A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan

Shaping the Future

2026-2030

Thank you to our funders

CUAN
An Ghníomhaireacht um Fhoréigean Baile, Gnéasach agus Inscnebhunaithe
The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency

Accompaniment Support Services for Children
A.S.S.C.

A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan “Shaping the Future” (2026 - 2030)

Table Of Content

- Chairpersons Introduction..... 1
- Executive Summary..... 2
- Acknowledgements..... 3
- Aim, Vision, Values & Mission..... 5
- Strategic Plan Process..... 6
- Strategic Plan Feedback..... 7
- A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan Overview..... 13
  - Themes..... 14
  - The People Pillar 15
  - The Services Pillar 18
  - The Governance Pillar 20
  - Action Plan 21
- Conclusion..... 22
- Appendix A: Objectives, Priorities, Goals Actions 23

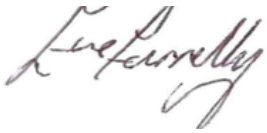
Chairpersons Introduction

It is my great privilege, on behalf of the Board of Management, to introduce A.S.S.C.'s Strategic Plan, Shaping the Future 2026-2030. This plan marks an important stage in the evolution of our organisation and reflects both the remarkable progress achieved in recent years and our ambition to build an even stronger future for the children, young people and families we support. Building on the success of Building on Strong Foundations (2023-2025), this strategy provides a clear and ambitious roadmap for the next five years.

The development of this plan has been informed by extensive engagement with our Board, staff, volunteers, stakeholders, funders and partners. Most importantly, it has been shaped by listening to the experiences of the children, young people and families at the heart of our work. Their voices have helped guide our priorities and strengthen our commitment to delivering meaningful and lasting impact.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Board members and Directors for their leadership, expertise and unwavering commitment. I also wish to acknowledge our exceptional staff and volunteers whose compassion and dedication continue to transform the lives of those navigating the Criminal Justice System. Their contribution has enabled significant growth in service provision while maintaining the high standards for which A.S.S.C. is recognised.

As we embark on this new chapter, guided by the principles of Voice, Impact and Resilience, I am filled with hope and confidence for the future. Together, we will continue to advocate for a more child-friendly justice system, strengthen our services, amplify the voices of those we support and ensure that every child and family engaging with A.S.S.C. is heard, respected and empowered.



Eve Farrelly
Chairperson

Executive Summary

A.S.S.C.'s third strategic plan, “Shaping the Future (2026-2030)”, will commence in January 2026 and guide the organisation's development over a five-year period, concluding at the end of 2030. A mid-term review is scheduled for 2028 to assess progress and ensure the plan remains responsive to emerging challenges, opportunities, and external factors that may affect the charity's growth and development during this period.

Building on the success of the previous strategic plan, “Building on Strong Foundations (2023-2025)”, A.S.S.C. has achieved significant growth and advancement across its three core pillars: People, Services, and Governance. This period has strengthened the organisation's capacity, expanded its reach, and reinforced its commitment to supporting children, young people, and families.

As A.S.S.C. enters this next stage of its development, the organisation is committed to further enhancing its impact while continuing to strengthen service delivery, data collection, and organisational learning within a robust governance framework. This new strategic phase reflects both the progress achieved to date and the ambition to deepen and extend the charity's contribution over the coming years.

Guided by the overarching themes of Impact, Voice, and Resilience, this plan's strategic priorities and objectives will be explored and implemented through the three pillars of People, Services, and Governance. Together, these themes and pillars will provide the framework through which A.S.S.C. will continue to grow, innovate, and deliver meaningful outcomes for the children, young people, and families it serves.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, A.S.S.C. would like to thank all the children, young people, and families whom the charity has supported to date. We are continually inspired by their resilience and courage as they navigate the Criminal Justice System (CJS), which has not always been designed to support and encourage their ongoing engagement.

A.S.S.C. remains committed to advocating for a more child-friendly justice system. One that upholds the rights of children and young people from the point of disclosure. That supports them throughout the investigative process and provides ongoing advocacy and specialist support as they prepare to give evidence and participate in criminal proceedings.

As A.S.S.C. moves from “Building on Strong Foundations” to “Shaping the Future”, we wish to acknowledge the establishment of Cuan, Ireland's statutory agency dedicated to achieving zero tolerance of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) across Irish society. We also gratefully recognise the continued support of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.

The continued funding provided through Cuan enables A.S.S.C. to support the State in meeting its obligations under the Victims' Rights Directive (Directive 2012/29/EU) and the Victims of Crime Act 2017. This support ensures that children, young people, and families can access specialist advocacy and assistance throughout what is often a challenging and complex journey through the Criminal Justice System in Ireland.

A.S.S.C. would also like to acknowledge and sincerely thank its dedicated staff and volunteers. As a volunteer-led organisation, their work with young people and their families has had a fundamental impact on this journey, which has been central to the charity's success and impact.

In 2025, A.S.S.C. volunteers supported 86% of all on-site support to children and young people. At the same time, our staff's dedication and leadership contributed to a 100% increase in children and young people supported.

Throughout this journey, children, young people, and their families engage with a wide range of professionals and services. We would therefore like to acknowledge the openness, collaboration, and commitment of the many State agencies, statutory bodies, and NGO's with whom A.S.S.C. works.

A.S.S.C. would like to acknowledge its partnership with Cuan as the charity's primary funder.

Finally the Directors and Board of Management of A.S.S.C. extend their sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the organisation's growth and success. Your ongoing support, dedication, and commitment continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of children, young people, and families across Ireland.

Aim, Vision, Values & Mission

Aim

The Charity's main aim is to provide support for all young people and their families as they negotiate their way through the Criminal Justice System in Ireland.

Vision

A.S.S.C.'s vision is a child-friendly justice system throughout the country that supports and gives a voice to all child victims of crime and witnesses to crime, along with their families, regardless of means, race, ethnicity, ability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or age.

Values

A.S.S.C. values the concept of "child–friendly justice", guided by a child-centred and client-led approach, facilitating a culture of transparent communication and support for young people and their families. This principle permeates each level of our organisation to include our young clients and their families, our volunteers and staff, our Board of Management, and our partners and other stakeholders. A.S.S.C. recognises the significant value of effective multi-disciplinary working in providing services to children and young people who are victims of crime or have witnessed crime.

Mission

A.S.S.C's mission is to provide children, young people and their families with accompaniment, support and advocacy services, giving them a voice to exercise their rights as they negotiate their way through the Criminal Justice System.

Strategic Plan Process

The Process

A mixed method approach was used on consultation to gather feedback. This feedback was gathered from the A.S.S.C. team, key stakeholders and A.S.S.C.'s primary funder, Cuan.

These methods included:

- Two half-day in-person workshops with the Board of Management, staff and volunteers of A.S.S.C.
- Surveys sent to external stakeholders and A.S.S.C. volunteers
- Interview with A.S.S.C.'s primary funder, Cuan

Engagement

Responses from consultations:

- 28 survey responses from external stakeholders
- 32 survey responses from A.S.S.C. volunteers
- Good attendance and participation at team workshops
- Full attendance and participation at the Board of Management workshop

Strategic Plan Feedback

Word Clouds

As part of the survey feedback, volunteers were asked to describe their work with A.S.S.C. in three words:

Stakeholders were also asked to describe what A.S.S.C's work mean to them in three words:

In team workshops, attendees were asked to identify A.S.S.C.'s core strengths. The strengths recognised were:

- The culture
- The people
- The services

The word clouds below provide further descriptions of these core strengths.

Culture:

People:

Services:

> A safe space filled with genuine care

A.S.S.C. Volunteer Testimonial

A.S.S.C. Volunteer Support

A.S.S.C. Volunteers gave a five-star rating in their ongoing support & training

Identified Challenges

Through workshops and survey engagement, the A.S.S.C. team and stakeholders were asked to identify challenges for A.S.S.C. moving onto the next strategic phase, for the charity specifically, and in the wider operational environment.

These challenges are listed below, including some stakeholder comments.

1. Service Expansion

Over expansion was identified as a challenge.

2. Charity Promotion

The promotion of the charity within the victim support sector and wider sectors.

3. Funding & Resourcing

The need for adequate funding to resource the charity.

4. Recording Child & Family Experiences (Child Participation)

The need for appropriate child/family friendly evaluation methods to give voice to our service users.

> "We have an adversarial, intimidating criminal process that is not child-friendly"

Legal Stakeholder

> "There is a lack of information or knowledge. Having support is one thing, but being made aware of their existence is another"

An Garda Síochána, Stakeholder

5. Growing Complexity & Demand of Cases

Children & young people moving through multiple structures such as the family courts and child protection systems.

6. Accessibility of Support in the Criminal Justice System

Access and awareness of ongoing specialised support in the Criminal Justice System.

7. Data Collection on Child Victims of Crime

Lack of standardised data collection and national coordination for child victims of crime.

> Many parents and guardians can come from already vulnerable groups... [making it hard]... to identify and provide sufficient support to meet the needs of young people forced to navigate through the criminal justice system

External Stakeholder

> A lack of data and a lack of joined-up data by the statutory agencies and courts means we cannot 'see' children as they move through the system or fall through the cracks

Community Service Stakeholder

A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan
“Shaping the Future” (2026 -2030)

A.S.S.C.'s focus over the next five years (2026-2030) will be on developing the organisation under three core themes: Voice, Impact & Resilience, under the People, Services and Governance pillars.

A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan Overview

Strategic Plan Dashboard

Element	Amount
Themes	3
Pillars	3
Strategic Priorities	6
Goals	15
Actions	33

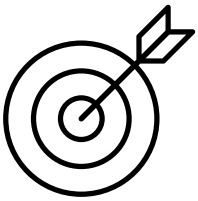
Themes

The A.S.S.C. Strategic Plan is based under three core themes.

Voice Theme

The voice theme is to prioritise and amplify the voices of the people engaged with A.S.S.C, focusing on the following groups: Service Users, Team and Stakeholders. The voice theme will be examined under the People Pillar.

Impact Theme



The impact theme aim is describe the impact of A.S.S.C. support on children, young people & families. Also, to report on their journey through the Criminal Justice System whilst optimising A.S.S.C. data collection. The impact theme will be examined under the Services Pillar.

Resilience Theme

The resilience theme is to prioritise strengthening and consolidating the charity after a period of considerable growth. Ensuring ongoing best practice for A.S.S.C. The resilience theme will be examined under the Governance Pillar.

Under the 3 pillars of People, Services, & Governance, A.S.S.C. developed 6 strategic priorities and 15 goals.

The People Pillar

Maintaining an open-door workplace culture and promoting the voice of the service users, the team and stakeholders, to allow A.S.S.C. to measure and report on the impact of the charity's services.

Strategic Priority 1: A.S.S.C.'s Service Users

A.S.S.C. will develop systems to promote the voices of children, young people, and their families, with an aim to improve their experiences and to report on gaps within the Criminal Justice System. This allows A.S.S.C. to measure and report on the impact of services.

Goals

1. Evaluating and measuring the lived experiences of children, young people and families' journey through A.S.S.C., to gauge the impact of the charity's outcomes.

2. Evaluating and measuring the lived experiences of children, young people and families' journey through the Criminal Justice System, to gauge the impact of the charity's outcomes.

The People Pillar

Strategic Priority 2: A.S.S.C.'s Team

A.S.S.C. will develop systems to promote the voices of the team to promote resilience and maintain a high-quality service, grounded in a supportive culture.

Goals

3. Develop a feedback system for the A.S.S.C. team to promote their voice.

4. Develop a robust team support cycle within A.S.S.C. to build resilience.

The People Pillar

Strategic Priority 3: A.S.S.C.'s Stakeholders

A.S.S.C. will strive to develop systems to amplify stakeholders' voices, to support and collaborate, aiming to improve the experiences of children, young people and families engaged with the Criminal Justice System.

Goals

5. Develop a feedback system on A.S.S.C. services for external stakeholders to record their experiences and expertise within Criminal Justice System.

6. Providing training and guidance on child-centred approaches to organisations to inform on best practice for children, young people & families.

7. Collaborating with agencies to advance data collection and research regarding child victims of crime and their families.

The Services Pillar

Providing continued specialist support for children, young people and families, whilst maintaining the high-quality of A.S.S.C.'s services, with emphasis on strengthening and reporting on the impact of service provision.

Strategic Priority 4: Strengthening of A.S.S.C.'s Service Reach

Maintaining A.S.S.C.'s high-quality service provision, with a focus on strengthening service provisions, data collection and reporting on A.S.S.C. impact.

Goals

8. Strengthening A.S.S.C. specialised services to benefit children, young people and families at different stages of the Criminal Justice System to continue to meet the charity's overall objective.

9. Development of A.S.S.C.'s external and internal referral pathways to strengthen and streamline processes.

The Services Pillar

Strategic Priority 5: Raising A.S.S.C.'s Profile

Raising awareness of A.S.S.C.'s impact by engaging with our service users and stakeholders to report on their experiences within the Criminal Justice System.

Goals

10. Develop information resources for children, young people and families to help them understand A.S.S.C.'s services and systems.

11. Enhancing social media presence to increase awareness and impact of A.S.S.C. and reach more families to access specialised services.

12. Strive for national recognition to promote A.S.S.C. impact.

The Governance Pillar

To maintain A.S.S.C. strength and consolidate its continued excellent governance and sustainable organisational development to build on the charity's resilience.

Strategic Priority 6: Safeguarding A.S.S.C.'s Organisational Enhancement

Safeguarding effective governance, risk management, and sustainable organisational development to build on the charity's resilience.

Goals

13. Reviewing A.S.S.C.'s funding base to support & strengthen service outreach, keeping in accordance with the charity's aim, vision, mission & values.

14. Reviewing A.S.S.C. systems to strengthen organisational and compliance requirements.

15. Implementing effective performance review systems to promote the team's voice, impact and resilience.

Action Plan

A.S.S.C.'s Strategic Plan "Shaping the Future" (2026 - 2030) has 33 actions. They are outlined in Appendix A: "Objectives, Priorities, Goals and Actions".

All actions have been prioritised over the next five years, with a mid-cycle review, according to the colour code below.

Short-term Actions

There are 11 short term actions within the Strategic Plan: 4 under The People Pillar, 4 under The Services Pillar and 3 under The Governance Pillar.

Mid-term Actions

There are 12 mid-term actions within the Strategic Plan: 3 under The People Pillar, 5 under The Services Pillar and 4 under The Governance pillar.

Long-term Actions

There are 10 long-term actions within the Strategic Plan: 8 under The People Pillar, 1 under The Services Pillar and 1 under The Governance Pillar.

Conclusion

As A.S.S.C. enters a new strategic planning phase, it does so with a strong record of achievement, significant growth, and substantial progress over recent years. The pace of change has been rapid, while maintaining the high quality of service for which the organisation is trusted and respected.

A.S.S.C.'s knowledge, expertise, and commitment to supporting children, young people, and families were consistently highlighted by its team members, external stakeholders, and primary funder. There is a clear need for the expansion of A.S.S.C.'s services, both in terms of nationwide reach and the breadth of services provided.

To sustain and strengthen its impact, a key consideration for the future will be how A.S.S.C. continues to build organisational capacity and enhance long-term sustainability. This growth will require increased management and coordination capabilities, as well as the expansion of staff and volunteer roles.

Strengthening A.S.S.C.'s visibility and deepening its engagement with key stakeholders and the wider justice community have also been identified as strategic priorities. Equally important will be the continued development of impact measurement and reporting mechanisms, including new feedback and evaluation processes for those who engage with A.S.S.C., as well as reporting on their experiences within the Criminal Justice System.

Appendix A: Objectives, Priorities, Goals & Actions

A.S.S.C.'s Strategic Plan "Shaping the Future" (2026 - 2030) actions have been categorised, according to short-term actions, mid-term actions and long-term actions.

They are detailed below.

Strategic Priority 1: A.S.S.C.'s Service Users

A.S.S.C. will develop systems to promote the voices of children, young people, and their families, with an aim to improve their experiences and to report on gaps within the Criminal Justice System. This allows A.S.S.C. to measure and report on the impact of services.

Goal: 1	**Evaluating and measuring the lived experiences of children, young people and families' journey through A.S.S.C., to gauge the impact of the charity's outcomes.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
1.1	Develop a feedback form for children & young people to give them a voice and for A.S.S.C. to identify any support gaps	Long-term actions
1.2	Develop a feedback form for families to have a voice and for A.S.S.C. to identify support gaps	Long-term actions
1.3	Review and enhance the CRM system to support the goal of reporting on impact	Mid-term actions

Goal: 2	**Evaluating and measuring the lived experiences of children, young people and families' journey through the Criminal Justice System, to gauge the impact of the charity's outcomes.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
2.1	Develop an evaluation form for children & young people to give them a voice and to identify and report on gaps within the Criminal Justice System.	Long-term actions
2.2	Develop an evaluation form for families to have a voice and to identify and report on gaps within the Criminal Justice System.	Long-term actions
2.3	Review and enhance the CRM system to support reporting on Criminal Justice System's journey for children, young people, and families.	Long-term actions

Strategic Priority 2: A.S.S.C.'s Team

A.S.S.C. will develop systems to promote the voices of the team to strengthen the team and maintain a high-quality service, grounded in a supportive culture.

Goal: 3	**Develop a feedback system for the A.S.S.C. team to promote their voice**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
3.1	Develop feedback systems to gain the team's experiences on the ground to improve service provisions	Short-term actions

Goal: 4	**Develop a robust team support cycle within A.S.S.C. to build resilience**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
4.1	Maintain and refine the A.S.S.C. support cycle to provide for team resilience whilst working in trauma	Short-term actions
4.2	Enhance the CPD framework for the team for continued upskilling	Short-term actions
4.3	Create and sustain a shared behavioral framework that strengthens respectful communication, collaborative problem-solving, and psychological safety, ensuring teams can work together effectively and resiliently	Short-term actions

Strategic Priority 3: A.S.S.C.'s Stakeholders

A.S.S.C. will endeavour to develop systems to amplify stakeholders' voices, to support and collaborate, aiming to improve the experiences of children, young people and families engaged with the Criminal Justice System.

Goal: 5	**Develop a feedback system on A.S.S.C. services for external stakeholders to record their experiences and expertise within Criminal Justice System**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
5.1	Develop feedback systems to capture stakeholders' on-the-ground experiences with A.S.S.C. to improve service provisions through a collaborative approach	Mid-term actions
5.2	Develop feedback systems to capture stakeholders' experiences on the ground within the Criminal Justice System to gain knowledge on their expertise	Long-term actions

Goal: 6	**Providing training and guidance on child-centred approaches to organisations to inform on best practice for children, young people & families.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
6.1	Networking with child and family organisations to provide training to promote A.S.S.C. and the charity's values, vision and knowledge exchange	Mid-term actions
6.2	Networking with appropriate agencies within the Criminal Justice System & DSGBV sector to provide training to promote A.S.S.C. and the charity's values, vision and knowledge exchange	Long-term actions

Goal: 7	**Collaborating with agencies to advance data collection and research regarding child victims of crime and their families**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
7.1	Reaching out within the sector through networking to gain knowledge on child data collection within the Criminal Justice System	Long-term actions

Strategic Priority 4: Strengthening of A.S.S.C.'s Service Reach

Maintaining A.S.S.C.'s high-quality service provision, with a focus on strengthening service provisions, data collection and reporting on A.S.S.C. impact.

Goal: 8	**Strengthening A.S.S.C.'s specialised service to benefit children, young people and families at different stages of the Criminal Justice System to continue to meet the charity's overall objective.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
8.1	Expansion into additional SATU/CASATS in the Republic of Ireland to meet the support needs of more children, young people, and families	Mid-term actions
8.2	Strengthening the Court Accompaniment service nationwide	Mid-term actions
8.3	Refining our Support & Advocacy pathways to provide support throughout the entire Criminal Justice System process	Mid-term actions
8.4	Evaluating additional accompaniment pathways to develop support throughout the entire Criminal Justice System process	Long-term actions

Goal: 9	**Development of A.S.S.C.'s external and internal referral pathways to strengthen and streamline processes.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
9.1	Memorandum of Understanding / Service Level Agreement development with state agencies for continued best practice	Short-term actions
9.2	Streamlining the referral pathways into A.S.S.C. services and organisational internal pathways to develop service-user access	Short-term actions
9.3	Developing self-referral pathways for families to promote their voice & rights within the Criminal Justice System	Mid-term actions

Strategic Priority 5: Raising A.S.S.C.'s Profile

Raising awareness of A.S.S.C.'s impact by engaging with our service users and stakeholders to report on their experiences within the Criminal Justice System.

Goal: 10	**Develop information resources for children, young people and families to help them understand A.S.S.C.'s services and systems**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
10.1	Developing and promoting child-friendly literature to promote a better understanding of the Criminal Justice System	Short-term actions
10.2	Developing child-friendly pathways on the website to promote better access to A.S.S.C. services	Mid-term actions

Goal: 11	**Enhancing social media presence to increase awareness and impact of A.S.S.C. and reach more families to access specialised services**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
11.1	Building on social media platforms to increase the profile of A.S.S.C.	Short-term actions

Goal: 12	**Strive for national recognition to promote A.S.S.C. impact**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
12.1	Continued networking nationally through advisory groups, conferences and application of recognition awards	Long-term actions

Strategic Priority 6: Safeguarding A.S.S.C.'s organisational

To continue to develop A.S.S.C. as a stable and sustainable organisation, underpinned by effective, robust governance, to build on the charity's resilience.

Goal: 13	**Reviewing A.S.S.C.'s funding base to support & strengthen service outreach, keeping in accordance with the charity's aim, vision, mission & values.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
13.1	Identifying areas of service growth, reviewing funding gaps and cultivating relationships	Short-term actions
13.2	Ensuring continued funding compliance structures within the organisation	Short-term actions

Goal: 14	**Reviewing A.S.S.C. systems to strengthen organisational and compliance requirements**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
14.1	Reviewing procedural systems within A.S.S.C. to strengthen and meet the growing demand	Short-term actions

Goal: 15	**Implementing effective performance review systems to promote the team's voice, impact and resilience.**	
Number	**Action**	**Timeline**
15.1	Board evaluation & future proofing to build on resilience	Mid-term actions
15.2	Reviewing the roles within the organisational structures to meet the growing demands of service provision	Mid-term actions
15.3	Develop a succession plan for key roles to strengthen the charity's structural resilience	Mid-term actions
15.4	Developing a performance review system for the A.S.S.C. team to support the charity's outcomes.	Mid-term actions