



COPE Galway

# COPE Connections

Autumn 2021



**Shining a light on the  
Resilience, Responsiveness  
and Adaptability**

**of our people, our services  
and our community**

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COPE Galway

COPE Galway CLG is a registered charity in the Republic of Ireland.  
Registered Office:  
Calbro House, Tuam Road, Galway.  
Registered Charity No. 20011314.  
Revenue No. CHY6339.  
Company No. 248134.

## COPE Galway Services

Our Homeless, Domestic Abuse and Senior Support Services continue to operate with current public health guidelines in place. If you need to access one of our services, please call the service before coming in. Thank you.

**Teach Corrib Day Centre**  
Supporting homeless individuals  
**091 525 259**

**Family Support Service**  
Supporting homeless families  
**091 527 571**

**Out of Hours Homeless Service**  
From 7pm to 11pm  
**1800 788 887**

**Domestic Abuse Service**  
24-hour helpline for women  
**091 565 985**

**Older People's Helpline**  
Practical help and support  
**085 876 7785**

**Meals4Health**  
Meal delivery service  
**091 354 000**

# Welcome to our Autumn 2021 Newsletter

As autumn winds of change begin to blow and restrictions begin to ease we look ahead with hope and optimism to a future where we can embrace the things we missed so dearly this past 18 months.

This newsletter highlights a number of projects across our homeless, domestic abuse and senior support services such as our Helping Kids First project, Forty Years Supporting Women in Galway and Positive Aging week. I hope you enjoy reading about the work we are doing to empower people, create change and strengthen communities.

As we work towards a busy winter period, we recently took time to reflect on the challenges we faced and our achievements in 2020 with the launch of our Annual Report by Dr. Michael Ryan of the World Health Organisation. On September 8th we were joined by many of you, virtually, to celebrate the resilience, responsiveness and adaptability of our services and our communities in responding to the challenges of the pandemic since March 2020.

Through the tireless efforts of our people, the incredible generosity of our supporters and the strength and determination of our clients we supported 2,616 people in 2020.

Thanks to all who support us in working towards our vision of a community where every person is valued, cared for and supported at every stage of life.

**Go raibh mile maith agaibh,**



**Michael Smyth, CEO**



# News & Updates

## 900 Back to School Kits

Last August, our volunteers packed and distributed 900 school stationery kits to families in Galway. The kits are provided through the EU's FEAD school stationery kits initiative, and are a great support to the families COPE Galway, and other agencies support.

We distributed school kits to primary and secondary children in our Family Support Service and Modh Eile House; Tusla Family Support Services in Athenry, Ballinasloe, Gort, Loughrea, Tuam and Galway City; Youth No.4 services and Tusla Education Welfare Services.



L-R: Paul Tannian (Tusla), Shane Lally (Athlone I.T.), from COPE Galway: Geraldine Ryan, Piotr Golebioski, Fiona Gillespie, Donal Ryan, John O Grady, Billy Miller and David Harkin.

## One Million Stars

COPE Galway, together with the Community Response to Domestic Abuse, Western Regional Network, is taking part in the One Million Stars project.

The project began in Australia in 2012, when a Samoan artist began weaving stars in response to the murder of an Irish woman. It is now a global movement – spreading light, hope and solidarity against violence, particularly violence against women.



We are calling on individuals, groups, schools and businesses to help fill Galway with thousands of vibrant coloured stars and to raise awareness and ultimately help end violence against women.

To get involved, contact one of the team at Modh Eile House:

091 394 880

[modheile@copegalway.ie](mailto:modheile@copegalway.ie)

# 2020 Annual Report

We launched our annual report on September 8th, sharing stories and highlights from our work in 2020 - in what has been a most challenging, and most inspiring year.

At the launch, keynote speaker Dr Michael Ryan, director of the WHO health emergencies programme, shared insights on the impact of Covid-19 and emphasised the particular impact the pandemic has had on women and older people.

.....  
Read the annual report or watch the launch event online at [annualreport.copegalway.ie](http://annualreport.copegalway.ie)



**“Now is the time to build on the positive, successful measures introduced during the Covid-19 response”**

## Tubridy Visits COPE Galway Charity Shop



Our charity shop team were delighted when Ryan Tubridy dropped in to the shop during his recent visit to Galway. He gave special mention to COPE Galway’s services and the shop in his broadcast the following day, and referenced the Helping Kids First project, made possible thanks to funding from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal and The Community Foundation for Ireland.

Helping Kids First supports children in Galway who are living in emergency accommodation.

**Read more on page 6.**



# Helping Kids First Project

COPE Galway Family Support Service currently supports over 220 children in homeless accommodation across Galway City and County.

Many of the families we support are in emergency Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Children living in emergency accommodation often have to share bedrooms and even beds with siblings and other family members. They struggle with the limited space, limited cooking and laundry facilities and with not being able to have friends over.

Our new Helping Kids First Project addresses an identified gap in support services for children in Galway who are homeless and whose development needs are not being adequately met. We were delighted to receive a grant of €44,000 from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal.

This funding enabled us to hire a new Child Support Outreach worker who will work with parents and children to develop individualised child-centred support plans to identify and meet the needs of children of all ages while they live in emergency accommodation.

This will include setting up breakfast clubs, helping with homework and engagement in social activities and making shared living spaces more child-friendly and welcoming.

Helping Kids First has significantly increased our capacity to directly support children in Galway who are homeless. This would not have been possible without the support of the RTÉ Toy Show, Community Foundation Ireland and everyone who donated to the 2020 RTÉ Toy Show Appeal.



Some of our family support service team. L-R, Amy, Sarah, Eve, Anne and Zach





## Welcoming our Community Gardai on a meal delivery run

We were delighted to have a Galway Community Policing Unit accompany us on one of our rural deliveries in East County Galway.

Galway Gardaí and COPE Galway Senior Support Services are involved in the Galway Age Friendly programme, helping to make Galway city and county a place where people can enjoy a good quality of life as they get older.

Last June, Donal Ryan, a volunteer with our Meals4Health service, linked in with his brother Sergeant Peadar Ryan of the Galway Community Policing Unit to establish a joint agency approach and enhance awareness of the Meals4Health home-delivered meal service.

As part of this initiative, posters about our Meals4Health service were placed on display in Garda Stations



throughout Galway City and County, and a Community Gardaí unit joined us on a meal delivery run.

It is essential that older people can easily access a range of affordable, high quality, age friendly, community-based services that support them in living independently or semi-independently at home, within their own communities.

Meals4Health provides fresh, healthy, tasty food delivered to people at home.

**Contact us at 091 354 000  
or visit [www.meals4health.ie](http://www.meals4health.ie)**

# Senior Support Service News

“We are delighted to be able to offer a safe outdoor space for people in Mervue and surrounding areas to meet, share a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.”

Hilary Nolan, Community Support Worker, gives some updates on activities that are starting up for older people in the Mervue community.

After months of experiencing increased isolation and loneliness due to the pandemic, it is really great to see people getting back to connecting with others, within current health guidelines.

We held our first coffee morning last June in the back garden of a house well known locally as “The Bungalow”. 25 people attended and enjoyed tea, coffee, biscuits and got to chat and catch up with friends and neighbours again.

We plan to use The Bungalow for more activities going forward. The coffee morning will continue on Wednesday mornings at 10am, and there will be a fun, general knowledge quiz at one of the mornings. We asked those attending what other activities they would be interested in and have had lots of great suggestions.

While Sonas Day Centre continued to support clients individually throughout the pandemic, clients have missed the group activities greatly. A weekly walking group for Friends of Sonas began early in June, and has proved to be very popular.

Up to 10 people join the walk, then enjoy a cup of tea and chat outside Sonas afterwards.

As we slowly see restrictions lifting, we are all looking forward to brighter times ahead when we can safely plan indoor get-togethers and welcome everyone.



# Befriending Opportunities

Social engagement is essential to our physical and mental wellbeing and is a very strong indicator of life expectancy. With this in mind and to counteract the social isolation which developed throughout the pandemic, our Senior Support Service now has three befriending programmes available to offer companionship and supports towards good health and wellbeing. Details below.

If you, or someone you know, would like to have a weekly call or visit from a friendly volunteer (fully Garda vetted, trained and vaccinated) don't hesitate to pick up the phone.

# Thank you for celebrating Positive Ageing Week

A massive thank you to all the individuals, groups, schools, local businesses, media and communities across Galway who are taking part in Positive Ageing Week 2021 and celebrating the contribution that older people have and continue to make to their families and their communities.

Go to [copegalway.ie/positiveageingweek](https://copegalway.ie/positiveageingweek) to see the 2021 Positive Ageing Week stories, events and activities.



COPE Galway

## BEFRIENDING OPTIONS

3 levels of befriending with one goal in mind

To support people to live healthy independent lives in their own homes

*All delivered by trusted volunteers who are vetted, trained and supported by COPE Galway*

### 1. TIME TO CARE

Phone befriending encouraging people to keep well, healthy and connected.

### 2. HELPING HANDS AT HOME

Offers companionship through a weekly home visit and includes light housework.

### 3. AGEWELL

Weekly visit from an AgeWell companion providing friendship and wellness support.

age well  
Live Well. Age Well

For more information on any of the above please contact:

Noelle Jennings on 085 874 3803 / Jacquie Lynskey 086 021 1110



COPE Galway

## 40 Years Supporting Women

**Waterside House**, the previous home of our Domestic Abuse Service, was opened in 1981. Everything about that building reflected how we understood the world at the time.

The building was modest. While some independent living was possible, sharing of facilities was still necessary, with the walls so thin that privacy was a challenge. Early records show women admitted with large numbers of children to very small spaces.

There was no specific provision to support children – that came later. At that time, we did not fully appreciate the impact of an abusive home life on children, or recognise that each child would also need support. In time, a playroom was provided, which grew to a fully-fledged children’s service over the years.

In 1981, our building was known as the Battered Wives Hostel. This was how society saw women and interpreted domestic abuse – it only happened to a ‘wife’ and involved physical violence. Usually, the expectation was that the assailant was a wayward drunk. After a couple of nights with his wife away in the refuge, he would learn his lesson and behave. Until the next time.

And that is what early records show – repeated admissions, the same woman, again and again, her children’s ages changing, new babies being born, older ones moving on. Abuse which haunted and marked a family – and the best we could offer was a couple of nights in a place for “battered wives”.

The fact that this was the best offer was reflective of wider issues in society and the oppression of women – struggles persisted for access to contraception, the recognition of marital rape, the right to equal pay for equal work. Some of these struggles remain unresolved. The story of Waterside House is the story of women in Galway.

Over forty years, thousands of women came through those doors. Each woman taught us something. We listened humbly and respectfully to her story – tales of abuse, neglect, violence, humiliation, depravity, torture – thinking there was nowhere to go for help, no way to make it stop.

In 2021 the world has changed in so many ways – but not for every woman.

We will soon mark this 40 years of growing, of learning, of evolving - and we hope you to will share this milestone with us.



## **"The story of Waterside House is the story of women in Galway"**



Modh Eile House - the new home of COPE Galway's Domestic Abuse Service



# Our Impact in 2020

In 2020 COPE Galway  
supported

# 2,616\* people

across our services.



# 1,157\*

## HOMELESS SERVICE

Accommodates people who are homeless; helps find and keep long-term housing; prevents homelessness.



**807**  
Adults



**350**  
Children



**138**  
Families



**606**  
Single people  
(433 male, 173 female)



**157**  
Single people Covid-19  
response accommodation

\*total number represents unique clients

# 603\*

## DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

Offers safety, guidance, support; helps understand dynamics of abusive relationships, break cycle of domestic abuse; addresses structures in society which give rise to domestic abuse.



### 79 Women

Admitted to refuge with 84 children



### 1,104

Outreach appointments  
(203 outreach clients)



### 116

Court appointments for 109 women



### 129

Play therapy sessions for 8 children

# 856\*

## SENIOR SUPPORT SERVICE

Supports independent ageing at home; helps older people in our community stay in their own home for as long as they wish to do so.



### 68,755 Meals

produced and delivered to 735 people



### 3,359

Individuals helped via FEAD Programme



### 350

Food bag deliveries



### 85

Helpline calls



### 400

Christmas hampers



### 182

Support calls (Lockdown 1)

## Meet Luke



My journey to joining COPE Galway began in September 2020 when I was working in Fat Tony's coffee shop, just behind COPE Galway's head office. Sharon Fitzpatrick, COPE Galway's Head of Development, regularly dropped in for a coffee and our informal conversations about the work of COPE Galway really sparked my interest in the organisation.

I was in my final year at NUIG, and had to complete a module on community development. I decided to research COPE Galway for my essay, and as I read up on their services, my interest grew even more. When Sharon mentioned the possibility of working with the fundraising team over the summer, I immediately jumped at the opportunity.

**Working with COPE Galway appealed to me because of its wide range of services that cater to the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in Galway. But also as a Galway native, I found it very interesting to get an insight into the needs in Galway, and the many ways communities in Galway come together to support people.**

My role is definitely varied - I do everything from project research, providing information and inputting data, to design work, helping with running fundraising and awareness campaigns and bringing donations to our charity shop in the city centre – it is never boring!

There is a plethora of things that I like about working with COPE Galway. Knowing that what I am doing is making a difference in my local community is a great feeling. The enthusiasm of the team around me and the desire to constantly improve COPE Galway's services is very inspiring.

# Our People

The last 18 months have shone a light on the strength and resilience of our people. Throughout the pandemic, COPE Galway staff worked to ensure services continued to operate and remained safe for people who needed to access services.

We are very proud of the level of professionalism, passion and dedication of our people – something we seek to develop and nurture with new staff and student placements.

“To see people succeeding in the most challenging of times is amazing and makes it all worth it. I have a renewed and deeper appreciation for my staff team.”

**Stephanie**, Resettlement and Tenancy Support

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## Work with us

We are often looking for people to join our homeless, domestic abuse and senior support service teams. We recruit people who are passionate about our mission and committed to making a real difference.

Follow COPE Galway on LinkedIn and Twitter or go to [copegalway.ie/careers](https://copegalway.ie/careers) to see current career opportunities with COPE Galway.

The pace of work here was something that took some getting used to. The transitioning between different projects is almost seamless within the Development team. With the help of the team, I have learned to adjust to the juggling of numerous projects at once. This is a very valuable skill that I will bring forward with me.

Looking forward, it is hard to know where I will be in 5 years. I have returned to college this September to complete an MSc in Global Environmental Economics. However, one thing that COPE Galway has hungered me for is to make a difference in the space around me.

**COPE Galway has taught me that everyone can add value to their local community, whether this is in working for a non-profit organisation or through supporting one.**



# Trane Technologies collection and virtual volunteering



Trane Technologies held a staff collection as part of their GIVE programme. They collected personal hygiene products and children's craft supplies for families affected by homelessness.

The craft supplies were given to children living in B&B emergency accommodation and helped keep these kids engaged and entertained over the summer break.

Having taken part in our Helping Hands corporate volunteering programme in the past, Trane Technologies staff switched with ease to virtual volunteering projects and shared their technology skills with our staff.

**"As part of GIVE and Trane Technologies communities, we are happy and excited to support initiatives that brings us great satisfaction not only as professionals, but first as people. We are looking forward to continuing to work with COPE Galway."**

- Melissa do Santos Jackson, local lead on the Trane Technologies GIVE programme (Pictured above [right] with Leonie Woutersen, COPE Galway).

**Thank You  
Craig!**

Over the past year Electronic Arts employee Craig Gallagher has been logging his hours of volunteer service in the community. COPE Galway recently received a €800 donation from Electronic Arts in matched funding for Craig's efforts and we were able to directly utilise these funds to purchase equipment for the Helping Kids First project. (See page 6)

# Pixie Lane

Staff at Pixie Lane Creche, Athenry, have taken on a truly inspired project to create a collection of special spaces in the grounds of Modh Eile House for the women and children who come to our service. The project is ongoing, but so far, they have created a fantastic children's play area, fairy houses around the gardens, a story time area and wooden stools for children to sit on. They plan to add a pergolia and a chill-out hut for teens.



As well as getting the project done, they have also held fundraisers, including a 21km run and a sleep out, to raise funds needed for the project.

**THANK YOU** everyone involved. You are doing something really amazing for the service.

## Join the 10th Business Leaders' Sleepout and help COPE Galway in the fight against homelessness



COPE Galway *Sleep Out*  
Business leaders giving hope



2012

Event launched,  
5 participants  
€7k raised



2015

Storm Desmond



2018

10,000 people  
homeless in  
Ireland



2021

Homelessness  
is as big a  
challenge as ever

**3 DECEMBER  
2021**

**10TH BUSINESS  
SLEEP OUT!**



9 years | 137 leaders  
23,000 hours | €1m



[copegalway.ie/sleepout](http://copegalway.ie/sleepout)

# Community Support

We are deeply grateful for every single person who has fundraised and made it possible for us to continue providing services. The difference you make is invaluable. **THANK YOU.**

## Giving It SOCKS!

Thank you to all the amazing 'Give-it-Sockers' who took on our August challenge.

Over 60 participants joined the Facebook group and challenged themselves to run, walk, swim or cycle their personal distance goal and to raise much needed funds for our services. Each participant received a fantastic pair of COPE Galway socks!



Everyday our frontline service staff 'give it socks' by putting their all into supporting people in our community. We thank you sincerely for helping us to continue providing essential services.

## 2021 Kinvara Run

Runners and walkers from two community organisations - Run Kinvara and Kinvara Alive - took part in a 24 hour run/walk challenge, raising €2,948 for COPE Galway's services. This was the second annual Run Kinvara challenge, where participants ran or walked one mile an hour, every hour, for 24 hours!

Thank you to everyone who took part, and to all those who donated,



sponsored and supported the event. Your generosity helps us make a real difference to the children, young people, women and men we work with across our services.

# Annual COPE Galway Golf Scramble

We were delighted to return to our first in-person fundraising event since March 2020 at Gort Golf Club on the 9th and 10th of September. 120 enthusiastic golfers participated and managed to get some high scores and play some great golf in spite of the weather forecast!

Thank you to all our sponsors who made this event possible.



# Our first eSports Tournament

Last summer we held our very first eSports events. Players from 11 Galway Soccer Clubs went head-to-head on their PlayStations in a knockout tournament in search of Galway's best FIFA21 player. Each club had one player who represented their team.

Huge thanks to each player who took part, and to the families and clubs who supported them. The players were brilliant. They helped the tournament run seamlessly and also made a real effort to fundraise. The winning prizes of a signed Galway United shirt and €150 PlayStation network voucher were well deserved!



"The organisation of the event was perfect and there was great contact with all of the contestants. It's nice to play a game you enjoy for a great cause." Mark Diskin, Contestant.



COPE Galway understands, respects and responds to the needs of people in our community who face the challenges of homelessness and domestic abuse. We support older people towards healthy and active ageing. We seek to make a difference by empowering people, creating change and strengthening communities.



**Homelessness | Domestic Abuse | Senior Support**

[copegalway.ie](http://copegalway.ie)

