



Galway
Hospice
Foundation

Impact Statement

Annual Report 2024





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At Galway Hospice, we are committed to providing compassionate specialist palliative care to patients and their families affected by life-limiting conditions. Our high-quality services are free of charge and are available to those living in Galway, Mayo and the surrounding areas.

We listen to what matters most to patients and their loved ones, tailoring our care to meet their physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs.

This care is offered in patients' homes, in other care settings, and within our two hospices located in Galway and Mayo.



Our Vision



Our vision is to be a leading example of excellence by delivering a specialist palliative care service, in appropriate settings, to people living with advanced life-limiting conditions.



Our Purpose



We provide compassionate palliative care to patients and their families in counties Galway and Mayo. We do this by working alongside our health partners. We offer Inpatient, Day Care and Community Palliative Care services, which are underpinned by exemplary knowledge and delivered with compassion, dignity, respect and excellence.



Our Values



Our values are the foundation of our culture and our working environment. Through them, we remain focused on maintaining a patient and family-centred caring work environment.

- **Community**
- **Excellence**
- **Compassion**
- **Working Together**
- **Dignity**



Reflecting on 2024: A Message from our CEO

We are proud to present this report for Galway and Mayo Hospices for 2024. This annual impact statement outlines how we deliver on our vision: to be a leading example of excellence by delivering a specialist palliative care service, in appropriate settings, to people living with advanced life-limiting illnesses.

Galway Hospice provides specialist palliative care services to inpatients and daycare patients at its premises in Renmore, as well as in the homes of patients across Galway city, county, and the adjoining islands. In addition, Galway Hospice Foundation holds operational and clinical governance responsibility for inpatient and daycare services at Mayo Hospice.

In January 2024, we completed our transition to Section 38 status in our agreement with the HSE and Department of Health. This was a significant milestone that provides clarity and confidence around future state funding. As a voluntary hospice with a Section 38 service agreement with the HSE, we work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver the highest quality care to people in Galway and Mayo who need end-of-life support. Serving a population of 408,234, we enable individuals living with advanced serious illness to live life as fully as possible. Our care and support are provided free of charge, and in 2024 we supported 1,344 patients and their families.

At the heart of our care is a guiding principle: every person is more than their illness. Whether sick or well, each individual has unique physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. At Galway and Mayo Hospices, we are committed to meeting those needs with respect, choice, and empowerment. Our values—compassion, dignity, excellence, community, and collaboration—underpin everything we do. As we deliver on our strategic objectives for 2022 to 2026, our focus remains on our patients, their families, carers, and communities. We strive to provide personalised, high-quality care in environments that respect patients' wishes, while also supporting our HSE and community partners.

Feedback from patients and families continues to be overwhelmingly positive. The following are some of the highlights of 2024:

- We achieved an average score of 9.64 out of 10 across all categories in our annual patient survey, and the feedback received in comment cards was very positive.
- In May both sites achieved ISO 9001 accreditation, with the final CHKS report confirming full compliance with all quality management standards and assessment criteria.
- The gradual implementation of the iCare electronic healthcare record system—a “paper light” project— continued steadily throughout 2024, supported by the steering committee and the dedicated efforts of our staff and managers.
- Project ECHO, a distance learning model launched in 2023 to connect local nursing home communities with specialist knowledge, was successfully rolled out to nursing homes across Galway, Mayo, and Roscommon during 2024. We will continue this initiative in 2025 with quarterly virtual sessions, supplemented by in-person education for nursing home staff.
- We also prioritised awareness and education during the year and we had a number of events during Palliative Care Week, including open evenings at both sites. We hosted a successful “Let’s Talk Palliative Care” education event in partnership with the CNME to raise awareness among healthcare colleagues.
- Patient engagement remained a top priority. We advanced our work using the HSE’s Better Together Patient Engagement Roadmap to ensure patient voices shape our services.

Demand for our services continues to grow. In 2024:

- 1,017 patients were cared for in the community,
- Inpatient occupancy increased by 10% in Galway and 25% in Mayo,
- 576 attendances to our Galway Day Care service
- 415 attendances to our Mayo Day Care service

As emphasized throughout this message, our care is guided by the belief that each person is more than their illness. Galway and Mayo Hospices continue to play a pivotal role in the lives of so many, and the compassion, expertise, and commitment of our staff and volunteers are evident in every page of this report.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our workforce and the generous support of our communities. We are sincerely grateful to everyone who contributed in 2024, and we look forward to continuing this vital work together in 2025 and beyond.

Mary Nash

Chief Executive

Our Impact at a Glance



1,344 patients

supported across all services in 2024



Inpatient Care

675 patients cared for in our Galway and Mayo Inpatient Units

237 patients discharged home or to another community-based setting (35%)



Community Palliative Care

1,017 patients cared for in the community

21,916 patient calls and **6,981 visits** made

87% of patients under our care died at home



Day Care

160 patients attended **Day Care** in Mayo and Galway (991 attendances)

1,210 therapy sessions delivered

Medical Social Work



3,297 contacts with **patients**

2,676 contacts with **carers**

674 bereavement support
services delivered

Therapies

531 patients received
6,191 therapy sessions,
including Occupational
Therapy, Physiotherapy,
Aromatherapy,
and Art Therapy



Volunteers

212 volunteers gave their
time to support our services

Additional Impact

73% of people in Galway who
died with a malignant diagnosis
were cared for by Galway Hospice





Inpatient Care



"On behalf of myself, my mother and all the family, we are sincerely thankful for the care my father received. You are absolutely fantastic. The receptionists, kitchen, staff, nurses and doctors. Thanks for everything you have done"

In our Galway and Mayo Inpatient Units, we support patients to manage symptoms, receive rehabilitation, and access respite care — helping them and their carers to continue living as independently as possible. A key part of our care is ensuring that people feel comfortable and “at home” during their stay. We also provide compassionate end-of-life care for patients at an advanced stage of their illness.

GALWAY Inpatient Care

The **Galway Hospice Inpatient Unit**, with 18 beds, cared for 340 patients in 2024 — a **10% increase** compared to 2023.

98% of patients admitted had a waiting time of less than 7 days.

82% of admissions had a malignant diagnosis, while **18%** were non-malignant.

46% of patients were discharged home or to another community-based setting.

Patients attended **3,577 therapy sessions** during the year.





"Everything was a good experience for all the family, all the staff were excellent, so friendly and caring, always a smile on their faces"

MAYO Inpatient Care



The **Mayo Hospice Inpatient Unit**, now in its fourth year of operation, has 14 beds and cared for **335 patients** in 2024 — a **25% increase** on 2023.

99% of patients admitted had a waiting time of less than 7 days.

60% of admissions had a malignant diagnosis, while **40%** were non-malignant.

27% of patients were discharged home or to another community-based setting.

Patients attended **1,428 therapy sessions** during the year.

"Galway Hospice is a place where magic truly happens"



My year at Galway Hospice has been a truly transformative experience. As a final-year specialist registrar, I've had the privilege of working across the inpatient unit, the community, and Day Care. The care I've witnessed in the inpatient unit, in particular, has been exceptional — combining deep clinical expertise with extraordinary compassion for patients and their families. What stands out most is how the values of the hospice are lived out by every single staff member and volunteer, every day. The care here is holistic — addressing not only physical symptoms like pain and breathlessness, but also emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs. And always, with kindness and dignity.

The teamwork is something I'll carry with me always. From the moment I arrived, I was welcomed with warmth. Everyone — from the reception team to catering staff, cleaners, nurses, therapists, and doctors — works together as one team, each playing an essential role in delivering truly person-centred care.

This has been more than just a training year for me — it has shaped me profoundly as a doctor and as a person. Galway Hospice is a place where magic truly happens. Every single day, I've seen staff and volunteers go out of their way to create moments of beauty and tenderness in people's lives — even during the most difficult times. I've witnessed extraordinary care and felt honoured to be part of it.

Dr Sarah Nestor

Specialist Registrar in Palliative Medicine



Galway Community Palliative Care

Our Community Palliative Care Team provides specialist care and support to patients in their own homes, nursing homes, and care facilities across Galway.

To provide the highest standard of care, the team works closely with patients, their families, and other professionals involved in their care, including GPs, public health nurses, and hospital consultants. Support includes pain and symptom management, along with emotional and practical support through home visits and telephone consultations. The team is available from 9am to 5pm, seven days a week.

In 2024, the team received 921 referrals and cared for 1,017 patients in the community, including 820 new referrals and 101 re-referrals.

21,916 patient calls and 6,981 visits were made during the year.

87% of patients who received care from the team died at home.

71% of patients supported by the team were never readmitted to an acute hospital setting.





"We received community palliative care for our mother, who has advanced Alzheimer's and bilateral breast cancer, and the care is ongoing. Initially, we thought it was end-of-life care, but she has rallied again. The professionalism and empathy of the community palliative care team has been exceptional, and we are greatly indebted for the wonderful care that both Mum and Dad are receiving. For us as a family caring for Mum, it gives us a huge sense of support and helps us maintain the best care for her at home."

"Our biggest role is to speak up for our patients' needs"



My name is Sabine. I'm originally from Germany. I've been working as a nurse for over 30 years. I've worked in Germany, Switzerland, and Ireland, and I've been working at Galway Hospice since August 2023.

As a young nurse, I worked in a cancer care unit, and at the time — in the early 1990s — I saw a lot of suffering. Suffering from symptoms, chemotherapy side effects, and the diagnosis itself. I found it very difficult to deal with.

Around that time, palliative care was introduced in Germany, and I've been following that pathway and philosophy ever since. It really helped me care for those patients and support those who were suffering.

As community nurses, we are often the advocates for our patients. We are the first point of contact. We are the eyes and ears of the multidisciplinary team. But really, our biggest role is to speak up for our patients' needs.

I feel it is a privilege to work as a nurse in palliative care. Sometimes I can inspire patients and families through my work — but more often, they inspire me. I take a great deal from this work, personally and professionally.

Sabine Rybak

Community Nurse Specialist

Day Care



Our **Day Care units in Galway and Castlebar** offer patients a safe and welcoming environment where they can access specialist nursing and medical care, benefit from a range of treatments and therapies, and meet with other members of the team, including Social Work and Pastoral Care.

This service enhances and complements the care patients already receive in the community. Some patients are referred by their medical team, while others attend because they are already known to the Community Specialist Palliative Care team.

For many, Day Care is their first introduction to hospice. Patients and families may initially feel apprehensive about palliative care, but this is quickly eased by the warm, friendly atmosphere created by our staff and volunteers.

Patients can access a wide variety of therapies, including Aromatherapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Art Therapy. Volunteers also offer activities such as horticulture, hairdressing, and nail care, while additional support is available from our Pastoral Care and Medical Social Work Teams.

In 2024, Day Care hosted a variety of activities — from crafting seasonal decorations and flower arranging to chair yoga, virtual cycling, and beauty workshops.

Day Care in Numbers

GALWAY

82 patients
attended Day
Care during
2024

576 attendances
recorded

**619 therapy
sessions**
delivered

MAYO

78 patients
attended Day
Care during
2024

415 attendances
recorded

**591 therapy
sessions**
delivered



“When I Come Here, I Feel Like I’m Living Again”

I’ve been in Ireland for about 19 or 20 years now. I’m originally from Lithuania. Before coming here, I worked in Denmark, always in construction. That’s my trade — building and tiling. When I first arrived, my English was absolutely zero. It was very difficult. Back then, there was no internet — we used a big Lithuanian-English dictionary to try and understand things. But I worked with Irish people, and slowly, bit by bit, my English got better. After about 10 years, I started working for myself, mostly doing tiling — kitchens, bathrooms — that kind of work.

When My Health Changed

In 2023, I started feeling a bit unwell. I went for blood tests and a CT scan, and they found a large tumour in my kidney. It was very serious, and surgery was not possible — they had to remove the kidney. At first, it seemed okay. I went for regular scans. But then in April 2024, they found something again — this time in my lungs. I tried immunotherapy, but it didn’t help. I had bad side effects, and the tumours kept growing. Before Christmas, I ended up in the emergency room. I had bleeding and stayed in hospital for a long time. After that, everything got worse — pain in my joints, no strength. I spent about two months in hospital. I don’t know how things will go. Sometimes, when I’m at home, I panic a bit. But I’m alive, and that’s something.

My Family and Support

My daughter speaks very good English, but she’s studying abroad now. She finished college in Ireland, then studied in Cork, and now she’s in Germany and Austria, doing biochemistry. She’s very smart. Recently, she came back to visit for the holidays, and I was so happy. My wife is here with me all the time — she speaks only a little English. She used to work part-time cleaning houses, but since my illness, she stopped everything to care for me.

Discovering Galway Hospice

I’ve been coming to Galway Hospice for Day Care every Wednesday. It’s very, very nice. The nurses are so kind, really like sisters or mothers. One of them said, “Would you like to try the jacuzzi?” So I tried it — it was great. Last time, I had aromatherapy. Very relaxing.

At home, it’s always the same, but here I feel a small change a bit. It helps. I really didn’t know what to expect from the Hospice. The social worker from the hospital introduced me, and I decided to try. I live about 50 km from Galway, but they bring me here for the day. I’m very happy to be here.

What Palliative Care Means to Me

The Hospice helps not only with health but with everything around — emotional, practical. At home, I don’t need a nurse yet. My wife helps me with everything — food, the stairs, day-to-day care. We’ve always been together.

Martina, the nurse from the Hospice, comes to check on me once a week — takes my blood pressure, checks on my skin problems, organises creams. Always asking how I am. It’s really good support. If I had to explain what palliative care means — for me, it’s 100% high quality. Really high quality. Everyone here is friendly, understanding. I know my health is not good, maybe I have a few months, maybe a year — but when I come here, I don’t think about that.

Finding Peace and Joy

The Hospice changes your mindset. You don’t just sit at home with your thoughts. Here, I feel like I’m living again. I forget my problems. I see people like me. I feel peace. This place is very special. The volunteers too — they work with their hearts. Always helping. Always smiling. I’m really, really happy.

When I first came here, I told my wife and daughter — I couldn’t believe how kind everyone was. They were so happy for me too. I don’t know about other hospices in Ireland, but in Galway — it’s amazing. I’m grateful every single time I come.

Evaldas

Galway Hospice Patient





Therapies

Our range of therapy services plays an essential role in the **holistic and specialist palliative care** we provide to patients and their families.

Therapists work with patients to maintain or rebuild strength and independence, while also supporting physical needs, mental health, and overall wellbeing.



"Everything — I enjoyed my aromatherapy session, occupational therapy, and art therapy very much. My meal was delicious, and the whole day made me feel vital."





Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists work with patients at all stages of illness to help them improve independence and participate as fully as possible in self-care, work, and leisure activities. Interventions are tailored to individual goals, focusing on promoting function, comfort, and quality of life

GALWAY

1,315 treatments
delivered to
263 patients

MAYO

553 treatments
delivered to
151 patients



Physiotherapy

The Physiotherapy Team supports patients and families to optimise physical function and wellbeing, helping patients live as independently as possible within the limits of their condition. Their work includes continual assessment of physical function, pain management, mobility safety, prevention of falls, and management of breathlessness and anxiety.

GALWAY

1,803 treatments
delivered to
285 patients

MAYO

751 treatments
delivered to
191 patients



Art Therapy

Art Therapy enriches emotional wellbeing through creative expression and meaningful engagement. It supports self-expression, emotional exploration, and distress management, offering an alternative form of communication for those who may find verbal or emotional expression difficult.

GALWAY

481 sessions
delivered to
142 patients

MAYO

75 sessions
delivered to
33 patients



Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy uses essential oils through massage, inhalation, or hydrotherapy to promote relaxation and healing. It can help relieve stress, anxiety, grief, and depression, relax muscles, improve sleep, reduce congestion, and hydrate the skin.

GALWAY

611 treatments
delivered to
174 patients

MAYO

613 treatments
delivered to
153 patients



Medical Social Work

Supporting family, friends and carers

The Medical Social Work Team provides essential therapeutic and practical support to patients, families, and carers across Galway and Mayo Hospices. The team also arranges respite care services to give carers much-needed breaks from their responsibilities, helping to reduce stress and prevent burnout.

In 2024, the team focused on strengthening relationships with local services and actively contributed to regional and national networks to further develop specialist palliative care social work services. Key updates to data recording systems were implemented to improve service planning, while ongoing efforts enhanced the quality of support provided to patients, carers, and families. Across all services, the team facilitated family meetings in response to the complex needs of carers and significant others.

In 2024, we also launched the Bereavement Café, a free service open to all adults who have experienced loss - not only those connected with the Hospice. It is not counselling, but a welcoming space for mutual support and understanding in grief.

Social Work in Numbers

GALWAY

2,249 contacts with patients

1,809 contacts with carers

422 bereavement support services delivered

MAYO

1,048 contacts with patients

867 contacts with carers

252 bereavement support services delivered



Bereavement Support Volunteer Service

Our **Bereavement Support Volunteer Service** works alongside the Medical Social Work Team to provide individual and telephone support to bereaved adults. The service also supports the Medical Social Work Department in facilitating adult bereavement groups and remembrance evenings.

These supports are offered free of charge and saw increased participation in 2024 across both **Mayo** and **Galway Hospices**.

Walk & Talk – Supporting People Through Connection

Walk & Talk is an outdoor walking group that brings together people who are grieving, offering a gentle and safe space for support, understanding, and shared experience. It combines the reassurance of professional guidance with the comfort of connecting with others who truly understand.

In 2024, attendance grew by **46%**, with more people joining regularly in both **Galway** and **Castlebar**. Families continue to give very positive feedback, describing Walk & Talk as a source of relief, comfort, and hope during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

Remembrance Service

Our **Remembrance Services** give families the opportunity to come together to celebrate, reflect, and — above all — remember their loved ones.

In 2024, **four remembrance services** were held in Galway, both in person and virtually, in addition to one annual service. These were co-facilitated by the Pastoral Care Team and attracted large attendances both in person and online. In Mayo, the **Pastoral Care Team**, together with Medical Social Work colleagues, organised and facilitated **two remembrance services** and one annual service in memory of those who died under the care of the team.

During these services, a candle was lit in memory of the **927 people** who passed away under our care in 2024.

“Thank you for treating our brother with great care and dignity”

My name is Margaret. I have just watched your Service of Remembrance from my home in Dublin and it was really beautiful.

My brother, Jimmy, passed peacefully in his sleep at 2.50am on 31 December 2024 in Portiuncula Hospital. I know that he had been under your care for a number of years and he spoke with great admiration and gratitude for all that you did for both him, and for his deceased partner. Because of the care you provided for Jimmy, he enjoyed a very full and happy life for these last two years and he was able to stay at home for much longer than I believe he would ever have thought possible. He was quite an interesting man and had a very philosophical view on life, and his stage in it. I thought he was so brave these last few years.

Thank you for treating our brother Jimmy with great care and dignity - he was a very proud and private man and when he trusted people, it spoke volumes. He trusted you all very much in Galway Hospice. Because of you, and all the others in the family who cared for him, he passed peacefully from this life, on his own terms and with great dignity - exactly as he wanted to do.

On my last visit to him in Portiuncula on 30 December, I asked him did he need anything and he said ‘bring me lots of smiles’, which I did! And when we said our final goodbye (not knowing that it would be our last one), I whipped off my mask and gave him a big smile and he said ...‘That will keep me going for days!’ And he gave me back one of his big beaming smiles too - isn’t that beautiful. May he Rest in Peace.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir agus beir beannacht.

Margaret McCormack





The Power of Volunteering

Volunteering at Galway or Mayo Hospice is about more than just giving time — it's about becoming part of a compassionate organisation that truly values every contribution.

Our volunteers play an essential role in the care and comfort we provide to patients, their families, and their loved ones. Whether helping as a receptionist, driver, delivering lunches or evening refreshments, or supporting in another capacity, their efforts directly impact the lives of those we serve. By offering their time and talents, they become a vital part of the Galway and Mayo Hospice family, joining a dedicated team that works together to ensure every patient receives the highest standard of care in a warm and supportive environment.

At Galway and Mayo Hospice, volunteering is also an opportunity for personal growth and connection — a chance to meet new people, learn new skills, and experience the deep satisfaction of helping others in their time of need.

In 2024, we were supported by **212 volunteers** (161 in Galway and 51 in Mayo).

To every volunteer who brings warmth, kindness, and commitment: thank you for making such a meaningful difference in the lives of so many.

“

“I love it. I absolutely love it. It's really uplifting for us to be there. It fills my day, and I feel good for doing it.”



“When the sliding doors open when you walk in, the first thing you see is the reception. There is the smile. That makes your day. It’s all about a smile. Then you think, I’m going to have a good day. That’s what it’s all about.”



“I was looking for something to add meaning to my life”

I was widowed unexpectedly several years ago.

It was an indescribable shock, so I know first-hand what support around this kind of life-changing event means. Even if someone has lived to a grand old age, saying goodbye is the hardest thing we will ever have to do.

And it never gets easier. It’s a privilege for me to be even a small part of that support process. Knowing that I’m helping during the most vulnerable point in someone’s life — both the person passing away and their loved ones — is an incredible honour.

That’s why I wanted to volunteer at Galway Hospice. I was looking for something to add meaning to my life, and maybe even give me some perspective. The hospice has given me both. When you see how precious life is, and how quickly it’s gone, it’s impossible not to feel grateful for whatever time we have.

Jim Hynes
Volunteer



Caring for People and the Planet

At Galway and Mayo Hospices, caring for people and caring for the planet go hand in hand. Over the past year, we have continued to take important steps to build a more sustainable hospice — one that supports patients, families, staff, and the wider community every day.

The maintenance team completed a range of significant projects during the year. The **medication rooms in the Galway Inpatient Unit** were consolidated into a single, fully refitted space with new units, plumbing, and electrical works completed to meet best practice standards.

One of the former medication rooms was repurposed as a **hot desk space for the therapy department**, improving workspace efficiency and supporting multidisciplinary collaboration.

Across both sites, **IT systems were upgraded and replaced where required, and backup broadband lines** were installed to ensure service reliability and minimise disruption.

A new **backup immersion system** was installed in Mayo to guarantee hot water provision in the event of a boiler failure. Compliance initiatives also included **chemical storage upgrades**, with updated risk assessments, improved safety documentation, and the installation of new cabinets and spill trays.

Radon testing was completed across all facilities, with all readings confirmed to be within safe limits.

The performance of the maintenance service continued to be closely monitored through the Q-Pulse system. In 2024, **191 maintenance requests in Galway and 79 in Mayo** were completed ahead of schedule, demonstrating a strong commitment to responsive and efficient facilities management.

Driving Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Sustainability and environmental responsibility were key priorities during the year. In Mayo, **solar panels** installed in quarter four generated 3% of the site's annual electricity requirement in their first month of operation. A **composter** was introduced for all food waste, and a new **greenhouse** supplied fresh herbs and produce for the catering team.

Across both sites, **bottle and can recycling systems** were implemented, with funds directed to green projects, and **additional recycling points** were installed to encourage sustainable practices.

Other energy-saving initiatives included replacing **fluorescent lights with LED panels** in the Galway kitchen, optimising **water cooling systems** in Castlebar to reduce mains water consumption, and installing an **Eddi unit** to use excess solar power for heating water during summer months.

Staff also played an active role in driving sustainability. The facilities team completed the **HSE Sustainability Course** and attended the national **HSE Climate and Health Alliance Conference**. Initial discussions were held with HSE sustainability officers on the potential installation of a **heat pump** to further reduce fossil fuel use, with early feedback being positive and next steps already planned for 2025.



"I think the efforts we have made thus far show the organisation's commitment to sustainability and its importance to our service users. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote and support sustainability initiatives within the organisation and will strive to do so well into the future."

Brian Nally
Maintenance and Facilities Manager





Highlights & Quality Improvements

iCare System Enhancements

Significant progress was made in 2024 to optimise the iCare system, improving efficiency and coordination of care across Galway and Mayo. The support model and training programme were reviewed and updated based on staff feedback, and a revised training manual was introduced. New electronic notes fields were rolled out in Community Palliative Care and Day Care, and Day Care referrals from Inpatient Units are now fully electronic.

Galway Hospice staff also continued to actively support the Palliative Care Programme and the Technology and Transformation (formerly eHealth) project teams, contributing to the national planning of the new Clinical Management System for Specialist Palliative Care. Seven staff members took part in a Benefits Mapping Workshop, and one of our Mayo consultants joined the National Steering Committee as a subject matter expert.

Patient Engagement Strengthened

In 2024, Galway Hospice made significant progress in strengthening patient and family engagement. Focus groups with staff provided valuable input on the role of patient and family representatives, leading to the development of a clear role description in line with the HSE *Better Together* roadmap.

Twelve patient and family representatives are now actively involved, and meetings — both one-to-one and in groups — were held throughout the year. A Patient Council has been formally established, with a Chair and Vice-Chair appointed, and regular meeting dates agreed for 2025.

Feedback processes were also enhanced: Hospice comment cards were redesigned, generating 80 responses since their launch, and the annual Experience Survey was simplified based on patient council feedback before being sent to all active patients in October.

Project ECHO – Sharing Knowledge to Improve End-of-Life Care

Project ECHO continued to grow in 2024, with staff from across all hospice disciplines contributing as speakers and panel members. Working closely with the All Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care team, the Galway Hospice ECHO facilitator supported 33 nursing homes around Galway, Roscommon, and Mayo – with 188 registered participants.

The programme provides an “all share, all learn” environment, with interactive sessions that include expert speakers, case presentations, and open discussions. Topics in 2024 ranged from pain and symptom management to advance care planning, ethical issues, and improving residents’ quality of life. The programme will continue into 2025 with quarterly sessions shaped by participant feedback.

Falls Working Group – Improving Safety Through Collaboration

In 2024, the multidisciplinary Falls Working Group focused on strengthening falls prevention and management across Galway and Mayo Hospices. Falls Awareness Days were held on both sites in October, engaging staff, volunteers, patients, and carers. The group also reviewed current practices and previous initiatives to identify future priorities for improvement.

Their work received recognition at national and international level. A poster entitled “A multidisciplinary collaborative quality improvement initiative to reduce falls and minimise associated harm in a hospice inpatient setting” was presented at the National **Patient Safety Office Conference** in September, and another was accepted for the **European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC)** and **IAPC Conference**.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In 2024, work began to strengthen Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across Galway and Mayo Hospices. A draft working plan was shared with the executive team, and staff were invited to join a new EDI steering committee – 12 members have expressed interest, with meetings due to begin in early 2025.

The EDI lead is mapping the current EDI landscape within the organisation and considering the needs of the communities we serve. Links are being developed with HSE EDI leads and local minority community organisations to ensure best practices and inclusive care.





Education – Building Skills and Sharing Knowledge

In 2024, Galway Hospice delivered a wide range of initiatives to strengthen staff learning, professional development, and knowledge-sharing across disciplines.

A full review of mandatory training policies was undertaken, including renewal requirements and the balance between face-to-face and HSEland training. Innovative initiatives such as “Spotlight on Drugs,” a monthly multidisciplinary session co-facilitated by Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing and Therapies, promoted shared learning through case studies and practical pharmacology discussions.

Education also extended to the volunteer sector, with the Volunteer Community Companion Programme hosting a dedicated training day in November. During Palliative Care Week, the “Let’s Talk Palliative Care” Conference took place on 12 September, receiving excellent feedback from attendees.

Galway Hospice staff also played an active role in national education efforts, contributing to the Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CNME) and Clinical Steering Group for the upcoming Documentation and Litigation in Nursing and Midwifery conference in February 2025. Work progressed on the rollout of face-to-face education sessions for mandated persons, following completion of HSE “Train the Trainer” certification in October 2024. In December, Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) education sessions with Allied Health Professionals were delivered to improve communication and handover practices.

Human Resources and Volunteer Initiatives

In 2024, we advanced our digital transformation in volunteering with the successful introduction of the Volunteer platform. This new tool improved scheduling, task management, and real-time communication, leading to greater volunteer engagement and flexibility. The HR team provided tailored training sessions, including one-to-one support where needed, to ensure all volunteers — including those less comfortable with technology — could confidently use Volunteer.

Employee wellbeing was also prioritised. Employee Wellbeing at Work Week, held from 22–26 April across both Mayo and Galway Hospices, featured talks and education sessions for staff and volunteers on stress management, aromatherapy, and nutrition, complemented by healthy snacks and treats to promote a culture of care and wellbeing.

Data Protection

Data protection at Galway and Mayo Hospices is managed by a dedicated Data Protection Lead with oversight and sign-off from an external Data Protection Officer. In 2024, unannounced observational walkarounds were conducted across all clinical and non-clinical areas to ensure compliance with regulations and best practice. There were no data protection breaches reported in 2024.

A comprehensive work plan guided ongoing compliance with GDPR and data protection legislation, including regular reviews of Data Processing Agreements, DPIAs, and key documentation. Following audits and incident reviews, the Hospice has prioritised improving the structure and processes surrounding chart management, both internally and with external storage providers. This work has already resulted in a clear action plan to strengthen the security and traceability of patient records, which will continue into 2025.



Our Finances

Statement of Financial Activities

For the Financial Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024 Restricted Funds €	2024 Unrestricted Funds €	2024 Total €	2023 Total €
Income From:				
Donations and legacies	1,070	1,090,152	1,091,222	2,105,777
Charitable activities	14,036,573	1,821,298	15,857,871	13,683,652
Other	4,000	137,196	141,196	101,693
Total	14,041,643	3,048,646	17,090,289	15,891,122
Expenditure On:				
Charitable activities	14,050,691	658,140	14,708,831	13,076,159
Other	147,171	–	147,171	98,028
Total	14,197,862	658,140	14,856,002	13,174,187
Net income/(expenditure)	(156,219)	2,390,506	2,234,287	2,716,575
Taxation	–	–	–	–
Transfers	–	–	–	–
Net movement in funds	(156,219)	2,390,506	2,234,287	2,716,575
Reconciliation of Funds				
Total funds brought forward	378,403	16,727,443	17,105,846	14,389,271
Total funds carried forward	222,184	19,117,949	19,340,133	17,105,846

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

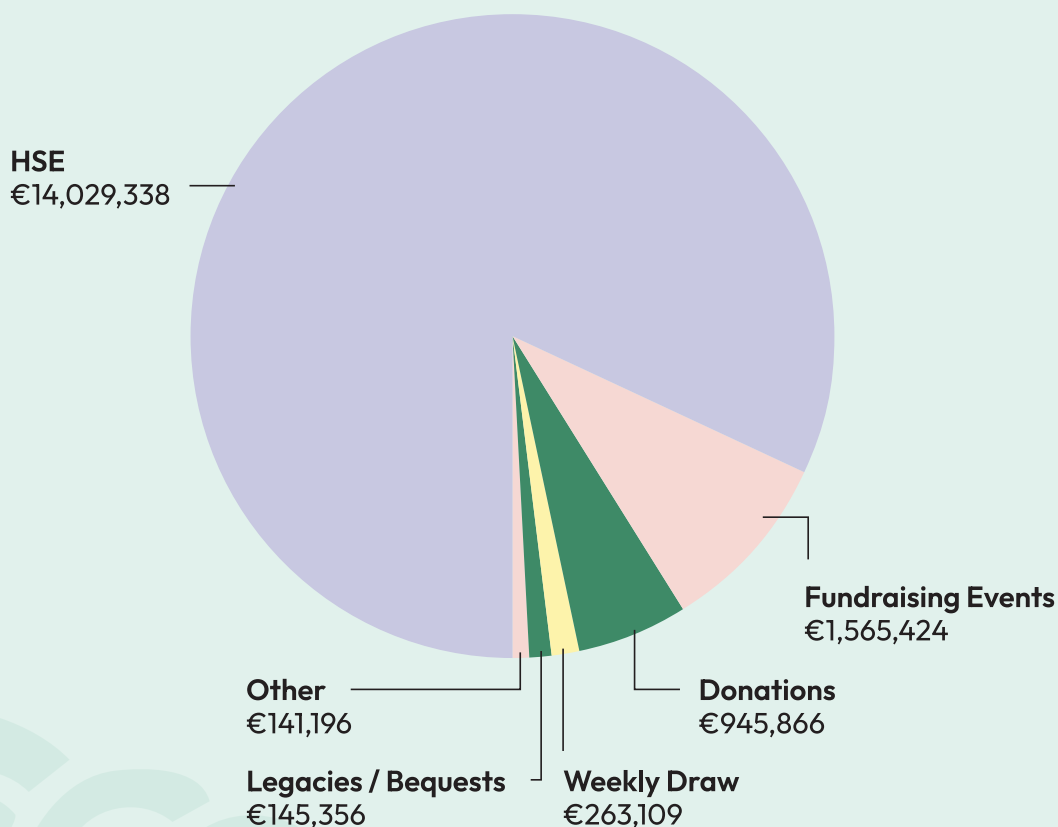
Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2024

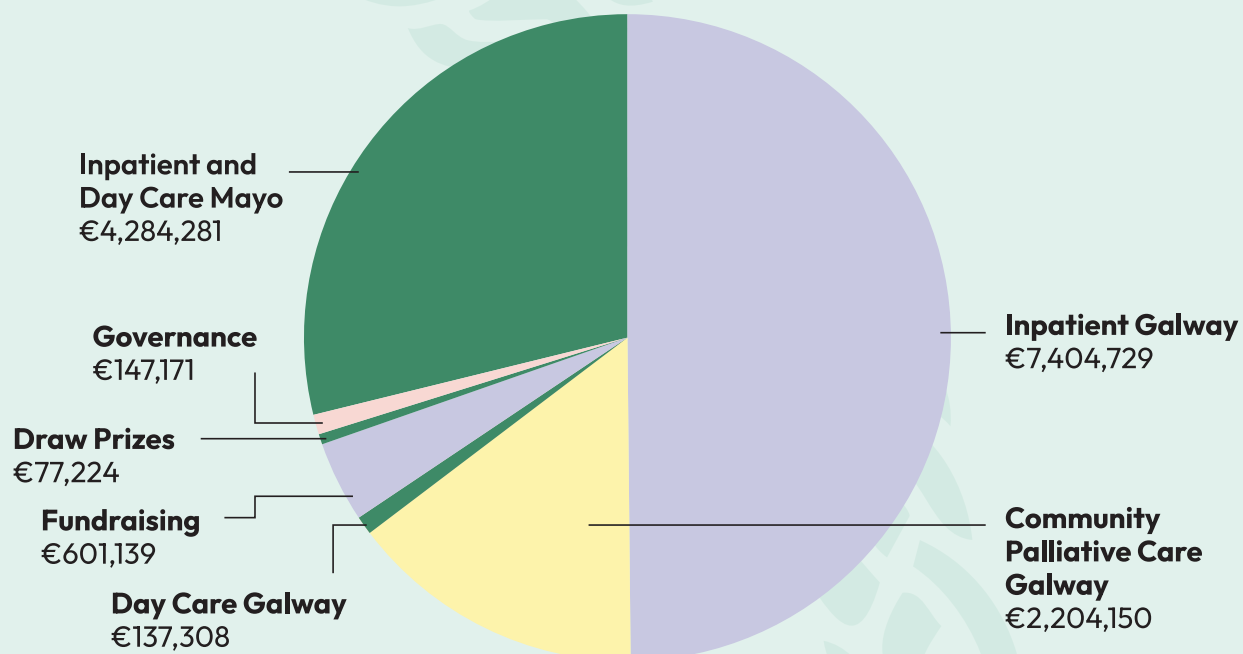
	2024 (€)	2023 (€)
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Fixed Assets	4,064,196	4,365,752
Current Assets		
Debtors	992,595	707,325
Cash at bank and in hand	15,883,517	13,220,526
	16,876,112	13,927,851
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(1,600,175)	(1,187,757)
Net Current Assets	15,275,937	12,740,094
NET ASSETS	19,340,133	17,105,846
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY		
Restricted funds	358,122	441,897
Designated funds	14,553,273	10,553,273
Unrestricted funds	4,428,738	6,110,676
TOTAL FUNDS	19,340,133	17,105,846

Graphs

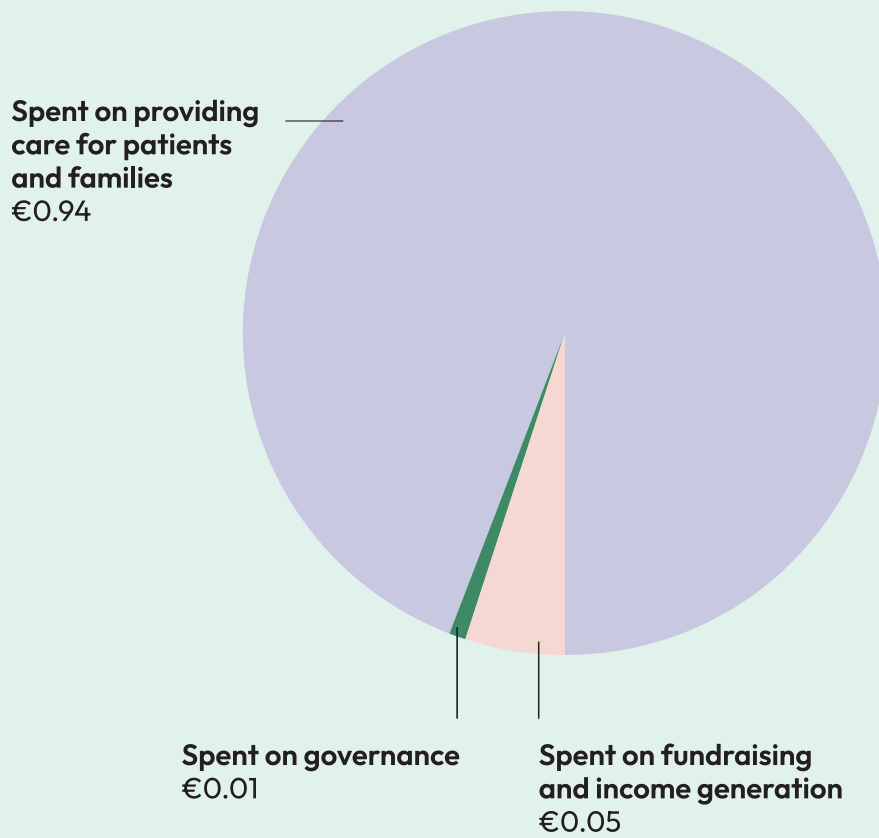
Total Income - €17,090,289



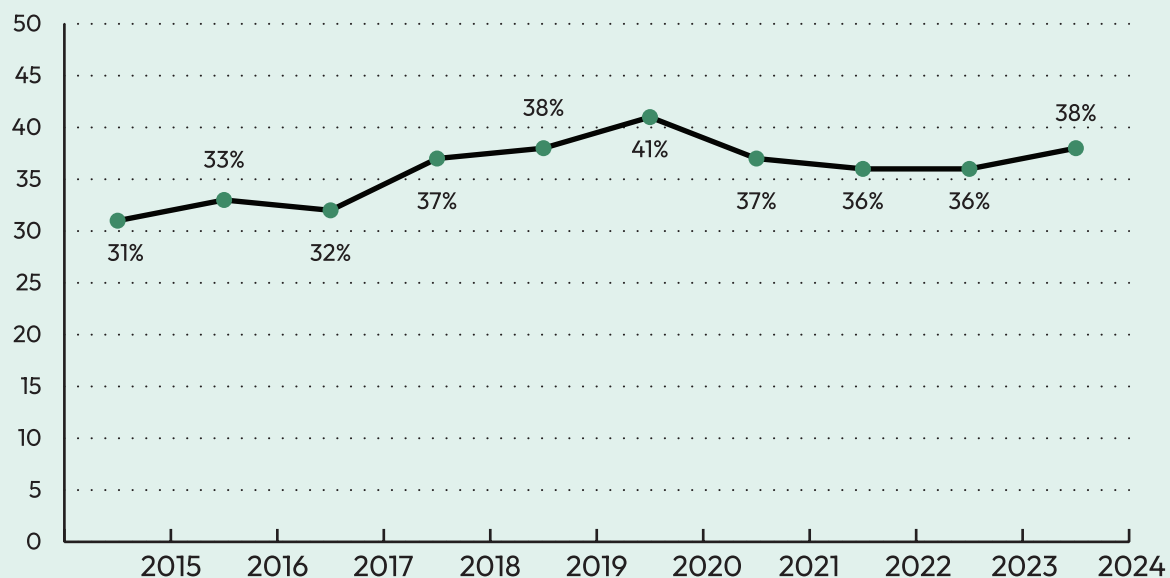
Total Expenditure - €14,856,002



How The Money Was Spent



Percentage of Individuals Who Died in Galway Cared for by Galway Hospice





It's all thanks to you

It is the remarkable kindness and generosity of our local community that allows us to support those facing life's most challenging moments. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has volunteered, fundraised, donated, and helped us in big ways and small in 2024 — you make our care possible.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who organised and attended community events in aid of Galway Hospice in 2024. From auctions and golf days to music nights and tractor runs, from wheelchair pushes and mini marathons to tea dances, swim and car washes, the support of our local community in every corner of the county has made an incredible difference.

2024 was filled with memorable community events, such as the Stronger Together with Edel 'Lunch in



Style' at The Lodge at Ashford, the Fundraising Cycle from Croke Park to Athenry GAA in memory of Anthony Freeney, Trevor Casserly's 7 Marathons in 7 Months in memory of Cathal Hynes, the '100 Miles with MedSoc' walking challenge, and a special Welsh Choir Concert dedicated to the memory of concert organiser Páraic (Tanty) MacDonncha.

We are so grateful to all those who supported Galway Hospice's fundraising events throughout the year, by purchasing our Car Raffle tickets or our Christmas Cards, by volunteering for our Hospice Sunflower Days or taking on our Croagh Patrick Climb, by walking with us at the Memorial Walk or brewing up a storm with a Hospice Coffee Morning.

Thank you to our supporters—you are at the heart of everything we do.



“Climbing Croagh Patrick was something my dad did every year”

We climbed Croagh Patrick in memory of our wonderful dad Tom, who passed away on June 20th, 2024. My dad was under the care of the Galway Hospice homcare team in his last few weeks. We absolutely couldn't have cared for him at home without the support of Galway Hospice and the Irish Cancer Society Night Nurses. The support was incredible; we will never forget it. It was so important to dad and to us as a family to have him at home in the weeks before he passed.

Climbing Croagh Patrick was something my dad did every year for about 65 years (some of those more than once!). He even climbed the Reek for the last time nine months before he died.

When we saw that the Galway Hospice Croagh Patrick Climb was on the weekend of his first anniversary, we took it as a very large sign from above. It was such a special and an emotional experience for us. Four of his grandchildren climbed Croagh Patrick for the very first time, boy, would he be proud!

Thanks for organising the Climb. It was an experience we won't forget in a hurry. We felt very close to our dad.

Áine Newell





Every moment matters



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