



Annual Report 2023

Chime

The National Charity for Deaf
and Hard of Hearing People

Table of Contents

Forewords Chairman of the Board CEO	Page 3
Our mission Mission and vision Our values	Page 6
Highlights of 2023 Summer camps The return of social groups Schools' project Tinnitus support Children & Family Support Service Explore	Page 8
Impact Our year at a glance Achievements and performance Summary statistics for other resource activities	Page 17
Client stories Richard, Ellie and John	Page 21
Advocacy Children's services Hearing loss	Page 26
Funding & finances Auditor's report Statement of financial activities Chime balance sheet Fundraising	Page 32
Governance Board of directors Structure and role of the board Board attendance Sub-committees	Page 40
Contact info	Page 44

Chairman's welcome

I would like to welcome you all to Chime's 2023 Annual Report. 2023 was a successful and exciting year for Chime and we made great strides in extending our services, enhancing our advocacy and supporting our clients.

In particular I would like to mention the launch of our Children's Multi-Disciplinary Team which began its work from our newly refurbished centre in DVI Cabra. Chime worked in cooperation with the HSE, and with the support of the Minister, in the creation of this vital team. This national service supports Hard of Hearing and Deaf children with additional needs, through psychology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy. I know it will make a big difference to children's lives across the country and I look forward to watching its progression.

I took great pride in Chime's advocacy work this year and I am delighted to say that we have seen advances in issues we addressed such as:

- **The Hearing Care Plan**, with the the Minister committing to developing a National Hearing Care Plan and establishing a Working Group early in 2024 to progress this.
- **The educational needs of Deaf children**, with the Joint Oireachtas Committee agreeing that there is a need to seek information on the educational outcomes of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in our schools
- **The promotion of ISL**. Chime have engaged with Comisiún na Meán, regarding subtitles and ISL on Irish television stations. We also made initial contact with stakeholders to begin discussions on ISL becoming an examination subject in State examinations. And we began exploring how FM systems can be made available to families with young Deaf or Hard of Hearing children to help support communication in the early years

Finally, I am also delighted to say that our Residential Service provided a vital support as a home for 3 adults who are supported around the clock and plans are underway to expand this service with a much needed second house.

The dedication, positivity and goodwill of the Chime staff has continued to impress me this year. In particular the vital work that is being done by our staff at resource centres across the country. They support and advise so many Deaf and hard of hearing people in towns and counties across Ireland, and I am grateful for their hard work and commitment.

I would also like to thank the Chief Executive, Mark Byrne, and Board colleagues for their support and guidance during the year

I look forward to a successful and positive 2024 and I wish you the same.

Yours Sincerely



TOM MAGUIRE
Chairman of the Board

CEO's foreword

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2023. I am delighted to say that 2023 was another positive and successful year for Chime. It marked the third year of our four-year strategic plan to 2024, and we are proud to report that we have been able to progress many of our objectives and we are looking forward to continuing to do more to improve support for the people who use our services.

Our Services

As we move forward Chime has continued to grow and develop our services to meet the needs of all of our clients. In 2023 we saw the following services flourish:

- Our flagship Children's Multi-Disciplinary Team began its work in earnest in 2023 from our refurbished centre in DVI Cabra. This national service supports hard of hearing or Deaf children with additional needs, through psychology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy.
- Our Children and Family team also went from strength to strength in 2023, with new family events including a Family Weekend in Barretstown, and our largest ever Christmas party, running alongside our much loved core events like the Newly Diagnosed Weekends.
- We are happy to say that our Hearing Aid Service continues to expand. Our training programme is proving very successful and we will welcome two new qualified audiologists in 2024. Our LifeTech and EduTech Services both continue to give people access to life-changing technology at home, at work, in the community and in educational settings.
- Our tinnitus support service has continued to be a key area of work for Chime. In 2023 it was once again our highest area for referrals and we are happy to be able to provide much needed support in this growing area.
- We were also delighted to open our new Resource Centre in Killarney in August 2023. After 25 years in the community, the move provides a larger space to deliver services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their families in Kerry.
- In 2023 our Residential Service provided a vital support as a home for 3 adults who are supported around the clock. We are aiming to expand this service and have completed our HIQA registration process and also agreed funding with the HSE for a much needed second house.



Mark Byrne

MARK BYRNE

Chief Executive Officer

Advocacy and Campaigning

At Chime we are always working to help to improve the lives of Hard of Hearing and Deaf people in Ireland. 2023 saw us make major strides in our advocacy and campaigning.

- Our campaigning convinced the HSE to agree to review the Mental Health Service to take Deaf people into consideration.
- Chime brought to light the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at an appearance at a joint Oireachtas Committee meeting on Education.
- We highlighted to the government the issue of waiting times for HSE Audiology Services.
- We engaged with the Department of Health which lead to the Department commissioning a Working Group to establish a National Hearing Care Plan.

Staff

The wonderful staff at Chime have continued to go above and beyond to support our clients and act as positive contributors to the success of the whole organisation. We could not do what we do without our team's professionalism and their whole hearted dedication.

Like most employers in the health sector, Chime are continuing to face challenges in recruitment, as ongoing staff shortages affect our business in many areas. Our committed team have stepped up and covered these vacancies with admirable goodwill.

Chime are continuing to campaign for Pay Parity between S39s and the Public Sector. We welcome the WRC's recommendation of an 8% pay award to our staff, as well as the overall recommendation that Pay Parity is achieved.

Thank you

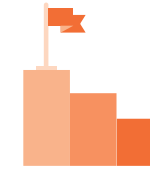
In addition to thanking our staff, there are a number of other people who helped to make 2023 a very successful year.

I would like to thank our generous funders; HSE and Pobal, who continue to support us. I would also like to thank our supporters who help us to keep up our vital work through their donations and fundraising. Our volunteers deserve our gratitude for helping us to extend the services that we provide, this includes our dedicated board of directors who lend us their guidance and support. Of course we must also mention our management team, who continue to support our teams, provide cover for our vacancies and work hard to move Chime forward in a challenging environment.



Mission

Mission and vision



OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to champion and support Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and advocate for full inclusion and equality.



OUR VISION

A future where Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are fully included and have equal opportunities.

Our Values

At Chime, we are determined to work with our values in mind. We want to create a service and support network that is inclusive and empowering, has a positive impact, shows integrity and is collaborative. We are proud of our core values because they help shape our culture and empower our team with decision-making.



AIM HIGH AND THINK BIG

We respect diversity and recognise the worth and dignity of every person. We are driven to inspire everyone to reach their potential.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We work together with dedication, empathy, creativity and passion to meet the needs of our clients. We hold ourselves accountable for delivering on our commitments.



TOGETHER IS BETTER

Teamwork is important to us. We strive to build meaningful relationships and to create more accessible services and supportive communities.



DO THE RIGHT THING

Our person-centred approach is open, honest, ethical and fair and we are proud of what we do.

Highlights of 2023



New Killarney office

In 2023, Chime took significant steps to modernise and expand our services to better serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. As part of this effort, we relocated our Killarney offices to a new, larger, and more modern facility. This move allows us to provide an enhanced, brighter environment for our clients and

enables us to reach more people than ever before. With these improved premises, we are better equipped to serve our clients, and expand our reach of audiology clients, ensuring that people in the Kerry area can benefit from our comprehensive range of services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.



Deaf Specialist MDT for children & young people

In 2023, Chime proudly launched the much-needed and long-awaited Deaf Specialist MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) service for children and young people aged 0-25.

We offer team-based assessments (Speech & Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist & Psychologist) and interventions, ensuring that each child or young person receives the specialised care and assistance they require.

Together we work in conjunction with Children's Disability and Primary Care teams across the country to provide clinical supports for Deaf and hard of hearing children and young people who have additional needs.

Regular webinars are also offered to health and social care professionals across the country to share information on a variety of topics, including working with a Deaf person, technology, autism and language deprivation.



ISL Week – 'Journeys that define us'

As part of ISL Week 2023, some of our staff members who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or part of the Deaf community, came together to create a poignant short film titled "Journeys that Define Us."

This video aims to increase awareness and understanding of their experience of being part of a Deaf family or growing up Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Through personal stories, they explored themes such as:

- growing up
- socialising
- identity
- technology
- communication

Their heartfelt narratives shed light on the unique challenges they face, fostering a deeper appreciation and awareness of their journeys within the broader community.



Kenny



Emma



Nicole



Tony

First Ever Family weekend at Barretstown



In September 2023, we hosted our first-ever Family Weekend at Barretstown, Co. Kildare, welcoming 30 families for an unforgettable experience.

The weekend was action-packed with activities like canoeing, face painting, archery, and rock climbing, creating lasting memories for all who attended. It was a truly special event that brought families together in fun and adventure.

“An absolutely wonderful weekend opportunity for us, and particularly our deaf child, to connect with deaf friends and families in the most idyllic setting for kids of this age group. We came home with our buckets and hearts full and dreaming of a chance to do it all again!”



Launch of Children's Book



In December 2023, Chime proudly launched “The Magic Within Our Ears,” an award winning collection of poetry, short stories, and illustrations created by Irish Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. This enchanting book showcases the creativity and unique perspectives of its young authors, celebrating their voices and experiences. To mark the launch,

we hosted a festive event followed by a tour of several libraries across the country, allowing communities to engage with and appreciate the remarkable talent of these children. “The Magic Within Our Ears” is now available for purchase at shop.chime.ie, offering readers a delightful journey into the imaginative world of these inspiring young individuals.

Tinnitus

In 2023, our Tinnitus service supported 434 individuals, exceeding expectations despite facing staffing challenges. Our dedicated team provided essential care nationally, both remotely and in person, ensuring clients could access support regardless of location. Tinnitus referrals have become one of the largest demands in our Community Service,

and despite the growing need, our team remained committed to delivering accessible, personalised care. As we look ahead, we aim to fill vacancies and continue expanding our services to meet the increasing demand, proud of the impact we've made on so many lives this year.



Ukrainian response



In 2023, we welcomed Deaf Ukrainian refugees to Galway, providing comprehensive support to help them settle into their new lives. Their needs were diverse, including assistance with housing, employment, school enrollment, rights, and social engagement. Given that Ukrainian Sign Language (USL) is their first language, we adapted by learning some USL and using International Sign Language and translation apps to facilitate communication. We also organised Irish Sign Language (ISL)

classes and supported their access to laptops for online education through GRET, ensuring they could continue their studies in ISL and English. This experience deepened our understanding of different sign languages and strengthened the connections between us and the community we serve. As the situation in Ukraine evolves, we remain committed to expanding our resources and training to better support Deaf Ukrainian refugees in the future.

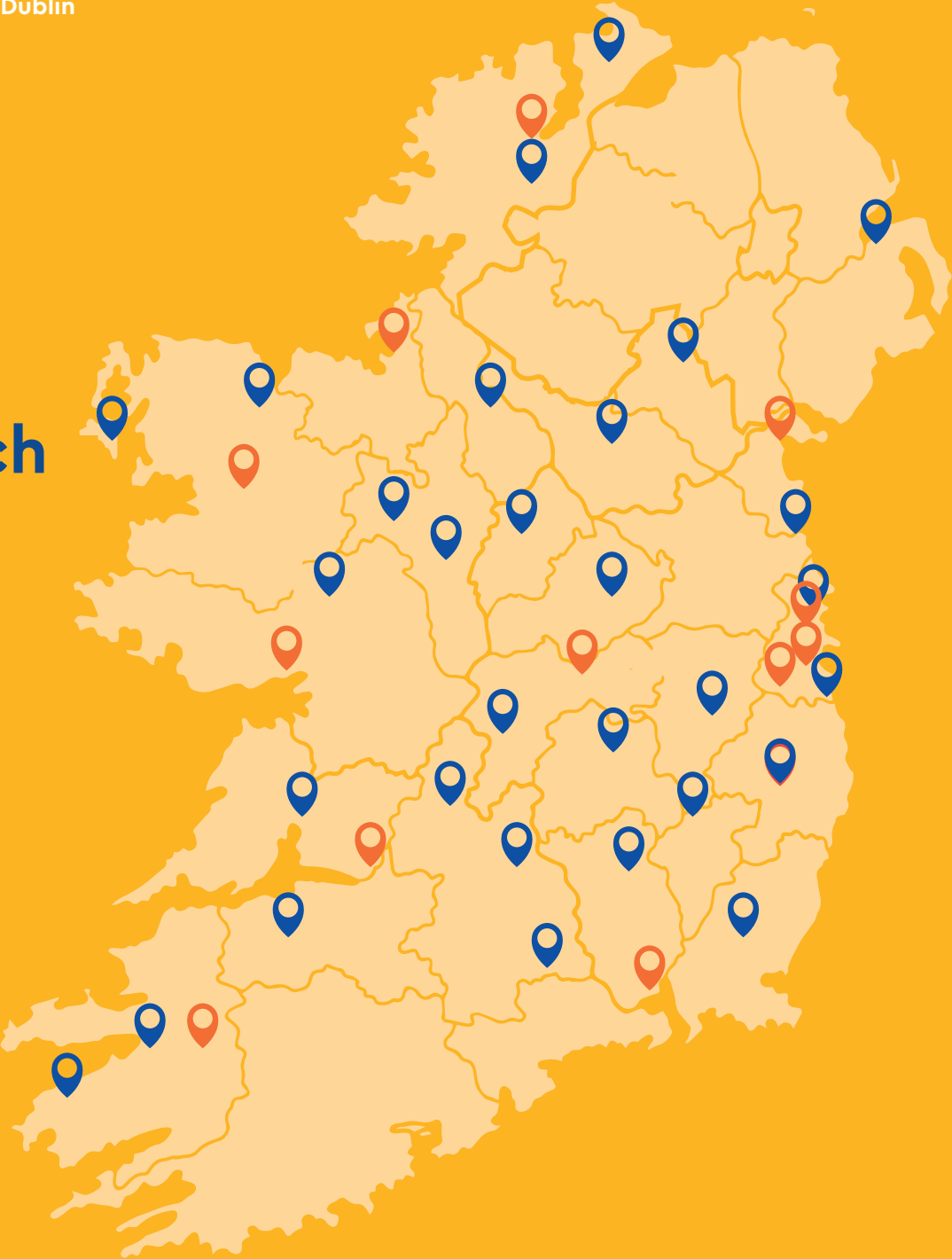
Where we are

Offices

- North Frederick St, Dublin
- Cabra, Dublin
- Tallaght, Dublin
- Dundalk
- Tullamore
- Killarney
- Limerick
- Waterford
- Castlebar
- Galway
- Sligo
- Letterkenny

Outreach

- Ballinasloe
- Castlerea
- Clifden
- Loughrea
- Roscommon
- Tuam
- Achill
- Ballina
- Ennis
- Nenagh
- Newcastle West
- Thurles
- Caherciveen
- Killorglin
- Kenmare
- Carlow
- Clonmel
- Kilkenny
- Wexford
- Birr
- Longford
- Mullingar
- Portlaoise
- Cabra
- Buncrana
- Tubbercurrey
- Mohil
- Donegal
- Sligo
- Gort



Chime offices can be found in **12 different locations** around Ireland. **Chime outreach clinics** (a free and confidential support service on all aspects of deafness and hearing loss) can be found around the country on a monthly basis.

Impact



Our year at a glance

In 2023, Chime proudly achieved significant milestones in our mission to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

We launched the Deaf Specialist MDT for Children and Young People, a groundbreaking service designed to provide specialised care and support.

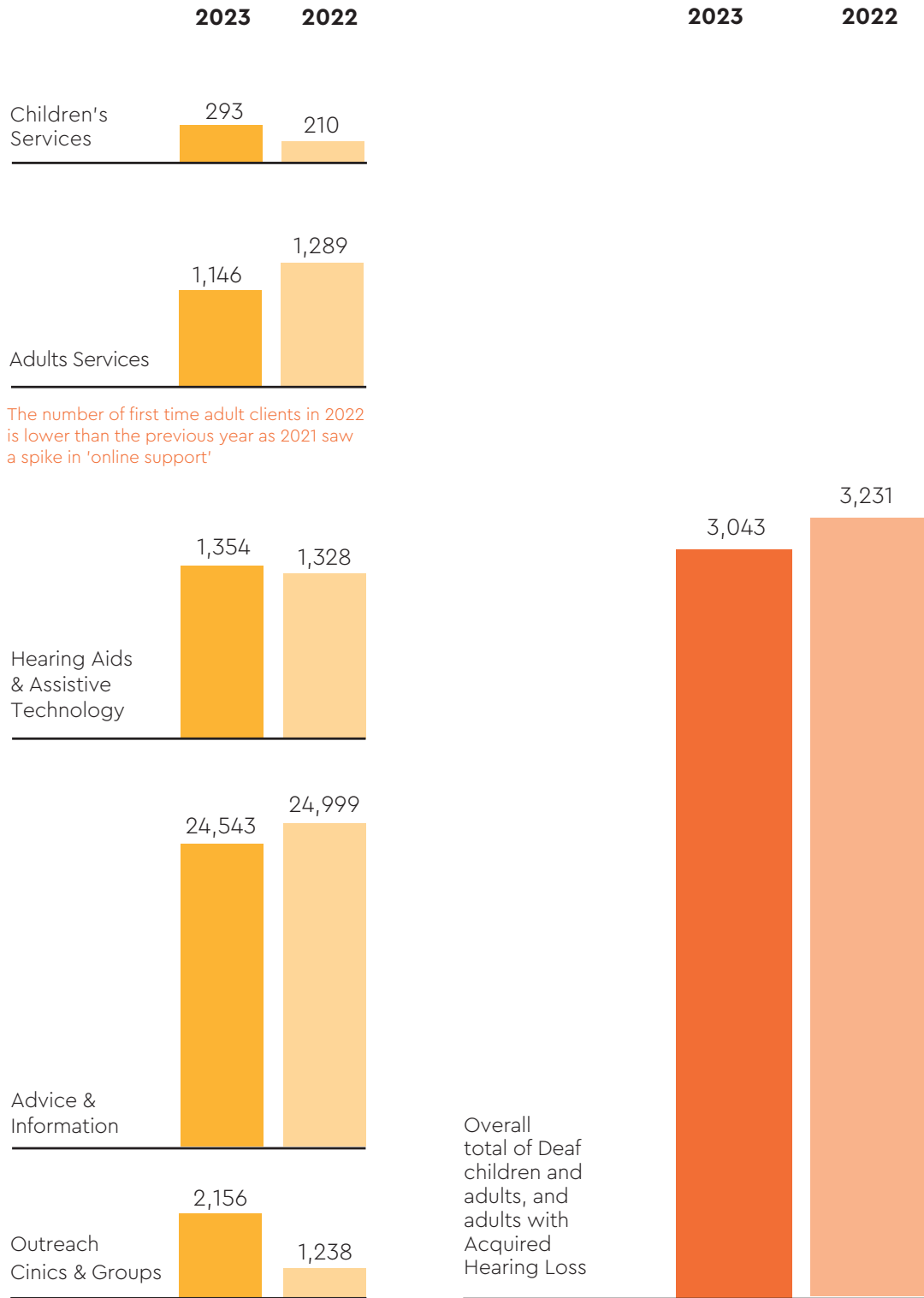
Our social groups for our Hard of Hearing clients flourished, fostering community and connection among participants.

Additionally, our programmes for young people such as the Explore Mentoring Programme and our summer camps offered enriching experiences that promoted personal growth and empowerment.

Through these and other initiatives, Chime has continued to enhance the quality of life for those we serve, advocating for inclusivity and providing comprehensive support across the country.

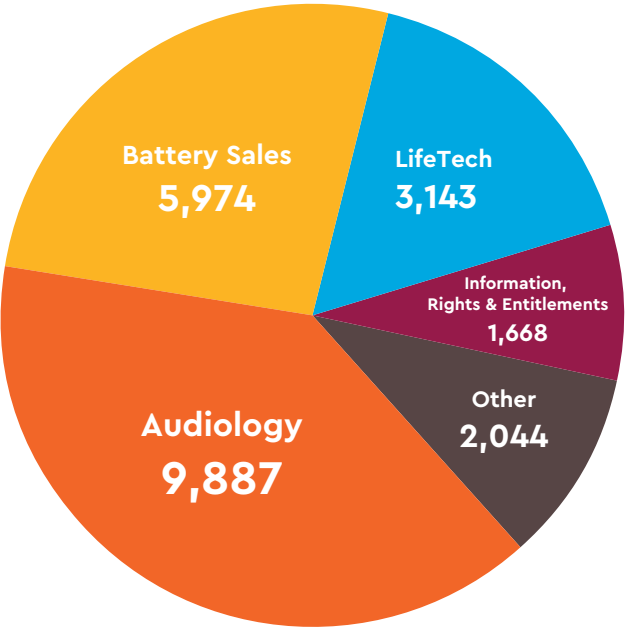


Achievements and performance

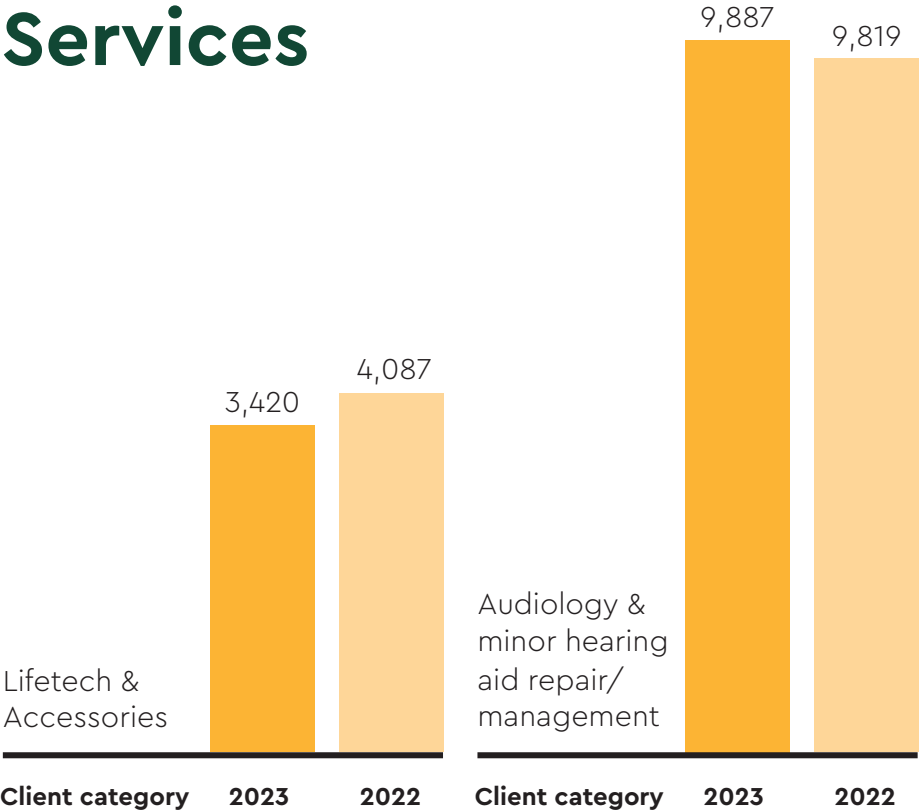


Summary statistics for other resource activities

In 2023, Chime met with 25,000 client contacts (excluding referrals)



Technology Services



Client Stories



Helen

My name is Helen Walmsley and I am the CEO of Voluntary Service International, which is the Irish branch of an international peace network.

I had no idea that there was any issue with my hearing before I was diagnosed with hearing loss. I presumed everyone else heard the same way I did. I needed to look directly at people to hear what they were saying and inevitably I would have to ask them to repeat themselves.

During zoom seminars I used subtitles so that I could follow what was happening. There was definitely a negative impact on my social life, background noise made hearing even more difficult and having to concentrate so intently was exhausting. I had difficulty holding a proper conversation and would miss a lot of what was being said.

When I finally went to Chime and received my diagnosis it was a revelation. I have mild to moderate hearing loss. I can hear high-pitched and low-pitched sound, but mid-ranged frequencies, voices and music, is where my hearing loss is. There were lots of things that I wasn't hearing properly, and I just didn't realise. I did not know the extent of my difficulty until I got hearing aids. Without them, sounds seemed muffled, but I didn't know any different.

When I put in my hearing aids in the for the first time, I could hear a clock ticking in the audiologist's room I had not heard before and my clothes brushing against a chair. Sounds became richer. I wanted to hear familiar voices, which are more nuanced for me now, each sound is now an individual thing and everything sounds better. I did not know what I couldn't hear.

Hearing aids changed my life, and I would always recommend anyone struggling with their hearing to go to Chime and get a diagnosis.



“ I didn't know others heard differently to me.”

Life is much easier for me now. Since I got my hearing aids, I find it interesting how many people tell me they or family members cannot hear very well, but they haven't looked for help.

Lots of people think they do not want hearing aids because others will see them, and they will feel self-conscious. But they are so small, mine are behind the ear and people tell me they do not really notice them.

It does take getting used to but hearing aids now are so technologically advanced. Mine come with an app, which I can use to adjust volume, prioritise sound direction and reduce background noise. They are so easy to use, and I can alter them for different work and social settings.

I would urge anyone who is worried about their hearing to speak to Chime, it really will change your life.

Sarah

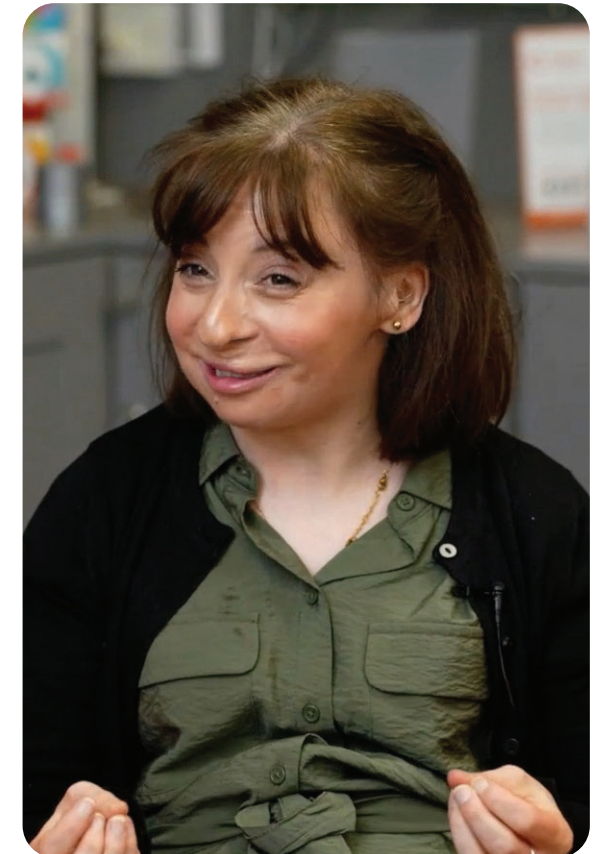
My name is Sarah McDonald. I was born with a hearing loss, due to having a cleft lip and palate. I try not to let my hearing loss affect anything I do in my life. I play both the violin and the piano and have competed and received awards in both. I even travelled to Helsinki, New York and Boston with the Cross Border Orchestra and I have spent time in recent years teaching the violin within the orchestra. I work as a music teacher now, teaching the violin and the piano, it is a job I really enjoy.

I think that Chime, as an organisation are just amazing, their staff do a wonderful job and I think they are very, very helpful.

Chime assisted me in finding equipment to help in my day-to-day life and it works wonderfully. I got an alarm clock, a doorbell transmitter and a smoke alarm – all things that make life easier and safer.

A friendly staff member came out to my house and checked my equipment, to make sure it was in working order, he was able to tell me if I needed an upgrade or a repair. It really made me feel that Chime supported me.

I would always recommend Chime, they are a wonderful organisation, everyone is very kind and they are a great benefit to anyone who has hearing loss or is Deaf.



“ A staff member came out to my house to check my equipment.”

Suzy



My name is Suzy Mooney, and I am a mentor with Chime's Explore mentoring programme. I am Deaf and was born Deaf, we think it was as a result of being born three months premature. I had hearing aids right up until the age of sixteen, and at sixteen my hearing deteriorated and I became eligible for a cochlear implant. Getting a cochlear implant was the best decision I ever made.

I first heard about Explore through the Chime Lifetech team. They came to install a carbon monoxide alarm in my house, and they told me all about the Explore programme. I was really interested so I went online to the Chime website and read a bit more about what it is. I quickly realised that it was the perfect programme for me, as at that time I was struggling to transition from college into the workforce.

I filled out a referral form and was connected with my mentor. My mentor and I met up and discussed the areas where I felt I needed help and we spent some time getting to know each other, which was lovely. I really felt like I could connect with her as she also had a hearing loss and there was that deeper level of understanding and shared experience.

Explore gave me the opportunity to connect with people like me, who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. It opened up a network of employers, so I could get some work experience. The Explore programme definitely helped to boost my confidence, it helped me to improve my CV and my mentor helped me to improve my interview techniques. I have a masters in sociology, which is quite a broad area of study, so she also helped me to look for jobs and pinpoint the ones that I felt were right for me.

Chime has helped me in other aspects of my life too. I have availed of LifeTech services, and I have met friends and had great experiences on their Breakaway summer camps, which are for people aged 18 to 25. It really allowed me to immerse myself in Deaf culture and connect with other people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Now as a mentor myself I feel like I have a lot of empathy for my clients as I have been in their position. Every day as a mentor is different, one day I could be meeting with clients and the next I could be delivering Deaf awareness training to colleges, employers or other stakeholders. I usually have a caseload of ten to twenty clients and the group is varied. We work with people who are Deaf and are ISL users, we also work with people who are Hard of Hearing and use assistive technology. Some of our clients have additional needs, like autism or learning difficulties, and our clients' age range is between 16 and 65.

My favourite thing about being a mentor on the Explore mentoring programme is that I can relate to my clients, I have been in their position, I know how they feel and what they need. It fills me with great pride when they achieve their goals.

Mark, Emma & Bonnie



My name is Mark Caffrey, and I am a fire safety engineer, I live with my partner Emma Cahill and our two children Jack and Bonnie in Walkinstown in Dublin.

When Bonnie was born, she didn't respond very well to the hearing tests. But the doctors explained that because she was born via c-section, there might still be fluid in her hears, so we weren't too worried.

When she came home and as she started to grow, I became concerned. I started to notice little things. Her older brother Jack is two years old and makes a lot of noise, but Bonnie was not responding to it. I didn't want to worry Emma, so I didn't say anything at first, but when I did mention it, I discovered that she was thinking the same way.

Bonnie was eventually diagnosed with hearing loss in both ears, which would not resolve itself. It was a double edged sword for us. We had gone in fearing Bonnie was completely Deaf, so there was some relief, but we still did not know what would happen next. We didn't know what the implications would be. Would she speak? Would she need to attend a special school? How long would it take to get hearing aids?

A referral to Chime helped set our minds at ease. They contacted us within days of being referred and introduced us to the many resources they make available to Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. I cannot thank them enough. We had known nothing of

Chime, but they became our guide, calling to our home, letting us know what we could do, and what we were entitled to. Bonnie wears hearing aids to assist her, which has been a game changer.

They even helped us fill in the forms for grants, including for an Irish Sign Language tutor, and have provided hearing aid care and maintenance. There is access to so many resources, including home safety devices and support. Being put in contact with families in similar situations has been brilliant.

We attended a Newly Diagnosed weekend in Portlaoise, and we were so worried on the way down, what would it be like? What would we find out? But we were quickly reassured. Chime experts talked us through everything, outlining every stage of the journey our family is on with Bonnie. We knew then it was going to be tough for us, but ultimately ok.

Meeting other families has been very reassuring, there were stories which resonated with me, like fathers clicking their fingers to see if their baby responded. Things that I myself had done, and an understanding of how we were feeling.

We left the weekend feeling great. We could see the road ahead and knew what our next steps would be.

Chime have been such a valuable part of our journey, and we want every child with hearing loss to be looked after as well as Bonnie has been. That's why I decided to give something back. I've always been an avid biker and I organised a motorbike fun run to raise funds for Chime. My whole family, friends and bikers from across the country got involved. It was amazing, we started at Harley Davidson HQ and made our way to the Deaf village in Cabra. I am delighted to say that we raised some much-needed funds for the charity that has helped us so much.



Advocacy

Campaign for a National Hearing Care plan

In 2023 Chime continued to campaign for the Department of Health to develop a National Hearing Care Plan. In 2021 the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended that governments should put such plans in place, as unmanaged hearing loss has a significant impact on quality of life and health status. The WHO also said that investing in hearing care represented excellent value for money, estimating that for every €1 invested, governments could expect a return of €16 over the following ten years.

For a number of years Chime has highlighted the high level of unmanaged hearing loss in Ireland. A TILDA report in 2018 found that only one in five older adults with hearing loss had hearing aids, while as a country we prescribed hearing aids at less than half the rate of the UK.

March 2023

To celebrate World Hearing Day on March 3rd, Ireland's first documentary on hearing loss was released. 'Through the Noise' was produced by NoName Media in collaboration with Chime and featured a number of people affected by hearing loss and experts who highlighted the impact of unmanaged hearing loss on health, communication and quality of life.



May 2023

Chime had a meeting with the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD, to impress on him the need for a National Hearing Care Plan. The Minister acknowledged that this was an important issue, thanked Chime for their work and said that the Department would seriously consider Chime's proposal to establish a Working Group to develop a national plan.

**27,944 HEARING AID
GRANT CLAIMS IN 2023**

**UP 90%
SINCE 2019**

Throughout the Summer and Autumn we continued to work with other stakeholders to push for a national plan. In early November we held a second hearing screening event in Leinster House, where we spoke to over 35 TDs and Senators.

November 2023

In late November we had a meeting with Department of Health officials. The officials confirmed that the Minister was committed to developing a National Hearing Care Plan, and that the Department would be establishing a Working Group early in the New Year to progress this. Officials indicated that the Working Group would probably focus on non-complex adult hearing loss initially, with a view to making recommendations for the 2025 Budget Estimates process.

Unmanaged hearing loss = increased social isolation, depression and cognitive decline

Chime's focus in 2024 will be to ensure that this commitment is progressed.

Education

Chime continues to seek the publication of educational outcomes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in Ireland. Currently there is no information available in Ireland on educational outcomes for this group of young people, but there are serious grounds for concern that these Children are achieving outcomes way below their potential.

Firstly, in the UK where outcomes are published, D/HH students are typically one grade per subject behind their hearing peers. Secondly, in Ireland the supports available to these students appear to be well below that of the UK. For example, the Visiting Teacher service in Ireland is at less than 60% of the capacity of the UK service, and only a fraction of teachers working only with D/HH students in Ireland have a postgraduate qualification in Deaf Education compared to virtually 100% in the UK.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) state:

“The goal should be that Deaf and Hard of Hearing children graduate from school with levels of educational attainment that are on a par with their hearing peers of similar ability.”

A further cause of concern is the new model for allocating special education teaching resources, which appears to be REDUCING the support hours for D/HH students in mainstream schools.

Chime sees the publication of educational outcomes as a critical first step in assessing how well D/HH students are achieving in our schools. Should outcomes be falling short of expectations, then it should act as a catalyst for The Department of Education to improve the supports available to these students.

**Over 5,000
Deaf and Hard
of Hearing
children in Ireland**

July 2023

Chime made a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education on our concerns and the need for some information on educational outcomes to ascertain how well D/HH students are achieving in our schools.

The Committee members were in agreement with Chime that information on outcomes was needed, and the Chair, Paul Kehoe T.D asked the Department to consider this and revert to the Committee.

October 2023

In early October the Department wrote to the Committee. The correspondence stated that the Department recognised *“the importance of monitoring educational outcomes for all children with special educational needs”* and that the Department has asked the NCSE *“to consider a study of outcomes for those children who are under the visiting teacher service.”*

At the end of 2023 Chime had no further information on the timeline for this to be completed. However, Chime believes that the publication of aggregated standardised test results for D/HH primary school children could be collated in a matter of weeks, if the relevant parties were willing to do so. Chime will be actively pursuing this issue in 2024.



Deaf community

Chime continued to campaign for equal access for members of the Deaf community in 2023, particularly focusing on employment and Section 9 of the ISL Act, which deals with the so-called 'Voucher Scheme'.

Reasonable Accommodation Fund

Chime completed a submission on the review of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF), provided by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The RAF provides a range of employment supports for people with disabilities in the workplace. This includes grants for assistive technology, alterations to the workplace and for ISL interpreters for job interviews and induction.

Chime advocated for access to ISL on an ongoing basis for Deaf people in the workplace. Without this, Deaf people have little or no access to training, promotional opportunities or staff meetings. Consequently, many Deaf people end up in roles where they are underemployed with no prospect of promotion.

August 2023

The DSP published their report, acknowledged that support for interpretation in the workplace was "inadequate" and recommended increasing the level of interpreter support in the workplace.

However, details of just how much interpretation support will be available has yet to be determined. DSP have committed to publishing a detailed implementation plan in Q1 2024.

Voucher Scheme

Throughout 2023 Chime and others advocated for the introduction of a permanent 'Voucher Scheme' for the Deaf community. A pilot scheme was completed in 2021, but the DSP did not progress a new scheme throughout 2022.

Section 9 of the ISL Act allows for the Minister for Social Protection to introduce a scheme to *"provide funds to facilitate users of Irish Sign Language with regard to support in relation to access to social, educational and cultural events..."*

This is known as the Voucher Scheme in the Deaf community, and it is critical in supporting Deaf people to participate in civic life and to complete personal affairs on an equal basis with other citizens.

In late 2022 Chime highlighted the fact that a permanent scheme had not been established in the media, and we continued to lobby DSP throughout 2023. Chime forwarded a pre-budget submission to the DSP in July, including a request for provision of funding for a permanent voucher scheme. In Q3 a new 'temporary' scheme was commenced, with funding until the end of 2023.

October 2023

The Minister of Social Protection Heather Humphrys confirmed confirmed in a parliamentary reply on October 25th that *"2024 funding has been secured as part of the recent Budget process" and that she was "firmly committed to supporting and funding the Voucher Scheme now and into the future, on a permanent basis."*

This was very welcome news for the Deaf community. However some issues remain, such as the low number of vouchers available to each person and the fact that currently the scheme is only open to adults. These are issues Chime hopes to address in 2024.

Other activity in 2023

We made contact and began engagement with Comisiún na Meán, a new agency that has replaced the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. We hope to make significant progress in 2024 regarding subtitles and ISL on Irish television stations. Late in 2023 we made initial contact with stakeholders to begin discussions on ISL becoming an examination subject in State examinations. And we began exploring how FM systems can be made available to families with young D/HH children to help support communication in the early years. These are all issues we hope to progress further in 2024.



Auditor's report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE DEAF T/A CHIME

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements of National Association for the Deaf T/A
Chime (the 'company')

We have audited the financial statements of the National Association for the Deaf T/A Chime (the "company") for the year ended 31 December 2023, which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council (FRS 102).

- In our opinion the financial statements:
- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2023 and of its result for the period then ended;
 - have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
 - have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report.

We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Funding and Finances

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- the information given in the directors' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements;
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements;
- the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited; and
- the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, are necessary for the purposes of our audit.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the requirements of any of Sections 305 to 312 of the Act, which relate to disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions are not complied with by the Company. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 37, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

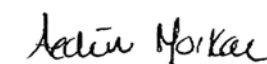
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority's website at: http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf.

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Aedín Morkan

For and on behalf of Mazars

Chartered Accountants And Statutory Audit Firm

Harcourt Centre, Block 3, Harcourt Road, Dublin 2.

Statement of financial activities

(Including income and expenditure account)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2023	2023	2022 as restated	2022 as restated	2022 as restated
	Restricted Funds €	Unrestricted Funds €	Total €	Restricted Funds €	Unrestricted Funds €	Total €
INCOME FROM						
Donations and legacies	5,999	29,700	35,699	217	18,341	18,558
Charitable activities	5,155,973	48,347	5,204,320	5,017,273	52,214	5,069,487
Other trading activities	—	1,640,694	1,640,694	—	1,609,229	1,609,229
Total	5,161,972	1,718,741	6,880,713	5,017,490	1,679,784	6,697,274
EXPENDITURE ON						
Charitable activities	5,136,371	280,809	5,417,180	4,575,036	151,716	4,726,752
Raising funds	—	1,513,416	1,513,416	—	1,470,462	1,470,462
Total	5,136,371	1,794,225	6,930,596	4,575,036	1,622,178	6,197,214
NET (EXPENDITURE) / INCOME BEFORE TAXATION	25,601	(75,484)	(49,883)	442,454	57,606	500,060
Taxation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfers between funds	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	25,601	(75,484)	(49,883)	442,454	57,606	500,060
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds brought forward	968,966	1,442,037	2,411,003	526,512	1,384,431	1,910,943
Total funds carried forward	994,567	1,366,553	2,361,120	968,966	1,442,037	2,411,003

There are no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed.
All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

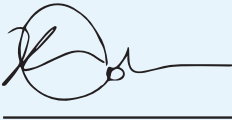
Chime balance sheet

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023 €	2022 as restated €
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	1,142,877	914,848
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	78,183	93,346
Debtors	251,931	158,140
Cash at bank and in hand	1,692,037	1,973,226
	2,022,151	2,224,712
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	(664,186)	(527,464)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,357,965	1,697,248
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,500,842	2,612,096
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after one year	(139,722)	(201,093)
NET ASSETS	2,361,120	2,411,003
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY		
ACCUMULATED FUNDS — RESTRICTED	994,567	968,966
ACCUMULATED FUNDS — UNRESTRICTED	1,366,553	1,442,037
	2,361,120	2,411,003

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 4 September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:




Thomas Maguire
Chairperson


Kevin Coleman
Director

Fundraising

Chime relies heavily on funding from the HSE to provide the services that we offer. In 2023, the HSE contributed over €5m towards funding services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people through Chime. In addition to that, Chime provides technology services, through our social enterprise model when offering clients access to hearing aids, school equipment and personal and household devices. All monies generated are retained in the charity and used to supplement or enhance our services.

In addition to the above we have also been supported by a number of other organisations in 2023:

Community Foundation of Ireland	€10,500
 etbi <small>Education and Training Borings Ireland Baird Children's Centre Clonmel Avenue</small>	€1,288
	€1,868

Other corporate and individual donations were received throughout the year and we would like to thank all those individuals who donated or participated in fundraising activities during the year

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Leigh Snedker for her exceptional dedication to fundraising. Her passion and commitment have been truly inspiring and her tireless efforts have made a significant impact to the Children & Family team, and we are incredibly grateful for her unwavering support.

Thank you, Leigh, for making such a meaningful difference!




Technology

In 2023, Chime was able to assist over 1,600 clients with Hearing Aids & Assistive Technology. This is a core service for Chime, as we know the real benefits to people from the use of this technology in their daily life.

As a charity, we ensure that we provide this service in a client-led, independent way and that all products are delivered by experienced, caring professionals. Our pricing structures reflect our charity status and are provided below market rates to ensure value for money.

Thank you to all clients who trusted us with addressing their technology needs, as all funding received for these products is used to provide other Chime services.





Governance

The National Association for the Deaf trading as Chime ('Chime'), was incorporated in 1964. Chime is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital, has established charitable status (CHY 5633) and is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (Charity Registration Number 20008772).

Chime is governed by a Constitution which was last amended in 2018.

In accordance with best practice for charitable and not for profit entities, the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102 has been adopted for this set of financial statements.

Chime has policies and procedures in place that adhere to the requirements of the Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code and complies with this Code on an ongoing basis.

Chime has also adopted the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public and the Internal Financial Controls Guidelines for Charities, issued by the Charities Regulator, and is committed to being accountable and transparent so that donors, prospective donors and fundraisers can have full confidence in Chime.

Structure and role of the Board

The Board is responsible for the overall control, governance and management of Chime and oversees the organisation to ensure transparency and best practice in all areas.

The Board has specific responsibility to:

- ensure the organisation is carrying out its charitable purposes for the public benefit;
- act in compliance with Chime's Constitution;
- oversee the strategic direction of the organisation and monitor the implementation of its strategic plans;
- monitor legal, regulatory and reporting compliance;
- manage Chime's resources responsibly including directly authorising any borrowings and all expenditure above €50,000;
- identify and manage risk;
- review the performance of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO);
- act in the best interests of the charity; and
- act with reasonable skill and care at all times.

The Board may comprise of between three and fifteen individuals elected for a three-year term. Ordinarily Directors are restricted to a maximum of three terms. One Director had served in excess of three terms at 31 December 2023 and will step down from the Board in 2024.

In January 2023, the Board endorsed the appointment of Thomas Maguire as the new Chairperson of Chime and he took over this role on 17 April 2023 at which time, the outgoing Chairperson, Declan Keane, formally resigned from the position.

The Directors and Company Secretary who held office during the year or who currently hold office are listed on page 3. All Directors give their time to Chime on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. They are entitled to avail of out of pocket expenses for Board business.

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of Chime is delegated to the CEO, who is directly accountable to the Board and who makes decisions that are in accordance with the agreed strategic direction.

Board attendance

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It currently comprises nine Non-Executive Directors. The Board ordinarily meets at least on a bi-monthly basis and met six times during 2023 (six in 2022).

Board attendance at eligible meetings

BOARD MEMBERS

Thomas Maguire	6 of 6
<i>(Elected as Chairman, 2023)</i>	
Declan Keane	2 of 3
<i>(Resigned as Chairman, 2023)</i>	
Kevin Coleman	3 of 6
Sandra Creagh	5 of 6
Martina Cummins	5 of 6
Pat Flynn	5 of 6
Ciarán McCormack	4 of 6
Deirdre Nicholl	4 of 6
Jennifer Robertson	4 of 6
John O’Hehir	2 of 3

CEO: Mark Byrne

Company Secretary: Mark Byrne

The CEO and Company Secretary are invited to all Board meetings.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

The changes to the Board of Directors during 2023 are outlined below:

John O’Hehir was appointed to the Board on 03 July 2023.

Declan Keane resigned from the Board on 12 June 2023.

Andrew Caffrey resigned as Company Secretary on 30 May 2023 and was replaced, on an interim basis, by Mark Byrne on the same date.

Sub-committees

The Board operates a number of sub committees which enhances Board oversight of the key activities of Chime. The committees are as follows:

- **Finance, Audit & Governance Committee**
- **Remuneration and Nominations Committee**
- **Commercial Development Committee**
- **The Services Committee**

Finance, Audit and Governance Committee

The Finance, Audit and Governance Committee is in place to review all matters relating to the financial affairs of Chime, to manage audit relationships, to ensure that there is a strong framework for accountability and governance, to examine and review all systems and methods of control, both financial and otherwise, including risk analysis and risk management and to ensure Chime is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. The Committee met six times in 2023. The Directors who comprise the Committee are Kevin Coleman (Chair), Ciaran McCormack and Deirdre Nicholl.

Remuneration and Nominations Committee

The Remuneration and Nominations Committee was established to provide strong oversight of Board recruitment and HR activity. The Directors who comprise the Committee are Tom Maguire (Chair) and Sandra Creagh. The Committee met three times during 2023.

Commercial Development Committee

The Commercial Development Committee was established to oversee the development of assistive technology services, fundraising and brand development. The Directors who comprise the Committee are Pat Flynn (Chair) and Ciarán McCormack. The Committee met four times in 2023.

The Services Committee

The Services Committee was established in 2021 to oversee the quality, safety and effectiveness of Chime’s service delivery by reviewing activities and facilitating planning and discussion of service plans. The Committee also oversees the collaborative working arrangements between Chime and Our New Ears (ONE). The Directors who comprise the Committee are Jennifer Robertson (Chair) and Thomas Maguire. The Committee met three times in 2023.

Partnership with Our New Ears

Chime has a collaborative working arrangement with Our New Ears (ONE), a group of parents dedicated to the needs of parents, guardians and families of children and young people who use hearing technologies which includes but is not limited to Cis, BAHAs (bone anchored hearing aids), hearing aids and ABIs (auditory brainstem implants). ONE operates in partnership and as a programme of Chime and Chime assists ONE in an advisory and administration capacity. ONE adheres to Chime’s policies and procedures and reports into the Chime’s Services Sub Committee. The ONE Sub Committee ceased in 2023. All amounts raised and expenditure incurred by ONE are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted funds.





chime

The National Charity for Deaf
and Hard of Hearing People

Head office

**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE DEAF T/A CHIME**

35 North Frederick Street,
Dublin 1, Ireland

TEL: 018175700

TEXT: 0879221046

EMAIL: info@chime.ie

Our centres

DUBLIN NORTH

Deaf Village Ireland,
Ratoath Road, Cabra

Tel: 01 8175700

Text: 087 922 1046

Email: info@chime.ie

DUBLIN SOUTH

Unit G-H, Exchange Hall,
Belgard Square North,
Tallaght, Dublin

Tel: 01 462 0377

Text: 086 171 6284

Email: dublinsouth@chime.ie

DUNDALK

14 Jocelyn Street,
Dundalk, Co Louth,

Tel: 042 933 2010

Text: 087 711 8717

Email: dundalk@chime.ie

TULLAMORE

14 Church Street,
Tullamore, Co Offaly

Tel: 057 935 1606

Text: 086 143 6476

Email: tullamore@chime.ie

KILLARNEY

1b Park Place, High Street,
Killarney, V93 CDP9

Tel: 064 662 0052

Text: 086 805 6202

Email: killarney@chime.ie

LIMERICK

Pery Street, Co Limerick

Tel: 061 467 494

Text: 086 222 9638

Email: limerick@chime.ie

WATERFORD

23/24 Merchants Quay,
Waterford City, Co Waterford

Tel: 061 467 494

Text: 086 222 9638

Email: waterford@chime.ie

CASTLEBAR

Mayo PCCC, St. Mary's HQ,
Castlebar, Co Mayo

Tel: 094 904 9109

Text: 087 196 2928

Email: mayo@chime.ie

GALWAY

9 Francis Street,
Co Galway

Tel: 091 564 871

Text: 086 864 8659

Email: galway@chime.ie

SLIGO

Abbeyville Centre,
Abbeyville
Co Sligo

Tel: 071 919 4975

Text: 086 796 1324

Email: sligo@chime.ie

LETTERKENNY

Unit 2, Spencer House,
High Road, Letterkenny,
Co Donegal

Tel: 074 918 8252

Text: 086 885 8194

Email: letterkenny@chime.ie

Company limited by guarantee registered in Ireland No. 21627
Registered Charity No. 20008772
CHY 5633