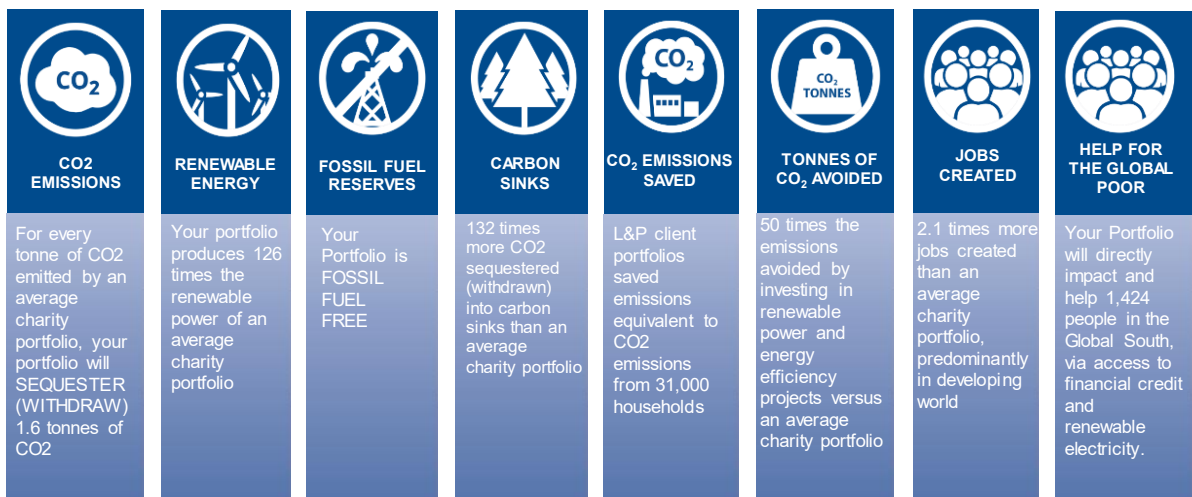
-  Trócaire
-  Focus Ireland
-  St Stephen's Green Trust
-  Medecins Sans Frontiers
-  Dundalk Simon Community
-  T.E.A.M. Mullingar
-  Women's Refuge Support Service, Navan,
-  Kinnegoe Tree Planting, Donegal
-  Tullamore Children in need



Our Mission Driven Investment Approach

As investors, it can be easy to get caught up in simple financial return. However, investing is an extremely useful tool for not only generating financial returns but also creating an impact on the world around us. We see our investment portfolio as an extension of our Mission. Alongside our active ministries, we strive to create meaningful change through positive impact investing. At the same time, we actively avoid investments in industries that are contrary to our values, such as fossil fuels and armaments. By doing so, we ensure that our financial resources are not supporting harmful activities.

However, avoiding harm is only part of the equation. We believe that driving positive change through our investments is even more powerful. That’s why we focus on opportunities that promote individual well-being and environmental sustainability. We assess our impact across key areas that reflect how our investments contribute to a better world. Below are some of the positive outcomes achieved through our investment portfolio:



The Portfolio and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Every investment within our portfolio is analysed to assess its contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals,

adopted by all UN member states, serve as a global blueprint for creating a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.

The SDGs aim to address some of the world's most pressing challenges by focusing on ending poverty, protecting the environment, and improving overall well-being. They encourage governments, businesses, and investors to take meaningful action toward achieving these objectives by 2030. By aligning our investments with the SDGs, we ensure that our financial decisions are not only responsible but also actively driving positive change. Through this approach, we contribute to solutions that foster economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are as follows:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: UN (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) closely align with the charitable missions and ethical principles upheld by religious organizations. Rooted in values of human dignity, social justice, and environmental stewardship, the SDGs provide a framework for addressing some of the world's most urgent challenges—many of which religious communities have long worked to combat.

Since the publication of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has strongly emphasized the need for sustainable development and care for our common home. His call for

“... every person living on this planet for an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet” underscores the moral responsibility to act urgently on issues such as climate change, inequality, and global poverty. Pope Francis has also voiced direct support for the SDGs, notably in his speech ahead of the United Nations General Assembly’s formal adoption of the 17 Goals. His endorsement reinforced the ambitious and transformational vision of the SDGs, aligning them with the principles of integral human development—the idea that progress must support both people and the planet.

By integrating the SDGs into investment strategies, faith-based organizations can actively contribute to a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world, ensuring that financial resources are directed toward initiatives that reflect their core values. To ensure alignment of the SDGs we use a comprehensive Ethical and Positive Impact screen which guarantees the Portfolio remains consistent with the ethos of the charity. The Portfolio currently excludes companies involved in the material production of weapons, tobacco, alcohol, pornography, and activities such as gambling and embryonic stem cell research. Additional Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria complements the screening to improve the overall ESG risk exposure of the Portfolio.

Environmental Impact

Overall Carbon Footprint



Measurement of carbon emissions plays a critical role in shaping our understanding of how our investment portfolio affects the climate crisis, and also enables us to better address it. Additionally, limiting carbon emissions interacts with several SDGs, helping address Climate Action in particular. Climate justice is another aspect addressed in our portfolio, as climate change predominantly impacts those who’ve done the least to contribute to pollution and have less resources to deal with it. Therefore, control of carbon emissions in our portfolio also contributes to reducing poverty (SDG1), reducing inequality (SDG10) and preserving life on land (SDG15) and in the ocean (SDG14)

The portfolio includes several carbon sink investments designed to capture and remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. Among these,

forestry stands out as a particularly effective solution, as trees naturally absorb CO₂ during their growth process. As a result, the inclusion of forestry funds helps to offset the majority of the portfolio's carbon emissions, effectively balancing its environmental impact.

Put another way, this means that the Portfolio in aggregate will emit 27 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide or equivalent gases) from the atmosphere per annum while an unscreened portfolio of the same size would produce c. 6,113 tonnes of CO₂e. We believe that these extremely strong carbon emission statistics makes the Portfolio very much part of the solution to climate change, rather than part of the problem.

Fossil Fuel Reserves

In early 2017, the Trustees made the decision to fully divest from fossil fuels, ensuring that the portfolio now holds no fossil fuel reserves. This policy guarantees that there is no direct exposure to companies involved in thermal coal, oil, natural gas, or other unconventional reserves, such as oil sands, shale oil, and shale gas.

A significant portion of these fossil fuel reserves is expected to become "stranded assets", meaning they may never be utilized if global efforts to limit temperature rise to below 2°C are successful. By avoiding these assets, the portfolio not only reinforces its commitment to environmental sustainability but also mitigates financial risks associated with stranded fossil fuel investments.

The chart below illustrates the fossil fuel reserves held within the portfolio compared to an unscreened portfolio. As shown, the portfolio holds zero fossil fuel reserves, reinforcing its dedication to supporting the global transition to sustainable energy. This approach ensures that investments align with the portfolio's overarching impact-driven strategy, actively contributing to the shift away from fossil fuels toward clean, renewable energy solutions.

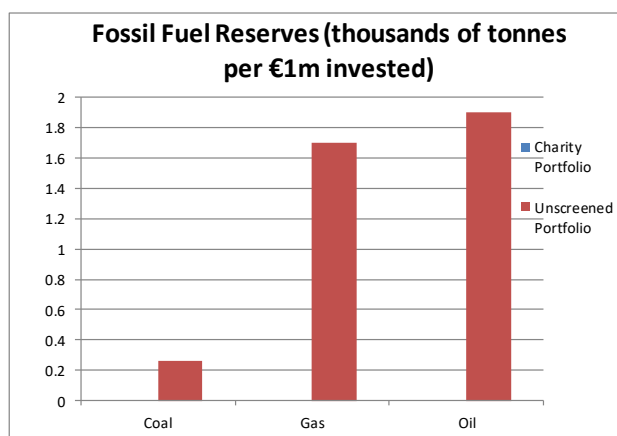


Chart showing the Charity's Investment Portfolio holds no fossil fuel reserves (no blue bar)

Renewable Energy

As the transition to renewable energy is crucial in addressing climate change, impact-focused investors typically aim for a high level of renewable power generation within their portfolios.

In our portfolio, renewable energy production is supported through various investments across Ireland, Europe, the U.S., and developing regions. These investments play a vital role in advancing clean energy solutions while contributing to global sustainability goals.

Below, we highlight some of the key impact metrics of these renewable energy funds:

Renewable Energy Fund

Renewable energy fund holding both onshore and offshore projects

- Energy for 300,000 houses per annum
- Avoids emissions of 400,000 tonnes of CO2 per annum
- 1,000,000 MWh of renewable power per annum

Solar Income Fund

Fund holding approx. 40 solar plants in Europe

- Energy for 150,000 houses per annum
- Avoids emissions of 162,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum
- 480,000 MWh of renewable power per annum



The benefit of generating renewable power can be measured by how much fossil fuel power (and resulting CO₂ emissions) it replaces. In 2024, the Portfolio avoided the release of almost 2,688 tonnes of CO₂e. This is equivalent to:

- Removing 581 cars from the roads every year
- 6,183 barrels of oil saved
- 2,239 acres of pine forest absorbing CO₂ for one year
- 296 round trips around the world by one typical passenger car (travelling at the equator).

In terms of renewable energy produced, the Portfolio produced 5,789 MWh in 2024, enough energy to power approx. 1,565 homes.

Environmental Protection and Carbon Sequestration

Environmental protection is a critical aspect of sustainability addressed by the Portfolio. The forestry investments within the Portfolio have a mandate to:

- Produce sustainable timber;
- Sequester carbon from the atmosphere;
- Protect natural resources and biodiversity of the area, in order to minimise the effect on the biodiversity and general environmental welfare.



The managers of the forestry investments in the portfolio review any new forest properties at the outset to record and maintain Biodiversity already present. They have also adopted an approach in their management to enhance biodiversity by planning linkage between features using corridors so that the biodiversity

features on site are conserved and new features being created are all joined and form part of a biodiversity unit within each property. These features are measured and captured on the managers' geographic information system (GIS). A detailed biodiversity classification and ranking system is in place and enhancement targets are being set to enrich diversification in fauna and flora throughout the portfolio.

Social Impact

Job Creation



Providing employment is one of the best methods of reducing poverty, and therefore it has a number of positive beneficial effects across the SDGs, from poverty reduction (SDG1) to providing Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG8). As the majority of the jobs created by the impact investments are in the developing world, and tend to favour women as much (if not more) than men, then job creation in these areas improves Gender Equality (SDG5) and Reduces Inequalities (SDG10), both between sexes and between the developed and developing regions of the world.

The Portfolio has a number of funds which provide job creation through their economic activity. The equity funds provide capital to companies that employ anywhere between hundreds to hundreds of thousands, and therefore additional capital from investors should enable these companies to create jobs, albeit that the job creation impact from additional investment in these typically large, established businesses is low. However, other funds that operate in the developing world tend to produce far higher job creation and comprise the majority of the additional jobs produced for the portfolio as a whole.

The new jobs created by an unscreened portfolio of the same size as the Portfolio would only create 22 new jobs, while the Portfolio helped create circa 29 direct jobs in 2024.

Homelessness Crisis

As of 2024, there were an estimated 14,000 homeless individuals in Ireland, indicating a dramatic rise of over 250% in the number of homeless families since 2015. This stark increase highlights the deepening crisis in Ireland's social housing sector, which has been struggling to meet demand due to severe limitations in the availability of residential properties and a rapidly growing population. At the time of this report, Ireland's population had surpassed 5 million people, reaching its highest level since 1851. This population growth, coupled with increasing urbanization and economic pressures, has put enormous strain on the housing market.

In response to this urgent need for affordable housing, the portfolio has included the New Haven Social Housing Fund, which is specifically designed to address the chronic shortage of housing for vulnerable populations in Ireland. The Fund's primary aim is to invest in and develop sustainable, high-quality housing for those most in need, including low-income families, individuals facing homelessness, and other at-risk groups.

The following outlines the key goals of the **New Haven Social Housing Fund**, which works to mitigate the social and economic challenges posed by this growing crisis:

Social Housing Fund

Innovative fund acquires properties for social housing purposes

- Provide €100m+ in long term capital to housing sector
- Target high ESG and sustainability standards
- 500+ new homes to be provided for social housing needs



Heritage and Upkeep of Listed Assets

The Charity owns some Listed buildings which are protected structures. These buildings are on the Department of Communities listed buildings database in recognition of their importance. Therefore, they are legally protected from harm. Any future changes to these structures are controlled and managed through the development control process.

Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest. It also brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that some thought will be taken about its future. The Charity is legally required to make sure that these structures do not become endangered through neglect, decay, damage or harm.



Gate Lodge, Villa
Nova, Bundoran

In the last sixteen months the Charity outlaid €44,088 in the upkeep of listed assets. Certain repair works that are normally routine on a building, may require planning permission on a protected structure. Additional expenditure is incurred in sourcing expertise and materials for the renovation of a listed building or in carrying out demolition on a heritage site. Associated costs are insurance, maintenance, security, general upkeep, depreciation, engagement of a Heritage Architect and other Professional Fees.

Financial Review (RoI)

Results for the year

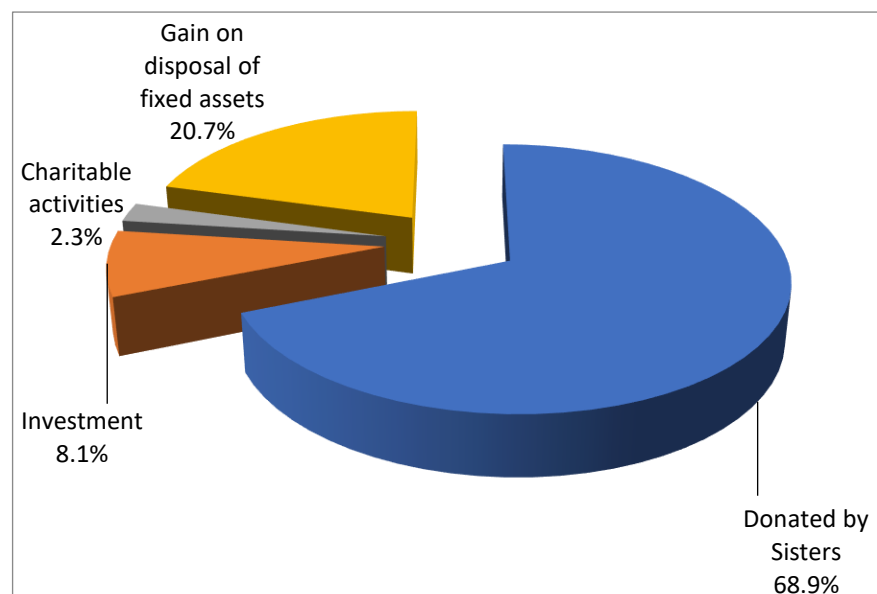
A summary of the period's accounts can be found on page 38 of this report.

Income - where our income came from

Income for the period totalled €6,699,654:

- Voluntary income of €4,616,320: this was the pension, salary, and stipend income earned by the members of the Sisters of Mercy Northern Province and donated to the Charity.
- Investment Income of €542,051: was the income earned on the Charity's investment portfolio, bank interest and rent received.
- Charitable activities of €155,148: was legacies and other income received.
- Other Income of €1,386,135: was the gain on the disposal of tangible assets, mainly property.

Breakdown of Income



Expenditure - where the money is spent

Total expenditure for the year was €8,607,168.

Charitable Activities - of the total, €8,444,703, or 98%, was spent on Charitable Activities:

- Congregational living, the advancement of Religion, €3,576,771: this



includes the upkeep and up-skilling and retraining of the members of the Province. The members who receive salary, pension, stipend and retirement lump sum income donate them to the Charity and therefore have no independent means of support.

They have devoted all of their adult years and their earnings to realize the objectives of the Charity. Many also give their services free in their various ministries and continue to do so well beyond retirement age. Hence the work of the Charity includes the provision of living accommodation, the upkeep, up-skilling and retraining of the members of the Province so that they will be able to continue in their service to the public

- Healthcare and the compassionate care of the sick and those in need,



€4,190,056: Catherine McAuley generated in her Sisters a deep concern and compassion for the sick and dying and today, over 180 years later, wellbeing activities, healthcare, care of the dying and the bereaved still engage many of the members in the Province. The members of the Province are involved in this work in

hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, community care and within the Community houses. In addition, the Charity must care for the elderly members of the Province who are now themselves in need of care.

- Relief of poverty, promotion of education, justice and other charitable



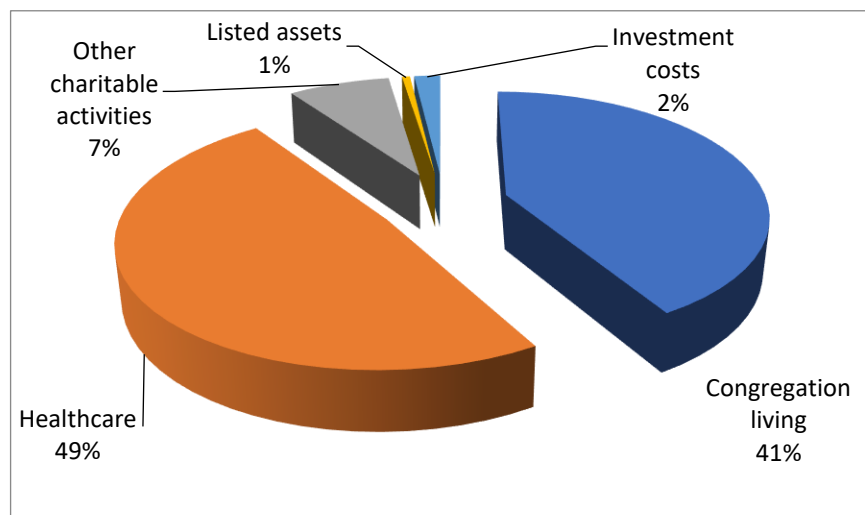
activities, €633,789: this includes expenditure on a number of headings, including Promotion of all aspects of Education, Justice, peace & reconciliation, Overseas development and support, Pastoral and social care and development, Support of other charities/groups and Involvement in critical global and local issues

- Upkeep of listed assets, €44,088: the Charity owns a number of protected structures. The structures are typically buildings that are listed on planning authority's Record of Protected Structures (RPS). By including them in the RPS, the importance of these structures is recognised; they are legally protected from harm and all future changes to the structure are controlled and managed through the development control process. The Charity is legally required to make sure that these structures do not become endangered through neglect, decay, damage or harm.



Investment costs – in the year, investment costs totalled €162,465.

Breakdown of Expenditure



Net movement in funds

Net expenditure for the year, therefore, was €1,907,514. This was before the loss on investment assets, which when taken into account results in a net decrease in funds in the year of €2,588,680.

Restructuring

As noted in the 2023 Report, this Charity is one of five 'Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy' civil charities in the Republic of Ireland and the Trustees have been working with the wider Congregation on a restructuring process. A decision has been taken to restructure the five civil charities in the Republic of Ireland into one charity. This followed an extensive period of reflection and discussion in relation to:

- The role and obligations of Charity Trustees
- The most effective and efficient use of the time and resources of the Republic of Ireland Provinces and the Congregation
- The best way of preserving the mission and ethos of the Provinces and Congregation into the future

The formal date of the restructuring was 30th April 2025:

- On this date, this Charity, and the three other Republic of Ireland Provincial charities, merged with the central charity, The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, RCN 20023843.
- On this date, all this Charity's assets, liabilities, activities and undertakings were merged with the central charity.
- Therefore, this is the final set of financial statements for this Charity.
- The Trustees will continue to work with both the Charities Regulator and the Revenue Commissioners on the formal wind-up of the Charity.

Review of Objectives for 2024

Objectives Set	Progress Review
To continue its commitment to the care of the Sisters in the Charity.	On-going.
To facilitate and support the Sisters in undertaking the Charity's activities.	Activities and Achievements noted throughout Report.
To work collaboratively with other groups and agencies in responding to global and local needs	On-going. See Activities and Achievements throughout Report.
To support and strengthen Cluster Communities, throughout the Charity	Consolidate the development of the Cluster Communities through Hub meetings, Cluster Gatherings and review (with Kinharvie institute support).
To ensure support programme for Leaders	Process-led programme for all Cluster Leaders (Kinharvie Institute) Leaders availing of Reflective Practice Programme
To continue to review Assisted Living provision, optimizing care and resources.	Monitored through PLT link and HR. Manager to be appointed to Dundalk facility. Identified need for Pastoral Support Link for Tullamore facility.
Put in place a process for move to new internal structural change	PLT. Stewardship, Human Resources and Safeguarding personnel working across the Congregation in plenary/bi-lateral engagements to harmonize practices where possible.
To ensure all members engage in discernment for Central Leadership and are familiar with the Charity's Constitutions.	Membership fully engaged. Constitutions disseminated and all becoming versant in them.
To maintain the Safeguarding Structures at National and Provincial levels	See page 33

Sisters of Mercy Northern Province (ROI) merger with The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy

This is the final Trustees' Report of the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province (ROI).

Following the approval of the Trustees of the Charity, the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province (ROI) merged with The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy (RCN 20023843), on 30th April 2025. All assets, liabilities and activities of the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province (ROI) transferred to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy on that date. The merger will facilitate more streamlined administration and continued good practice into the future.

Following the completion of the Merger and the approval of the Financial Statements, the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province (ROI) will cease to operate and will apply to the Charities Regulatory Authority and Revenue for deregulation.

As a result of the Merger, the Financial Statements cover a 16-month period from 1st January 2024 to 30th April 2025 (Prior reporting period: 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023).

Structure, Governance & Management

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The governing instrument of the Charity is the Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy. It was adopted by the General Chapter of the Congregation (August 1994) and approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life in Rome (April 1995). Within the governmental structure, there are a number of inter-connected units with the units' authority outlined in the Constitutions. The Northern Province, a unit of the Congregation is an unincorporated association with personnel and resources that support its life, mission and membership.

APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES (Provincial Leadership Team)

The Charity is governed by the Provincial Leader and Team, who are Sisters of Mercy elected for a six-year period by its members. The Provincial Leadership Team are the Trustees of the Charity, who have knowledge of the Congregation, its nature and mission. The Trustees receive no personal remuneration for their services as Trustees.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING

The Charity Trustees meet regularly. Every six years the Charity convenes a 'Chapter', where Members engage in a prolonged period of reflection/prayer, evaluation and planning with a focus on the development of policies and effective use of resources in an assessment of current and future needs.

Trustees attend formal training on their duties and seek guidance and advice as necessary from legal, investment and property advisors on the issues which arise in carrying out their duties. Professional advisors assist with various aspects of stewardship and the general management of the assets of the Charity.

Systems of accountability operate throughout the Charity. In addition to annual reporting to the Charity Regulator, formal reporting within the organisation takes place every three years. The Provincial Treasurer administers the affairs of the Charity under the direction of the Provincial Leader and her Team. Most of the income of the Charity is generated from Sisters' salaries, stipends and pensions, sale of property and

investments. The salary, stipend and pension income is voluntarily donated to a common fund, administered through a Provincial Stewardship Office.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

As referenced throughout this report, the Charity works in partnership and collaboration with ministry colleagues, statutory and voluntary bodies, and other religious congregations in serving local and wider communities.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees conscientiously attend to governance, management and operational risks through monitoring the following:-

- Implementation of strategic plans for Chapter priorities
- Training and support for trustee and staff.
- Financial and operational performance.
- Investment strategy.
- Insurance cover.
- Suitability and maintenance of buildings.
- Data backup procedures and security measures.
- Ministry activities of Sisters.
- Safeguarding.
- Health and Safety.
- Internal Policies and Procedures.
- Employment Policies and Procedures.

PROPERTY

The Sisters of Mercy are committed to a lifestyle reflecting the fact that all our possessions are held in trust for the promotion of the mission of the Congregation.

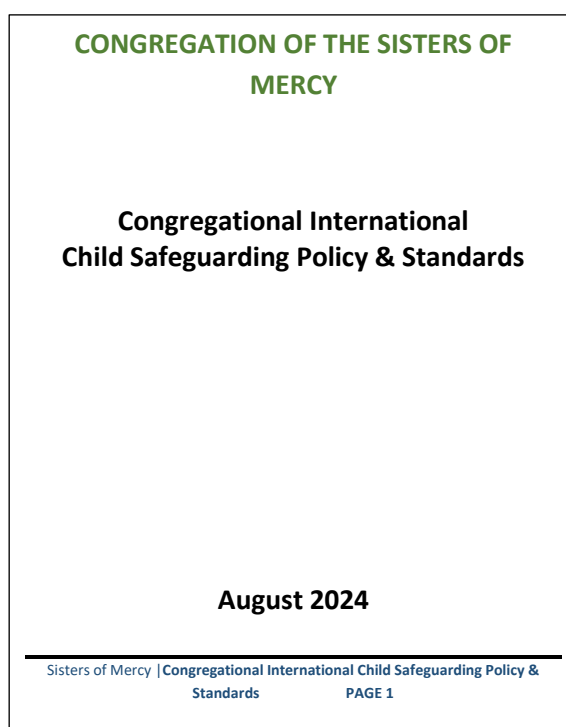
Professional advice is sought in relation to leases and agreements, protected structures, planning, health and safety legislation, acquisition, refurbishment and disposal of property and all legally binding issues and transactions.

POLICIES

The Trustees ensure that policies and good practice guidelines are developed, circulated and implemented, and that these are fully compliant with all legislative requirements. The Charity has further policies and guidelines on Stewardship, Health and Safety, Fire Evacuation for all residencies, Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm, Data Protection, Data Privacy Notices and Statements etc.,.

One Sister is the Human Resources Co-ordinator and attends to recruitment, employment protocols and procedures, staff induction, etc. Supervision and appraisals are regularly monitored and reviewed. The Charity fully complies with vetting obligations. The HR Co-ordinator ensures all policies in the Staff Handbook are familiar to managers and employees and that the policies are implemented.

From the mid-1990's the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy has had a Safeguarding Policy in place. The Policy aims to encourage adequate awareness and best practice throughout the Charity, among members and employees, ensuring children and adults at risk of harm are safeguarded from abuse of any kind. The Charity is committed to a culture of safeguarding and to ensuring compliance with best practice in this area. The Trustees are proactive in complying with civil and ecclesiastical requirements for safeguarding in the Republic of Ireland. The Trustees review annually the implementation of its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.



Safeguarding

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In June 2024, following a review of the 'Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016,' the National Board published 'A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024' with accompanying guidance. The Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province has adopted this Policy and is implementing it. All Sisters and Staff are required to comply with this Policy.

Safeguarding Personnel attended Induction on 'A Safe and Welcoming Church' (15.04.2024 & 30.04.2024), Designated Liaison Person attended training (28.05.2024) and both the Safeguarding Manager and Co-ordinator attended the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Area Meeting. (15.10.2024)

The Provincial Leader signed the 'Safeguarding Children Policy Statement' and the 'Commitment by the Church Authority' and forwarded both documents to the C.E.O. of the National Board. (11.06.2024)

'A Safe and Welcoming Church Policy' was disseminated widely to Sisters living in Convents and larger communities. (25.06.2024)

The Child Safeguarding Posters have been updated in line with the revised Policy and distributed to the Cluster Leaders for display in the Convents.

Safeguarding Personnel offered training to 35 Sisters and 2 Staff on the 'Safe and Welcoming Church Policy in Kells (11.09.2024)

The 'Child Safeguarding Statement' complies with the Children First Act, 2015 and TUSLA and is posted on the Congregational website.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM

The Trustees are committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and protection of adults at risk in ministries and in communities. The Charity adheres to the legislative requirements and the policy guidance in place in the Republic of Ireland.

The Safeguarding Personnel held in-person Adult Safeguarding Information Sessions in Ballyshannon (06.03.2024), Kells (13.03.2024) and Dundalk (08.05.2024). A total of 75 (39 Sisters and 36 Staff) attended.

STANDARD – Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Accountability for ensuring best practice in safeguarding rests with the Congregational Leadership Team.

Following the Congregational Chapter of April 2024, Provinces became Branches of the Congregation. The Branch Leader is accountable to the Congregational Leadership Team.

THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

The Charity has a robust safeguarding structure in place. The Safeguarding Manager is the Designated Liaison Person for the Charity. She is assisted by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and together they promote and oversee the implementation of best practice in safeguarding throughout the Charity, liaising with the Statutory authorities and external agencies as when necessary and appropriate.

A Safeguarding Committee of ten members who have relevant expertise and experience in safeguarding matters promotes a culture of best practice in safeguarding and monitors the implementation of the Safeguarding Strategic Plan within the Charity. The Safeguarding Committee meets in-person and by zoom every three months throughout the year.

The Designated Liaison Person, (DLP) manages any concerns of a safeguarding nature and liaises, as required, with the statutory authorities and external agencies.

Trainers accredited by the National Board organise and deliver Safeguarding Children Training within the Charity.

The Human Resources / Health and Safety Co-ordinator ensures the maintenance of safe environments and supports the implementation of consistent recruitment practices.

A Sister of Mercy is responsible for co-ordinating the vetting process and the Office Manager maintains the vetting database in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau requirements.

Administrative staff support the safeguarding structure by disseminating safeguarding material, maintaining filing systems and providing secretarial assistance.

THE SAFEGUARDING STRATEGIC PLAN 2024

The Safeguarding Strategic Plan is based on 'A Safe and Welcoming Church, 2024' Policy of the NBSCCCI (National Board for Safeguarding Children in Catholic Church in Ireland). The Plan aims to –

- i) maintain environments which are safe for children, adults at risk of harm and the adults who work with them.
- ii) ensure that the Charity has in place safeguarding arrangements which are in keeping with best practice and comply with legislative requirements.

ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING SELF-AUDIT

An audit of Sisters in ministry with children and adults at risk, is carried out annually. In 2024, this audit identified that Sisters are mainly involved in ministry with children and ministry with adults at risk of harm through external organisations, e.g. parishes, nursing homes and voluntary organisations. A small number of Sisters are engaged in ministry with children under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy. Their ministries include music tuition, pastoral care and support for refugee families and when necessary, carried out appropriate risk assessments.

The Audit also revealed that Sisters are increasingly involved internally in providing and managing care for older or infirmed Sisters who themselves are deemed adults at risk and who require support and assistance.

STANDARD – Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding

Recruitment & Selection Policy and Guidance

The Trustees recognise that all positions of employment require safe practice at every stage of the recruitment process. The Human Resources Co-ordinator supports and monitors recruitment practices within the Charity and reports to the Safeguarding Committee on a quarterly basis. The Recruitment Policies, Procedures and Staff Handbooks are updated in collaboration with an external Human Resources Company and re-issued to Sisters and Staff.

The Charity employs managers and staff who provide care and support for Sisters who require assistance with activities of daily living in the larger communities. Staff are required to attend Adult Safeguarding Awareness sessions and are facilitated to access additional relevant training online.

Garda Vetting

Vetting Policies and Procedures reflect the legal requirements in place in the Republic of Ireland. Records and documentation in relation to vetting are stored securely and managed in accordance with guidance. A 'Verification of Identification Form' supports the vetting process.

In the period of this Report, 8 new staff members were vetted and 18 staff members were re-vetted.

Safeguarding: Induction

To ensure that staff in the Charity receive effective induction, a 'Safeguarding Information Pack' is distributed to all staff on commencement of employment. This includes relevant supporting materials in relation to safeguarding children and adult safeguarding. Records of completed induction processes are signed by all employees and monitored by the Human Resources Co-ordinator and are retained in the workplace.

Safeguarding Updates / Safeguarding Communication Record

The Trustees recognise the importance of keeping Sisters and Staff informed of best practice and developments in relation to safeguarding. In the last 16-month period, safeguarding information and updates were provided through newsletters, correspondence and meetings via zoom conferencing.

The Safeguarding Annual Report 2024, was compiled by the Safeguarding personnel and submitted to the Charity Trustees and the Congregational Leadership Team.

Reference and Administrative Details

Name of Charity	Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province
Charity Number	CHY128 CRA No. 20000318
Address of Principal Office	Provincial House 74 Main Street Clogher Co. Tyrone BT76 0AA
Trustees (Provincial Leadership Team)	Sr. Rose Marie Conlan (Provincial Leader) Sr. Perpetua McNulty (Assistant Provincial Leader) Sr. Mary De Largy (Provincial Team Member) Sr. Áine Campbell (Provincial Team Member) Sr. Mabel Marron (Provincial Team Member)
Provincial Treasurer	Sr. Áine McGoldrick
Independent Auditors	Daly, Park & Co 6 Trevor Hill Newry Co Down BT34 1DN
Principal Bankers	Bank of Ireland Ballybofey Co. Donegal
Investment Managers	Setanta Asset Management Ltd Unigestion SA
Solicitors	GL McGowan The Square Balbriggan Co Dublin K32 XN61

