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# THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul

THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL IRELAND

# INVESTING TO SAVE

BUILDING AN EQUAL SOCIETY AFTER COVID-19

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**ANNUAL REPORT  
2021**

*"I live alone now and it can be lonely a lot of the time. But I have my friends here in the day centre and they are like a family to me now. We chat and play cards or bingo or do exercises, which is important for me at my age, and we have dinner together. We are looked after so well by everyone. It gives me so much joy in my day to come here."*

Breda – SVP Day Care Centre member



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# OUR MISSION

**Our mission statement sets out the three core principles of what we hope to achieve, namely:**



## **SUPPORT & FRIENDSHIP**

Through person to person contact, we are committed to respecting the dignity of those we assist and fostering self-respect.

We always assure confidentiality and endeavour to establish relationships based on trust and friendship.



## **PROMOTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

It is not enough to provide short-term material support. Those we assist are also helped to achieve self-sufficiency in the longer term, and the sense of self-worth this provides.

When problems are beyond our competence, we build bridges of support with others who can provide more specialised support.



## **WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

We are committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland and, in solidarity with those in need, to advocate and work for the changes required to create a more just and caring society.

**In striving to achieve the mission, we are guided by our values which are:**



**RESPECT**



**HUMILITY**



**LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR**



**EMPATHY**



**JOY THROUGH MISSION**



**PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THOSE IN NEED**



# OUR STORY

## ... SO FAR

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) was established in Ireland in 1844. It is the largest voluntary charitable organisation in Ireland. Our focus is on a practical approach to dealing with poverty, alleviating its effects on individuals and families through working primarily in person-to-person contact by a unique system of home visitation and seeking to achieve social justice and equality of opportunity for all citizens.

In addition to providing direct assistance to those in need, caring for the homeless, providing social housing, operating holiday homes and other social support activities, the Society promotes community self-sufficiency, enabling people to help themselves. Any assistance offered by the Society is given in a non-judgemental spirit, based on the needs of the individual or family seeking help.

The Society respects the dignity of those who contact us, offering assistance and advice when sought, maintaining their dignity while assisting them towards long-term self-sufficiency in a relationship of friendship, trust and confidentiality.

The Society is organised in small groups or branches, called "Conferences", often based in local parishes, which meet regularly and their work is usually concentrated on local home visitation. Home visitation is the core activity of the Society and one in which most Members are engaged weekly.

Throughout the history of the Society on the island of Ireland, we have responded to social and societal changes, often providing solutions and innovative services to local unmet needs and have developed a range of additional services.

Such additional services and activities are known as "Special Works". They comprised a significant proportion of the Society's activities and the organisation has had to manage the associated obligations regarding employment, quality standards and adherence to funding service arrangements, all within an increasingly regulated environment.

# WELCOME

## Building an equal society after Covid-19

In 2021, we had the highest number of calls on record for the Society. A total of 191,000 calls came into our offices during the year. That is a 12% increase up on the number of calls received in 2020.

The fact that the Society received more calls for help nationally than at any other time in its history and still managed to provide help is testimony to the dedication of our Volunteers and staff and the incredible support of the Irish public.

Many families experienced extra food and fuel costs during lockdowns when children were at home during the day.

We in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul saw the impact every day through the volume of people contacting us seeking help. Too many people in Ireland continue to live in poverty and many more risk falling into the poverty trap. It is an unbelievable situation in what is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Evidence of the difficulties faced by so many people in Ireland were identified by a major piece of research we commissioned early in 2021 from RED C Poll.



The purpose of the research was to ascertain the financial impact of Covid. It found that a significant proportion of Irish society were facing a multitude of financial pressures due to the pandemic. These included loss of income, increased household expenditure on basics, erosion of savings to meet ordinary living expenses, falling behind on bills and being forced to cut back on essentials like food, heating and electricity. One-in-four people reported cutting back on food and utilities due to pandemic, and almost one-in-ten tenants reported falling behind on their rent.

In 2021 we provided many with help to the tune of €1.6 million for people who could not afford food; €4.3 million in supporting access to education and €4.3 million for those struggling with their utility costs.

Our work is underpinned by the principles of equality, fairness and social justice. We do this with the ever-generous support of the donations from the Irish people. As our



national response to the pandemic showed, Irish people believe in showing compassion towards others, and helping and protecting each other from harm.

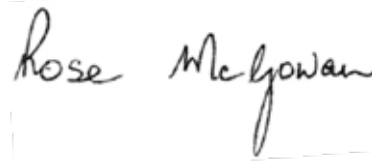
Within the Society our greatest strength is our Volunteers, they know the issues in their community and can address immediate needs as well as helping families and individuals, young and old, move towards self-sufficiency and equal opportunity through friendship and support. Offering a little help at the right time can give people hope for the future. Volunteers sharing their time and skills can change lives forever.

It was unfortunate that in 2021 for a large part we were unable to do what we do best, visit people in their homes. But as we left the difficulties of 2021 behind we moved back to helping people in the way we do best, visiting.

We must do that with a renewed spirit, a spirit that provides the help that can make a real difference to people's lives, to help them not just financially but with friendship and support, listening in confidence and hearing their lived experience in a non-judgemental way.

As our founder Frédéric Ozanam said; *"Help honours when to the bread that nourishes it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up the sinking courage"*

I am now completely convinced that when one does a deed of charity one need not worry about where the money will come from: it will always come.



Rose McGowan  
National President





## Dear SVP

*I am writing to you to explain what COVID has done to me and my little family. I am a separated father of two young girls, and I work in the hospitality industry, at least I did.*

*My idea of being comfortable financially was food on the table, all the bills paid, a few nice presents at Christmas, and a few quid to buy a new pair of runners for my girls when they needed them.*

*This morning, I kissed my daughters goodbye as they went off to school. Then came into the kitchen and cried uncontrollably. They are oblivious to any worries or anxieties their father has. I don't want them worried.*

*I don't know how we can keep going on €300 a week.*

*I don't have a Plan B this time. I look in my fridge, and I know that I only just have enough food to do us until Tuesday. I'm actually frightened. I fear I won't have the money for necessities. I fear I won't be able to buy clothes for my girls. Fear like this is something I've never experienced in my life.*

*Christmas is just around the corner. The thought of it is making me physically sick. I don't know who else to turn to.*

*Yours,  
Seamus*

# THE SOCIETY IN 2021

The experience and learnings during this time mean the Society can now "take stock" and start a broader strategic intent process in 2022-2023, thus planning for the Society's future over the next 5 years.

In late 2019 the Society decided that the time was right to commence a process of evaluation of the structures of the Special Works, given the experience of the previous five years and to establish the needs for future years. Hence, in 2020 strategic planning processes were commenced across several areas, including Shops, Social Housing and Visitation. Covid-19 impacted this work.

However, 2022 sees the detailed plans arising from those strategies, which sets a roadmap for the next three to five years.

2020 saw the start of the global pandemic and Covid-19 impacted every aspect of the Society's activities, resulting in significant challenges and disruption.

The Society's Members' and staff's ongoing commitment, flexibility, innovation, a robust suite of policies and appropriate governance frameworks, all combined to mitigate the potentially catastrophic impact of the pandemic on the organisation.

Following the introduction of national Covid-19 restrictions in mid-March 2020,

the Society established a Covid-19 Crisis Group. The group comprised senior Members and staff who met daily for several months of the restrictions. This forum made the operational decisions regarding closures, guidance and communications, all of which were activity / functional specific and utilised the established and effective communication channels available within the organisation. This group was mandated by the National Management Council (NMC) to manage the evolving challenges which arose from Covid-19 and the nationwide restrictions.

However, certain matters were referred to the NMC for decision-making and the first full remote meeting of the NMC was held on 21st March 2020, followed by five more meetings over the next two months to ensure that the principles of oversight and governance applied during the period.

Several services, including Homeless, Social Housing and forms of Visitation, did not cease operating and the fact that Covid-19 was effectively managed to reduce the effects of contagion in both Social Housing and Homeless Services shows the commitment of both volunteers and staff.

The seamless move to remote working was facilitated by the IT infrastructure and existing Human Resources Policies, including the flexible working policy.



As the restrictions extended into the summer of 2020, the publication of the Government roadmap allowed for the reopening of certain activities, including Charity Shops.

However, subsequent increases in Covid-19 numbers led to further restrictions, which had a significant impact.

Nevertheless, the experience of the earlier shutdowns was replicated and the structures established over the previous six years became invaluable in ensuring systematic approaches across the Society. This was particularly evident in the Charity Shops reopening (and subsequent closure), where detailed planning allowed for the reopening in June 2020. The 2020 experience and structures enable the Society to meet the ongoing Covid-19 impact in 2021.

Communication with Members and staff was essential and constant throughout the year, with updates, policies, support and general information. From 2020 to 2021, there were many additional meetings of the NMC National Remuneration and Compensation Committee to consider the potential of redeployment, potential temporary layoffs and general staffing issues. This required significant data collation and effective communications throughout the Society. With the assistance of the Government support schemes, the Society was able to prepare for the immediate reopening of many activities in 2021. This was a significant achievement.

During 2020 and 2021 Trustees met numerous times to make decisions on activities operations, potential temporary layoffs and other measures whilst maintaining a

balance between commitment to staff, ensuring sufficient resources were available to achieve the Society's charitable objectives and commitment to Donors. This achievement epitomised the values and ethos of the Society.

Covid-19 and the applied restrictions seriously hampered income sources. However, a strategic and innovative approach to planning for fundraising appeals during May and Christmas was adopted. This approach was underpinned by creating alternative channels to Churchgate collections and local giving, to a more centralised approach, with subsequent reallocation of the funds raised going to the Areas or Conferences. The donations and fundraising outcomes are a testament to the success of those campaigns.

Whilst the impact of Covid-19 during 2020-2021 was significant; day-to-day activities continued through the work of the activity's operations teams and support functions of Finance, Communications, HR, IT and Facilities departments. The annual Consolidation financial statements for 2019 and 2020 were completed with no significant delays from the schedule. New staff were recruited, inducted and operational despite the restrictions, whilst various information technology pilots and rollouts continued. In addition, the Society availed of the Government's support schemes to maintain employment, viability and permit the reopening of many activities in 2021.

Both internal and external communications were critical in 2020 and 2021. Covid-19 did not prevent us from being a significant voice in advocating for a fairer society, whilst the internal communication



## Dear SVP

*To the volunteers who helped me in SVP,*

*I was at a very low point in my life physically, emotionally and financially when I called SVP.*

*I was a nurse working very long shifts with two young children. Then I became unwell and my marriage fell apart and we lost our home all in the one year. It was very intense.*

*I had to ask someone for help because I just couldn't pay my bills. It feels horrible. One day you're leading a normal life and having normal bills and then suddenly everything falls apart and you have got to make that call. You feel responsible that you have done something wrong.*

*Then you ring SVP and you ask for help and these angels come to your door and they just continue to come week after week and just fill you with love and non-judgemental support. It was just phenomenal.*

*They were so discreet because they knew I was embarrassed, and I didn't want my two small children to know that we were going without food.*

*They helped me with supermarket vouchers, they paid some of my bills and they even helped with some of the children's activities as they didn't want them to be left out in school.*

*I will never be able to thank you enough and I will always donate back when I can.*

*All my love,  
Mairead*



## Dear SVP

*A few years back my younger brother Brian and I had to leave our family home. Things had gotten too bad for us to stay there. I was 18 and Brian was just 16. I didn't know what was going to happen. How we would find a place to live. How I would do my Leaving Cert in a few month's time.*

*We worked part-time jobs after school to save for a deposit to rent a house. In the meantime, we stayed on friends' couches and floors. Someone in school mentioned SVP so I called.*

*I'd never really opened up to anyone about our family situation. It was a huge relief knowing we had someone to talk to and we weren't alone. We would have frozen that winter without the help they gave us.*

*Volunteers visited us regularly when we found a place to rent with food vouchers, bus tickets and coal to heat the place.*

*That first Christmas we were alone, we opened the front door on Christmas eve to find a hamper from the volunteers. That was the moment we knew someone really cared about us. Sometimes that's all you need to know that time of year.*

*I really want you to know how grateful we are. The support we received from SVP changed our lives. It helped me get through the Leaving Cert and into a place in university. Without this help, we could've been on the streets.*

*Thank you, we remember you every Christmas.*

*Cian*



channels were invaluable in keeping all up to date and connected. It was indeed a team effort where Trustees, Members, Volunteers and staff all played their part in ensuring the work of the Society continued.

The contribution of ancillary services such as Security, Facilities and Housekeeping is also to be acknowledged in looking after our buildings and offices and ensuring safe access and environments for essential workers who continue to work at offices. The capacity of Facilities to ensure all premises were Covid-19 safe greatly contributed to the sense of well-being for Members and staff.

An essential aspect during 2020-2021 was the continuation of activity, or function-specific strategic planning, to ensure the Society was well placed, with clear direction, for the post-Covid-19 environment and beyond. An area to which the Society attached particular importance was that of Safeguarding, given the Covid-19 restrictions and the reduction in face-to-face Visitation.

Members and staff were reminded of the referral pathways, whilst the Designated Liaison Persons were supported and provided with further training to consider the unique Safeguarding risks associated with the lockdown. In addition, given the size and complexity of the Society, there is always a continuous need to recruit new Members.

In 2020, the National Management Council established a Governance Committee for the Society to support its objective to strengthen the governance of the Society in its service to the people the Society supports and through improved governance, transparency and accountability to maintain the trust of donors and the public.

The Governance Committee is a standing Committee; its role is to review and promote good governance in the Society and report to the NMC about it, making recommendations to NMC for change as it considers appropriate, including recommendations regarding the Charities Governance Code.

In 2021, the Committee continued its work to review the NMC-level governance of the Society and submitted to the NMC a Handbook for Trustees, a revised Code of Conduct for Trustees and a draft Society Charities Governance Code Compliance Record Form showing all the Standards in the Code and the Society's actions to meet them. The NMC adopted all these documents and declared the Society compliant with the Code.

In 2021, the RTE Mass for SVP was broadcast on Sunday, 3rd December. This Mass is an opportunity for the Society to celebrate and give thanks to all who have been involved with the Society throughout the year.





## Dear SVP

*I just wanted to write and thank you for the oil you paid for and the vouchers which I wasn't expecting. My daughter has asthma and we live in an old house so keeping it warm and free from damp is important to keep her healthy.*

*My husband and I have only been working part-time so we were really struggling. Her medication and rent are very expensive so we couldn't afford the minimum for an oil delivery. Some nights were so cold we pulled a mattress in front of the fire and all slept there. The children just thought it was for fun.*

*We were really struggling so we reached out to you. I felt I had no choice.*

*I felt nervous before your volunteers came to visit but they were so lovely. They paid to fill my oil tank right up for the winter. Then they came back the next day with food vouchers which was a surprise.*

*A warm house took so much pressure off. I was able to get a few nice presents for the girls for a change, and we will have enough for the dinner on Christmas day thanks to the vouchers.*

*I am so happy, I can't begin to express what it means to me. I owe you such a debt of gratitude for helping us.*

*I know everybody struggles at Christmas time so I am going to donate back what I got for another family.*

*Aisling*

# HOW WE HELP

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Any individual can join a conference (the basic operating unit of the Society). On the island of Ireland, there are 1,164 Conferences (2020: 1,175) grouped into 108 Area Councils (2020: 108). The Areas, in turn, are grouped into 8 Regional Councils (2020: 8).

Each Conference, Area Council and Regional Council has an elected President who appoints the Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

The National Council is comprised of Presidents of the Area Councils and the members of the NMC. The National Council and the Trustees elect a National President. The NMC consists of the National President, 8 Regional Presidents, 1 National Vice President, a National Treasurer and a Spiritual Advisor. These NMC members are also the Trustees of the Society. In addition, there are several attendees at the NMC who are not Trustees, nor have they a vote. They include the National Secretary and the Chair of the Governance committee. The National President is a member of the International Council General, which coordinates the Society in almost 150 countries.

## MANAGEMENT & DECISION MAKING

The NMC manages the affairs of the Society and reports to the National Council. All decisions proposed by the NMC and not covered by the Rule of the Society, must be ratified by the National Council before they become part of the Society's Rule. The NMC normally meets monthly. The National Council normally meets once per year. The NMC is assisted in the discharge of its duties by various Committees, including the National Audit and Risk Committee, whose membership comprises volunteers.

The Society employs a National Secretary whose role is to oversee the national operations and administration of the Society and who reports directly to the National President. The National Secretary is accountable to the NMC and the National Council.

Staff members' remuneration is established by the Society's Remuneration and Compensation Committee.

## RELATED PARTIES & CONNECTED ORGANISATIONS

The nature of the Society's work means that it has connections to a number of organisations. None of these relationships confers any ability to exercise any control over the activities of the Society. All transactions are within the ordinary course of business.

## VOLUNTARY MEMBERS

The Society is a volunteer-led organisation. All the Society's work is carried out by more than 11,000 Members and Volunteers supported by a staff of full time, part-time and seasonal basis employees. The Home Visitations are entirely carried out by volunteer members. The NMC consists solely of volunteer members who receive no remuneration other than the reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of their duties for the Society.

The NMC recognises and appreciates the commitment of the Society's Members and Volunteers in the island of Ireland and the many supporters of the work of the Society. It is not possible to place a monetary value on this voluntary effort, but this is essential to enable the Society to achieve its core objective of relieving poverty.

## WHO WE HELP

# 191,000

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

RECEIVED DURING 2021

# 88,295

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE ONLINE

SVP responds to every request for assistance we receive

## HOW SVP RESPONDS



### HOME VISITATION MEMBERS

SVP provides direct support to those who request assistance. Volunteers visit people in their homes to offer support, guidance, and friendship.



### LOCAL OFFICE SERVICES & RESOURCE CENTRES

The Society currently operates 8 regional offices and 4 resource centres located around the country.



### INFORMATION SUPPORT OFFICERS

When someone contacts SVP for assistance, Information Support Officers record the details and pass the information to the local branch.



### SVP WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The SVP website is the most effective online channel for people to get in touch and access supports.

## SVP SERVICES



## HOW SVP CAN HELP



8 REGIONAL OFFICES



903 VISITATION CONFERENCES



VOUCHERS AND FOOD BANKS



EDUCATION BURSARY GRANTS



HOUSING & UTILITY COSTS



## 2021 AT A GLANCE

## OUR RESPONSE IN 2021



**11,000+**  
VOLUNTEERS &  
MEMBERS



**1,164**  
CONFERENCES



**62**  
SOCIAL HOUSING  
CONFERENCES



**824**  
EMPLOYEES  
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENCY  
(FTE)



**2,520**  
RETAIL  
VOLUNTEERS

**500**

calls per day  
in the first three months

**70,657**

food  
vouchers

**7,979**

requests for assistance  
with education costs

**62,743**

requests for assistance  
during winter months  
(November & December)

## SVP OPERATIONS IN 2021



\*In 2021, the Society exited 9 of the 10 hostel services

# STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

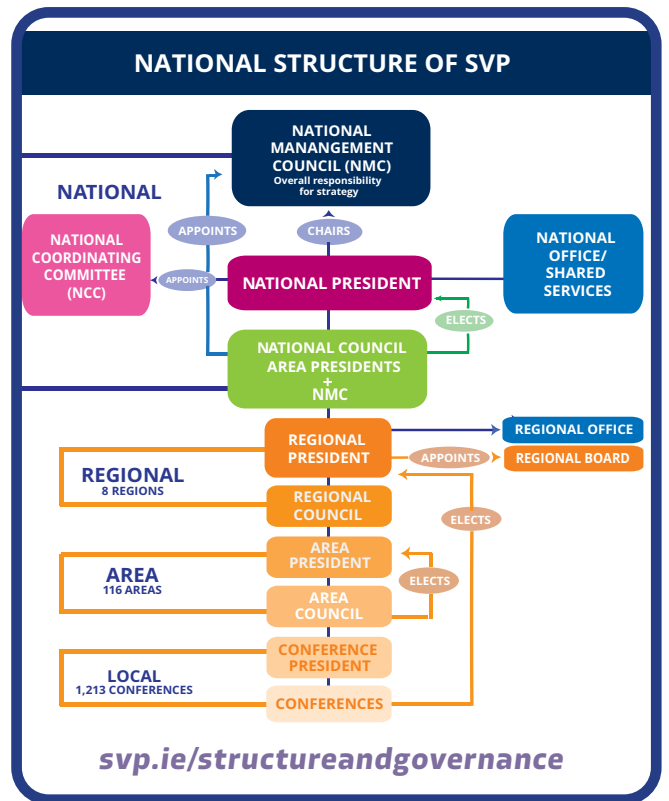
The Society is a member led unincorporated entity, comprising more than 11,000 Members and Volunteers supported by over 800 staff.

The Society is organised into 1,164 Conferences, organised into 108 areas, which in turn are organised into eight regions North and South. The Society is governed by a Rule (constitution) which is drawn from the International Rule.

The Rule sets out the purposes and objects of the Society and the governance arrangements and internal management of the organisation.

The National Management Council is the directive, coordinating and management body of the Society in Ireland and sets the policy of the Society, consistent with the Mission and Values Statement. It is also responsible for the overall direction, control and management of the activities of the Society at national, regional, area and local level and in respect of the Society's special works, implementing its policy consistent with the Mission and Values Statement.

The membership of the National Management Council consists of the National President, the eight Regional Presidents, three appointees (Vice-Presidents) of the National President and the Spiritual Advisor. The National Management Council members are also the trustees of the Society as set out in the 2009 Charities Act. As set out in the Rule certain matters are outside the remit of the NMC and must be approved by the National Council.



## STATUS

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is registered in Ireland as a charity.

## GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Society of St Vincent de Paul was established in Ireland in 1844 and is governed under the "Rule", which derives from the International Rule of the worldwide Society.

**CHARITY REGULATOR NUMBER:  
20013806**

**CHARITY NUMBER:  
CHY 6892**



## NATIONAL OFFICE

SVP House  
91/92 Sean MacDermott Street  
Dublin 1, Ireland D01 WV38

## NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL TRUSTEES

- Rose McGowan - National President
- John Lupton - National Vice President
- Peter Fitzpatrick - National Treasurer
- Larry Butler
- Marie Cronin
- Annette Beckett
- Rosa Glacken
- Maureen Mitchell
- Paddy O'Flynn
- Teresa Ryan
- Mary Waide
- Fr. Paschal Scallan - Spiritual Advisor

## AUDITORS

Deloitte Ireland LLP,  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm  
Dublin 2, Ireland

## NATIONAL SECRETARY

Andy Heffernan  
Martin Tierney (Interim from April 2022)

## PRINCIPAL BANKERS

Bank of Ireland	Allied Irish Bank plc
40 Mespil Road,	Bankcentre
Saint Peters,	Ballsbridge
Dublin 4, Ireland	Dublin 4, Ireland

## SOLICITORS

Kilcullen & Associates	McCann Fitzgerald
30 Ardagh Grove	Riverside One
Blackrock	Sir John Rogerson Quay
Co. Dublin	Dublin 2

TRUSTEE	OFFICE HELD	DATE OF APPOINTMENT TO NMC
Rose McGowan	National President	August 2020
John Lupton	National Vice President for Members	September 2020
Peter Fitzpatrick	National Treasurer	September 2020
Larry Butler	Regional President North-East & Midlands	June 2018
Marie Cronin	Regional President East	July 2020
Annette Beckett	South-East Regional President	March 2022
Rosa Glacken	North-West Regional President	December 2017
Maureen Mitchell	West Regional President	October 2020
Paddy O'Flynn	South-West Regional President	February 2020
Teresa Ryan	Mid-West Regional	July 2020
Mary Waide	President North	July 2020
Fr Paschal Scallan	Spiritual Advisor	May 2018

**DATE OF RESIGNATION FROM NMC 2021**  
No Resignations from NMC in 2021.  
Bernadette Doyle, Regional President South East, March 2022.

“I like to work with older people – I like to know about their lives and what happened to them in their lives so I can learn from them. The adults are also really interested to hear what happens to me and they offer advice to help me.”

Student with SVP's Intergenerational Programme



# SVP MEMBERS

Our aim is to bring friendship and support to people in need and suffering marginalisation; this is at the heart of what we do.

SVP Members assist individuals and families challenged by poverty and inequality, and make a real difference in the lives of many. Visitation work is only possible due to the passion and commitment of the SVP members, volunteers and staff, and through the ongoing generosity of the people of the island of Ireland which has remained as strong as ever.

We are however only as good as our members and we continue to need new volunteers to help us to address the issues we encounter in our visitation work. People can contact SVP through our network, offices, by email and phone. People can contact SVP through our eight regional or national offices by email and telephone.

## OUR NETWORK

- 1 EAST REGION**  
Dublin | Kildare  
Wicklow
- 2 MID WEST REGION**  
Clare | Limerick  
Tipperary | Offaly
- 3 WEST REGION**  
Galway | Mayo  
Roscommon
- 4 NORTHEAST & MIDLANDS**  
Cavan | Louth | Longford  
Westmeath | Meath  
Monaghan
- 5 SOUTH EAST REGION**  
Carlow | Laois | Kilkenny  
Wexford | Waterford
- 6 SOUTH WEST REGION**  
Cork | Kerry
- 7 NORTH WEST REGION**  
Donegal | Leitrim  
Sligo
- 8 NORTH REGION**  
Antrim | Armagh | Derry  
Down | Tyrone  
Fermanagh





# MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

**Covid-19 dominated the Membership Support landscape in 2021 requiring of volunteers and staff to act with flexibility and initiative to meet the needs of the Society, and most importantly, people in need.**

## REMOTE ACCESS CONTINUES

Using the experience of the months from March – October 2020, SVP Conferences continued to support their communities by providing remote assistance, receiving and returning phone calls to many individuals in need and posting out assistance in accordance with the need. Membership Support provided guidance, support and insight to our volunteers, and used evaluation surveys to ensure we could find out what worked well, and what could be improved.

## ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Assessing Need was a central theme of the newly created National Membership Support Committee, made up by volunteers from all regions, who created resources to support SVP Conferences assess need based on acknowledging the real income and real expenditure for households in Ireland.

The Committee were clear that the Society's role of friendship and support was central to hearing, helping and advising households in need. This view was expressed by the Committee members who spoke to 445 members at 16 regional seminars across the Society.

## AREA GATHERINGS

The member support team were able to offer online Area Gatherings from January 2021 and throughout the year. The number of Area Gatherings increased from 19 to 35 and likewise attendance increased from 590 members to 963.

## EDUCATION AND PRISON VISITATION GATHERINGS

2021 also saw the first online Education and Prison visitation gatherings. At the Education Gathering, regional education committees were able to reveal their level of work assessing applications and share information that nearly 1,000 students were assisted with an average assistance of €1,800.

Despite prison visitation ceasing due to Covid-19, the Society's Prison Visitation Conferences came together to discuss and reflect on issues of common concern, training requirements and future initiatives.

## RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

A concern for members was the need for and retention of new members. The lack of in-person meetings and visitation created a

concern that new, and indeed existing members, may become detached from SVP.

Conference Presidents were reminded to involve all members in the life and decision-making of their Conference.

The National Training, Development and Recruitment Committee worked exceptionally hard to create online opportunities for new volunteers. By 2021 a full suite of training modules were available online, with the Face-to-Face module taking place via Zoom. This flexibility ensured that 66% of 557 applicants were in a position to join a Conference by the end of 2021 (up from 16% in 2020), with many soon to be eligible in early 2022.

To bolster the resources of the regional training teams, a Train the Trainer session was delivered in November 2021. Their experience and passion for the work of the Society will benefit new and existing Members in the coming years.

### **ELECTRIC IRELAND HARDSHIP FUND**

In the ROI, SVP partnered with Electric Ireland to help distribute support to people experiencing significant challenges with their energy bills. To the end of 2021, SVP Members made approximately 1,500 requests for support, with the credit provided totalling approximately €470 k.

### **MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 2021**

In November 2021, 715 SVP members took the time and effort to respond to the membership survey. The questions ranged from the impact of, and innovations from, Covid; assessment of need; training and development; visitation and people in need; technology and support.

### **AREA & CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS & MSO's**

As always, the role of Area President was extremely important in 2021 as a conduit for information, advice and guidance.

Supported by a full complement of MSO's, Area Presidents were requested to communicate new and ever changing information due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Such is the importance of the Area President role, a challenge for 2022 will be to ensure that the number of Area presidents in position (77%) is increased to a higher level, and likewise a challenge exists in 2022 to bring the figure of in-term Conference Presidents of 63% to a more sustainable level.

To that end Membership Support envisages a series of specific Area and Conference President training in 2022.



# SAFEGUARDING

**Safeguarding in SVP is about maintaining a safe environment, good standards of practice, and working together to further enhance a positive ethos. We all share responsibility for safeguarding; to prevent harm in our interaction with vulnerable groups in the community, with each other as Members, Volunteers and staff, and in all operations on behalf of the Society.**

SVP Safeguarding is understood in context of The Rule which clarifies the Vincentian values of dignity, respect, empathy, compassion, empowerment, independence, justice and human rights, all of which underpin safeguarding, how we do our daily work safely, and our interaction when assisting the most impoverished across the island of Ireland. This value-base informs our understanding of safeguarding within the context of SVP, and how together we can prevent harm through our actions and words, and role model ways that uphold respectful relationships.

SVP takes safeguarding seriously and has strong reporting pathways through the

national safeguarding Designated Liaison Person network team.

In 2021, significant developments in safeguarding included the newly established National Safeguarding Committee that will, on behalf of the National Management Committee, develop a Safeguarding Strategy and annual work plan.

To mark the first National Adult Safeguarding Awareness Day in Ireland, the National Safeguarding Manager hosted a Safeguarding Symposium titled - Journeying through Safeguarding as we care for others - what it means to me as a volunteer and staff





member in SVP – making safeguarding personal in our everyday work in SVP.

The safeguarding awareness online event was recorded and had full attendance mainly by Members, with the National President as the opening speaker to deliver key safeguarding messages to the audience.

Four presentations were delivered about the work of the Membership with a focus on how everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding within SVP, and in context of government restrictions in response to Covid, exploring ways to appropriately support and empower vulnerable groups to safeguard themselves and their financial affairs

particularly the elderly in such unprecedented times.

Feedback from the evaluation is incorporated into the national safeguarding annual work plan.

One participant stated:

***“The living document which is the Safeguarding policy is very important to keep to the forefront of everybody’s mind.”***

The Safeguarding Manager, as a member of the National Safeguarding Committee of Ireland, hosted a presentation highlighting the work by SVP, and the success of the Safeguarding Symposium, which was very well received.

## **KEY PRIORITIES IN SAFEGUARDING IN 2021:**

- **supporting the implementation of recommendations from audits in safeguarding within SVP**
- **monitoring and evaluating ongoing safeguarding awareness training, including visits to conference activities, such as, food banks in Dublin, Ozanam House and Hostel accommodation in Donegal, and home visitation conference activities**
- **review of safeguarding measures in the SVP Visitation Handbook incorporating the Code of Conduct; recruitment cycle for the Membership; and HR People’s \Strategy**
- **SVP Safeguarding National Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Network building capacity, training and further strengthening reporting pathways**
- **monitoring responses to safeguarding complaints, the outcomes and implementation of the learning to improve or change standards and practices, systems and processes; eg up to date police vetting through eVetting, risk assessment of services and activities, and visitation in pairs by Members**

The Safeguarding Strategy for 2022 aims to review safeguarding and associate policies, prioritising support for the SVP Safeguarding National DLP network, on par with legislative change (Coercive Control), and to further develop the safeguarding centralised reporting system and monitoring quality assurance measures.

The Society remains committed to creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment, maintaining standards of good practice, quality service delivery and visitation activities to provide assistance to families, young children, youth and vulnerable adults, in a dignified and respectful manner.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Almost 600,000 people are living below the poverty line in Ireland. We are working to change that.**

## WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IS ONE OF THE THREE KEY PILLARS OF SVP

The role of the SVP is not only to provide immediate help to people in need, but also to tackle the root causes of the problems that we see. Homelessness, low pay, child poverty, inadequate social welfare, lack of opportunity, the high cost of housing, energy, childcare and education are some of the social injustices that SVP is challenging. We seek to influence policy makers and public opinion from a position of authority backed by evidence from our volunteers who are working with people experiencing poverty. We turn concern into action and advocate for more socially just policies with the aim of ending poverty in Ireland.

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## SVP CORE POLICY AREAS ARE:

### HOUSING

Our ambition is that everyone has access to affordable, good quality & secure housing.

### EDUCATION

We believe that investment in education from early years right through to adult education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

### ENERGY

We want to see an end to energy poverty so that everyone can afford sufficient light and heat.

### INCOME

An adequate income for everyone in and out of work is a key goal of SVP.

that SVP is challenging. We seek to influence policy makers and public opinion from a position of authority backed by evidence from our volunteers who are working with people experiencing poverty. We turn concern into action and advocate for more socially just policies with the aim of ending poverty in Ireland.

## SVP SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITY 2021 IN NUMBERS

- 4 meetings with Government Ministers, including with the Taoiseach and Tánaiste.
- 18 submissions to Government consultations focused on the National Economic Plan, Child Maintenance, SUSI Grant, Climate Action and Energy Poverty, and the New 'Housing for All' Government Strategy.
- 22 meetings with senior Government officials.
- 18 meetings with key energy suppliers and the Regulator.
- 4 reports and policy briefings.
- 2 social justice surveys of Members on support with digital devices and the impact of moneylending loans.
- 58 references to SVP social justice work in the Dáil in 2021.
- 150+ media mentions of SVP social justice issues and solutions.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN IMPACTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

In February 2021, we issued a survey to Members to capture the extent to which Conferences were supporting students with the cost of digital devices during Covid-19 related school closures. The findings of our report: *Mitigating the impact of school closures on disadvantaged students* were included in the Ombudsman for Children's review of school closures on child well-being and the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection's report on the pandemic. This work and campaigning with the Children's Rights Alliance resulted in additional funding from the Department of Education to help students with learning loss and adverse impacts on their well-being.

## **HIGHLIGHTING THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THOSE IN POVERTY**

In March 2021, we published *Cutting Back and Falling Behind*, which was an analysis of the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on households in Ireland. The representative sample of Irish adults, collected by RED C research highlighted the unequal impact of the pandemic on groups already at risk of poverty. This provided valuable evidence to support our policy proposals when engaging with Government Officials, regulators and energy suppliers on the measures needed to protect households from financial difficulty during Covid-19 restrictions.

## **REAL PROGRESS PREVENTING UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS**

SVP worked quickly to make sure the right supports were there for people at risk of being cut off from their supply when the Covid-19 disconnection moratorium was lifted in June 2021. We ensured that more flexible payment plans were being offered by suppliers and worked with the Department of Social Protection to ensure people could access support with their utility bills. We also secured a change in the Exceptional Needs Payment scheme which allowed people on pre-pay meters who may be at risk of self-disconnection access support with energy costs. These measures became even more important as energy prices started to climb at the end of 2021. As a result of this work, disconnections have stayed very low despite the energy crisis intensifying. This work continues through 2022.

## **SHINING A LIGHT ON THE HOUSING CRISIS**

In September, the Social Justice Team published two housing reports. The first was written in partnership with Threshold and entitled "*Warm Housing for All*". The report clearly set out the measures required to successfully improve energy efficiency and housing standards for tenants. The second report – *Combating Housing Exclusion in Ireland* – shone a light on the hidden aspects of the housing crisis as seen by SVP and our solutions. This has been an important advocacy tool for our engagements with the National Homeless Action Committee which is chaired by the Minister for Housing.

## **ADVOCATING FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS THROUGH THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

Budget 2022 delivered a number of key SVP asks including increased support for lone parents with back-to-school costs, increases in the SUSI grant, improvements in the Fuel Allowance, and greater investment in the National Childcare Scheme for low-income families. However, as the cost-of-living crisis intensified, the welfare increases were insufficient to keep people afloat in a sea of rising living costs. Much uncertainty remains about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on low-income households in the short and medium term. SVP will redouble our efforts to challenge poverty and inequality and advocate for investment in policies which will make a difference in the lives of people who are struggling, and a more equal society for all.

[svp.ie/end\\_poverty](https://svp.ie/end_poverty)

# SOCIAL HOUSING

The Society of St Vincent de Paul provides 861 social units with +898 tenants through a network of 62 volunteer-led Conferences. In 2021, the Society welcomed 74 new tenants over 2021. The Society is an Approved Housing Body (AHB - Tier 3).

The Society recognises that our social housing success is made possible owing to the collective hard work and dedication of our members and staff.

The Society works closely with Local Authorities, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and other external stakeholders who share our commitment to housing people in our communities.

In 2021, Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed presented many challenges. We continued to support our tenants. A hybrid approach was applied for meetings across National/Regional Committees and local Conferences.

In 2021, training was provided to members and staff online. This included Safety Management training and the development of a Social Housing Safety Management Manual for our Conferences.

A key aim for the Society is to ensure the sustainability and viability in the delivery of social housing, and central is the application of a standard social housing rent rate nationally. Across 2021 increased number of social housing tenants were supported to access rent assistance through their local authority.

In 2021, the National Social Housing Committee commenced the development of a new Social Housing Strategic Plan for 2022-2026. This involved extensive consultation with local members, regions, staff, and other stakeholders. In formulating its strategic objectives, the Society was cognisant of the need to take account of the risks identified through the Social Housing Risk Management Process. Consequently, the mitigation of risks is reflected in each of the objectives outlined in the strategy.

**Four key strategic objectives were recognised from the detailed information gathering and analysis.**

## **GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION EFFICIENCY**

The Society aims to ensure that its housing operations are well managed, resourced, and fit for purpose with the appropriate structures providing oversight.

## **OUR SERVICE & PERFORMANCE**

The Society will seek continuous improvement in its Social Housing service delivery.

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

To ensure effective asset management, provide and develop the highest quality accommodation for present and future tenants.

## **SUSTAINABLE & VIABLE SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION**

To ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of Social Housing provision.

***A copy of the strategic plan is available from the Society website.***

The AHB Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) was established in February 2021. The National Committee members participated in AHBRA focus Groups which inputted into the development of the new Standards relating to the governance of AHBs; the financial management of, and financial reporting by, AHBs; and property and asset management and tenancy management by AHBs.

In 2021, the Society developed for its Conference members a Social Housing Conference Roles and Responsibilities document, which guides the members on the tasks associated with the quality provision of social housing and tenant management.

[svp.ie/what-we-do/social-housing](https://www.svp.ie/what-we-do/social-housing)

The Society aims for quality Homes for its tenants. In 2021, the Society carried out refurbishment and energy upgrades on a number of properties / schemes nationally including Cork, Leitrim, Dublin, Kerry, and Meath.

In 2021, development training modules commenced for members of the social housing Conferences, which is planned to be delivered in 2022.

The focus on tenants' wellbeing is central to the Society's involvement in social housing. We create good homes in our communities through the support provided by members,

staff and local support. We create an environment where our tenants feel a sense of belonging, can benefit from member / staff support and friendship and feel safe and secure in their homes.

In 2021, Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed curtailed the Society's tenant events and activities for certain parts of the year. However, in 2022, we will see the return of many tenants' events and activities, including coffee, BBQs, book clubs, exercise classes, monthly mass/prayer, and outdoor gardening. The Society's aims for our tenants to have a greater capacity to sustain their tenancies and wellbeing.

## **SOCIAL HOUSING CONFERENCE MEMBER IN FOCUS**

**John Norris – President, St Frances Conference, Waterford City**

### **Background**

I am a Chartered Civil Engineer with over 40 years experience in civil engineering and building works, project management, environmental engineering, procurement and planning for a wide variety of public and private Clients including government departments, local authorities, industrial undertakers and developers.

### **How and why did you get involved in St Vincent de Paul?**

After retiring from Malone O Regan Consulting Engineers I was looking for opportunities in the not for profit / charity sector. I responded to an advertisement the Society placed in the Munster Express in 2021 looking for Architects or Engineers to help develop a housing Conference in Waterford.

### **What skills do you bring to housing / What particular area of Housing / Tenant Management are you involved in?**

I have a wide range of experience in civil engineering and building works and can assist the Society in the maintenance of existing properties and the development of new properties if opportunities arise in the future.

### **To date I have:**

- Completed numerous Stock Condition Surveys and Reports
- Completed numerous Visual Property Inspection Surveys and Reports
- Prepared a CAS Application for the refurbishment and extension of a 4 – storey building on Bridge Street in Waterford. The building will accommodate 4 x 1 – bed Apartments.
- Arranged and managed a variety of repair and maintenance works to roofs, windows and doors etc to existing St Vincent de Paul owned properties





# HOMELESS SERVICES

The Society continued to offer emergency accommodation services across the country in 10 Hostel Services, additional support services through Tenancy Sustainment Officers in Cork and Limerick City, and Outreach Workers in the Carlow and Letterkenny services.

In 2021, the Society exited 9 of the 10 hostel services, and the Letterkenny service remains. In 2014, SVP recognised that the landscape for delivering residential services for homeless people had changed since our hostels had been established by SVP Conferences some 10 or 20 years prior. In addition, regulation of the Voluntary Housing sector and a National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services reinforced the need for significant and ongoing investment in the services to meet current expectations.

In 2016, the NMC determined that the provision of these hostel services had come to exceed the capacity of SVP as a volunteer organisation, along with the rising costs of delivering contemporary accommodation services in line with modern quality standards.

SVP invited Depaul to explore a transfer of all 10 SVP homeless services. It was essential to the Trustees of both organisations that the services continued to operate under the Vincentian framework, following our shared values and ethos. Exhaustive due diligence by Depaul helped to reveal the extent of SVP subsidisation of the services arising from historical under-funding and a gap in the funding model, which provided no revenue stream for the property obligations. Thus, a complete transfer of all the services and properties on the existing funding model was not feasible, and SVP's approach of exiting service provision was reconfigured to work towards solutions on a service-by-service basis.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING / HSE

Considering the escalating homelessness crisis across the country, SVP & Depaul jointly secured the support of the Dept of Housing and the HSE national office in recognition of the inherent shortcomings in the funding model. As a result, the regional funders of seven services invited Depaul to submit full cost proposals for the transfers of services, including provision for the sinking fund/rent costs to service the properties for the first time in this sector.

Through this exhaustive joint effort over the past five years, we have attracted HSE/LA engagement for additional core annual funding for the services. This was based on budgets/service delivery models submitted by Depaul.

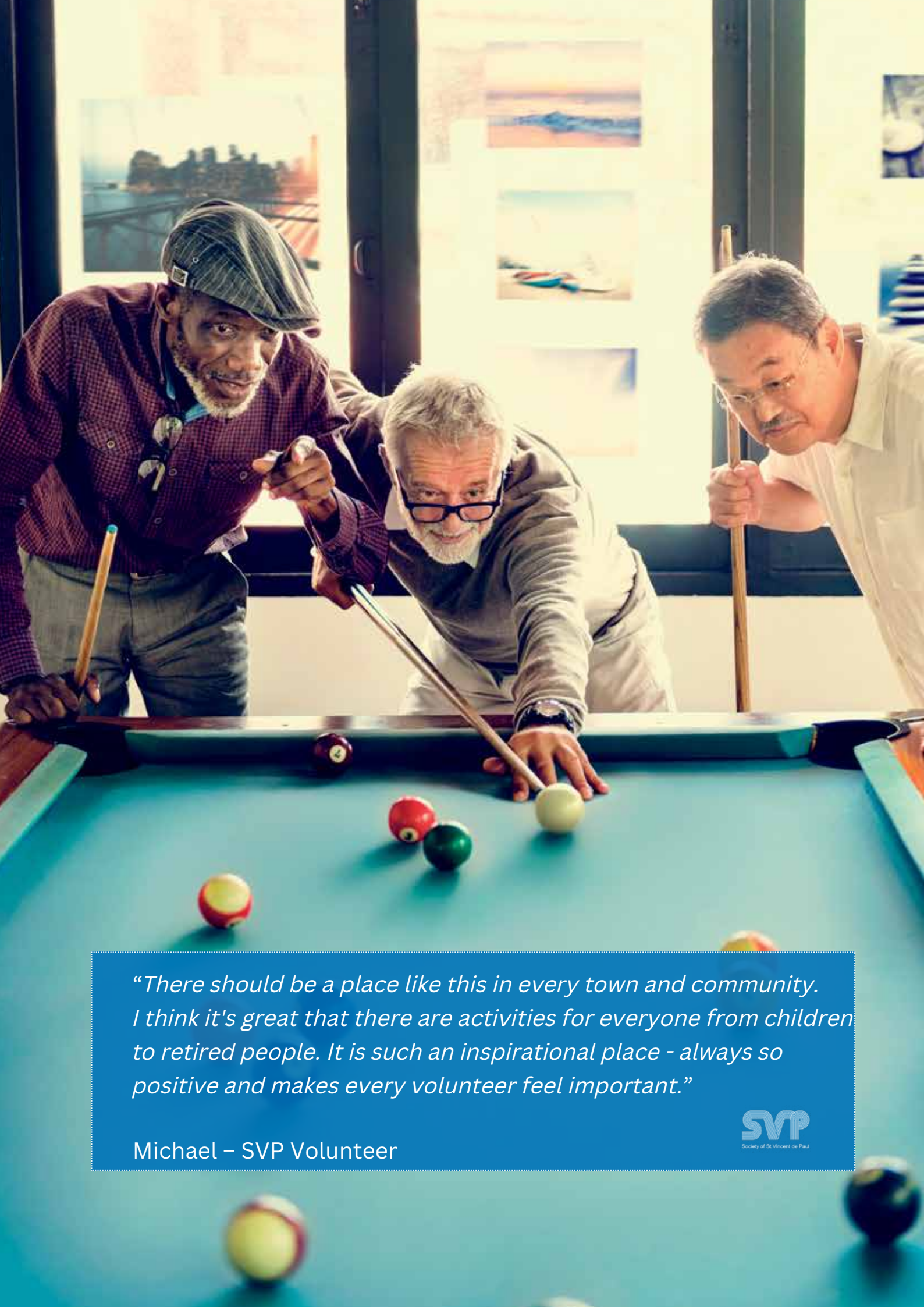
This enabled an agreement between SVP & Depaul on the entire transfer of seven homeless services to Depaul, and both organisations committed to a smooth transfer and no disruption to service users in these Representative communities.

All the following services were transferred to DePaul by 8th December 2021.

- Deerpark Hostel Cork (South West)
- St. Vincent's Hostel Cork (South West)
- Ozanam House Wexford (South East)
- McGwire House Waterford (South East)
- Carlow Area Homelessness Support Services (South East)
- St Martha's Longford (North East Midland)
- Bethany House Longford (North East Midland)

Limerick and Ennis homelessness services were transferred to Midwest Simon in 2021.





*“There should be a place like this in every town and community. I think it's great that there are activities for everyone from children to retired people. It is such an inspirational place - always so positive and makes every volunteer feel important.”*

Michael – SVP Volunteer



Society of St Vincent de Paul

# RETAIL

## Our Trading Context

In the early part of 2021, the Society's Charity shops were severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. During that period, the Society lost approximately €7.6 million in income (based on the same period in 2019, the last full trading year).

However, our retail teams returned in May 2021, full of enthusiasm and determined to reconnect with our customers. That coupled with the Society benefitting from the unprecedented generosity of the donating public resulted in income of €26.4 million for year which was a €2.6 million (11%) increase on 2020 which was an amazing recovery.

By the end of 2021, 2,520 active shop and OFC volunteers were supporting our Charity shops.

## The Retail Strategic Plan

***"Without a strategy, an organisation is like a ship without a rudder, going around in circles"***

Joel Ross

As society reopened after restrictions of lockdown, the National Retail Committee launched the Retail Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 with five key pillars of work including:

- the development of our people,
- improving the customer experience,
- improving the donor experience,
- development of the retail estate and
- decision making based on better quality data.

This work has been further underpinned by the development of a linear matrix document, RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) to provide greater clarity around the roles and responsibilities of each of the key stakeholder groups supporting retail operations.

### Should our focus be on selling or serving?

Vincent's Retail in Ireland has become synonymous with authentic customer care and the Vincentian values of social justice, self-sufficiency, and the promotion of friendship, with the retail management team advocating the view that customer engagement and service are more important than making a sale.

As well as delivering on SVP core values, this "Sales through service" approach has enabled Vincent's to distinguish itself from the competition. The next question to answer is which segment of the market should Vincent's be serving? Are we better positioned to serve the utilitarian shopper, the recreational shopper, or is it possible to develop a local blend of products and services tailored to the needs and wants of all?

As part of the development of our competitive strategy, the retail management team have developed a suite of services which span the price – quality continuum, enabling local shops to meet local needs.

This "Best Cost" model, from Porters Generic Strategies, means that we are committed to differentiating ourselves on quality and price whilst the customer gets more choice.

## Our Trading Context

Following a review of labels in 2021, donated items are now sorted and placed into three pricing brackets. Our Value, Style, and Designer tickets have been introduced to ensure that all budgets and tastes are catered for.

In addition to our budget busting value range, our Conference referral system and Emergency Assistance programme ensured that everyone has access to our products.

## The Vincent's Olympics - A Retail Recovery Showcase

As our customers returned to our shops in 2021, craving the type of engagement they had been denied during lockdown, a research opportunity presented itself to scientifically test the hypothesis that a programme of customer engagement tactics could impact positively on sales.

Within our wider research topic, we also wanted to test for any relationship between a four-week discount programme recommended by our SVP colleagues in the USA, and any identifiable uplift in Like-for-like (LFL) sales.

The basis of the markdown program is that every garment is identified with a coloured label and put through a markdown program, with the garment being sold at full price throughout week 1 and then systematically reduced by 25%, then 50%, with any remaining garments sold at €1 by week four. A Value Board was placed on each shop floor to ensure that customers could see what discounts were applicable at their time of visit.

These tactics were packaged as part of the Vincent's Olympics – a retail recovery showcase, and all shops were invited to participate. Over 200 did!

## The Results:

The level of engagement from our teams was superb. Participating shop teams had a lot of fun and showed great creativity and team spirit, engaging with our customers on many things from social events to activities to promote our strong: Reuse – Reduce – Recycle message.

Tactics have been noted and sales have been tracked across both participating and non-participating shops. A student from TU Dublin wrote her dissertation on the campaign and tested the results statistically proving that customer engagement tactics, enthusiastically implemented, impact positively on sales.

- Shops not participating in the Olympics delivered LFL growth of 2%
- Shops in Ireland participating in the Olympics delivered growth of 18%
- The Markdown programme delivered growth of more than 15%

The great news is that our Vincentian style of community retailing, operating from a mixed portfolio of urban, suburban, and rural locations, which puts customer service ahead of sales, is better for business.

## 2021: RETAIL IN NUMBERS



[svp.ie/shops](https://svp.ie/shops)

# CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Our Children and Family Services department had its first full year in operation in 2021 supporting our 40 Children and Family services throughout the island of Ireland. Having been established in September 2020, this area of function oversees and supports our services who offer child, family and adult supports in so many ways throughout the country.

## These include the following;

- **Childcare Centres**
- **Community & Family Resource Centres**
- **Meals on Wheels / Hamper services**
- **Drop in services for the homeless**
- **Holiday centres for children**
- **Youth Clubs & Youth Services**
- **Day Care Centres for the elderly**
- **Residential Centre for the elderly**
- **Prison Visitor Centres**
- **Holiday Centres and Homes for Families**

## ENHANCING OUR TEAM

2021 has seen many of our amazing team of volunteers return to the work that they are passionately committed to. This year saw our enhanced ability to recruit new volunteer members to support our services, with a dedicated profile now in place on the SVP website, highlighting the amazing opportunities in child and family services for people to share their talents, skills and passions for the benefit of others.

Our staff continue to be an incredible force, supporting our service users in so many ways, during what has been challenging times for many, particularly in our childcare centres and drop in centres for the homeless.

*"I live alone now and it can be lonely a lot of the time. But I have my friends here in the day centre and they are like a family to me now. We chat and play cards or bingo or do exercises, which is important for me at my age, and we have dinner together. We are looked after so well by everyone. It gives me so much joy in my day to come here"*

**Breda - Day Care Centre member**

## NATIONAL CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEE

In February 2021 the National Children and Family Services Committee was established by the National President as a support to members and to staff delivering children and family services. This Committee now oversees and provides governance on the ongoing development of child and family services in a collaborative and cohesive way. Terms of reference were established and agreed for this new committee, which is chaired by Ms Teresa Ryan, Regional President from the Mid West Region. The committee provides invaluable support to the great work our volunteers and staff undertake everyday in our services.



## REOPENING SERVICES

During what was a difficult year for most services, we supported the re-opening of youth clubs, youth services, including educational support groups, adult education services, day care centres and services for older members of our communities at various times throughout the year.

In all 16 services which had been curtailed at different times of the year, slowly returned to normal levels of service as the year progressed and continued to re-build capacity and re-engage with the people who missed these clubs, groups and programmes so much for what seemed so long.

Our service users were so eager and happy to come back in and enjoy the special care, compassion and support that our volunteers and our staff offer every day.

## ENHANCED SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

We developed and commenced a 'Keeping Children Safe - National Implementation Plan' to address all of the recommendations made in our 'Keeping Children Safe' internationally accredited audit undertaken in 2020. This plan supports our children's services to reach and maintain high standards in safeguarding structures and controls, further protecting those that need it most. This included an enhanced and active DLP network.

All services of size now have an internal Designated Liaison Person allocated within the service.

We also developed a nationally coordinated 'Safeguarding Training Programme' and trained 137 staff and lead volunteers throughout the year, as well as 88 Volunteers facilitating and supporting the work in our children's services.



## REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND SUPPORTS

We have worked hard throughout the year to ensure that our services maintain and remain compliant with all areas of legislation and regulation in this ever-changing environment. Not alone in our safeguarding structures and supports, but also in the areas of general operations, GDPR and risk management, where we have enhanced our operational guidelines, procedures, processes, risk registers and the monitoring and evaluation of these areas.

This work is so important in providing the solid foundation to our work and allowing us to put more energy into enhancing the quality of our services.

## LOOKING AHEAD

With the support of our new national committee, the great work of our volunteers, the support of new volunteers joining our team and with the ongoing commitment and hard work of our staff and the development of active service networks, we are now looking forward to the continued return to normal services throughout all areas of our work and to consolidating and enhancing our services further in 2022, while continuing to provide the invaluable and unique supports that we offer everyday in our services throughout the country.

# YOUNG SVP

**The Young SVP team is made up of 7 Regional Youth Development Officers, one National College Support Officer and a National Youth Development Coordinator. The team offer ongoing support to all those engaging in the Young SVP programme.**

Young SVP is our youth development programme designed for young people attending secondary school / Youthreach and other educational settings; those taking part in youth groups/clubs; and those at 3rd level – be it in college/university.

The programme focuses on social action within the ethos and mission of SVP. Young people are offered opportunities to learn about SVP, about social justice and about how to engage in social action in a positive, purposeful, and meaningful way.

In what was a difficult and unusual year for everyone, the Young SVP team showed great resilience and creativity, to maintain engagement with young people and to ensure there was a programme for them to engage with.

The year was significantly disrupted by various Covid related restrictions, lockdowns and all education being conducted virtually for a period in early 2021.

## **Despite all of these restrictions the team managed to achieve the following:**

- Our team delivered a total of 653 school visits across more than 147 different schools and other settings, where they informed students about the work of SVP, explored issues of social justice and supported them in designing and delivering activities to address needs in their own communities.
- A total of 4,850 young people were reached through our visits and chose to engage in our developmental schools programme taking part in workshops and designing action projects through the year.
- The Champions programme (more info overleaf) was maintained throughout the full academic year with monthly Young SVP connects meetings being facilitated, all online.
- Different challenges were created for young people and groups to engage in. Both groups and individuals participated in these and posted on social media about their achievements.

### **Challenges included:**

- October – Social Justice Book Club – theme poverty and inequality.
- November – ‘Use Your Power’
- February Film Club – theme Equality of Education
- ‘Choose to Challenge’ Campaign – calling out gender bias and inequality in all environments
- ‘#10days4’ - Self-Care while Volunteering – importance of minding yourself
- Community Clothes Drive – which coincided with school buildings and Vincent’s shops reopening & World Earth Day

## CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME

This year we launched our pilot Young SVP Champions Programme offering a new and exciting opportunity for young people to engage in the Young SVP programme independently of their school or group setting.

Young SVP Champions allows students with a particular interest in learning more / those who do not have the opportunity to participate through school to take part in an online version of the Young SVP Programme. Registered Champions have the opportunity to engage in online workshops, exploring topics and issues relevant to the work of SVP. They are asked to participate in Challenges that encourage social action, and to come together to meet other participants in a monthly 'Connects' meeting.

This year we had over 200 students signing up for the pilot and we intend to launch it as a full and comprehensive programme in September 2021.

### SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2020 /2021

Restricted due to Covid-19

**156**

SCHOOLS



**216**

GROUPS



**641**

WORKSHOPS  
DELIVERED



**224**

CHAMPIONS



**5,400**

PARTICIPANTS



**64%**

YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT  
TEAMS

Due to vacant posts  
& temporary layoffs



## ELECTRIC IRELAND SUPPORT & OUR NEW LOGO

Electric Ireland have been generously sponsoring the Young SVP programme since 2013 and we were delighted when they announced at the start of this academic year that this support would be continuing until at least 2023.

The support has been fantastic, and this year not only did Electric Ireland provide us with the financial support we have also been working together on other ways they can support the programme and the young people taking part. As part of this they designed a new logo for us which launched in September 2021.



[svp.ie/youngsvp](http://svp.ie/youngsvp)

# SUPPORT SERVICES



## HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources coordinates personnel activities for a staff of 824 employees (FTE) across the island of Ireland.

### Key areas of responsibility include:

- Recruitment & Selection
- Benefits, Compensation
- Policy Development
- Legal Compliance & Reporting
- Change Management Support and advice
- Development and training
- Employment Relations that promote a positive working environment

In 2021, SVP employees were facing innumerable issues including worries about their own and their families health, financial concerns, navigating a new normal of working remotely, being placed on temporary lay-off due to government restrictions, social distancing, child-care concerns, changes in family routines and general uncertainty about the future.

Throughout it all SVP's employees showed perseverance and dedication every day providing exceptional services to the community and those we assist.

Human Resources is very proud to support such talented, dedicated and hard-working employees and to work with members who demonstrated Vincentian values at their best.



## IT FUNCTION

The Society has developed several cloud-based systems to increase efficiencies in administration generally and keep up with the introduction of regulation for Charities in Ireland and the growing compliance requirements for the Charity Sector.

The Society's IT Department focuses on supporting the Society by ensuring the major cloud-based systems are available to all users around the country. The cloud-based solutions have been widely adopted within the Society, making it easier to record and

store information in a secure, reliable and accessible way.

Cyber threat is increasing year on year, and the Society has managed to improve the cyber security defense to enhance protection on major applications and data assets.

This is an evolving threat, and the Society is proactively monitoring and rolling out increased security measures to mitigate against risk where possible.





## NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

SVP's National Communications team strategically increases the Society's presence; brand awareness and digital reach; and creates a strong and trusted brand across numerous online platforms.

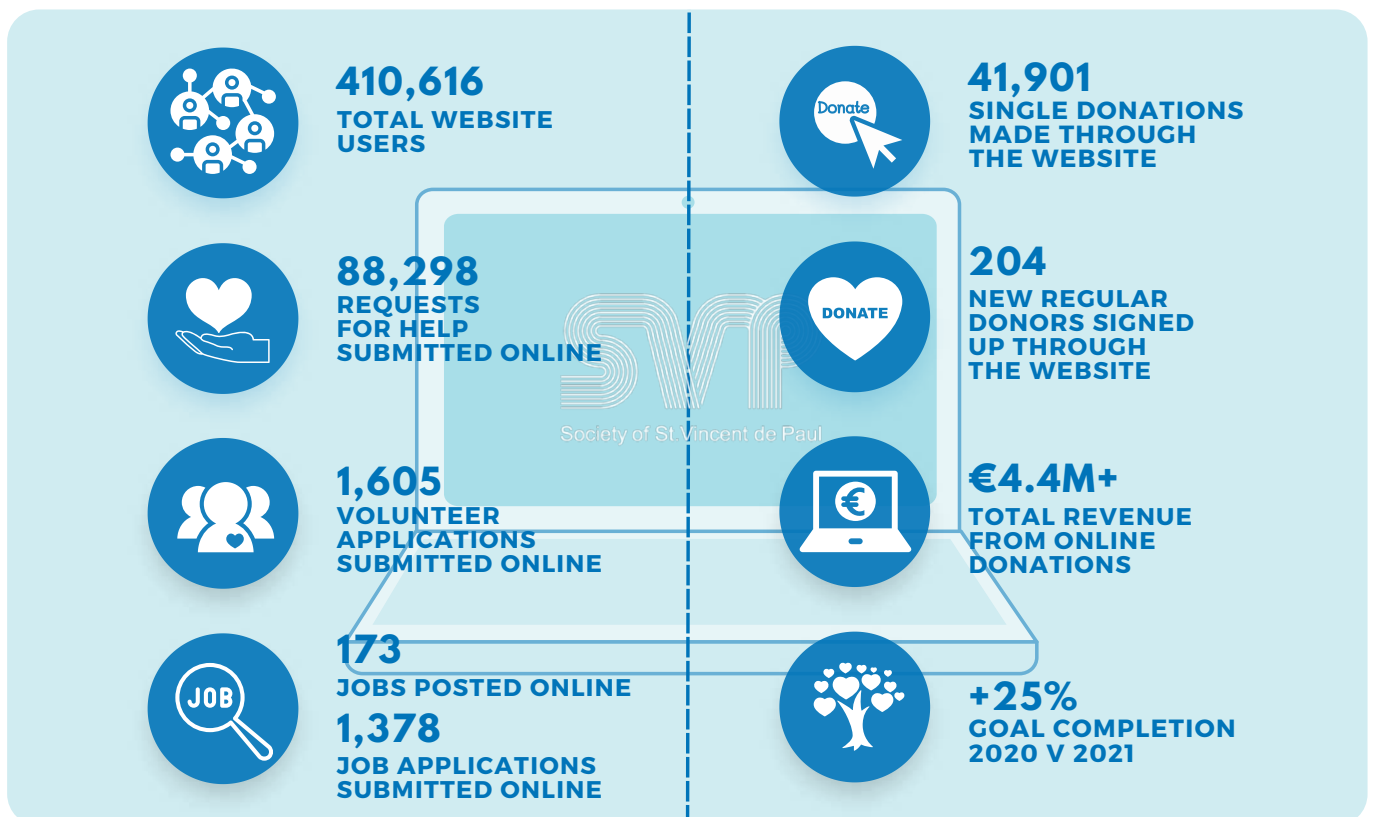
The SVP Communications Department produces digital content to inspire and motivate members, those we assist and our donors. The team regularly collaborate with multiple SVP functions and departments to spread the organisation's key messages to our diverse audiences.

The team supports both Internal and External Communications for the Society. It manages the SVP website **www.svp.ie**, national Social Media Channels (Facebook, Twitter,

Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) and Social Media Marketing Campaigns that support SVP's functions and activities. It creates, promotes and reports messaging for various campaigns for Fundraising (including the SVP Annual Appeal), Social Justice, Retail, Membership Support, Young SVP and HR. It also manages all internal email messaging to Members, Volunteers and Staff and external eZines to donors and Social Justice Supporters.

At the end of 2021, svp.ie had accumulated over 410k users, reached approximately €4.4 million in revenue, and facilitated almost 88k requests for assistance through the website from people looking for SVP's assistance online.

### 2021: SVP.ie IN NUMBERS



# FUNDRAISING

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul could not do our work without the support and the generosity of the public. We have seen how one small thing can tip a family into a cycle of poverty and crisis. But the opposite is also true. A little bit of help at the right time can change everything.

Income for the Society is received from three main sources: donations from the public, sales from our community charity shop network and Government grants for Special Works (i.e., social housing and resource centres). The core work of the Society, home visitation and direct assistance, is funded almost entirely from public donations. In 2021, fundraised income for SVP totalled €45.5 million due to the continued generosity of the Irish public.

These generous donations enabled SVP to carry out our vital work in the core area of home visitation and direct assistance with the costs of food, fuel, and school. Central to our fundraising activities each year is the SVP Annual Appeal in November and December. The SVP

Annual Appeal continues to be the main national campaign each year and is responsible for raising the majority of the funds needed. During this time, the Society benefits from a groundswell of support amongst the general public and local businesses and is facilitated by over 11,000 members and volunteers.

Other key channels of fundraising income for the Society are church collections and legacy donations. In 2021, church gate collections brought in €4.9 million for the Society, marking a percentage increase from 2020 of 30.6%.

One of the unique aspects of fundraising within SVP is the large membership base of volunteers in local communities throughout Ireland. Even with the challenges that Covid brought, these volunteers were responsible for raising a significant proportion of the income we received in 2021.

All of the donations collected are kept within the community and used to help local families.



The Society also receives support through several corporate partnerships. These partnerships provide volunteers, sponsorship and public awareness that complements the work

of our volunteers on the ground and the demand they face in local communities.

## YOUR HUNGER-FIGHTING GIFTS

With a sharp and heartbreaking rise in families who find themselves relying on food banks, your kind support is filling empty cupboards and lifting heavy hearts far and wide during this crisis...

No family should be without essential supplies such as food, toiletries, and nappies. With your support, SVP works with local groups including Clondalkin Helping Homeless, to provide food bank services.

But not only has the pandemic meant many more families depending on food banks, it's also made providing frontline services more difficult...



*"There's more paperwork, more phone calls, much more work."* says SVP volunteer and East Region President, Marie. And it's not only Marie who's struggling to keep up with the unprecedented calls for help and support.



## "I'M ON MY BIKE ALL DAY"

Noel is a volunteer in Crumlin and Kimmage. It's the overwhelming demand from struggling families that has led Noel to increase the number of days he volunteers – he doesn't want a single person to go hungry.

Since the beginning of this crisis, SVP has been posting out food and fuel vouchers. But the keen cyclist and generous heart that he is, Noel prefers to deliver them himself.

***"I'm on my bike all the time now...I normally just drop the vouchers into their letterbox myself."***

[svp.ie/fundraise](https://svp.ie/fundraise)





*“I love my club, it's like my other home. I can't wait to come every week. I feel so happy when I get to meet my friends and have fun doing so much stuff that I love and I love our leaders, they are great, they look after us and are so friendly.”*

Mathew – SVP Youth Club member



# FINANCIAL REPORTS

# INCOME & EXPENDED SUMMARY

	2021			2020		
	INCOME	EXPENDED	NET	INCOME	EXPENDED	NET
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Visitation	45,500	29,711	15,787	41,761	30,423	11,338
Twining	-	299	(299)	-	440	(440)
Fundraising	-	1,290	(1,290)	-	1,184	(1,184)
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>45,500</b>	<b>31,300</b>	<b>14,200</b>	<b>41,761</b>	<b>32,047</b>	<b>9,714</b>
<b>SERVICES</b>						
Hostels	4,724	9,085	(4,361)	5,620	9,032	(3,412)
Social Housing	3,076	4,619	(1,543)	2,826	3,974	(1,148)
Holiday Homes, Resource Centres, etc.	5,128	5,930	(802)	4,535	6,618	(2,083)
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12,928</b>	<b>19,634</b>	<b>(6,706)</b>	<b>12,981</b>	<b>19,624</b>	<b>(6,643)</b>
Charity Shops	26,404	20,849	5,555	23,817	22,045	1,772
Governance, Management, Support & Admin	-	8,317	(8,317)	-	9,087	(9,087)
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>84,832</b>	<b>80,100</b>	<b>4,732</b>	<b>78,559</b>	<b>82,803</b>	<b>(4,244)</b>
Other gains in the year	349	-	349	1,017	-	1,017
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS IN THE YEAR</b>	<b>85,181</b>	<b>80,100</b>	<b>5,081</b>	<b>79,576</b>	<b>82,803</b>	<b>(3,227)</b>

# BALANCE SHEET

The Society's Financial Reserves were €156.2 million at December 2021.

This is made up of:

RESTRICTED & DESIGNATED RESERVES

€34.1 M

PROPERTY VALUATION RESERVES

€80.8 M

GENERAL RESERVES

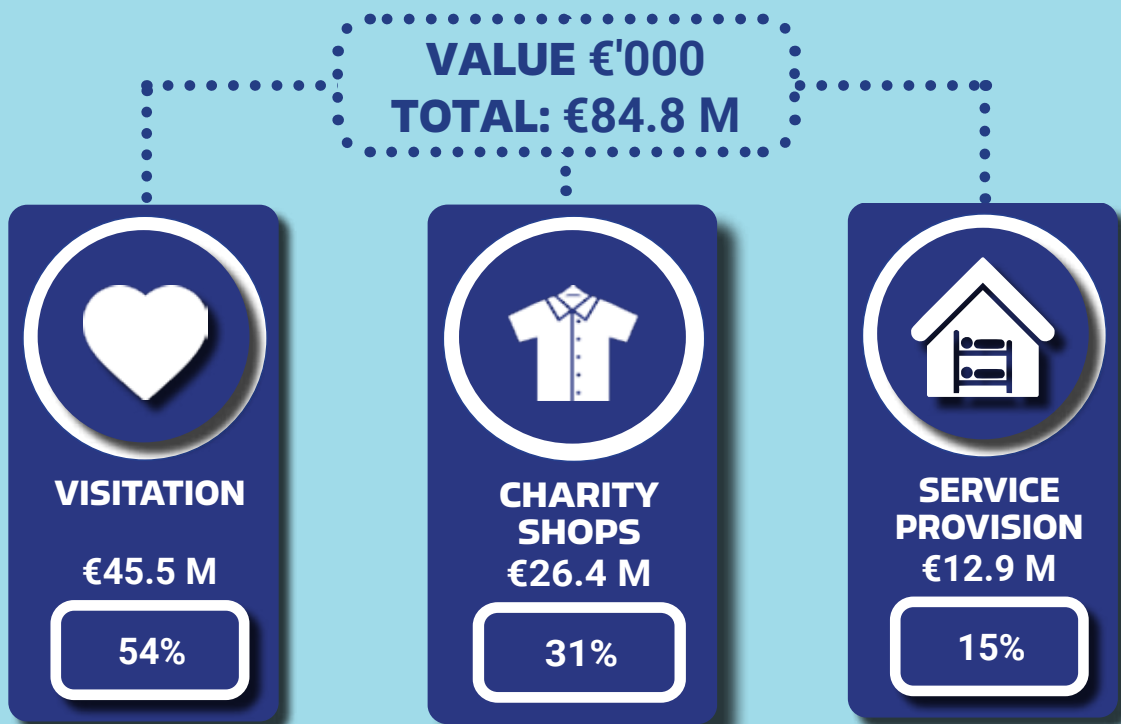
€41.3M

	2021	2020	MOVEMENT
	€'000	€'000	€'000
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Property, Tangible Assets	96,482	100,681	(4,199)
Investment and Other	57	48	9
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>96,539</b>	<b>100,729</b>	<b>(4,190)</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Stock	2	9	(7)
Debtors	6,906	3,874	3,032
Cash at Bank and in Hand			
- Restricted/Designated	34,097	25,867	8,230
- General	58,137	59,783	(1,646)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>195,681</b>	<b>190,262</b>	<b>5,419</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors falling due within 1 Year	(8,266)	(6,906)	(1,360)
Creditors and Deeds of Mortgages	(31,184)	(32,206)	1,022
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>156,231</b>	<b>151,150</b>	<b>5,081</b>
<b>FUNDS OF THE SOCIETY</b>			
Restricted	5,531	5,475	56
Property Valuations	80,817	80,817	-
Designated Funds	26,566	20,392	8,174
General Funds	41,317	44,466	(3,149)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>156,231</b>	<b>151,150</b>	<b>5,081</b>

# INCOME 2021



In 2021, total income for the Society was €84.8 M (2020: €78.6 M)



## INCOME STREAMS

The Society has a range of income streams.

SVP Annual Report 2021



The Society couldn't carry out its vital work without the generosity of our many donors and funders.



GOVERNANCE,  
MANAGEMENT,  
SUPPORT & ADMIN

SERVICE  
PROVISION

CHARTY  
SHOPS

VISITATION

# EXPENDITURE 2021

In 2021, total expenditure was  
€80.1 M (2020: €82.8 M)

VALUE €'000  
TOTAL: €80.1 M



Assistance to individuals can be direct financial support, foods, fuel and support with utility bills. Our Services include social housing, homeless services, resource centres, holiday homes etc.

Financial Statements for the Society are available online at  
[svp.ie/structure-finance-governance](https://svp.ie/structure-finance-governance)

**Everything we do throughout the Society  
relies on the generosity of the public.**

**We have seen how one small thing can tip a family  
into a cycle of poverty and crisis.**

**But the opposite is also true.**

**A little bit of help at the right time  
can change everything.**



**Thank you to our generous donors,  
and to our members, volunteers and staff  
who put their generosity  
into action everyday.**



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**CHARITY NO: CHY 6892  
CRA NO: 20013806**



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

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# **ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

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