

NEWSLETTER

A WARM WELCOME TO 2025...

I hope our first newsletter of 2025 finds you all safe & well.

While it seems a long time ago, it was great to meet up with so many staff at the Christmas lunch and share the Christmas spirit after such a challenging yet productive year in 2024.

In 2024 we launched our new brand, our new visual design and our website which included our updated values. These are our guiding principles underpinning our person-centred approach to service provision. These values will guide us in our decision making to ensure each and every one of us creates a positive impact on the lives of those we support each day.

Compassion: This is our commitment to recognising and relieving the difficulties and challenges faced by the individuals in our care in a most compassionate way.

Integrity: Being honest and principled in all of our activities and dealings with all of our stakeholders.

Innovation: Seeing the value of new ideas and challenging ourselves to develop our services and processes to better serve the individuals and families we serve.

Dedication: Our team are committed to our mission of a service of excellence that is person-centred.

I have seen all of these values in action as staff support and uplift those around them with genuine care and concern. The unwavering dedication is evident each and every day as staff work tirelessly to overcome obstacles to meet the needs of those we support. Innovation comes to the forefront with the creative solutions to problems, thinking outside the box and trying new things while recognising learning from our experience. And throughout it all, showing up each day with integrity guiding your actions and decisions. The work we do is not easy, and there will always be challenges of some sort or another – but our core values are brought to life each and every day here in St Catherine’s Association.

Michael



Outlook and Key Priorities for 2025

As always we have a lot of work to do as we start another year and with the best will in the world, there won't be enough time to do it all. We do have some priorities that will be focused on this year including our Kilcoole development, IPSOS working groups and services.

Kilcoole Project: The Kilcoole development remains a top priority to develop a purpose-built Adult Day Service, Administration Building and Respite Centre in Kilcoole. There has been a lot of movement on this project throughout 2024 and it continues this year as we work with the Design Team to nail down the detailed design elements of the Adult Day Centre and get the project ready for tendering. We are not quite ready for Hard-Hats and Hi-Viz jackets but it's not far off and we expect to be on site with the development of the access road in the next six to eight weeks.

IPSOS Working Groups: We continue working through an action list that resulted from our IPSOS staff survey. The various working groups have come up with a number of fantastic ideas to enhance engagement, communication, recognition and health and well-being. Many of these ideas have already been implemented or in progress. I look forward to seeing this develop further in 2025.

Softworks: The implementation of a time management system is well under way. The hardware has been installed in each location and the HR team continue to work on the roll out across the organisation which is now live in many locations. This will be a great benefit to all staff and we welcome your feedback as this is rolled out.

Services: We will continue to engage with our HSE colleagues in Disability Services to advocate for more services to meet presenting needs. We continue to engage with them as they support a residential placement in Brambles while they secure an alternative property for the long term residential placement. In the meantime, I am delighted to advise that the Brambles team have relocated to Haughton Lodge and have commenced the provision of respite services from there. The team are very excited to be welcoming back the children and families from Brambles Respite to Haughton Lodge. We are very grateful to the team for stepping up to support the crisis residential placement in Brambles and for the fantastic work they did but we are even more grateful to welcome the team back to provide respite services from the Lodge.

Woodbeg Christmas Jumper Party

The elves in Woodbeg were very busy before Christmas planning a great party for the whole of St. Catherine's to enjoy. The team worked hard to create a Christmas wonderland for all their guests and Thomas & Abbey were happy to welcome their friends and family into their home for some Christmas cheer. There was dancing, singing, plenty of yummy food, games and a visit from Santa Claus himself. Thomas, Abbey and the team in Woodbeg would like to thank everyone for coming along and joining in on the fun.



Staff Christmas Lunch

Thank you for joining us for the annual SCA Christmas lunch! What a great day with delicious food and even better company.

The Culture, Health & Wellbeing Committee also organised this year's first 'Christmas Spirit Competition' which was great fun for all involved. Thank you so much for all the amazing entries.. it was a very tough decision picking a winner.. but in the end it was Woodbeg who took it home for their Christmas Spirit with their Christmas Jumper party, a very well deserved second prize goes to ADS for their Christmas Spirit Video.

It was great to see so many entries across the organisation and we are looking forward to even more entries next year.. well done again!



Training Department Updates

- We are currently recruiting for Safety Intervention Trainers, if you are interested, please contact the training dept. for further information
- Report Writing Training - spaces available for training on 17th of June
- Mental Health First Aid Training scheduled for 4th of March, please contact the training dept. if you are interested in attending
- We are currently reviewing feedback from the Training Needs Questionnaire
- **Please note: it is important to confirm your attendance for all training**

Softworks Update

We are pleased to update you that Softworks is now in use in Adult Day Services, EDC, HR, QCT, Senior Management Team, Maintenance, Glenview Heights, Fairwinds, Bird Hill and Woodbeg.

We continue to review the system and are completing payroll comparison against data on Softworks and timesheets. Staff are now able to log in and view their own information and apply for annual leave through Softworks. Softworks is being rolled out to Meadow View and Ballylusk in February & March with the rest of staff coming on board after this.

As with any new system there are a lot of queries so please bear with us as we get back to you on your individual query.



Staff News & Updates

A warm welcome

Albright Milo, (Fairwinds), Shinoj Joseph, (School), Aisling Kearns, (Meadow View), Aine Roche, (Potters Club), Caoimhe Deegan, (Meadow View), Happiness Mazibuko, (Fairwinds), Chimene Kapanga, (Fairwinds), Ella Austin, (Meadow View), Prince Fungula, (Woodbeg), Patricia Plavungal, (Meadow View) and Ryan Esmonde, (Woodbeg)

And a fond farewell...

Natasha O'Toole (Fairwinds), Stuart Porter, (Ballylusk), Louise Pedlow, (Brambles), Genevieve Codd, (Ballylusk) and Elaine Johnson, (Brambles)

Baby News

Alan Keogh, GVH welcomed a beautiful baby girl. Baby Nova Reign was born on Monday the 9th December weighing 9lb 2oz. Ciara Roberts, DRSM Ballylusk welcomed a beautiful baby girl. Baby Aoibhe was born on Thursday 12th December weighing 7lb 9oz.

Ciara Mohan, Adult Day Services welcomed a beautiful baby girl. Baby Elsie was born on Thursday 16th January weighing 6lb. Cáemóc O'Neill, Ballylusk welcomed a beautiful baby girl. Baby Cara was born in January.

Welcome Back

Tara O' Leary returned from Maternity Leave in December to the Training Department and Tara Lennox returned to Adult Day Services this month





Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh
Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals



CORU Registration for Social Care Workers

Are you working as a Social Care Worker in SCA? Then you need to register as a Social Care Worker with CORU.

New Graduates can register under Section 38 route

If you are not a new graduate then you need to register under Section 91 Route (grandparenting route)

Closing date for grandparenting route is 30/11/25

See FAQ on Registration process <https://coru.ie/social-care-workers/faqs%20for%20social%20care%20workers/>

See CORU Guide on Registering <https://coru.ie/files-registration/guidance-notes-s91-english.pdf>

If you need any support with your application please contact hr@stcatherines.ie

Social Media

Please follow SCA on our Socials:

If there is any content you would like shared on our Social Media please contact Laurissa on socialmedia@stcatherines.ie



Employee Referral Scheme

Would you like a €500 voucher? Do you have a friend or family member who shares our culture and values and has the right qualifications and skills to apply for any of our exciting opportunities? If you do, then please let HR know and we will be happy to reward you if your referral is successful in joining the SCA team (T's & C's apply).

Employee Recognition

Congratulations to the following staff for their length of service with SCA. From 5 years to 40 years is an amazing achievement. We are very lucky to have such wonderful and dedicated staff here in SCA. All staff below received a voucher to thank them for their dedicated service with SCA.

5 Years Service

Ginny Whiston (Potter Club), Eimear Walker (Fairwinds), Anne Gallagher (Ballylusk), Debbie Carr (HR), Catherine Merriman (Reception), Tracy Vickers (Meadow View), Lorraine Tyndall (Bird Hill), Ciara Malone (CDNT), Darina McGrath (Fairwinds), April McKenna (ADS) and Anna Dawidziak (Meadow View).

10 Years' Service

Lorna Carty (Meadow View) and Alan Keogh (Glenview Heights).

15 Years' Service

Róisín Mannion (BSS)

20 Years' Service

Jimmy Carthy (Maintenance), Kathleen Driver (Haughton House), Siobhán Loughlin (Bird Hill), Fidelma Hynes (CDNT)

30 Years' Service

Collette Connolly (CDNT)

40 Years' Service

Linda Roberts (CDNT)



INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRMAN OF ST. CATHERINE'S ASSOCIATION, BRENDAN WHELAN

Why did you become involved in the Section 39 area; what drove you specifically to St. Catherine's?

My grandson, Alex was availing of services from a young age with Collette Connolly and her team in Early Services. We will always be very grateful for the kind and responsive service Alex received from them.

In 2014 all St Catherine's parents were called to an emergency meeting where they were advised that St Catherine's was in a very challenging position with significant compliance deficits. They were calling for help to stabilise the organisation and from a governance perspective, needed support at board level. Knowing the wonderful service St Catherine's were providing, I was keen to help out. I have been involved with St Catherine's since 2010 with Alex and have worked with the Board of Directors since 2014.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the sector?

There are a number of challenges in the sector, first and foremost is the level of funding available to support such a vulnerable and complex cohort of young people. There is a high demand for our services. The new Government have advised that disability services will be a priority in the new programme for government which will hopefully result in greater access for those who need it most.

The pay parity and terms & conditions for Section 39 staff is a challenge. This leads directly into a recruitment and retention challenge, again this is a national issue.

Another challenge is dealing with such a large organisation as the HSE as our funder Vs SCA, a small not-for-profit company with a Board of Directors.



What has been the greatest achievement in St. Catherine's that you are proud of?

Our greatest achievement is the positive feedback we receive from the families we support which is testimony that we are providing a valuable service.

What is your own career background?

I have spent most of my career in various roles in the finance sector. I was a founder of Social Finance Foundation and Microfinance Ireland which provide loans to organisations in the not-for-profit sector and to individual entrepreneurs respectively. In 2021 I was appointed by the Minister for Health to the Board of the HSE and was reappointed this year for a second term.

What do you think is in the future for St. Catherine's?

St Catherine's Association provide a very specialised service to individuals with complex needs. The demand for services is growing and there are opportunities for growth and development. The Kilcoole development is progressing in the background but there are opportunities for growth to meet the unmet needs of families long into the future. I am very optimistic for the future development of St Catherine's.