



Tribe Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2025

COPE Galway

60 YEARS Improving Lives
Strengthening Community



The Yellow 'Submaroom'

Dive into the new
Family Service space

You're Never Too Old!

A reshaped perspective on ageing

The Power to Change

Supporting and validating
women's lived experience

COPE Galway Services

Main contact numbers for our homeless, domestic abuse and senior support services.

Homeless Services

Teach Corrib Day Centre
Supporting men and women
091 525 259

Family Support Service
Supporting families
091 527 571

Domestic Abuse Service
24-hour support helpline
091 565 985

Senior Support Service
Practical help and support
for older people
091 753 402

Meals4Health
Meal delivery service
091 354 000

COPE Galway

Calbro House
Tuam Road
Galway H91 XR97

☎ 091 778 750

✉ info@copegalway.ie

🌐 copegalway.ie

Pg.13 Funding awarded
for work with children



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COPE Galway

60 YEARS Improving Lives
Strengthening Community

COPE Galway is a registered charity in the Republic of Ireland.

Registered Office: Calbro House, Tuam Road, Galway.

Registered Charity Number 20011314 · Charity Revenue Number CHY6339.

Welcome to our Spring/Summer 2025 Tribe Newsletter

As we enter the summer months we look back on a challenging but productive first half of the year. We welcome the energy of the season ahead and the opportunities it brings to engage with our community.

Across the following pages, I invite you to read about the unwavering efforts of our staff to best support the people who reach out to our services. This was especially evident during the immense challenges of **Storm Éowyn**, when our staff ensured our services continued to respond to the needs of our clients.

Our Homeless Service introduced **the Yellow 'Submaroom'**, a creative and playful sea-themed space that allows parents to receive focused support from our Family Service, while their children play and build relationships with staff.

We say a **fond farewell to Jacquie Lynskey**, Head of Senior Support Service and my predecessor as CEO of COPE Galway for 24 years. Jacquie tells us how her time with the organisation has positively reshaped her perspective on ageing and given her the courage to pursue her next venture. Jacquie's leadership over the past three decades has ensured COPE Galway has been a steadfast ally to the people in our community who face significant challenges in their lives.

This year marks **60 years of COPE Galway** working at the heart of the community. Thanks to your generosity and constant care and support, we can provide our essential services to people in our community.

We count on your support as we respond to future challenges together, so we can continue to improve lives and strengthen our community for as long as the people of Galway need us.

Go raibh maith agaibh ó chroí,



Michael Smyth, CEO



10 key actions on homelessness for new Government

By the Irish Homeless Policy Group

Actions for Government

COPE Galway was one of the leading homeless and housing agencies calling for action on homelessness in the next programme for Government.

COPE Galway is part of the Irish Homeless Policy Group (IHPG), a group made up of organisations working at the frontline of the housing and homelessness crisis.

The IHPG outlined 10 key actions they urged the next Government to include in the Programme for Government. →



Image source: galwaybayfm.ie

University of Notre Dame 'Grow Irish'

We were delighted to be one of the host organisations participating in the University of Notre Dame - Mendoza College of Business 'Grow Irish' initiative. Two groups of MBA students worked with us for a week on strategic development projects.

We are grateful to Chicago Sister Cities International, University of Notre Dame, Galway City Council, Galway Chamber and Platform94 for bringing this wonderful programme to Galway - working in partnership to make a positive impact in our community.

1. Develop collaborative structures to end homelessness
2. Build enough homes
3. End long-term homelessness by 2030
4. Prioritise homeless prevention measures
5. Ensure that nobody has to sleep rough, regardless of legal status
6. Develop a strategy for the private rental sector
7. Fully implement the Youth Homelessness Strategy
8. Introduce range of measures to tackle issues facing homeless families
9. Improve mental health services for people experiencing homelessness
10. Improve the transparency of access to homeless services


Healthy competition at Fairgreen Hostel

There was some healthy competition between clients of our Fairgreen Hostel and clients from Galway Simon Community Abbey House recently.

A pool competition was held in COPE Galway Fairgreen Hostel between the clients, with 6 players on each team. It was a great opportunity for the clients of both organisations to connect and have fun.

The COPE Galway Fairgreen Hostel team came out winners on the day. A follow up event will soon take place where the opposition will have the chance to step onto the leaderboard.





“ I connected with inspiring, brave women who understood exactly what it is like to be in an abusive relationship and that you are not alone.”

- feedback from programme attendee

The Power to Change

Our Domestic Abuse Service runs an 8-week support programme called 'The Power to Change'.

The programme is run by facilitators who understand the dynamics and impact of abusive relationships, and covers a different theme each week. The themes include, but are not limited to: the history of domestic abuse, a person's rights, and emotional boundaries and needs, with self-care woven through each topic.

Women who attend the programme get the additional benefit of peer support from other women attending who have similar lived experience. This can be validating for each of their own journeys.

For more information on The Power to Change programme, contact our Domestic Abuse Service on 091 565 985.

Leading by example: domestic abuse awareness training for all COPE Galway staff

COPE Galway has introduced domestic abuse awareness training for all our staff. This is one of the steps we are taking as part of our goal of a Zero Tolerance of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV) community.

The intention of this training is to provide all our staff with the skills to recognise, respond and refer victims/survivors of domestic abuse, whether it be in or out of the workplace.

For information on training for your business contact Jackie Carroll: 091 394 882, jcarroll@copegalway.ie.



Response to Storm Éowyn

Storm Éowyn and its aftermath was very disruptive and challenging for many in our community. Thanks to the efforts of our staff, our services continued to operate and respond to the needs of our clients.

Some of the ways the COPE Galway team supported our clients to stay safe:

- Working to ensure anyone sleeping rough was provided with shelter during the storm, which was made possible through the operation of the Severe Weather Response.
- Preparing and delivering twice the number of meals by Meals4Health and Community Catering on the eve of the storm.
- Engaging with clients across our three services in advance to advise of the approaching storm and checking in with them post-storm to ensure all clients were safe and well.
- Communicating to the wider Galway community about how to engage with our services.



Severe Weather Response emergency set up

- Assessing all building damage to properties and ensuring structures were safe.
- Providing supports for several Traveller Families who were without shelter following damage to their caravans and mobile homes.

The challenges faced by our clients can be exacerbated by a red weather warning. Our staff supported our clients with care, respect and through a trauma informed approach.

Through all of this, our staff right across the organisation worked as one, supporting one another and assisting where needed to be the best support to our community.



Welcome to the Yellow 'Submaroom'!

The Yellow Submarine Room - or, Yellow 'Submaroom' as it's come to be known - is a colourful, underwater-themed space. Children who use our Family Support Service can play and learn in the space while their parent or guardian meets with their keyworker to address their homelessness situation.

For children, play is always linked to learning. Play helps young people to learn the necessary skills to regulate their emotions. These skills are especially needed when children are faced with the trauma of experiencing homelessness.

For this reason, COPE Galway Family Service created the Yellow Submarine Room, painted by local artist, Tracey Moca. The room is filled with all the things children love: books, toys and games, all in a safe environment.

While children play in the Submaroom supervised by a member of our Family Services team, the children's parents receive support from their keyworker in an adjacent office. This shields children from difficult conversations about their situation, avoiding additional trauma associated with being homeless.

The creation of The Yellow 'Submaroom' was made possible thanks to funding from our annual Business Leaders' Sleep Out.



The power of connection and creativity

The Resettlement Team are hosting regular social groups for clients following the success of crafting workshops they held at the end of 2024.

This year, the team has hosted a St. Brigid's cross-making group and an open mic session where clients performed music, recited poetry and sang karaoke. This particular activity was a big hit with clients, with every attendee taking part... and an ask that the team do it again soon!

These social groups have been a really positive incentive for both staff and clients, providing the opportunity to socialise and make new connections in a safe and trusting environment.



A trip 'under the sea' for families

Our Family Support Service provided tickets to Galway Atlantaquaria to each of the families we work with.

A trip to the aquarium gives families an opportunity to enjoy a fun and educational outing together, to create happy memories and bond as a family in a stress-free environment.

This is particularly valuable for families experiencing homelessness, as it can bring a much-needed sense of normality to their lives and contributes to their overall mental health.

The purchase of the Galway Atlantaquaria tickets was made possible with the generous support of The Ireland Funds through the Heart of the Community Fund.



You're never too old!

After 28 years with COPE Galway, Jacquie Lynskey, Head of Senior Support Service, is moving on to pastures new. Jacquie reflects on her time with COPE Galway and tells us how her perspective on ageing has changed for the better.

Joining as CEO in 1997, a position she held for 24 years before becoming Head of Senior Support Service, Jacquie looks back on her time with COPE Galway and feels an **“overriding sense of pride”** for the charity, for its clients, staff and supporters.

“ I feel very lucky to have worked in this organisation. It has always been so much more than a job. It has been my life.”

Jacquie started with COPE Galway when it had a much smaller workforce

across its homeless, domestic abuse and senior support services. With just 40 staff at the time, senior roles were more broadly shared and Jacquie, alongside her CEO duties, took on additional oversight responsibilities for the Senior Support Service. When she stepped down as CEO, applying for the newly available Head of Senior Support Service role felt like a natural next step.

Jacquie says her perspective on ageing has also evolved in a positive way and her experiences in COPE Galway gave her the courage to change careers at this stage of life.

“ Many people reach their 60s and feel how they're going to end up as an older person is predetermined. But we have control of our ageing journey. I'm not sure I'd see that if I hadn't worked here.”

According to the World Health Organisation's Healthy Life Expectancy index, people in Ireland can expect to live to 82 years. Jacque notes this longer life expectancy is down to improved living conditions, medical care and a realisation that many factors contributing to a positive ageing experience are within our control.

When it comes to embracing our ageing journey, Jacque notes that education and public information is key. She emphasises that we can continue to live productive, fulfilling lives if we plan for them, acknowledging the invaluable contribution of older people in our communities today:

“ While a common misconception on ageing sees older people as frail and dependent, the reality is often the complete opposite. Most people over 70 are engaging in and enriching their communities. Nowadays, 60 feels like the new 40!”

For others who find themselves at a transitional point in their lives, or who want to try something new like Jacque, there's one reminder she will always emphasise - **you're never too old!**

We wish Jacque the very best with her adventures ahead and thank her for continuously working to uplift people to promote lasting change in our community.

Teaching tech

Through a consultation process, our Senior Support Service Team identified the need for technology classes for older adults on the everyday use of their mobile phones.

A volunteer with a background in cybersecurity and a passion to engage in the community, kindly hosted a one hour class each week which ran from the end of January to the end of March in The Bungalow in Mervue.

The participants covered a lot over the course of the programme, including how to scan QR codes, set up emergency contacts, install the Transport For Ireland (TFI) app, and how to book and buy tickets online.



Sonas ladies' group

Every Wednesday, Sonas Social Centre in Mervue holds a ladies' social group. Women come together to chat and have a cup of tea or coffee... with some sweet treat accompaniments of course!

This group reaches women beyond the surrounding Mervue area. Women from nursing homes in the county who were looking for a group to attend outside the nursing home have been attending, to increase their social participation.

Women attending the group really enjoy the weekly meet up, with one lady saying she "loves the conversations, the people, the place."



Volunteers
Needed

VOLUNTEER WITH OUR BEFRIENDING SERVICE

Befriending volunteers offer companionship, conversation and a social connection to an older person, through a weekly home visit or meet-up. Where needed, volunteers occasionally help with light housework, shopping and prescription collection.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer,
please contact Lorraine McNamee:



befriending@copegalway.ie



086 201 2037



Philanthropic funding supporting our work with children

COPE Galway awarded multi year philanthropic grant to develop the work of Solas Óg and Helping Kids First.

For several years COPE Galway has benefitted from generous philanthropic grant support for the development of our children and young peoples' domestic abuse service, Solas Óg. We are delighted to announce that we have recently been awarded additional multi-year funding from the same donor to support the continued development of this work.

Funding will enable the delivery of our **Healthy Relationships programme** in schools and community groups for the next 3 years. This programme helps teenagers to better understand what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like, and to increase their awareness of the supports available to young people experiencing domestic abuse.

Funding has also been granted to develop our **Helping Kids First project**, which supports children's physical, emotional, educational and social development. Homework clubs, day trips, extra-curricular activities and one-to-one support are some of the services offered to children and families living in homeless emergency accommodation.



We are extremely grateful for this continued philanthropic support, which is enabling innovation in service development for children supported by COPE Galway.

Largest corporate volunteering group - BrightWork

We had the pleasure of welcoming our largest group of corporate volunteers to date, as 40 staff from BrightWork's Global Team joined us to support two volunteer projects.

The team divided into two groups: one organised the sorting area of our COPE Galway Charity Shop in Newtownsmith, while the other took on a creative task for an upcoming community campaign.

BrightWork followed up with an extremely generous donation of €29,000. We are truly grateful for this collaboration which is making a real difference in our community.



One Night. Lasting Impact.

Join COPE Galway's 2025 Business Leaders' Sleep Out on Friday, 5th December 2025 as we celebrate 60 Years of Community Support in Galway.

We are calling on CEOs, directors, and senior managers to take part and raise vital funds for COPE Galway's homeless services.

In 2024, we supported 1,337 people experiencing homelessness. Thanks to Business Sleep Out donations we were able to provide nutritious meals, fund children's activity camps, and make much-needed improvements to homeless hostel accommodations.

Be part of the change.

 To learn more or arrange a call, email: sleepout@copegalway.ie

 Register your interest online at: copegalwaysleepout.ie

Coral Leisure Ballinasloe Charity of the Year

We are so grateful that Coral Leisure, Ballinasloe has chosen COPE Galway as their Charity of the Year.

Coral Leisure's Charity Coordinators, Mary, Sharon and Lisa, have been busy planning and organising fundraising events to suit everyone.

So far, they have organised a bake sale, a Hyrox style fitness event called 'The Duo Grit Games', and an Easter raffle. All these events have raised vital funds in support of our Homeless, Domestic Abuse and Senior Support Services.

We are excited to see what's in store for the year ahead working with Coral Leisure.



Pictured: Mary Ward (left) and Sharon Williamson (right) of Coral Leisure, Ballinasloe, with Ciara McGrath, COPE Galway (centre).



Pictured (L-R): Ellie Sainsbury (COPE Galway), Paul Freeney (Seapoint Leisure Centre) and Carol Hynes (Galway Simon Community).

Seapoint Leisure

A massive thank you to Paul Freeney and all the staff at Seapoint Leisure in Salthill for their generous donation of €2,650.

Once a month, Seapoint Leisure hold a Charity Bingo night. We are so grateful to have been chosen, alongside Galway Simon Community, as one of the beneficiaries for one of their events earlier this year. The event raised a phenomenal €5,300 which was divided equally between the charities

These funds will help us continue providing supports to people in our community who need them.



Want to make a difference
in your community?

Volunteer with us!

- Long-term roles across our services and charity shops
- Occasional roles at our fundraising events
- Corporate volunteer opportunities for businesses

For details on all our current volunteer opportunities visit:

copegalway.ie/volunteer



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Homeless Service | Domestic Abuse Service | Senior Support Service

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