



RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE SERVICES



2021
Annual Report

The below illustration was submitted by a Restorative Justice participant who wished to express himself through art.



Explanatory narrative

"This piece of Art reflects on my hope for a better future. To put past situations behind me. There is growth, awareness and regained consciousness in this image. The blue background reflects a new day to start again. I am mindful in this image not to let negative situations frustrate me and to get out in the day and live my life".

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Welcome

Welcome to the Restorative Justice Services 2021 Annual Report. This report is a record of the core activities undertaken by the organisation over the 2021 calendar year and provides a comprehensive range of statistics on key aspects of our case work as well as some case studies which I'm sure will be of great interest to the reader.

At time of writing, we are in a period where we can be hopeful of maintaining a more familiar way of life that we had so long taken for granted. However, for almost the entirety of 2021 the Covid – 19 pandemic continued to impact across all aspects and facets of our work. The many associated challenges were met with great determination by our staff team, volunteers and directors, ensuring safe, appropriate and effective continuity of service provision to our service users and each other. My sincere thanks and appreciation to all our service personnel. A particular note of gratitude is extended to the respective teams from the Restorative Justice & Victim Services and Community Based Organisation units of the Probation Service, for the support and guidance they provided throughout this challenging time. I am also pleased to acknowledge the support of our partners and colleagues in Crime Victims Helpline and An Garda Síochána. The Judiciary continued to be a vital contributor to the work of RJS through the referral of cases from the District and Circuit Courts and we remain most appreciative of their support and interest in our work.



RJS Chairperson
Maria Flynn

Our Working Groups continued the considered and complex process of progressing the comprehensive range of recommendations and proposals contained in our Strategic Plan to implementation stage. This important developmental work will continue in 2022.

The experience of the pandemic highlighted the true value, importance and benefit of our partnership service delivery model which has been a cornerstone of the organisation since it was first established in 1999.

Finally, I wish to note the retirement of Edel Bracken, our long serving Financial and Office Administrator. Edel joined RJS in 2003 and was an exemplary employee throughout her tenure. A consummate professional, the very essence of a team player, she possessed a forensic attention to finer details of the organisations finances, was a vital link in the all - important RJS chain of communication and of constant support to all of our personnel across the service. Edel's contribution to our service went way above and beyond that of her formal brief. We wish her every happiness and a long and healthy retirement.

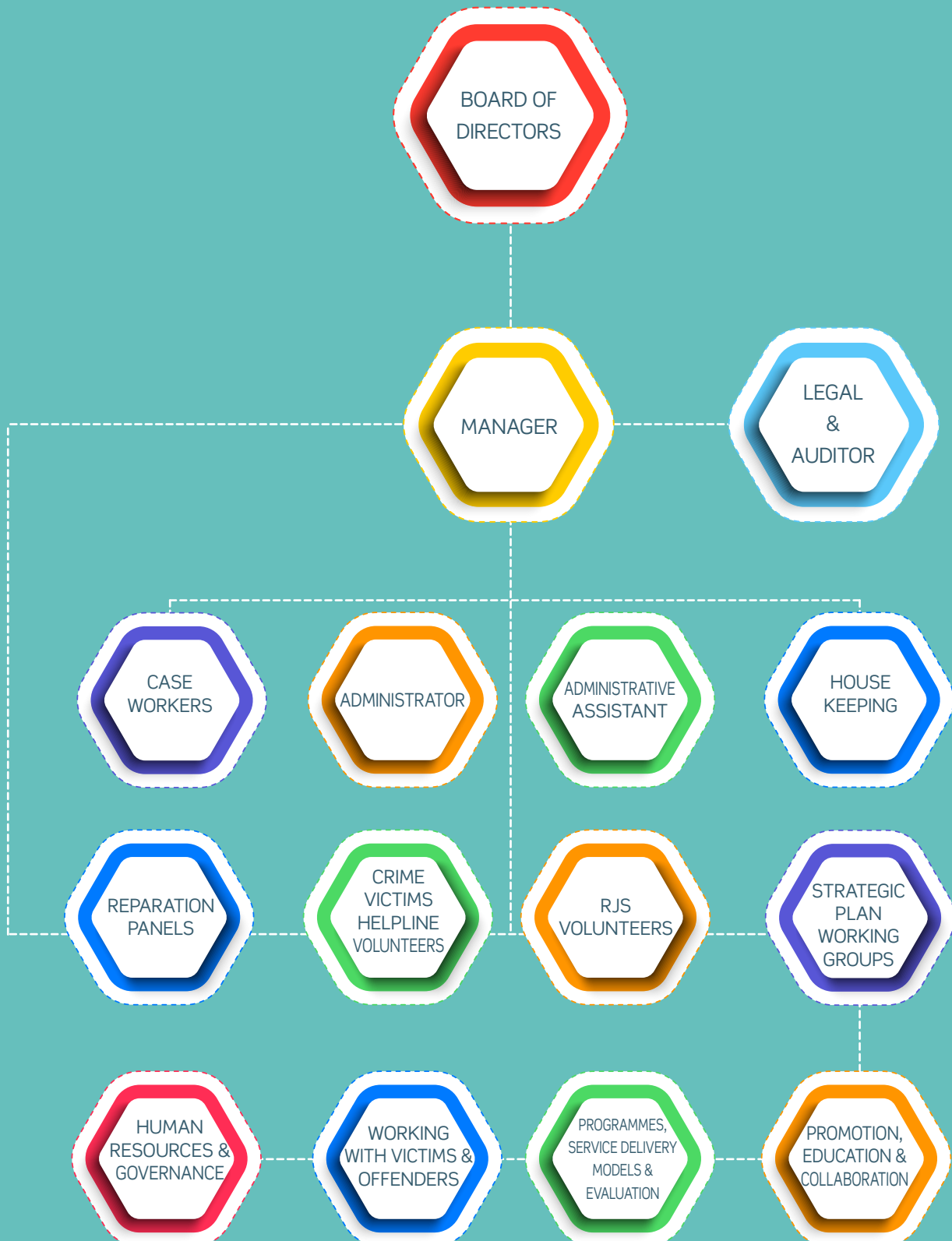
I hope you enjoy reading the report and welcome your feedback, comments and observations.

Maria Flynn

Chairperson

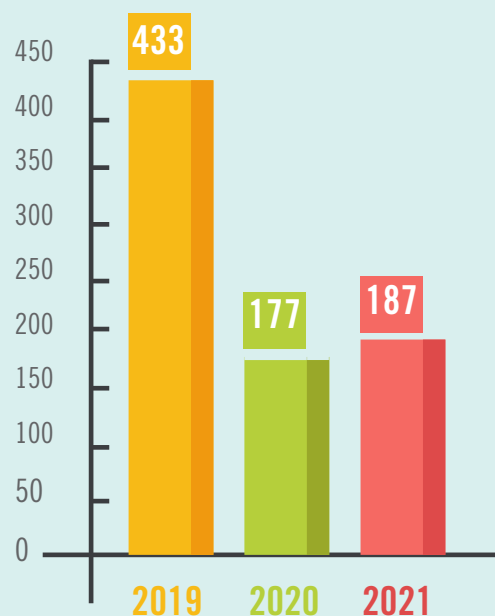
Restorative Justice Services

Organisational Structure & People



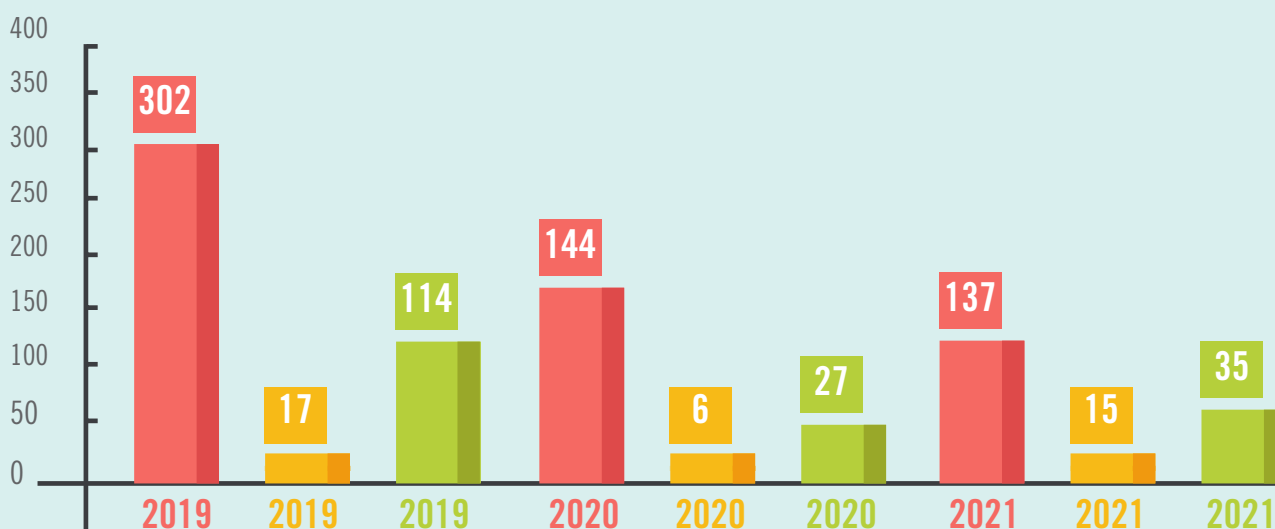
Total Case Referrals Comparative 2019 – 2021

2019 Case Referrals	433
2020 Case Referrals	177
2021 Case Referrals	187

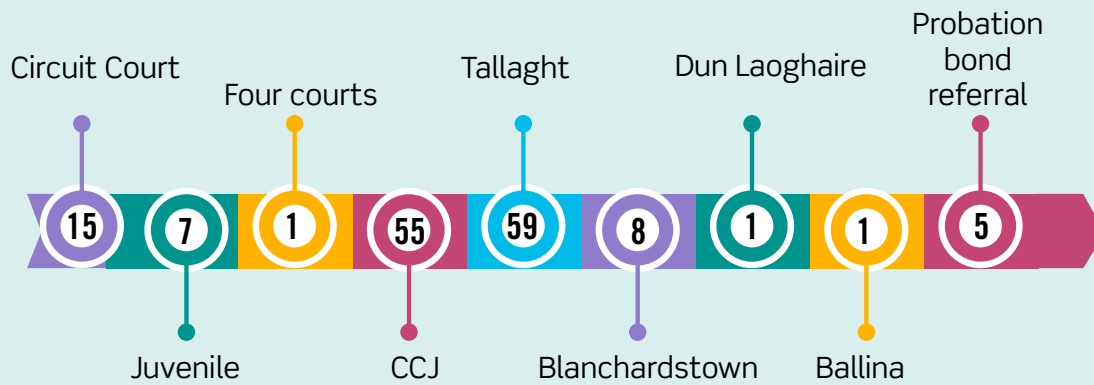


Breakdown of the 2019 - 2021 Referrals

2019 District Court Referrals	302
2019 Circuit Court Referrals	17
2019 Restorative Road Safety Programme	114
2020 District Court Referrals	144
2020 Circuit Court Referrals	6
2020 Restorative Road Safety Programme	27
2021 District Court Referrals	137
2021 Circuit Court Referrals	15
2021 Restorative Road Safety Programme	35



Source of 2021 Court Referrals



Sanction – Court Outcomes



Offences before the Court



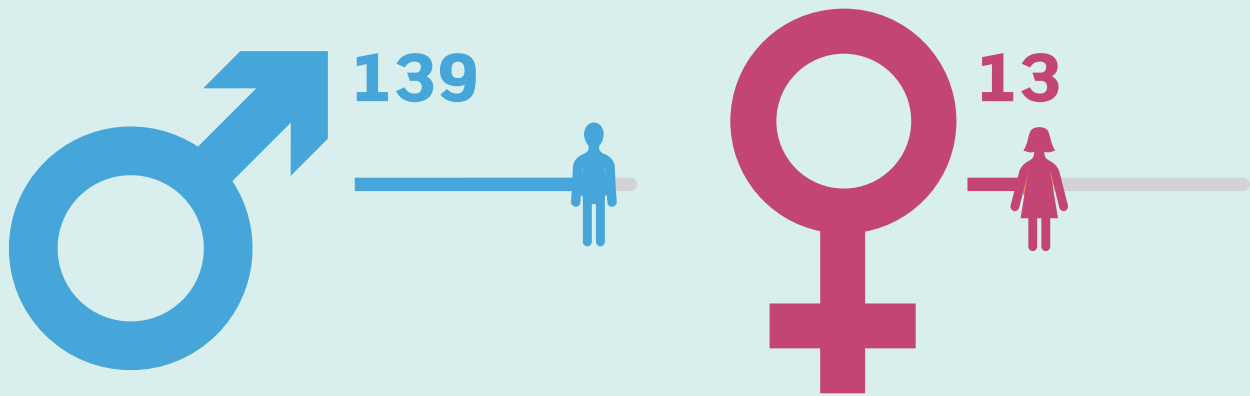
Note:

1. Referrals are often accompanied by more than just one offence / charge.
2. On review, certain Road Traffic referrals / offences are directed to the Reparation Programme.

Completions



Gender



Age Demographic



Charitable Donations and Compensation

Compensation	€2000
Garda Benevolent Fund	€1000
Ronald McDonald House	€1000
Compensation	€1000
Irish Cancer Society	€1000
Little Blue Heroes	€615
Pieta House	€540
Compensation	€500
Garda Benevolent Fund	€400
National Rehabilitation Hospital	€300
St.Dominics Drug Community Response	€250
St. Dominics Drug Centre	€250
Peter McVerry Trust	€275
Aware	€300
Down Syndrome Ireland	€200
Pieta House/Focus Ireland	€200
Our Lady's Childrens Hospital	€200
Barnardos	€200
Aoibhness	€200
M.S. Ireland	€200
Alzheimer's Society	€200
Village Counselling	€100
National Rehabilitation Hospital	€100
Mendicity	€100
Dog's Trust	€160
Addiction Response	€100
Headway Brain Injury	€100
M.S. Ireland	€100
Cystic Fibrosis	€50
Bradog Youth Service	€30
TOTAL	€11,670

Note: A charitable donation is a common element within an Offender Reparation Contract

Retirement of Edel Bracken

– RJS Financial and Office Administrator



Edel Bracken – who served as RJS Financial and Office Administrator for over 19 years.

Edel Bracken joined RJS in 2003 when she became the 2nd official employee of RJS.

It's quite a challenge to put together the right words to appropriately acknowledge the contribution Edel

has made over the 19 years of her unstinting commitment and loyalty to the work and development of RJS, which went far above and beyond what might have been considered 'the norm'.

As I noted at her farewell lunch, while I held the title of Manager, it was a *de facto* management team, Peter and Edel, particularly so since the recession circa. 2010 which led to the restructuring of the responsibilities of the then RJS Staff Team.



Pictured at the gathering to mark the retirement of Edel Bracken. L-R: Edel Bracken, Lovena Judgewo – RJS Financial & Office Administrator, Kieran O'Dwyer – former RJS Director and Volunteer, Brian Sheridan – RJS Volunteer, Claude Delaney – RJS Volunteer, Sadhbh McGarry – RJS Caseworker, Maria Flynn – RJS Chairperson and Volunteer.

Her job description and associated roles and responsibilities were constantly evolving, yet Edel took every unexpected development, every unforeseen scenario, every twist and turn of the RJS journey in her stride, facing into all challenges with her trademark professionalism, competency, good grace and good will.

Her true contribution can never be accurately calculated or evaluated as there was almost as much work going on 'under the radar' as the work which was visible and accounted for.

I could spend a lot of time here listing out the qualities and attributes which made her such a crucial and valued member of the team. As modesty is high on that list, I'll only single out her integrity, generosity, work ethic, loyalty, discretion and patience. A very special personal thank you from me in that regard. Not to forget her unfailing reliability and dependability. Edel could always be completed and entirely counted on, 100%.

We will miss Edel, our colleague and friend and we send her our heartfelt thanks for walking the long and winding road with RJS over the last 19 years. We wish her every happiness, every good fortune, the best of good luck and excellent health to enjoy her our retirement and everything good thing that life presents to her and her family in the coming years.

All the very best Edel.

Peter Keeley
Manager RJS



L – R: Gemma Anslow – RJS Volunteer, Mary Shine Thompson – RJS Director and Volunteer, Sarah Frazer – RJS Case Worker, Catherine Ashe – RJS Volunteer, Peter Keeley – RJS Manager, Anna Gallagher – Probation Service & member of RJS Reparation Panels, Eileen Brady – RJS Director / Crime Victims Helpline& RJS Volunteer.

Case Studies - The different styles, language, presentation and level of detail provided for in the respective studies has been determined by a range of factors including the issue of anonymity, deidentification and the opportunity to facilitate their wider publication and circulation.

Case Study 1 – Section 15 Public Order

David, a young man in his early twenties, was before the District Court after being charged with a Section 15 Public Order offence. David had no previous convictions and pleaded guilty to the charge. Before making a final decision on sanction, the Judge referred the matter to Restorative Justice Services.

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At the first meeting with and RJS Caseworker, David described that on the date of the offences before the Courts that he had been drinking heavily as a coping mechanism to manage difficult feelings. David went out with friends and spent most of the day drinking alcohol. David and his friends later attended a concert in a local bar. At some point during the night, David's friend started an argument with a member of the band. David stepped in and physically pushed the band member away from his friend. The incident escalated, with the bands family and friends becoming involved. David began arguing further with those involved, before being asked to leave the bar by security. Outside on the main street, the argument continued and David began to physically push members of the crowd that followed them from the bar. David stated that he had been so intoxicated at this point, that he had difficulty seeing and had been lashing out at anyone around him. A member of the public came up to David and physically assaulted him leaving him with serious injuries. David was rushed to hospital with a friend, and received urgent medical care.

David spoke of his regret for his behaviour and how he had impacted those around him. David

also showed significant signs of self-blame for the serious injuries he received. David shared that he been taking prescribed anxiety and depression medication at the time and was struggling with his mental health. He disclosed that he had a poor relationship with his family which was leading to further issues with his mental health.

David was working full time and hoping to go on to study criminal justice, but was very aware that any sanctions imposed by the Court could impact his future career in that area.

At the end of the meeting David confirmed that he was willing to participate in the Reparation Programme. Due to the sensitive nature of the case and with David being a victim of crime himself from the night in question, the RJS Caseworker and David agreed to a bespoke restorative conference. David stated that he would like his family to attend the conference meeting as he hoped to improve his relationship with them as well as having the benefit of family support during the process.

David's conference meeting was chaired by a trained community volunteer and attended by his mother and father, the RJS Caseworker, a member of An Garda Síochána and a Probation Officer. A volunteer from the Crime Victim's Helpline was also in attendance at this meeting, due to David being both a perpetrator of the offence before the Court and a victim of crime due to his being assaulted in the aftermath of his own offending.

The conference meeting aimed to explore the background of the offence, what led up to the offence, focus on awareness of harm and those who were directly and indirectly impacted by the offence.

The conference meeting began with an invitation to David to tell his own narrative of

The Meeting:

Following a number of separate preparation meetings with both parties, a date and a neutral venue was agreed for the facilitated meeting.

As agreed, Maria arrived first, followed by Anna. Two RJS Caseworkers were also in attendance.

After welcome and introductions, the context and guidelines of the meeting were outlined for both parties. Maria had the opportunity to speak first and she spoke clearly and passionately about the impact of the assault on her. Maria wanted Anna to know how the assault had impacted on her, not just in the physical sense but emotionally also. She also wanted a commitment from Anna that nothing like this would ever happen again.

Anna then had the opportunity to respond with her apology and an expression of remorse. She also gave a commitment that she would never behave in this way again. She confirmed that she had attended alcohol education and anger management classes. Finally, she presented a written letter of apology and an amount of compensation that had been agreed between the parties.

Once both parties had finished speaking, one of the RJS Caseworkers summarised the contributions of each party and asked if either wanted to add anything else before the meeting was closed. Anna took the opportunity to reiterate her apology.

The meeting was then formally closed. As agreed, Anna was invited to leave the room first. As she left there was a handshake between the parties which was initiated by Maria.

In Summary:

Maria stated that the restorative justice process had provided her with the opportunity to communicate with Anna in a safe and controlled environment. She stated that the meeting had calmed her anxieties and she felt reassured that Anna would never hurt her or anyone else again.

Anna stated that she was fairly dealt with by the Court and Maria, given the very serious nature of the offence. She also stated that she was grateful that she had been given the opportunity to apologise and make amends.

Court Outcome:

Anna was given a 1 year peace bond.

Case Study 3

Simon – Public Order

Simon, a young man in his early twenties, pleaded guilty before the District Court in relation to a public order offence that took place within the location of a hospital. It was noted in court that Simon had two previous public order offences. The Judge adjourned the matter to Restorative Justice Services. As Simon's offence had taken place at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic the Court requested that there be a particular focus on the impact to the hospital and its staff.

Simon met with an RJS Caseworker. He described how he had attended a major hospital in Dublin as his wife had been admitted to A&E. Simon stated that his wife had ongoing issues in relation to her health and they were both worried about the pandemic. Simon had left his

heard how patients were impacted, as being in hospital is a very difficult time for people, with the palliative care ward being close to where Simon's offence had taken place. Simon stated how he had not thought of this, and that he recognised that people could have been receiving bad news. Simon engaged well, asked questions and showed learning from the engagement.

Simon also attended anger management with an outside organisation, however he also engaged with the RJS caseworker as he was going through this process to reflect on his learning. Following his engagement with this course and completion of the other agreed actions, Simon attended another meeting with the Reparation Panel where he shared his learning, in particular his new coping mechanisms when stressed or angry. Simon also explained to the meeting what he had learnt from his engagement with the hospital representative, including how he had not considered those around him being in a difficult situation, and that he was selfish for not considering this before this time. All those in attendance expressed their satisfaction that Simon had developed a better awareness of the impact of his offences on the wider community around his.

Court Outcome:

When Simon returned to Court, the Judge commented on the high standard of Simon's engagement with RJS and completion of agreed restorative actions. The Court directed Simon to pay a further charitable donation to the hospital, after which the matter was 'Struck Out'

Case Study 4

District Court - Cathy and Thomas - Section 3 Assault

This case involved a man and a woman who were unknown to each other before the assault. Thomas was working full-time in Dublin City Centre. Cathy, originally from Cork, was living and working in Dublin in retail for over 10 years. This offence took place at the beginning of the pandemic lock down when mask wearing and social distancing were being rigorously observed.

Contact with the parties:

On receiving the referral contact was made with both parties via letter, providing information on restorative justice and including the possible options available to facilitate their participation. The principle of voluntary participation was also clearly highlighted.

Cathy's Story:

On the day of the offence Cathy was assigned to manage the flow of customers through the store. Due to the Covid pandemic, safety regulations were in place, such as mandatory masks and social distancing and hand sanitisation.

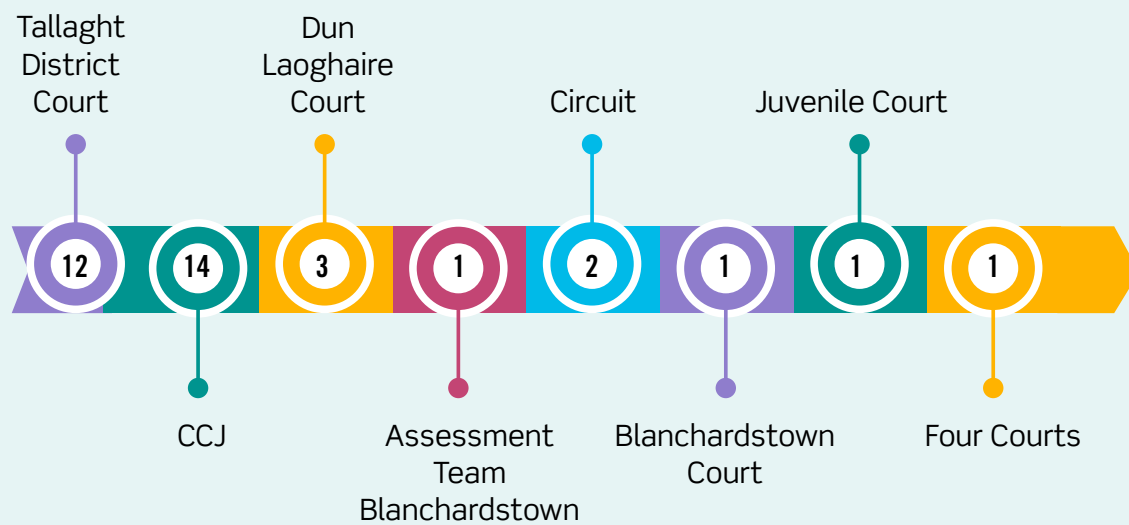
When Thomas came to the door the shop was at maximum capacity and there was a long queue. Thomas presented at the top of the queue. Cathy stated that she stopped him and informed him of the new safety procedures in place and that they were there to keep every safe. She stated that she told him that it would be unfair of her to allow him access to the shop as everyone was queuing. Cathy stated that this conversation went on for about 10 mins and that she could see Thomas becoming heightened,

Restorative Road Safety Pilot Programme Statistics for 2021

Cases Referred in 2021

35 cases

Source of Referral

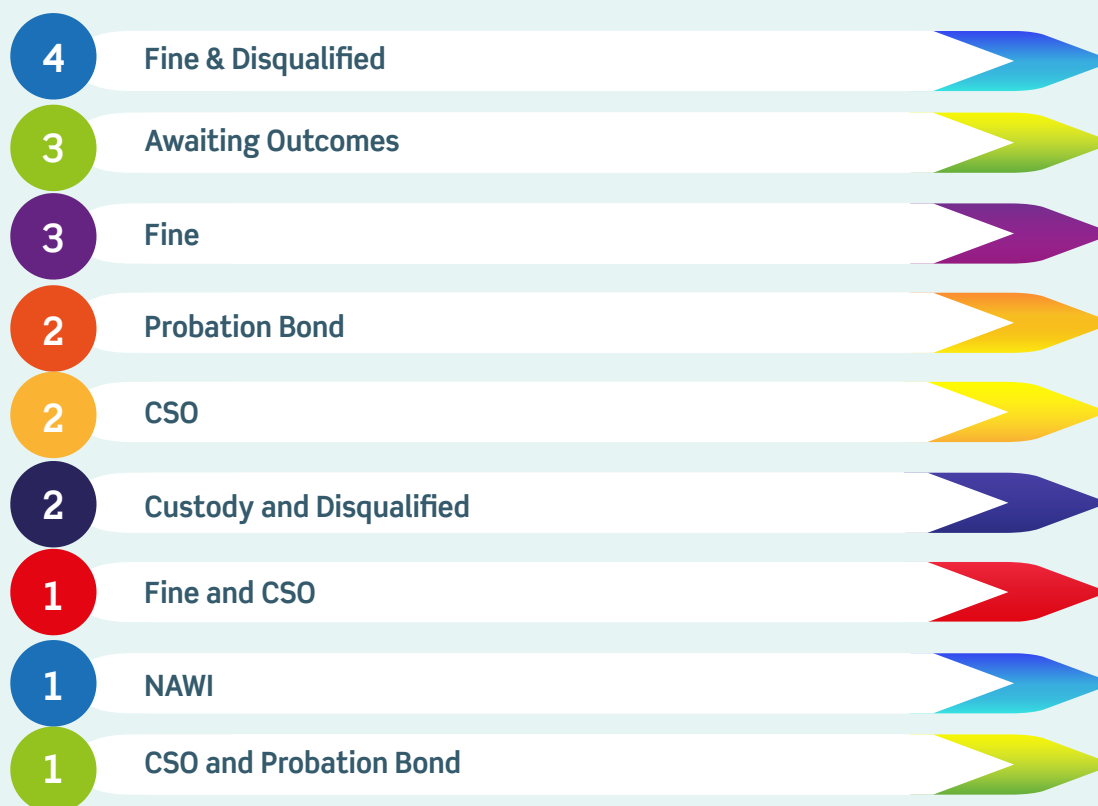


Offences before the Court



Note 1: Referrals are often accompanied by more than just one offence / charge.

Sanction - Court Outcomes

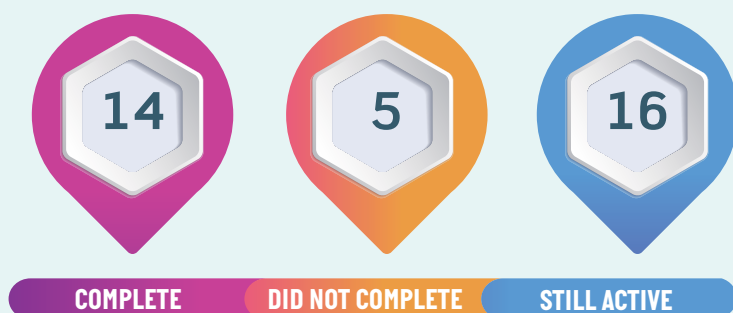


Charitable Donations

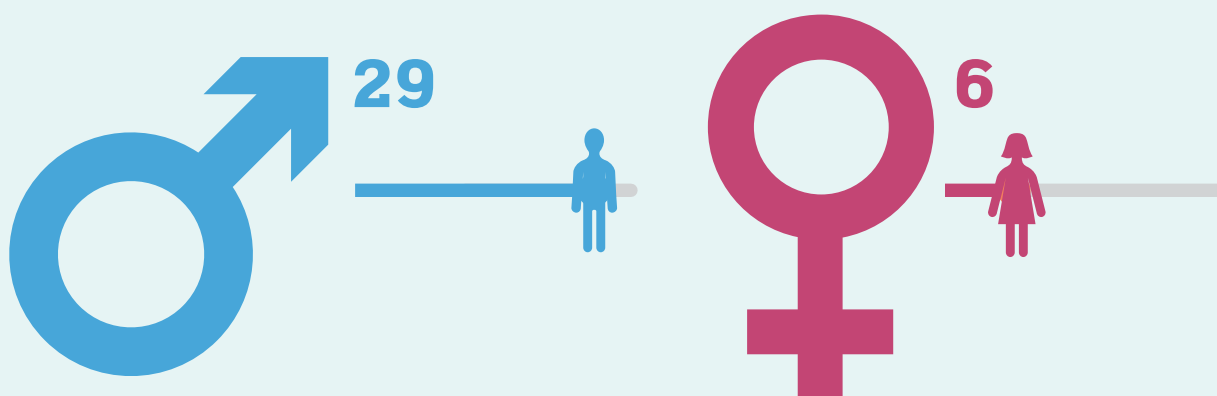
Irish Society for Autism	€250
Our Lady's Children's Hospital	€200
Crumlin Children's Hospital	€200
Irish Guide Dogs	€150
CF Ireland	€150
National Rehabilitation Hospital	€150
Irish Guide Dogs	€150
National Rehabilitation Hospital	€100
Womens Aid	€50
National Rehabilitation Hospital	€20
Total	€1,470

Note 2: A charitable donation is a common element with the Restorative Road Safety Programme.

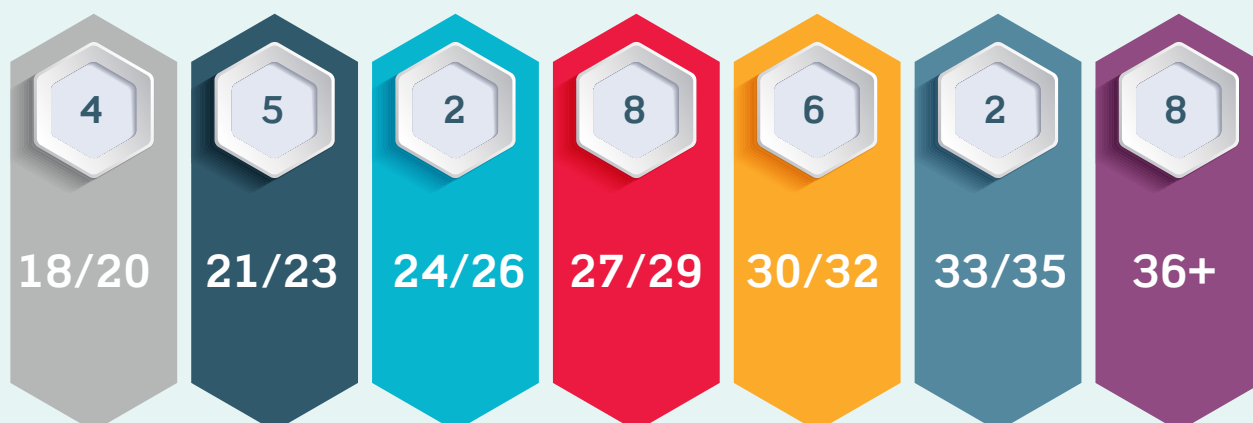
Completions



Gender



Age Demographic



Note: Still Active refers to cases referred in 2021 that remain active at time of publication.



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