



# IMPACT REPORT 2024

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Acquired  
Brain Injury  
Ireland





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## Introduction from our Chief Executive

It is a privilege to introduce my first impact report as Chief Executive of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland. Having worked in different roles across this organisation for many years, I am honoured now to lead our dedicated and expert team as we continue to support people living with brain injury and their families.



2024 marked the final year of our five-year strategic plan. During this period, we have achieved a great deal together: expanding and strengthening our services, building new programmes, advancing research, and raising the profile of brain injury in Ireland. We have also strengthened our business and support functions, always guided by our shared vision, mission, and values.

But there is still much more to do. As we close one chapter, we are actively developing our new five-year plan, working with colleagues, partners and stakeholders to set out the next phase of our journey. This plan will be ambitious and forward-focused, but it will also be firmly rooted in the needs of survivors of brain injury and their families.

We know there are still significant challenges on the road to achieving equitable access to rehabilitation in Ireland. Too often, survivors and their families struggle to access the services they need at the right time, within their communities. That is why we will continue to work with Government and the HSE to strengthen rehabilitation pathways, uphold the right to rehabilitation, and ensure that survivors can live with dignity, independence and opportunity.

As I step into this role, I feel inspired every day by the resilience of the people we serve and proud of the professionalism and compassion of my colleagues. Together, we will continue to build a future where every person with an acquired brain injury has the chance to rebuild their life.

**Dr Karen Foley**  
Chief Executive

## Message from our Chair

I have been honoured to serve as Interim Chair of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland during 2024. This has been a year of transition and renewal, as we welcomed new leadership and prepared to embark on the organisation's next strategic phase.

A highlight of the year was our CARF Survey Inspection. This rigorous international process takes place every three years, and once again the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. While the formal report will be shared in 2025, we are proud that the team of global surveyors recognised the quality of our services, our focus on person-centred practice, and our commitment to excellence across all levels of the organisation. This is a tribute to the expertise, skill and dedication of our staff, and I want to thank every colleague for the role they played in this process.

This year, our research and outcomes data again proved that access to our services reduces limitations for survivors of brain injury. This translates to better quality of life for survivors, reduced caregiver burden and, ultimately, reduced cost to the State. These findings underline why sustained investment in rehabilitation must remain a priority for Government and the HSE. Following this year's general election, we are encouraged by the commitments made in the Programme for Government. As we move forward, we are optimistic that we can work in partnership to make these commitments a reality.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland team and my fellow Board members for their commitment, time and expertise. I would also like to thank my predecessor in the role of Chair, Clair Cullinan, who served the organisation so effectively across two Board terms. We are proud not only of the standards we uphold in the services we provide, but also of how we operate as an organisation – with transparency, accountability, and integrity. Our shared values are not just words on a page – they guide how we work together, how we govern, and how we support survivors and their families.

As Interim Chair, it has been a privilege to help steer the Board through this important year. I look forward with optimism to the future, confident that the organisation is strongly positioned for the next phase of its development.

**Hugh O'Connor**  
Interim Chair of the Board







# About Us

A brain injury can happen to anyone, at any time. It could be your mother. It could be your brother. It could even be you. We believe every brain injury survivor should have the chance to rebuild their life and live it to the fullest, and we will never stop campaigning to make that belief a reality.

Established in 2000 with a single assisted living house in Dublin, our services have since grown to support some 1,200 brain injury survivors every year.



## Our Vision

A society where brain injury is understood and all those impacted receive world-class, personalised rehabilitation and support, as and when they need it.



## Our Mission

We will passionately serve and relentlessly advocate to empower and support people impacted by brain injury to rebuild their lives.



## Our Values

**Dignity and Respect:** We treat each other with the utmost dignity and respect in our interactions.

**Relationships:** We engage meaningfully with each other with honesty, integrity and kindness.

**Choices:** We empower each other through choices to manage and direct our lives within our capabilities.

**Sharing Everyday Places:** We value inclusion for all in our communities and sharing everyday experiences.

**Contributions:** We encourage everyone to play their part, no matter how small.



# Our impact: Rebuilding lives

If your life was derailed by brain injury, you'd like to know there were people who could help you get it back on track.

Each year, we support hundreds of people impacted by brain injury to rebuild and live fuller, more independent lives with confidence. Their stories and experiences help us understand the reality of living with an acquired brain injury and drive us to do our job better every day.







## Jimmy's story

For Jimmy Morrisroe, life changed in an instant. While working in France, he fell and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Doctors told his father to prepare for the worst. Six weeks later, Jimmy awoke from a coma to a world that felt unrecognisable.

**“At the time, trying to come to terms with what had happened was very difficult. My life would never be the same.”**

With limited mobility and speech difficulties, Jimmy faced huge challenges. On his return to Ireland, he was placed in a nursing home. Though grateful for the care, the experience was isolating.

**“At my age, I should not be in a nursing home. It's very hard being stuck in an environment with people 30 or 40 years older than me.”**

Without another option, Jimmy might have remained there – one of some 1,200 people under 65 in Ireland inappropriately placed in such a setting. Instead, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland offered a different path.

### A turning point

When Jimmy learned about our Transitional Living Unit (TLU) in Sligo, he wasn't convinced he needed it. But his decision to engage with the team and the service proved life-changing.

**“To be honest, my first reaction was, ‘Do I really need this?’ Turns out, I did. Because of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, I have made huge steps in my recovery. It was the best decision I've ever made.”**

In the TLU, Jimmy worked intensively on rebuilding his concentration, mobility, and daily living skills. He recalls the exhaustion of those early days, but also the pride of small wins, like being able to visit home at weekends again.

Rehabilitation activities such as woodworking and gardening gave him purpose, as well as a space to share his skills with others.

**“Because I had a true love for my former profession, I think that's the most difficult part of my brain injury. However, it is amazing I have this outlet.”**

### Building a life again

Over time, Jimmy moved back to his community. Today, he lives independently in his own apartment, just across the road from our resource centre in Sligo town. He still attends rehabilitation groups, where he continues his rehabilitation and shares his experiences with others earlier on their recovery journey.

He enjoys the camaraderie, and his relationship with our specialist clinical team has been a constant source of support.

**“Every time I visit my psychologist, she greets me with a big smile, which makes me happy. I can even make her laugh!”**

### Looking forward

Jimmy now dreams of mentoring apprentices or lecturing in carpentry. He also advocates strongly for greater awareness of invisible disabilities, reminding others that recovery is often about the challenges you can't see.

**“I have learned that life does go on. It may be in a different direction, but you can come back punching a little harder than before.”**

Jimmy's story is a testament to the power of rehabilitation: with the right supports, in the right place and at the right time, people with brain injuries can move beyond nursing homes, rebuild independence, and thrive again in their communities.





## Aisling's story

At just 18 years old, Aisling Morris's life changed forever. A bright creative arts student, she loved music, photography, and time with friends. But one October evening in 2005, as she stepped off the bus near her home, she was struck by a car.

She suffered a severe brain injury and spent more than five weeks on life support. Her family was told she had only a small chance of survival.

**"Aisling had just a 20-30% chance of surviving the night."**

- Doreen, Aisling's mother

When Aisling awoke, her abilities were profoundly altered. She could not move, speak, or recognise anyone except her mam. Doctors suggested long-term placement in a nursing home, but her family knew she needed more.

### Fighting for rehabilitation

Doreen, her mother, fought tirelessly to secure a place for Aisling at the National Rehabilitation Hospital. What began as a two-week trial turned into five months of intensive therapy. Slowly, Aisling relearned how to walk, talk, and reconnect with the world.

One milestone stands out: the day Doreen received her first text from Aisling.

**"Where are you, Mam?"**

Doreen pulled her car to the side of the road and cried with relief. It was proof that her daughter was coming back to them.

### A new chapter with Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Rehabilitation continued at home, where Aisling rebuilt her independence step by step. Yet she often felt isolated – until she found Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.

**"Before ABI Ireland, I felt so solitary, like I was the only one."**

Through our services, Aisling found not just rehabilitation but also community. In our Navan Clubhouse, she took part in cookery, art, mindfulness, and creative writing, regaining confidence and purpose. She discovered joy in weekly routines: online quizzes on Mondays, cooking on Tuesdays, art classes on Fridays.

These activities were more than hobbies – they were vital elements of neuro-rehabilitation, overseen by experts and clinicians, and supported by peers who truly understood her challenges.

**"Tell me I can't do something? Watch me do it."**

### Sharing strength

Aisling's resilience has inspired many. During the Covid-19 pandemic, she became an ambassador for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, leading national online meetings and encouraging other survivors to share their stories.

She has also learned to embrace her identity as a survivor.

**"I can't live in the past. You have to mourn the old you, but I'm happy with who I am."**

Each year, her family marks the anniversary of her injury as a celebration of survival – a reminder of how far she has come.

Aisling's journey is a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of people living with brain injury. It is a reflection not only of her determination, but also of the vital role that rehabilitation plays in helping survivors move forward and create meaningful, fulfilling lives.



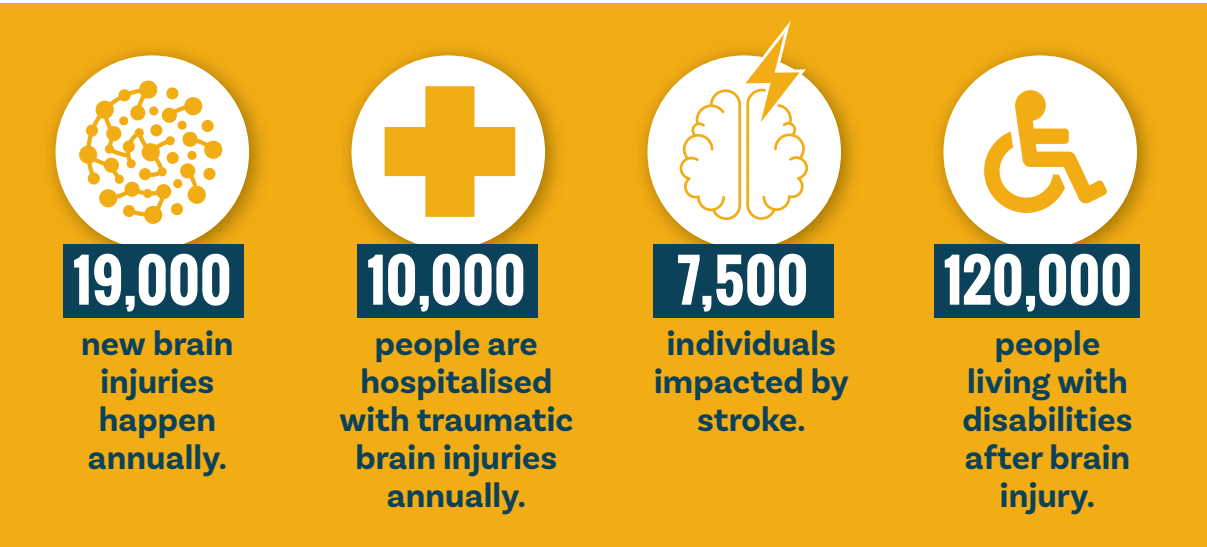
# Our services: Person-centred rehabilitation

Our expert teams support people and their families recovering from the impacts of brain injury by offering services and tools that help them rehabilitate, adapt and live their fullest lives with confidence.





It is estimated that 19,000 people in Ireland acquire a brain injury every year. This includes 10,000 people hospitalised with traumatic brain injuries and 7,500 individuals impacted by stroke. We also know that 120,000 people in Ireland are living with a disability after brain injury.



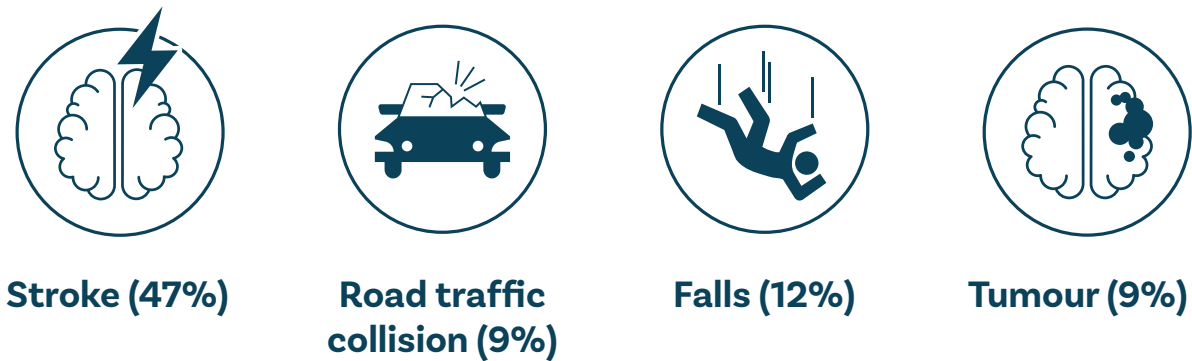
At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, through our community based rehabilitation services, we help as many of them as we can to return to leading independent lives.

We do this by providing a range of expert clinical services and supports specific to the needs of the person, with individually-designed rehabilitation plans that assist them in reaching their goals.

We provide information, training and practical help to those living with an acquired brain injury, as well as to their carers and healthcare professionals.

We also give people impacted by brain injury a voice so that their rehabilitation needs may be clearly heard, understood and answered by decision makers.

Common causes of brain injury in our services



Our Model of Rehabilitation: A Person-Centred Approach

Every brain injury is different, unique to the person affected. At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland we look at the whole person. We take account of their environment, their ability and support needs. We look at the life they had before their brain injury. We support them and their families through a bio-psychosocial model which considers the biological, psychological and social aspects of rehabilitation.

For this reason, we champion the ‘Individual Rehabilitation Plan’ (IRP). The plan is developed with the person, their family and our interdisciplinary team. It focuses on achieving specific goals related to the individual’s needs and personalised rehabilitation. This person-centred approach to neuro-rehabilitation is at the core of everything we do.

Clinical Leadership

All the support we provide to brain injury survivors and their families is overseen by clinical experts, informed by research and best practice.

Our psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists work as part of an interdisciplinary team to help each person in our services to identify their personal goals and set out their IRP. Our skilled local services managers, team leaders and rehabilitation assistants work with survivors on a day-to-day basis to progress these goals. They are supported by speech and language therapists and physiotherapists when required.

Our clinical neuro-rehabilitation teams:







**Globally, an estimated 10 million people are impacted by a traumatic brain injury each year. By 2020, brain injury will surpass many diseases as the major causes of death and disability worldwide.**

Burke S, et al. (2020)

## Our Services

### Assisted Living

For some survivors of brain injury, returning home after a stay in hospital is not an option straight away. Our assisted living services offer those survivors a home from home, where they can benefit from long-term tailored brain injury rehabilitation. Four or five residents are typically supported in our assisted living houses. In this setting, they can work on rehabilitation goals related to personal care, cookery, home management and household finances, ultimately maximising their independence in a safe environment with 24/7 support. Community integration is a key focus of all our services. Assisted living residents are encouraged to access local amenities, such as libraries and leisure facilities.

### Home and Community Rehabilitation

Our home and community services deliver one-to-one brain injury rehabilitation to support individuals to achieve their goals at home, and to encourage integration into community and family life. Often people have experienced some rehabilitation in hospital, but further skills may need to be relearned at home after discharge. This might include support to build and maintain a daily routine, or manage household activities such as cooking, laundry and personal finance. Our home and community rehabilitation services ensure those individuals continue to make progress on their recovery and maximise their potential after brain injury.

### Brain Injury Case Management

When a brain injury happens, survivors and their families often feel overwhelmed and don't know where to turn. The role of our specialist case managers is designed for these times of distress. Our case managers are brain injury experts who act as a single point of contact, listening to the families' needs and identifying resources to support their situation. Through our case management service, we help to provide a clear pathway to support the survivor's transition from hospital to home, linking them to the variety of services they need.

### Clubhouses and Group Rehabilitation

Our clubhouses provide vital peer support to enhance independence and encourage learning of new skills. Attendees benefit from group and cognitive rehabilitation in a



supportive and welcoming environment. These services create a space for survivors of brain injury to socialise and develop new relationships, as well as helping them to explore new interests that build on their strengths and capabilities. Our clubhouses are particularly important to support those working on goals such as building self-esteem, independence, community involvement and personal growth. They are first and foremost a community, run by and for members with the support of expert staff.

### Transitional Rehabilitation

Our transitional living service bridges the gap for brain injury survivors, as they prepare to return to independent living at home. The service provides intensive rehabilitation and support in an assisted living setting, Monday to Friday, for a period of six weeks up to six months, depending on the person's needs. Currently we operate one transitional living unit in Sligo and we continue to seek funding to grow this much needed service.

### Family Support Services

At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, we understand that a brain injury doesn't just happen to the individual – it happens to the whole family. Delivering support to families is integral to the work we do. Our case managers and social workers play a key role in supporting families to navigate the services and resources that may be available to them. We also provide training, practical help, listening and peer-to-peer support through our free, national On With Life Programme for Families and Carers. There are three strands of the On With Life programme: support for families and carers of adults with an acquired brain injury; for parents and carers of young people under 18 with an acquired brain injury; and for family members and carers preparing to return to employment, training or education.

### Return to Work and Education

Step Ahead Plus is our free, national vocational assessment and rehabilitation service for adults with an acquired brain injury. Led by skilled occupational therapists and specialist rehabilitation assistants, the service works with each survivor of brain injury to identify their abilities, strengths, and challenges. It also sets out a personalised plan with recommendations and supportive strategies to help every person on their route back to work, training or education.

### creATe Digital Assistive Technology

For some brain injury survivors, technology and digital tools can play a useful role in overcoming challenges and increasing independence. We provide support to those in our services to access technology to meet their needs through our creATe digital assistive technology programme.



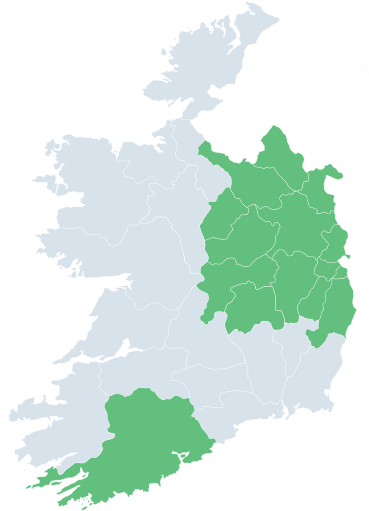


# Rehabilitation services

provided by Acquired Brain Injury Ireland



**Case Management**  
Number of clients: 373



Our Case Managers are brain injury experts who act as a single point of contact providing a clear pathway and linkages to the variety of services to support a person's transition from hospital to home.

- Cavan

■ Cork

■ Dublin

■ Kildare

■ Laois

■ Longford
- Louth

■ Meath

■ Monaghan

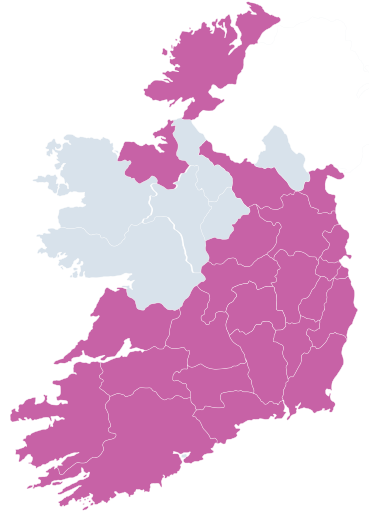
■ Offaly

■ Westmeath

■ Wicklow



**Home and Community Rehabilitation**  
Number of clients: 335



Our Rehabilitation Assistants deliver one-to-one neuro-rehabilitation to support individuals with their rehabilitation goals at home and integrate back into their community and family life.

- Carlow

■ Cavan

■ Clare

■ Cork

■ Donegal

■ Dublin

■ Kerry

■ Kildare

■ Kilkenney

■ Laois

■ Limerick
- Louth

■ Meath

■ Offaly

■ Sligo

■ Tipperary

■ Waterford

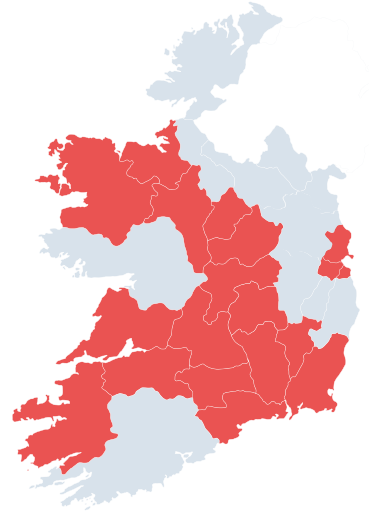
■ Westmeath

■ Wexford

■ Wicklow



**Clubhouses**  
Number of clients: 479



Our Clubhouses provide vital peer support, group rehabilitation and cognitive rehabilitation to enhance independence and encourage learning new skills.

- Carlow

■ Clare

■ Dublin

■ Kerry

■ Kilkenney

■ Laois

■ Limerick

■ Longford
- Mayo

■ Offaly

■ Roscommon

■ Sligo

■ Tipperary

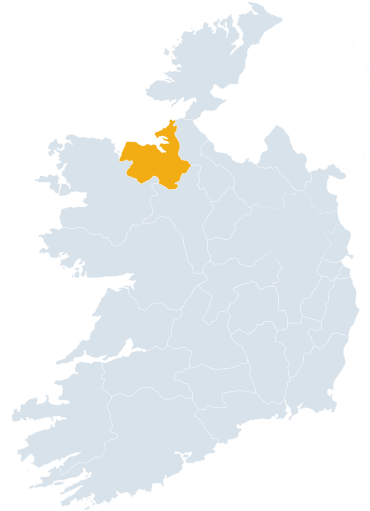
■ Waterford

■ Westmeath

■ Wexford



**Transitional Living Services**  
Number of beds: 4

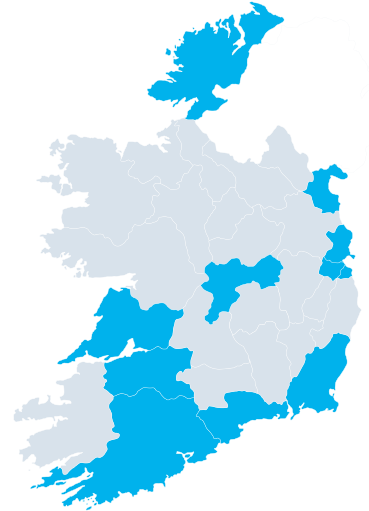


Our transitional living service is a bridge for brain injury survivors to prepare to return to independent living. It provides intensive rehabilitation and support in an assisted living setting from Monday to Friday from six weeks up to six months.

- Sligo



**Assisted Living**  
Number of beds: 66



Our unique neuro-rehabilitation assisted living services provide long-term, tailored rehabilitation and support to 4-5 residents in a house to maximise their independence in a safe and homely place on a 24/7 basis.

- Clare

■ Cork

■ Donegal

■ Dublin

■ Limerick
- Louth

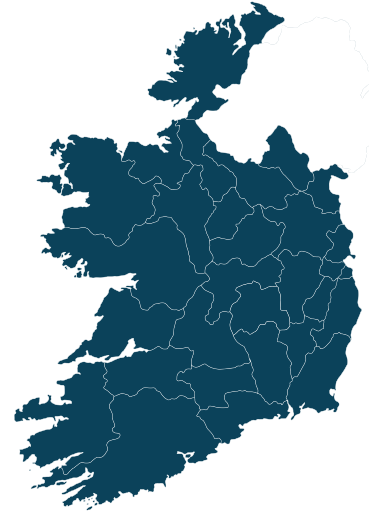
■ Offaly

■ Waterford

■ Wexford



**Family Services**  
Nationwide



Our family services deliver support nationally through case management and, through the On With Life programme, through family therapy, parenting skills training, carer training and peer support groups.

- Case management

■ Parenting skills training

■ Family and carer training

■ Peer support groups

■ Nationwide





## Our Commitment to Quality

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is committed to providing services at an internationally recognised standard. We deliver on this goal through regular CARF accreditation (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). This is a prestigious and internationally recognised quality mark, signalling that the services we provide meet or exceed international best practice. Our organisation has been successfully accredited every three years since 2003 across:

- Home and Community Services (Adults)
- Home and Community Services (Children)
- Residential Rehabilitation Programmes (Adults)
- Governance Standards
- Case Management

Our three-yearly CARF Survey was carried out during November 2024, with surveys completed across assisted living, case management, community, and clubhouse services, as well as across administrative and governance functions. Additionally, our vocational assessment and rehabilitation service, Step Ahead Plus, was surveyed for accreditation for the first time.

Initial feedback from the 2024 survey has been overwhelmingly positive, with the surveyors commenting particularly on our focus on maintaining high quality person-centred services. The survey report is in process and will be available in early 2025.

## How We Measure Up

At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, our day-to-day work is built on transparency and two-way communication with those we serve. We believe it is crucial to measure the quality of what we do, including through feedback from survivors and family members. This ensures our standards are maintained and that the people engaged in our services are continually empowered to achieve their rehabilitation goals.

Every year we run an independent customer satisfaction survey, using the internationally benchmarked uSPEQ model. The uSPEQ survey provides feedback in relation to five key areas: service responsiveness, informed choice, respect, participation, and overall value.

This feedback informs the organisation of any areas of concern, so we can respond to reported issues or needs. It's also a source of motivation and positively drives our person-centred culture so we can improve and grow our services.

In 2024, here is what the people we serve said:





## Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

All our assisted living services are fully registered with HIQA and monitored under the Health Act 2007 (Care and support of residents in designated centres for persons (children and adults) with disabilities) regulations 2013.

There were several inspections across services in 2024, all with excellent outcomes and positive feedback regarding the work of staff teams and our person-centred practice. Issues that arose were invariably legacy-based and premises-related, due to the establishment of many of our assisted living services in ordinary houses well in advance of regulation in 2013.





# 2024: The year in review

During 2024, we continued to work creatively to respond to the identified and often complex needs of a significant acquired brain injury population in Ireland.

We maintained a range of essential national clinically-led services. We invested in and focused on nurturing our highly skilled team of professionals. We raised the voices of brain injury survivors in our role as passionate advocates and campaigners for change. And, through fundraising activity, we worked hard to grow and diversify streams of income so that we can pursue our mission sustainably for years to come.





# 2024: The year in review

78

survivors of brain injury  
received specialised  
rehabilitation in our  
assisted living services

439

brain injury survivors  
were supported through  
our home and  
community services

384

people were supported  
by our case managers

301

individuals with brain  
injury participated in  
group rehabilitation in  
our clubhouses



Our On With Life  
programme provided  
support services to  
family members and  
carers nationwide

112

people were supported  
by our Step Ahead Plus  
vocational assessment  
and rehabilitation  
programme

## Key achievements included:

- A significant reduction in reliance on agency staff to deliver assisted living services (down 66% by the end of October on the previous year), providing a more sustainable, person-centred solution to cover periods of leave and absence, and resulting in a higher quality of service provision and better outcomes for persons served.
- Full HIQA registration of all assisted living services with all mandatory three-year re-registrations successful.
- Continued growth in each of our nine existing Group Rehabilitation/Clubhouse services and facilities, including the agreement of sustainable funding for services in counties Meath and Wexford. However, most developments in our Clubhouse/Group Rehabilitation Services were possible due to grant funding and community fundraising activities. The unpredictable nature of this level of funding leaves these Clubhouses vulnerable to closure.
- 16 assisted living rehabilitation services operating in Dublin (six), Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Clare (two), Sligo, Donegal, Louth and Offaly. While vacancies did arise from time to time as individuals transitioned out into the community, we were able to secure new clients to fill these vacancies within the services.
- Development of three further assisted living rehabilitation services is underway in Offaly, Kerry and Tipperary.
- Significant levels of rehabilitation and support delivered through our Home and Community Services, with 15 services in operation nationally.
- The expansion of clinical resources through funding from the HSE in Tipperary/North Limerick (Social Work and Occupational Therapy), providing invaluable clinical support for those areas.





# On With Life: support for families and carers

## Key achievements included:

- Continued growth across each of the three strands of our On With Life family and carer support programme.
- A well-established network of face-to-face and online peer support groups held nationally throughout the year.
- Delivery of a range of education seminars, workshops and events, including Family Fun Day 2024.
- Growth of our programme for parents and carers of children and young people under 18, through funding from the Community Foundation for Ireland and the Late Late Toy Show Appeal.
- The second successful year of ‘On With Training & Employment’, funded by Pobal to provide support to family members and carers preparing to return to employment, training or education.



## Step Ahead Plus: vocational assessment and rehabilitation

In 2024, Step Ahead Plus was successfully awarded five-year funding through the WorkAbility: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme. The current iteration of the programme will run from 2024 to 2028. It is co-financed by the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training Programme 2021-

2027 and the Department of Social Protection, and is administered by Pobal.

### DURING 2024

29 PERSONS SERVED	availed of specialised brain injury vocational assessment
42 PERSONS SERVED	received one-to-one support in areas including symptom management and work-life balance
29 EMPLOYERS	engaged with the programme team to support workplace planning and implementation

### OUTCOMES

26 PERSONS SERVED	returned to or were supported in existing or new employment, or volunteering roles
31 PERSONS SERVED	engaged in skills development, educational or training courses


## creATe: digital assistive technology

In 2024 Acquired Brain Injury Ireland sustained and developed the creATe digital assistive technology programme. The programme enables survivors of brain injury to access technology that supports and increases their ability to live independently.

### Interventions

The three most common interventions provided in the creATe service were:


1



**Communication**

Apps or software used to support communication.


2



**Cognitive Aids**

Resources to help with executive function, such as shared calendars and smart devices with reminders.

3



**Access – Physical**

Adaptations and devices that allow for control of technologies.



# Clinical Programme

In 2024, the role of Clinical Programme Manager was expanded in scope and renamed as Head of Rehabilitation Programmes to contribute to the senior services and executive management teams.

There was a key focus on reviewing the organisation’s clinical governance framework, key policies and procedures, reviewing and advocating for clinical resources, and contributing to learning and development from a rehabilitation perspective. During the year a quality improvement plan was also completed to create a more robust process for data collection and analysis.

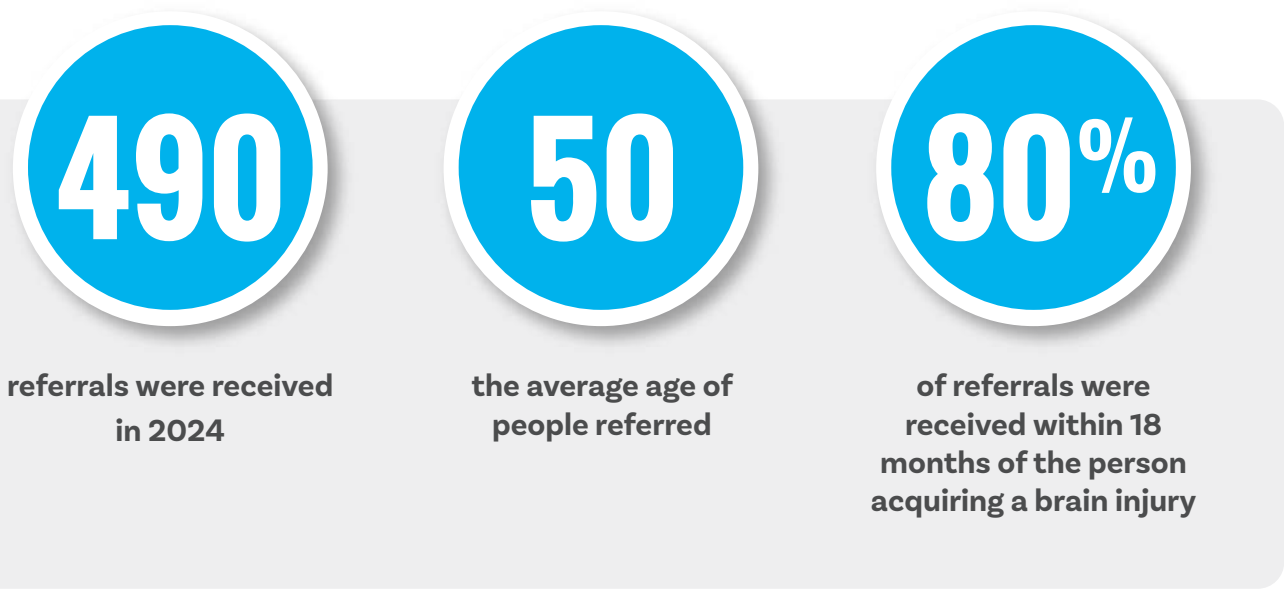
## Rehabilitation outcomes

As part of our clinical work we regularly gather and analyse data regarding referrals received, demographics of persons-served, rehabilitation programmes, and service outcomes. This information helps us interpret and understand trends in assisted living and community services, supporting better planning and decision-making.

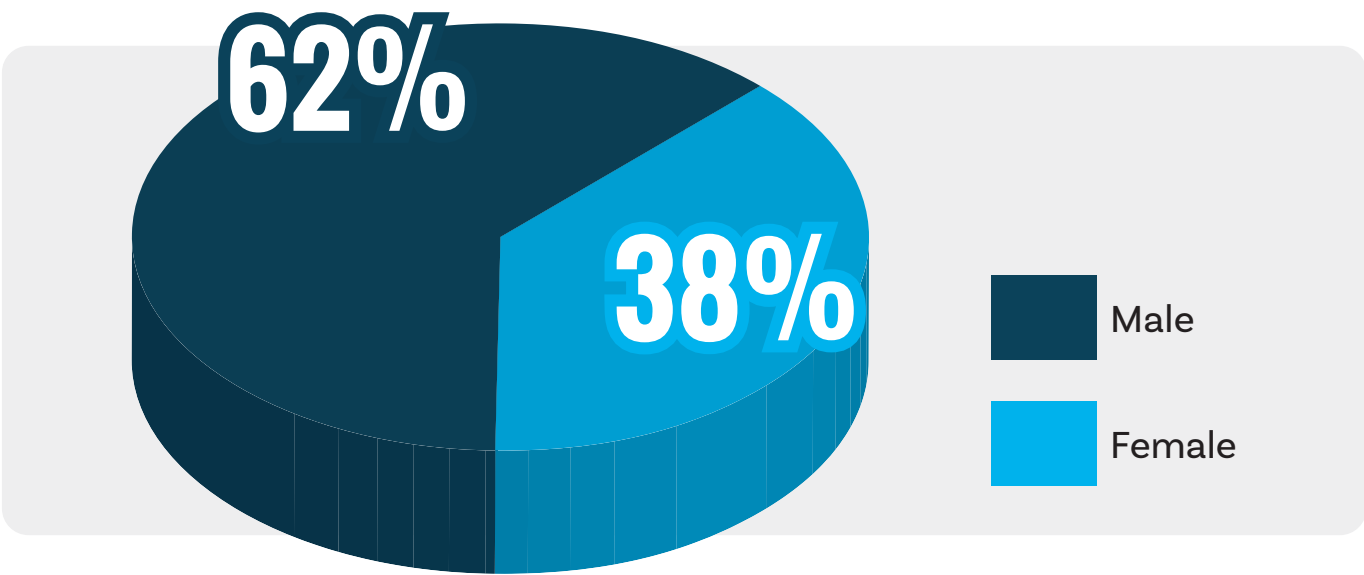
Year after year, this outcome measurement data demonstrates that people who access neuro-rehabilitation services typically experience a reduction in their impairments over the course of their rehabilitation journey.

The evidence also indicates that those who access our services earlier after their injury have a greater reduction in limitations than those who wait longer for input.

In 2024, across our assisted living and home and community services:

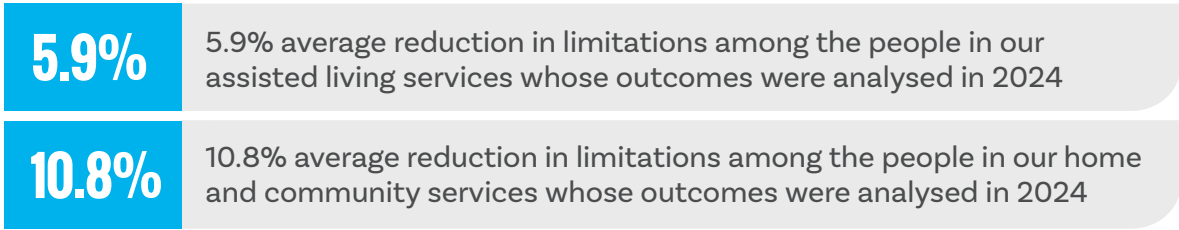


In 2024, we experienced a 5% increase in women being referred to our services compared to the previous year.



At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland we use the MPAI-4 outcome measure to assess the effectiveness of service in our community and assisted living services. The measure provides information about a person’s limitations in three areas: **Abilities**, **Adjustment**, and **Participation**.

2024 MPAI-4 data analysis demonstrated that the limitations of the people we serve are reducing, indicating that our service is having a positive impact.



## Sharing our clinical experience

Our 5th annual Clinical Forum took place in Portlaoise during 2024 – an engaging day bringing together more than 30 colleagues including those in clinical and case management roles to connect, present research, and share examples of best clinical practice.

Additionally, representatives from two of our rehabilitation programmes presented at international conferences in 2024.



Responding to the educational needs of children with an ABI, and responding to the needs of parents of children with an ABI were focus areas for presentations at the International Paediatric Brain Injury Society (IPBIS) Conference in Glasgow. A poster presentation was also made on findings from the collaborative strategic direction paper: 'Rehabilitation for Children and Young People in Ireland Following Acquired Brain Injury: current services and potential future directions.'

Our creATe digital assistive technology programme was profiled at the Communication Matters International Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Conference at the University of Leeds.



## Housing and Development

The Housing and Development team has overall responsibility for housing and development, including new property acquisition and optimisation of the existing property portfolio.

Housing supply is delivered from service need. The Ombudsman's 'Wasted Lives' report supports the need to acquire additional transitional living and assisted living properties in target growth areas. At present, an active focus is on the CHO3, CHO4, and CHO5 areas. The viability of such services has support from the HSE, Local Authorities and Local Government departments.

An emphasis on sustainability is also a key driver for the property portfolio. We continue to refurbish older properties to align with the overall property strategy. Universal Design and developing barrier-free dwellings in existing communities is critical in the delivery of this objective, in line with government policies.

### Key achievements in 2024:

- With thanks to the family of a person impacted by ABI and previously engaged in our services, we agreed the acquisition of a two-bed independent living unit in Dun Laoghaire (CHO6) through CAS funding with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- As a legacy gift from a person served by our organisation in the Midlands, we agreed the acquisition of a fully accessible property in Mullingar (CHO8).
- Acquisition of two rented properties, adding to the service offered in Clarecastle (CHO3) to support people with an ABI to transition to more independent living.
- Agreeing CAS funding for the acquisition of a five-bed detached house in Macroom with Cork County Council and a private landlord.

In addition, the two members of the Housing and Development team were accepted onto the government-funded Chartered Institute of Housing Course, in conjunction with the Irish Council for Social Housing, working towards obtaining a qualification as a Certified Practitioner in Housing.

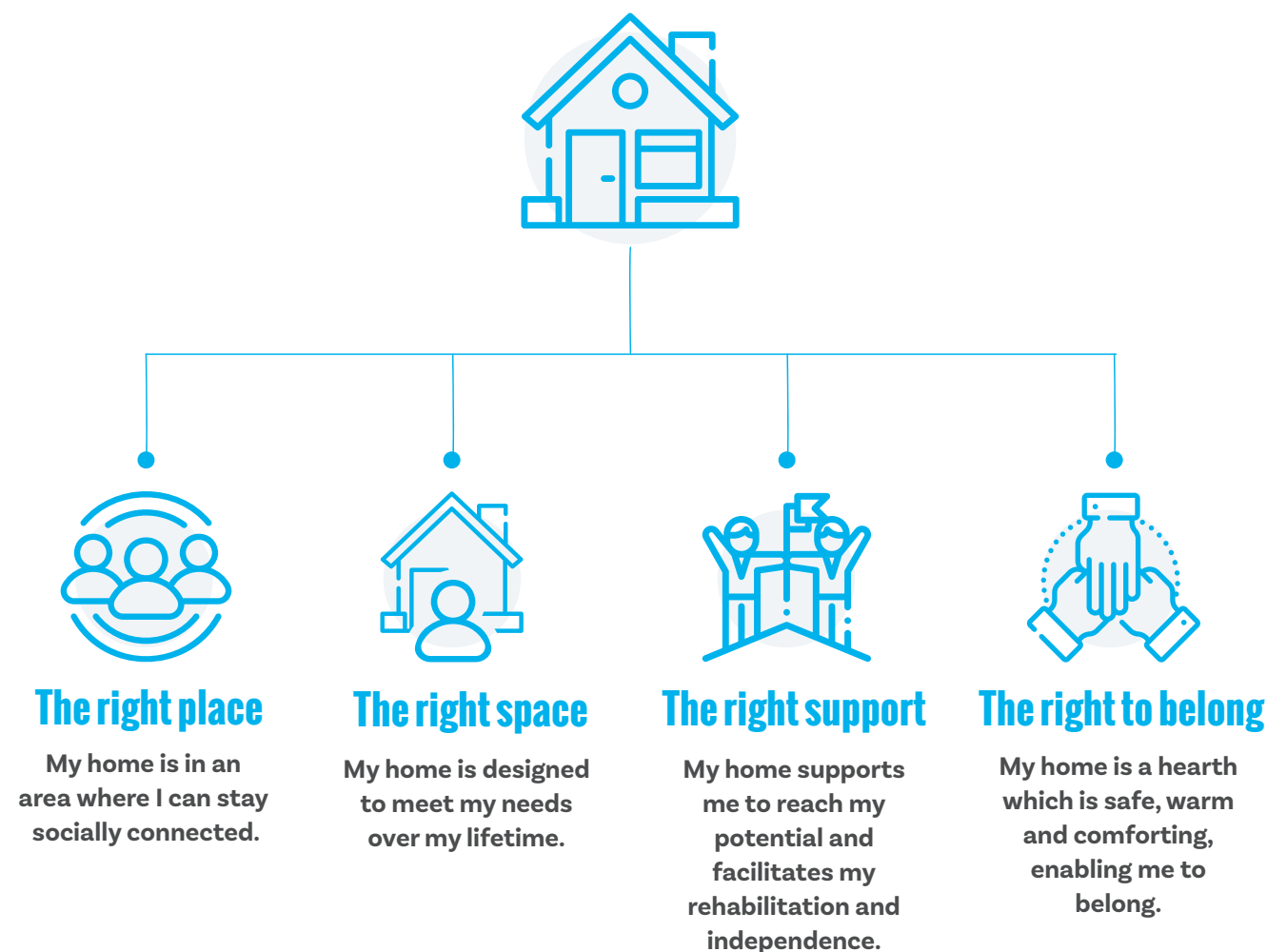


## Anvers Housing

Working in conjunction with Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Anvers Housing is the approved housing body that provides supported housing and independent living options for people with an acquired brain injury. The housing model requires a whole of government approach including the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Health, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Anvers Housing properties represent an award-winning model recognised by the Irish Council for Social Housing Community Housing with Supports Award in 2023.

Existing Anvers Housing properties are funded by the government through the Capital Assistance Scheme and facilitate supported housing options for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland and the people we serve.

The core principles adopted by Acquired Brain Injury Ireland and Anvers Housing are: The Right Space, The Right Place, The Right to Belong and The Right Support. Together, both organisations will continue to provide accommodation to meet these principles.





# Our People

Just as every brain injury is unique, at Acquired Brain Injury Ireland our people are unique. Our teams are highly skilled and qualified in their area and extremely passionate about the work they do.

Rebuilding lives through rehabilitation takes time. In addition to key skills, it requires the ability to see things differently and think outside the box. That’s why we place so much value on our team of problem-solvers, who have an ability to drive everyday solutions to help those in our services adapt to life after their brain injury.

Providing choice is at the heart of what we do. Our teams thrive on finding creative solutions to preserve the right to choose for the people we serve. Our approach to service delivery is about partnership and collaboration. Building positive relationships between rehabilitation assistants and the people they serve is essential to achieving personalised goals.



**I have been offered many opportunities to develop new skills and I have enjoyed my time working with ABI Ireland.**



**The values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that constitute ABI Ireland’s organisational culture have a positive influence on my work ethic**

In 2024, we continued to build a strong and values-led organisation, with the average employee headcount rising to 397, up from 367 in 2023. This growth reflects our ongoing expansion and investment in people and services.

The People and Culture (P&C) team delivers comprehensive support across the entire employee lifecycle. Its services include recruitment and onboarding, induction and training, employee engagement and relations, performance management, HR administration and data protection, and learning and development. The team also ensures compliance with legal, regulatory and CARF accreditation standards, while partnering closely with organisational leadership to align people strategies with strategic and operational goals.

A major focus in 2024 was improving employee engagement and reducing attrition. Initiatives included:

- A refreshed onboarding programme, reintroducing in-person induction for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic. This induction emphasised our mission, vision, values, and the specialist skills required in neuro-rehabilitation.
- The establishment of new forums for employee engagement to strengthen two-way communication between senior leadership and the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland team.
- Extensive consultation in the co-creation of our new strategic plan, Beyond Boundaries 2025 – 2029, with four Colleague Engagement Days planned for early 2025.
- Actions to support transparency and leadership visibility, such as senior management site visits, colleague briefings, and newsletters.

In collaboration with the Finance team, the P&C team ensured continued delivery of pay increases following 2023’s WRC pay award and subsequent HSE funding. This had an immediate, positive impact on recruitment and retention, with further pay awards expected across 2025 and 2026.

Projects were also progressed to implement a new HR information system and new recruitment software, with the launch of both products planned for 2025.

Together, the P&C team successfully responded to 16 Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) throughout 2024 and managed three data incidents during the year.

**In 2024:**

95%	of colleagues said our organisation is a great place to work
95%	report overall satisfaction with their job
96%	of colleagues said they work well with their co-workers
95%	of the team support the organisation’s overall direction
96%	of our team would recommend the organisation to family and friends






## Learning and Development

2024 was a milestone year for innovation and growth in training at Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.

Focus areas for learning and development (L&D) included content development, delivery, digital transformation, and enhancing learning environments. There was also a key focus on induction and continuous learning.

Key achievements included the launch of a two-day, in-person induction workshop for new colleagues. The sessions had high engagement rates and positive feedback, with attendees acknowledging the practical structure and clear pathways for career progression outlined. We also continued to support employees pursuing formal education.

During the year the organisation also introduced and updated several important training offerings. These included finance system training, modules on epilepsy awareness and safeguarding vulnerable adults, modules covering the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015, rollout of the HSE’s Let’s Talk About Suicide training, and training in skin integrity and wound management.

 → <b>5,193</b>	<b>5,193 LEARNING MODULES</b> were completed by <u>401</u> colleagues
 → <b>116</b>	<b>116 MODULES</b> were delivered in brain injury education, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in rehabilitation and lifelong learning.
 → <b>687</b>	<b>687 ATTENDANCES</b> were recorded at live training sessions

## Information Technology (IT)

We are committed to continuously improving the systems and technology we use to promote security, quality and efficiency. In September 2023, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland received funding from the HSE to improve cybersecurity. This past year, we introduced enhanced cybersecurity technologies, bringing the benchmark Microsoft security score from 49% (2021) to 74%.

The IT team continued to engage with departments across the organisation to facilitate more streamlined access and use of operational systems. This included implementation of Single Sign On for the organisation’s CRM platform, improving

workflow efficiencies.

IT infrastructure was enhanced in four assisted living properties. A year-on-year upgrade strategy also saw the replacement of 30 of the oldest laptops in use. The department engaged in processes to implement new expense and HR systems and completed an IT business continuity plan.

Overall, some 4,000 support calls were logged and handled by the organisation’s IT team during the year. With improved processes, reliance on third-party support was reduced by 18% to 6.9%, ensuring better in-house outcomes.





# Campaigning for Change

Brain injury is a hidden phenomenon in Irish society. Nobody ever thinks it will happen to them. Yet each year, as many as 19,000 lives are turned upside down from newly acquired brain injuries.

Too often people who acquire brain injuries are young and, due to the lack of services available at the time of their injury, they are often left in inappropriate settings such as nursing homes, community hospitals or at home where families are unable to cope.

This highlights a greater need for awareness around brain injury. The more people who understand acquired brain injury at a political level, in the health system and widely in the public, the easier it is to push for the services needed to support people and their families.

At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, we give people impacted by brain injury a voice so that their rehabilitation needs may be clearly heard, understood and answered by decision makers.

We do this by:

- 1



Making submissions and policy briefings based on the real experiences of brain injury survivors and their families
- 2



Partnering with other organisations who respond to the rehabilitation needs of brain injury survivors
- 3



Putting those with lived experience of brain injury front and centre of our public campaigns for change
- 4



Supporting research that provides strong evidence, improves services, ensures best practice, and helps us to better campaign for policy change

## Policy and advocacy

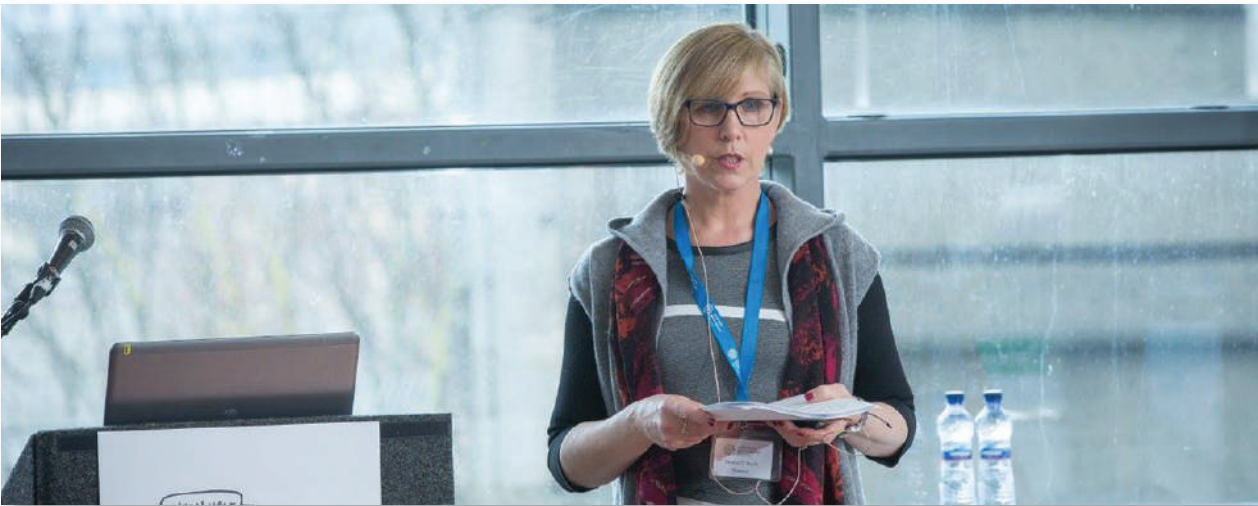
Despite some service development during 2024, many national acquired brain injury service gaps remain unaddressed. Insufficient investment in home and community rehabilitation services, assisted living services and case management is still leading to significant waiting lists, delayed discharges from acute and rehabilitation hospitals, and inappropriate placements in nursing homes.

In 2024, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland coordinated and participated in various local, regional and national communication, policy and research activities. These events and activities helped to raise awareness of acquired brain injury as a condition, the impact of the neuro-rehabilitation we offer in the community, and the need for increased service provision to support survivors and their families.

We continued to champion the recommendations of the Ombudsman’s ‘Wasted Lives’ report. This was a key focus of our Pre Budget Submission 2025, which called for investment in case management services. We also spotlighted the persisting issues in national media, with features secured in The Irish Times and on Newstalk FM.

In all campaigns and political influencing opportunities, we included a priority focus on sustainable funding for Section 39 organisations. We engaged collaboratively with the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), and The Wheel to advocate on a sectoral basis.

Submissions were made to the Independent Commission on Care for Older People, the HIQA National Draft Standards of Homecare, and a contribution was made to the Sinn Fein Private Members Motion on Disability Issues. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland was also represented at consultation events on the Action Plan for Disability (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth) and at a briefing in Leinster House on the Neuro Rehabilitation Strategy, organised by NAI.





## Supporting brain injury research

Throughout 2024, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland continued to contribute to the research on brain injury and brain health nationally and internationally. We welcomed ongoing engagement with the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), and worked in partnership with Prof David Loane, Neuroscientist at TCD, to engage people with lived experience of ABI in research on traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Representatives from our organisation participated in an expert panel on concussion and TBI led by Prof Willie Stewart and, during Creative Brain Week 2024, we hosted lived experience representatives and clinical professionals as part of a panel discussion: 'I've walked in your shoes'.

During the year the organisation also updated its research policy. New structures were implemented including a Research Committee and renewal of the Research Ethics Committee membership.

Building on global connections forged during the 2023 World Congress on Brain Injury, co-hosted by Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in Dublin, research collaborations were developed with the University of Toronto and the University of Queensland. Abstracts were submitted for international conferences, two of which were selected for oral presentation at the International Paediatric Brain Injury Society (IPBIS) Conference in Scotland, and one of which was selected for poster presentation at the Communication Matters International Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Conference in Leeds.

## Raising awareness

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland has a strategic objective to increase public awareness and understanding of the causes and symptoms of ABI. We also seek to share knowledge about the benefits of long-term access to neuro-rehabilitation for those impacted.

Awareness strategies include public relations, marketing and digital activity, as well as online and in-person education and information initiatives locally and nationally.

We contributed to two live 'Creative Brainwaves' public events, in May and October, at the dlr LexIcon Library – a series of talks and workshops on how the creative arts improve brain health. Members of our Clubhouses in Dublin and Meath shared their experience of brain injury and how art and painting have supported their journeys through rehabilitation. Our creATe programme speech and language therapist spoke about the role of digital assistive technology in supporting brain health and wellness,

while a former member of our On With Life team presented the book she authored especially for children and young people living with the impacts of fatigue as the result of an ABI.

Additionally, our Director of Policy and Research contributed to a video exploring the role of the creative arts in brain health and brain injury rehabilitation, commissioned by Dún Laoghaire County Council.

Media coverage achieved during 2024 – including features across national print (Irish Times, Irish Independent, Irish Daily Mail, Irish Daily Mirror) and online (TheJournal.ie) – amplified the voices of brain injury survivors. We maintained strong relationships with key public spokespeople of influence and continued to grow engagement across our digital platforms.

Digital initiatives in 2024 included the launch of the organisation's first email newsletter, and the development of online advertising strategies using a Google Ad Grant to increase reach and visibility.

We also continued to drive engagement across our social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok), with all channels experiencing steady growth.





# Fundraising

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland’s work is enhanced through donations and fundraising by individuals, corporate partners, and community groups. The organisation is also supported by trusts, foundations and other grant-making organisations, private and public. These philanthropic investments allow us to increase our unrestricted income and progress projects that otherwise would not be possible. It allows for innovation, including through development of the creATe programme which utilises assistive technology for rehabilitation. Other funded projects promote social inclusion and creativity, such as gardening, art, music therapy, and day trips for residents and clubhouse members.

## Community fundraising

2024 was a year of transition and fresh momentum for community fundraising efforts. The organisation was especially grateful for the generous support of Paul McGrath and Declan Pierce, who raised funds and awareness through the sale of branded merchandise. A standout success was the 15.5% increase in fundraisers participating in the Dublin Marathon, highlighting the strong commitment and enthusiasm of our organisation’s supporters. This growing momentum provides a positive foundation for building future community-led fundraising initiatives.

## Corporate, major donors, trusts and grants

Corporate partnerships are crucial in enabling our organisation to initiate new projects and develop our services. Companies including SMBC Aviation Capital, Gilead Sciences, Analog Devices, Traditional Meat Company, Liam Neville Developments Ltd, Celtic Roads, EI Electronics, Beta Layout Ltd, O’Leary Insurances Ltd and Grant Thornton supported ABI Ireland in 2024. Grants were received from the Smurfit Westrock Foundation, Pobal, Monkstown Hospital Foundation, Community Foundation for Ireland, including through the Toyshow Appeal, the Hospital Saturday Foundation and several Local Authorities.

## Individual giving

Our efforts to encourage individuals to support us through one-off and regular donations continue to increase unrestricted and predictable sources of income. Strategic direct mail activity continued across 2024, including two newsletters and three fundraising appeals. All appeals and donation requests were integrated across print and digital platforms, to existing and prospective audiences. The largest source

of income in this category came from retention activities, followed by legacy and in memory income.

## Key achievements 2024



Pobal agreed to provide **€1M IN FUNDING** over five years for our Step Ahead Plus programme, which supports people back to work or education after a brain injury. This project is part of the Workability: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme and is co-funded through the Department of Social Protection and the European Union.



Smurfit Westrock Foundation generously donated €56,000 to revitalise the outdoor space and garden in one of our assisted living residences in Dún Laoghaire into an accessible and therapeutic sanctuary where residents can engage with our rehabilitation professionals, connect with one another, and unwind.



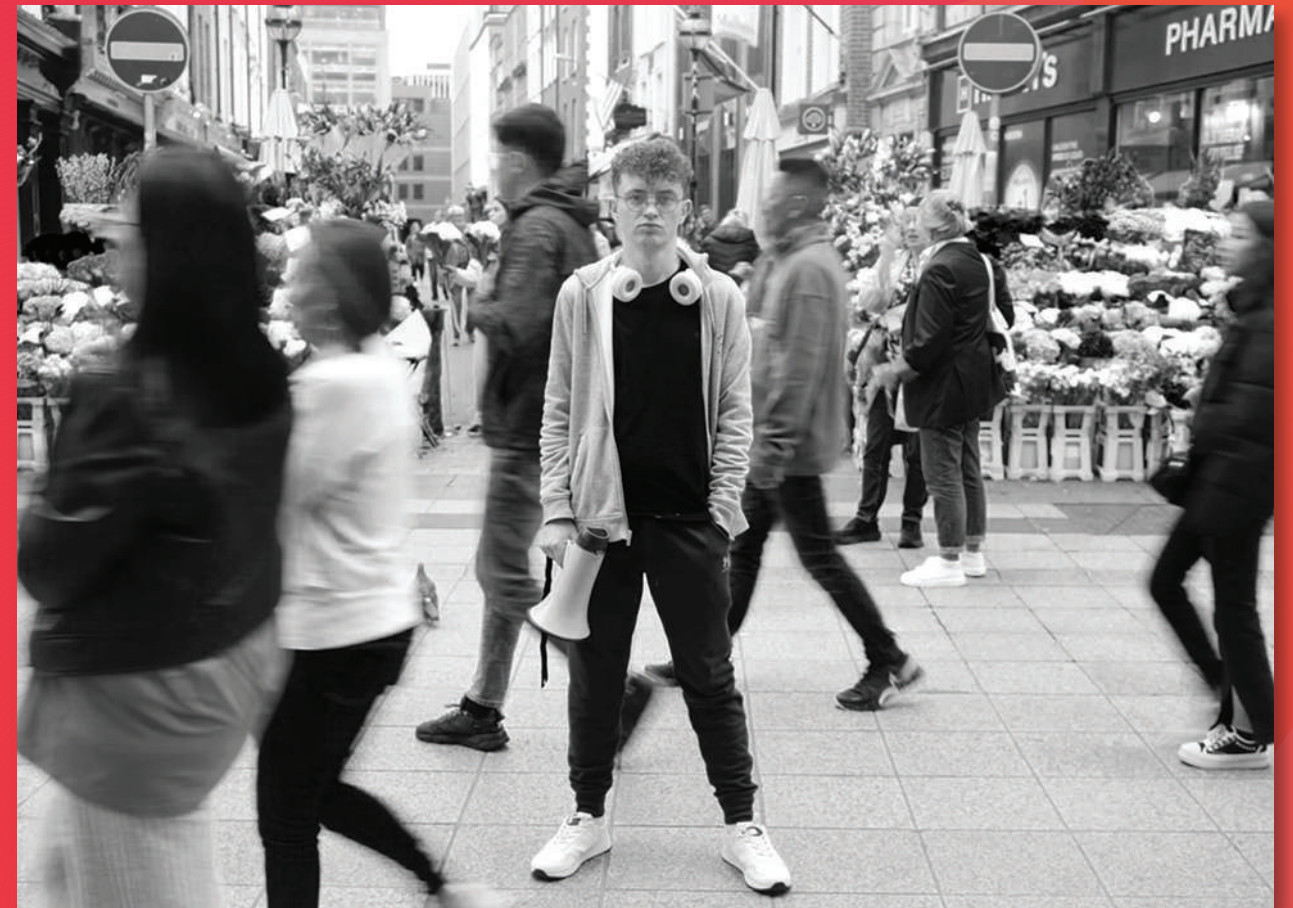
Our national event, Christmas Hat Day, returned for its second consecutive year in 2024. The initiative saw a marked increase in participation, with our services alone raising more than €10,000.

**We are extremely grateful to all our donors, funders and grant agencies for their support. It truly makes a life-changing difference for survivors of acquired brain injury.**



# Fight for our Lives: General Election 2024

For too many people in Ireland, surviving a brain injury isn't where the fight ends - it's where it begins.





## Fight for our Lives: General Election 2024

**After the devastation of a brain injury, when families have their loved one back home, they're emotionally so relieved and simply exhausted that often they simply don't have the energy to seek help. For these people - is a nursing home really the best option?**

Phil Quinlan, writer, father and survivor of brain injury

In October, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland launched a public campaign ahead of the 2024 Irish General Election. The campaign called on candidates to uphold the human rights of brain injury survivors and give them the chance to live the lives they fought so hard for.

It had three key objectives:

- 1** To raise awareness of the rehabilitation needs of people with an ABI and their families in the Dáil
- 2** To advocate to prioritise funding for long-term rehabilitation services for people with an ABI, to address the existing gaps and postcode lottery for services
- 3** To make Acquired Brain Injury Ireland financially sustainable, to support the organisation to continue to deliver in the community.

Survivors and their families shared these messages, and their lived experience of ABI, with the public and election candidates across a range of media and in-person. They explained the challenges they faced in navigating sizeable gaps in the rehabilitation pathway, and the absence of support to adjust to life after the brain injury.

During the campaign, we advocated strongly to all major political parties and engaged in policy analysis. We hosted a public launch event with election candidates in the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Wexford Clubhouse, including the unveiling of an

art installation, 'This is our lives', as a way to raise awareness of the lived experience of survivors.



**The absence of services for people with brain injury and other neurological conditions, like dementia, is appalling. It's a postcode lottery. It depends on where you live.**

**Acquired brain injury is a lifelong journey. You can maintain where you are, but that part of your brain isn't going to heal. That's the way it is forever.**

**So, rehabilitation helps you and educates you about how to live your best life. And you need that support throughout your life.**

Lorraine Duffy, researcher, advocate and survivor of brain injury



We promoted grassroots campaigning through our local and regional networks, and undertook a national public awareness drive with targeted online advertising, development of campaign materials (postcards, posters, social media assets), and videos featuring the self-advocacy of survivors of brain injury, family members and colleagues.

**Years of underinvestment in community rehabilitation services and a failure to fully implement national policy have left thousands of survivors and families feeling lost and abandoned on their rehabilitation journey.**

**We see the tangible, positive impacts of rehabilitation in our services every day. It is critical, for those impacted and their families, that community neuro-rehabilitation services are funded for the long-term.**

Dr Karen Foley, Chief Executive

The campaign launch video received 17,000 views on YouTube and almost 10,000 views on Instagram. Media coverage was achieved in local and national press.

Key outcomes of the campaign included all major political parties referencing neuro-rehabilitation and addressing the issue of younger people in nursing homes in their election manifestos. This was followed by subsequent commitments in the Programme for Government to support the delivery of neuro-rehabilitation services in the community and stop the practice of placing those under 65 in nursing homes.





# Summary financial position 2024





Total income for the year ended December 2024 at €22.5 million represented an increase of €2.1m (10%) over 2023.

Expenditure for 2024 increased by 3% to €21.8 million. The net income for the year was €642k, (2023: net expenditure of €926k)

The majority (97.3%) of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's income can be attributed to the HSE and other statutory agencies. This is relatively consistent with 2023 (95.5%).

Direct service grants and other income increased by 10.8% year on year.

Income of €338k was received in respect of a programme to support the employment of people with disabilities funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (Dormant Accounts Fund) in 2024 (this was an increase of €220k from 2023).

Fundraising and events income amounted to €394k, a decrease of €69k (15%) from 2023.



# Finances and Accounts 2024


## Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

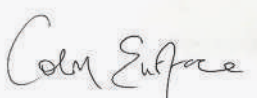
	2024	2023
	€	€
Income	22,485,870	20,351,030
Expenditure	(21,843,843)	(21,276,921)
Net income/(expenditure)	642,027	(925,891)

## Balance Sheet at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	€	€
<b>Tangible Assets</b>	3,058,982	3,147,631
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	1,219,748	575,124
Cash at bank and in hand	1,227,538	1,245,101
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(1,870,685)	(1,880,988)
Net current (liabilities)/assets	576,601	(60,763)
Total assets less current liabilities	3,635,583	3,068,868
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(978,239)	(971,551)
<b>Net Assets</b>	2,757,344	2,115,317
<b>Total Reserves including Capital Reserves</b>	2,757,344	2,115,317

The accounts were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on September 19th 2024.

  
Jim Mahon

  
Colm Eustace



COMPANY INFORMATION

PETER BRADLEY FOUNDATION CLG  
T/A ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY IRELAND  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Directors

James Mahon (Chairperson)  
Colm Eustace  
Ann Coyle  
Robert McCarthy  
Tina Leonard  
Lorraine McCarthy  
Majella Cassidy  
Edel Creely

Chief Executive

Dr Karen Foley

Company Secretary

Gillian Littlefield

Revenue Number

14289

Charities Regulator Number

20046200

Registered Number

334659

Trading Name

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Registered Office

Century House  
100 George’s Street Upper  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin  
A96 R2V3

Independent Auditors

Crowe Ireland  
Chartered  
Accountants &  
Statutory Audit Firm  
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Dublin 4  
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Bankers

Allied Irish Bank plc  
Cornelscourt  
Dublin 18

Solicitors

TP Robinson Solicitors  
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