




le chéile
MENTORING

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Inspiring hope, believing in change



“Each week it gives me something to look forward to, even if it’s just a chat. If I’m struggling in deciding where I want to go in life, or what I want to do, it’s good to chat about it. If I need advice, it’s good to talk about it. My mentor has also helped me in learning how to get things done that other people find easy to do - looking at an alternative way of doing or approaching things. I think sometimes when I’m making decisions, I don’t always make the right decisions and he helps me to see things differently”.

– Young Person

“I honestly don’t know where me or my family would be without the support of my mentor. It has been one of the best organisations my family has been referred to. One of the best things about Le Chéile is they look at the family as a whole. I will always be grateful for the support, understanding and kindness I received from my mentor”.

– Parent

“One bad decision can change a lifetime but should not define an individual. Le Chéile is providing a service that is essential in seeking to help the next generation and our communities”.

– Volunteer Mentor

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An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

Le Chéile Mentoring is funded by the Department of Justice through the Probation Service.

Introduction from the Chairperson

I am delighted to introduce our Annual Report for 2023, which was a busy and successful year for Le Chéile Mentoring. 2023 was the first full year post pandemic and it was great to be able to hold our National Volunteer Conference in person in September. I was so impressed with the volunteer mentors whom I met at the conference, by their enthusiasm and commitment to supporting vulnerable young people and families. A huge thank you to our 250+ volunteers, supported by our staff team, who delivered 2251 mentoring sessions in 2023, a 24% increase on the previous year.

Another highlight of 2023 was the awarding of the Quality in Mentoring Excellence award in August. We have a strong ethos of quality and best practice in Le Chéile, and we are very proud to have our policies and services validated by an independent expert body.

The Board of Le Chéile Mentoring is acutely aware of the importance of good governance and I want to thank my fellow Board members for their expertise and commitment in ensuring that Le Chéile is a well-managed organisation and continues to fulfil its mission. The Board met seven times during 2023 and in addition to this, Board members also attended and contributed to our established sub-committees. We commenced the crucial work of developing a new strategic plan in Q4 2023, for completion in 2024.

I would like to extend my gratitude to fellow Directors who completed their term of office in 2023, namely Darina Sexton, Olivia Keaveney, John Balfe and Maria Molloy. A big thank you to all of them for their contribution. We were also very pleased to welcome four new board members this year, Carin Bryans, Claire Walsh, Deirdre Macklin, Mary Byrne, and Ronan McLoughlin. We look forward to gaining from their expertise and experience.

I want to thank our primary funders and partners, namely the Probation Service and the Department of Justice. We have strong collaboration with colleagues in the Probation Service, working in partnership to support the best outcomes for the young people and in turn to reduce offending in the community. However, maintaining both the quality and

quantity of services has become increasingly challenging for the organisation. It is simply not viable to continue to cover the increasing cost of living and growing operating costs without an adequate uplift in Probation Service funding. This financial strain makes it difficult to sustain the level of service those we work with and our community deserves. We will continue to engage constructively with our funders on this important issue.

I would also like to thank our partners in Oberstown, Archways, Crosscare, Limerick City Council and Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Justice Service for their support and collaboration in 2023. Together we continue to deliver services that have the power to encourage someone to change their life. To the young people and parents referred to Le Chéile who may be reading this, I also want to extend my gratitude to you. Whether you have completed your journey with Le Chéile or are still engaged with your mentor, I hope you have found guidance and confidence with your mentor and thank you for putting your trust in our team of volunteers and staff.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my thanks to the management team and the staff of Le Chéile for their work, passion and commitment over the past 12 months and particularly to Anne Conroy, our CEO for her dedicated leadership and commitment to delivering high-quality services and supporting the Board in our governance responsibilities.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Doorley".

James Doorley
Chairperson

Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to our Le Chéile's Annual report for 2023. The Annual report is a good time to reflect on the year, the achievements and the challenges.

One of the recurring themes for 2023 was the increase in the complexity and level of need experienced by young people who use our services. Substance misuse is common, early school leaving, mental health issues, poor family relationships and increasingly homelessness are part of the lives of many of the young people we support. Mentoring does not claim to solve any or all of those challenges, but it does support young people and parents, to take first steps to address the issues they want to work on. **I am very proud of the 150 young people and 73 parents who availed of mentoring last year. In this Annual Report you can read more about some of their stories and the impact of taking part in mentoring or restorative justice.**

The Restorative Justice service expanded in 2023 to cover county Cork as well as counties Limerick and Clare. RJ is a powerful approach to supporting young people who have engaged in offending behaviour, to address their behaviour and also to support victims. 28 young people took part in RJ programmes in 2023 and there were 5 restorative conferences held.

There were many achievements in 2023, the National Volunteer Conference in September and the Restorative Justice Conference in November stand out as important highlights. We also expanded our mentoring for young people involved in YDPs in the greater Dublin area. Our current strategic plan came to an end in 2023 and work began on developing a new strategy, which will be launched in 2024.

While recruiting volunteers is more difficult post Covid, we continue to recruit high calibre volunteers and I am delighted that 55 new volunteers joined Le Chéile in 2023. The volunteer mentors, supported by the staff team, give incredible service to Le Chéile and to their communities. I am delighted to pay tribute and to thank all of them for their dedication and commitment to vulnerable young people and families.

I want to express my gratitude to our brilliant staff team for their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm. The Board of Le Chéile ensure that we are a well run organisation and I appreciate their guidance, in particular the support of our chairperson James Doorley. Our Board, staff and volunteers 'le chéile', enable us to support young people to make positive changes in their lives and contribute to safer communities for us all.



Anne Conroy

Anne Conroy
CEO

Vision, Mission and Values

VISION

Our vision is that every child and young person, Le Chéile works with will be supported and empowered to realise their hopes and dreams.

MISSION

Le Chéile Mentoring is a national, volunteer mentoring, restorative justice and family support service, which supports children, young people and their families, where the child or young person is involved in or at risk of offending. We provide tailored supports, in partnership with other organisations, working along-side children, young people and their families, to enable them to reach their potential now and into the future.

VALUES

We believe in the rights and potential of every child and young person to make positive changes in their lives and to be actively involved in that process.

We believe in the power of volunteer mentoring.

We are committed to a restorative approach.

We value partnership with children, young people, families and other organisations.

We actively listen, respect and empower.

We understand the impact of trauma and we work from a trauma informed approach.

We are committed to evidence informed programmes and excellence in everything that we do.

We recognise the impact of socio-economic deprivation and believe in social justice and equality.

We are committed to diversity and social inclusion.

2023 In Numbers



Highlights from 2023

Probation Service inaugural CBO Summit – 28/04/23

Le Chéile joined many other community-based organisations (CBOs) funded by the Probation Service at the first-ever networking and learning event for organisations working with people who have experience with the justice system. Speakers included Mark Wilson, Director of Probation Service, Simon Harris, Minister for Justice and James Brown, Minister of State.

The summit aimed to promote and encourage more collaboration between the Probation Service and CBOs, a goal that Le Chéile fully endorses and welcomes. The summit has been followed up by the setting up of the YPP Forum, a forum for youth CBOs to meet and collaborate on a regular basis.



Left to right are Lyndsey McCabe, Coordinator, Anne Conroy, CEO, Olivia Keaveney, Deputy Director of Operations Probation Service and Alan Quinn Southern Regional Manager.

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteering Week is a weeklong celebration of volunteering. It's a time to highlight the remarkable stories of generosity and selflessness that characterise volunteering in our communities. Volunteering is much more than a simple act of giving; it's a powerful force for positive change, fostering connections and bridging social divides.

At Le Chéile, we know that volunteering isn't always easy. Many of the young people and parents we support face significant challenges in their lives, making it difficult to attend sessions or arrange meetings. Despite these obstacles, volunteers persevere, showing up day after day to support work with young people where they are at. Their commitment and determination are truly commendable, as they work tirelessly to build positive relationships.

To all the volunteers at Le Chéile Mentoring and beyond, a heartfelt thank you.

Damien Quinn – Thriving After Prison – 31/05/23

We were delighted our Midlands region organised a talk for our staff and volunteers with Damien Quinn, the founder of Spéire Nua. After a life stunted by addiction, prison, relapse and recovery, Damien immersed himself in education and sought to re-enter the workforce. However, his criminal convictions led to constant rejections, making reintegration exceedingly difficult. Eventually, an employer took a chance on him, enabling Damien to rebuild his life, career, and family. His current work with Spéire Nua is a true passion project, focused on supporting individuals with criminal convictions to rebuild their lives by counteracting the stigma of their criminal conviction.



First RJ CONFERENCE in UL Limerick – 24/11/23

2023 ended on a high with the first Le Chéile Restorative Justice Conference taking place on the 24th of November 2023 in the Pavillion Building, University of Limerick. The theme of the conference was 'Stories of Restoration'. The special guest host for the event was Dr. Ian Marder (Assistant Professor of Criminology, Maynooth University).

The guest speakers on the day were Janine Carroll, internationally renowned Restorative Practices trainer, Ailbhe Griffith, from the documentary The Meeting and advocate for Restorative Justice, Dr. Sharon Lambert, Lecturer and researcher from U.C.C, Joe Power, Limerick Restorative Practices Project, Elaine Slattery, Moyross Youth Academy, Simon Keating, Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project Coordinator and two Le Chéile volunteer mentors who had participated in Restorative Conferences.



Highlights from 2023

The National Volunteer Conference – 30/09/23

Le Chéile hosted our 5th National Volunteer Conference, on the 30th of September in Portlaoise, welcoming volunteers from across the country. The purpose of the conference was to bring together the Le Chéile volunteer community, share stories and learnings, and convey our passion for mentoring. This year's theme, "One Step at a Time – The Transformative Power of Mentoring," highlighted the profound impact mentoring can have.

Ronan McLoughlin, Assistant Principal Officer for Young Persons Probation (YPP) and a Director of the Le Chéile Board, highlighted the value of volunteers' presence, support and encouragement for their mentees, noting the positive impact on both individuals and society. Keynote speakers Dr. Rebekah Brennan and Dr. Brian Pennie shared their transformative experiences and emphasised the importance of supportive adults and value-based decisions. Workshops covered topics such as Motivational Interviewing, supporting LGBTI+ young people and understanding trauma.

Former mentee Caoimhe also shared her transformational mentoring experience, enriching the event with personal insights and inspiration.

We look forward to our next National Volunteer Conference!



The 9th Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference 2023 at Dublin Castle - 10/10/23

Le Chéile was honoured to be invited to speak at the 9th annual Irish Criminal Justice Agencies (ICJA) conference. This event ran by the Association for Criminal Justice Agencies Conference (ACJRD) gathers professionals and experts from various sectors of the criminal justice system, providing a platform for exchanging knowledge and sharing of best practices. At the conference, Le Chéile had the opportunity to share our extensive expertise on the crucial role of volunteerism within the criminal justice system. Our presentation highlighted the positive impact that volunteer mentors can have, working with young people and parents in the justice system.



Quality in Mentoring Excellence Award

Le Chéile was awarded a Quality in Mentoring Excellence Award by the Befriending Network in August 2023. Befriending Networks is an independent expert body for Befriending and Mentoring organisations in the UK and Ireland.

The Quality in Mentoring Excellence award validates our strong commitment to operating our mentoring programmes to the highest standards. We are immensely proud of the feedback we received during the assessment. In particular, the assessor noted:

“The organisation very much excels in participation and involving all stakeholders in the development of the organisation. The interviews showcase that young people and volunteers feel listened to, have a choice and feel welcome in the organisation. The support for volunteers is outstanding and it was great hearing about the national volunteer committee”.



Staff in head office celebrating the Quality in Mentoring Excellence award. Left to right Carol Doyle, Anne Conroy, Maxine Kelly, Mary Daly and Mark Turner.

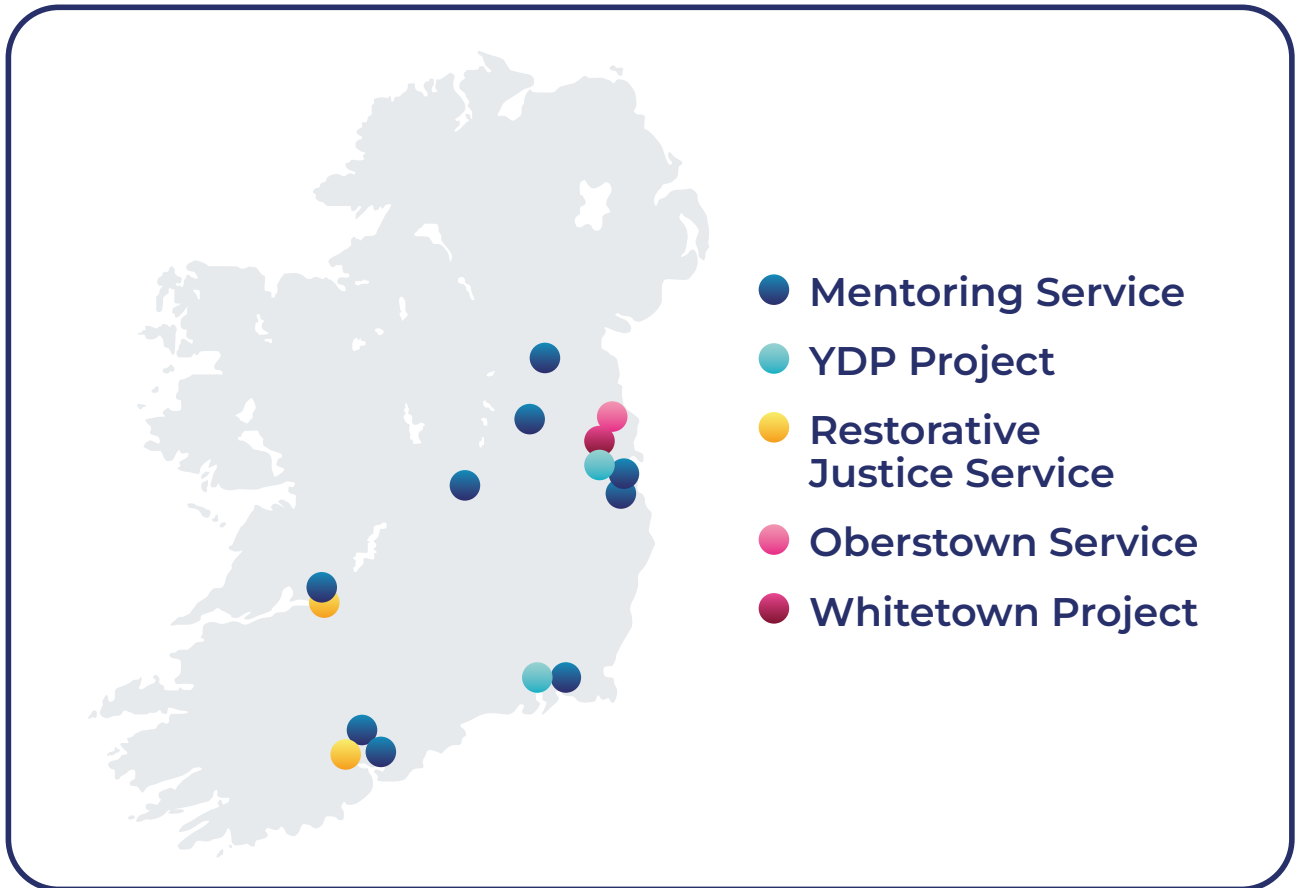
Strategy 2020-2023

Our current strategy covered the period 2020 to 2023. Most of the objectives in the strategy were achieved. Developments which are worth highlighting include:

- Service expansion in both the Dublin YDP service and Oberstown.
- Involvement in the Greentown initiative through the provision of mentoring, in partnership with Archways.
- Quality in Mentoring Excellence Award.
- RJ delivering wider services and expanding to County Cork.
- Development of Communications: new website launched, 3 new Animations, Mentor video, video for victims, greater use of social media.
- 3 National Volunteer Conferences held.

In Q4 2023 we commenced work on developing a new strategy.

Le Chéile Services



“Mentoring helped me staying out of trouble, keeping my head down. Provided me with someone to trust, a shoulder to cry on, and a place to speak”.

– **Young Person**

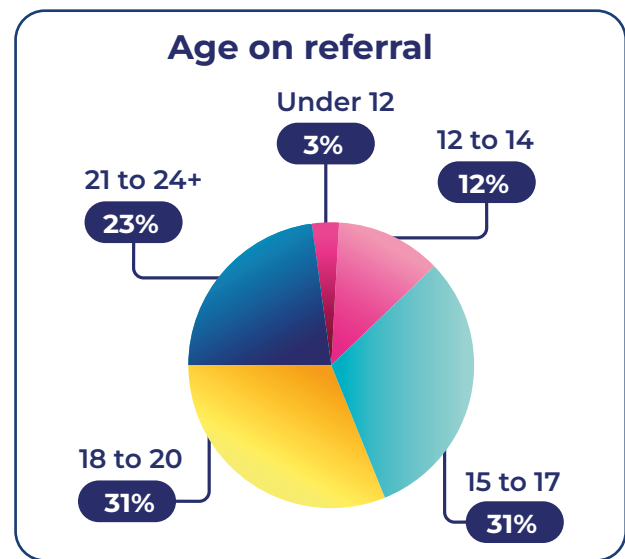
Youth Mentoring

Youth mentoring pairs a volunteer mentor with a young person to build a trusting relationship. The mentor supports and empowers the young person to make positive changes. Sessions occur weekly for 1-3 hours and last around 18 months. Mentors listen, advise and share experiences, leading to reduced offending, improved confidence, positive use of time and better family relationships.

In 2023, Le Chéile supported 150 young people across Ireland, of these 150 young people, 87% were male and 13% were female.

There has been a notable rise in the age range of those referred. Referrals from the 21-24+ age group have continued to grow; in 2022, this age group accounted for 16% of referrals, whereas in 2023, they comprised 23%. This trend poses greater challenges due to the

increased complexity and needs, with many of these young adults being cautious to engage due to past negative experiences with the justice system.



Youth mentoring outcomes in 2023

Top 4 areas of progression made by young people in youth mentoring



Le Chéile uses the Outcomes Star tool to support the young people we work with in making positive changes in their lives. The Outcomes Star tool allows young people and parents to score their progress in a specific area. Highlighting areas of strength but also areas of difficulty, where support may be needed. Displayed in the graph are the top areas of progression made by young people.

Conor's Story – Youth Mentoring

Conor was referred to Le Chéile in the beginning of 2023 by the Probation Service. Conor was 18 at the time of referral. Recognising the potential benefits of mentoring, Conor's Probation Officer thought that mentoring would be of benefit to him, as a motivation to get out his house and back into the outside world.

Conor's struggle with social anxiety led him to frequently isolate himself in his room. Therefore, meeting with a volunteer mentor on a weekly basis posed a significant challenge. Initially, Conor struggled to engage with his mentor and would often agree to a mentoring session only to cancel at the last minute due to his high anxiety levels. Despite these setbacks, his mentor persisted in trying to engage Conor regularly. Through the mentor's persistence and Conor's own willingness to receive support and push himself, he gradually overcame his initial barriers. Conor started meeting his mentor consistently every week, demonstrating his commitment to progress.

He and his mentor developed a strong and supportive relationship, building trust and mutual understanding. Together, they worked methodically on setting incremental and achievable goals for Conor. These goals were designed to gently nudge him beyond his comfort zone and help him reconnect with society and become more involved in his community.

Through their consistent weekly meetings, Conor experienced substantial positive changes. He not only gained confidence but also found himself motivated to take proactive steps towards personal development. One significant outcome of the mentoring relationship is Conor's enrolment in a course, marking a pivotal step towards advancing his education. This achievement reflects the transformative impact of mentoring on Conor's life, empowering him to have the courage to overcome his anxiety and embrace new opportunities.



Parent Mentoring

Parent mentoring offers valuable support to parents and carers facing the complexities of family life. Participation is completely voluntary and involves the parent being matched with a volunteer mentor. As with youth mentoring, the relationship which develops between the mentor and the parent is central to parents feeling supported and empowered to make some changes in their lives. Parent mentoring helps develop parenting skills and deal with challenges in a non-judgmental environment outside the home.

Through reflective discussions with mentors, parents gain confidence and empowerment to tackle life's hurdles. Similar to youth mentoring, parent mentoring matches parents with mentors based on shared interests.

Parent mentoring yields significant benefits for parents, including enhanced self-confidence, emotional well-being and improved family relationships. It also fosters better stress management and greater engagement in activities beyond the home. Parent mentoring is available to those with young people on probation or at risk of offending. It is also available and taken up by parents who are on probation in their own right.

A unique aspect of our program is the parent mentoring initiative in collaboration with Oberstown Children Detention Campus, which offers support to parents or carers while their child is in detention and post-detention support.

Parent mentoring outcomes in 2023

Top 4 areas of progression made by parents in parent mentoring



In the same way youth mentoring uses the Outcomes Star tool, it is also used in parent mentoring. Parents can record their progress across seven different areas, which allows us to support the parents we work with in making positive changes in their lives. The top outcome areas of progression for parent/caregivers in 2023 are detailed in this graph.

Megan's Story – Parent Mentoring

Megan was referred to Le Chéile Mentoring in 2022. She was a single parent with two young children. Megan needed support and came to our mentoring service because she had previous run-ins with the law, such as driving and drug possession offences.

It was hoped that she could benefit from the support offered by a Le Chéile mentor, as raising two young children on her own while dealing with ongoing court dates was very difficult and she felt very scared.

Megan engaged with mentoring for a year and a half, which was not a linear process. The beginning was very challenging; there were bumps and hurdles along the road and as she struggled to trust the support that we could provide.

Over several weeks, Megan built a relationship with the Le Chéile Coordinator and her volunteer mentor. She opened up about past traumas and poor choices, having distanced herself from her family's support and drifted under the influence of newfound 'friends'. This negative influence made it difficult for her to sustain any real change away from offending behaviours. The strain on Megan's relationship with her family led her to rely more heavily on these friends, who continued to engage in anti-social behaviours and criminal activities.

Initially progress was made, but after a few months, Megan disengaged and reverted to avoidance behaviours. It emerged that Megan had relapsed into substance misuse and Megan's children were taken into foster care. This was a real wake up moment for Megan. She could not believe this had happened and desperately wanted to get her children back.

Following this incident, Megan was determined to change and became proactive in addressing her substance misuse, distancing herself from negative influences and re-engaging in education and training. She connected positively with her social worker, rising to every challenge, resulting in successful reunification with her children.

Throughout these months, Megan met her volunteer mentor weekly, discussing her struggles and the importance of a small, strong, dependable support network. She was encouraged to engage with other support services who could help to reconnect her with her family. She talked to her mentor about her future and the role model she wanted to be for her children. Helping Megan envision a different future, providing hope along with knowledge of the steps and supports available, helped her turn her life around. This not only offered Megan a future without the threat of court and prison but also provided a better future for her children.

Megan and her mentor continued to meet for some time beyond the reunification with her children and this consolidated her confidence and firmly established positive changes which she had put in place to change her life path and that of her children.

"Meeting with my mentor helps me in being a better parent for my children. It's a non-judgmental, honest space, where I can talk openly about my son, his challenges and how I feel. Mentoring supports me in my relationship with my son".

– Parent

Restorative Justice

Le Chéile is committed to a restorative approach, evident in our mentoring model which integrates a restorative ethos. All our volunteers undergo training in restorative practice.

Restorative Justice fosters reconciliation by bringing together those impacted by crime—offenders, victims, families, and communities—and emphasises the restoration of harm. The process prioritises the needs of the victim while holding the young person accountable and exploring avenues for restoration. Tailored to the unique needs of each young person and victim, our project works with young people aged 12-25 and includes:

1. **Victim Empathy Programme** – This programme encourages empathy in the young person who offended, prompting them to confront the harm they've caused and consider how they can make amends. The programme aims to increase empathy in participants, which has been proven to be positive in reducing offending behaviour.
2. **Restorative Conference** – A structured meeting involving the young person, victim(s), Restorative Justice Coordinator, and may involve family members friends, community representatives and statutory services. This conference provides a restorative process where the victim has a direct role in discussing the offence and determining outcomes. It also increases the young person's understanding of the impact of their actions on the victim,

their family and the wider community. In certain cases, where the direct victim is not available or willing to engage in a restorative conference, a volunteer who has experienced a similar crime is used as a proxy victim during the meeting.

3. **Victim/Offender Mediation** – This process facilitates communication between the victim and the young person in a controlled and secure setting. Typically, communication occurs indirectly through an intermediary, ensuring the safety of both parties.
4. **Reparation** – Reparation aims to address the harm done to the victim while holding the young person accountable for their actions. Reparative actions may include apologies, activities, reflective work, or symbolic gestures.

Our distinctive Restorative Justice Project in Counties Limerick, Clare, and Cork is a partnership with the Probation Service An Garda Síochána, Limerick City & County Council and other agencies.

"It gave me a sense of reality and encourages me to better myself in order to help my situation".

– RJ Participant

Restorative Justice in Numbers



28
young people
engaged in
Victim
Empathy
Programmes.



180
participants
in training
and RJ
conference.



10
reparation
interventions.



5
restorative
conferences.

Restorative Justice outcomes in 2023

Top 4 areas of progression made by young people in RJ



Johnny's Story – Restorative Justice

Johnny was 20 when he was referred to Le Chéile by his Probation Officer due to a serious assault charge. The Probation Officer believed that Johnny would benefit greatly from Restorative Justice, particularly the Victim Empathy Programme (VEP).

Johnny initially scored 40/66 on the Victim Empathy Scale (VES), indicating some empathy towards his victim. However, he had little insight into the broader impact of his behaviour on the victim, the witnesses, or his own family. The beginning of the VEP was very challenging for Johnny, as he was reluctant to revisit past events.

During the VEP, our Restorative Justice Coordinator created a safe and open space for Johnny, allowing them to develop a trusting relationship. Through gentle encouragement and positive reinforcement, Johnny began to share more and provide thoughtful answers during the exploratory sessions. The programme focused on helping Johnny understand the consequences of his actions for himself, his family and the victim. The programme also helped him identify support for himself in times of need.

At the end of the programme Johnny proceeded to participate in a Restorative Conference with a proxy victim who had experienced a similar assault and had been trained for this role. This structured meeting,

facilitated by the RJ Coordinator allowed both parties to share their experiences and respond to each other's perspectives. Johnny's Probation Officer also attended the meeting. All participants described the experience as powerful and positive for both sides.

By the end of the programme, Johnny's empathy score had increased to 59/66 which is a remarkable achievement on Johnny's part.

“It made me realise how the situation must have been terrifying” Johnny said at the end of his time with Le Chéile, “I am doing better for myself, it made me become a better person, not as angry”.



Family Support Programmes



Parenting Together

Parenting Together (also known as Non-Violent Resistance Parenting) is a programme for parents and carers experiencing child to parent abuse. The programme supports parents in preventing and responding to controlling and violent behaviour by children and young people.



Strengthening Families Programme

Le Chéile coordinates and funds Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) on behalf of the Probation Service, providing support. SFP is an evidence-based, whole family skills training programme, designed to work with high stress families, including families with drug and alcohol issues.



Family Support Interventions

Family Support Interventions are tailored supports designed for each individual family's needs, which complement the mentoring sessions. Family support interventions aim to improve communications within the family and promote the importance of family relationships. Examples might include family mediation or a family meal.

Our Volunteers

Our volunteer mentors are the foundation of Le Chéile. Their dedication to supporting youth, parents and families is truly commendable. In 2023, we welcomed 55 new volunteers who brought fresh enthusiasm to volunteering with Le Chéile.

To ensure our volunteers receive the support and guidance they need to respond to the needs of parents and young people, Le Chéile provides training, one-on-one support with staff and group supervision. We are deeply committed to fostering an environment where our volunteers feel valued, supported, and empowered in their role as mentors.

We extend our gratitude to each and every volunteer for their invaluable experience, commitment kindness and time. Without their unwavering support, Le Chéile would not be able to achieve the significant impact we have with young people and families in communities across the country. This dedication and hard work deserve recognition and Le Chéile always aims to acknowledge the expertise, passion and diligence that our volunteers bring to the role. Thank you to all our volunteers!



Volunteers and staff at our National Volunteer Conference September 2023

The National Volunteer Committee

The National Volunteer Committee (NVC) is a forum for volunteers to participate in the discussion and development of the work of Le Chéile. The NVC meets three times a year to share information across regions and discuss pertinent issues that arise for our volunteers. The Committee is made up of two volunteer representatives from each region and meetings are attended by the CEO, the National Volunteer Coordinator and the Communications and Policy Officer. A huge thank you to Debra Crawley who chaired the NVC in 2023 and to Jake Jeffrey vice chairperson.



February 2023 NVC meeting in the Parish Centre, Portlaoise. Left to right Jake Jeffrey (Cork), Debra Crawley (chair), Maxine Kelly (National Volunteer Coordinator), Anthony Wyse (Midlands), Anne Conroy (CEO), Canice Conroy (Midlands) and Deji Adenuga (Meath).

Volunteer Training

At present, Le Chéile is supported by a team of approximately 250 volunteers who enabled us to provide 2251 mentoring sessions in 2023. This figure does not include the time taken to attend regular group supervisions, additional training, or liaising with their supervisor. Throughout the year, we successfully onboarded and trained 55 new volunteers. Our volunteer training comprises seven modules, carefully crafted to empower mentors with the necessary tools for working with vulnerable young people and parents. Furthermore, we provide regular training sessions, including child protection training, to ensure our volunteers remain well-equipped and up to date for mentoring.

“I think the services provided by Le Chéile are very beneficial towards both the young people, adults and the mentors. The friendship that is made in the mentoring relationships are something that mean a lot to those who engage with the our service”.

– Volunteer Mentor

Annette's Story – Volunteer Mentor

I have been volunteering with Le Chéile for five years. The experience of mentoring has greatly improved my outlook on various situations. I have mentored two young people. One was 19 years old, constantly in and out of court like a yo-yo. I thought, "Wow, this is going to be tough." I was nervous at our initial meeting, but once I finished my cuppa and he his cola, we were on good terms.

He was a well-dressed, gentle-speaking and a very shy young man. I thought, "OK, I have two sons, and this chap is a son to his mother." So we spoke about Le Chéile and I asked him what his expectations were, but he didn't know.

At our first meeting, he wouldn't go to the counter to order his snack. He seemed wary of other people in the café. We talked about his family, the trouble he was in and how he tended to handle situations with anger and lashing out.

During our meetings, we got to know each other. He never wanted to do anything other than sit and chat. It was as if the hour we had was the only hour he had someone to listen to him. He was so young and had many court hearings from past misdemeanours. We met regularly, but he would sometimes miss appointments and lose contact. I would try to keep in touch and then he would come back. We would say, "OK, just keep moving forward." He was present now and we would see how things would go.

I asked him what he wanted from his life. He told me, "I just want no trouble, no courts, no guards. Just live and be happy." This was something only he could do. We spoke about his temper and he worked on it and did very well.

He met a girl, moved in with her and was very happy. His court appearances ended and he stayed out of trouble. He now has a baby girl and lives a very happy life as a family of four. He works hard every day and has no trouble.

I have learned so much from this young man. He had to work hard to fit into mainstream life and build up his confidence. I learned that I did not need to preach to him. I spoke to him as I would to my own sons and more importantly, I listened to him.

Le Chéile gave both of us the opportunity to learn about ourselves. He received support, study opportunities and leisure activities from Le Chéile. I think the support from Le Chéile gave him the confidence to grow into a responsible young man.

My advice to new volunteers is to be yourself and enjoy the experience. I believe that even the small changes can have a huge impact on a young person's life.



Our Partners

We believe in the power of collaboration and partnering with other agencies to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our collective impact is greater and more effective than anything we could achieve alone.

Probation Service

We have a longstanding partnership with the Probation Service. We are funded by the Department of Justice through the Probation Service and work closely with them to deliver mentoring to young people on probation, parents/carers of young people on probation, and parents on probation. We also run a unique restorative justice service with the Probation Service in Counties Limerick, Clare and Cork.

Youth Diversion Projects

We provide mentoring for young people referred by Youth Diversion Projects (YDPs) in Dublin, Waterford and parts of Tipperary. In Dublin, we have a strong partnership with Crosscare, while in the South-East we work closely with Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Service. Tailored mentoring is provided to young people or parents/carers of young people who are at risk of offending or becoming more involved in crime/anti-social behaviour. YDP Projects and mentoring challenge young people to divert from offending behaviour and empower them to make positive decisions about their lives.



Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Since 2017, we have partnered with Oberstown to run a unique initiative supporting parents where their child is in detention. The parent mentoring project for parents of children in detention is the first of its kind internationally. It operates similarly to Le Chéile's other parent mentoring programme, seeking to provide support, a listening ear and build confidence in different skills that a parent may find useful in relating to their child. Its ultimate aim is to offer support to these parents/carers that will help them when their child is released from Oberstown.

Archways

Le Chéile and Archways have been in partnership since 2021, working on an interagency family support project. The project is a pilot developed following extensive research undertaken by the University of Limerick. It is an evidence-informed programme that works with young people, their families and the community. Our role in the project is to provide a mentoring service to young people to support them in making choices that promote positive changes in their lives.

Funding

Le Chéile is funded by the Department of Justice, through the Probation Service.

Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project receives funding from the Probation Service, Limerick City and County Council and the Victims of Crime Office.

The Oberstown mentoring project is funded by Oberstown Children Detention Campus.

Le Chéile also receives funding for mentoring with Youth Diversion Projects from the Department of Justice via Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service and Crosscare.



Statement of Financial Activities

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total 2023 €	Total 2022 €
Income				
Donations and legacies	1,478	-	1,478	1,593
Charitable activities				
Grants from governments and other co-funders	-	1,559,923	1,559,923	1,436,086
Other income	5	-	5	2,417
Total income	1,483	1,559,923	1,561,406	1,440,096
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	1,478	1,534,701	1,536,179	1,453,438
Net income/(expenditure)	5	25,222	25,227	(13,342)
Transfers between funds	25,222	(25,222)	-	-
Net movement in funds for the financial year	25,227	-	25,227	(13,342)
Reconciliation of funds				
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2023	46,311	42,057	88,368	101,710
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2023	71,538	42,057	113,595	88,368

Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	<u>1</u>	<u>1,100</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors	52,173	54,944
Cash at bank and in hand	382,761	566,731
	434,935	<u>621,675</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(321,340)	<u>(534,407)</u>
Net Current Assets	113,594	<u>87,268</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	113,595	<u>88,368</u>
Funds		
Restricted funds	42,057	42,057
General fund (unrestricted)	71,538	46,311
Total funds	113,595	<u>88,368</u>

Our People

Board of Director in 2023:

James Doorley	Chairperson and Director
Margaret Rogers	Director, Vice Chairperson and Company Secretary
Brian McDonald	Director
Sarah Jane Judge	Director
Andrew Bray	Director
Olivia Keaveney	Director
Ronan McLoughlin	Director
Carin Bryans	Director
Claire Walsh	Director
Deirdre Macklin	Director
John Balfe	Director
Maria Molloy	Director
Mary Byrne	Director


Board attendance

James Doorley – 8/8	Carin Bryans – 4/4 (new in June)
Margaret Rogers – 7/8	Claire Walsh – 3/4 (new in June)
Brian McDonald – 8/8	Deirdre Macklin – 4/4 (new in June)
Sarah Jane Judge – 5/8	John Balfe – 2/6 (resigned in September)
Andrew Bray – 4/8	Maria Molloy – 5/8 (resigned in December)
Olivia Keaveney – 3/5 (resigned in June)	Mary Byrne – 1/1 (new in December)
Ronan McLoughlin – 4/4 (new in June)	

Staff

Anne Conroy	CEO
Claudio Marmo	Accounts and Corporate Services Manager
Mary Daly	Eastern Regional Manager
Alan Quinn	Southern Regional Manager
Laureen Christie	Whitetown Mentor Coordinator
Ingrid Cooney	Dublin North Mentor Coordinator
Maartje Van Stokkem	Dublin North Mentor Coordinator
Marie Vanasova	Dublin South Team Leader
Cormac Ryan	YDP Dublin Mentor Coordinator
Conor Byrne	Oberstown Mentor Coordinator
Allison Gordon	Cork South & West Mentor Coordinator
Ailbe Coleman	Cork North & East Mentor Coordinator
Heather Sinnott	South East Team Leader
Jenny Croke	YDP South East Project Officer
Helen McCarthy	Midlands Mentor Coordinator
Lyndsey McCabe	Meath Mentor Coordinator
Lorna Walsh	Limerick and Clare Mentor Coordinator
Aideen Curran	Accounts and Finance Administrator
Sara McDonnell	National Volunteer Coordinator
Molly Ingarfield	Communications and Policy Officer
Carol Doyle	Administrator
Mark Turner	YDP Project Officer
Simon Keating	Restorative Justice Coordinator





“Without the support, I would have not have made the progression I have”.

– **Young Person**

“Le Chéile services are run by incredible people that are so dedicated to helping parents and young people have a second chance at what their life should be”.

– **Volunteer Mentor**

“To have someone to talk to and to check in every week meant the world to me. We laughed so much and I knew I could trust my mentor. She was my sounding board and always very supportive and encouraging”.

– **Parent**



le chéile

MENTORING

Inspiring hope, believing in change



Le Chéile Mentoring,
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