



A.S.S.C.

Accompaniment Support Services for Children

Annual Report (2021)

15 July 2020 (date of incorporation) – 31 December 2021

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Section 1: Chairperson's Statement

I am delighted to present A.S.S.C. Accompaniment Support Services for Children first annual report. This Annual Report outlines in detail the work carried out in the first 18 months of A.S.S.C.'s set up. A.S.S.C. provides specialised support for young people and their families when they are receiving a forensic medical exam and when young people need to go to Court to give witness testimony.

There are few meetings that stand out as pivotal in my career. The most important one was the one that I had with Grace Jordan and Lynette Bradshaw in mid-2020. CARI (Children at Risk Ireland), a therapy centre for young people impacted by sexual abuse, made the difficult decision to discontinue its accompaniment services for young people by the end of 2020. We were faced with the reality that by January of 2021 there would be no specialised service of support for young people going to court or attending a forensic examination. The easier road would have been to accept this decision and move on a road, it quickly transpired, we were not prepared to travel down. It was at this meeting that A.S.S.C. was created.

The first six months of A.S.S.C. was spent building its foundation. We embarked on a journey of governance through policy making, risk assessment and regular engagement with the Charities Regulator. On the incorporation of the company, we created our Constitution and out of that came our mission and vision for the charity. We developed a two-year strategic plan and began to meet the necessary standards for registration with the Charities Regulator. We created the service map for our accompaniment services and engaged in a wide communication plan with our stakeholders and with the Department of Justice. We strengthened our Board of Management and developed a robust team of dedicated volunteers. In January of 2021, A.S.S.C. opened its doors of service provision for young people as a Level 5 Covid-19 lockdown swept over the country.

The challenges of beginning in a Level 5 lockdown were navigated with calm and confident wisdom by both Lynette Bradshaw, our Executive Director, and Grace Jordan, our Director of Services.

In the first year of its operations, A.S.S.C. provided accompaniment support to 133 young people, 214 adults and 35 professionals across its accompaniment services. Noting that service provision was restricted due to an extended Level 5 lockdown for the first five months of its operations, these numbers demonstrate a clear need for our services. We had 92 missed accompaniments, primarily due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Most of the court cases supported in 2021 were crimes of a sexual nature. All forensic accompaniments had concerns of child sexual abuse. It is essential that young people and families dealing with this complex trauma have access to specialised support when they need it.

The Board would like to acknowledge and thank the management, staff and volunteers of A.S.S.C. The professionalism and high performance of each volunteer and staff member has ensured the continued growth of this much needed service.

This work could not have been achieved without the continued support of the Department of Justice. Indeed, the Board wishes to thank the many stakeholders that gave their support to this organisation at its initial formation and throughout: the Barnahus West team, The Courts Service, An Garda Síochána, CARI, Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC), St Clare's Unit, St Louise's Unit, and our neighbouring NGOs.

I would like to give my sincerest thanks and gratitude to my fellow board members for their continued support to both A.S.S.C. and also to me as Chair. I am privileged to be part of a team of people whose work and dedication to the children we serve never wanes.

Lastly, I, and the Board, would like to pay homage to the young people and families we support. The resilience and bravery demonstrated by the young people we serve never ceases to humble and motivate me, and us, to continue to do more.

Eve Farrelly
Chairperson
A.S.S.C.

Section 2: Meeting Our Objectives

2.1. The Constitution

The journey to meeting our objectives began with the development of the charity's Constitution. The Constitution defines our charitable purpose. It outlines the powers of the charity as well as its range of operations.

2.2. A.S.S.C. Objectives

A.S.S.C.'s main objective is to provide support for all young people and their families as they negotiate their way through the criminal justice system in Ireland. We achieve this by operating a Forensic and Court Accompaniment Support Service and an Advocacy Service. We provide this before, during and directly after a family's time in the criminal justice system.

Our subsidiary aims include training, raising awareness and contributing, where appropriate, to research in the field.

2.3. Mission

The mission of A.S.S.C. is to provide all young people and their families with accompaniment and support during their time within the criminal justice system. We provide a voice for the rights and experiences of young people and their families when they go through the criminal process.

Section 3: Formation of A.S.S.C.

3.1. A.S.S.C. Development & Transition

A.S.S.C. is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation, set up in 2020 to address the needs of young people as they negotiate their way through the criminal justice system. A.S.S.C. provides accompaniment and advocacy for young people and their families at different stages through the criminal process. We aim to ensure that all young people who need our support receive it, in a timely and appropriate manner, irrespective of their means.

A.S.S.C. began to secure financial support for its services in 2020 from the Department of Justice. This was sanctioned in 2021 (during the peak of Covid-19), which allowed A.S.S.C. services to begin in early 2021.

The service provision is primarily supported through volunteers, with existing dedicated CARI volunteers transitioning over to A.S.S.C.

3.2. Stakeholders Support

The success of the development of A.S.S.C. was partly due to a number of stakeholders including Department of Justice, Barnahus West, Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service (CASATS) Galway, Sexual Assault treatment Unit (SATU) Rotunda, An Garda Síochána, The Courts Service, Tusla (Assessment Unit), Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) as well as other external NGOs including: Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI), Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC), Galway Rape Crisis Centre (GRCC), Victim Support at Court (VSAC) and One in Four. We are extremely grateful for their continued support and guidance through this transition.



3.3 Client Transition

A system was also put in place to ensure the smooth transition of clients from CARI (Children at Risk Ireland) to A.S.S.C. This ensured that a total of 25 young people and their families made the smooth transition over to A.S.S.C for continued support and accompaniment.

3.4 Securing Funding

To secure funding we initially sought support from the CARI Board of Management and CARI's Executive Director. With their support, a series of meetings were held with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and a business case submitted. Thankfully, our funding application was accepted and A.S.S.C. was awarded funding from the DoJ in late December 2020.

3.5 Charity Status

A.S.S.C. first submitted its application for Charitable Status to the Charities Regulator on the 17th July 2020. A.S.S.C. was awarded its charity number on the 2nd March 2021 and is now on the Register of Charities.

Section 4: A.S.S.C. Volunteers

During 2020-2021 there was a period of adjustment where 22 CARI volunteers transitioned to A.S.S.C. A training needs analysis was completed to identify if any additional training was required. This gave us the opportunity to clearly identify and enhance the skills of all migrating volunteers. Following strict adherence to protocols and best practice, A.S.S.C. was in a position to provide services from 2021.

During 2021, a recruitment campaign began for new volunteers, initially for Dublin and Galway forensic accompaniment. This was followed by recruitment for court accompaniment, advocacy support workers, administrators and volunteer fundraising roles.

Despite the restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, A.S.S.C. has been successful in transitioning over all of the former CARI volunteers as well as recruiting new volunteers. This was achieved within the community Covid-19 guidelines.

4.1 A.S.S.C. Volunteer Roles

4.1.1 Forensic Accompaniment Volunteer Role

The Forensic Accompaniment Volunteer supports young people and their parents/guardians as the young person undergoes a forensic/medical examination. The volunteer offers emotional and practical support to the families while their child or children are examined. This can be a difficult and often traumatic time for the whole family. The psychological support provided can help reduce the stress and trauma.

4.1.2 Court Accompaniment Volunteer Role

Court Accompaniment Volunteers support young people and their parents/guardians as the young person goes through trial proceedings offering emotional and practical support to the young person and family throughout the trial.

Currently the court system is set up for adults, and the professionals involved are accustomed to dealing with adult witnesses. However, the courts are making changes for child witnesses thanks to EU Directive 2012/29/EU and the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017. Nonetheless, it remains an alienating experience and the court process can be frightening and traumatic. Our volunteers can help minimise negative experiences that might arise during the criminal justice process.

4.1.3 Advocacy Support Volunteer Worker

Our advocacy phone support service is provided to any parent/guardian where A.S.S.C. has supported their child or children through the forensic or court process. This phone support provides a listening space, free of charge. It prevents families from feeling isolated and allows a space for a parent/guardian to explore any concerns or questions they may have. The A.S.S.C. advocacy worker liaises with other professionals who work closely with the young person and their family, ensuring a better support environment for the young person as relevant information is shared amongst the professionals supporting the child.

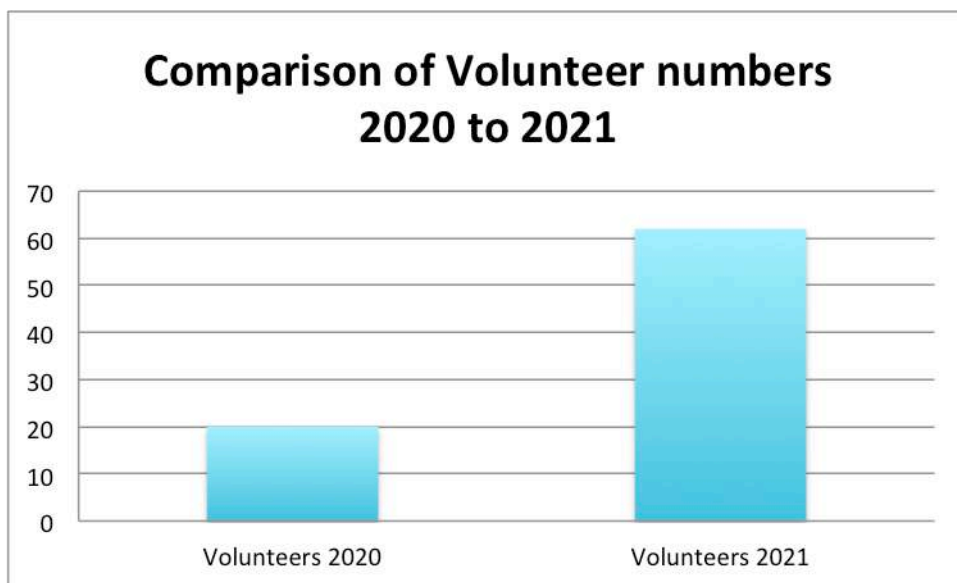
4.1.4 Administrator Volunteers

Volunteers support management with administrative duties such as compiling volunteer rotas, research, team meetings and other essential work.

4.2 A.S.S.C. Volunteer Progression 2020-2021

By the end of 2021, A.S.S.C. had 62 volunteers across all services, an 80% increase in volunteer numbers since 2020.

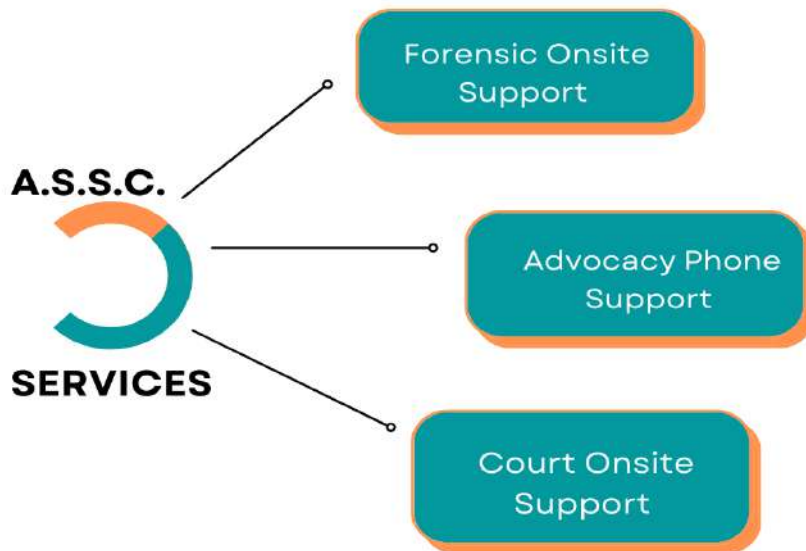
Figure 1. Chart illustrating the increase in volunteer numbers from 2020 to 2021



4.3 Volunteer Recruitment Process

Each A.S.S.C. volunteer goes through a rigorous training and application process. The specifics of each volunteer post and the recruitment process are available in the A.S.S.C. Volunteer Handbook and on the A.S.S.C. website www.assc.ie.

Section 5: Our Services



5.1 Forensic Accompaniment

Barnahus West – CASATS Unit

A.S.S.C. volunteers provide onsite forensic accompaniment support to young people and their families who attend for a forensic medical examination at CASATS (Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service), which is co-located within Barnahus West in Galway. The age cohort of young people supported here is 0 – 14 years old.

Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) – Rotunda Hospital

A.S.S.C. volunteers provide onsite forensic accompaniment support to young people and their families who attend for a forensic medical examination at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU), which is co-located within Rotunda Hospital, Dublin 1. The age cohort of young people supported here is 14 - 16 years old.



7 WAYS A.S.S.C. SUPPORTS CHILD VICTIMS OF CRIME



Accompaniment
Support
Services for
Children



www.assc.ie
support@assc.ie
0879615306

01 FORENSIC ONSITE SUPPORT

A.S.S.C. volunteers support young people and their families when they attend the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit in the Rotunda, Dublin



02 BARNAHUS GALWAY "ONE HOUSE"

A.S.S.C. volunteers support young people and their families when they attend the Child & Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Unit in Barnahus, Galway

A.S.S.C. provides Advocacy for families in Barnahus too



03 CRISIS SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Empathic client-led phone support for the young persons family support coming out of the forensic unit after disclosure of child sexual violence



04 COURT ONSITE SUPPORT

A.S.S.C. volunteers support young people and their families when they come to testify at the Criminal Courts of Justice, Dublin



05 THE NORMALISATION OF THE CRIMINAL COURT PROCESS

- Facilitate a visit to the court prior to a trial
- Accompaniment during trial time
- Post-trial support around sentencing and case outcome



06 ADVOCACY FOR FAMILIES THROUGH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Phone advocacy support for families as they negotiate the Criminal Justice System for a child, who is a victim or witness to a crime



07 A.S.S.C. ACCOMPANIMENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES AS THEY NEGOTIATE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN IRELAND.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

5.2 Court Accompaniment

A.S.S.C. provides court accompaniment support to all young people who are a witness in any criminal trial. At present, our accompaniment service is provided in the Dublin region only, with our advocacy phone support extended nationally.

Pre-Trial Preparation

Going to court can be a daunting and stressful time for a young person and their family. An A.S.S.C. advocacy support worker, known as an accompaniment officer, will attend a pre-trial meeting to give the young person the opportunity to ask questions and to acquire a sense of control over the experience ahead. It includes a visit to the courthouse and a tour of the victim support area, including the video link room where the young person will give their evidence.

DVD (Video) Statement

A.S.S.C. accompaniment officers are also available to accompany young people when they review the videorecording of their original statement made to a Garda specialist interviewer. This viewing is carried out shortly before the trial and allows the young person to be reminded of the account they gave to the Garda Siochana. They see themselves at a younger age, which can add to their anxieties and the unfamiliar situation they are in. This is particularly the case given the average timeline (4.4 years) it takes for cases to come to trial. The accompaniment officer is there to support them through this process.

Trial Accompaniment

A.S.S.C. court accompaniment volunteers provide trial accompaniment to the young person and their support network throughout the trial. Our volunteers provide emotional and practical support. They explain legal terminology and court processes to them, staying with and facilitating them in what they may need for the duration of the trial. A.S.S.C. will advocate for the young person throughout the trial process. We extend our support, if needed, to the family for the remainder of the trial process and for sentencing if there is a guilty plea or verdict.

Post-Trial Support

Each family has different post-trial needs depending on the outcome of the trial. A.S.S.C. advocacy support workers provide advocacy phone support where the verdict is 'not guilty', when requested by the family. Where the verdict is 'guilty' and, if the young person or their family wish to attend the sentencing hearing, we provide onsite accompaniment. A young person and their family often require support in reading their victim impact statement. A.S.S.C. advocacy phone support is always extended out to the family post-trial at their request.

A young person may be vulnerable post trial and may need to re-engage with therapy. A.S.S.C. will help support the young person and family for an appropriate referral at this stage.

COURT SUPPORT



"THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR
SUPPORT
THROUGH THIS PROCESS.
YOU ARE ALL AMAZING AND WE ARE
VERY GRATEFUL
FOR EVERYTHING YOU HAVE DONE
FOR US."

A.S.S.C. YOUNG PERSON & FAMILY



5.3 Advocacy Services

Our advocacy support workers provide a phone advocacy support service to the families we have supported. This service provides support on the forensic and court process. Families can avail of this phone support service free of charge, and it provides a client-led empathic, supportive space. Phone advocacy support prevents families from feeling isolated and allows a space for a parent/guardian to explore any concerns or questions or to be referred to other relevant long-term therapeutic supports.



All service provisions are client-led and child-centred and we have an open file policy, should a client require our services in the future.

Section 6: A.S.S.C. Figures 2021

6.1. Forensic Accompaniment Figures

In 2021, there were 48 individual young people referred to A.S.S.C. for forensic support. These were young people who attended the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) in Dublin and Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service (CASATS) in Barnahus West.

Table 1: Number of forensic supports provided in 2021

Numbers of people supported in the Sexual Assault Treatment Units	Total
Number of young people referred to service	48
Number of young people provided with onsite accompaniment	21
Number of siblings, who are minors, accompanied	30
Number of adult carers accompanied	25
Total supported onsite	76
Number of cases referred to Advocacy Phone Support	*42

*Not all families want to be referred into A.S.S.C. Advocacy support service

Onsite accompaniment was provided to 21 young people in 2021. This onsite accompaniment also provided support for 25 adults and 30 siblings, totalling 76 people supported over this period. As Covid-19 restrictions were in place, this had an impact on support numbers with a total of 92 missed accompaniments, detailed in section 7 of this report.

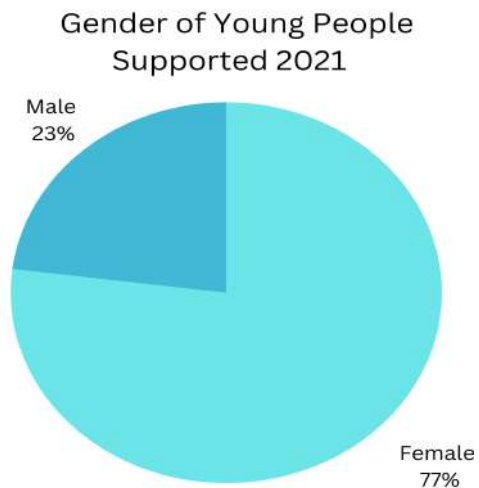
An important aspect of the work is supporting the siblings of a child who presents for forensic examination. We must be mindful of the effects a visit to the unit may have on siblings who attend. This can be an overwhelming and confusing experience for them, and our volunteers provide accompaniment and support to these siblings also.

When examining the number of families availing of A.S.S.C. advocacy support on coming from the onsite support provided in the units. A total of 87.5% of families were transferred on request to this support.

Gender of Young People Referred

The gender of the young people referred to our services is predominately female at 77%.

Figure 2. Gender of Young People Supported 2021

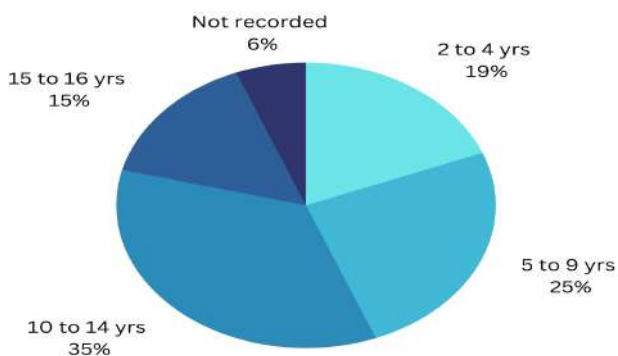


Age Range of Young People Requiring Support

The highest proportion of children who attend were 10–14-year-olds (35%). However, children as young as 2 years of age have presented at the treatment units in 2021 and 19% of those attending were of pre-school age.

Figure 3. Age of Young People Supported 2021

Age of Young People Supported 2021



The Regions

Many young people and their families travel a great distance to attend the Galway Barnahus West & SATU Rotunda unit. Table 2 below details the regions from which people travelled.

Table 2: The different regions from which young people & families travelled.

Barnahus West	Rotunda SATU
Galway	Dublin
Roscommon	Wicklow
Tipperary	
Limerick	
Kerry	
Donegal	
Leitrim	
Mayo	
Longford	
Sligo	

6.2 Court Accompaniment Figures

Who A.S.S.C. Supported in 2021

In 2021 our court team supported 60 young people throughout Ireland. Our court service provided 106 onsite accompaniment support meetings in 2021.

A total of 191 Adults (110 female and 81 male) were facilitated in these meetings. This cohort of adults are the parents/carers/family support of the young person who has been called to testify, as victim of crime or as a witness to crime. Furthermore, 14 professional supports were also provided.

Table 3: The numbers of court support provided in 2021.

Numbers of people supported in the CCJ Dublin	Total
Number of Young People Supported	60
Number of Adults Supported	191
Number of Professionals supported	14
Onsite Support for Court	106

6.3 Referrals 2021

Of the 60 active cases in 2021, 35 cases were new cases since the foundation of A.S.S.C. An Garda Síochána provided 37% of the overall referrals in 2021. The number of referrals was lower than would normally be expected, primarily due to Covid-19.

Table 4: The percentage of court referrals per agency in 2021

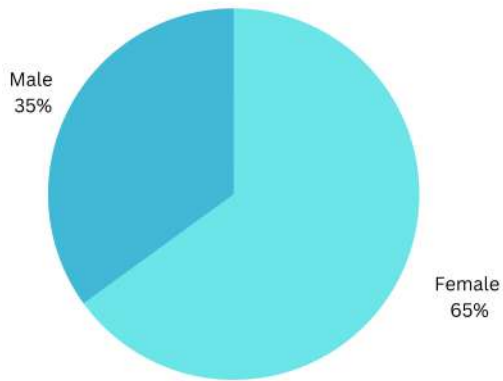
Referral Agency	Percentage for 2021
Transferred from CARI	41.6 %
An Garda Síochána	36.6%
GSOC	5.0%
CARI	5.0%
VSAC - Walk In's	1.6%
Self-Referral	1.6%
St Louise's	5.0%
DPP	3.3%

6.4 Gender Breakdown of Referrals

Of the 60 young people referred to the service for Onsite Court Accompaniment in 2021, 21 were male and 39 were female.

Figure 2. Gender of Young People Supported 2021

Gender of Young People Supported 2021



"THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.
ALL YOUR HELPFUL ASSISTANCE IN
NAVIGATING THE COURT HOUSE, BOTH
THE BUILDING ITSELF AND THE
PROCEDURES.
THANK YOU ALL SO VERY MUCH!"
A.S.S.C. MUM



6.5 Timeline for the Young Person

The time from when the young person reported the crime to when there was a trial outcome took on average 4.4 years. This is a considerable length of time in the life of a young person and has a direct impact on the lives of the young person and his or her family, with some families commenting that they felt their "life was on hold."

We can expect a case to go on for approximately 2 to 6 years.

The current statistics have been gathered from cases closed in 2021; figures are available for 35 cases.

6.6 Case outcomes

In 2021, the conviction rate was 72%. The defendant was found guilty by trial in 47% of cases. A guilty plea was entered in 25% of cases. 14% of defendants were found not guilty. A further 8% of cases resulted in a hung jury. In two cases the defendant was deceased before the trial outcome.

"YOU REALLY HELPED PUT HIM AT EASE AND I COULD SEE A BIG CHANGE IN HIM AFTERWARDS. THEY TOLD ME THAT THEY FEEL MUCH BETTER ABOUT THE CASE NOW."

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA



6.7 A.S.S.C. Advocacy Phone Support

The table below outlines the volume of calls A.S.S.C. engages in through our National Advocacy Phone Support service, open to all families who we have supported either through our forensic or court accompaniment services. The vast majority are to support a court accompaniment.

Table 5: The number of advocacy supports provided in 2021

Our Work in 2021	Communication Figures 2021
Total Communications	1,757
Forensic Advocacy Communications	292
Court Advocacy Communications	1,465

"I WISH TO THANK YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES, FOR THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE YOUNG PERSON & FAMILY FOR THE HEARING. THE PROFESSIONALISM AND THE SUPPORT YOU PROVIDED WAS COMMENTED ON BY THE FAMILY. WHOM APPRECIATED YOUR ASSISTANCE DURING THIS DIFFICULT PROCESS. ON BEHALF OF THE GARDA OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION, I WISH TO OFFER OUR SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT THAT WAS PROVIDED."

THE GARDA OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION



6.8 Demographics of the Accused

The figures discussed below are from our court caseload. The term accused has been used as the data is from "accused persons" sitting for trial.

Relationship of the Victim to the Accused

The accused is more likely to be known to the young victim; indeed 56% are within the family. 83% of the accused were known to the young person, leaving 17% who were unknown to the young person prior to the incident.

In 87% of extrafamilial cases, the alleged perpetrator was recorded as known to the young person. The young person may know them as partners of family members, family friends, neighbours, child minders, or school friends.

Gender of the Accused

In 2021 96% of the accused were male and 4% were female.

Age of the Accused

Of the cases that came to court, 21% of the accused were under 18 years of age at the time the crime was alleged to have happened and 79% of the accused were adults at the time of the event. We are seeing an increase in minors accused of sexual crimes against children/young people. Though this trend is observable there is no established reason for the increase.

Section 7: Impact of Covid-19

A.S.S.C.'s service provision continued to progress under Covid-19 restrictions. While Covid-19 was a difficult time for all NGO sectors, A.S.S.C. treated the lockdown period as an opportunity to further develop our services.

We focused on three specific areas:

- Development of A.S.S.C. policy
- Recruitment of additional board members to enhance the skillset of A.S.S.C.
- Development of a national volunteer recruitment campaign for both the Dublin and Galway regions

7.1 Missed Accompaniment in the Forensic Units

Like most organisations, our service and service users have been severely impacted by Covid-19 and the corresponding restrictions. This is evident in the total of 92 missed accompaniments in the Forensic units 2021. A missed accompaniment is where a volunteer is unable to be provided. In 2021, missed accompaniments did not reflect the volunteer unavailability but was due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

When there was an easing of public restrictions, the Health Service Executive (HSE) was still operating under strict guidelines. Following best practice, A.S.S.C. volunteers adhered to the HSE guidelines and agreed they could not provide onsite accompaniment during the affected period. Thus, the statistics provided are not a true reflection of the demand for services.

Furthermore, the Central Criminal Courts in Dublin had to restrict their weekly trials from an average of 16 to 4 per week due to social distancing rules. This resulted in the adjournment of 15 trials in 2021.

Section 8: Meet the Team

8.1. A.S.S.C. Volunteers

We would like to thank all our volunteers who give up their time willingly and without financial gain, particularly for transitioning from their role at CARI to A.S.S.C. and for their continued dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, volunteers have continually demonstrated their flexibility, empathy and compassion in ways that cannot be underestimated. Their input has been, and continues to be, vital for the successful service provision of the organisation. A.S.S.C. volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, age, ethnicity and genders, which reflect the diversity in the community and the clients we support.

Some of our volunteers are profiled below.

Ms. Polly McMenamín - Advocacy Phone Support Volunteer



I volunteer with A.S.S.C. as an Advocacy Phone Support Worker.

In my time volunteering with A.S.S.C., I have been given excellent supports from my superiors and co-workers including weekly supervision and monthly clinical supervision. Training is readily provided.

My background has been in working with the families, friends & professionals who have direct contact with young people who have experienced sexual abuse. My work now is carried out mainly by phone, but contact can be made by email or text.

I am happy to put to good use my years of training and experience. It has been exciting and rewarding to watch a new essential service take off and provide a much-needed service to those who use it here in Ireland. I am honoured to work with skilled, knowledgeable and very hard-working individuals in A.S.S.C. and I look forward to watching how the years ahead unfold.

Ms. Margaret Dent – Court Accompaniment Volunteer



I have been volunteering with A.S.S.C. as a Court Accompaniment Officer for almost a year now. During that time, it has been an absolute privilege to be able to help, in some small way, the young people and families that I've met. They are amazing people without exception, struggling to cope with a dreadful and painful experience and I'm just grateful to be there for them, whether it's making a cup of tea, chatting with the young person, or simply sitting with a parent. I genuinely feel that we make a difference by just being there and it makes me very glad that I was accepted as a volunteer. It's a really worthwhile thing to do.

Mr. Brian Costello – Forensic Accompaniment Volunteer



A.S.S.C. is a fantastic, loving and caring organisation that provides a very professional service to families and their loved ones, who are in need of support and help, as they go through this difficult time in their life.

As a volunteer you feel part of another family who all get along fantastically at all levels, right up to management. We as volunteers feel we make a difference to the families that come into the centres and they feel more at ease – sometimes when they are leaving, they would comment how grateful they were to have a stranger sit and listen to them, even just to have a cup of tea with them. Volunteering in this role gives me great pride to know that I can help a family within a small community.

"AS A VOLUNTEER I HAVE BEEN HUGELY IMPRESSED BY THE DEDICATION, CARING AND GENUINE CONCERN FOR CHILD WELFARE OF ALL THE A.S.S.C. TEAM AND VOLUNTEERS.

NOT ONLY ARE THE TEAM EXTREMELY PROFESSIONAL BUT THERE'S A VOCATIONAL KIND OF COMMITMENT IN THE WORK THEY DO TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE. I COULD NOT IMAGINE NEGOTIATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AS A CHILD WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF AN ORGANISATION LIKE A.S.S.C."

A.S.S.C. VOLUNTEER



8.2 A.S.S.C. Staff

Ms. Lynette Bradshaw, Executive Director



Lynette is one of the founding members of A.S.S.C. and serves as Executive Director with the organisation. She is responsible for the operations of A.S.S.C., from excellent governance standards to liaising with and reporting to the Board of Management. She is responsible for the financial reporting of A.S.S.C. and holds the title of Designated Liaison Person, to ensure prompt engagement with Tusla concerning any child safeguarding matters. She also provides external training to stakeholders on such topics as the impact of trauma, child victims of crime & tools to help safeguard professionals. Lynette is also responsible for media engagement and representing A.S.S.C. on government advisory groups. She works with A.S.S.C. on a full-time basis. Lynette feels it is a privilege to have such a role and to work with young people and their families.

Lynette initially qualified and worked as a professional chef before retraining in the NGO sector. She holds a first-class Honours Degree in Psychology Applied to Information Technology (IADT), after which she was engaged under a Community Employment Scheme in CARI in 2012. Lynette progressed through the organisation to become the manager of the court accompaniment support service.

Lynette is in her 10th year supporting young people who are victims of crime and their families. She has expertise in supporting a young person and family when their child is due to give testimony in a criminal trial. This expertise is related to voicing the rights of the young person through the Victims of Crime Act 2017 & other relevant legislation in Ireland.

Lynette is a creative and innovative thinker as she has experience in the arts, professional cookery, and advanced IT skills in usability engineering and computer software development, all accomplished through her past academic and work-life experience. Her ambitions presently are to work at establishing A.S.S.C. as a leading victim support service for young people & families nationwide. Lynette recently completed the “New Frontiers” entrepreneurial training programme with Enterprise Ireland.

She has a strong belief that our intuition and drive can guide us on the right path forward whilst remembering that our weaknesses and limitations can become our greatest strengths.

Ms. Grace Jordan, A.S.S.C. Director of Services



Grace is one of the founding members of A.S.S.C. and serves as Director of Services on a part-time basis. She is responsible for the smooth running of A.S.S.C. services and adherence to national policy and best practice.

Grace also works part-time with Le Chéile Mentoring Services as the Dublin North Coordinator. She works closely with the Probation Service to support young offenders, through mentoring and other service provisions. Grace initially volunteered with Le Chéile, as a mentor for young offenders and their parents/guardians, for more than three years, before she was employed with their service.

Grace has over 23 years’ experience working with victims of crime in the field of child sexual abuse. Specifically, she has managed volunteers for over 10 years, and has experience of recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers on a national level. Grace has expertise in the area of supporting young people and their families when a young person is going through a forensic or medical examination process following a concern or disclosure of child sexual abuse. She also has

extensive experience of supporting young people and their families through criminal trials as well as advocacy/helpline support.

Grace holds a first-class Honours Degree in Psychology (Dublin Business School) and an M.A. in Criminology (Dublin Institute of Technology). Grace has also achieved academic Diplomas in Family Law and Child Psychology & Development and has undertaken further on-going extensive training within the area of volunteer management.

8.3 A.S.S.C. Board of Management

Ms. Eve Farrelly, Chairperson



Eve is also one of the founding members of A.S.S.C. and serves as Chairperson on its Board of Management. She has an Honours Degree in Psychology (DBS), a Master's in criminology (DIT) and a Masters in Management (Michael Smurfit Business School). Eve has also achieved academic Diplomas in Strategic Business Management (IBAT) and Data Protection Law (Honourable Society of King's Inns).

Eve has over 10 years' experience working with victims of crime in the field of child sexual abuse. She has particular expertise in the area of child victims as witnesses for the State in criminal trials. She spent five years in Complaints and Investigations at the Ombudsman for Children's Office, examining complaints and overseeing governance standards in line with legal and policy-based frameworks. She served as Lead Facilitator Coordinator for OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Ireland, which ran support groups for people living with OCD, Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Trichotillomania. She has volunteered as a facilitator working directly with prisoners through the AVP Project, a project that runs workshops in conflict resolution and restorative practices with prisoners. She was also served as an Inspector with the Office of Inspector of Prisons conducting inspections of Irish prisons against Human Rights standards, before taking up a position as a High Court Registrar with The Courts Service.

Mr. Michael Lynch, Justice / Child Safeguarding Trustee



Michael is a retired Detective Inspector who served at the Garda National Protective Services Bureau from 2006 to 2020. Michael Lynch is also an independent Safeguarding Consultant, having also worked for two years as the Safeguarding Manager at Scouting Ireland.

Throughout his career with An Garda Síochána, Michael managed four Garda national units: the Sexual Crime Management Unit; the Sex Offender Management and Intelligence Unit; the Online Child Exploitation Unit; and the Garda National Child Protection Unit.

Michael holds a B.A. (Humanities), majoring in Psychology, from NUI Maynooth and an M.Sc. in Child Protection and Welfare from Trinity College Dublin.

Michael was the Garda lead on the HSE's interagency Sexual Assault Response Team, the Inter-departmental Group for Development of Cross-agency Child Sexual Abuse Services (Barnahus), the Inter-departmental Group for the Implementation of Children First, and the Review of Protections for Vulnerable Witnesses in the Investigation and Prosecution of Sexual Offences (O'Malley Report, July 2020). He has been the Irish national expert with Interpol and Europol regarding the prevention of online child exploitation, has provided consultancy and training to numerous European agencies and the United Nations on child protection and sexual abuse issues, and has drafted several Garda policies in Ireland on child protection, sexual abuse investigation and domestic violence intervention.

Ms. Fiona Kenny, Legal Trustee



Fiona is a solicitor, qualified to practice in Ireland, England and Wales. She graduated from University College Dublin with a Bachelor of Civil Law (Hons). Fiona also achieved a Diploma in French Law from the Université de Nancy 2 in France and a Diploma in Finance Law from the Law Society of Ireland.

Fiona has over 10 years' legal experience, having worked in a large Dublin law firm, in a London law firm, and in the legal department of a global financial services firm. Her areas of expertise include corporate transactions, corporate governance and commercial/contract law. Fiona serves on the Board as legal trustee, advising on legal and governance matters.

Mr. Karl Foley, Financial Trustee

Resigned 11th November 2021



Karl was the financial trustee of A.S.S.C. up to November 2021. Karl is an associate member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland with over 14 years of experience in the accountancy profession.

Karl has served as a director on a number of boards including numerous charities and a recognised accountancy body. Karl is currently employed as a senior manager in PKF-FPM.

Ms. Gillian Mc Namee , Company Secretary



Gillian is the Company Secretary for A.S.S.C. She previously volunteered as a Forensic Accompaniment Worker in the Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Unit in Galway for 2 and a half years. Gillian holds a Masters in Child & Youth Care (Athlone Institute of Technology), Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies & Social Care (Athlone Institute of Technology), Diploma in Psychology of Criminal Behaviour (University College Cork), Certificate in Autism Studies (University College Cork) and Trauma Informed Care (Quality Matters).

Gillian has over 17 years of experience directly working with, leading and managing services that support individuals with Intellectual Disability, Acquired Brain Injury, Forensic, Autism, Mental Health, Dual Diagnoses & Complex Needs. Gillian has a particular interest in the experiences of people with disabilities in the criminal justice system and is a strong advocate for the provision of appropriate systems and strategies to support them. Her paper "Supports for Offenders with Learning Disabilities in the Irish Judicial System: A Critical Review" has been published in the Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies. She was invited to Prague to deliver workshops and seminars raising awareness on disability, autism, child sexual abuse and the criminal justice system. Gillian is also a guest lecturer in University College Cork on their Psychology of Criminal Behaviour course.

Section 9: Governance

As a charity and an organisation in receipt of State funding, A.S.S.C. ensures adherence to good governance standards. At the outset, we set about recruiting a Board of Management and putting in place a robust governance framework.

9.1 A Robust Board of Management

The three founders of A.S.S.C. set out what skills were needed on the Board of Management for A.S.S.C. It was decided that A.S.S.C. needed a legal trustee, a financial trustee, a company secretary, and a trustee with experience in the criminal justice system.

A.S.S.C. began recruitment for board members in October 2020. All our board members were in position by February 2021.

9.2 Governance Framework

A critical part of the development of A.S.S.C. was to ensure solid financial and operational governance. Measures were put in place including sound financial projections; researching bank accounts that support start-ups; recruitment of a senior accountant onto the board of management; implementation of accountancy software; monthly board reporting; cash flow systems being put in place & the setting up of a sub-committee for finances and funding.

In addition, several policies and operational documents were put in place to ensure the day-to-day operations of ASSC adhere to best practice and charity regulation.

Table 6: Governance documentation compiled in 2021

Policy Documents	Operational Documents
A.S.S.C. Constitution	A.S.S.C. Annual Plan
A.S.S.C. Policy Document	A.S.S.C. Annual Budget Plan
Strategic Plan “Programme for Stability”	A.S.S.C. Business Plan 2020
Conflict of Interest Policy	A.S.S.C. Business Plan 2021
Child Safeguarding Statement	Monthly Directors Reports
Identifying and Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns	Monthly Financial Reports
Garda Vetting Policy	BoM – Minutes & Agendas
Data Protection Policy	Incident Report Form
Volunteer Policy & Procedure Handbook	Complaint Form
Trustee Handbook	
Supervision Policy	
Out of Hours Safety Procedure	
Health & Safety Policy	
Out of Hours Safety Procedure	
Complaints Policy	
Employee Handbook	
Risk Management Policy	

9.3 Meeting Attendance Table & Compliance Table 2021

Table 7: Board Meeting Attendance 2021

Director	Position	No. Meetings Attended
Eve Farrelly	Chairperson	7/7
Gillian Mc Namee	Company Secretary	6/7
Fiona Kenny	Legal Trustee	7/7
Michael Lynch	Justice / Child Safeguarding Trustee	6/7
Karl Foley (<i>resigned 11 Nov 2021</i>)	Financial Trustee	3/7
Lynette Bradshaw	Executive Director	7/7
Grace Jordon	Executive Director	7/7

Table 8: Financial & Funding Sub-Committee Meeting Attendance 2021

Director	Position	No. Meetings Attended
Karl Foley (<i>resigned 11 Nov 2021</i>)	Chairperson	2/3
Gillian Mc Namee	Company Secretary & Interim Chair (<i>from 11 Nov 2021</i>)	3/3
Lynette Bradshaw	Executive Director	3/3
Irene Dehaene	Administration Volunteer	1/3
Keaton Singh Parihar	Fundraising Volunteer	1/3

Table 9: A.S.S.C. Compliance Table

Governance Organisation		Date of Completion
Charities Regulator Ireland	Awarded Charitable Status	2/03/2021
Companies Charity Register	Incorporation as a CLG	17/07/2020