

ANNUAL

REPORT

2021

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GOVERNANCE

THE AVALON CENTRE COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Charity Number	CHY 19121
Charity Regulatory Authority Number	200745943
Company Number	157875
Registered Office	Chapel Street, Sligo, F91 RF78
Directors	Pat Forde (Chairperson) Cathy McCarthy (Secretary) Paul Tolan (Treasurer) Mary Nicholson Michael O' Hehir Mark Connor
Auditors	Gilroy Gannon Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors 25 Stephen Street Sligo
Bankers	Allied Irish Bank Stephen Street Sligo
Solicitors	Murphy Ballantyne Chapel Street Sligo

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Another year has come to an end, and with that comes the opportunity to reflect on the services and the supports we have here at the Avalon Centre. We reflect on the progress we have made in 2021 and the developments in our programmes to support people in our community.

I want to begin by thanking the Board of Directors (Charity Trustees), the management team and the staff of the organisation for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to the local community and to the needs of those whom we support. This work can be difficult and complex in an ever-changing environment, and I wish to acknowledge especially management and staff who are the most important drivers of success.

The Avalon Centre continues to offer a wide variety of programmes to meet the needs of the local community. This would not be possible without the on-going support of the HSE, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

We sincerely thank these organisations for this funding, which allows us to provide services and supports to older people; through the provision of our Social Day Care Centre, and children and young people with additional needs; through the provision of our Saturday Club, Tuesday Club, Drama, integrated camps, and our Cool Kids Programmes.

Funding for our Bright Minds Preschool and afterschool services are provided by Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and administered through Pobal.

The staffing of the Centre is highly reliant on funding from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection through its community employment scheme. This funding as well as the accompanying materials and training budgets, are crucially important and provides support to all areas of our work here in the centre. We would like to sincerely thank the department for their continued assistance, as without this level of support we would not be able to provide the same level of service to the community.

I have no doubt that the Avalon Centre will face many challenges in the year ahead, particularly given the current economic climate, the challenges with recruitment and the difficulties associated with providing services in a post covid era, but I believe that we have the personnel and the capabilities to work through these challenges and to continue to build on the progress that has been made to date in the Centre.

Pat Forde

OUR STORY SO FAR

OUR MISSION

The Avalon Centre is a charitable organisation whose mission is to provide accessible and quality community services to children, young people and older adults in Sligo and the surrounding areas.

OUR PURPOSE

Main Object

The main object for which this company is established is to operate a centre for the community of Sligo and surrounding areas, providing accessible and quality community services to children, young people and older adults, particularly those who are vulnerable or experiencing disadvantage.

Subsidiary Objects

1.To offer social day services for older adults to improve their well-being and quality of life, promote independent living and to help them to continue living in their own community.
2.To enhance the outcomes of early childhood and school age children and their families, support their social development and life-long learning and help break the cycle of deprivation.

3.To deliver extra-curricular activities for children and young people with special needs to help enhance their communication skills, improve self-confidence and promote social inclusion and integration.

4.To improve the lives of children and young people by delivering programmes and activities that aid their personal and social development.

5.To empower service users and their families, helping develop their confidence and self-esteem through informed choice and shared decision making.

6.To provide a safe, inclusive facility for social, recreational and educational purposes for the local and wider community.

7.To provide facilities for training courses, cultural activities, leisure and education classes and meetings for community & voluntary organisations.

ACTIVITIES

1

Childrens Special Needs Programmes

The main objective of our activity clubs for children with special needs is to enhance their communication skills, build social integration and promote social inclusion through a range of activities focussed on fun and getting out and about in the local community.

Our special needs programmes include: The Saturday Club, Tuesday Youth Club, Drama, and our Cool Kids Programmes.

These programmes are funded by the HSE Learning Disability Services and supported by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

2

Day Centre for Older Adults

The overall aim of the day centre is to provide older people with an improved quality of life through opportunities for socialisation and lifelong learning. It also endeavours to promote social inclusion and integration of older people in the life of the community.

The centre also aims to offer support to older people to live longer in their own homes, to improve their mental health, well-being and to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The day centre is funded by the HSE Services for Older People and supported by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

3

Bright Minds- School Age Childcare

Children attending Bright Minds School Age Childcare Service have access to a variety of supports including homework support, hot nutritious meals and a wide range of organised activities. We offer a 'walking bus' collection service for students attending Mercy Primary School and Sligo School Project. Bright Minds School Age Childcare is a provider of the National Childcare Scheme which provides subsidised childcare to eligible families.

Bright Minds School Age Child Care is funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and supported by Pobal.

4

Bright Minds- Preschool Service

Our preschool service provides a child-led curriculum in line with Aistear, the Early Years Curriculum Framework delivered by highly qualified and experienced staff. We have lots of natural, open-ended materials and an enclosed outdoor area. Bright Minds Preschool service is a provider of the ECCE Scheme. Children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years and 6 months are eligible for the scheme and can avail of FREE preschool from September-June for up to two years.

Bright Minds Preschool Service is funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and supported by Pobal.

ACTIVITIES

5

Community Employment

Participants on our Community Employment Scheme work across all of the Avalon's programmes, in addition they also hold positions in administration, maintenance, cleaning and caretaking. The aim of the Community Employment Scheme is to enhance the employability of long-term unemployed persons by providing them with meaningful work experience and relevant QQI accredited training qualifications.

The Avalon Centre Community Employment scheme has approval for 26 participants and is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

6

Integrated Camps

The Avalon Centre integrated camps aim to promote healthy living and provides a holiday at home for young people aged 6-13, in age-appropriate groups. They are designed to help young people enjoy activities which are fun, active, challenging, and healthy. Activities include orienteering, kayaking, arts and crafts, sports, and games.

We hold a one week integrated junior camp during the Easter holidays followed by 4 weeks of integrated junior and senior camps during the month of July.

The camps provide up to 37 hours of programme per week.

7

Seniors Alert Scheme

The Avalon Centre is a registered provider of the Seniors Alert Scheme. The Seniors Alert Scheme has been established to encourage community support for vulnerable older people in our communities. It provides funding for a personal monitored alarm, connected to a contact centre to enable older persons of 65 or older and of limited means, to continue to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind. The Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development via Pobal with equipment made available through community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, such as the Avalon Centre.

8

Parent & Toddler Group

The Avalon Centre's parent and toddler groups provides a space for parents and young children to come and interact, play and have fun.

It gives parents the opportunity to get parenting tips and support from the other parents as well as from visiting professionals from time to time, and to make friends and build a local support network for themselves.

OUR WORK 2021

Like all businesses in 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic affected The Avalon Centre and the services we offer. In January, early learning and childcare and school-age childcare services were restricted to children of essential workers and vulnerable children only and the ECCE pre-school programme was suspended. Early learning and childcare and school-age childcare began opening for other groups of children throughout March on a phased basis: From 8 March, the ECCE Programme reopened for all participating children; and from 29 March all children returned to our Preschool and Afterschool Services.

Our Social Day Centre for older adults remained closed until early August and upon reopening, operated at a drastically reduced level of service, catering for just 8 clients per day, in comparison to 25 clients per day pre-covid. The provision of assistance with personal care remained suspended and certain activities that were provided pre covid (e.g. live music and dancing) were not provided for the remainder of 2021.

Our programmes for Children with additional needs were also suspended from January to March and upon returning, operated at reduced capacity.

Integrated Summer Camps, usually held across 4 weeks in July, catering for up to 120 children per week could not run, instead specific summer activity programmes for children with additional needs were ran with low numbers of children and staff.

As with all businesses, our expenditure on cleaning supplies and equipment increased drastically as programmes began to return.

PROJECTS	OUTCOME
Social Day Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 426– the number of service user attendances this year • 426– the number of hot meals provided during the year • 24– the average number of clients attending on a weekly basis this year • 266– the number of transport round trips to the centre this year • 2,130– the number of programme hours provided to members this year including music/singing, dancing, art, bingo and physical exercise
Special Needs Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50+ - the number of children that attended our special needs programmes on a weekly basis this year • 667– number of activity sessions delivered to children this year • 2,001- number of programme activity hours provided this year
Preschool & School Age Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24– the number of children that attended our school age childcare service on a daily basis this year • 22– the number of children that attended our preschool service on a daily basis this year • 3,600– the number of hot nutritious meals served to children this year • 16,200– the total number of homework support hours provided to children this year • 9,900 the number of Aistear curriculum-led hours provided to preschool children • 10,800– the number of organised activity hours provided to SAC children this year
Community Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25– the total number participants on our Community Employment Scheme this year • 1,182– the number of training hours completed by participants this year • 3,324– the number of support hours provided to the Social Day Centre, Bright Minds preschool & school age childcare, our Special Needs Programmes and Youth Clubs this year • 9,012– the number of hours dedicated to the administration, cleaning, maintenance and caretaking of the centre this year

FINANCES

Income & Expenditure Account

Financial year ended 31st December 2021

	2021	2020
	€	€
Income	673,571	714,332
Expenditure	(672,205)	(713,567)
Operating Surplus	1,366	765
Other Income	33,103	6,806
Depreciation (net)	(37,838)	(4,089)
(Deficit)/Surplus for the Financial Year	(3,369)	3,482

Balance Sheet

As at 31st December 2021

	2021		2020	
	€	€	€	€
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets	489,029		777,855	
		489,029		777,855
Current Assets				
Debtors	31,784		29,919	
Cash at bank & in hand	350,180		230,235	
	381,964		260,154	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	(157,335)		(69,994)	
Net Current Assets		224,629		190,160
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		713,658		968,015
Deferred Income		(418,206)		(669,194)
Net Assets		295,452		298,821
Capital & Reserves Surplus		295,452		298,821

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The important work we do at The Avalon Centre would not be possible without the tireless work of the Board of Directors/Charity Trustees, the dedicated staff on the ground delivering the programmes, and our external funding partners; the HSE, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Children & Youth Affairs.

We also wish to acknowledge the support of agencies such as Sligo Leader Partnership, Pobal, TUSLA, and Better Start who support us in our everyday work.

We want to lend a special thanks to our service users and their families as well as the wider community for their unwavering support & gratitude.

The Avalon Centre CLG
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**WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT
IN OUR WORK**