



Informing
Unmarried
Parents



Annual Report 2024





Treoir's Advocacy and Growth in 2024

In January 2024, Treoir supported the landmark Supreme Court case John O'Meara & Ors -V- The Minister for Social Protection, securing rights for John O'Meara, his children, and cohabiting couples in Ireland.

This victory was a major advance in family law, strengthening legal protections and recognition for cohabiting families who previously faced many challenges. Treoir's expert advice and advocacy ensured their voices were heard at the highest judicial level.



*We have members here from Kinship Care, Treoir and One Family and yes the families we have now are broader and more inclusive and our view is one that encompasses as many different forms that can make up a loving and supportive unit, reflecting the diversity of love, care and support that defines the essence of what is a family in Ireland in 2024. **In Ireland 1 in 5 people live in a one-parent family, 86.4% of one-parent families are headed by a mother, there are 150,000 co-habiting couples with 75,000 cohabiting couples with children, 40% of births are outside of marriage and 40% of families are non-marital.** It is why it is necessary – that is what it is, and it is what needs recognition and support. It is why we recognise all of these many forms of contemporary Irish life, families of all shapes and sizes, including amongst others, lone parent families, blended families, same-sex parents and extended families where grandparents, aunts and uncles play pivotal roles and that we are so fortunate to have them all and call them our Irish families.*

President Michael D. Higgins' speech at his Áras an Uachtaráin Garden Party

Media Presence

Treoir increased coverage to **43** instances in **2024** across local, national, and international media.

New website visitors totaled **15,661**, showing growing public engagement.

Training Impact

Parent and professional training in family law rose by **26.96%**, enhancing knowledge nationwide.

Young Parents Support

The Teen Parents Support Programme evolved into the Young Parents Support Programme, extending support to parents up to age **24** across **19** counties. **4** new projects opened in counties Kildare, Westmeath/Longford, Clare, and Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan.

Kinship Care Calls

Kinship Care Ireland received a record **807** calls from carers and professionals, more than doubling previous support requests.

Kinship Care Ireland hosted Ireland's first celebration of Kinship Care Week, joining the global community of kinship carers and kinship allies to spotlight and celebrate kinship families. **President Michael D. Higgins**, a child of kinship care, sent a letter of acknowledgement for kinship carers in Ireland which was read at the main event.

Former President Mary McAleese was the keynote speaker at a joint Treoir & One Family event for the family referendum on **March 2nd, 2024**.



Note from the CEO

I am proud to present this Annual Report as a reflection of a year marked by progress, renewal, and meaningful change. Treoir continues to be a vital voice for unmarried parents and diverse families across Ireland.

2024 was a significant year of transition, most notably with the retirement of our colleague **Veronica Black**. For over 20 years, Veronica was a pillar of our information team. She was the primary responder to calls from individuals and families seeking information in times of uncertainty. Her deep knowledge, unwavering commitment to accessible, accurate information made a lasting difference in countless lives. We extend our deepest gratitude to Veronica for her remarkable contribution and enduring legacy.

While we were sad to say goodbye, we were delighted to welcome **Sinead Murray** as our new Senior Information and Training Officer. Sinead has embraced the role with skill and compassion, ensuring a seamless continuation of our services. Despite the departure of such a longstanding team member, our information service has not only maintained its quality, it has grown stronger.

In an age of misinformation, Treoir remains a trusted source of fact-based, clear information for today's families. Our team has refined how we log and analyse queries, allowing us to better identify emerging issues and cases requiring strategic advocacy. This evolution ensures we're not only meeting individual needs, but also working toward broader systemic change.

We were especially proud to host two major events in 2024 that reflect our mission and values. In **September**, we held the first-ever **Kinship Care Week** in Ireland, an important milestone in recognising the role of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings who provide care when parents are unable to do so. It was a week of celebration and advocacy, bringing attention to the unique challenges and contributions of kinship carers.

Later in the year, we marked the **25th anniversary of the Teen Parents Support Programme**, now relaunched as the **Young Parents Support Programme**. This event honoured the legacy of the programme while reaffirming our commitment to supporting young mothers and fathers in a non-judgemental, empowering way. Both events highlighted Treoir's unique position at the intersection of policy, service provision, and lived experience.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the dedication of our **staff team**. Whether working in the information service, Young Parents Support Programme, Kinship Care, Shared Parenting, Membership and Communications, or in administrative and financial roles, every team member plays a vital part in sustaining a trauma-informed, person-centred service. I sincerely thank them for their ongoing commitment and compassion.

I also want to express my appreciation to **Treoir's Council**, our Board of Directors, whose leadership and guidance have been instrumental. Their behind-the-scenes work in governance and strategic oversight is the foundation of our stability and impact.

Finally, I extend our thanks to our **funders**. Your ongoing support has allowed Treoir to serve Irish families for the past 48 years. As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2026, we look ahead with pride and purpose, ready to face new challenges and opportunities together.

Thank you for standing with Treoir in 2024.



Damien Peelo

Chief Executive
Officer

Treoir



Note from the Chair of Treoir Council

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and pride for the work Treoir accomplished in 2024. I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to our former chair, Evelyn Mahon, who resigned in April 2024. Evelyn's leadership and contributions have left an indelible mark on our organisation, and we are profoundly grateful for her service.

I am also delighted to welcome our new council members, Anthony McCashin, Deirdre McCarthy, and John Lee. Their expertise and commitment will undoubtedly strengthen our council and enhance our efforts to support unmarried families across Ireland.

The year 2024 was one of both highs and lows for Treoir. One of the more disappointing moments was the outcome of the referendum to include unmarried families in the constitution. Despite the setback, I was moved by the immense personal effort of the staff and leadership from Damien. They dedicated their personal time to campaign for this crucial change. Their dedication and passion made me incredibly proud to be part of Treoir, and it was an honour to be elected as chair of the council this year.

Amidst the challenges, we also celebrated significant victories. One of the most notable achievements was John O'Meara's success in his Supreme Court case, which was supported by Treoir. This landmark victory will result in a major change in the support available for unmarried families after the death of a partner. We continue to work closely with the current Minister for Social Protection to ensure the 'Bereaved Partner's Pension' Bill is passed and implemented by the Department of Social Protection.

This bill represents an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to achieve equal treatment for unmarried families.

This year, we also bid farewell to a key member of the team, Veronica Black, who retired after 20 plus years of dedicated service to Treoir. Veronica's contributions have been invaluable, and her presence is greatly missed. At the same time, we were fortunate to welcome new members of staff who have settled in exceptionally well, bringing their own unique skills and talents to our organisation.

As we look ahead, I am confident that Treoir will continue to be a beacon of support and advocacy for unmarried families. The Treoir team are small, but mighty. The teamwork, co-operation and passion they have make such a difference to the families we support.

In closing, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to Treoir's work in 2024. Together, we will continue to strive for a society where all families are treated with dignity and respect.



Louise Bayliss

MSc in Equality Studies, Founder of SPARK, Head of Social Justice & Policy in St Vincent de Paul



Our Vision

Our vision is of an Ireland where the families of today and their children enjoy full equality under the law and where their legal civil and economic rights are realised both in legislation and society.

Our Mission

Our mission is to advance equal rights for families not based on marriage and the modern families of today. By providing specialist information and support, engaging in policy, advocacy, training and through building power with families impacted, members and allies we work for systemic change.



About Us

Treoir was established in 1976 as a Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children and is a nationally recognised membership-based organisation. Our initial mission was to provide vital information and support to unmarried mothers and the professionals who assisted them, at a time when many unmarried mothers faced significant societal discrimination and stigma. Children born to unmarried parents were often labelled “illegitimate,” reflecting the deeply ingrained prejudices of the era.

Since its founding almost 50 years ago, Treoir has witnessed tremendous societal change. In 1976, just 3.8% of all births in Ireland occurred outside of marriage, whereas by 2021, this figure had risen to 41%. Family structures have evolved dramatically over the past five decades, and while some legislative changes, such as the Children and Family Relationships Act 2016, the Children First Act, and the Marriage Equality referendum, have sought to address these shifts, much work remains to ensure all family types, whether married or not, are treated equally under the law.

Despite these advancements, lone parents, particularly mothers, continue to face significant financial challenges and discrimination. Poverty rates are disproportionately high among lone mothers, especially those who leave school early and struggle to return to education or work. At Treoir, we are committed to removing barriers and advocating for policies that address these inequities.

A cornerstone of our advocacy is the Young Parent Support Programme (YPSP). This programme provides crucial support for young parents up to the age of 24, recognising the unique challenges they face. Many young mothers are at higher risk of leaving school during pregnancy, with long-term consequences for their education and career choices. Our programme also supports young fathers in taking an active role in their child’s life, fostering healthier, more engaged family dynamics.

In addition, Treoir coordinates the National Kinship Care Ireland programme, kinship care is the full-time care of children by relatives or close family friends. It occurs for various reasons, including parental death, illness, substance misuse, imprisonment, abuse, or displacement. Whether formal or informal, kinship care is a form of family-based care provided within a child’s extended family or by those who have a close relationship with the child, offering a safe and nurturing alternative to traditional foster care.

At Treoir, we remain dedicated to advocating for all families and fostering a more inclusive and supportive society for unmarried parents and their children.



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Thank you so much for this call, I got more information than I was expecting, and you've been so helpful. Finding Treoir's website has been invaluable to me thank you for the work you do.

Migrant father never married to the mother, June 2024.



Treoir Staff 2024

Veronica Black

*Senior Information and Training Officer
(retired April 2024)*

Laura Dunleavy

*National Manager of Kinship Care
Ireland*

Samantha Dunne

National Manager of TPSP/YPSP

Crona Gallagher

*Programme Support for YPSP/KCI
(since October 2024)*

Anna Gibbons

Administrative Officer

Joanne Hickey

Office Assistant

Emma Hughes

Administrator for KCI/TPSP

Sharon Kavanagh

Finance Officer

Sinéad Murray

*Communications, Membership &
Information Officer (until April 2024)
& Senior Information and Outreach
Officer (from May 2024)*

Alice O'Flynn

*Communications, Membership &
Information Officer (from July 2024)*

Geraldine O'Driscoll

*Shared Parenting Liaison Officer (since
October 2024)*

Damien Peelo

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Gayle Smith

Policy & Information Officer

Treoir Council 2024

Lorraine Barry

*Ringsend & Irishtown Community
Centre*

Louise Bayliss (Chair)

*S.P.A.R.K. (Single Parents Acting on
the Rights of their Kids)*

Norma Fitzgerald

Anew

Tanya Franciosa

The Coombe

Rosemary Grant

Independent Member

Bernard Joyce

Irish Traveller Movement

Deirdre McCarthy

Independent Member

Anthony McCashin

Independent Member

John Lee

From Lads to Dads

Brian Tobin

Independent Member

Caitriona Nic Mhuiris

Kinship Care Ireland

Anita Whelan

Doras Buí

Notes on Treoir Council

- Louise Bayliss was elected as chair of the board in July 2024.
- Anita Whelan joined the board at AGM May 2024.
- Deirdre McCarthy joined the board in September 2024.
- Anthony McCashin joined the board in September 2024.
- John Lee joined the board in December 2024.
- Adele O'Connor resigned at AGM May 2024.
- Evelyn Mahon resigned at AGM May 2024.



Treoir Membership & Coalition Building

Treoir Members 2024: Civil society organisations and state bodies that are members of Treoir nationally.

- An Cosán
- ANEW Head Office
- ARC Family Resource Centre
- Barnardos*
- Childhood Matters*
- Clarecare
- Cork University Maternity Hospital
- Cox's Demesne Youth & Community Project*
- Doras Bui*
- Familibase*
- Family Support Network
- Foróige - Donegal*
- From Lads To Dads
- Galway University Hospital*
- Home Start Blanchardstown
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Limerick Social Services Council*
- Lifestart Development Drogheda*
- Men's Aid
- National Maternity Hospital
- Rainbows Ireland
- Ringsend and Irishtown Community Centre
- Rotunda Hospital
- SPARK
- St Andrew's Family Resource Centre
- St Anne's Day Nursery
- St. Catherine's Community Services Centre*
- The Coombe Hospital



Treoir has 2 honorary members for their dedication and work for the families Treoir works with and for: Margaret Dromey and Gemma Rowley.

*Member organisations that host a Teen Parent Support Programme (TPSP) or Young Parent Support Programme (YPSP) project.



Treoir, is a **member of** the following coalitions and alliances to show solidarity, research and advocate for policy change:

- Care Alliance Ireland
- Children Living with Domestic and Gender Based Violence Alliance
- Child Maintenance Communications & Consultancy Forum
- Children’s Rights Alliance (CRA)
- Community Law & Mediation (CLM)
- Courts Service Consultancy Forum
- Community Platform
- Department of Social Protection Consultancy Forum.
- European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland
- Family for Every Child
- Family Justice Strategy Consultation Forum
- Home for Good
- Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness (ICEYH)
- Legal Board Consultancy Forum
- Northeast Inner City of Dublin (NEIC)
- National One Parent Family Alliance (NOPFA)
- Parenting Network
- Solidarity Network
- Supported Youth Housing Stakeholder Group- Department of Housing
- The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT)
- The Local Parent Strategy Network
- The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
- The National Home Visiting Advisory Group
- The National Women’s Council (NWC)
- The National Women’s Council - Childcare Working Group
- The Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN)
- The Wheel
- Ukraine Forum
- Youth Strategy Steering Group- Department of Housing





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I feel so listened to and before this call I couldn't stop crying and now I feel 20 stone lighter. Thank you for all that clear information it's been so helpful.

Mother never married to the father, suffering coercive control, July. 2024.



Treoir: The National Information Service for the Families of Today

Treoir provides a free, confidential National Information Service for non-marital parents and their families, as well as for professionals working with them. Support is available via telephone, email, face-to-face (primarily in Dublin), video conferencing, and social media. As part of our commitment to flexibility and accessibility, we are continuously expanding the ways families and professionals can connect with us. This includes making reasonable accommodations for those who may need additional support, with the long-term goal of delivering a fully accessible, Plain English, and trauma-informed service.

The National Information Service for the Families of Today: encompassing any family in Ireland that is not based on opposite-sex heterosexual marriage.

This includes namely mothers and fathers who were never married to each other, co-parents, cohabiting couples with or without dependent children, LGBTQ+ parents, kinship families, migrant parents, and survivors of domestic abuse of any gender. We provide them with a combination of telecommunication information, in-person and online resources, advocacy, policy research, and communications.

Treoir supports families through a combination of trauma-informed and accessible information, public awareness campaigns, advocacy and policy research.





Key Statistics

40% of families are not based on marriage

14% of families are One-Parent

85% led by women

10-12,000 children live in kinship care (1%)

3,135 mothers under 20 in 1999

705 in 2024

26% Shared parenting among never-married lone parents

176,956 cohabiting couples evenly split with/without children

43% births outside marriage/civil partnership in 2022

26% of these births to cohabiting couples



Treoir's Information and Support Services

Trauma-Informed Approach

Treoir recognises, through both our direct work with families and our research, the importance of trauma-informed public services in Ireland. We prioritise trauma-informed care in our operations, ensuring staff are trained in empathy, self-care, boundaries, and a “no wrong door” approach; offering a welcoming, supportive experience regardless of how someone first contacts us.

Accessible, Person-Centred Information

Treoir delivers accessible, up-to-date legal and social welfare information through multiple platforms: our website, social media, and online publications. While we continue to expand our digital options, we remain committed to a personal, human response, aiming to reply on the same day whenever possible. As birth registrations outside of marriage continue to rise we work to ensure that parents are not left behind in accessing critical information and support.

Plain English & Digital Inclusion

We are actively moving towards becoming a Plain English and digitally accessible organisation, in line with developments within the Courts Service. This will help ensure that parents, carers, or professionals with literacy difficulties, English as a second language, or disabilities can confidently understand our information. It also helps combat misinformation online and makes translation into other languages easier and more accurate.

Inclusive Communication & Translation

In 2024, Treoir piloted a free translation service supported by the HSE CHO9 Social Inclusion office for families and professionals to assess demand and feasibility. Though this service takes longer to resolve a query, it reflects our commitment to intersectionality, particularly for migrant families and those with disabilities. During the trial, the service was used eight times across five languages: Arabic, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Polish, and Irish Sign Language.



The National Information Service Statistics

Treoir received 2,654 contacts from families in 2024 leading to 12,787 queries.

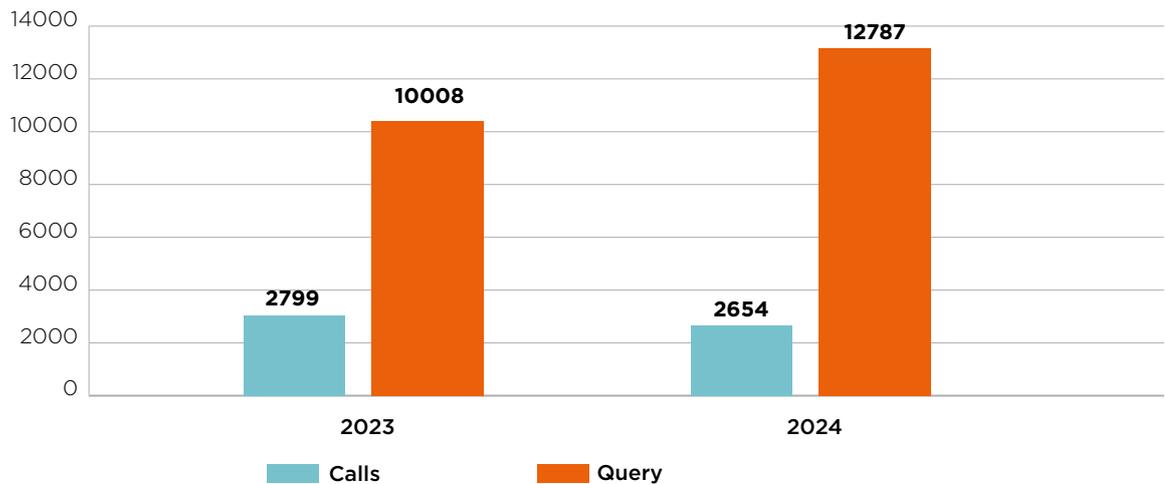
	2022 Contacts with Families	2022 Queries	2023 Contact with Families	2023 Queries	2024 Contact with Families	2024 Queries
Telephone Calls	1,984	8,632	1,803	6,492	1,746	8,563
Callback Request (from website)	913	4,081	501	2,275	463	2501
Email	442	1,387	419	1,129	409	1,445
Social Media	21	79	64	66	10	37
In-Person	8	34	12	46	26	241
Total	3368	14213	2,799	10,008	2,654	12,787

The table above shows how Treoir increased the number of contacts with families during 2024 leading to a higher number of queries than last year. The increase in queries with families and professionals can be explained by the complexities of the calls with many callers having multiple issues. Our commitment to provide a person-centred trauma informed service ensures callers feel confident in raising these often traumatic issues. The number of enquiries also reflect emergent issues related to citizenship, housing needs and maternity related queries raised by new migrant communities. However, most calls still arise within the family law arena: guardianship, access, custody, legal processing, parenting and maintenance payments.

The graph below shows the rise in queries from 2023 which reflects the increased complexity of calls.

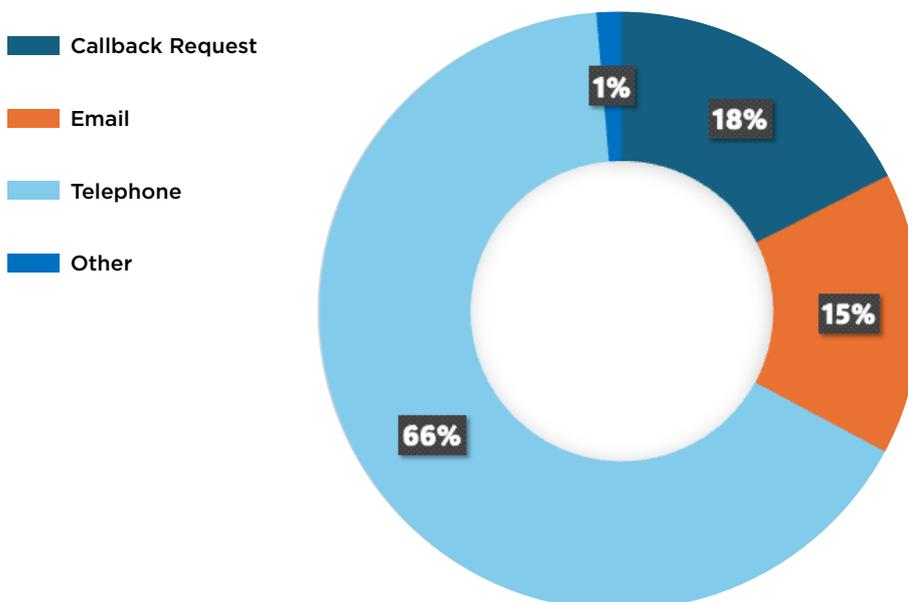


Calls & Query 2023 v 2024



Contact Method

In an increasingly digital world with numerous online resources, telephone contact remains the most popular way for people to engage with Treoir. Over 80% of parents prefer to be contacted by phone, 66% directly and 15% through website callback requests. Despite the availability of online information, many callers value the reassurance, clarity, and empathy that come with speaking to a real person, especially when dealing with sensitive or complex family matters. A phone conversation allows for immediate, personalized responses, helps build trust, and often provides the emotional support that automated services or written content cannot offer. The average response time for a call is one day, reflecting the service's commitment to accessibility and timely support.





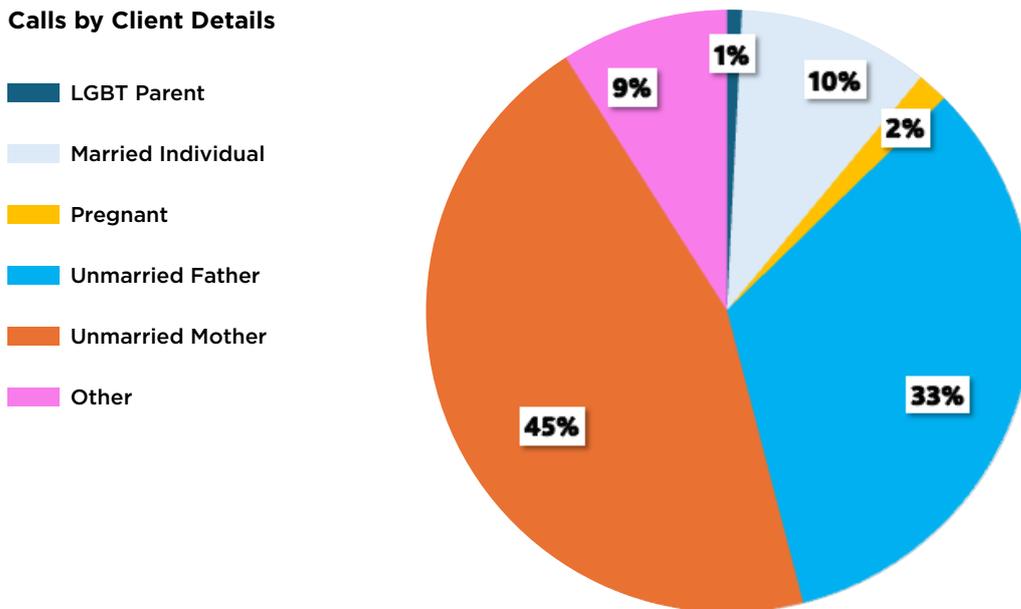
Who's Calling? Mothers, Fathers, and Treoir's Inclusive Reach

Treoir's information service supports a wide range of callers, but the majority are mothers and fathers seeking guidance on parenting and family law issues. While we are sometimes misidentified as a „fathers' organisation,“ the data tells a different story, one of broad accessibility and inclusive support.

As shown in the chart below, the largest group of callers are unmarried mothers, accounting for 45% (1,196) of total calls. Unmarried fathers follow at 33% (885), showing strong engagement from both parents. This reflects Treoir's role as a trusted, neutral source of information for all parents, regardless of gender identity.

The significant number of calls from both mothers and fathers demonstrates that parents feel comfortable turning to Treoir for information. Our service is designed to be inclusive, non-judgmental, and welcoming, providing clear, compassionate information to unmarried parents who need it.

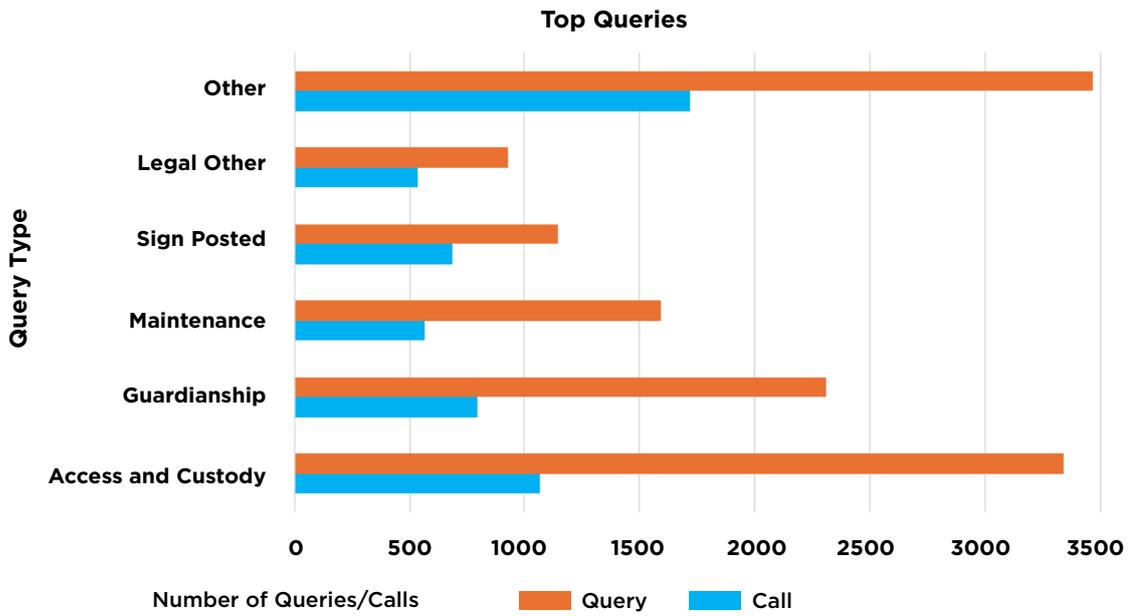
Calls by Client Details



Top Queries

The information service handles calls from a wide range of individuals, including parents, professionals, kinship carers, family members, and foster parents. Callers typically have multiple queries and often begin with, “I'm not sure if you can help, this is an unusual case.”

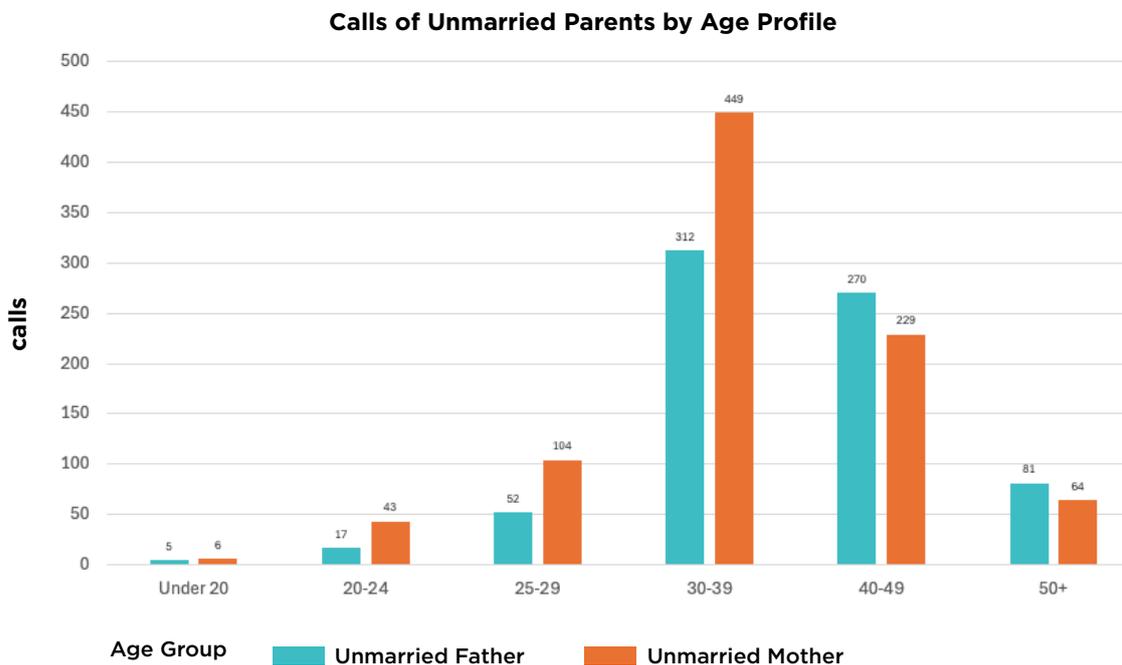
As shown in the chart below, the majority of queries **(3,342)** concerned access and custody issues. This was followed by **2,310** queries about guardianship and **1,589** about maintenance. The service referred **1,155** individuals to specialist support services. Other topics included legal matters **(930)**, birth registration **(752)**, domestic violence **(746)**, social welfare **(716)**, and miscellaneous issues **(461)**.



Age Profile

National statistics from the CSO show a clear demographic shift in parenting. Births to women aged **40** and over rose by **21.5%** over the past decade from **4,007** in 2012 to **4,868** in 2022. This trend is reflected in the age profile of callers to Treoir, with the majority of calls coming from parents aged **30** to **49**.

Conversely, births to women under **20** declined by **51.7%** during the same period, dropping from **1,616** in 2012 to **781** in 2022. In response to these changing demographics, Treoir's communication strategy targets a range of age groups using a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter), ensuring accessible support across all age profiles.





Treoir Outreach

The Senior Information and Training Officer implemented a strategic approach to outreach workshops, aligning them with Treoir's wider goals: empowering parents, building coalitions, and reaching marginalised communities. The workshops were redesigned for both in-person and online delivery, featuring tailored content, Treoir's evidence base, shared parenting and dispute resolution resources, expanded signposting, and anonymised attendee feedback.



Fantastic, informative presentation delivered with in-depth knowledge.

Family Resource Centre Manager, July 2024.

Developed in consultation with the Information Team, Kinship Care Ireland, and the Young Parents Support Programme, the new format enabled broader engagement with parents, civil society groups, and campaigns. This targeted, collaborative approach has significantly increased demand for workshops into 2025.



Excellent presentation, well organised and delivered highly. Thank you very much

Senior Medical Social Worker, November 2024



I am so happy I discovered this workshop - it is so much more helpful than just reading online, especially the opportunity to ask questions.

Parent, October 2024.



Outreach Statistics 2024



ORGANISATIONS
CIVIL SOCIETY
/ NON-PROFIT
ORGANISATIONS

13 Primary*
9 State bodies
2 Internal

*9 Other organisations
attended workshop

Compared to 2023

27 WORKSHOPS

23 Online | 4 In-Person

16
Workshop
Counties
in 2023

10
Workshop
Counties
in 2024

18.25

Average no. of
attendees

2.5hrs

Average Length
(excluding travel time)

55.75

Total Hours of
Workshops

438

Total Attendees
2024

345

Total
Attendees
2023

Average Attendees Survey Rating 2024

- I feel better prepared and informed on the legal situation of non-marital families after the session: **4.75 /5**
- My questions about the rights and responsibilities of non-marital parents were answered in this session: **4.8 /5**
- The presentation slides and materials provided will be useful in the future: **4.9 /5**
- I found the duration and style of today's training workshop engaging: **4.84 /5**



Advocacy 2024

Landmark Supreme Court Ruling on Cohabiting Families - O'Meara Case

In January 2024, the Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling advancing equality for cohabiting couples and their children, ordering the government to introduce new legislation in the coming months.

The case was brought by John O'Meara, who first contacted Treoir after being denied the Widow's Contributory Pension and Bereavement Grant following the death of his partner, Michelle Batey, in 2021. Despite cohabiting for 18 years, raising three children, and sharing a mortgage, John was excluded from support because they were not married. Treoir referred the case to the Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC), who agreed to take it on.



The legal challenge centred on two key issues: the right of their children to be treated equally under the law, and John's right to equal treatment as a surviving parent. The Supreme Court agreed, stating the family should have been recognised under the law—highlighting the unjust contradiction that cohabiting partners are assessed jointly for social welfare but denied survivor benefits.

The ruling marked a powerful moment for cohabiting families across Ireland. Treoir has since seen a surge in engagement from media, politicians, and affected families. We extend our deepest thanks to John, and his children Aoife, Jack, and Tommy, for their courage throughout a harrowing process during a time of profound loss.

We also thank Sheila Duffy and Maria O'Dwyer, who bravely shared their own experiences to support the campaign, as well as our partners at FLAC, and political allies including Deputy Alan Kelly and Deputy Ivana Bacik for their unwavering support.

This case has not only changed law—it has validated the lived experiences of thousands and renewed momentum for equal rights for all families.



Yes/Yes Equality Referendum Campaign



From September to December 2023, Treoir worked closely with civil society partners including the National Women’s Council, Independent Movement Ireland (ILMI), Family Carers Ireland, and One Family on the proposed referendums on family and care. Treoir advocated for wording aligned with the Citizens’ Assembly and Joint Oireachtas Committee recommendations.

When the government released alternative wording in December 2023, Treoir launched a consultation process with families, legal experts, staff, and stakeholders. While the “Family” referendum introduced the concept of “durable relationships,” and the “Care” amendment proposed to remove sexist language, both proposals had the potential if passed to move us closer in our journey for greater equality.

Despite some concerns with the proposed wording, Treoir ultimately backed a YesYes/TáTá vote, viewing the amendments as a necessary step away from outdated constitutional language. The campaign launched in Ozanam House, Mountjoy Square. Staff volunteered personal time to the campaign, our deepest thanks to Damien Peelo, Gayle Smith, Sinéad Murray, Laura Dunleavy, Emma Hughes, and Anna Gibbons for the personal time volunteered to this referendum.



The results were disappointing: 67% and 74% of voters rejected the Family and Care amendments, respectively. With turnout under 50%, and many previous Yes voters from 2015 (same-sex marriage) and 2018 (Repeal the 8th) abstaining or voting No, the outcome revealed a failure of leadership, public engagement, and communication—not of the principle of equality itself.

Treoir thanks all our partner organisations and, most of all, the families who stood with us especially John O’Meara, Sheila Duffy, and Deirdre McCarthy—who showed immense courage in sharing their stories despite personal cost. Special thanks to Helen Lowry for her leadership as national campaign co-ordinator.

This campaign reaffirmed Treoir’s commitment to constitutional and legal change that reflects the reality of today’s families.



This is such a helpful service, I can’t believe I didn’t know about it before.

Cohabitant Mother, regarding the Widow’s Pension, August 2024.



Campaign for an inclusive Bereaved Partner's Pension 2024

In the lead-up to and aftermath of the John O'Meara case, Treoir spoke widely to the public about the rights of cohabiting couples. Many assumed that cohabiting partners, whether same-sex or opposite-sex, had the same legal entitlements as married couples. This misunderstanding is common, especially since the Civil Partnership Act and the introduction of marriage equality. In reality, important gaps still exist in how these families are treated under the law.

Treoir connected with cohabiting partners through the information service, who were affected by the Supreme Court ruling to identify areas where families may be excluded from the proposed Bereaved Partner's Pension.

We continue to work closely with FLAC, as well as with government and opposition representatives, to ensure the final legislation is as inclusive and equitable as possible.





Additional Advocacy & Coalition Work

In 2024, Treoir engaged in a number of advocacy cases across the spectrum of family types we support, focusing on key issues including social welfare, child maintenance, family courts, birth registration and social housing.

The Power of Storytelling

Individual cases are examples of how the lived experiences of the families of today; one-parent households, bereaved cohabiting partners, kinship carers, young parents, and those navigating a complex family court system, resonate deeply at both national and international levels.

Treoir's commitment in 2024 to engage, partner, reflect, campaign, and amplify real stories led to a significant increase in media and public engagement across our core programmes.

We took strategic cases to highlight systemic inequalities, and in doing so, strengthened our role as a trusted voice for families not protected by traditional legal frameworks.





Treoir Policy

A major policy milestone in 2024 was the Supreme Court victory by the O'Meara family, which compelled the government to draft legislation extending the Widow's Contributory Pension to cohabiting couples. We welcomed the Minister for Social Protection's proposed legislation in late 2024 and await its full enactment.

Another key event was the Family and Care Referendum. While the outcome was disappointing, the campaign successfully raised public awareness about the urgent need for constitutional recognition of diverse families. It also helped forge lasting alliances and strengthened our campaigning capacity.



Our National Information Line continues to be a vital source of real-life case studies that inform our policy work. Guardianship remains a recurring issue. In 2025, Treoir will launch a campaign for a Central Register of Guardians to support separated parents, survivors of domestic abuse, kinship carers, and young parents in accessing public services.

Through our membership in the National One Parent Family Alliance (NOPFA), we contributed to a significant policy win: the removal of child maintenance as means for social welfare calculations. We now advocate for the same reform across social housing, medical cards, and legal aid.

Treoir proudly supports the Alliance for a Public Early Years and Childcare System, led by the National Women's Council. Our Policy Officer contributed to a September panel event highlighting the critical need for quality, affordable childcare, especially for lone-parent families.

We also engaged with the Department of Justice, Courts Service, and Legal Aid Board to improve access to justice. Our input contributed to the development of simplified, plain-English court forms, set to launch in June 2025.

Treoir's Policy Sub-Committee continues to drive our advocacy agenda, informed by lived experience through Kinship Care Ireland and the Young Parent Support Programme (YPSP), and strengthened by growing collaborations with academic and civil society partners. In 2024, our Policy Officer delivered guest lectures at Maynooth University, reinforcing our role as a trusted voice in family rights.



Submissions

- Pre-budget submission to Department of Social Protection.
- Observations on the bereaved partner's bill.
- Priorities for the Programme for Government.
- Opinion Piece: Enforcement-of-Child-Maintenance-Irish-Journal-of-Family-Law.pdf

Treoir Public Awareness, Communications, Membership & Policy Events 2024

- Family Homelessness
- Referendum x 4
- Treoir AGM

Kinship Care Ireland

- Kinship Care Ireland "The Way Forward" event in March
- Kinship Care Week x 5

Young Parents Support Programme

- 2 x inter-project meeting events
- 2 x training workshops
- 25th TPSP Anniversary and YPSP Launch





”

Honestly, thank you so much for this, I was feeling so powerless and like I had no say over what happened to my child because of my disability and this meeting has at least given me a way forward

Mother never married to the father, in-person, 1 October 2024.



Communications

In 2024, Treoir increased its media presence with **43** features across local (**21**), national (**18**), and international (**4**) outlets—up from **29** in 2023. This was driven by media training provided to families and strategic coverage of key issues including the John O’Meara case, Bereaved Partner’s Pension Bill, Irish Family Law reforms, referendums, Budget 2025, and child maintenance.

To mark the one-year anniversary of the John O’Meara case, Treoir launched a national communications strategy in December 2024, advocating for the urgent passage of the Bereaved Partner’s Pension Bill.

Treoir appeared in over **40** media outlets including RTÉ, The Irish Times, Newstalk, Irish Independent, The Journal, and Virgin Media.

Additionally, Treoir issued 6 press releases and contributed to joint releases as part of the Yes Yes Equality campaign, NOPFA, and the Community Platform.

Treoir In the News

Treoir was featured in the following publications and outlets: **Breaking News, Midlands Radio, Evoke, Daily Mail, Newstalk, Galway Bay FM, NUIG Student TV, Irish Independent, Reboot Republic Podcast with Rory Hearne, Tipp Midwest, Cork Life FM, The Irish Times, Limerick Live 95FM, Clare FM, Mayo News, Civicus, Irish Legal News, Law Society Gazette, Sunday Business Post, Limerick Live 95, Virgin Media, Highland Radio Donegal, The Sun, Louth /Meath FM, Beat 102103, Limerick Live, Cork Echo Op-Ed, The Last Word with Matt Cooper, Farmers Journal, RTE, The Journal Tipp West Radio, Wired Limerick, Castlebar Community Radio, Irish Daily Mail, Dundalk FM, Roscommon Herald, KLCR Live, The Late Debate on RTE , Irish Mirror, Today FM, The Irish Examiner.**



This is such a helpful service, I can’t believe I didn’t know about it before.

Cohabitant Mother, regarding the Widow’s Pension, August 2024.



Social Media 2024



www.facebook.com/treoir

146 Posts & **225** Stories

34,900 Page Reach

118 Link Clicks

5140 Page Visits

652 Likes/Reactions

125 New Followers



Instagram - [@treoir1976](https://www.instagram.com/treoir1976)

141 Posts & **308** Stories

26,259 Page Reach

86 Link Clicks

1690 Page Visits

131 Likes/Reactions

256 New Followers

Twitter / X no longer provides analytics to organisations for free. In early 2025, Treoir discontinued its use of X and switched to Blue Sky.



TikTok

Treoir launched on TikTok in December 2024, with the aim to share engage younger audiences with our informational and accessible videos and share campaign materials on the platform. TikTok generally has a larger reach and can reach a higher number of users.

5 Posts

8 Followers

2,404 Viewers

12 Likes



Treoir Website Analytics

15,661 new visitors to our website. Of these visitors, 85% came from organic searches and 2% came through links on social media.

69.2% of Active users were Women, **30.8%** Active Users were Men.

The age category of most of our website users is **35-44** followed by **45-54**.

Our most visited pages were **Child Maintenance, Fathers, Guardianship, Registration of Births and Access & Custody to Children**.

Most of our users were from **Dublin**, followed by **Cork, London, Limerick** and then **Galway**.



Communications Campaigns

- Election 2024: Canvas Cards for Families, Treoir's Asks for the New Government
- Budget 2025: Treoir's Asks for Budget 2025
- Treoir's Response to Budget 2025
- Child Poverty Week: Public Awareness campaign on Instagram and Facebook, highlighting the disparities in poverty between marital families and non-marital, particularly lone parent families.
- Widows pension
- Yes/Yes Equality Communications Strategy for the Family & Care Referendum
- Shared Parenting Over Christmas

Publications Distribution

To promote Treoir's National Information Service more, Treoir recommenced after the covid-19 crisis sending out of physical publications as part of our Outreach, Communication and Membership Strategy. Treoir sent out 16,679 publications. We continue to streamline our publications processes to ensure going forward our publications are up-to-date, plain English, accessible and inclusive to all family types from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and gender and sexuality identities.

Treoir Membership

Treoir met members throughout the year to discuss their main policy priorities which fed into Treoir's policy work. They were invited to engage with us in 6 membership events.

Treoir Members 1:1

One-to-one meetings were held with members throughout the year and Treoir staff attended events organised by our membership. We held discussions with potential new members that are working with homeless one-parent families, survivors of domestic abuse, and early learning initiatives.

Membership Engagement

As part of our Strategic Planning review, Treoir consulted member organisations to enhance engagement and better understand their priorities. Feedback was gathered through surveys, meetings, and ongoing communications. Members were kept informed via campaign and legislative updates, budget analysis, social media, our National Information Service, and regular features such as „What Says in the Papers.” Members were also invited to contribute to policy, research, and campaign events.



”

“I have to say this after dealing with a lot of agencies over the last few weeks and I have never been given such reassurance, clarifying quality information.

Mother never married to the father, 30th of May 2024.



Treoir's National Programmes; Young Parent Support and Kinship Care

YOUNG PARENTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME (YPSP), 2024

Formerly the Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP), the YPSP was launched in 2024, expanding support to parents under 24 during pregnancy and their child's first 1,000 days. Building on 25 years of TPSP, which supported over 10,000 parents under 19, this transformation was driven by Treoir's long-standing advocacy and funded by the European Social Fund in partnership with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and Tusla.

Four new projects were introduced in Clare, Kildare, Sligo/Leitrim/Cavan West, and Westmeath/Longford—bringing the programme to 19 counties. The official launch marked the TPSP's 25th anniversary. Treoir continues to support programme expansion into 2025.





TPSP National Advisory Committee

The Teen Parents Support Programme National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established in 1999 to oversee the TPSP initiative. Chaired by Laura Harrington (National Maternity Hospital), the NAC provides guidance on TPSP development and assists the National YPSP Manager. Its focus is on expanding the programme nationally and fostering collaboration among various agencies to better support young parents and their children.

The National TPSP Manager

In 2024, the National Manager supported TPSP projects and collaborated with professionals working with young parents through participation in working groups, events, and various committees focused on young families.

Engagement

In 2024, the National Manager collaborated with TPSP Employing Organisations, the National Advisory Committee, and project staff to enhance communication and address issues for TPSP staff and host organisations. The manager also advocated for young parents by engaging with various statutory and non-statutory agencies and government departments.

Policy and Advocacy

The TPSP advocates for young parents in Ireland by preparing a Pre-Budget Submission for the Department of Social Protection in 2024 and participating in policy discussions. Their contributions include involvement in the National Youth Housing and Homelessness strategy advisory panel and sessions with HSE and Tusla through the Children's Rights Alliance.





School Completion Programme (SCP)

The SCP, funded by Tusla's Education Support Services (TESS), aims to increase young parents completing the Leaving Certificate. For 2023/2024, it received over €264,000 for 11 TPSP projects, this funding stream is managed by Treoir. After launching the Young Parents Support Programme, an extra €50,000 was secured to assist new project work, benefiting all YPSP projects and supporting young parents in education and related activities.

Referrals to the Teen Parents Support Programme – National Figures

In 2024, 478 parents received support from eleven projects, including 430 young mothers and 48 young fathers, who face various challenges such as affordable housing, hidden homelessness, poverty, and mental health issues. The TPSP Project Workers provide holistic, trauma-informed support to help navigate these obstacles. They offer information, advocacy, and practical assistance through peer groups, one-on-one help, and home visits, aiming to enhance outcomes for both young parents and their children.

Training Workshops

In 2024, the TPSP team organised key in-person training workshops to support staff working with young parents. Highlights included the 'TPSP Toolkit' (35 attendees) and 'Focus on Fathers' (31 attendees), both open to project and non-project staff. In December, 41 staff participated in tailored training on coercive control, delivered by Saoirse Domestic Abuse Services, addressing increasing concerns about domestic violence.

Ongoing training needs assessments have identified priorities for 2025, including peer support and self-care workshops as the YPSP continues to expand.





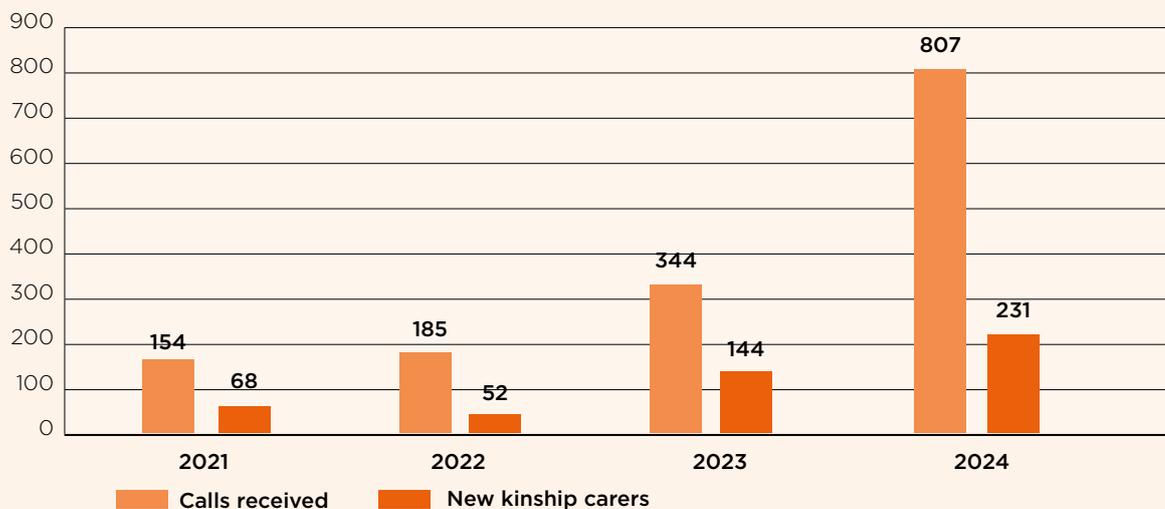
Kinship Care Ireland



Support Kinship Families

Kinship Care Ireland offers a free, confidential phonenumber and advocacy service for kinship carers, their families, and professionals nationwide. In 2024, most queries focused on legal, social welfare, and housing succession issues, advocacy support, peer support, children's needs and clarity on formal vs. informal kinship care.

Growth in kinship carers reached annually



Access to Essential Financial Support

The Guardian's Payment is a crucial social welfare payment that kinship carers may be eligible to, though only one quarter of kinship families Nationally are receiving this vital support. By the end of 2024, 1,875 guardians received the payment for 2,508 children, a slight increase from 2023. Despite this, many still struggle to secure the payment, prompting Kinship Care Ireland to offer advocacy support.

"We are saving the State billions, but being pushed to the brink"

*There's an estimated 10,000-12,000 children in kinship care in Ireland. If 10,000-12,000 children received the Guardian's Payment, it would cost the State **€134 million** annually. Providing the lower rate of Foster Care Allowance (€400/week) for the same number would cost around **€249 million** and placing them in State Residential Care would exceed **€3.6 billion** per year. Yet, in 2024, only one quarter of kinship families accessed the Guardian's payment Nationally, costing the State just **€29.6 million**. But at what cost to children, young people and their kinship carers?*



2024 Advocacy Impact

In 2024, just **12%** of kinship carers contacting Kinship Care Ireland were receiving the Guardian's Payment. Through targeted advocacy, **60%** of new callers were supported, resulting in a **9%** increase in families receiving the payment, bringing the total to **21%**.

"I think about the service ye provide all the time and the help ye gave me. If ye hadn't informed me about the payment and supported me with the process, we would have had to sell our home."

Peer Group Expansion

In 2024, Kinship Care Ireland ran 12 in-person peer groups at Hillstreet FRC, Dublin 1, with all eligible members now receiving the Guardian's Payment and accessing new supports, like early years services and teen counselling. Six new peer groups were launched in partnership with Family Resource Centres in Limerick, Waterford, Meath, Westmeath, Longford, and Kerry, supported by Rethink Ireland, The Katharine Howard Foundation, Community Foundation Ireland, and the DCEDIY Supporting Parents Fund.

Twenty-two online groups were facilitated by Karuna Counselling, and three kinship carers created an independent peer-led Facebook group, now supporting over 100 carers and reducing isolation.

A Kinship Care Peer Group Toolkit, led by researcher Maria O'Dwyer, is in development for 2025.

"I was saying on the walk here (to the peer group), until we found Kinship Care Ireland everything was spiralling downward. This was the first piece of positivity that year, it brought us back on track."





Awareness & Recognition

Kinship Care Ireland delivered **17** workshops to **431** professionals and attended **74** interagency meetings and **33** sector events. They featured in national media (**9** radio interviews & **3** newspaper articles) and represented Ireland at conferences in London and Lithuania.

Ireland's First Kinship Care Week

To mark Ireland's first Kinship Care Week, KCI hosted five webinars, a celebration event, and joined a global webinar by Family for Every Child. The campaign reached over 80,000 on social media and engaged 800+ services and all elected representatives.

“Having Kinship Care Week and all the online resources are brilliant. We are visible!”

“Thank you Kinship Care Ireland for advocating for families who are too exhausted to advocate for themselves! Thank you for the hope you help us offer to children and for the expert advise and support you give to families who care”

Political Advocacy and Campaign work

Following targeted outreach, four political parties included kinship care in their manifestos. Two pre-budget submissions and three Parliamentary Questions addressed barriers to the Guardian's Payment. Policy work continued with DCEDIY, Tusla, and others, including three kinship carer engagement meetings.

Sustainability of the programme

To meet growing demand, Emma Hughes became full-time in her information & advocacy role in December 2024, supporting increased calls and providing direct assistance.





Governance, Accountability and Transparency

Treoir is dedicated to upholding the highest levels of governance, accountability, and transparency with its members, funders, and the public. These principles are a shared responsibility between the Council and the CEO. The Council holds the ultimate responsibility for ensuring adherence to governance standards and best practices, while the CEO is responsible for implementing and maintaining the necessary procedures, practices, and protocols at all operational levels of the organisation.

In 2024, the Council held six meetings and continued to oversee the completion of the previous Strategic Plan, which was extended to 2024 due to Covid. The Council also began working with the CEO and the Treoir team on developing a new strategic plan for 2025-2030. Additionally, the Council focused on ensuring the organisation's full compliance with all relevant legislation and the Charities Code.

The Council of Treoir has three sub-committees to carry out important functions on its behalf: the Finance and Audit Committee, HR Committee, and Policy Committee.

Finance and Audit Committee

This committee met five times in 2024. The Finance and Audit committee's work included:

- Overseeing the implementation of the organisational budget, developing the budget for 2025 and reviewing the management accounts
- Overseeing the external audit
- Ensuring Treoir was compliant with the financial provisions of Charities Governance Code
- Reviewing, updating and developing financial policies and procedures

The members of this committee in 2024 were Lorraine Barry (Chair), Rosemary Grant, Anita Whelan and John Lee. The CEO and Finance Officer (Sharon Kavanagh) support the Committee.



HR Committee

The committee met four times in 2024. The committee's work included:

- Updating key policies and procedures including the Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure, Annual Leave, Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave, Pension Policy.
- Developed and adopted Treoir's Menstruation and Menopause Policy.
- Compliance with the Governance Code as it relates to staffing policies.

Members of the Committee during 2024 were: Norma Fitzgerald (Chair), Rosemary Grant, Bernard Joyce & Deirdre McCarthy. The CEO Supports the Committee.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee met five times in 2024. A primary focus for the policy committee was the seminar on Family and Care Referendum. The Committee highlighted the lack of rights for non-marital families and constitutional recognition. The Policy Committee celebrated the landmark win in the Supreme Court by the O'Meara family.

The Committee helped develop the following submissions:

- Pre budget submission to Department of Social Protection
- Observations on the Bereaved Partner's Pension Bill
- Priorities for the Programme for Government 2025.

In 2024 the Committee collaborated and consulted with organisations such as National One Parent Family Alliance (NOPFA), Community Platform, Legal Aid Board Consultancy Forum and more.

Members of this Committee are Louise Bayliss (Chair), Rosemary Grant, and Anthony McCashin. Gayle Smith (Information and Policy Officer) and the CEO support the Committee.



”

I've been in and out of courthouses and legal clinics for the last week and honestly 10 minutes on the phone with you has given me more clarity than anything. You've no idea how helpful this information was thank you so much

Father never married to the mother, 20th of August.



Financial Statements

The year ended 31st December 2024

TREOIR THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SERVICES FOR UNMARRIED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total 2024 €	Total 2023 €
Incoming resources					
Other Income	3	-	15,522	15,522	10,657
Charitable activities	3	890,463	17,657	908,120	816,032
Total incoming resources		890,463	33,179	923,642	826,689
Resources expended					
Charitable activities	4	(923,163)	(24,692)	(947,855)	(827,058)
Total resources expended		(923,163)	(24,692)	(947,855)	(827,058)
Net (Deficit) for the financial year	5	(32,700)	8,487	(24,213)	(369)

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

**TREOIR THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SERVICES FOR UNMARRIED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN****STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION****AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	2024 €	€	2023 €	€
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	9		3,280		-
Tangible assets	10		12,536		11,572
			<u>15,816</u>		<u>11,572</u>
Current assets					
Debtors	12	10,082		18,802	
Cash at bank and in hand		389,105		353,040	
		<u>399,187</u>		<u>371,842</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(142,066)		(86,264)	
Net current assets			<u>257,121</u>		<u>285,578</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>272,937</u>		<u>297,150</u>
Reserves					
Restricted funds	17		176,932		209,632
Unrestricted funds	17		96,005		87,518
Members' funds			<u>272,937</u>		<u>297,150</u>

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors and authorised for issue on and are signed on its behalf by:

.....
Louise Bayliss
Director

.....
Lorraine Barry
Director

**TREOIR THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SERVICES FOR UNMARRIED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN****DETAILED TRADING AND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 €	2023 €
Income		
HSE Dublin CH09	246,998	237,824
Tusla	19,287	20,922
HSE Crisis Pregnancy Prog	147,000	136,681
Membership fees	1,950	-
Citizens Information Board	34,400	34,400
Rental Income	12,507	7,128
Other Income	1,066	529
Katherine Howard Foundation	9,380	-
POBAL	37,755	42,986
Kinship Care	79,030	78,450
Tusla - Tess	264,769	264,769
Rethink Ireland	22,500	3,000
DCEDIY KCI What Works	15,000	-
Pobal KCI	2,000	-
TUSLA - TPSP Rebranding	10,000	-
DCEDIY Shared Parenting	20,000	-
	<u>923,642</u>	<u>826,689</u>
Administrative expenses	(947,855)	(827,058)
Operating deficit	<u>(24,213)</u>	<u>(369)</u>

**TREOIR THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SERVICES FOR UNMARRIED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN****SCHEDULE OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024	2023
	€	€
Administrative expenses		
Wages and salaries	413,144	343,316
Social security costs	43,223	32,032
Staff training / Human Resources	7,866	4,802
Staff pension costs defined contribution	15,466	10,929
Rent	42,404	33,377
Cleaning	6,959	5,738
Power, light and heat	8,110	7,602
Computer running costs	10,883	10,154
Repairs and maintenance	1,043	6,254
Insurance	1,777	1,777
KCI FRC'S	12,000	-
Supplies	6,638	9,764
Membership	8,560	7,429
Newspapers	737	635
Publishing	15,561	9,183
Travelling expenses	4,213	5,760
Conferences / meetings	21,736	10,365
Professional fees	28,566	36,375
Audit fees	3,383	3,383
Health & Safety	504	-
Bank charges	252	224
Printing and stationery	7,280	4,634
Advertising / Marketing	13,030	24
Telecommunications	5,369	7,911
Administration expenses	8,753	7,544
School completion payments	247,112	256,971
Amortisation	1,640	2,645
Depreciation	11,646	8,230
	<u>947,855</u>	<u>827,058</u>

Acknowledgements & Thank You's

We wish to thank the Citizens Information Board, Department of Children Equality, Disability and Youth, HSE CHO9, HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Katherine Howard Foundation, Pobal, Rethink Ireland, and TUSLA, without whose financial support the organisation would not exist. We would also like to thank various government departments who have kindly given their time to Treoir, either through making presentations or discussing policy issues.

Kindly funded by



treoir

Treoir is a company limited by guarantee; company number 82321, Charity number: CHY 8877. Treoir is also registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority, Ireland's national statutory regulatory agency for charitable organisations. Charity Registration Number: 20022211

treoir



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