Threshold
preventing homelessness

Annual Report 2023

Supporting Renters Saving Homes

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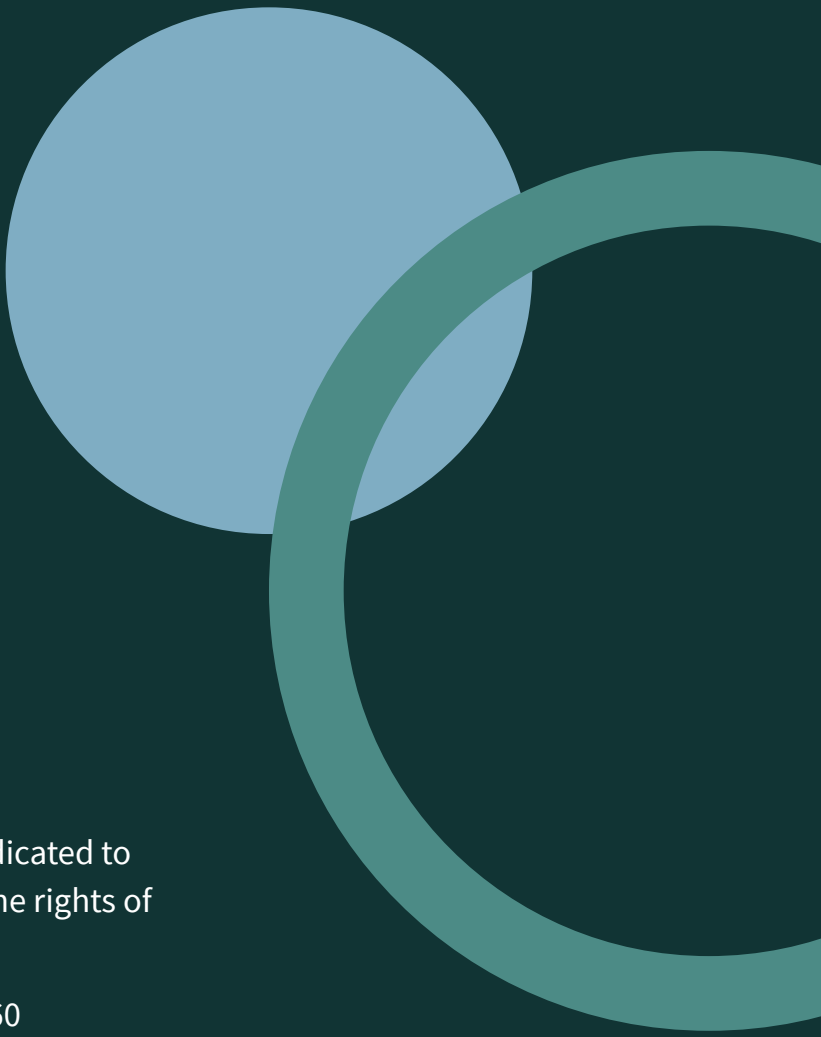
preventing homelessness

Our Vision

*An Ireland where **everyone** has access to affordable, secure, suitable, and good quality housing in sustainable communities.*



Threshold is a national housing charity dedicated to preventing homelessness and protecting the rights of renters in Ireland.

Company Registration Number (CRN): 70660
Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20011031
Charity Revenue Number (CHY): 6279

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Message from our Chairperson, Liam Reid

With the ongoing housing crisis continuing to impact Irish society in 2023, Threshold was again at the forefront of the voluntary sector response, playing a vital role in supporting and advocating on behalf of people who rent.

During the year, the Board and management of Threshold worked closely to really embed the strategic plan which was finalised the previous year, building the organisation's resilience and ability to adequately meet the complex requirements of tenants in what continues to be an incredibly challenging housing system. Landlords continued to sell their properties in significant numbers in 2023, resulting in high and sustained levels of tenancy terminations. These were occurring in a market with very limited supply and therefore few housing alternatives for families losing their rented home and needing to seek a new home.

This necessitated the in-depth expertise of Threshold advisors to assist and advise renters of their options, their rights and their protections in trying to save their tenancy, improve the conditions of their existing tenancy or deal with issues such as rent increases, deposit retention disputes and the physical quality of their homes.

This vital advice and home-saving work of our services is underpinned by the objectives of our strategic plan.

The first objective of our plan relates to our homeless prevention impact. **In 2023, Threshold worked on 12,204 cases where a household was at risk of homelessness. Of the 5,850 at-risk cases closed, 3,951 households (5,120 adults and 3,709 children) were prevented from entering homeless services. This is a prevention rate of 67%.**

Our representation work at the Residential Tenancies Board is part of our effort to prevent homelessness, given that the source of many landlord-tenant disputes has the potential to cause or exacerbate the ending of a tenancy. In 2023, Threshold advisors provided representation for 255 households at the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) and helped 237 households submit disputes.

Threshold worked collectively with other NGOs and statutory agencies to strengthen efforts to prevent homelessness, including the Citizens Information Centres (CICs), the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), local authorities and various homelessness fora. Collaborative work is not limited to our services. In 2023 Threshold's advocacy team launched joint research on housing and aging with ALONE entitled 'Double Deficit'. Threshold also participated in a sub-group of the Housing Commission looking at policies related to rental housing, and in the national Homeless Action Committee, chaired by the Minister for Housing.

During 2023 we also worked to evolve and strengthen our organisation, creating new career routes and senior roles for experienced staff, introducing and embedding new reporting systems and processes, while increasing our fundraising and income base.

We also worked to grow our reach across Ireland, with the purchase of new premises in Limerick city and the refurbishment of our Galway offices.

With our priority on providing excellent services to our clients, we also developed a specific plan of engagement to assess clients' experience of Threshold services. It is intended that the findings will also inform the development of our services and how best to communicate with them.

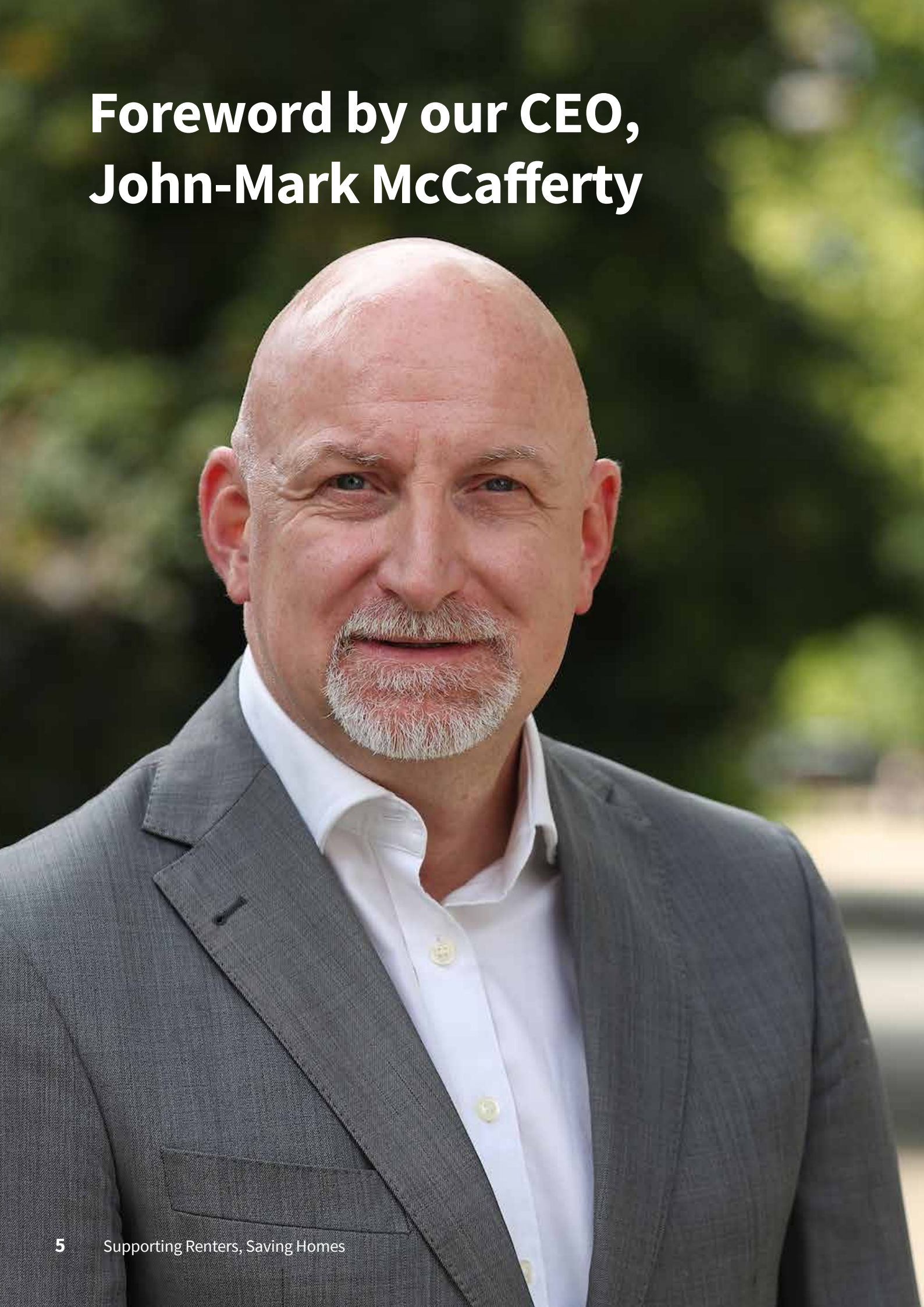
None of this can be done by Threshold alone and I want to thank and acknowledge the support of some key groups who make the work of Threshold possible: our Board and staff, our donors, Government departments and agencies who support our work, and our fellow NGOs with whom we collaborate.

This essential support has allowed Threshold to play that critical role in responding to the crisis and supporting those in the private rented sector who are one of the most at-risk groups in terms of experiencing homelessness.

Sincerely,

Liam Reid
Chairperson, Threshold

Foreword by our CEO, John-Mark McCafferty



Once again, Threshold met many of the challenges of the housing crisis during 2023 through the dedicated, tangible actions of our advisors – and the words, evidence and influence of our policy advocates. As tenancy termination cases continued, many of which were caused by landlords selling their rented properties, tenants also struggled with the lack of alternative housing options. Two in five of all cases opened in 2023 were for clients who had received a notice of termination, which was on a par with 2022. Even though social and cost-rental output was increasing in 2023, the availability of houses and apartments in the wider private rented sector was limited and challenging. This was particularly true for people and families on lower incomes. In 2023, **Threshold advisors assisted 18,706 households (24,634 adults and 15,516 children)**. Over 12,000 of these households we worked with related to new cases that were opened during 2023.

Our advisors worked on almost 21,000 individual cases with households during this time. The case number is higher than the number of households due to some households engaging with us on more than one housing issue during the year. Given our central role as a tenancy protection service, Threshold worked on over 12,000 cases where we deemed that a family or individual was at risk of homelessness. Of the almost 6,000 at-risk cases closed, just under 4,000 households were prevented from entering homeless services. This is a prevention rate of two-thirds of all closed cases.

While we can't stop all tenancy terminations taking place, we can intervene in many, and we continue to save the rented homes of families despite landlords selling and notices being issued to tenants. **Unfortunately, 442 households being assisted by Threshold in 2023 entered homeless services and 306 were forced to stay with family and friends (couch surf) when their tenancy could not be protected and alternative housing could not be secured**. Some clients facing a notice of termination were advised on their entitlement to the correct notice period according to their length of tenancy. Often in such cases, knowing the correct notice period allowed them the breathing space to find alternative housing, albeit from limited supply. **The work of our informed, committed advisors speaks for itself, with over 41,000 calls from tenants answered in 2023, over 5,000 new cases originating from clients making contact by email, over 7,500 webchat queries with renters and over 600 video consultations provided**.

In October we launched the third year of the 'Own Your Rights' public awareness campaign, funded by the Department of Housing. The campaign conveyed to tenants their rights and protections and the importance of contacting us as early as possible to advise them and where necessary to represent them and/or protect their tenancy. To underpin the above work for and with renters, Threshold invested in several key strategic areas including advisor progression; increasing digitalisation; work to secure long-term, quality office premises for staff and clients; improved reporting of the impact we make; and planned consultation with our clients. The results of this

In 2023, Threshold advisors assisted 18,706 households (24,634 adults and 15,516 children).

client engagement will help inform and enhance our service delivery.

I want to thank all staff and CE participants for their ongoing dedication to the cause of advising tenants, preventing homelessness and advocating for a better housing system for all. People make Threshold the service and advocacy organisation that it is. We are guided and supported by an expert Board of Directors who deserve huge thanks for their insight and counsel throughout the year. We have benefitted greatly from the establishment of the Board Sub-Committees which direct planning and activity across key areas of Threshold's work, reflecting and supporting the change-management agenda of our Strategic Plan.

We can't deliver advice, home-saving services and our advocacy agenda without the essential support of our donors and funders. We hugely appreciated the support of the Department of Housing, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, Cork City and County Councils and Kerry County Councils, Galway City Council, the HSE, the Department of Social Protection, The Department of Rural and Community Development's (DRCD) Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) and the Citizen's Information Board. Our donors and partners enable us to provide the supports to frontline staff and strengthen the sustainability of Threshold, including our vital policy, research and media work. Thank you to our statutory funders, donors and partners – we can't realise the rights of tenants without you.

John-Mark McCafferty
Chief Executive Officer, Threshold

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Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

An Ireland where everyone has access to affordable, secure, suitable, and good quality housing in sustainable communities.

Mission

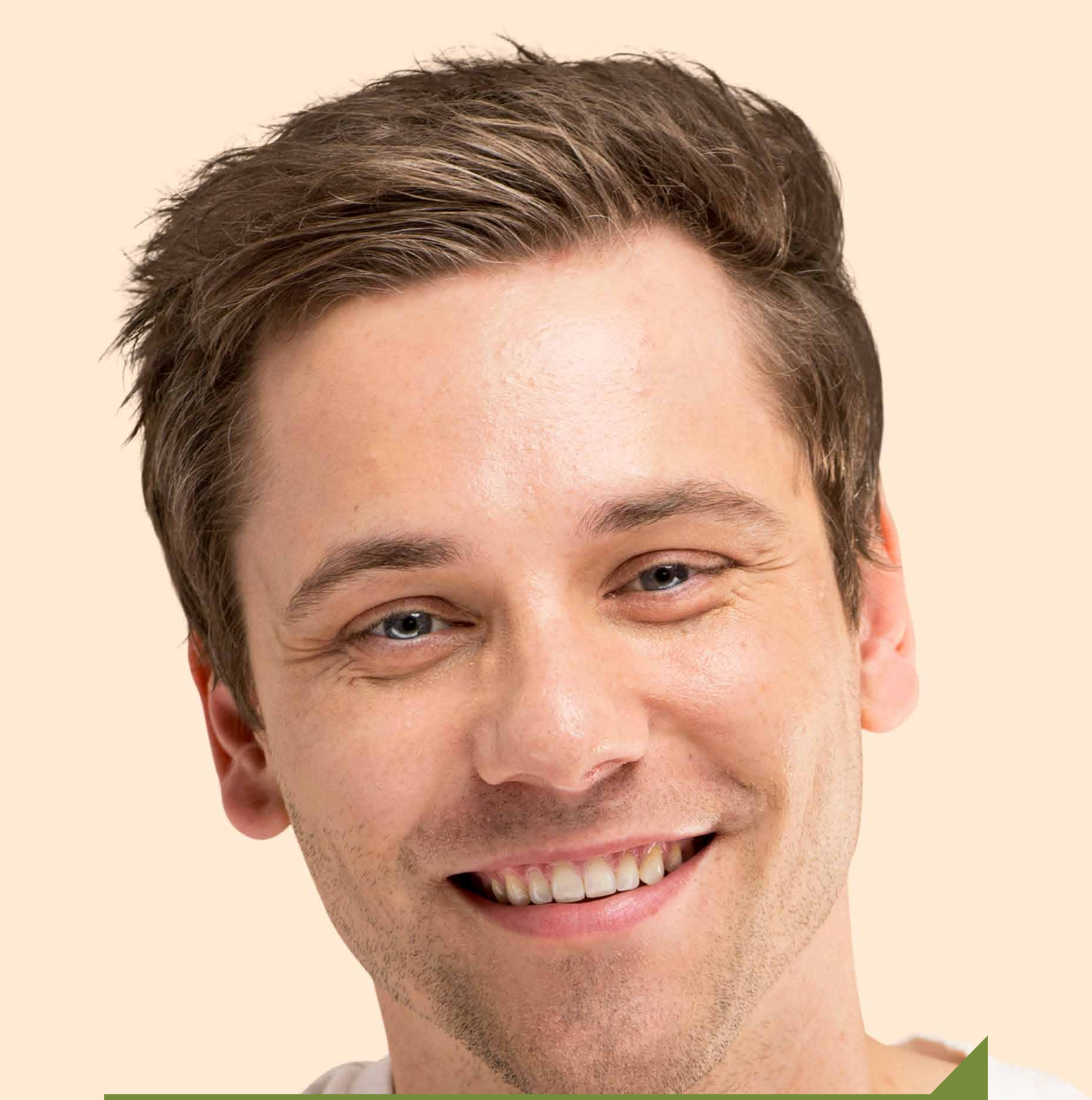
To prevent homelessness and campaign for the right to housing for all by:

1. Providing tailored advice and representation to tenants and their families.
2. Delivering services and supports that protect tenancies and prevent people in the residential rented sector from becoming homeless.
3. Advocating for housing rights through policy and legal positions informed by our services.

Values

Our values shape how we work. They include:

- **Independence** – We pursue our mission with courage and fairness, maintaining our independence as an organisation.
- **Accountability and Openness** – We are committed to transparency and accountability, continuously adapting our services to meet changing needs.
- **Dignity, Care, and Respect** – We treat clients, staff, and stakeholders with empathy, dignity, care, and respect.
- **Right to Housing** – We believe that everyone has a right to housing and equality of opportunity.
- **Empowerment** – We assist tenants with specific advice to help solve their housing problems, and where necessary, provide representation in disputes.
- **Trust** – We are trusted by clients, statutory bodies, NGOs, donors, and stakeholders to provide expert, accurate advice and evidence-based policy recommendations.
- **Competence and Experience** – Our advisors are experts on housing law and policy, guided by our direct work with clients and enhanced through our policy, legal, and campaign activities.



Aydin had lived in his apartment for three years when he decided to move to a larger property to accommodate his growing family. However, after moving out, his landlord withheld the deposit, citing vague and unjustified damage claims. Knowing that the property had been left in good condition, Aydin contacted Threshold for assistance.

Threshold's advisor helped Aydin take his dispute to the RTB, where a thorough investigation ruled in Aydin's favor. The landlord was ordered to return the full deposit. Aydin said, "I felt so powerless when my landlord withheld the deposit. But Threshold gave me the knowledge and support I needed to get my money back."

Our Year at a Glance

Impact & Support

18,706 households supported (24,634 adults and 15,516 children)

20,738 cases handled including new and repeat clients

12,204 cases involved families or individuals at risk of homelessness

Of the almost **6,000 at-risk cases** closed, just over two-thirds (3,951 households) were successfully prevented from entering homeless services

Fundraising & Financials

Total income: **€4.8 million**

€3.3 million in State grants

Donations, legacies, and trusts: **€1.16 million**

Advocacy Milestones

Progress made on the regulation of short-term lets at national and EU level, long advocated for by Threshold

Tenant-in-Situ (TiS) scheme expanded and the Cost Rental TiS established to prevent homelessness when a landlord is selling

Published **6 reports** and delivered **11 policy submissions**

Client Engagement

Handled over 80,000 calls, inbound and outbound

In-person consultations and Outreach sessions: 2,472

Webchat Queries: 7,574

Online Video Consultations: 624

Email Queries: 5,183

Client Feedback

"Caitlin was very quick and helpful with clear and detailed content on the legal information. Thank you very much for the speedy help, much appreciated."

"Threshold know exactly what they are doing. Answered all my questions. Very clear with what I need to do. Very reassuring that I will find a place and not go homeless with their help. I could not do this on my own."

"James helped me figure some things out. He was very friendly and straight to the point. Thanks James."

"Allison was incredibly helpful. Honestly, I could not have asked for better. I will be recommending Threshold to anyone I know that needs advice on renting."

Our Achievements in 2023

In 2022, we introduced our new Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 after an extensive review of our previous strategies and consultations with both internal and external stakeholders. The plan focuses on four strategic themes – **People, Place, Purpose, and Partnership** – to guide our efforts in supporting renters and preventing homelessness. As we had hoped, 2023 marked a year of significant progress, both in terms of strategic goals and the ongoing delivery of critical frontline services.

At its core, Threshold is committed to **preventing homelessness, advocating for renters' rights, and advancing housing stability**, with a focus on ensuring affordable and secure housing for all.

People – Investing in Our Team

Threshold places great emphasis on its people, recognising that an engaged and supported team is essential to delivering impactful services. In 2023, we introduced seven new Senior Advisor positions, creating clearer career progression for our staff. These Senior Advisors played a crucial role in enhancing our service delivery, overseeing complex case management, and building key relationships with external agencies. Most of these positions were filled by the end of the year.

Employee Engagement

To ensure we continue to foster a supportive work environment, we conducted employee satisfaction surveys and interviews. Career advancement was highlighted as a key motivator. We are committed to nurturing our staff's professional growth to maintain high levels of engagement and service quality.

Place – Expanding Our Presence and Outreach

A major priority for Threshold is ensuring our services are both accessible and welcoming. In 2023, we started the process of expanding our physical presence and outreach services. This included investing in:

- **New Premises in Limerick:** We acquired new premises in Limerick and began refurbishment to establish a dedicated client-facing service. The local team recruitment started in Q3 2023, and this represents a significant re-establishment of our presence in the Midwest after many years.
- **Galway and Dublin Office Renovations:** Our Galway office underwent significant refurbishment to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Temporary locations were set up to continue client support during the renovations. In late 2023, our Dublin office was sold, and we are actively searching for a new space while maintaining services through temporary locations. These investments reflect our commitment to providing safe, accessible environments for both staff and clients.
- **Outreach Services Expansion:** We recommenced our Outreach services in Limerick, Clare, Galway, and Mayo, increasing our reach to those most in need, particularly in areas beyond city centres. This expansion is critical to our strategy of bringing support closer to renters facing housing instability, making our services more accessible across the country.

Purpose – Preventing Homelessness and Empowering Renters

- **Homeless Prevention:** In 2023, Threshold prevented 3,951 households from entering homelessness.
- **Public Awareness Campaign:** In October we launched the third annual 'Own Your Rights' campaign. Funded by the Department of Housing, this campaign was aimed at **empowering tenants by educating them on their rights and promoting early intervention before housing issues escalate**. Reaching over 600,000 people, the campaign has had a significant impact in raising awareness and reducing the risk of individual housing crises.

Partnership – Strengthening Relationships and Diversifying Income

Collaborating with stakeholders and diversifying our income streams has been a major focus in 2023. We enhanced relationships with our existing donor base and explored more cost-effective digital acquisition channels.

We established a new role to manage trusts, foundations, major giving, legacy giving, and corporate partnerships. This role, filled in Q4 2023, has been pivotal in ensuring sustainable funding. Through strategic fundraising efforts, we expanded into data-driven and multifaceted fundraising strategies, which allowed us to weather a challenging economic climate while maintaining strong relationships with donors and partners.

Threshold's Impact in 2023

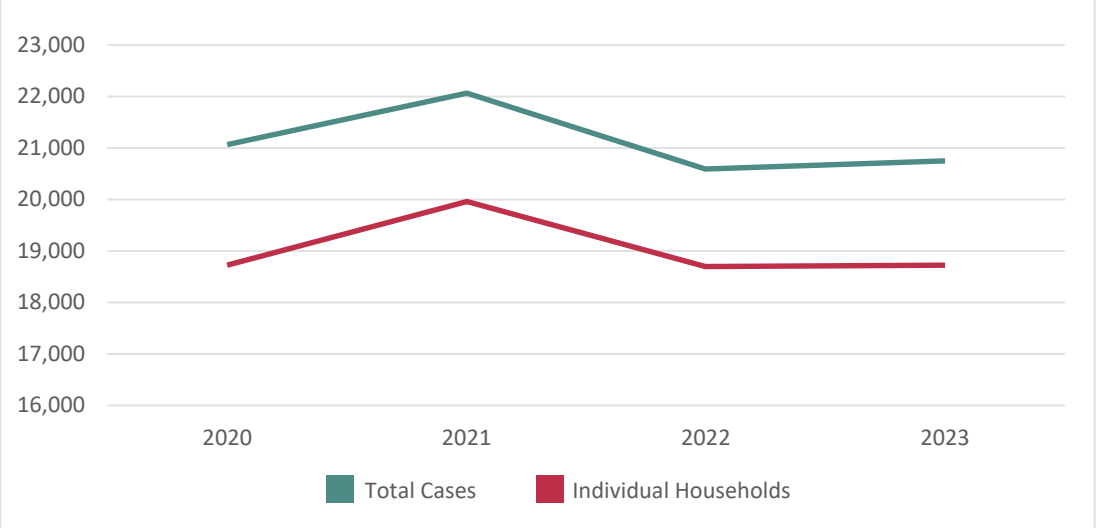
The Tenancy Protection Service (TPS)

In 2023, we continued our mission to prevent homelessness and empower renters across Ireland. Our work spanned advice services, advocacy, representation, training, research, and campaigns.

In 2023, we assisted **18,706 households**, comprising **24,634 adults** and **15,516 children**. Of these, **12,332 households** opened new cases with Threshold.

In total, we worked on **20,738 individual cases**. This number reflects the fact that some households required support with multiple issues throughout the year. A portion of these cases carried over from previous years, emphasizing the ongoing support we provide to those in need.

Total Cases and Individual Households



(Total Cases and Individual Households 2020-2023)

Homelessness prevention continues to be central to our mission. In 2023, we assisted 12,204 households who were at risk of losing their homes. Of the 5,850 cases closed Threshold's dedicated advisors **prevented 3,951 households (including 5,120 adults and 3,709 children) from entering homelessness**. This represents a prevention rate of 67%, which is a direct reflection of our advisors' commitment and effectiveness. Threshold will continue to support the remainder as long as they need.

Tenancy Sustainment Protocol

The Tenancy Sustainment Protocol, operational since 2014, continued to provide vital support to households in Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Galway City, and Cork City.

In 2023, an additional **62 households** (comprising **84 adults** and **61 children**) were supported through rent supplement uplifts, ensuring they could maintain their tenancies and avoid homelessness.

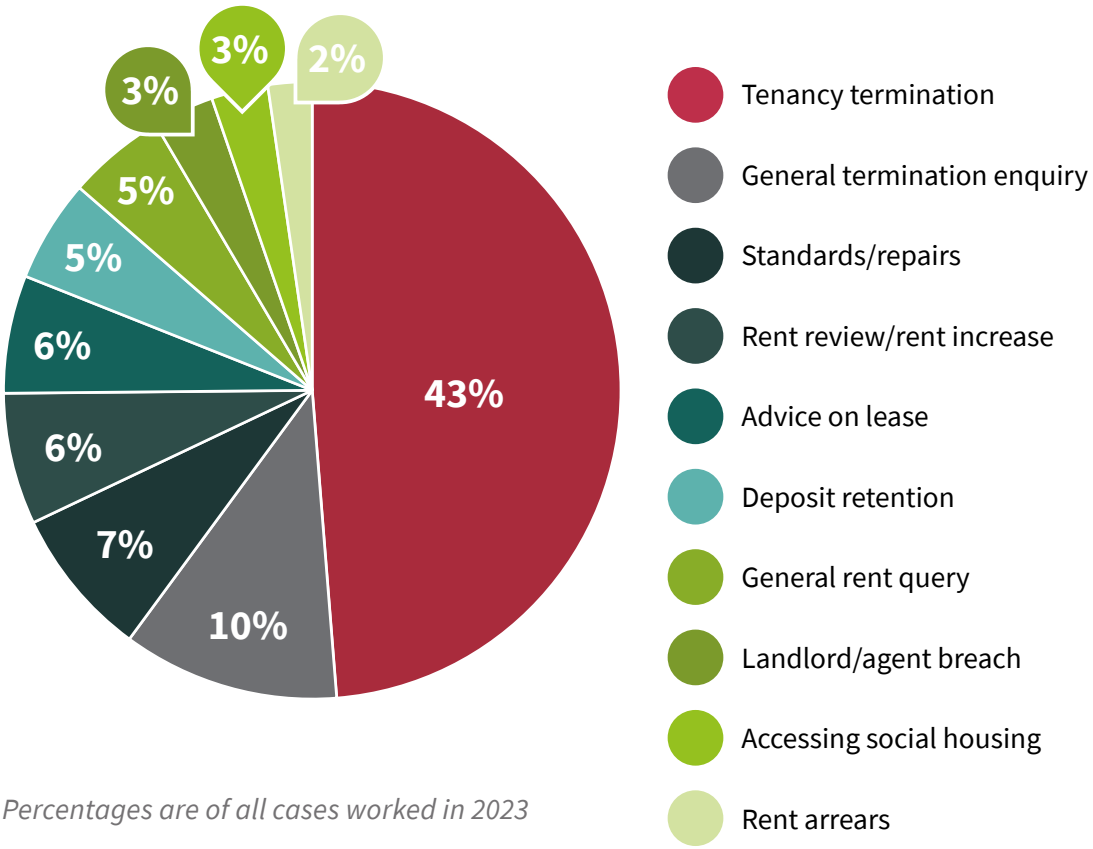
Working with Citizens Information Centres

In addition to direct support, Threshold provided specialist assistance and training.

In 2023, Threshold supported CICs across Ireland by assisting with **286 queries** from private renters. The top issues addressed included general termination queries, lease agreements, and rent related questions.

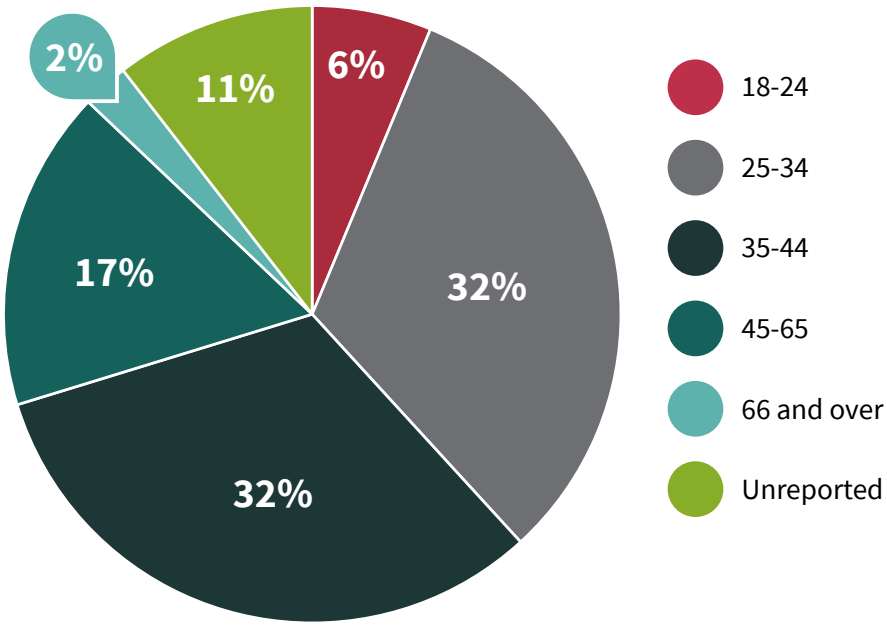
Threshold delivered three training sessions to CIC staff, enhancing their ability to advise and support renters effectively.

Top 10 Issues for 2023



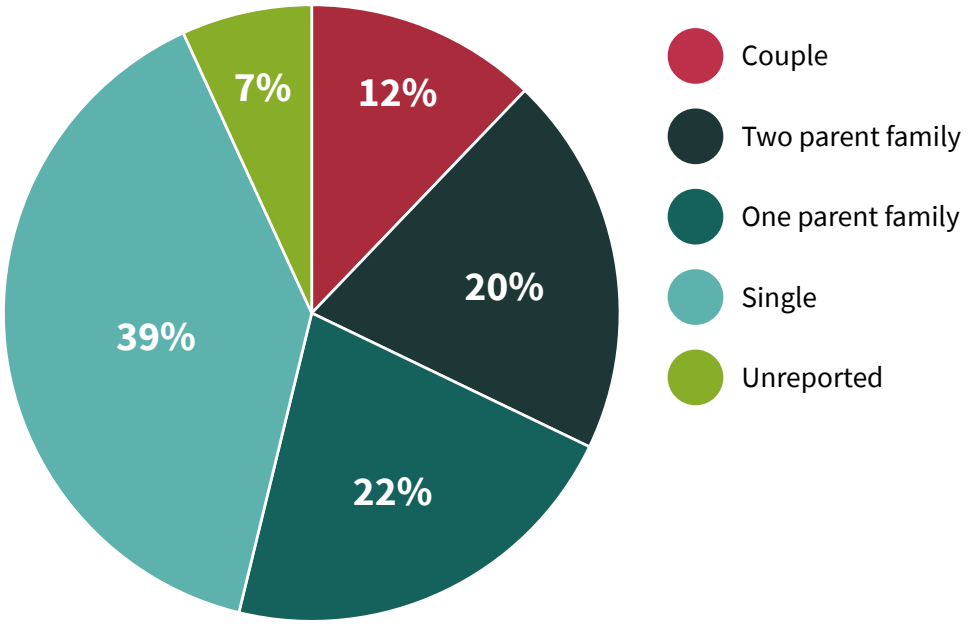
Percentages are of all cases worked in 2023

Age Profile of Clients

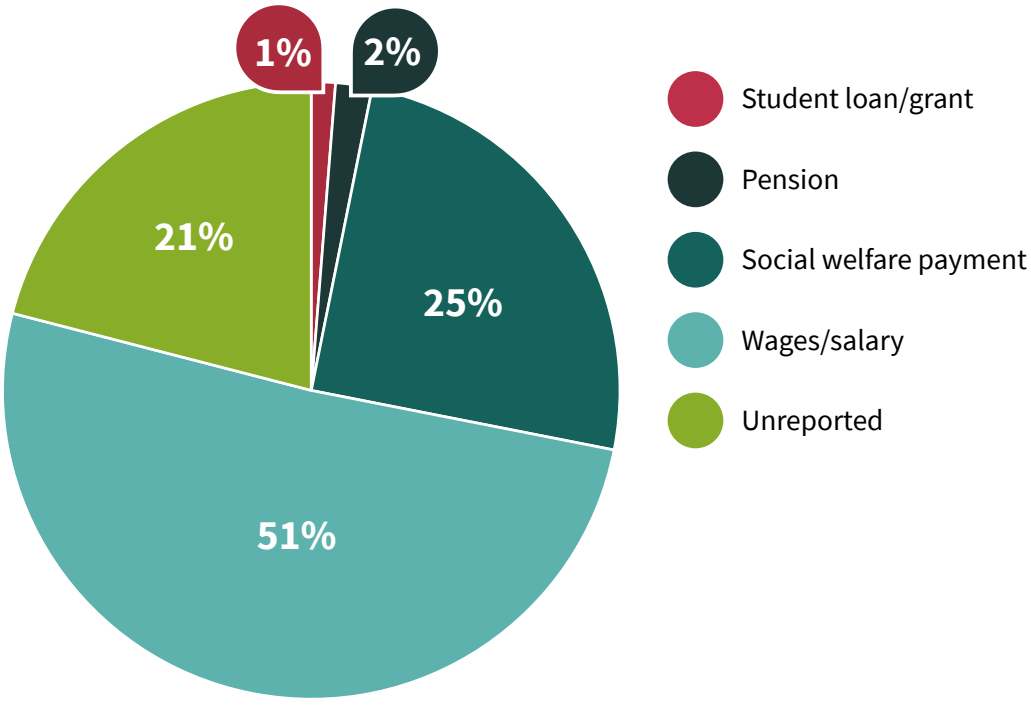


Percentages are of all clients worked with in 2023

Household Type



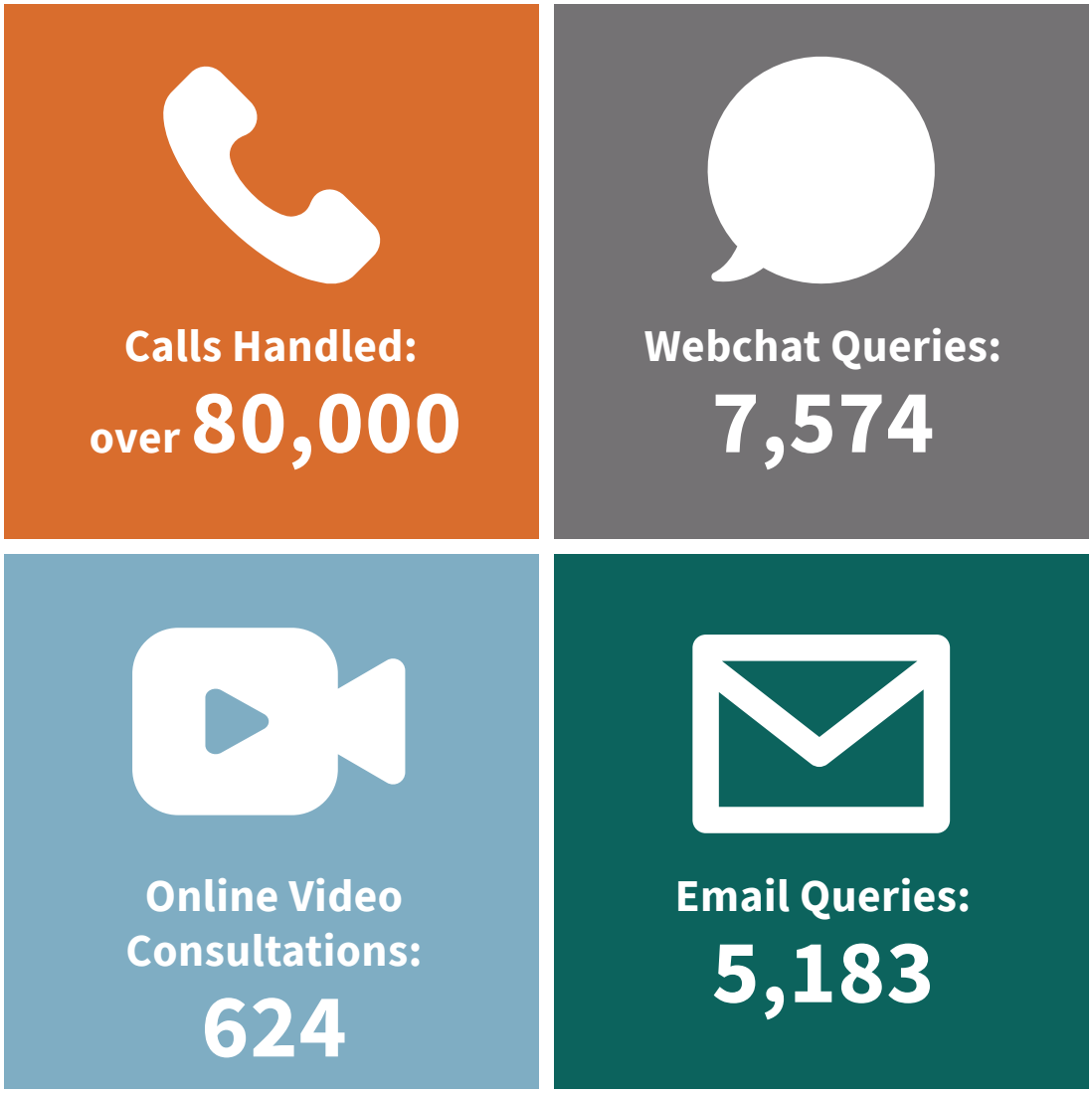
Main Source of Income



Percentages are of all clients worked with in 2023

How People Got in Touch With Us

Threshold provided direct advice and support to renters through multiple channels to ensure they received the help they needed to navigate Ireland's challenging rental market.

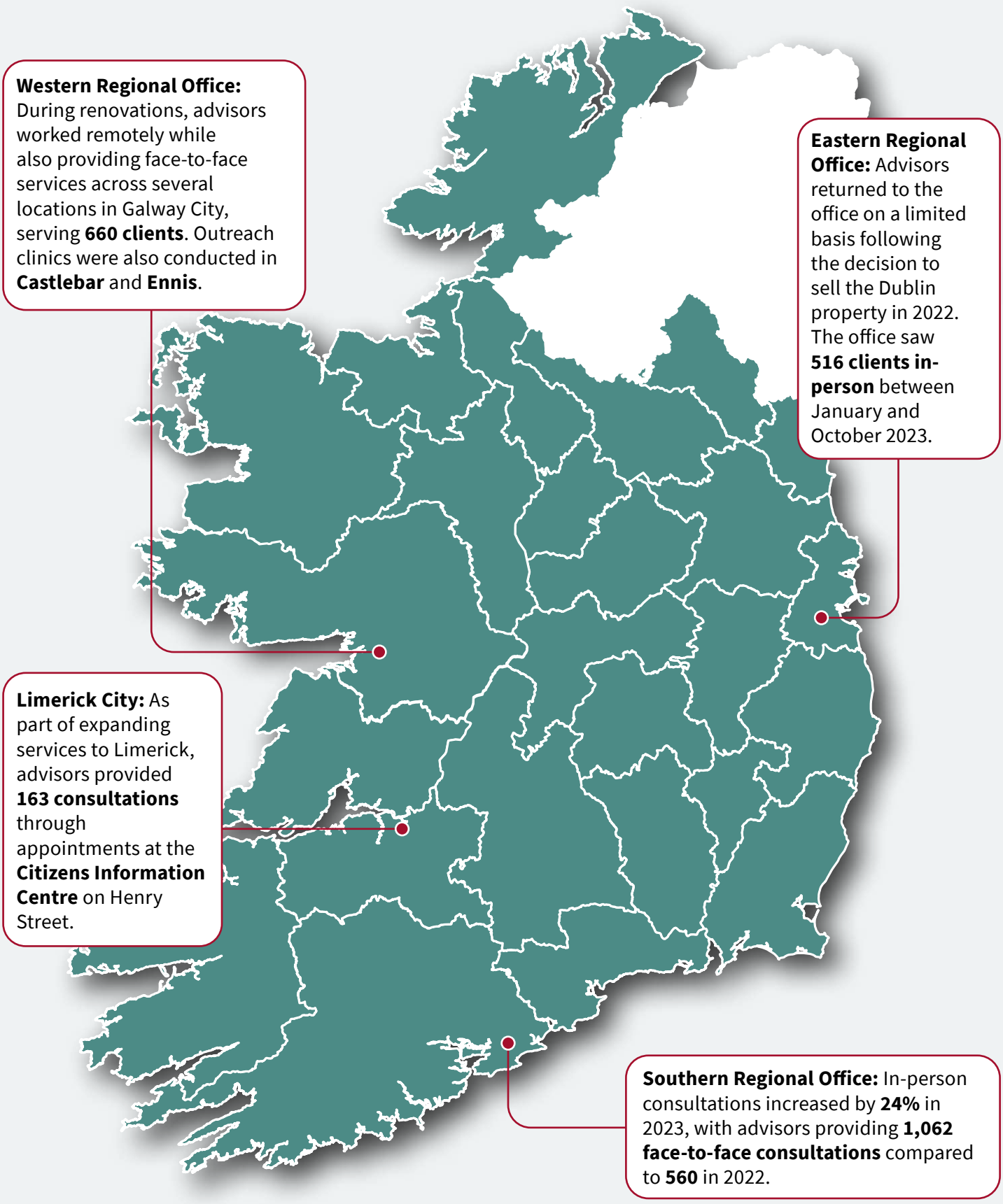


Our dedicated **National Freephone Helpline (1800 454 454)**, operational from **9am to 9pm, Monday to Friday**, remained the backbone of our advisory services, complemented by in-person, email, webchat, and video consultations.

Christmas On-Call Service

Threshold understands the need to be available for tenants throughout the year. To meet this commitment, we provided a **Christmas On-Call Service** between **27th and 29th December 2023**. We handled **137 queries** during this period, up from **116** the previous year, representing an 18% increase. On average, 44 queries per day were answered, with **70%** being new contacts.

In-Person Consultations and Outreach



Western Regional Office: During renovations, advisors worked remotely while also providing face-to-face services across several locations in Galway City, serving **660 clients**. Outreach clinics were also conducted in **Castlebar** and **Ennis**.

Eastern Regional Office: Advisors returned to the office on a limited basis following the decision to sell the Dublin property in 2022. The office saw **516 clients in-person** between January and October 2023.

Limerick City: As part of expanding services to Limerick, advisors provided **163 consultations** through appointments at the **Citizens Information Centre** on Henry Street.

Southern Regional Office: In-person consultations increased by **24%** in 2023, with advisors providing **1,062 face-to-face consultations** compared to **560** in 2022.

Access Housing Unit (AHU)

The **Access Housing Unit (AHU)** in Cork provided crucial **Tenancy Sustainment Support** and **Resettlement Services** to households at risk of homelessness or already experiencing it. The services were designed to help vulnerable individuals and families secure long-term housing and maintain their tenancies.

In 2023, the AHU assisted **32 households** (comprising **37 adults** and **26 children**) in maintaining their tenancies. The support services provided addressed a variety of complex needs, including, but not limited to, mental health supports, household budgeting and independent living skills.

The Resettlement and Tenancy Sustainment Support services ensure that households have the help they need when exiting homelessness. In 2023, these supports were offered to **55 households** (**64 adults** and **31 children**).

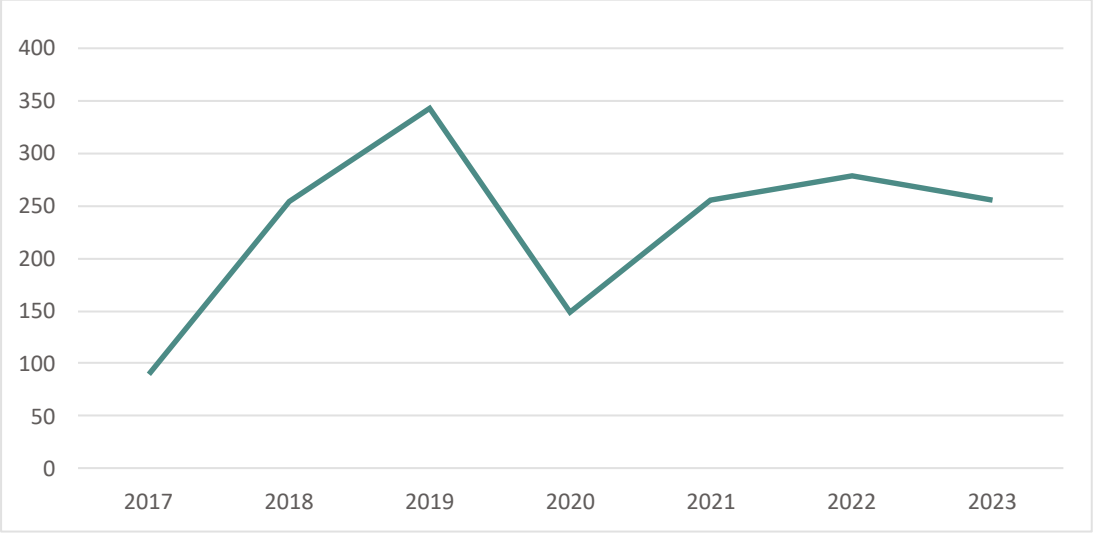
In addition, The AHU assisted **24 households** (including **28 adults** and **12 children**) to secure housing allowing them to move out of homelessness.

To further prevent homelessness, the AHU conducted Pre-Tenancy Training Workshops at two homeless services. These workshops provided essential guidance on sourcing accommodation, understanding tenancy rights, and sustaining a rental property, empowering individuals to manage their housing needs proactively.

Representation

The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)

Threshold advisors have expertise in housing law, specifically with the Residential Tenancies Acts 2004, as amended. They are highly knowledgeable and experienced and can explain the diverse options available to tenants who require support. In 2023, our advisors represented **255 households** and assisted **237 households** in submitting disputes. We are committed to restoring these numbers to pre-pandemic levels to ensure tenants receive the best possible support.



(RTB Representation 2017-2023)

One particularly high-profile case involved Dervla, whose landlord refused to address damp and mould issues that posed a fire hazard. Threshold's advisor represented her at the RTB, where she won compensation. However, the landlord appealed the decision and still did not comply with the RTB's ruling, requiring Threshold to support Dervla in taking further action to enforce the ruling.

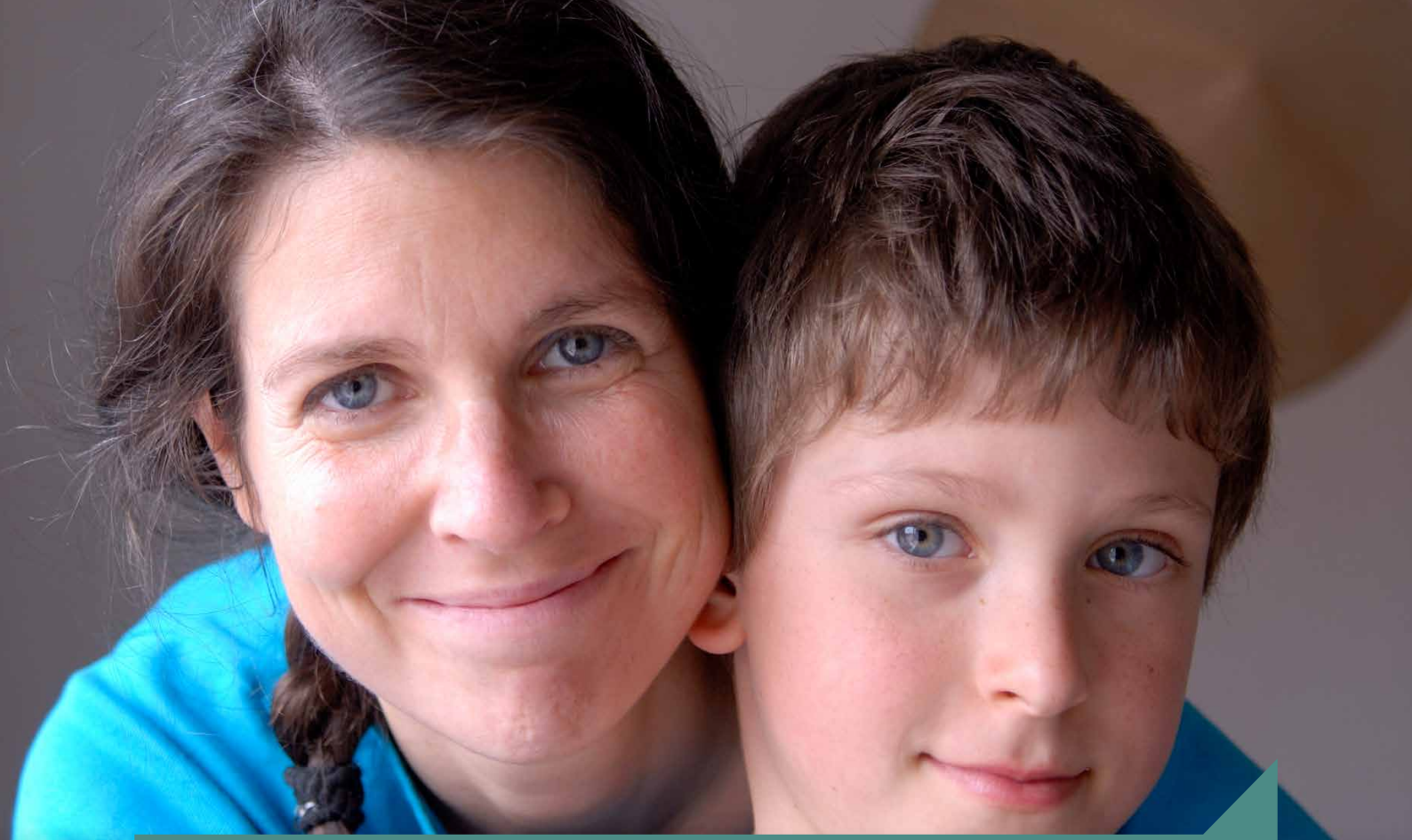
The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)

Threshold also represented **15 clients** before the WRC, whose landlords were alleged to have engaged in discriminatory practices, particularly against tenants who relied on **Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)**. In one case, a family was denied a rental home after disclosing that they were HAP recipients. Threshold represented them at the WRC, where the landlord was ordered to pay compensation and accept HAP, setting an important legal precedent.

Dervla and her three children have been living in their home for nearly a decade. There are ongoing issues with damp and mould in Dervla's home. She had reported these issues multiple times to the letting agent, but no action had been taken. Dervla finally made a complaint to the Local Authority, and there was an inspection of the property.

The inspector found that the dampness in the property was affecting the electrics, which posed a possible fire hazard. On foot of this, there was an inspection by the letting agent, and Dervla was promised that somebody would be out to make the necessary repairs. However, there was no follow-up contact. Her Threshold advisor suggested that Dervla contact the Local Authority for a copy of a report and send a follow-up email to the agent. The advisor also talked Dervla through the process of taking a case to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), as the letting agent was in breach of its obligations.

The advisor represented Dervla at the RTB hearing. The RTB Adjudicator awarded Dervla a significant amount of compensation for the landlord's failure to address the damp and for allowing a serious fire hazard to persist in the home. The landlord appealed the decision, but the Tribunal also ruled in Dervla's favour. Unfortunately, the landlord has not complied with the RTB's order. Dervla has been forced to go once more to the RTB, this time to ask them to enforce the order so that the landlord pays the compensation. Threshold will stick with her all the way.



Laoise and her son had been living in their home for three years and were in receipt of rent supplement. Following changes in government policy, Laoise's Local Authority informed her that she was to move from rent supplement to HAP. However, her landlord would not sign the HAP forms. Laoise then became very worried that she would not be able to pay the rent.

She got in contact with Threshold, where an advisor informed her about the discrimination complaints procedure at the Workplace Relations Commission. The advisor told Laoise that they would assist her in completing the necessary forms.

After submitting the forms, Laoise received a notice of termination from her landlord, where he claimed he wanted the property back for one of his family members. Laoise felt like she was being punished for asking her landlord to sign the initial HAP forms. The landlord later sent an email to refute these discrimination claims and stated that he would accept HAP. Laoise then resent the HAP forms to the landlord, but these were ultimately never filled out.

The WRC hearing was held a few months after this, following the landlord's continuing refusal to sign the HAP forms. After the WRC hearing, the landlord was ordered to pay €12,500, as the WRC case found in Laoise's favour. In the end, the landlord made a settlement of €13,500 and gave Laoise her deposit back in full on condition that Laoise give up vacant possession of the property.

In the end, Laoise found new rental accommodation and was due to move into her new home shortly after she was awarded the compensation.

Advocacy

Threshold's National Advocacy Team is at the heart of our efforts to drive legislative change and create meaningful improvements in Ireland's housing system. In 2023, the team actively engaged with government bodies, collaborated with local authorities, and participated in public campaigns to protect renters' rights and ensure housing remained a top political priority.

Thanks to a generous donation, we were able to expand our Advocacy Team. This growth allows us to engage in more focused campaigns around critical issues in the private rental sector, collaborate with a broader range of stakeholders, and produce in-depth policy proposals. Our goal is to continue driving forward the changes needed to improve the lives of renters across Ireland.

Key Achievements

- **Regulating Short-Term Lettings:** A long-term goal for Threshold has been the regulation of short-term lettings to return much-needed homes to the long-term rental market. Significant progress was made with the drafting of the **Registration of the Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill**, prioritised by the Government in December 2022. Threshold played a key role by contributing to the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill with the Joint **Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media** in early 2023. After a brief pause by the European Commission, progress resumed in November. The legislation, while drafted, is yet to be commenced, and Threshold will continue its campaign until the regulations are in force.

- **Temporary Ban on Evictions:** The **Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination Dates of Certain Tenancies) Act 2022** put in place an eviction ban through the winter of 2022 until March 2023. While the solution was temporary, it provided essential relief for tenants facing eviction. Alongside other NGOs, Threshold actively advocated for the continuation of the ban, submitting recommendations to address the ongoing housing crisis and protect renters during this critical period. On foot of this, the Government committed to the continuation and scaling up of the Tenant-in-Situ scheme to protect renters facing eviction.

Advocacy Partnerships and Memberships

In 2023, Threshold deepened its collaboration with key organisations, government bodies, and legal experts to drive positive changes in the private rental sector.

- **National Homeless Action Committee:** Our CEO represents Threshold on the National Homeless Action Committee, convened by the Minister for Housing in 2021. This inter-agency committee coordinates efforts to reduce homelessness and implement the Housing for All strategy. Threshold contributes regularly by providing insights and policy submissions to influence national housing policy.

- **Housing Commission:** In 2023, Threshold was actively involved in the Housing Commission, a government appointed group examining critical housing issues such as tenure, standards, and affordability. Both our CEO and the Chair of the Policy and Research Group participated, contributing to discussions to inform the final report of the Housing Commission.

- **Home for Good Coalition:** As a member of the Home for Good Coalition, Threshold supports the campaign for a referendum to enshrine the right to housing in the Irish Constitution. This movement gained momentum in 2023, with Threshold advocating strongly for the right to housing to be recognised and protected.

- **Irish Homeless Policy Group:** Threshold is an active participant in the Irish Homeless Policy Group, a collaborative forum made up of organisations in the community and voluntary sector. Through this group, Threshold works closely with partners to influence policy and legislative changes that address homelessness.

Research

Research is integral to Threshold's advocacy work. Understanding the lived experiences of renters allows us to strengthen our services, shape policy and push for systemic change.

Key research initiatives included:

- **Tenant Sentiment Survey:** In 2023, Threshold published the results of its sixth annual Tenant Sentiment Survey, titled 'We Are Generation Rent'. This survey captured the frustrations and aspirations of renters and provided crucial insights for our policy proposals and advocacy efforts.

- **Double Deficit Report:** In partnership with **ALONE**, we released the **Double Deficit** report in 2023, which examined whether the private rental sector can meet the housing needs of older people. The report offered practical policy recommendations to improve housing conditions for individuals aged 55 and up, as an alternative to homeownership or social housing.

- **Quarterly Impact Reports:** Threshold's **Quarterly Impact Reports** provided detailed demographic analysis and real-life stories, highlighting key challenges faced by renters throughout 2023. These reports continue to inform our advocacy work, ensuring we address emerging trends with timely and relevant solutions.

By monitoring trends and offering geographically specific advice, Threshold's research underpins its advocacy, driving impactful change for renters across Ireland.

Policy Development

Threshold made significant contributions to shaping housing policy in 2023.

Threshold had a number of policy proposals aimed at reducing homelessness and improving access to affordable, quality housing for renters. The most notable change to government policy in 2023 was the mainstreaming of the Tenant-in-Situ (TiS) Scheme. This was set out in 'Circular: Housing 08/2023', issued by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Threshold recommended it remain a central part of all future housing policy.

Threshold's position is that the State's role in managing the size of the sector involves greater 'socialisation' via the Tenant-in-Situ Schemes.

This will keep people in their homes, avoid homelessness and create stable communities. Increased public housing, including cost-rental, plays a key role in realising a functioning housing sector, by ensuring the shift towards a unitary housing system. The expansion of the Tenant-in-Situ Scheme and the Cost-Rental Tenant-in-Situ Scheme are both welcome initiatives that have no doubt prevented many people, like Aiden and Hazel, from entering homelessness.

Submissions to Government

In 2023, Threshold proactively engaged with government bodies to advocate for the rights and interests of private renters. We made 11 submissions on key issues such as housing supply, affordability, and tenant protections to the Housing Commission, the Department of Housing, and other relevant bodies.

We also participated in consultations on the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the Private Rental Sector Review, and the Housing Act 1988 amendments. Additionally, we advocated for stricter regulations on short-term lets.

Through these efforts, we aimed to improve the living conditions and security of tenure for private renters in Ireland. Our submissions to government and other publications are available on our website.

Hazel and Aiden had been living in their rented home with their two children for 15 years when they received a Notice of Termination (NoT) from their landlord, who intended to sell the property. Although they wanted to purchase the home, financial difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic left them unable to afford it.

Threshold advised Aiden and Hazel about the Tenant-in-Situ Scheme and facilitated negotiations between the landlord and the Local Authority. After several weeks of discussions, the Local Authority agreed to purchase the property, allowing the family to remain in their home. Reflecting on the experience, Hazel said, "The relief we felt when we were told we could stay was indescribable. We've been in this house for so long, it's our home, and we couldn't bear the thought of losing it."

Campaigns

Informed by the lived experiences of our clients and supported by research, Threshold's National Advocacy Campaigns in 2023 were designed to address some of the most pressing issues facing renters in Ireland. The goal was to empower tenants by providing them with knowledge of their rights, preventing unlawful evictions, and advocating for legislative changes to improve the private rental sector. By raising public awareness and engaging with policymakers, Threshold played a key role in advancing housing reforms throughout the year.

Deposit Retention Campaign

The **Deposit Retention Campaign** was another major focus for Threshold in 2023, addressing the widespread issue of landlords unlawfully withholding deposits from tenants at the end of tenancies. Threshold's research showed that **deposit disputes** continue to be one of the most common problems faced by renters.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness among tenants about their rights regarding **deposit returns** and provided practical advice on how to challenge unfair deposit retention. As part of this campaign, Threshold advocated for the introduction of a **Deposit Protection Scheme**, where deposits would be securely held by a third party, ensuring they are returned to tenants unless the landlord can provide justification and evidence for withholding them.

Liam's Story

Liam is a single man who was sent a notice of termination where the landlord stated that he needed to move into the property. Liam got in touch with Threshold and sent on the Notice of Termination for review. Unfortunately, before an advisor could assess the notice and respond, Liam moved out of the home. He was couch-surfing with friends as he had been unable to find another home to rent. It turned out that the Notice of Termination was not compliant with the legislation. Not only this, but the moratorium on evictions was in place at the time, meaning that even if the notice was compliant, Liam would have additional time to find a new home. The Threshold advisor continued to work with Liam, advocating to the Local Authority for emergency accommodation. Liam's case highlights how important it is for renters to contact Threshold for advice on on whether their notice is compliant or not, as well as for guidance on their options. This case is heart-breaking, and there are possibly many other people in Liam's position who left homes when they did not have to.

At Threshold we respect everyone who turns to us for help. So while client stories are genuine and true, names and stock photographs are used to protect privacy. We appreciate your understanding.

'Own Your Rights' Campaign

The **'Own Your Rights' campaign** was a central element of Threshold's public outreach in 2023. This campaign reached over **600,000 people** across Ireland through a combination of radio, social media, and print materials. It focused on educating tenants about their legal rights, providing them with the tools and knowledge to challenge unlawful practices by landlords. The key areas addressed were:

- **Eviction Notices**
- **Rent Reviews**
- **Deposit Protection**

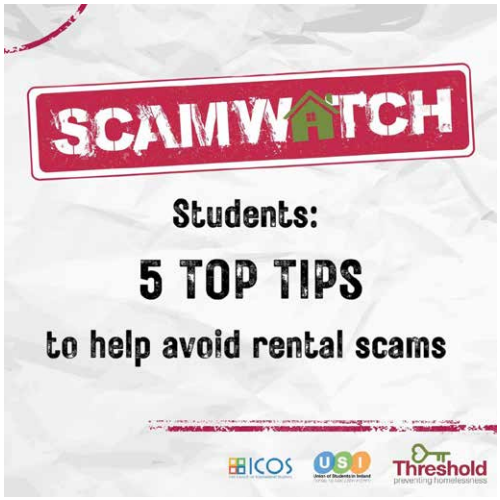
The campaign aimed to raise awareness among tenants of their rights under Irish rental law, while also encouraging early intervention when housing issues arose, preventing crises before they escalated.

Bianca contacted Threshold after receiving a Notice of Termination (NoT) from her landlord, who intended to sell the family home. Bianca, her husband, and their two children had lived in the property for 10 years. As a single-income household, they had limited savings and were unable to afford another rental property or mortgage. Facing the prospect of homelessness, Bianca felt overwhelmed.

Threshold assisted her in exploring the Tenant-in-Situ Scheme, which allowed the Local Authority to purchase the home from the landlord. After successful negotiations, the landlord agreed to sell the property through the scheme, enabling Bianca and her family to remain in their home permanently. Expressing her relief, Bianca said, "I honestly thought we would be out on the street, but now we have security and don't have to worry about finding a new place."

Scamwatch Campaign

The Scamwatch campaign, delivered in partnership with the Union of Students of Ireland (USI) and the Irish Council for International Student (ICOS) ran in August 2023. The aim of this campaign is to warn students who are looking for rental accommodation about scams, and how to spot and avoid such scams. The campaign ran across social media, with a Tip Sheet disseminated among all student unions. The campaign received a high level of coverage across print and broadcast media increasing the reach of its message.



Fundraising

Fundraising in 2023: Empowering Change Together

2023 was a significant year for Threshold, with fundraising efforts playing a key role in advancing the charity's mission. Despite economic challenges, Threshold's loyal supporters, regular donors, major gifts, corporate partners, and community fundraisers enabled the organisation to continue its vital work, preventing homelessness and protecting renters' rights across Ireland. A total of **€1,160,448** was raised through donations, legacies, and trusts, demonstrating the strong support for the work that Threshold carries out.

Threshold's fundraising success in 2023 was the result of creative and targeted strategies that engaged supporters and ensured financial sustainability across multiple channels.

Direct Mail Programme

Threshold's **Direct Mail Programme** was a key fundraising tool in 2023, engaging thousands of supporters through well-targeted campaigns. By effectively communicating the urgency of its work, Threshold received strong support from regular donors, highlighting the importance of consistent communication. This programme not only drove donations but also built long-term loyalty, allowing the organisation to plan ahead and allocate resources more effectively.

Trusts and Foundations

Support from **Trusts and Foundations** was crucial in 2023, allowing Threshold to expand its services, advocate for important policy changes, and maintain operational sustainability. These grants enabled Threshold to deliver critical services, such as tenancy protection, and advance its advocacy work, ensuring that renters' rights remained a priority in public policy discussions.

Loyalty of Regular Donors

Regular donors have been the foundation of Threshold's fundraising efforts, providing a reliable income stream that allowed the charity to respond quickly to crises. In 2023, these loyal supporters helped Threshold assist thousands of families in staying in their homes. Their continued monthly contributions not only provided financial security but also reflected the deep trust that donors place in the organisation's work.

Lucy turned to Threshold when she was on the verge of homelessness in 2015. Thanks to Threshold's intervention, she avoided eviction and found stable housing. Since then, Lucy has become a monthly donor, supporting others facing similar challenges. She proudly shares her experience, saying, "Threshold helped me when I needed it most, and now I'm part of a community that ensures no one else faces the fear of losing their home. Every donation helps keep a roof over someone's head."

Major Gifts

The generosity of **Major Gifts** played a vital role in supporting Threshold's work in 2023. These substantial donations, particularly for services like the **Tenancy Protection Service**, enabled Threshold to make a significant impact in preventing homelessness. Major gifts allowed the charity to provide targeted support to renters facing eviction, ensuring they could remain secure in their homes.

Community Fundraisers

One of the standout partnerships in 2023 was with **Maynooth Student Union**, which selected Threshold as its charity partner. Throughout the year, students organised various fundraising events, including a **24-hour live gaming stream** and an auction, raising **€5,000**. This collaboration demonstrated the power of youth engagement in supporting social causes, with groups like the **Maynooth Games Society** playing an important role in these efforts. Their dedication showcased how young people are committed to making a difference in their communities.

Corporate Donations

Corporate donors were instrumental in supporting Threshold's fundraising events, particularly through the **Christmas Raffle**. Contributions came from companies such as:

- **Dunnes Stores**
- **Smyths Toys**
- **Cassidy Travel**
- **Clayton Hotels**
- **Maldron Hotels**
- **Meaghers Pharmacy**
- **Dublin Zoo**
- **The Gate Theatre**
- **The Irish Film Institute**

These donations helped raise critical funds to support families during the winter, a period of heightened housing insecurity. Additionally, well-known figures like **Brendan Gleeson**, **Sharon Horgan**, and **Graham Norton** lent their support to Threshold's efforts, increasing public awareness and participation.

Governance

Threshold is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance and transparency. In 2023, the organisation continued to meet its obligations under the **Charities Regulator's Governance Code** and operated as an **Approved Housing Body (AHB)** under the **Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA)**. As a **Triple Lock Standard** certified member of the **Charities Institute Ireland**, Threshold demonstrated its commitment to consistently meeting statutory obligations, ensuring that funds and donations were managed responsibly and effectively. This commitment to good governance reassures all stakeholders, including donors, funders, and service users, of the organisation's accountability.

Charities Regulatory Authority Number:	20011031
Charity Revenue Number (CHY):	6279
Company Number:	70660
Registered Office and Principal Address:	Threshold, First Floor, 25-28 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1, D01 XP04
Office Locations:	Dublin, Cork, Galway, and Limerick.
Auditors:	Whelan Dowling & Associates, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors Block 1, Unit 1 & 4, Northwood Court, Santry, Dublin 9
Bankers:	Bank of Ireland, 2 College Green, Dublin 2, D02 VR66 AIB, 66 South Mall, Cork, T12 Y822 AIB, Lynch's Castle, 40 Shop Street, Galway, H91 W400
Solicitors:	O'Sullivan O'Dowd Solicitors, 1 Blackhall View, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7, D07 FR59

Board Structure and Oversight

Threshold's Board plays a critical role in overseeing the organisation's strategy, policy direction, and financial management. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Senior Leadership Team, allowing the Board to focus on strategic planning and budget approval. The Senior Leadership Team drafts plans, which are then reviewed and approved by the Board.

Board Member Profiles

The Board is composed of individuals with a wide range of expertise, ensuring a balanced governance approach. The Board members in 2023 included:

- **Chairperson:** Liam Reid – Chief External Affairs Officer at Eir, with prior roles in Diageo, the Department of the Environment, and The Irish Times.
- **Treasurer:** Bernard Cronin – Recently retired after 40 years at Apple, where he held senior roles in Finance and Human Resources.
- **Company Secretary:** Laura Harmon – Executive Director of the Irish Council for International Students, with extensive NGO experience.
- **Elaine McGrath:** Coordinator for Economic Programmes at PAUL Partnership in Limerick, focused on social inclusion.
- **Fernanda Camargo:** EMEA Risk and Governance Manager at Google.
- **Yvonne Harris:** Head of Customer Operations at Irish Water.
- **Geoff Byrne:** Chief Operating Officer at Tesco with over 30 years of leadership experience.
- **Patricia Sheehy Skeffington BL:** Barrister with interests in housing, administrative law, and equality.
- **Dr. Sarah Sheridan:** Independent researcher with expertise in homelessness.
- **Martin Whelan:** Head of Public Affairs and Communications for NTMA.
- **Brian Murphy:** Chief of Staff at the Department of An Taoiseach.

Board and Committee Meetings

In 2023, the Board met six times and received regular updates on key performance, strategic, and risk management issues.

Threshold established several specialised Board Sub-Committees in 2022 to oversee critical governance areas. These sub-committees continued their work throughout 2023. The committees and their focus areas are as follows:

- **Governance Committee:** Focuses on ensuring that Threshold adheres to the highest standards of governance and regulatory compliance.
- **Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee:** Oversees financial health, internal controls, and risk management.
- **HR and Remuneration Committee:** Focuses on staff welfare, remuneration, and personal and professional development.
- **Operations and Services Committee:** Reviews service delivery and ensures that it meets client needs.
- **Fundraising and Strategy Committee:** Focuses on aligning advocacy and fundraising activities with the organisation's goals, overseeing the Policy and Research Group, and managing external engagement, including policy, advocacy, and campaigns.

Sub-committees met regularly, providing specialised governance and timely updates to the full Board, ensuring informed decision-making.

Conflicts of Interest

Threshold maintains a Conflicts of Interest Policy. All Board members are required to declare any potential conflicts at the start of each meeting, and if a conflict arises, the member involved is excused from decision-making on the relevant issue. All conflicts are recorded in the meeting minutes, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Stakeholder Engagement

Threshold maintains open communication with stakeholders through regular engagement and feedback mechanisms. This ensures the organisation remains responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

Separation of CEO and Board

In line with best practice governance standards, Threshold's **CEO** is not a member of the Board. This clear separation ensures that the Board retains independent oversight over the CEO and Senior Leadership Team, enhancing the organisation's accountability and transparency.

Recruitment and Development of Board Members

Threshold's **Board member recruitment process** is transparent and designed to attract individuals with the skills and expertise needed for effective governance. New Board members undergo an induction process that includes informing them of their legal responsibilities and an overview of Threshold's operations. Continuous development opportunities are made available to Board Members through governance workshops and external training, ensuring that all members are afforded the opportunity to stay up to date with best practices.

Decision-Making and Delegation of Powers

The Board retains decision-making authority over major strategic initiatives, such as budget approval and risk management. Day-to-day operational decisions are delegated to the CEO. These powers are clearly outlined in Threshold's Board Handbook, and regular reports are made by the CEO to the Board to ensure oversight.

Risk Management

In 2023, the Board and Senior Leadership Team furthered the implementation of a comprehensive risk management strategy through a review of internal controls, regular audits, and process reviews.

Remuneration and Performance Management

Threshold's approach to remuneration is fair, transparent, and benchmarked against industry standards. **Staff salaries** are reviewed annually, and the CEO's performance is evaluated by the Board. The CEO's remuneration is tied to performance outcomes and the organisation's financial health, ensuring that compensation is both equitable and linked to Threshold's success.

Fundraising Compliance

Threshold adheres to the **Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising**, ensuring that all fundraising activities are conducted ethically and transparently. The organisation maintains the trust of its supporters by being clear about how donations are used and by implementing rigorous financial controls.

Compliance with Governance Codes

Threshold is fully compliant with the **Charities Governance Code** and the **Companies Act 2014**. The organisation continued to adhere to the **Charities SORP (FRS 102)** in 2023, ensuring transparency in financial reporting. This compliance is critical to maintaining the trust of donors, funders, and the public. Additionally, Threshold recorded all lobbying activity and communications with public officials as required by the **Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015**.

In 2023, no political contributions were made, and Threshold focused on lobbying efforts related to housing policies and tenant rights. These efforts are vital in advocating on behalf of renters and influencing national policy to improve housing availability and affordability.

Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Threshold's financial performance in 2023 reflected substantial growth, driven by an increase in state support and various income sources. The year's achievements enabled the organisation to expand services and maintain vital operations, despite challenges in the broader economic landscape. Below is a detailed overview of Threshold's income, expenditure, reserves, and financial health.

Income and Expenditure Overview

Threshold's total income for 2023 was **€4,816,681**, a **15% increase** from the previous year. This was primarily due to a **22% increase in state grants** and a **one-off profit of €317,639** from the sale of the Stoneybatter premises. Donations, legacies, and trusts totaled €1,160,448, a **20% decrease** from 2022, attributed to fewer one-off donations.

Income Breakdown

Income Source	2023 (€)	2022 (€)	Change (%)
State Grants	3,324,737	2,727,337	+22%
Donations, Legacies, Trusts	1,160,448	1,443,677	-20%
Profit from Sale of Property	317,639	-	100
Other Income	13,857	18,142	-24%
Total Income	**4,816,681**	**4,189,426**	**+15%**

Expenditure Breakdown

Total expenditure amounted to **€3,974,719**, reflecting a **6% increase** from 2022. Key drivers included the expansion of the **Tenancy Protection Service** and **Policy & Advocacy** work, which are central to Threshold's mission of preventing homelessness. Fundraising costs, however, decreased by 28%, due to efficiencies in staffing and campaign management.

Expenditure	2023 (€)	2022 (€)	Change (%)
Charitable Activities	3,412,541	2,965,933	+15%
Fundraising	562,178	782,340	-28%
Total Expenditure	**3,974,719**	**3,748,273**	**+6%**

Reserves and Financial Health

As of 31 December 2023, Threshold's reserves stood at **€6,214,386**, ensuring a strong foundation for future growth. Reserves were split between **restricted funds of €1,038,761** (designated for specific purposes) and **unrestricted and designated funds of €5,175,625**, with a portion designated for the future purchase of a new property.

Reserves Breakdown

Reserve Type	Amount (€)	Details
Restricted Funds	1,038,761	Designated by donors for specific purposes
Unrestricted Funds	5,175,625	€4,066,516 designated for future projects, €1,109,109 unrestricted

Future Plans

The Board continues to focus on building reserves to cover 50% of total income, a target crucial for ensuring service continuity in challenging times. Currently, reserves stand at **23% of total income**.

Governance and Support Costs Allocation

Threshold's governance and support costs amounted to **€505,975** in 2023, allocated across various core activities. This ensured that essential functions, such as Finance, HR and IT, effectively supported front-line services.

Activity	Governance & Support Costs (€)
Raising Funds	50,259
Tenancy Protection Service	221,864
Advice Services	91,581
Access Housing Unit	25,158
Policy & Advocacy	59,461
Housing Activity	57,652

Strategic Outlook

The sale of the Stoneybatter property will be reinvested in securing new operational premises. As Threshold looks ahead, the focus remains on maintaining its strong financial position while expanding its capacity to meet growing demand for housing support services. Careful management of reserves, combined with efficient fundraising efforts, will continue to underpin Threshold's long-term sustainability and its ability to drive forward its mission.

For a complete breakdown of Threshold's financial performance, please refer to the 2023 Audited Financial Statements available at www.threshold.ie.

Thank You to Our Supporters

At Threshold, we are constantly reminded that our work to prevent homelessness and support renters would not be possible without the dedication and generosity of our incredible community of supporters. We are deeply grateful to everyone who stood with us in 2023 – your commitment to our mission has made a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of families across Ireland.

Our Donors

To our regular donors, major givers, and those who contributed through one-off donations or legacies, thank you. Your generosity allowed us to provide essential services, keeping families in their homes and advocating for renters' rights at the highest levels. Every single contribution, big or small, helps us ensure that vulnerable renters get the support they need.

"I have been supporting Threshold for about 10 years now and I see the great work they do. If my gift can continue to make a difference and help even one more family from becoming homeless then it makes me happy knowing I am making a difference."

Teresa, Threshold donor

Corporate Partners

We are fortunate to have worked alongside a number of corporate partners who shared their resources and contributed to our fundraising efforts in 2023. Special thanks go to Dunnes Stores, Smyths Toys, Clayton Hotels, Cassidy Travel, Meaghers Pharmacy, and many others who helped make our Christmas Raffle a success. Your support not only raised crucial funds but also helped spread awareness of our mission.

Trusts and Foundations

The trust and foundation grants we received in 2023 were instrumental in expanding our programmes and ensuring the sustainability of our work. Your commitment to supporting critical housing initiatives made it possible for us to advocate for policy changes that will positively impact renters for years to come.

Community Fundraisers

A huge thank you to the individuals and groups who organised events, raised awareness, and fundraised on our behalf throughout 2023. From charity walks to gaming marathons, your enthusiasm and creativity continue to inspire us. In particular, we'd like to recognise the Maynooth Student Union and the Maynooth Games Society, who together raised €5,000 through a series of inventive activities. Your energy and commitment truly exemplify the power of community support.

Staff and Advisors

We cannot overlook the hard work of our incredible staff and advisors, whose professionalism, empathy, and dedication are the heart of everything we do. Your unwavering commitment to helping renters navigate housing challenges ensures that Threshold remains a beacon of hope for those in need.

Board

We are inspired by the generosity and passion of our Board members, who take a strategic and risk-based overview of the organisation. Their belief in our mission and their ongoing commitment to the development of Threshold steers and underpins our work in advising tenants, advocating for renters' rights and preventing homelessness. The experience and insights of Board members support and guide our governance, financial, planning, HR and external communication work of Threshold, thereby building the resilience of the organisation.

Threshold
preventing homelessness

3 WAYS YOU CAN HELP SAVE A HOME TODAY

1 Scan the QR code to donate now.

2 Help prevent a family from losing their home. Call Catherine today to learn how on **1890 43 44 45.**

3 Visit our website **www.threshold.ie** to find out how you, your friends and your workplace can help prevent homelessness.

CHARITIES INSTITUTE IRELAND
2024 TRIPLE LOCK MEMBER
Promoting Trust

Registered Office: First Floor, 25-28 Strand St Great, Dublin 1, D01 XP04

Charity No: CHY 6279
Charity Registration No : 20011031

Threshold's Annual Report 2023

Threshold
preventing homelessness

Revenue (Charities Unit) (CHY): 6279
Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA): 200110301

National Office and Eastern Regional Office
First Floor 25-28 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1, D01 XP04

Southern Regional Office
22 South Mall, Cork, T12 C2YN

Western Regional Offices
5 Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 HC1H
Unit 2-4 Howleys Court, Steamboat Quay, Dock Road, Limerick, V94 P8C0

National Freephone Helpline:
1800 454 454
9am to 9pm Monday to Friday

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The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development.