



Annual Report

2024

BODYWHYS

The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland

Our Vision

“ Our vision is that people affected by eating disorders will have their needs met through the provision of appropriate, integrated, quality services being delivered by a range of statutory, private and voluntary agencies ”

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Chairperson & CEO's Report



Sene Naoupu
Chairperson



Jacinta Hastings
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

As Chairperson and CEO of Bodywhys, we are delighted to present to you, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, the Bodywhys Annual Report for 2024, which provides a comprehensive overview of our activities to support people affected by eating disorders.

During the year

6,380

people accessed our support services



This reflects a

7% increase

compared to 2023

Our helpline received **1,296** calls, with over one third of those calls concerning children and adolescents under 18, and over one fifth of calls concerned those aged over 36 years of age. 27% of calls were supporting those living with an eating disorder for over 10 years. Another point of note was increased helpline queries about people with avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID), amounting to 24% of calls.

258 participants attended the **BodywhysConnect** online support groups, whilst 100 participants attended our **YouthConnect** groups. Our **email support** service dealt with 2,399 support emails, with over 60% of emails relating to children and adolescents experiencing eating disorders. 428 people registered for the **virtual support group**, reflecting an increase of 28%, compared to 2023.

We wish to sincerely thank our volunteers for the dedication they bring to our support services. Bodywhys **volunteers** give generously of their personal time, skills and expertise to ensure that people affected by eating disorders are supported.

Bodywhys continued to provide and expand the **Family Support Package (FSP)** for families and carers. The FSP includes the PiLaR (Peer Led Resilience) programme which is a four-week structured programme, run one evening a week over four weeks, providing psychoeducation, practical advice, and support through all the main issues that carers face when supporting a loved one with an eating disorder. During the year, we ran the **PiLaR programme** six times, with 752 family members signing up to attend. The Post-PiLaR Support Group is a follow-on support group for those who have attended the PiLaR programme and is held three times a month.

The **New Maudsley Carer Skills Workshop series** is an 8-workshop series run over four months in which carers are trained in core supportive skills. The regular monthly **New Maudsley support group** is for those who have completed the New Maudsley workshop series, where carers can get and give support to

one another, as well as practice and refresh the skills learned. In the Autumn, we launched **‘Conversations with Carers’**, a free online space to explore specific themes and topics related to supporting someone with an eating disorder. In 2024, there was a 25% increase in people accessing the FSP. And finally, in 2024, our New Maudsley Carer Skills podcast returned for a second season.

This year, the theme of **Eating Disorders Awareness Week** (EDAW) focused on ‘Eating Disorder Recovery and Beyond: Respecting Individuality and Identity’ and encompassed a range of events and activities.

We published updated **media guidelines** to guide journalists in their reporting on eating disorders. As in previous years, the media spotlight on eating disorders continued throughout 2024 resulting in 104 media requests. Key broadcast stories this year included *Anorexia, My Family and Me*, a powerful television documentary and a piece on *RTÉ Prime Time*.

The Bodywhys online **#MoreThanASelfie** programme for secondary schools was widely used in 2024. The resources were accessed by teachers 247 times and delivered to 60,266 students. The **‘Happy To Be Me’** online programme for primary schools was accessed by 96 schools and was delivered to a total of 8,557 primary school students in 2024. This reflects an increase of 29%, compared to 6,646 students in 2023. As an additional aspect of our work within the education sector, we conducted surveys

across a range of settings, with the aim of understanding body image-related concerns arising in school students nationwide.

During the year, we said goodbye to Shauna McGroarty, and Terri Coffey, whilst Prerna Arvind Shah transitioned from Email Support Officer to Support Services Officer. At Board level, we welcomed Judy Blake. We look forward to working with our colleagues in the coming year as we achieve our shared goals.

Key highlights from 2024

- In **April**, *Belong To* published research identifying a range of mental health issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, including eating disorders
- In **May**, the Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, TD, announced much welcome news of increased funding for a new specialist eating disorder team for adults across Kildare/West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West

Minister Butler also announced a review of the HSE’s Model of Care for eating disorders to ensure services are being developed in line with demand and changes in population

- In **June**, Families for the Reform of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services published a report outlining challenges families face when accessing mental health services. The report was based on over 730 survey responses

- In **September**, Mental Health Reform (MHR) welcomed the second stage debate of Mental Health Bill 2024. MHR also published an open letter to An Taoiseach, Simon Harris, calling for increased funding for mental health services in the budget. The letter was signed by 60 leaders in the voluntary and community sector

- In **November**, the Health Research Board (HRB) published hospitalisation statistics from 2023, including worrying increased rates of eating disorder admissions.

In conclusion, as Chair, I wish to pay tribute to my fellow Trustees for their ongoing support and commitment to Bodywhys, as well as the team of staff and volunteers who ensure that Bodywhys continues to support people affected by eating disorders.

For both of us, this is our last Annual Report, as Jacinta retires in 2025 and Sene will have served her term of office as Chairperson. Serving Bodywhys has been a privilege, and we wish our respective successors every good wish in the future.

Sene Naoupu
Chairperson

Jacinta Hastings
CEO



Overview of Services

Overview of Services



Kathy Downes
Support Services
Manager

Kathy Downes joined Bodywhys in 2017. She is an accredited psychotherapist, and supervisor, who works with children, adolescents and young adults. She is a seminar lead and regular teacher and on the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) M.Sc. in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. She has also taught on University College Dublin (UCD) Art Psychotherapy Masters, and TCD's MPhil in Psychoanalysis.



Terri Coffey
Support Services
Officer

Bodywhys support services are a vital component of the work of our organisation, and the cornerstone of our engagement with individuals affected by eating disorders.

In 2024, we saw the demand for support services continue to rise, with approximately **6,380 individuals** using our different support services: a national helpline, online virtual support groups, chat-based support groups, a support email service, and a family support package.

Each service is managed and supervised by staff and all except our family support package, are operated by our body of trained volunteers. In 2024, we took on 18 new volunteers, who underwent an extensive training process before joining the services, bringing the total to **57 volunteers** working across our services.

As always, it's with much gratitude that Bodywhys acknowledges the indispensable dedication that all our volunteers offer the organisation. It is they who are at the front line of services, offering a non-judgmental, non-directive listening ear and respect to everyone who gets in touch with us. We want to sincerely thank our volunteers for their time and commitment and acknowledge the rich life experience and thoughtfulness they brought to the organisation in 2024.



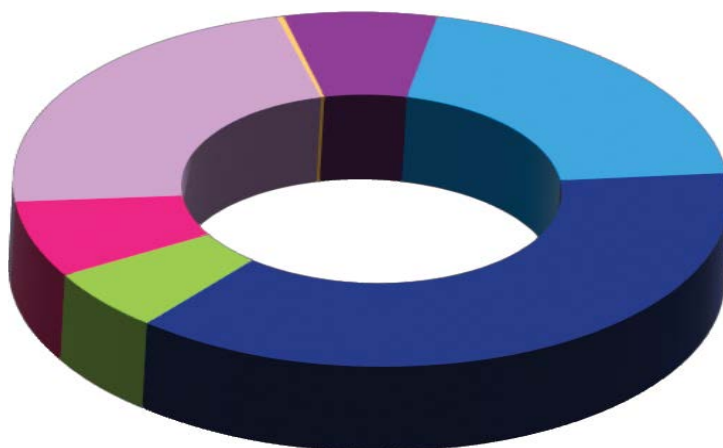
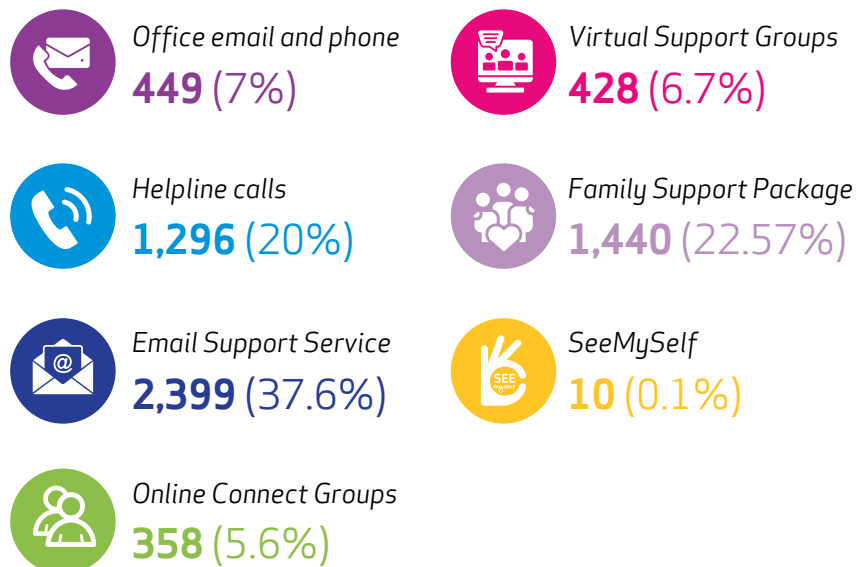
Perna Shah
Support Services
Officer

The support we offer is, at its core, a 'listening ear' support, which offers the space and time to think through what is happening for the person in that moment. This 'listening ear' support is combined with accurate and essential information and psychoeducation, regarding the nature of eating disorders, treatment and how to support better.

All our support services are based on the principle that we recognise an eating disorder is not just about food or weight, it also affects how a person thinks and how they manage their feelings. Put simply, an eating disorder is a coping mechanism; the person's disordered eating behaviours and all the distorted and preoccupying thoughts they have about that and their sense of self in the world, becomes their way of coping with life. This means that foremost for us in the services team, is to provide inclusive support and acceptance of everyone, at whatever point they may be at.

We engage with a broad range of service users; some at the beginning of an eating disorder, others perhaps at a later stage, some in treatment, others not. We support families, friends and partners, who themselves need a listening ear, or guidance on how to support their loved ones. Service users can and do use our services whenever, and as often as they wish, whether they have a formal diagnosis or not. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of how people contacted us for support in 2024.

Figure 1 Overview of service users who received support through Bodywhys services



"I was drawn to volunteering to support people who feel isolated or overwhelmed, and to deepen my ability to listen without judgment. The training was excellent, but it's the calls themselves that teach you. What matters most is being fully present. It can be challenging at times, but the support and supervision are strong. I've gained perspective and a deeper sense of empathy. I'd recommend this work to anyone who wants to do something real. It's not always easy, but it's meaningful—and it matters."

Support services volunteer



Helpline

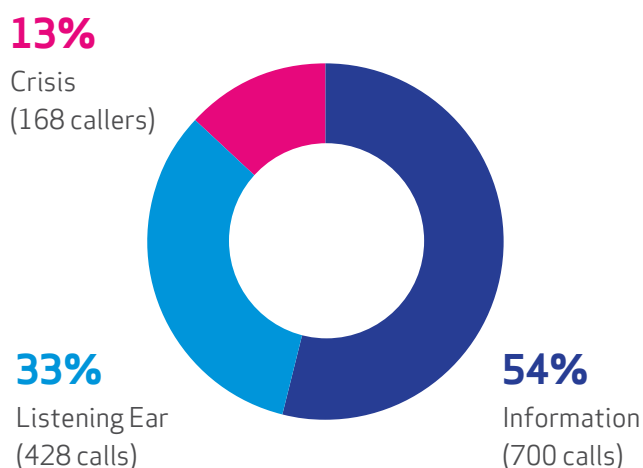
In 2024, our national helpline operated for 2 hours per day, 6 days per week, and answered 1,296 calls. We also offered a call back service, with the aim of meeting the growing need of incoming calls. Our telephone helpline service delivers a safe, non-judgemental listening and support space along with provision of up-to-date clear guidance, information and psychoeducation, to people affected by eating disorders.

As with all Bodywhys services, the helpline is respectful of people's anonymity, and calls vary depending on the service user's needs. Figure 2 below, shows a breakdown where we know why people called.

We do not always know how many times people might use the service, however we do know that some people use the helpline on an ongoing basis, calling weekly over a period of years. Looking at the figures, where we know if people were first time or repeat callers, we found that 61% of callers were calling us for the first time, and 39% were repeat callers.

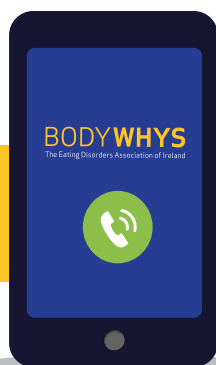
It is worth noting that calls to our helpline vary in duration. However, most calls, 60%, are between 20 and 45 minutes. The highest percentage of calls are in the 31-45 min category, demonstrating the quality of our volunteers' skills, and their ability to listen, empathise and offer a space for exploration and support.

Figure 2 Why did people call the helpline?



"Being a helpline volunteer is such a privilege. It is challenging at times but hugely rewarding. It feeds my soul being able to support another person who needs to be heard, understood and feel comforted by talking with someone who understands their struggle."

Helpline volunteer

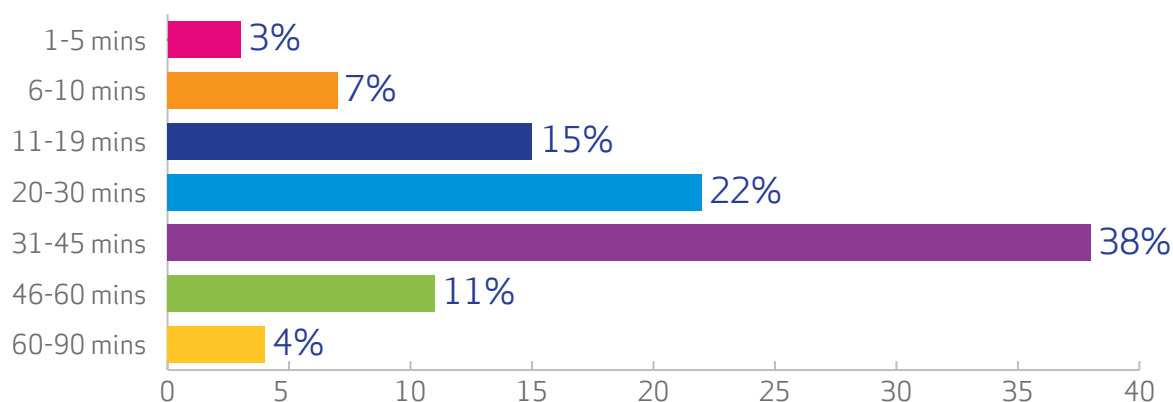


01 210 7906

2 Hours
Per Day

6 Days per
Week

Figure 3 Duration of helpline calls



Helpline calls in the main tend to be broken down into calls from a person needing support for themselves, or from caregivers, and partners who are supporting a loved one with an eating disorder.

In Figure 4, again, where we know the type of contact, most callers were people who have an eating disorder, which is a change from 2023 when most calls were from family and friends.

Figure 5 shows the breakdown of calls, where we know the gender of the person with an eating disorder. Once again, this service sees a higher female presentation, although males are up slightly on last year, nearing 13% as opposed to 10% in 2023.

Figure 4 Who contacted the helpline?

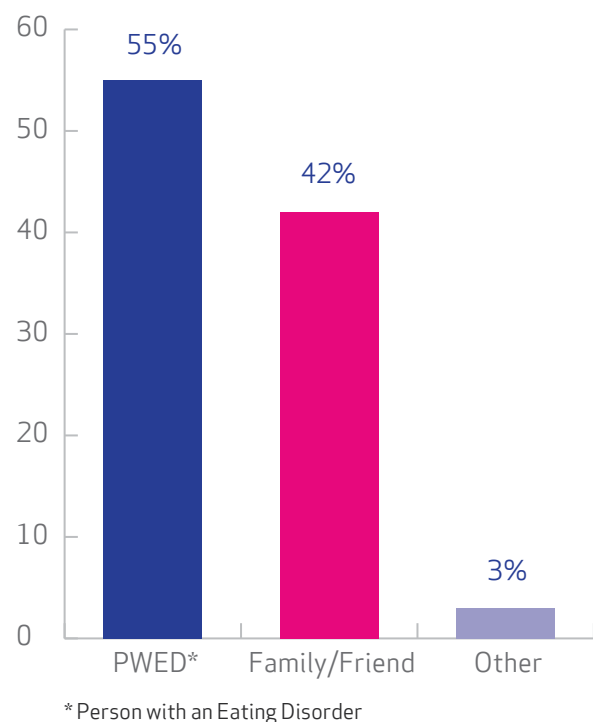
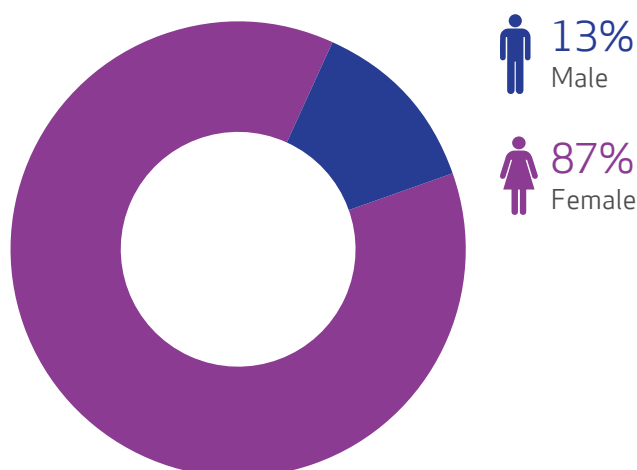


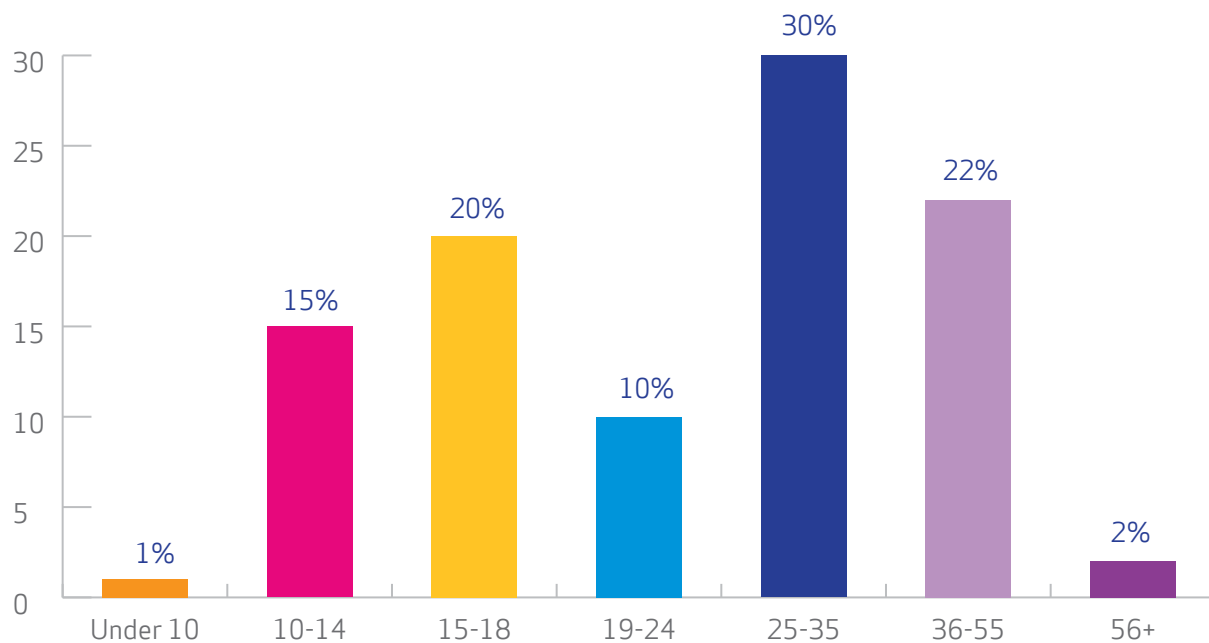
Figure 5 Gender of person with an eating disorder



Sometimes we get information in the call, as to the age of the person with an eating disorder. Over a third of calls concerned young people under 18 years of

age. It is notable that 24% of calls concerned a person over 36 years of age. Again, dispelling the stereotype that eating disorders only affect younger people.

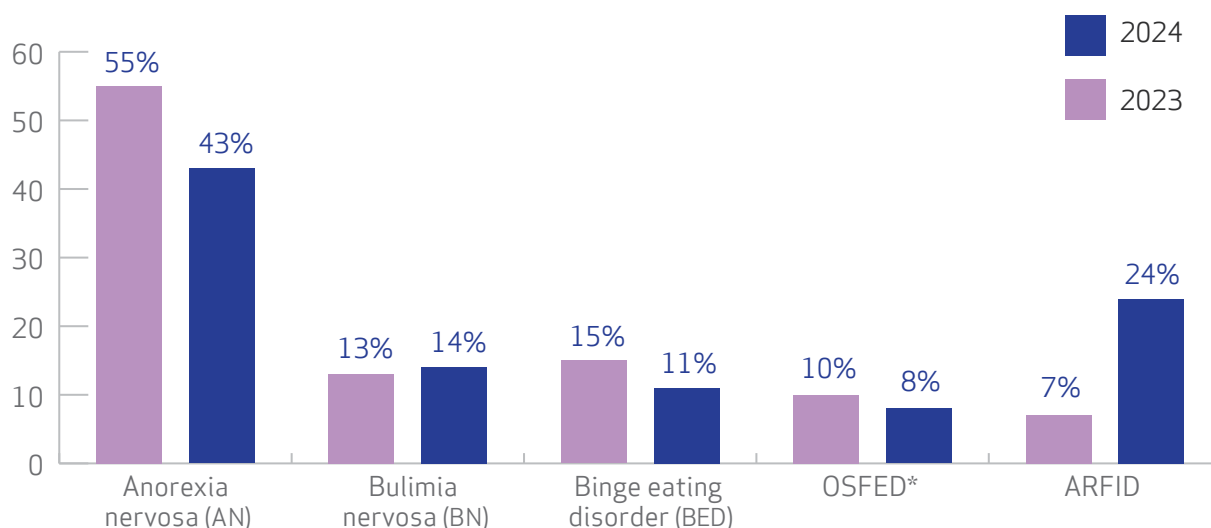
Figure 6 What age is the person with the eating disorder?



People do not need to have a diagnosis to use our support services. In Figure 7, where we know the type of eating disorder a person has, we can see that for the most part, the 2024 figures follow the pattern from 2023, with one significant exception; the rise

in people diagnosed with (ARFID). Calls about ARFID represented 24% of all calls in 2024. A staggering increase that correlates with what HSE community services are also reporting.

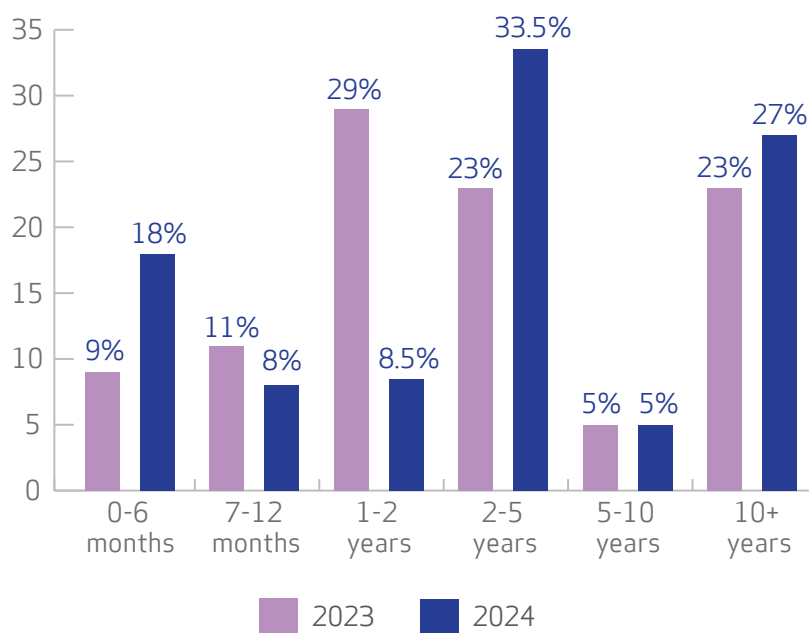
Figure 7 What type of eating disorder?



* Other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED)

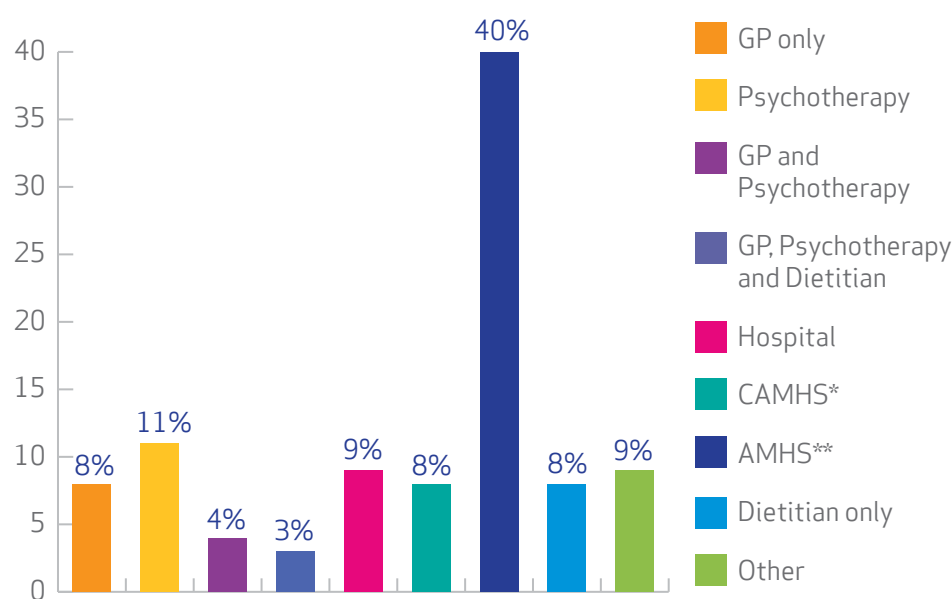
In Figure 8, we look at how long a person has had an eating disorder for. Again, the figures are taken from the number of calls where we know the duration of illness. We can see from this breakdown that 27% of calls concerned a person who has had an eating disorder for over ten years. Living with a longstanding eating disorder or supporting someone with a long-standing eating disorder, is incredibly difficult and we strive to provide ongoing support for people in this situation. Seeing that 27% of calls are from people in this situation, up 4% from 2023, indicates to us that we are meeting this need and we must continue to build upon this in the future.

Figure 8 How long has the person had an eating disorder?



Bodywhys services support people whether they are engaged in treatment or not. We do not always know from callers whether they are in treatment at the time of their call. Where we do know, Figure 9, shows us the type of treatment the person is engaged in. In Figure 9, we can see that the largest percentage of callers are those engaged with adult mental health services.

Figure 9 Current treatment



* CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

** AMHS - Adult Mental Health Services

42%

of callers who used the helpline in 2024 were **not engaged** in treatment.

In summary, then, if we were to take a snapshot of our most frequent types of callers, they are adult women with anorexia nervosa, who are attending an adult mental health service, who have had an eating disorder for over 10 years, with calls lasting over 30 mins.



Online Support Groups

At Bodywhys, we run several online support groups. These groups are facilitated by trained Bodywhys volunteers and supervised by our Support Services Manager. We provide both chat-based online support groups (no cameras or audio) and virtual support groups with cameras on.



BodywhysConnect, is a support group for those aged **18+ years**

Both are chat-based online support groups, giving attendees the comfort and privacy of anonymity, while connecting and sharing experiences with each other through typing.

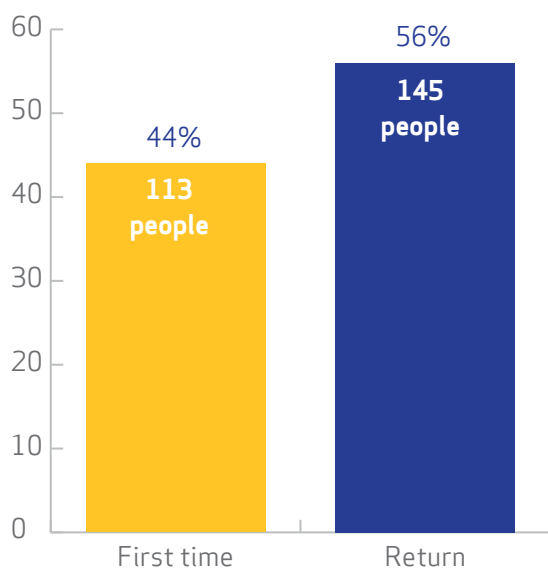
In 2024, 258 participants attended the adult group, and 100 participants attended the teen group. This year, we continued to provide a once monthly chat-based group for third level students. In 2024, this student support group ran 12 times. We ran our once monthly men's chat-based support group until June 2024 when attendance dropped off and we decided to pause it.



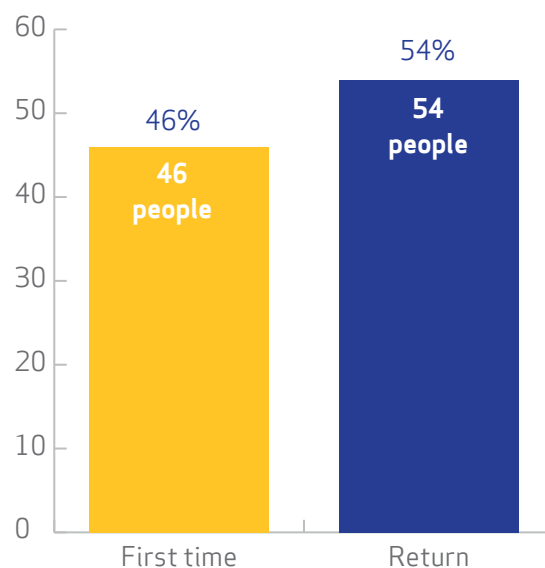
YouthConnect, is for those aged **13-18 years** old.

Figure 10 shows the breakdown in those attending for the first time and those who are returning to the groups. The figures show that over half of adults using the group return to the group, and just under half of adolescent users return to the group. Again, indicating to us that the group is meeting a support need for people with an eating disorder. It continues to be encouraging to us that both groups have a stronger number who return.

Figure 10 First time or return



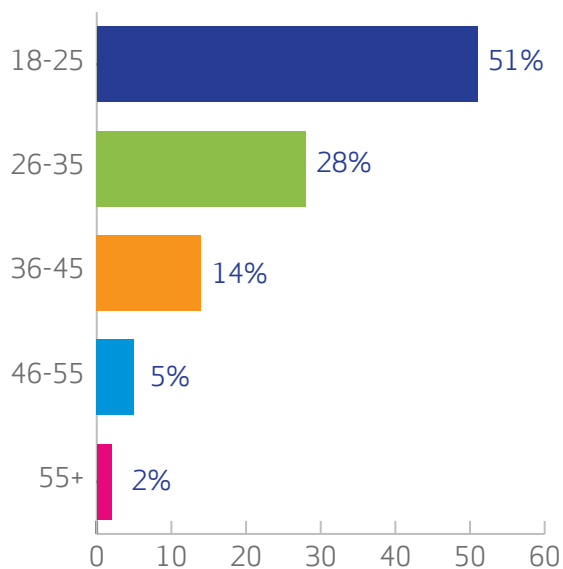
Bodywhys Connect



Youth Connect

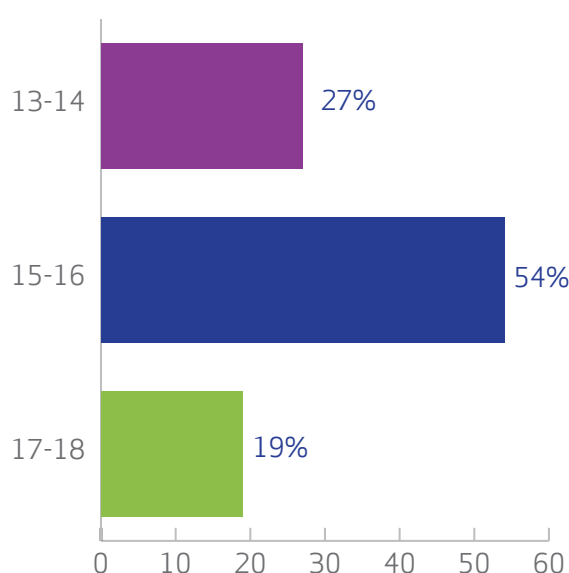
When registering for the groups, users are asked to choose an age category for themselves. In Figure 11, we can see the breakdown of adult users. The majority of BodywhysConnect users are aged 18 to 25 years old.

Figure 11 Age of adult users



Bodywhys Connect

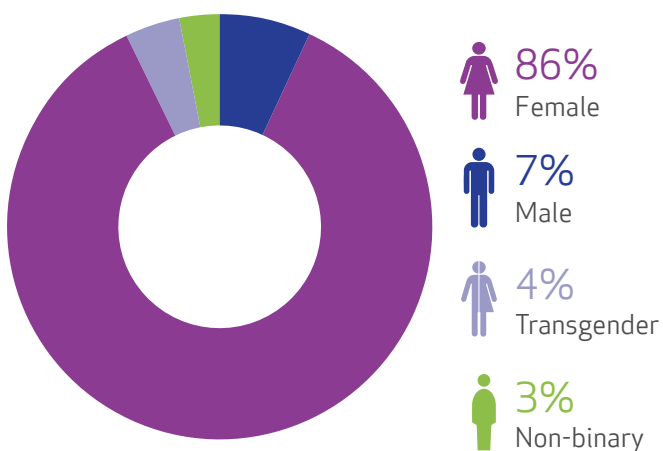
Figure 12 Age of teen users



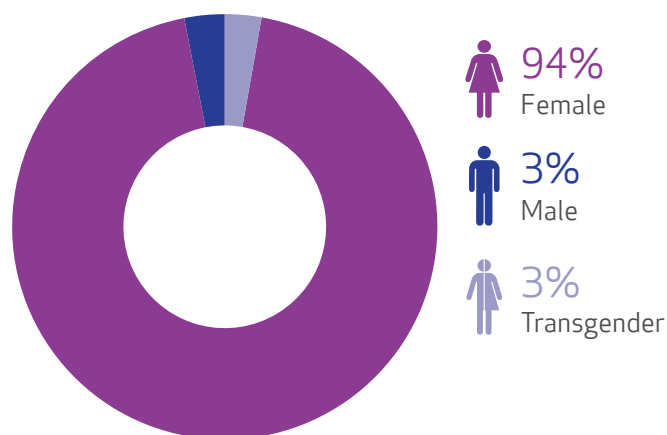
Youth Connect

Users of the Connect groups are also asked to select a gender when registering for the group. Figure 13 shows the genders participants selected.

Figure 13 Gender of online group users



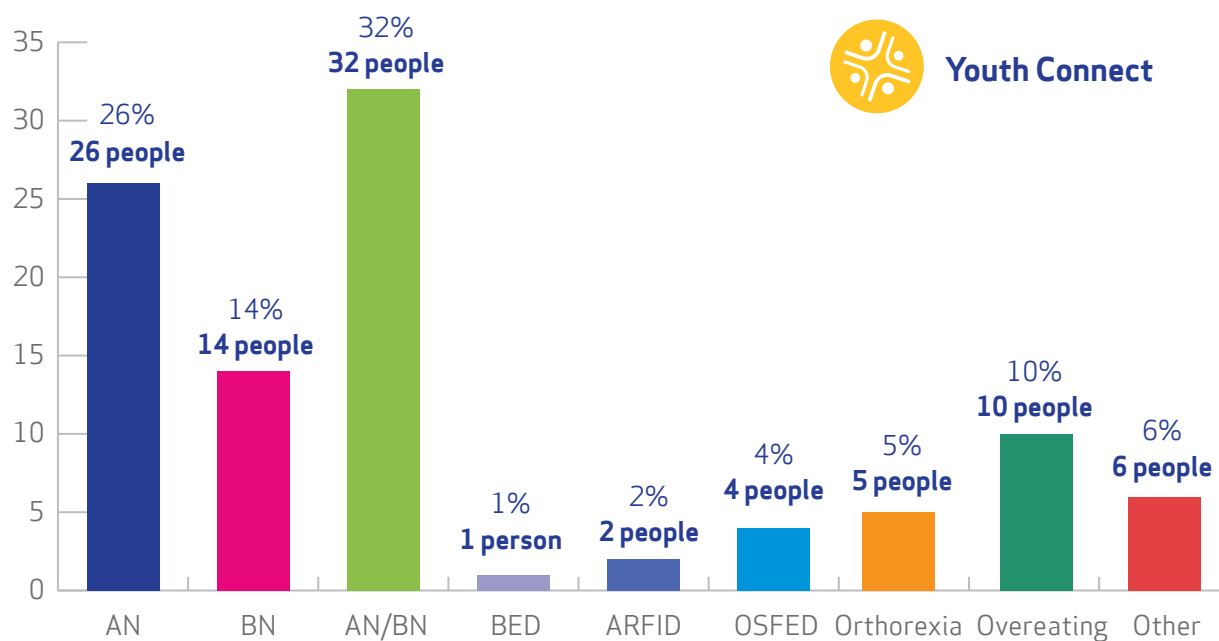
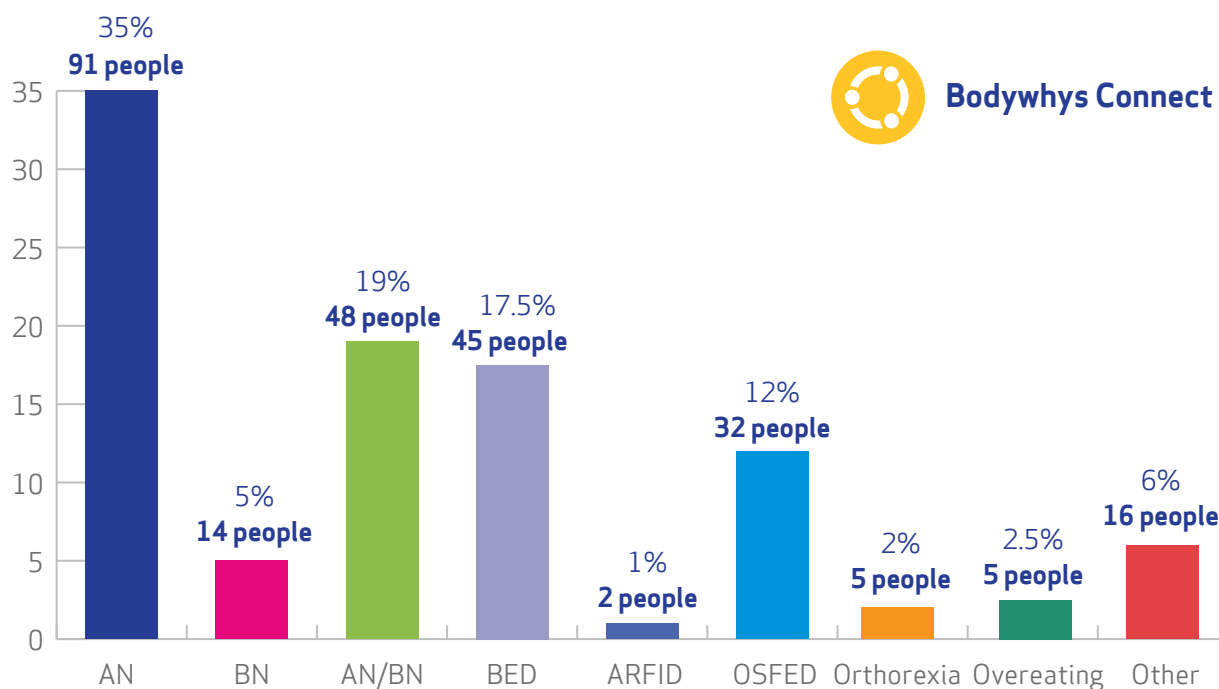
Bodywhys Connect



Youth Connect

Figure 14 shows the breakdown in types of eating disorders, participants reported being affected by.

Figure 14 Attendance by type eating disorder





Virtual Support Groups

Bodywhys runs two types of virtual support group; a general virtual support group for adults experiencing any type of eating disorder, and a group for adults experiencing binge eating disorder (BED).

We started with the general virtual support group and following a look at the breakdown of attendees we identified the need for a separate BED support group. We trialled this group in July 2024, and after a successful once monthly roll out, in October 2024, we decided to run the BED group twice a month.

The Virtual Support Group ran twice a month throughout 2024. Using cameras enables participants to see and hear one another. In 2024, 329 people signed up for the general virtual support groups, and 99 signed up for the BED virtual groups, giving a total of 428 people. This is an increase of 28% on last year. When people register for the group, they can select a gender and Figure 15 outlines the gender breakdown of both groups, where individuals have identified a gender.

Figure 15 Breakdown of Gender

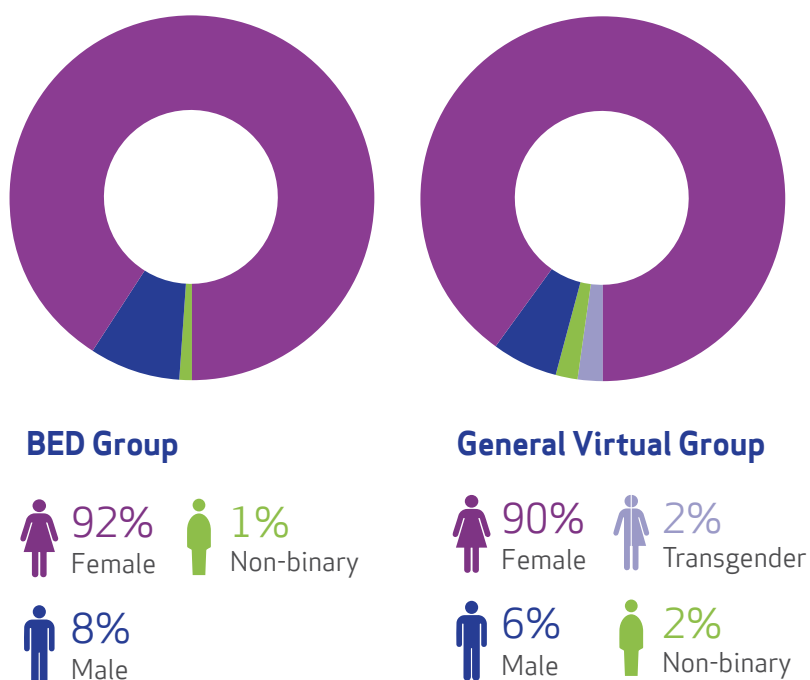
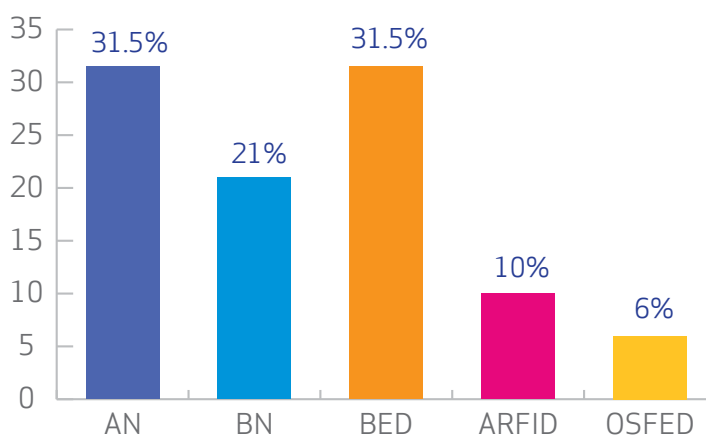


Figure 16 shows the breakdown in type of eating disorder experienced by people attending the general virtual group. It is important to note that the percentage of service users with BED is on a par with participants with anorexia nervosa. This is something we haven't seen on any other service before now.

Figure 16 Eating Disorder Type





Email Support

'Alex' is a group of volunteers who write our email replies. 'Like a helpline call in an email', our email support service is a listening ear service, offering understanding alongside accurate information and signposting. This year, our support email service received and answered 2,399 support emails.

The email service has grown annually, and in 2024 we saw a growth of 2.25% in the number of emails received.

People can write as often as they wish, and many of our emailers correspond with us over many years, with 45% of those in contact, writing to us on a repeat basis.

The email service offers different things to different service users. People contact alex@bodywhys.ie for many different reasons.

This year, we can see in Figure 17, that nearly half of email service users, 47%, wrote in need of a listening ear.

"Alex, you have no idea how much that email helped me. I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to write it. I will read again and reply. Your support and advice right now is unmeasurable - please pass this on to you whoever runs Bodywhys or use as a testimonial if needed. This is what is needed more of from our government, and we should be screaming from the rooftops for it. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart for all your help. You are a diamond."

Figure 17 Why did people email Bodywhys?



In Figure 18, we look at the breakdown of who contacted the Alex email service.

Figure 18 Who contacted the email service?

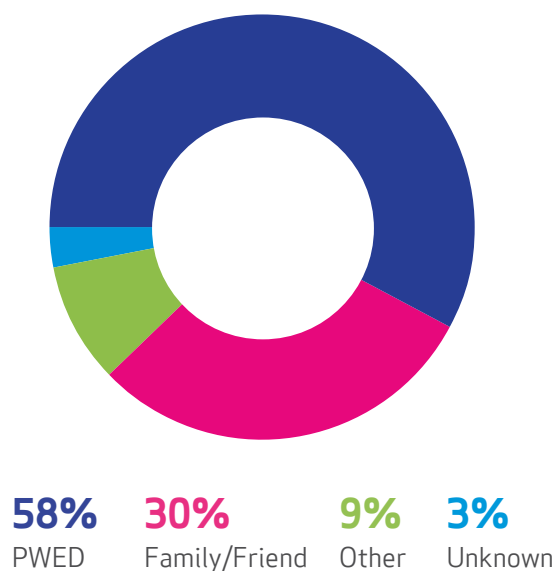


Figure 19 shows the gender of the person with an eating disorder, where we know the gender.

Figure 19 Gender of person with an eating disorder

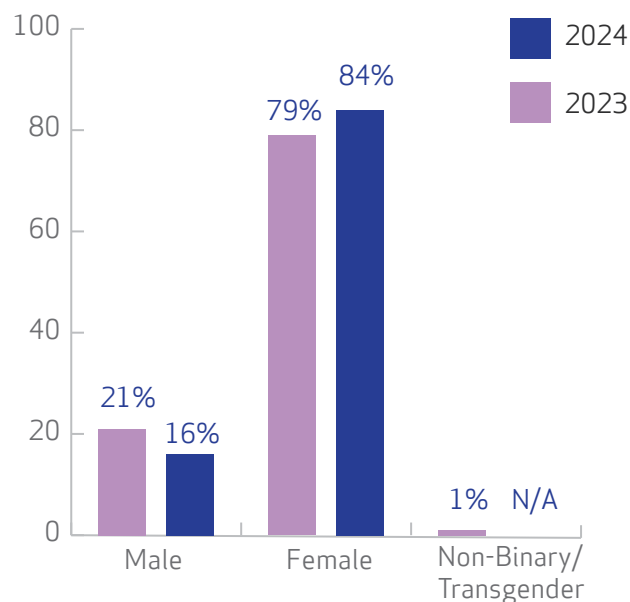
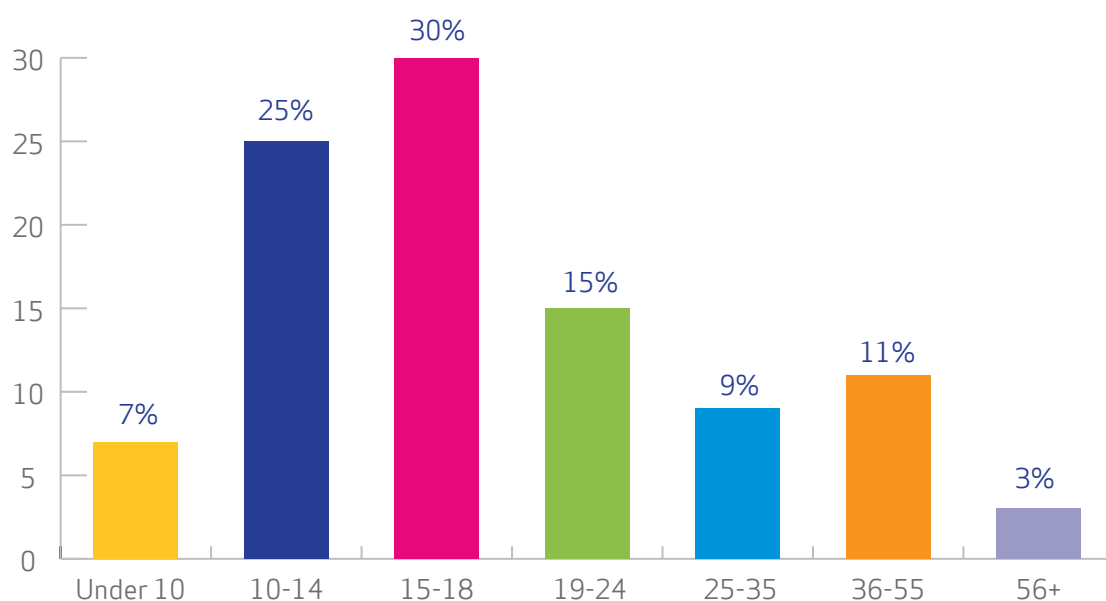


Figure 20 shows the age of those with an eating disorder using the email service, where we know the person's age.

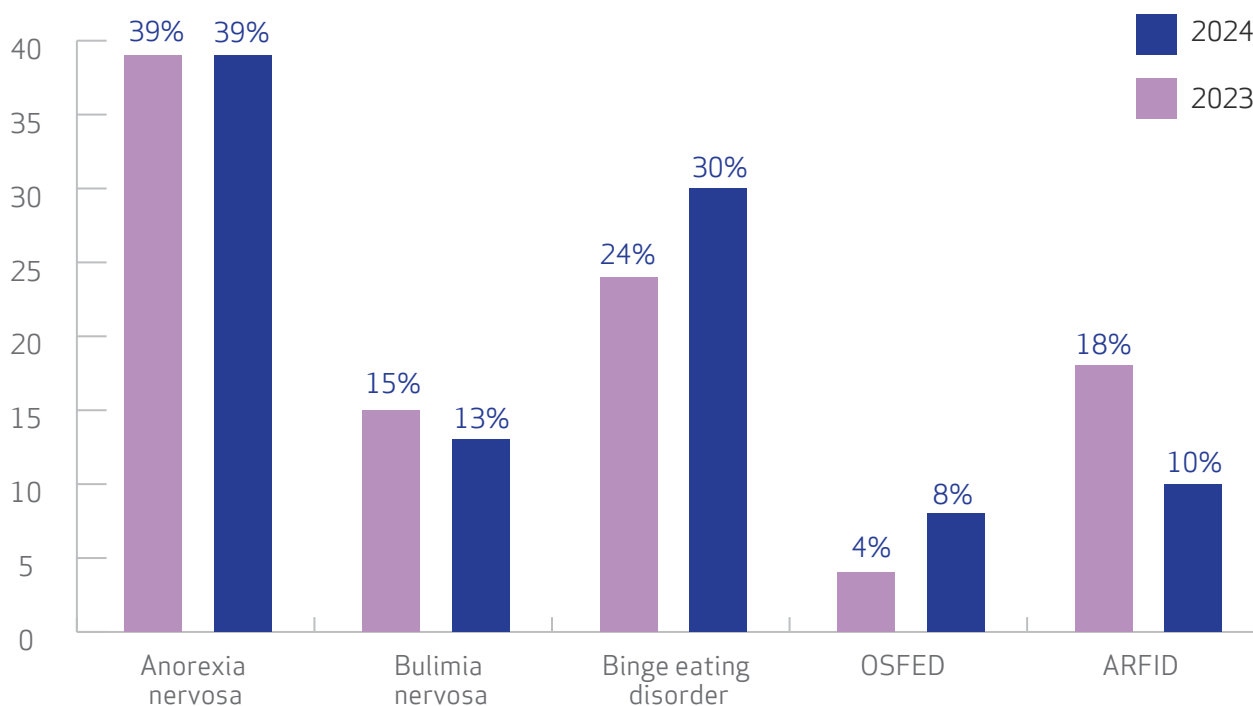
Figure 20 What age is the person with the eating disorder?



Taking a closer look at this graph, we can see that 62% of emails concern children and adolescents up to age 18, of which, just over half of emails (32%) concern those up to 14 years old, and 30% concern those aged 15 to 18 years old, highlighting the importance of offering families support and psychoeducation as well.

In many emails we do not know if the person has received a formal diagnosis. However, where we know the type of eating disorder, Figure 21 shows the breakdown.

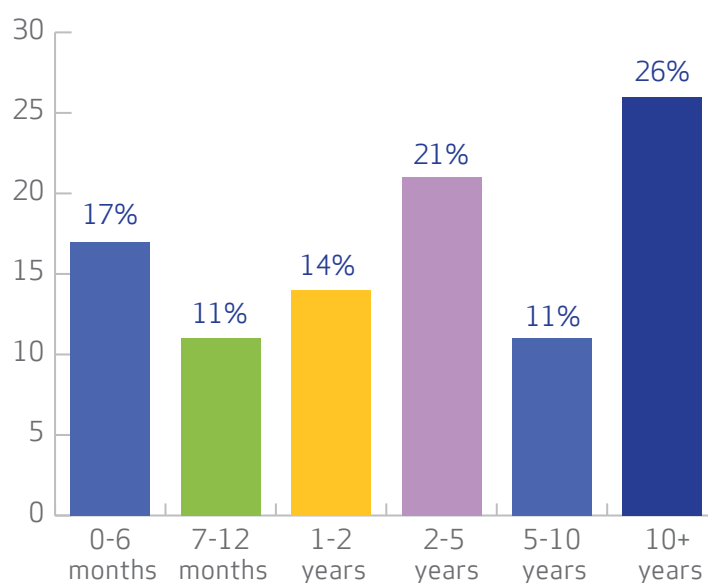
Figure 21 Type of eating disorder?



Anorexia nervosa is still the highest percentage, although of note is the increase in emails concerning BED, which was 24% in 2023, rising to 30% in 2024, which is another reason for starting the BED virtual support group in 2024. We hope that this indicates a growing recognition that BED is an eating disorder, and not just a food or weight issue. The more this is recognised, the more we hope that people with this eating disorder will turn to eating disorder support and treatment rather than supports that focus on food and weight alone.

In a small number of emails, we are aware of the duration of the eating disorder. It is interesting to note that where we know how long someone has been living with an eating disorder, most emails are from people who have been living with an eating disorder for over 10 years (26%), mirroring our helpline users experience. See Figure 22.

Figure 22 How long has the person had an eating disorder?



Part of the role of the email support service is to inform people of the treatment pathways available to them. Reflecting on the emails we have received in 2024, we found that some who email are at the beginning of their journey and we support them to take another step when they feel ready. Others have been in treatment but are no longer, and some may not feel able to be in treatment at this time.

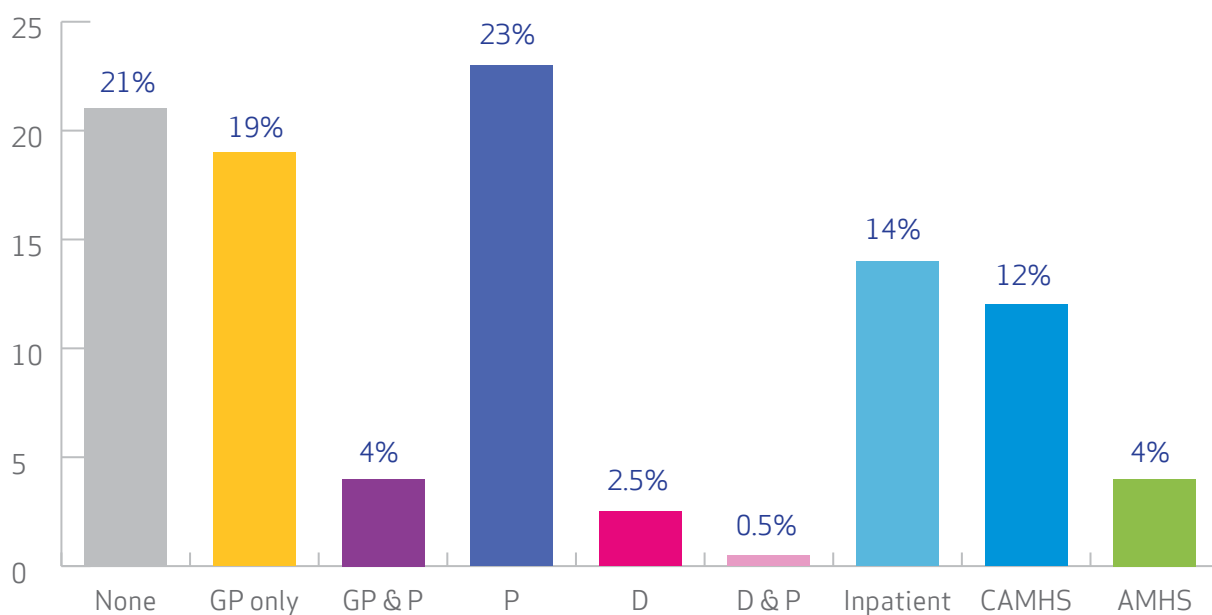
Nearly **75%** of those who use our email support service do so regularly. Some of these people use just the email service and some use other Bodywhys supports like our groups, alongside the email support.

Looking then at treatment accessed this year, of those who have named a treatment, we have broken down individual treatment services, to get a more accurate picture. (See Figure 23)

“Every email I do takes one minute away from what we went through. It’s taking back control, where there was none.”

Email volunteer with experience of caring for someone with an eating disorder

Figure 23 Current treatment

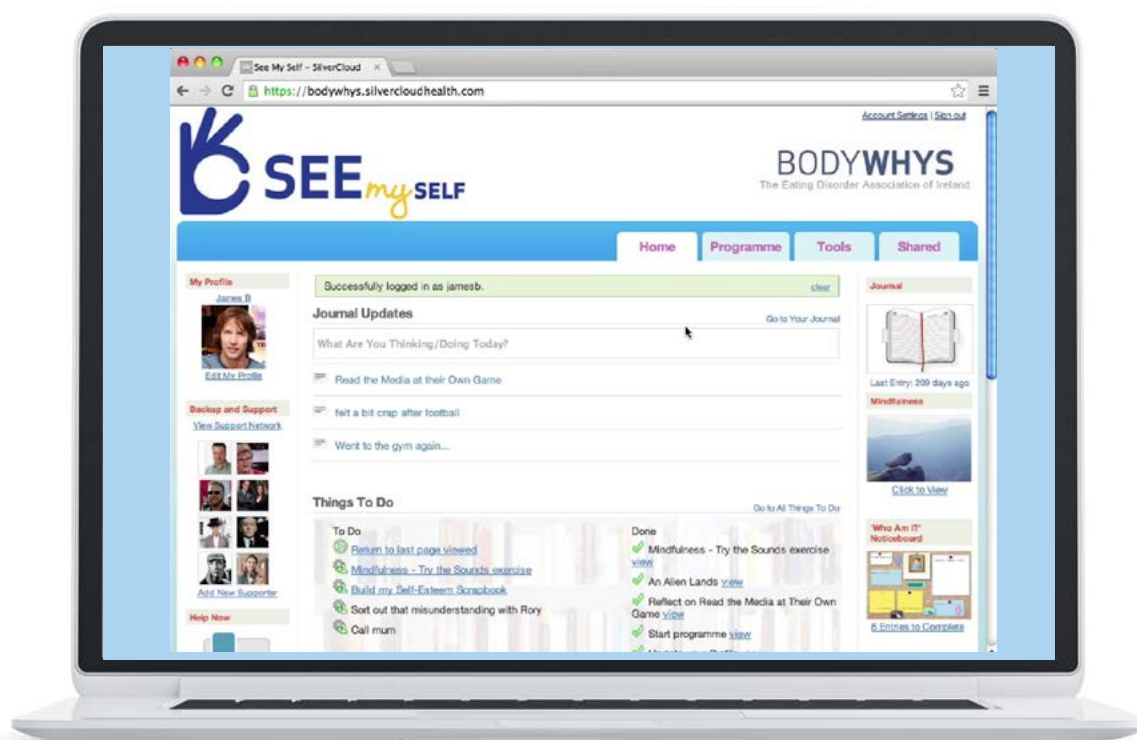


None	Dietitian (D)	AMHS
GP only	Dietitian and psychotherapy (D&P)	
GP and psychotherapy (GP & P)	Inpatient	
Psychotherapy (P)	CAMHS	



SeeMySelf is an **8-week online psychoeducation programme** running alongside our other online supports. The SeeMySelf programme is designed for young people aged 15-24 focusing on self-esteem, body image, media literacy, and cultural effects on self-image.

It is not specifically focused on eating disorders. The programme is interactive with lots of activities, exercises and a journal, encouraging participants to reflect upon their views of topics covered. The service offers a weekly email check in, support, and encouragement by Bodywhys volunteers.





Training and Development

Training & Development



Harriet Parsons

*Training and Development
Manager*



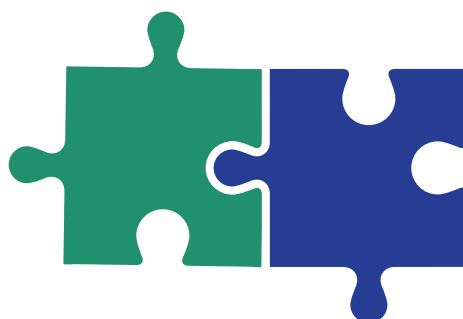
Christopher Cash

*Training and Development
Consultant*

Harriet joined Bodywhys in 2005 and is currently the Training and Development Manager. Harriet holds an MSc. in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy from St. Vincent's Hospital School of Psychotherapy/UCD, and an MA in Addiction Studies from DBS. Harriet is a member of the Irish Council of Psychotherapy (ICP) and is a registered practitioner with the Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland (APPI). She was Chairperson of APPI from 2014-2016 and is currently a member of the Editorial Board of the APPI peer-reviewed journal Lacunae.

Christopher is a PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, under the supervision of Professor Alan Carr (University College Dublin) & Prof. Salvatore D'Amore (Université Libre de Bruxelles), and a graduate member of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). Christopher has been working with Bodywhys since 2021 and currently supports the provision of the Family Support Package.

The Bodywhys Training and Development team provides carers with the **free** Family Support Package. The team works alongside the HSE's National Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders (NCP-ED), providing, supervising and implementing the support component to the NCP-ED's Model of Care. The central aim of NCP-ED is to improve public specialist eating disorders services nationally.





Family Support Package (FSP)

Supporting families has always been a central component of services delivered by Bodywhys. In 1995, when the organisation was established by a group of parents, the vision was to provide support to both people with an eating disorder and their families.

In 2024, the Training and Development team provided carers, such as parents, family, partners and friends of those with an eating disorder, with psychoeducation, therapeutic support and training in carer skills.

The primary focus of the FSP is to support the supporters. We know that supporting someone through recovery from an eating disorder can be a long and difficult process. Carers can feel isolated, hopeless, and frustrated alongside unconditional love and hope. Our core aim, therefore, is to improve carers' well-being and mental health as well as reducing their sense of isolation by building a community around them. This helps carers develop the resilience needed to support their loved one towards recovery. The benefits to carers, people with eating disorders and the wider health services are evident by the consistent uptake of services, and the feedback provided from carers, clinicians and people with an eating disorder themselves.

The Bodywhys FSP is **free** to avail of and is designed for carers who are supporting a person of any age, any eating disorder and any severity of illness. Looking at the demographics of those attending, we can see that carers are supporting people in many different situations.

Briefly, the FSP consists of:

- 1 The **PiLaR family support programme**
- 2 The **Post-PiLaR Support Group**
- 3 The **New Maudsley Carer Skills Workshop** series
- 4 A **Regular New Maudsley Support Group**
- 5 **Conversations with Carers**
- 6 **Wrap Around Supports:** Carers can also avail of our helpline, email support, and website resources throughout their time with us, as much or as little as they need.

"Support from Bodywhys in the form of the PiLaR programme and Post-PiLaR Support Group is the only solid regular consistent steady platform that there is for carers of people with eating disorders. This disorder needs the right strength to challenge it and that I get from Bodywhys. The only beacon of light in a desert of darkness."

Quote from Carer

1 | The PiLaR Programme



The PiLaR family support programme is a **free** online structured psychoeducation and support service on four evenings over four weeks, delivered by the Training and Development team.

Working alongside the HSE's NCP-ED Model of Care, and the specialist training for HSE eating disorder clinicians, has meant that the PiLaR programme supports carers whose loved one is in treatment, giving safe, accurate and helpful information, offering insights into the different situations that can arise, and supporting carers to provide the most effective support for their loved one.

The programme continues to be developed and improved. In 2024 topics included were;

- ✓ Understanding an eating disorder as a coping mechanism
- ✓ The main types of eating disorders (including a new section on ARFID) and the mindset that accompanies each
- ✓ Common features including distorted body image, black and white thinking, and super-sensitivity
- ✓ How to think through an eating disorder cycle to provide a framework for understanding
- ✓ Understanding how the person with an eating disorder interprets their world
- ✓ Reframing behaviours to allow for better support
- ✓ Externalising the eating disorder and encouraging the person to separate themselves from their eating disorder
- ✓ Avoiding power struggles
- ✓ Communication skills and how to have important and sensitive conversations
- ✓ The role of an eating routine in recovery and how to provide meal support
- ✓ Support for siblings
- ✓ Understanding triggers
- ✓ Thinking about what recovery is and how it feels for a person
- ✓ Treatment pathways, and how to think about whether treatment is working or whether questions need to be asked. How to ask questions of healthcare providers
- ✓ Managing relapse.

PiLaR
PEER LED RESILIENCE

In 2024, we ran the PiLaR programme **6 times**, with **752 people** signing up to attend, from all over Ireland, Northern Ireland as well as some international carers. Figure 24 shows the number of people who signed up to attend the PiLaR programme in 2024.

Figure 24 PiLaR programme sign-ups

Month	PiLaR Attendance
January	149
March	132
May	110
June	61
September	158
November	142
Total	752



Are you supporting a family member with an eating disorder?

If so, this **free** online 4-week programme for families and friends is for you

When: September 12th, 19th, 26th and October 3rd (4 Thursday Evenings)

Time: 7.00pm - 9.00pm (Evening Programme online via zoom)

Attendance is FREE but booking is essential.

For booking information please contact: Christopher (pilar@bodywhys.ie)

BODYWHYS The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland

EdEAT Clinical Programme for Eating Disorders

We ask attendees to complete an anonymous survey to gather demographic information. Due to this, the overall figures attending is higher than the total numbers counted for each question. This data reflects a snapshot of our PiLaR demographics from September 2024 PiLaR.

Figure 25 Carers attending

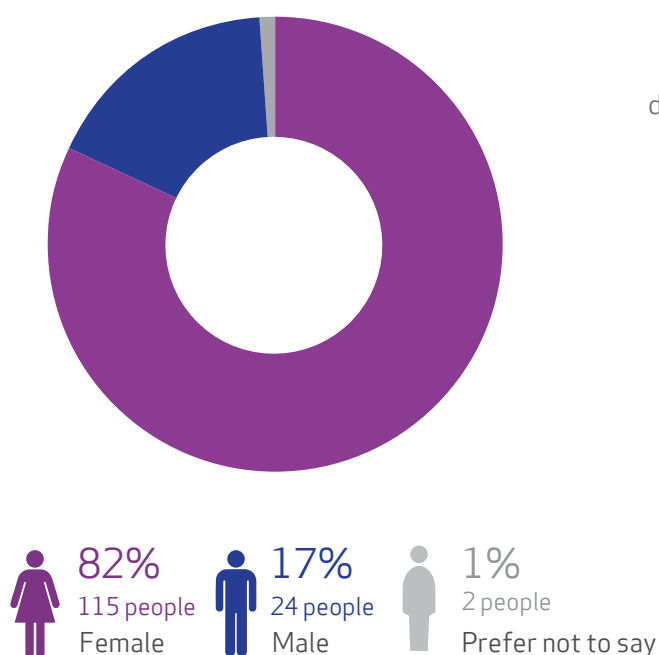


Figure 26 Person being supported

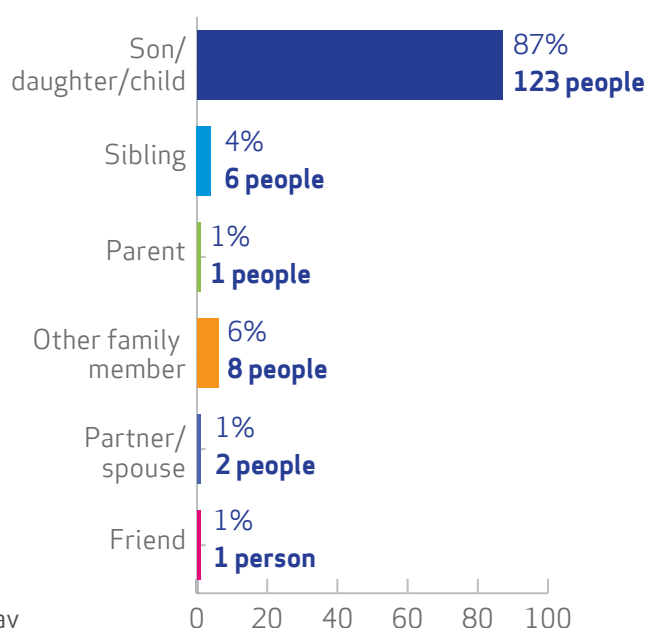


Figure 27 What is the gender of the person you are supporting?

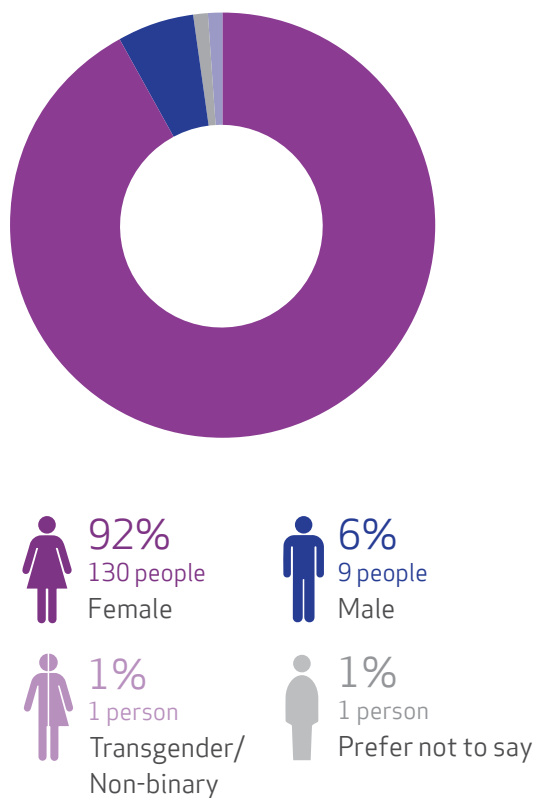


Figure 29 What type of ED do they have?

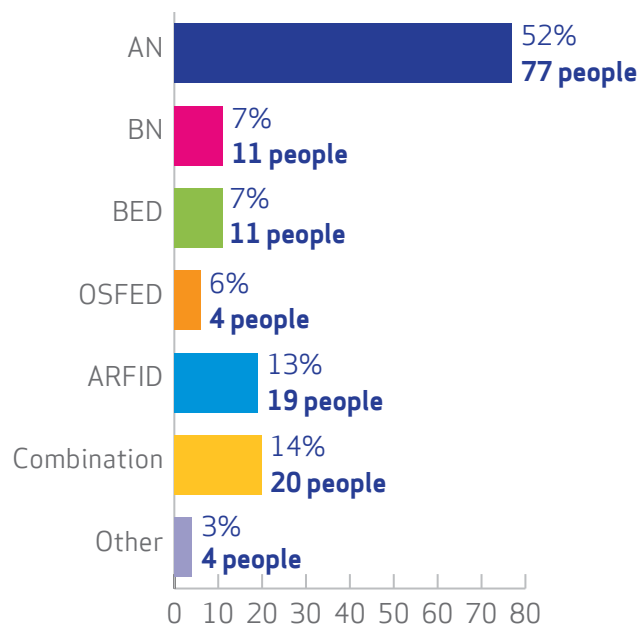


Figure 28 What is the age of the person you are supporting?

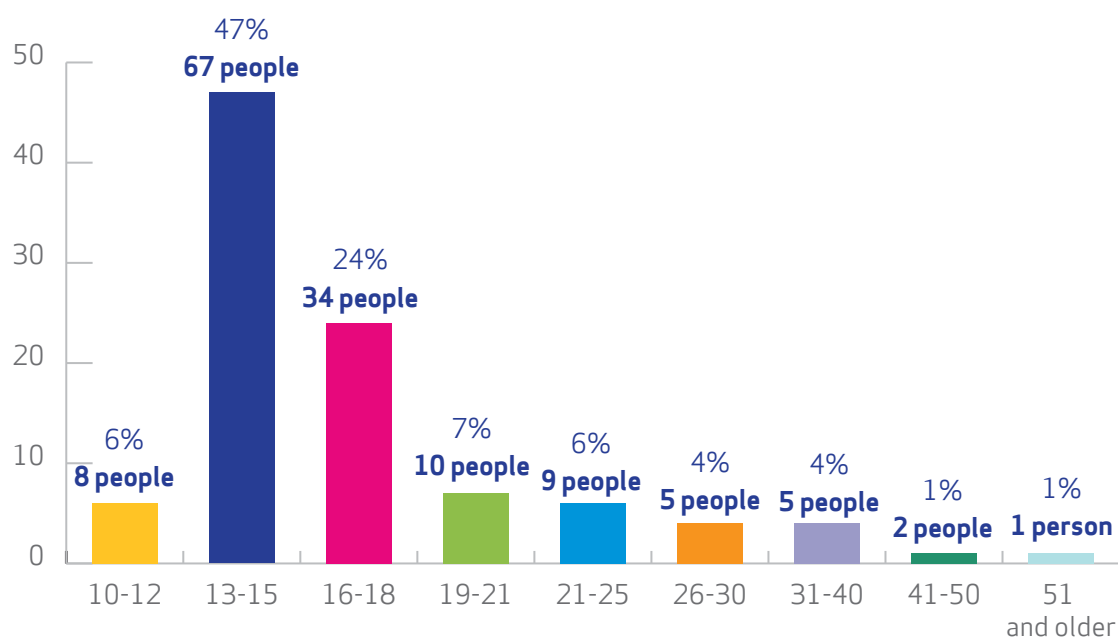


Figure 30 Where in the process is your person?

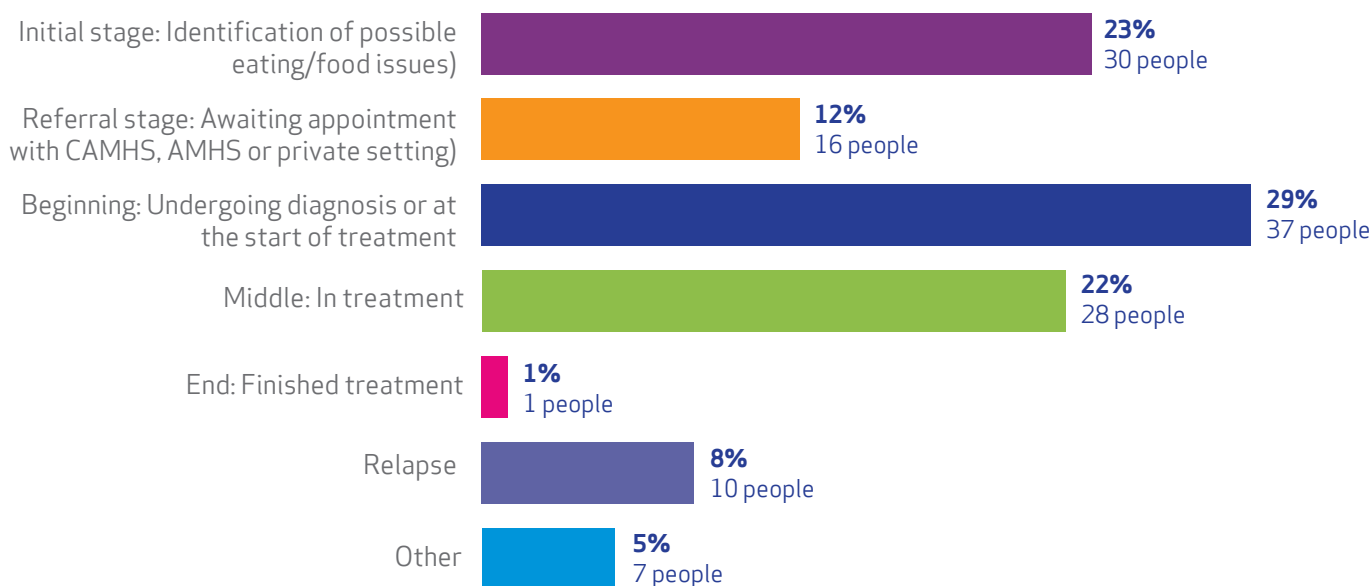


Figure 31 Are they currently engaged in treatment?

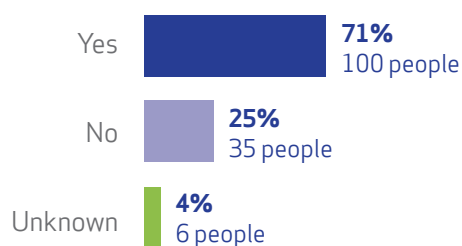
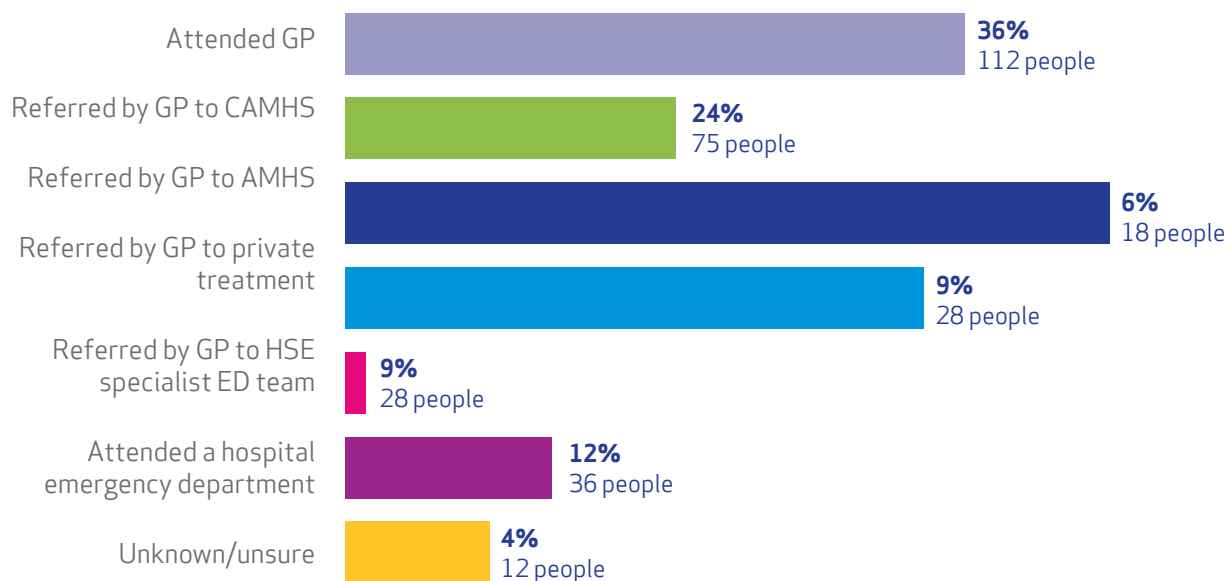


Figure 32 Due to the eating disorder, the person I support has... (Can select more than one answer)



And finally, we ask, what, if anything, do you feel you gained from taking part in PiLaR at this time?

"I thought this was a great programme, delivered by people who know what they are talking about. It helped me to help the person I am caring for and was full of useful techniques and approaches. I particularly appreciated the strong message of hope - recovery is possible."

"I found the PiLaR programme to be a wonderful support in helping to better understand eating disorders and how the person I'm caring for might be thinking and feeling. It also provided concrete guidance on what kinds of situations and conversations might arise and how best to handle them. Thank you to the team!"

"This is at least my second time doing PiLaR-I immediately realised the shift of mindset I needed to make to support my person and also to support myself. I was quite fearful and very disheartened that my person had relapsed but I now believe they had not fully recovered and had only achieved their target weight and maintained it. Attending the programme provided hope, encouragement and a new perspective. Thank you! I feel prepared for the next part of the journey."

"I found the PiLaR programme very helpful. I feel very isolated, very few people understand what you are going through. My son is 21 he should be with his friends enjoying his life but he is at home most of the time, has been hospitalised because of his low weight. Through the PiLaR programme I began to understand his ED, why he is the way he is. Also it gave me a glimmer of hope that he may in time recover."



2 | Post-PiLaR Support Group

Looking at feedback from every PiLaR programme, people always remark on the positive experience of being in the same space with others going through a similar experience. To provide ongoing support, and to facilitate a safe space for carers to talk and support one another, we set up the Post-PiLaR Support Group, facilitated by the Training and Development team, for anyone who has attended the PiLaR programme.

In 2024, the Post-PiLaR Support Group took place in the morning and evening time. Frequency and attendance are highlighted below.



24

morning
sessions



12

evening
sessions

Overall

attendance was

276

80

individual participants

attending multiple times

"As a parent, joining the Post-PiLaR Support Group has been a lifeline. Sharing with others who truly understand has brought comfort, hope, and strength to our family's journey."

"I feel the Post-PiLaR Support Group is somewhere I can be with people who understand and empathise with my situation as a carer of someone with anorexia nervosa. This is so important to me as I feel after years of being with this illness, it is difficult to get that empathy (even from family and friends) and therefore sometimes it can be a sad, frustrating and lonely place to be. It is so great to talk to people in the same boat and feel their support. And of course, get professional advice from Bodywhys also. Thank you for providing this essential service."



PiLaR
PEER LED RESILIENCE

3 | New Maudsley Carer Skills (NMCS) Training

We began running NMCS workshops in 2021. Currently, each group of carers attend eight workshops over a four-month period, two workshops each month. Each workshop lasts for two and a half hours, and the group works together, learning the core caring skills of the New Maudsley Carer Skills programme including:

- ✓ Externalising the eating disorder
- ✓ The red and blue balloon analogy
- ✓ Animal metaphors – understanding instinctive caring styles
- ✓ Basic communication skills – OARS (Open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summarising)
- ✓ Advanced communication skills – DEARS (Developing discrepancy, expressing empathy, amplifying ambivalence, rolling with resistance, supporting self-efficacy), DARN-C (Desire to want to change, ability and skills needed for change, reasons to change, need to change and commitment to change)
- ✓ Emotional intelligence coaching – ALVS (Attend, label, validate, soothe)
- ✓ The stages of change model and the decisional balance tool
- ✓ The reassurance trap
- ✓ Planning change and the five-step approach to change.



In 2024, we delivered the NMCS workshop series to three groups, bringing the total number of groups who have received the New Maudsley Carer Skills training to eleven since 2021.

Figure 33 shows the number of people who signed-up to each workshop series in 2024.

Figure 33 NMCS workshop series

New Maudsley Group Number	Participants
Maudsley Group 9	34
Maudsley Group 10	34
Maudsley Group 11	29
Total	97

Note: Groups 1-3 were held in 2022, and 4-8 were held in 2023. This table reflects 2024's groups based on 24 workshops.

In October 2024, thanks to National Lottery funding, we were able to run an in-person NMCS weekend. A fantastic two days, with 40 wonderful carers attending each day.

"Participating in the New Maudsley online series was truly transformative. Christopher stood out for his engaging style, deep knowledge, and gentle, caring attitude. He made it easy to open up, ask questions, and feel genuinely supported throughout the journey. I'm deeply grateful for this positive and empowering experience."

"The free training and education I received gave me the understanding, tools, and hope I so desperately needed. Thanks to this support, I was able to help my daughter through the darkest moments of her eating disorder and guide her toward recovery and stability. I truly believe this knowledge helped save her life."

4 | Regular New Maudsley Carer Skills Support Group

Following completion of the eight-workshop series, carers can opt-in to a Regular NMCS Support Group, once a month. This group combines support with skills practice. The focus is on the application of the NMCS to situations carers are dealing with, as well as looking at content and modules that are not covered in the eight-workshop series.



In 2024 we delivered **10 sessions** of the Regular New Maudsley Support Group

Overall attendance was **112 | 37** participants attending multiple times

“A lifeline in the time of darkness. Harriet gave us light when we all were in a very dark tunnel. A space where we could talk openly and never judged.”

“The Maudsley Regulars group and the overall support delivered by Bodywhys were a real lifeline to our family whilst we handled the most acute phase of our person’s eating disorder. The actionable insights and techniques were key together with the safe place it provided for families to share. As parents, we would never have been able to support our person effectively without the Maudsley regulars and Bodywhys. Thank you.”



We would like to **extend our thanks** to Jenny Langley, author of *Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder*; *The New Maudsley Skills Based Training Manual*, both for her wonderful manual and the time and knowledge she contributes to our NMCS podcast series.

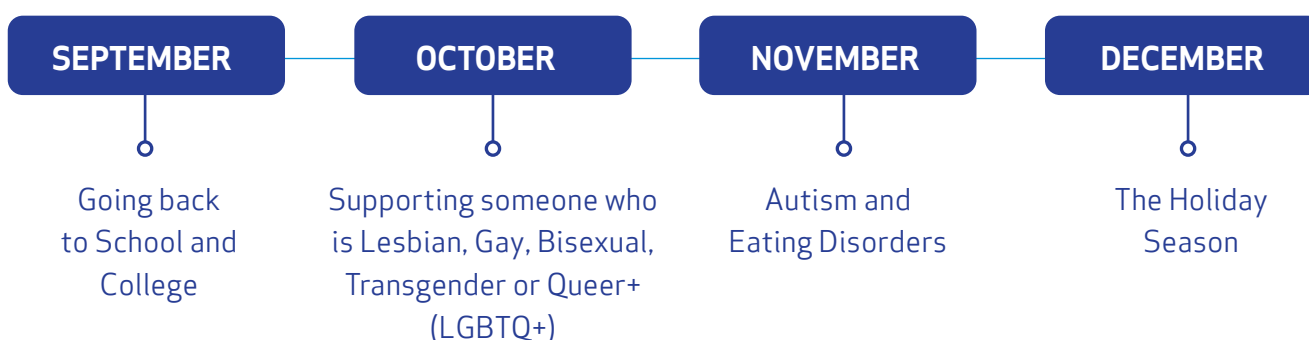


5 | Conversations with Carers (CwC)

We launched the latest service in our FSP in September 2024, as a space for carers to come together and explore common themes that arise when supporting someone with an eating disorder.

There is currently one session per month. In each session, carers think through the challenges the theme may cause and share what has helped and not helped so that they can learn from one another. In 2024, we delivered 4 sessions of Conversations with Carers and had 51 attendees.

Themes from 2024:



Feedback on Conversations with Carers

"Prior to Bodywhys' Conversations with Carers, I was feeling lost, frustrated and alone following our teenager's recent ARFID diagnosis. Experimentation is critical to discover baby steps forward on this 'person-specific' journey. The CwC forum offers carers across the country an opportunity to empathise from lived experience, to share tried tips and practical supportive suggestions for routine day-to-day living and more challenging times like summer holidays."

"Conversations with Carers is an opportunity to talk to others in an open, respectful manner about subjects related to a person experiencing an eating disorder, such as being on the autism spectrum or expressing themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ community."

It is a fabulous way to talk in a smaller group of likeminded parents, and Christopher's quiet and respectful steering provides a chance to open up, without fear of being judged or patronised. It really is a rewarding and deeply personal chance to talk openly about one's life experiences without fear or judgement."

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to tell our stories, with dignity and privacy. Thanks to Bodywhys."



Support emails

During the year, Christopher responded to



152 support emails
from carers



How does providing support to the supporters benefit the people with eating disorders being supported?

Let's hear from them;

"Only for my mother I would not be here. She is the only person who understands me and my condition truly. The frustration carries on against the most feared upon and only for her I would not be here today. She did the PiLaR programme when I was at my lowest as an inpatient, the only person who kept me going with her strength she gained from the PiLaR programme and she also did the Maudsley program – she held us all together, my two sisters my brother."

"When my mother participated in the PiLaR and Maudsley courses online she learnt techniques to help me when I was distressed."

"My mom has been the most supportive carer for me during the last five years, she has aided any and all progress I have made with my eating disorder. Through the PiLaR and Maudsley courses my mom has wholly been able to care for me based off the skills and information she has been given. These courses have helped saved both me and my mom."

"The most helpful thing my mother did when faced with my eating disorder was admitting that she did not understand. She did not accept it, but also knew she could not force me to change it. With that, came a willingness to learn. The PiLaR group gave her the tools to support me, to nurture and continue being my biggest cheerleader, even when faced with this new battle."

Professional Training

As an organisation, Bodywhys, has a significant amount of knowledge and experience, and we provide continuous professional development training for health professionals and allied health professionals on an ongoing basis. The voice of lived experience is at the heart of our training workshops and webinars. Our professional training focuses on building compassionate understanding, helpful communication, and detailed psychoeducation, sharing the knowledge base that we have built up in the past 29 years.

Currently, the following training talks and workshops are provided by Bodywhys.

- A Understanding Eating Disorders
- C Supporting and working therapeutically with a person
- B Supporting a person with an eating disorder
- D New Maudsley Carer Skills

A Understanding Eating Disorders

A training for general knowledge purposes, designed for those who might deal with people with eating disorders irregularly, and who are seeking to increase their knowledge about eating disorders or supporting a person with an eating disorder. This is a public information type session that lasts approximately 1-2 hours.

Topics covered:

- ✓ Basic concepts
- ✓ Different types of eating disorders
- ✓ Risk factors
- ✓ Dispelling common myths
- ✓ Basic tips on language
- ✓ Basics of support
- ✓ Bodywhys support services and resources (who we are and what we do).

B Supporting a Person with an Eating Disorder

A 2-3 hour session, for those working in supportive roles, such as other charities, agencies, foster carers, care workers that deal with people affected by eating disorders more frequently, and feel they need upskilling in this area. This session provides a foundational understanding as well as key aspects of supporting people with eating disorders to help build confidence to support better.

Topics covered:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What is an eating disorder? ✓ Understanding an eating disorder as a coping mechanism or a functional illness ✓ Difference between disordered eating and eating disorders ✓ The different types of eating disorders ✓ Transdiagnostic perspective of eating disorders ✓ Common clinical features: in particular, fear of fat and gaining weight, super-sensitivity, black and white thinking and intrusive thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How a person with an eating disorder experiences the world ✓ Language and communication ✓ Common fears ✓ Treatment pathways ✓ Bodywhys services and resources. <p>By the end of the training, attendees have a better understanding of eating disorders and how they manifest in a person's experience as well as, accurate information about signposting, treatment and supports available. Essentially, this session equips people with the basic knowledge, information, and skills they need to provide 'once off' type support to a person affected by an eating disorder.</p> |
|---|---|

C Supporting and Working Therapeutically with a Person with an Eating Disorder

A 3-hour, to full day session, developed for those who work face-to-face, one-to-one, with people affected by eating disorders, e.g. clinicians, allied health professionals, such as psychologists, dietitians, speech and language therapists (SLTs), occupational therapists (OTs), social workers, nurses, registrars, psychiatrists, psychotherapists of various disciplines and approaches. This training provides knowledge, insight, practical information, and skills to work with this client group. This is for the purposes of continued professional development (CPD). It is expected that those attending are fully qualified in their field of study. Training sessions are frequently adapted for the group, e.g. for school support teams, dietitians working in acute hospitals.

Topics covered:

- ✓ Resources for clinicians working with people with eating disorders
- ✓ Common myths
- ✓ Understanding and detailing the main eating disorders - diagnostic features
- ✓ Difference between disordered eating and eating disorders
- ✓ Transdiagnostic perspective of eating disorders
- ✓ Common clinical features: in particular, fear of fat and gaining weight, super-sensitivity, black and white thinking and intrusive thinking
- ✓ Causes and risk factors
- ✓ Using formulation cycles to understand the problem being presented
- ✓ Reframing disordered behaviours
- ✓ Collaborative support and what that means within your focus as a clinician
- ✓ Externalising the eating disorder, separating the person from their eating disorder
- ✓ Avoiding power struggles
- ✓ Communication skills, language, dos and don'ts of communication
- ✓ Emotional coaching
- ✓ Common fears and anxieties
- ✓ Relapse.

D New Maudsley Carer Skills

This year, Bodywhys provided NMCS training to HSE clinicians and some of the NCP-ED's specialist ED teams. This training is delivered over three days and equips clinicians to run their own workshops with carers using their service. In this training, the first two days are for clinicians, and the third day is for clinicians and families/carers of their service, so that clinicians can see the workshop in 'action' and learn how to deliver the workshops to carers.

This year saw continued demand for professional training in supporting people with eating disorders, with a total of 52 training sessions delivered to 1,908 clinicians, allied healthcare professionals and members of the public. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1: Training and Development activities delivered in 2024.

When	Type of Training	For whom	Attendance
January	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Dietitians, Mullingar Hospital	6
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Adult students, Sallynoggin College	50
	Supporting a Young Person with an ED	School support staff, St Mary's N.S., Limerick	8
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in training	15
February	Supporting a Person with an ED	Regina Mundi College	20
	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Clinicians and dietitians, Waterford General Hospital	20
	The Importance of the Lived Experience in Shaping Eating Disorder Services	HSE National Eating Disorders Webinar 2024- Expanding Eating Disorder Knowledge and Service Development	850
	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Nurses in training, St. Angela's College, Sligo	10
	Supporting a Person with an ED	SNAs in training	30
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Public, Blanchardstown Library	4
	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Guidance Counsellors in training, Maynooth University	20
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Public, Fingal Libraries	30
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Public, Rush Library	5

When	Type of Training	For whom	Attendance
March	Supporting a Person with an ED	Ballymun, Gheel Autism Service Staff	20
	Supporting Young People with EDs	Teaching Staff, Kishoige Community College	50
	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	National Traveller Service	10
	Understanding EDs and creating a safer working culture	Not Another Intl	10
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Public, Blessington Library	2
	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Diabetes Nurses / Clinical Nurse Specialist, Cork/Kerry HSE Diabetes service	10
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Parents, Mount Temple Comprehensive School Parents Association	35
	Supporting a Person with an ED	Don Bosco Care home staff	10
	Bodywhys Supporting Students with Eating Disorders Webinar	Teachers and Guidance Counsellors	49
April	Working Therapeutically with People with EDs	Linn Dara Clinicians, CAMHS Clinicians	15
	Supporting people with EDs during the Perinatal Period	HCUK Conference online, Health professionals	30
	Supporting People with Eating Disorders	Staff and MHFA members of staff, Gas Networks Ireland	20

When	Type of Training	For whom	Attendance
May	Supporting people with eating disorders via text service	Spunout text service volunteers	10
	Presentation for Atkin Realis Company	Staff and Mental Health First Aiders	10
	Training 'Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders' national Rehab Hospital	Psychology, dietetics, social workers, physiotherapists	20
	Supporting Young People with EDs	Staff in Tusla residential care home for under 18s, Blanchardstown	10
	'How Bodywhys Supports Your Services'	NCP-ED Staff, NCP-ED Hub Network Day	60
	Supporting People with Eating Disorders	Members of Oireachtas, Oireachtas Health and Well being	15
June	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Beaumont Hospital Clinicians	25
	Father's Experiences - Eating Disorder Treatment & Recovery	Public	25
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Donegal MH Services	7
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Bushypark Addiction Treatment Residential programme, Ennis, Co. Clare	35
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Maternity Dietitians (Holles St, Rotunda, Coombe, Portlaoise, Waterford)	9
	Bodywhys Volunteer Training	Bodywhys Volunteers	18
	Bodywhys Volunteer Training	Bodywhys Volunteers	18

When	Type of Training	For whom	Attendance
August	Supporting Young People with EDs	Castleblaney Residential Care home (HSE/ TUSLA)	10
September	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Staff, Donegal Education Centre	11
	New Maudsley Carer Skills Training	HSE Clinicians and carers, Donegal, Sligo and Saint Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH) teams	29
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Merchant's Quay Staff	10
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Jigsaw staff Cork, Kerry, Tipperary	10
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Staff, Dun Laoghaire Community Training Centre	7
October	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Higher Diploma, Mental Health Nursing, UCD	30
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Louth South CAMHS	9
November	NMCS Family training day	Cork Adult ED Team ED clinicians and Carers	15
	NMCS Weekend Workshop	Carers	40
	NMCS Weekend Workshop	Carers	40
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	Odyssey Home Care / alone teen care home	5
	Working Therapeutically with People with Eating Disorders	St. Patrick's Hospital Clinicians	20
	Bodywhys Coping with Christmas Webinar	Public	99

The Expert by Experience (eBe) Group

In 2023, Bodywhys together with the HSE's NCP-ED, established the eBe group, the first of its kind for HSE clinical programmes. This was an important development for the improvement of eating disorder treatment services in Ireland. Bodywhys strives to ensure that the voice of the person with an eating disorder, and their carers, is heard and listened to. As the support partner to the NCP-ED, Bodywhys facilitates this through the eBe group.

In 2024, the eBe group met twice with the NCP-ED, facilitated by the Training and Development

Manager, Harriet Parsons, to establish processes for the work of the eBe group. The group's first piece of work was to provide feedback and comment on the 'Guideline for the Assessment and Management of Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Eating Disorders in the Emergency Department' authored by Aileen McCabe, Omotayo Raji, Pauline Boyle, Sinead Feehan, Sarah Deery, Aine McGarvey, Breda Naddy, Paula McKay, Michelle Clifford.

It was decided between the members of the eBe group and the NCP-ED that there will be both, a feedback mechanism, and a feed-forward mechanism, between both.

Collaboration with NCP-ED

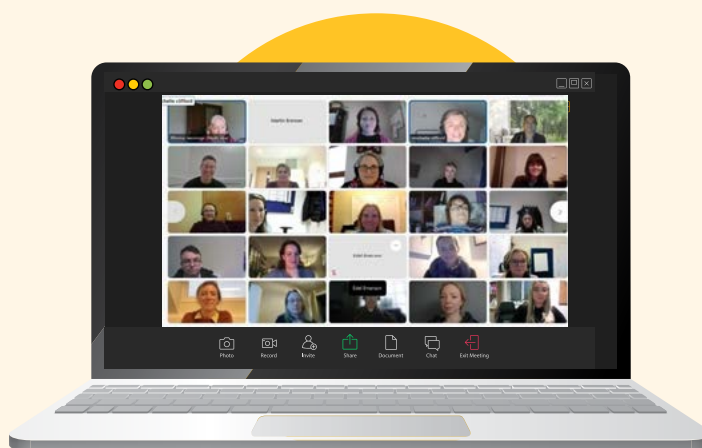
2024 saw the development of further community-based services in the public health system, bringing the number of specialist eating disorder teams nationally to eleven. The Training and Development Manager met with the newly formed teams to inform them about the work that Bodywhys does.

Throughout the year, the Training and Development Manager attended the monthly NCP-ED Planning and Oversight Group meetings for the Model of Care. These meetings allow for the sharing of developments and information as well as ensuring collaboration and consistency of support to the NCP-ED.

In December 2024, we sent a short survey to each of the HSE NCP-ED teams, to begin to gather feedback on the impact of our services on the work of the NCP-ED. The teams were in various stages of development, so not all questions were relevant or could be answered by them. This marks the initial phase of collecting feedback to assess our engagement with the HSE NCP-ED as the support partner to the programme, in accordance with the Model of Care. This process will be ongoing in the coming years.



In total, the survey was sent to all 11 teams and there were 17 responses. The discrepancy in response numbers below indicates that not all questions were either relevant for all teams, or they did not have experience to answer the question because of the newness of the team.



**HSE Clinical Programme
for Eating Disorders**

HSE NCP-ED Team Feedback | Survey Results



Q1: On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not valuable, and 5 is extremely valuable, how valuable is it, in your experience, to have families already knowledgeable and equipped with information before starting treatment?

5 Extremely valuable	12 responses
4 Valuable	3 responses

Q2: In your experience, where families have engaged with the Bodywhys PiLaR Programme and family supports, does this impact on the following:

a. Treatment Duration :

Slightly improves	2 responses
Significantly improves	11 responses

Comments from clinicians:

"Mainly supports engagement with the treatment and although it may not shorten the treatment, it increases the chances of the treatment not needing to be extended."

"This really helps me to place more focus on the individual suffering from the eating disorder, the education for carers in the PiLaR programme is invaluable and I constantly receive positive feedback."

"Better understanding of the ED mindset."

"Strengthens therapeutic engagement which is linked with better outcomes and shorter treatment duration."

b. Family 'buy-in' or readiness to engage in treatment work:

Slightly improves	2 responses
Significantly improves	12 responses

Comments from clinicians from clinicians:

"Definitely improves but amount depends on the family."

"I believe the programme really helps families gain a better understanding outside of the treatment in the locality, it also really helps the individual being treated as they often worry about family involvement in the service and can be more likely to disengage due to fear and anxiety that their treatment is not individualised."

"Parents are more informed during treatment and make reference to the PiLaR program when they have attended."

c. Family understanding of treatment goals:

Slightly improves	5 responses
Significantly improves	8 responses

Comments from clinicians from clinicians:

"Family involvement for many of our clients can be quite challenging when they are very unwell with a low BMI."

"PiLaR is aligned with family based treatment (FBT) as evidence-based treatment."

d. Family confidence in supporting treatment work:

Slightly improves	6 responses
Significantly improves	10 responses

Comments from clinicians from clinicians:

"Family therapy engagement is generally more successful with our younger client group."

"My impression is that this is dependent on the degree to which the family member(s) engaged with the programme (e.g. their openness to suggestions, advice, etc)."

"Significantly improves in the majority of families."

Q3: What specific benefits have you observed when families are better prepared?

Improved understanding of eating disorders	11 responses
Increased confidence in supporting their loved one	12 responses
Enhanced collaboration with the treatment team	10 responses

Comments from clinicians:

"All of the above, families also benefit from knowledge of other families in similar situations, decreases sense of isolation."

"Improves confidence in CAMHS services which has been low."

"They are more likely to engage in family therapy and just have greater insight. However, I think families in the initial stages after an initial diagnosis need to be referred to your support services immediately. Perhaps

GPs need to make people more aware of your services so that they can encourage their patients to seek support from your services."

Q4: Bodywhys delivers the New Maudsley Carer Skills workshops for carers. If any of your client's carers have engaged with these workshops, how has this impacted on the following?

a. Family understanding of treatment goals:

Slightly improves	1 responses
Significantly improves	8 responses

Comments from clinicians:

"I have received very positive feedback through clients regarding their family members' engagement with the Maudsley Carer Skills workshop."

b. Family confidence in supporting treatment work:

Slightly improves	2 responses
Significantly improves	9 responses

Q5: How does ongoing engagement with Bodywhys support services (for the person or their family) impact treatment outcomes?

Moderate impact	2 responses
Significant impact	6 responses

Comments from clinicians:

"Website is a reliable source of information, support services invaluable, especially PiLaR."

"Parents are more confident and less alone."

"The eating disorder is present in the family outside of the weekly sessions at therapy, this service really supports the client and the family if they wish to engage, and even knowing the option is there is so helpful."

"The involvement of families is critical to recovery and by scaffolding the families the individual is supported to recover."

Q6: What specific aspects of treatment are positively affected by ongoing support? (Select all that apply)

Family resilience and coping strategies	9 responses
Client motivation and engagement	3 responses
Reduced dropout rates	2 responses

Q7: On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not valuable, and 5 is extremely valuable, how valuable do you believe Bodywhys eating disorder support services are to:

Your clinical work / workload:

3	2 responses
4	2 responses
5	11 responses

Client outcomes:

3	3 responses
4	4 responses
5	7 responses

Family engagement:

3	1 responses
4	3 responses
5	10 responses

Reducing strain on public treatment services:

4	4 responses
5	10 responses

Comments from clinicians:

"Excellent service from Harriet and the team there. Thank you for all of the support."

"There is often significant ambivalence and fear surrounding accessing the local mental health service, I strongly believe the Bodywhys support service has bridged the gap and will continue to do so going forward."

"Since the training [New Maudsley Carer Skills Clinician Training] we have increased the involvement of families in our adult ED service, having joint feedback sessions with parents and clients - it has been an extremely positive change of practice. Also, we are in the process of planning our first ever carer skills group in early 2025 in collaboration with our CAMHS colleagues, all thanks to Bodywhys."

"We have all really appreciated the excellent training from Harriet Parsons. She has instilled confidence in clinicians, clients, and families alike. We are all very fortunate to have access to such an excellent service."

Bodywhys would like to thank Dr. Michelle Clifford, clinical lead for HSE NCP-ED, and Rhona Jennings, Programme Manager for the HSE NCP-ED, as well as all the clinicians within the HSE NCP-ED for their continued support. It is wonderful to see the goal of supporting the work of the NCP-ED, begin to come to fruition for both clinicians and service users.



Youth Development

Youth Development



Dr Fiona Flynn

Youth Development Manager

Bodywhys extends huge congratulations to Dr Fiona Flynn, our Youth Development Manager, who, in September 2024, was awarded a PhD in psychology from Maynooth University. Fiona's doctoral degree research, funded by the Irish Research Council (IRC), was conducted in collaboration with Bodywhys and focused on the development and evaluation of a school-based intervention aimed at promoting positive body image and enhancing social media literacy among young adolescents. This research received particular attention during the graduation ceremony for its practical application, the use of engaged research methodologies, and its significant uptake in schools both nationally and internationally.



Molly Nee

Regional Youth Development Officer (West)



Pictured: Dr Catriona O'Toole, Department of Education, Maynooth, Dr Fiona Flynn, Bodywhys, Professor Sinead McGilloway, Department of Psychology, Maynooth.



Shauna McGroarty

Regional Youth Development Officer (East)

In April, we bid farewell to Shauna McGroarty. Shauna served as Youth Development Officer for nearly two years, during which time she made a significant contribution to the organisation, including delivering presentations to schools and youth groups across the country, as well as playing an integral role in the research and development of new content, particularly in body image and sport. This year, Shauna delivered school talks in Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Monaghan, Wicklow and Westmeath, and she spoke to students in Drogheda Institute of Further Education and members of the Traveller community.

Webinars for Schools

Throughout 2024, Bodywhys continued to deliver its secondary school webinar series. Live sessions on the topics of “*Understanding Eating Disorders*”, “*Let’s Talk Body Image*” and “*Promoting Positive Body Image in Your School*”, were attended by teachers and students from **302** schools across the country.

Each webinar was recorded. Following the sessions, attendees received access to the recordings, along with a supplementary resource document. This document included information and links related to eating disorders, body image, Bodywhys services, and additional resources for distribution within the broader school community, including parents.

Bodywhys | Webinar Series for Secondary Schools



Body image is an issue affecting people of all ages and genders.

Body image concerns are so widespread in adolescent years that, in some ways, they have become somewhat normalised and accepted as a part of teenage life. The implications of negative body image however, can have a grave impact on a child or young person’s life and mental health. Research indicates that negative body image is linked to the development of eating disorders and other mental health issues including depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse and to higher levels of self-harm and suicidality.

Young people today are inundated with messages about how they should look. This growing focus on appearance is unhealthy and can be damaging to a young person’s development and self-esteem. Schools and youth group settings are ideal places **to promote healthy body image, media literacy and to support students in developing positive behaviours** to support wellbeing and positive body image.

 Understanding Eating Disorders	 Let’s Talk Body Image	 Let’s Talk Body Image	 Promoting Positive Body Image in Your School
Tuesday 24th September 12:00 – 12.40	Thursday 26th September 12:00 – 12.40	Wednesday 16th October 12:00 – 12.40	Tuesday 22nd October 12:00 – 12.40
This webinar will cover: ■ Risk factors ■ Signs and symptoms ■ How an eating disorder impacts a person’s life – emotionally, psychologically and physically ■ Recovery and treatment ■ Supporting a friend ■ Treatment Options	This session will explore challenges impacting body image in young people including: ■ Media messaging, social media and peers ■ Practical ways to challenge negative pressures to improve body image.	Starting secondary school can be very exciting but may also bring a lot of change and new pressures. This transition can be an anxious time with some students feeling pressure to conform or to fit in. This webinar will explore ways to challenge these pressures to improve body image and wellbeing.	Transition year is often a very positive and life enhancing year. The alternative options for career development and creativity it provides can open up new pathways and ideas. This webinar will explore ways that TY students can promote positive body image within their wider school environment.
Suitable for all year groups	Suitable for all year groups	First Years	Transition Years

School Talks, Workshops and Youth Events

Having completed her training to deliver school talks and workshops in early 2024, Molly delivered “Be Body Positive” school talks to a total of **2,277** young people in **20 schools** across Clare, Cork, Dublin, Kerry, Kildare, Limerick, Galway, Roscommon and Westmeath. In November, Molly relocated to Dublin to take up position as Youth Development Officer (East) to meet the demand of school talks in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. The wait list for school talks nationally continues to rise.

In total this year, our Youth Development team reached

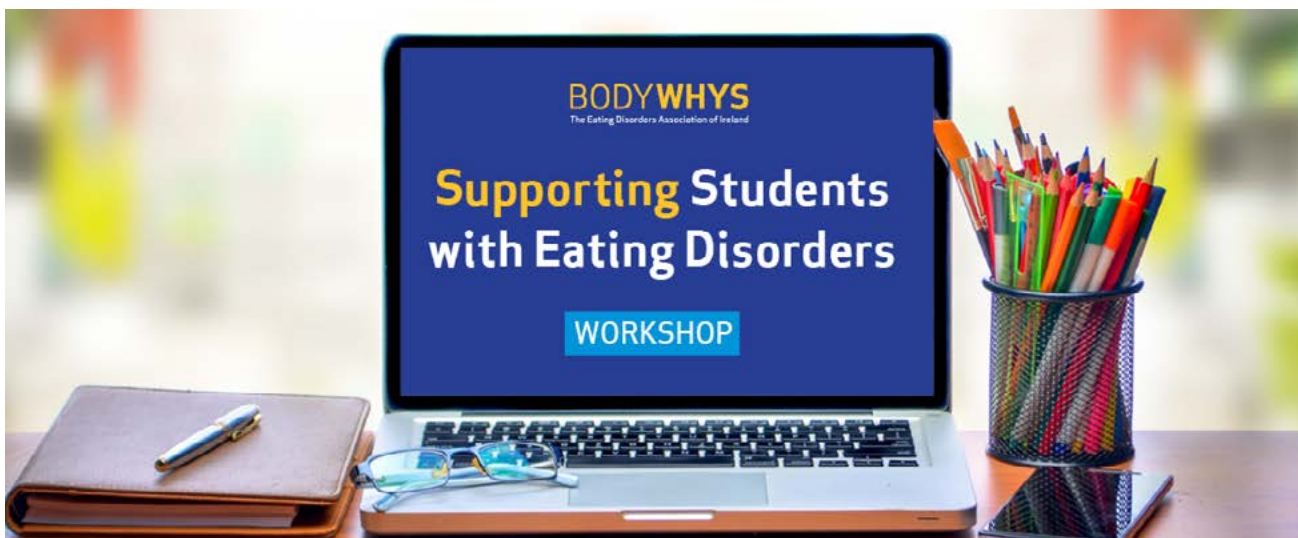
9,580

young people through school talks, workshops and youth events.

Bodywhys Teacher Training:

In **March** 2024, Christopher from our Training and Development team, delivered a training webinar for teachers on supporting young people with eating disorders. 49 teachers and guidance counsellors attended.

In **April** and **November**, Fiona delivered online training for secondary school teachers and educators on supporting students with eating disorders and delivering body image content within the classroom. These sessions were attended by a total of 126 secondary school teachers and school support staff. Training for primary school teachers was delivered through in-person events held in Dublin and was attended by representatives from 19 schools over the course of the year.



DATE	TIME	VENUE
Wednesday March 20th	7pm - 9pm	Online via Zoom

Bodywhys is delighted to offer a training workshop for school support staff who would like to learn how to therapeutically support students with eating disorders. This is a **2-hour workshop** that will address:

- Understanding eating disorders with a view to knowing how to support better
- Understanding the mindset of a person with an eating disorder to enable you to support better
- Learn tips for supportive communication
- Learn about the common pitfalls and how to avoid them
- Understanding the possible role of school (and teachers) in supporting a student with an eating disorder
- Learn about care pathways and support services

This workshop is for school staff/teachers only and will not be recorded.

To book your free place please fill out the booking form linked below or use the QR code.



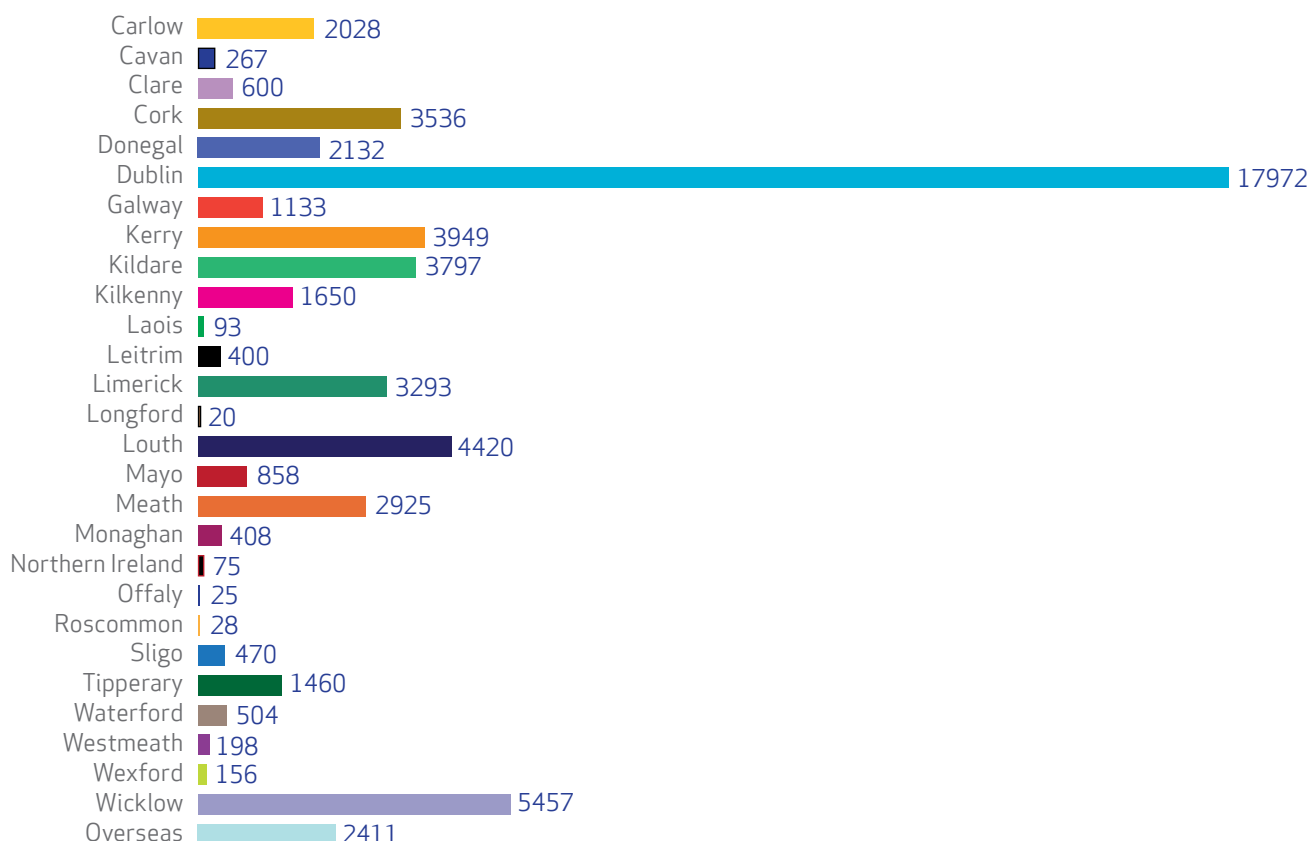
Bodywhys Online School Programmes

The Bodywhys online programme, **#MoreThanASelfie**, originally launched in October 2020 for secondary schools, continued to see widespread use in 2024. The resources were accessed by educators on 247 occasions and delivered to a total of 60,266 students. This online programme, which comprises four structured lessons featuring embedded videos, discussion prompts, user-friendly facilitator guides, and student workbooks, remained in high demand across Ireland in 2024, reaching 57,855 students. Additionally, the programme was accessed internationally, reaching a further 2,411 students in countries including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A regional breakdown of the number of students who participated in the #MoreThanASelfie programme nationwide (and overseas) is presented in Figure 34.



Figure 34 Delivery of the Bodywhys #MoreThanASelfie Programme by location

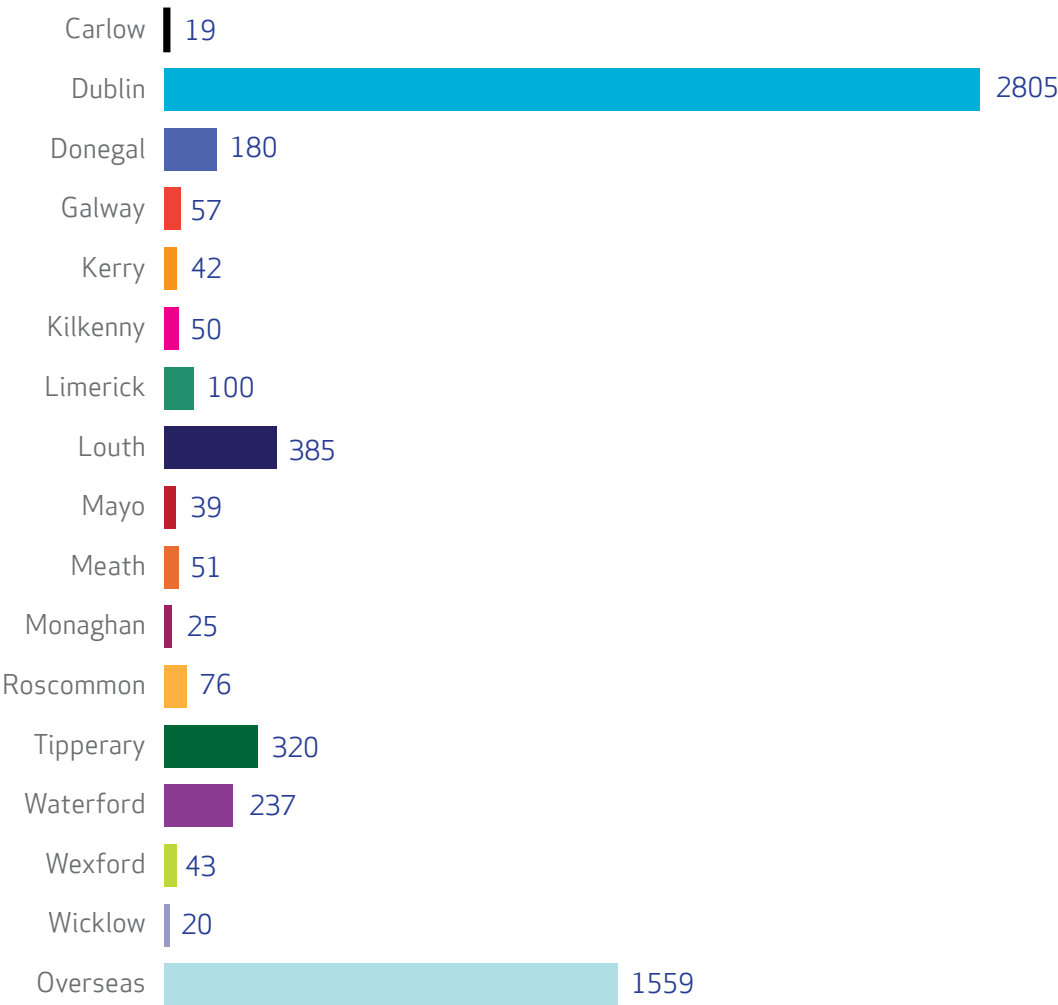


Primary Schools

The ‘Happy To Be Me’ online programme, designed to promote positive body image, improve self-esteem, and media/social media literacy among primary school students (beginning from second class at age-appropriate stages), was accessed by 96 schools in 2024. During this period, the programme was delivered to a total of 8,557 primary school students nationwide. A breakdown of participation county-by-county is provided in Figure 35. Additionally, the resources were implemented internationally, reaching 1,559 students in countries including Australia, India, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).



Figure 35 Breakdown of Responses by Class Group



Be Body Positive Project

2024 saw the launch of the “Be Body Positive Project”. This project aims to encourage schools, youth groups and other youth settings to actively promote positive body image in young people by rewarding positive action taken to address these issues. There are currently 3 schools undertaking the “Body Positive Project.”



Engaged Research

In 2024, engaged research continued to play a central role in our efforts to develop new educational resources aimed at supporting teachers and educators at second level in raising awareness of eating disorders and fostering positive body image among young people. This work involved meaningful consultation with young people through focus groups conducted with Transition Year students, as well as collaboration with the Bodywhys Youth Panel and Spunout’s Action Panel.

Bodywhys also conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers from a diverse selection of schools nationwide to incorporate the real-world perspectives of educators. These interviews aimed to identify barriers to the effective delivery of sensitive content in the classroom, explore teachers’ preferences regarding content and delivery formats, and examine current challenges related to eating disorders, body image, and associated pressures within the classroom and broader school environment.

Further, in late 2024, Bodywhys developed and disseminated surveys targeting educators across a range of educational settings, with the aim of gaining deeper insight into body image-related issues currently affecting schools nationwide. These preliminary surveys were designed to complement existing engaged research findings and to inform the development of new resources to promote positive body image among students.

The decision to conduct this research with teachers was based on the objective of enhancing understanding of the age-specific nature and prevalence of such issues, as well as identifying potential patterns based on geographic location (e.g., rural, urban, or by county) and school type (e.g., single-gender or co-educational settings). The surveys were promoted via social media channels throughout September and October 2024. In total, 351 educators responded and completed the surveys.

Primary School Survey Findings:

A total of **96 educators** completed the primary school surveys, comprising

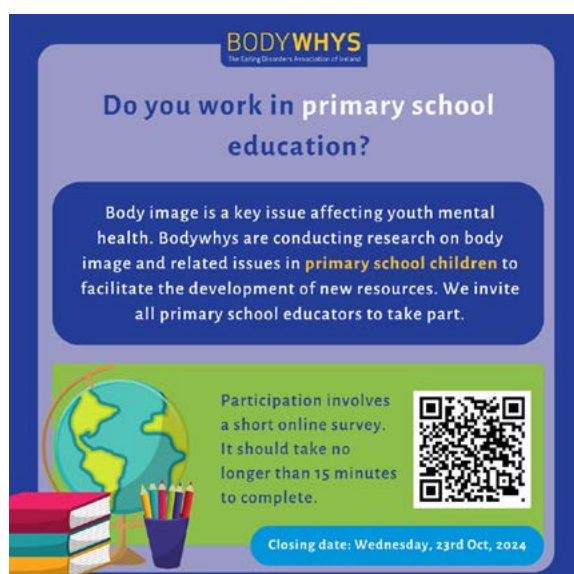
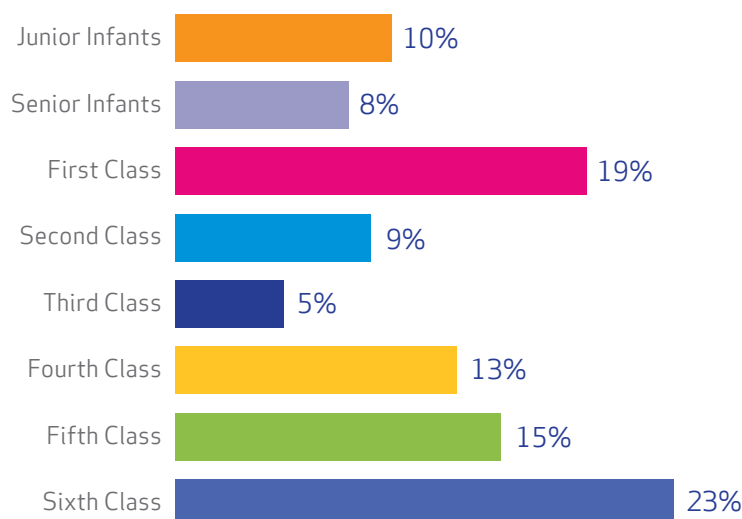
78 teachers/educators

14 school principals

4 vice principals

Most respondents (87%) were from mixed-gender schools, with representation from schools across the country. The survey responses covered all primary class groups, with a detailed breakdown presented in the Figure 36.

Figure 36 Breakdown of Responses by Class Group



A concerning 46% of respondents reported being aware of students within their class group who were experiencing body image concerns, while 16% indicated awareness of students in their class who were affected by an eating disorder. Additionally, 25% of respondents reported having observed dieting behaviours in the classroom, while 38% indicated they had heard discussions related to dieting, and 27% noted conversations concerning bodybuilding behaviours. Respondents were also invited to provide specific examples in an open-response field, a selection of which is presented below:

"Discussing TikTokers and what they look like. How to look like them, etc."

"Not eating, over exercising, indulging in diet culture at 10." (age)

"Speaking about TikTok and models on Instagram."

"Very aware of footballers and their physique. Boys are aware of the gym bod from YouTubers and the likes of MMA fighters."

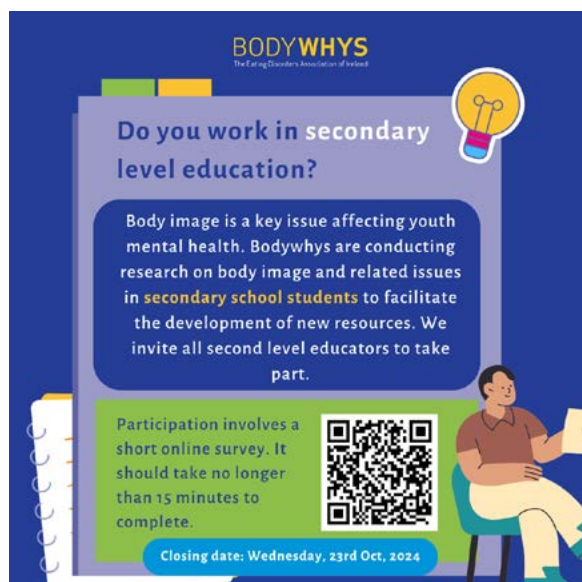
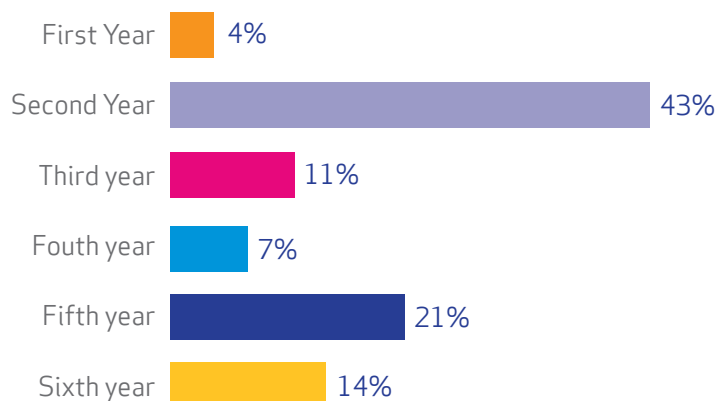
"Children are very aware of the 'ideal' body. They know what celebs look like and want to look like them."

Secondary School Survey Findings:

A total of **231** educators responded to the secondary school survey, comprising of

172	teachers
14	guidance counsellors
4	school principals
8	deputy/vice principals
3	special needs assistants
5	school chaplains

Figure 37 Approximate Numbers of Students Affected by Eating Disorders by Year Group



74% percent of respondents indicated that there were students in their class experiencing body image concerns. Among these, 76% pertained to students in the junior cycle and 24% to those in the senior cycle. Respondents indicated that dieting behaviours (65%) and body building behaviours (64%) are prevalent. Notably, 45% of respondents reported being aware of students in their class group who have an eating disorder indicating that the group most affected is second year (43%).

Respondents were invited to provide specific examples in an open-response field, a selection of which is presented below:

"I feel that the summer after 1st year is high pressured - teens often wanting to return "improved" for 2nd year. Physically thinner or more buff."

"Desire to fit in and follow the crowd (and look a certain way) stronger in Junior Cycle"

"I feel that first and second year are difficult for teens. They already know what society expects from them. They don't "fit in" or at least they believe that they don't. Often teens haven't found their tribe until 3rd or 4th year. Confidence is low and they are more easily led into self-loathing behaviours by comparing oneself to another. It's very sad to hear what they say."

"Unrealistic expectations of themselves and their bodies, looking at 'body transformations' and celebrity weight loss."

"Varying types of ED. Some getting help and in recovery, some getting help and struggling with recovery, remainder not getting external help with ED."

Special Educational Needs (SEN) survey findings

A total of **24 responses** were received for the SEN survey. Of these, 80% of respondents reported that students in their group were experiencing body image issues. Additionally, 33% indicated that they were aware of students within their group who were affected by eating disorders. Although the number of respondents is small, the responses indicate a clear need for resources which are suitable for special educational needs settings. Selected comments from respondents include:

"Not eating lunch, feeling sick or weak. Too long in the bathroom."

"Eating disorders, anxiety related to body image."

"Fear of eating, conscious of putting on weight, extreme dieting."

"Students struggling with weight and those who are depriving themselves to look a certain way."

"Autistic students avoiding certain foods."



Do you work in special educational needs?

Body image is a key issue affecting youth mental health. Bodywhys are conducting research on body image and related issues in those with **special educational needs** to facilitate the development of new resources. We invite all those who work in special educational needs to take part.

Participation involves a short online survey. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.



Closing date: Wednesday, 23rd Oct, 2024

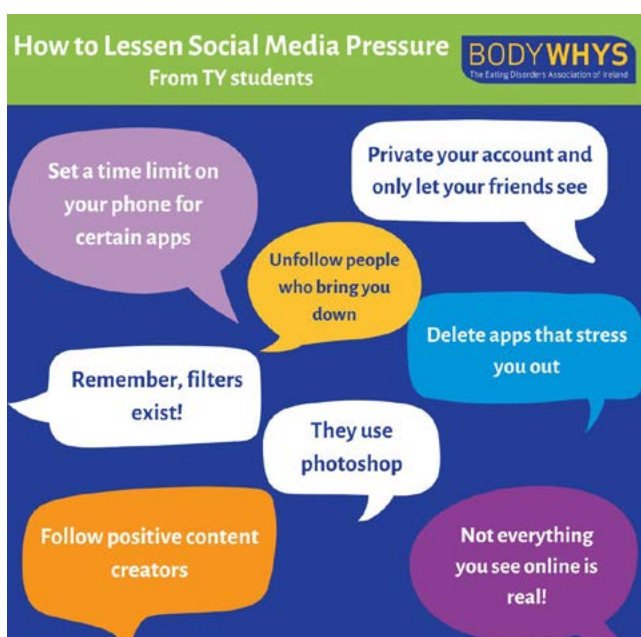
4th Annual Childhood Adolescent and Young Adult Cancers Survivorship (CAYAS) conference

Our Youth Development team developed a specialised workshop for the 4th Annual CAYAS conference held by Childhood Cancer Ireland and CanTeen in Croke Park in October. 25 young people who have or had cancer attended this workshop.



Pictured: Molly attending Mental Health Week at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) in Galway, approximately 600 attendees.

In **September**, Molly attended the Transition Year **(TY) show** at the Curragh, Newbridge, Co. Kildare. The event was attended by **4,000 young people**. Young people were invited to co-create posters on the topics of “How to lessen social media pressure” and “ways to be more body positive.” The response was overwhelming, showing just how attuned the young people are to the impact of body image on their lives. Young people offered advice, some of which Molly used to create content that was shared on Bodywhys social media channels.



Molly at the TY Show, Kildare



Molly attended the **Cycle Against Suicide Headstrong summit** in Kilmainham Hospital and delivered a talk on Bodywhys’ services to the 200 attending students, which was filmed so that it can be shown to the 600 schools that use Cycle Against Suicide resources.

Collaboration with other organisations

Throughout 2024, the Youth Development team continued their collaboration with relevant agencies, including Healthy Ireland to support educators in the Fingal area. This work was to promote positive body image and raise awareness of eating disorders within schools and the broader community. The team also remained actively engaged in reviewing and developing content aimed at fostering positive body image among various youth groups, including CanTeen, Childhood Cancer Ireland, CAYAS, Belong To, and Spunout.

In March, Molly joined Mental Health Ireland's "Connemara Mental Health Alliance," later renamed "Thrive Connemara" following Mental Health Ireland's successful project "Thrive Balbriggan." Molly remained a member until she relocated to Dublin.

Molly connected with Emmet Major from Planet Youth Ireland which is an initiative to promote wellbeing among children and adolescents. It takes a "ground-up" approach whereby local regions conduct detailed surveys with adolescents in their schools every two years and use this information to inform evidence-based interventions at a local level. The Youth Development team developed and submitted questions related to body image that were included in the 2024 surveys.

Bodywhys Youth Panel

The Youth Development team continued meetings with the Bodywhys Youth Panel (BYP) in 2024.

This year, the BYP grew to 13 members aged 16-24 from across the country. The BYP are instrumental to the work of the Youth Development team, providing an essential youth voice and perspective. They reviewed resources, content and provided constructive feedback. We extend our thanks to them for their time, knowledge and contributions.





Communications,
Research and Policy

Communications, Research and Policy



Ellen Jennings
Communications Officer



Barry Murphy
Research & Policy Officer

A key strategic aim of Bodywhys is to engage in public awareness activities including activities aimed at challenging discrimination and stigma and advocating for the rights and needs of all those affected by eating disorders.

The Bodywhys Communications, Research and Policy team continued to deliver upon this aim in 2024, keeping the voice of lived experience central to that work. Throughout the year the team collaborated to develop and disseminate key communications informed by lived experience and research. In 2024, this was achieved through various activities, such as engagement with mainstream media, social media campaigns, podcasts, events, website and resource updates, and meetings with key groups.

Media Queries		
	National Radio	17
	Regional Radio	27
	National Newspapers	19
	Regional Newspapers	5
	Television	12
	Magazine	4
	Online	13
	Documentary / Independent film	1
	Information/campaign video	2
	Podcast	3
	Other	1
Total		104

In 2024, we continued to see notable interest from the media.

Key areas of inquiry included:

- ✓ Diet culture and January
- ✓ Emotional eating
- ✓ Service provision and the HSE Model of Care for eating disorders
- ✓ Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW)
- ✓ Body dysmorphic disorder and social media trends
- ✓ Social media and cosmetic procedures
- ✓ Food and coping mechanisms
- ✓ Weight loss injections
- ✓ Regulation of online content related to weight loss and exercise
- ✓ Weight stigma and television shows
- ✓ COVID-19 and eating disorders
- ✓ Eating disorders in midlife, young people and children
- ✓ The online environment and body image
- ✓ The treatment abroad scheme
- ✓ Eating disorders and menopause
- ✓ Weight stigma and obesity
- ✓ Young men, gym influencers and body image
- ✓ Body image
- ✓ Lived experience
- ✓ ARFID
- ✓ Lent and eating disorders
- ✓ Diet pills and young people
- ✓ Hospital statistics on eating disorders (Health Research Board)
- ✓ Filters on social media
- ✓ Body image and weddings
- ✓ Eating disorders and recovery
- ✓ Summer and body image
- ✓ Families and conversations about weight
- ✓ Anorexia nervosa
- ✓ Dieting and fitness
- ✓ Eating disorder treatment
- ✓ Sports and eating disorders
- ✓ Obesity and eating disorders
- ✓ Eating disorders and families.

Media spotlight on eating disorders

In **January** and **February**, the media explored calorie labelling on menus, compulsive exercise, mental health and binge eating, eating disorders among young people, the concept of 'terminal' anorexia nervosa, a potential genetic link between anorexia nervosa and being an early riser, emotional eating, intuitive eating, and diet culture. Coverage focused on TikTok's ban of the 'leggings legs' trend, the role of social media in the glorification of illness and its impact on eating disorders, and the online safety regulator. Other articles addressed body image concerns, societal ideals and skincare routines. BBC News highlighted concerns from dermatologists because children as young as eight were accessing skincare products.



Eating Disorders Awareness Week received significant media coverage, with issues related to eating disorder treatment in Ireland making headlines. For example, early intervention, the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach, waiting lists, and protests held in Dublin, Cork and Limerick advocating for urgent reforms in Ireland's eating disorder services. There was coverage of a roundtable event at the South East Technological University (SETU), Waterford, which explored the benefits of spiritual practices in eating disorder recovery. Personal experiences of eating disorders highlighted in the media included those of Irish singer Lyra, rugby union player Andrew Porter, and former Miss Ireland, Lynda Duffy.



Pictured at the SETU roundtable event discussing the benefits of spiritual practices in eating disorder recovery were PhD candidate, Tara Travers, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler TD, Irish broadcaster, Andrea Hayes, and Head of Research SETU, Dr Geraldine Canny. Photograph: Patrick Browne

March/April

In March and April, media coverage continued to focus on eating disorder services, alongside increasing reports of children presenting to emergency departments with mental health difficulties, the treatment abroad scheme, and rising support needs within the LGBTQ+ community. The campaign group MindEveryBody (sic) engaged with the media advocating for the rights and needs of individuals affected by eating disorders and family members. In March, Harriet spoke with *Newstalk FM's Hard Shoulder* about "Spotting eating disorders in children and young people."

The Hard Shoulder

with Kieran Cuddihy



Spotting eating disorders in children and young people

This week in our Kid's Health Check, Training and Development Manager at BodyWhys, Harriet Parsons joined Kieran to discuss how to spot eating disorder in children and young teens...

Social media algorithms and online safety for young people remained prominent topics, with discussions extending to the influence of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated influencers. Related subjects discussed included weight loss injections and celebrity influence, perimenopause and eating disorders, summer body image ideals, weight stigma, intuitive eating, body neutrality, bulimia nervosa, body image concerns, eating disorder recovery, body shaming, obesity, and binge eating behaviors. In April, Harriet discussed disordered eating on the Shona Project podcast.

Episode 4

Podcast Series The Shona Project
Podcast with Alison Curtis and
Tammy Darcy



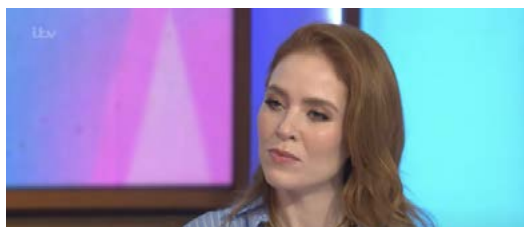
In this episode Alison and Tammy speak to Harriet Parsons of Bodywhys - The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland. They start by discussing healthy habits we can instil in our daughters from an early age to help them have a healthy relationship with food. We then discuss early warning signs of disordered eating, first steps to support our child if this develops and the definite things to avoid doing as a parent if you suspect your child has disordered eating.

Also in March and April, there was significant coverage of the English actress and activist Jameela Jamil's personal experiences with eating disorders, including her statement that two decades of dieting have compromised her bone density. Additionally, Australian cricketer Meg Lanning shared her story about exercise obsession and how under-fueling contributed to her decision to retire from international cricket. Fictional portrayals of eating disorders in the third season of *Netflix's Heartstopper* and an *EastEnders* storyline addressing anabolic steroid dependency also attracted attention and sparked conversations.

May/June

In May and June, numerous personal experience stories received media coverage. These included former international cricketer Freddie Flintoff who shared his experience with bulimia nervosa; Irish television presenter Angela Scanlon who spoke about her 15-year struggle with an eating disorder on ITV's *Loose Women*; Lauren Gaffney, a member of the Bodywhys Media Panel, discussed her experience with anorexia nervosa; *Love Island* star Jessie Wynter recounted her own experience with an eating disorder; and Irish author Louise O'Neill addressed personal issues surrounding eating disorders and weight stigma.

ANGELA SCANLON DETAILS 'BLEAK' 15 YEAR LONG EATING DISORDER BATTLE



**KÍLA
DUNNE**

Angela Scanlon has detailed her "bleak" 15-year-long eating disorder battle. The presenter has opened up about suffering from anorexia and bulimia from her late teens and early twenties.

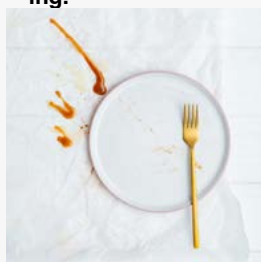
Social media platforms remained prominent in discussions around eating disorders, with topics such as toxic algorithms, unrealistic body images, media regulations, and new online safety guidelines highlighted. TikTok's implementation of new rules concerning extreme weight-loss content received coverage. Around this time, Irish singer Qbanaa (sic) released a music video titled "Shrink," which explores struggles with eating disorders and addiction through personification and surreal imagery.

Other topics in the media included the use of weight loss injections and their relation to eating disorders, blood glucose monitoring and orthorexia, eating disorders and the LGBTQ+ community, World Eating Disorders Action Day, debates around weight loss medications and body positivity and ARFID. *Stellar* magazine published an article titled "Understanding Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder."

STELLAR

Understanding Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

The eating disorder often mistaken for 'picky' eating.



We live in an era where food is closely linked to our personalities. We go for coffees and pastries to catch up with our girlfriends; get avocado toast brunches to snap aesthetic Instagram pics...

Binge eating disorder was highlighted in relation to at-home treatment options and the challenges of working from home. Discussions also continued to highlight recovery and eating disorder treatment in Ireland.

In early summer, the Department of Health announced an additional €10 million allocated for mental health services, including funding for a new specialist eating disorder treatment team for adults. Minister for Mental Health and Older People Mary Butler stated, "This new funding will build on the progress made last year when six new teams commenced and will ensure more people with eating disorder conditions will receive the quality treatment they need in the setting most appropriate to their needs."

July/August

During July and August, topics related to eating disorders continued to receive media attention, particularly concerning online platforms, pro-anorexia content, social media influencers, and issues such as eating disorders among athletes and diet culture. Additionally, children's online skincare trends were highlighted. There was press coverage ahead of the release of the RTÉ documentary *Anorexia, My Family and Me*. This documentary was developed and directed by Alan Bradley, Alleycats TV. The *Irish Examiner* focused on body image concerns among teenage boys.



HOME PAGE / LIFESTYLE / HEALTH & WELLBEING

Pressure for perfection: Are teenage boys risking their health when building muscle?

Influenced by social media and sports stars, teen boys are loading up on protein and piling on the weights. Are they in danger of putting their health at risk?

September/October

In September and October, there was significant media coverage surrounding eating disorders, particularly in relation to the Alleycats TV documentary *Anorexia, My Family and Me*. The documentary featured 16-year-old Josh; Sean, a 42-year-old father of four; and Amanda, aged 36, all of whom shared their experiences with anorexia nervosa. Irish television presenter, Angela Scanlon, provided narration for the documentary, and discussed her personal experience with anorexia nervosa during an interview on RTÉ's *The Late Late Show*. During this period, several articles highlighted the severity and impact of eating disorders, with titles such as "Anorexia nervosa is just hell. It takes control. The power of it is just incredible." and "An eating disorder is such an isolating thing."



Additionally, there was media coverage on the increasing number of individuals receiving treatment for eating disorders in Ireland and the rising presentation rates. RTÉ Prime Time featured an episode titled "Eating disorder patients struggle to find help," which featured Lauren Gaffney, a member of the Bodywhys Media Panel.



Prime Time: Eating disorder patients struggle to find help

Updated / Tuesday, 17 Sep 2024 14:27

Harriet also discussed the increasing need for support services for eating disorders during an interview on Newstalk Breakfast.



People accessing eating disorder support services

Newstalk Breakfast Highlights

Bodywhys, the eating disorder association of Ireland's annual report has seen an increase of 19.5% accessing eating disorder support services. Speaking to Shane this morning was Harriet Parsons, Psychotherapist and Training and Development Manager at Bodywhys.ie.

Other relevant topics covered included ARFID, the use of psychedelics in eating disorder treatment, the relationship between ultra-processed foods and eating disorders, and issues related to fussy eating. In terms of body image, coverage addressed topics such as the promotion of weight loss injections through social media promotion, body dysmorphia, the influence of social media algorithms on mental health, and the impact of harmful social media content.

November/December

Towards the end of the year, coverage of eating disorders remained prominent. Sky Sports presenter Abigail Davies shared her personal experience with anorexia nervosa. Documentary filmmaker Alan Bradley, behind the projects *Unspoken* and *Anorexia, My Family and Me*, received a Mental Health Champion Award from Headline. Harriet Parsons appeared on *Newstalk FM*'s *Pat Kenny* show to speak about emotional eating.



Áine O'Meara, Headline, Alan Bradley, Alleycats TV and Nicola Byrne, Shine



Harriet Parsons with Pat Kenny, Newstalk FM

Awareness was also raised regarding eating disorders in boys and men, with UK musician John Tibbits, who was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa as a teenager, warning that boys are at risk from exposure to fitness 'propaganda'. During this period, focus was brought to YouTube and dieting videos and TikTok's decision to implement measures on the use of beauty filters. Additionally, issues such as binge eating, ARFID, bulimia, service provision, the use of appetite-suppressants, and various aspects of eating disorder treatment continued to be covered in the media.

Articles by key word (print and web)

Keyword	Number of articles
Anorexia nervosa	1,541
Bulimia nervosa	1,380
Eating disorders	2,051
Body image	1,894
Bodywhys	219
Body dysmorphia	1,362
Binge eating	1,249
ARFID	1,185
Orthorexia	1,175
Muscle dysmorphia	1,171
EDNOS	1,164
Total	3,923



1,297 articles were **print based**



2,626 articles were from **web based**

219 articles referenced

BODYWHYS
The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland

130 of those were **web-based**

89 of those were **print** articles

Top news sources by volume of articles:

- *Thesun.ie* - 812 articles
- *Independent.ie* - 117 articles
- *Irish Daily Mail* - 113 articles
- *MSN (Ireland)* - 97 articles

Top sources with Bodywhys as keyword

- *Irish examiner.com* - 11 articles
- *Irish Independent* - 10 articles
- *The Irish Examiner* - 10 articles
- *Newstalk.com* - 9 articles

Website traffic

The number of **users**

33,337

User sessions

52,654

Page views

127,057

Most accessed sections of the site by page views

Homepage

25,006

Services directory

9,933

Helpline

5,367

Treatment

3,924

Overview of support services

3,797



26,122

users accessed the site via **mobile phone**



6,757

were on a **desktop**



311

were on a **tablet device**

There were

3,899



files downloaded from the website in 2024

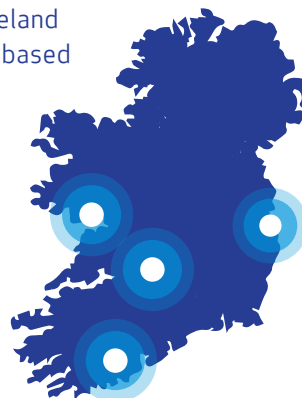
Top downloads included:

- ✓ A guide for families: at least 499 downloads
- ✓ Binge eating booklet: at least 948 downloads
- ✓ Treatment guide: at least 618 downloads

Where in Ireland were users based

462
Galway

373
Limerick



4,888
Unkown

18,472
Dublin

4,384
Cork

Busiest times of year

February

6,040

March

4,725

October

5,203

user sessions



Spike on 13.10.24 around the release of 'Anorexia, My family and Me' with

3,963

views that day



32,875

of visitors in 2024 were **new users**



24,592

users found the site via **organic search**



7,005

users via **direct link** or **social media**

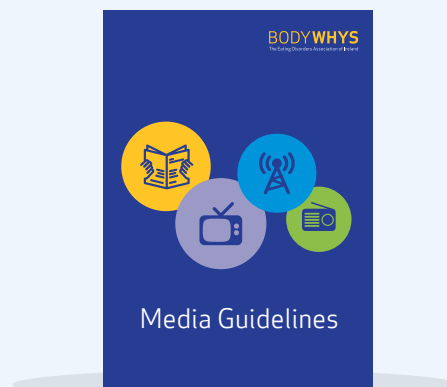


The **top search terms on Google** that lead to the site were:

- ✓ bodywhys, **9,267**
- ✓ anorexia, **855**
- ✓ body whys, **851**
- ✓ Bodywise, **814**
- ✓ arfid, **787**
- ✓ anorexia stories, **624**
- ✓ binge eating disorder, **589**

Updated Bodywhys Media Guidelines

In March, we updated our media guidelines for journalists, researchers and producers. Media stories which are sensitive and accurate, and which avoid sensationalising the issue, can contribute significantly to an increased public understanding of eating disorders, and can encourage those affected to seek support at an early stage.



Social Media

Our **Facebook** reach was **24,965** 

New **Facebook** followers **246** 

Our **Instagram** reach was **82,668** 

New **Instagram** followers **528** 

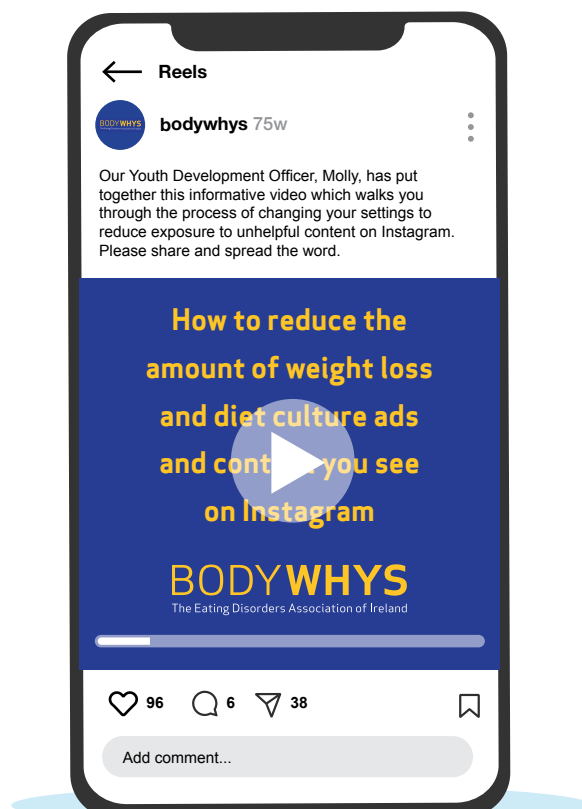
Popular posts on Facebook and Instagram included:

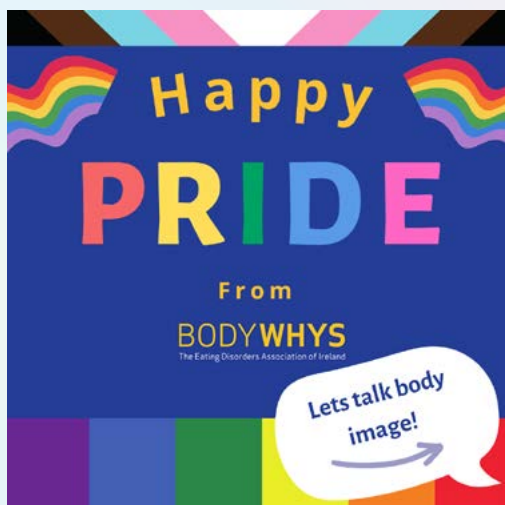
- ✓ World Suicide Prevention Day
- ✓ How to reduce the amount of weight loss and diet culture ads you see on Instagram
- ✓ Anorexia, My Family and Me documentary
- ✓ World Mental Health Day
- ✓ Bodywhys webinar series for secondary schools
- ✓ Eating Disorders Awareness Week posts
- ✓ Bodywhys body image research posters

You Tube **11,174**
views

Diet culture and social media

In March, our Youth Development Officer, Molly, developed an informative video walking our Instagram followers through the process of changing their settings to reduce exposure to unhelpful weight loss and diet culture content on their feed. The video was presented on 11,293 individuals' Instagram feeds, and received 172 interactions, including 39 shares and 32 saves.



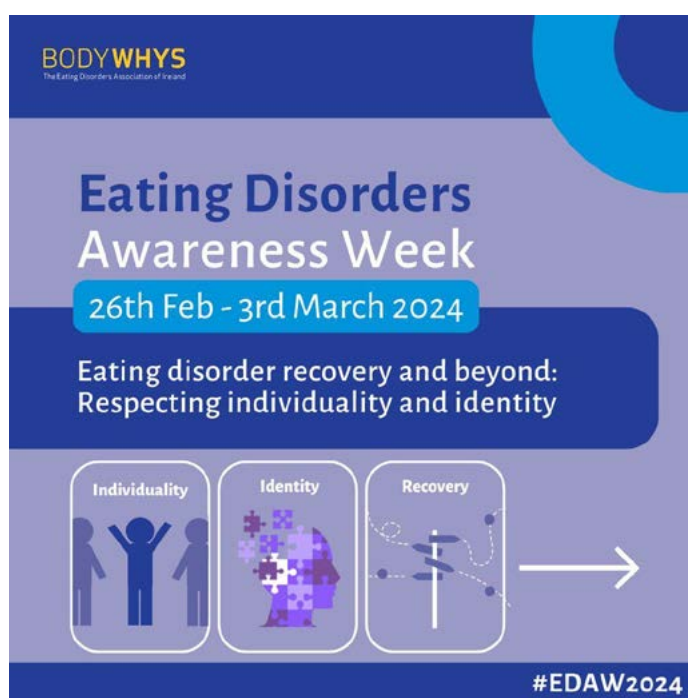


Body Image and LGBTQ+ Community

In support of Pride Month in June, we highlighted that concerns with body image can occur more frequently for members of the LGBTQ+ community, due to unique experiences within society, including stigmatisation, prejudice and discrimination. Molly updated our LGBTQ+ section on www.bodywhysbodyimage.ie

Eating Disorders Awareness Week

EDAW 2024 took place from 26th February–3rd March 2024. The theme was ‘Eating Disorder Recovery and Beyond: Respecting Individuality and Identity’. We highlighted that an eating disorder develops and functions differently for each individual person. Over time it can become a part of a person’s identity and can become intertwined with the person’s sense of self. What it means to recover is unique to each person. We highlighted that a person-centred approach is crucial to validate and recognise these individual experiences and to ensure that each person feels heard and supported every step of the way. Throughout the week, we shared research and lived experience-focused posts as well as hosting various events.

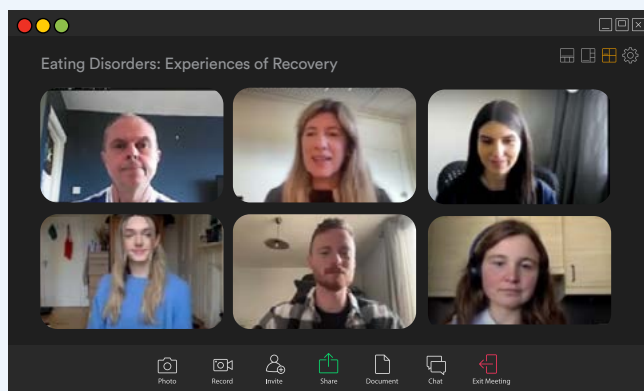


EDAW 2024 events

Organisation	Focus	Format
Spirituality Institute for Research and Education, SETU	Engaging in the challenge of eating disorder recovery through spiritual programmes	In-person
SupportedED Families	Reclaiming Radiance: Nourishing the healthy self in recovery	Online
Lois Bridges	Peer support	Online

Organisation	Focus	Format
Bodywhys	The 4-7 zone and eating disorders, with Dr Colman Noctor	Online
National Eating Disorders Recovery Centre (NEDRC)	Tools for your toolbox: Coping ahead and managing distress	Online
Bodywhys and Fingal Libraries	Supporting people with eating disorders	Online
Lois Bridges	What to do when you're scared to make changes	Online
Bodywhys	Navigating body changes through the lifecycle: Reflecting on lived experience, chronic illness, pregnancy and menopause	Online
NEDRC	We need to talk about the realities of eating disorder recovery	Online
HSE NCPED	Expanding eating disorder knowledge and service development	Online
SupportED Families	5 powerful ways to support your loved one's recovery journey	Online
Lois Bridges	Managing high levels of distress	Online
St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS)	Exploring eating disorder recovery and identifying the signs of eating disorders	Online
Bodywhys	Experiences and stories of recovery	Online
Bodywhys and Rush Library	Supporting people with eating disorders	In-person
Lois Bridges	Virtual open day	
Bodywhys	Bridging the gap between clinical and personal recovery. Informed by research and lived experience	Online
Bodywhys	A discussion on BED with Jo Moscalu – The Binge Eating Dietitian	Online
Conference Networking Ireland, Gerry Butcher	6th Irish National Eating Disorders Conference	In-person, Dublin city
Lois Bridges	The importance of nutritional support in eating disorder recovery	Online
NEDRC	Neurodivergence and eating disorders: Adapting your practice for clients	Online
Advocacy groups	MindEveryBody protests	Cork, Dublin, Limerick
	Unveiling the complexities of eating disorders and understanding major types	Online

Experiences and stories of recovery | [webinar](#)



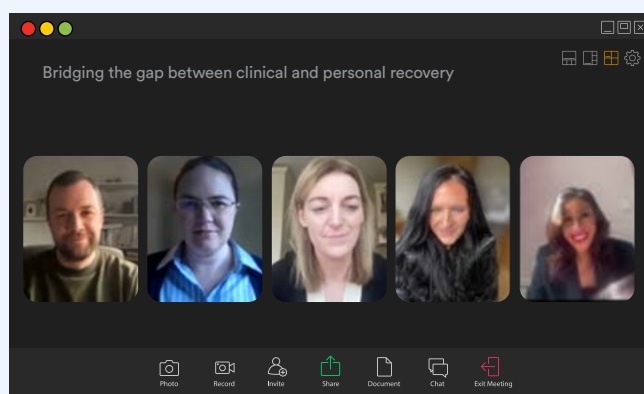
Harriet Parsons spoke with members of the Bodywhys Media Panel (Johnny, Laura, Bláithín, Chris and Emmy)

4-7 zone and eating disorders | [webinar](#)



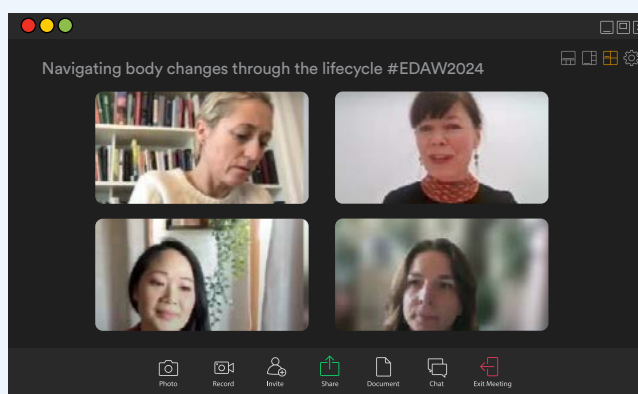
Harriet Parsons spoke with Dr. Colman Noctor, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

Bridging the gap between clinical and personal recovery | [webinar](#)



Contributors: Eoin and Roisin (Bodywhys Media Panel), Dr Niamh McNamara, Nottingham Trent University, Dr Amanda Fitzgerald, University College Dublin. Chaired by Sene Naopu

Navigating body changes through the lifecycle | [webinar](#)



Contributors: Dr. Sarah Cooney, UCD, Bente Sommerfeldt, University of Oslo, Julie and Aoife, (Bodywhys Media Panel). Chaired by Dr Fiona Flynn



Harriet Parsons speaking in Rush Library, Co. Dublin



Niamh, Kathy, Harriet and Molly at the 6th Irish national eating disorders conference in February

National Volunteering Week

In May, we highlighted the experiences of our volunteers and expressed our gratitude for their ongoing support.

"The best part for me in volunteering on the helpline, is to hear the change in the voice from the start to the end of a call. It can be a distressed sad one, or a very anxious stressed one when the call starts, but when you can hear calmness in their voice before hanging up and they say they feel a little calmer then for me it is the biggest reward. To be able to help and make a little difference in their lives is worth everything."

National Volunteering Week
(20th - 26th May 2024)

BODYWHYS
The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland

'It is such an honour to be part of a wonderful service, whereby the volunteers are truly valued and supported'

'Emotional support can be a drop in the ocean, but after all, an ocean is made by drops, so even a small help can make a difference'

Thank you to our dedicated team of volunteers for your continued support.

Interested in Volunteering? Click the link below for more information

Green Ribbon 2024

Throughout September, we supported the Shine – Green Ribbon campaign. This important annual campaign aims to normalise talking about mental health and foster a more inclusive and supportive society. We were delighted to attend the launch event in Dublin city, at which Shine ambassador, Brodie Thompson, shared her personal experience. We supported the campaign throughout the month by sharing research and lived experience posts, including 'A person-centred, ecological framework for recovery', carer's experiences and personal experience of living with Type 1 diabetes (T1D) and an eating disorder, from Media Panel member Fiona McLoone.



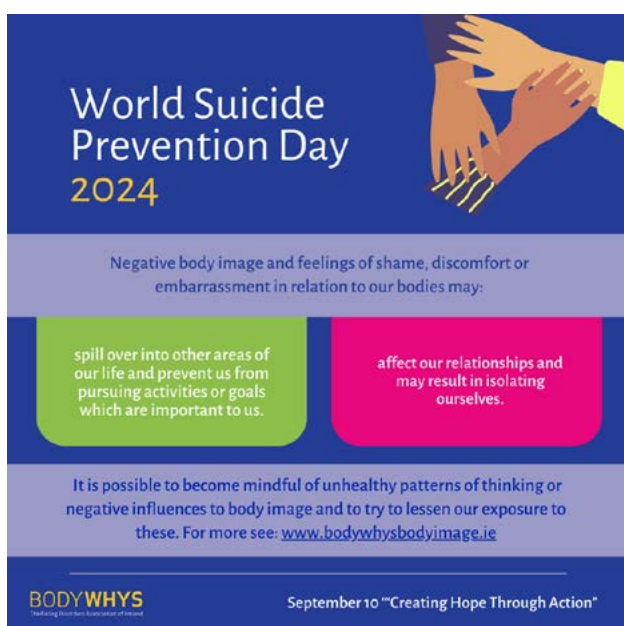
"Navigating the healthcare system with both T1D and anorexia was incredibly challenging. My struggles were often oversimplified, shoved into boxes that didn't fit. I wanted to scream, 'I don't fit your label!' No two cases are the same, and everyone deserves to be heard, not just categorised. It wasn't until years later, after I had recovered, that I began to feel validated."



Fiona McLoone,
Bodywhys Media Panel

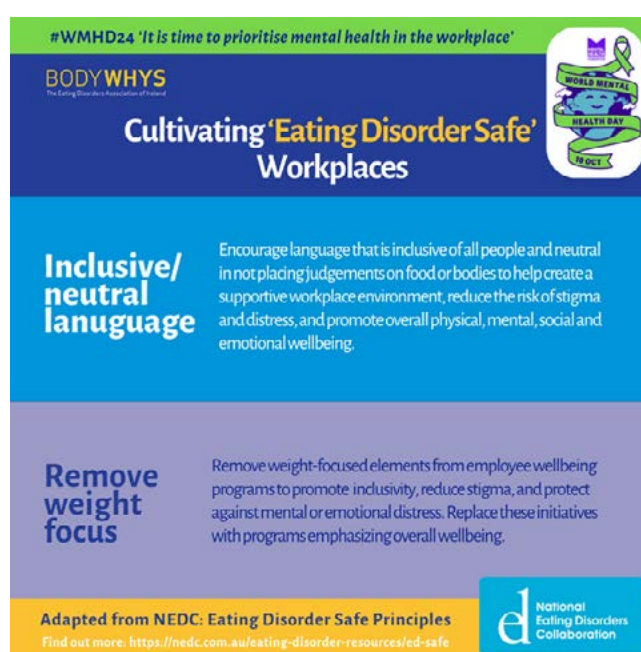
World Suicide Prevention Day 2024

We highlighted the link between body image dissatisfaction and suicidal ideation on World Suicide Prevention Day with the message that it is possible to become mindful of unhealthy patterns of thinking or negative influences to body image and try to lessen our exposure to these.



World Mental Health Month

In October, we supported World Mental Health Month and the theme 'Prioritising Mental Health in the Workplace'. We shared key messages from the Australian National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC) who developed 'Eating Disorder Safe Principles'. These principles are designed to guide consistent and safe messaging in a variety of settings, aiming to prevent and minimise harm in relation to eating disorders.



Podcast

The Bodywhys podcast continued to grow in 2024, and a new series of the New Maudsley Carer Skills commenced in the Autumn.

We published

24 podcast episodes

Streams and downloads

11,818

Consumption hours

1,839

Spotify **demographics** where known

81%

Female

13%

Male

0.8%

Non-binary

4.8%

not specified

271 Increase in followers



795

total followers at the end of 2024



Audience size on Spotify in 2024

1,467



Age: 52% of listeners were in the 45-59 year age group

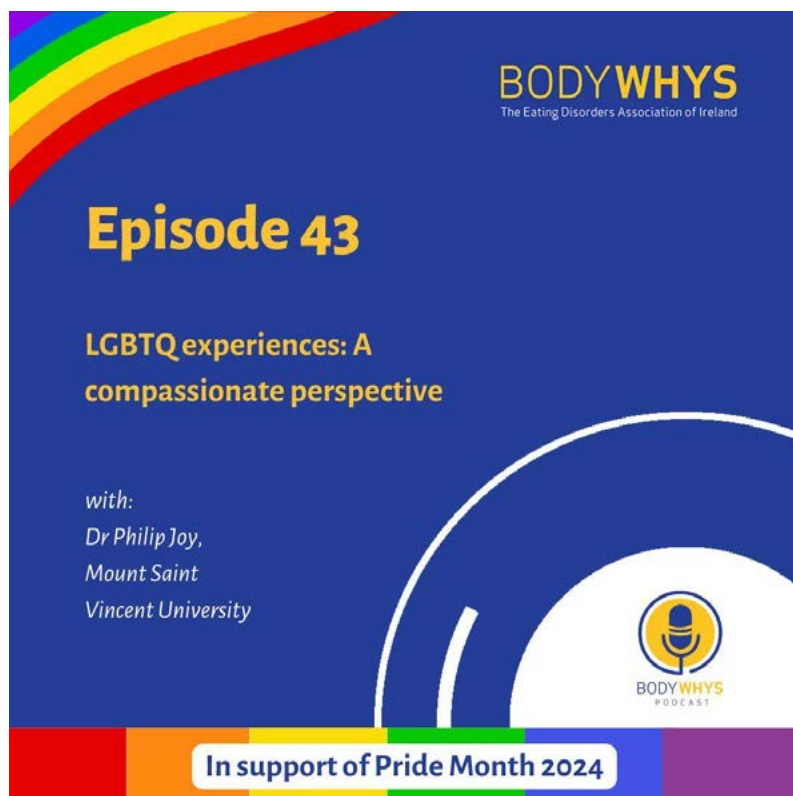
Episodes included:

Bodywhys podcast

- ✓ Voices of Lived Experience: Severe and Enduring Eating Disorders
- ✓ Interceptive sensibility and body image
- ✓ Social media and body image: Addressing knowledge gaps
- ✓ Experiences of Recovery: Stories from the Bodywhys Media Panel (webinar recording audio)
- ✓ The ignored role of disadvantage
- ✓ Co-producing principles to guide health research
- ✓ Sports coaches and relative energy deficiency in sport (REDS)
- ✓ Auditing social media algorithms
- ✓ LGBTQ experiences: A compassionate perspective
- ✓ Artificial intelligence and ethics
- ✓ Binge eating and decision making
- ✓ Humour, compassion, microinterventions for body image
- ✓ Voices of Lived Experience: How an eating disorder taught me I am enough
- ✓ Eating disorders are not niche
- ✓ What is diagnostic crossover?

NMCS podcast

- ✓ Welcome back to season 2
- ✓ An introduction to the New Maudsley Carer Skills model when supporting an autistic or neurodivergent person with an eating disorder
- ✓ The purple balloon
- ✓ Adapting OARS when supporting an autistic/neurodivergent person with an eating disorder
- ✓ Adapting the ALVS (Attend, Label, Validate, Soothe) technique when supporting an autistic person with an eating disorder
- ✓ ARFID – Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (Mini-series part 1)
- ✓ ARFID – Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder in children (Mini-series part 2)
- ✓ ARFID – Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder in adults (Mini-series part 3)
- ✓ ARFID – What to do when your loved one is stuck (Mini-series part 4)



Ongoing international meetings

Ellen Jennings and Barry Murphy, attended virtual meetings bimonthly throughout the year with representatives from international eating disorder organisations, including Beat (United Kingdom), the Butterfly Foundation (Australia), National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA; United States) and National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC; Canada). It has been very beneficial to keep in touch with international colleagues and learn about their work. We look forward to future meetings in 2025.

eBulletin

There were **5** editions of the eBulletin sent to our **2,259** subscribers throughout the year. Updates were sent in February, March, April, July and October.



Webinars and events

Ellen supported the co-ordination and preparation of a range of Bodywhys events. For example,

- ✓ During EDAW, Ellen spoke on behalf of Bodywhys at a Spectrum Health workplace wellness event focused on eating disorders hosted by Clare McKenna
- ✓ Against the Odds: Women's Journeys from Negative to Positive Body Image with Moon Waldén. This event was in support of International Women's Day
- ✓ Fathers' experiences: Eating Disorder Treatment and Recovery in support of Men's Health Week.



During the year, Ellen attended the following events

When	Organisation
HSE National Eating Disorders Webinar 2024: Expanding Eating Disorder Knowledge and Service Development	HSE NCPED
Eating Disorder Safe Principles launch	National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC)
Children's Rights Alliance: Report Card	Children's Rights Alliance
Mental Health Peer-Support (Buddy) Training	Cycle Against Suicide
Pre-Budget Submission launch online	Mental Health Reform
Culture night planning	The Wheel

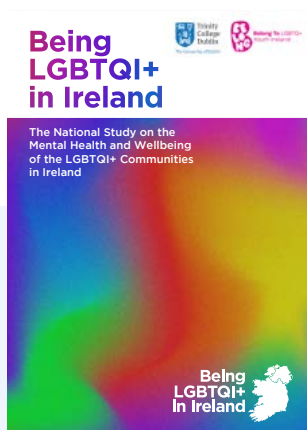
Literature development

During the year, we updated several Bodywhys information leaflets.



Irish research

In **April**, Barry attended the launch of Belong To's report on mental health in the LGBTQ+ community. This research was a follow up study to 2016's Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland (sic) study. 2024's findings included potential eating disorders amongst 41% of participants. The research had a sample size of 2,806 people aged 14-84.



Barry attended the launch of the National Youth Council of Ireland's (NYCI) report *State of our young nation: A report into the lives of Irish 18-29-year-olds*. The report, based on a quantitative sample of 781 adults, noted that 1/5 of young people had skipped meals due to cost, with this peaking amongst 18-22-year-olds. This may suggest a connection to food insecurity, which is a risk factor for eating disorders.



Body Image Research Network (BIRN)

In November, Barry, Fiona and Molly attended the inaugural BIRN event titled 'Connecting Bodies: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Body Image Research in Ireland' in Dublin. Keynote speakers included Professor Elizabeth Daniels, Director of the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR), University of Bristol, Professor Colette Kelly, University of Galway and Dr Rachel Rodgers, Northeastern University.



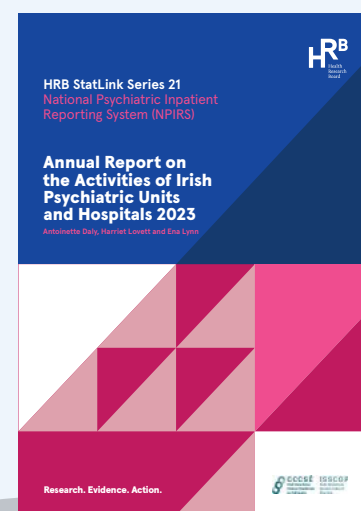
Hospital Inpatient Figures: Health Research Board (HRB)

In **November**, the HRB published figures from the National Psychiatric Inpatient Reporting System (NPIRS) for 2023. These statistics are unsurprising and extremely concerning.

Page 24 of the HRB report stated 'For the first time, eating disorders accounted for the highest proportion of all under 18 admissions along with depressive disorders. Both disorders accounted for 24% each of all under 18 admissions.'

Whilst on page 25 the HRB commented that:

'the proportion of admissions for all under 18s with a primary admission diagnosis of eating disorder has progressively increased from 11% in 2019, 18% in 2020, 23% in 2021, 22% in 2022, to 24% in 2023'



International research

Research from Yale School of Medicine and Yale School of Public Health found a significant association between eczema and eating disorders. The study identified that people with eczema are three times more likely to experience binge eating disorder and twice as likely to experience anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa.

Online Safety

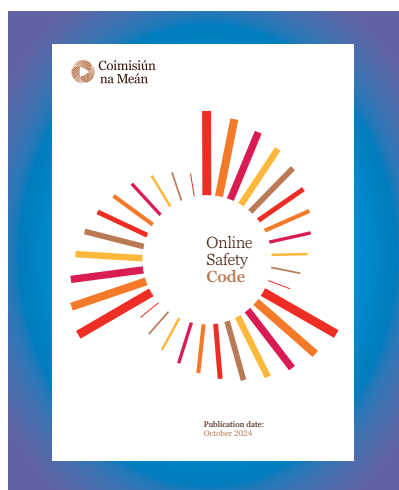
Online safety remained a key priority in 2024, including progress at a regulatory level. Bodywhys completed a further submission to Coimisiún na Meán early in the year. Over 1,300 submissions were received by the regulator.

In **May**, Barry attended an Online Safety Code briefing by Coimisiún na Meán. In June, Barry met with Dublin City University's (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre to discuss online safety. Barry attended the Children's Rights Alliance annual general meeting (AGM) and online safety briefing in Dublin. The keynote address was by Professor Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics. In August, the Children's Rights Alliance expressed concern that the draft Online Safety Code did not provide adequate safeguards for children and young people.

In **September**, Barry and other experts, attended a virtual meeting of Ofcom, the online safety regulator in the United Kingdom at their request. Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly established an Online Health Taskforce to develop

a public health response to harms caused to children and young people by certain types of online activity. The Taskforce is chaired by children's rights advocate Jillian van Turnhout.

In **October**, Coimisiún na Meán published its final Online Safety Code with binding online safety rules for Irish-based video-sharing platforms. This includes 'video content by which a person promotes or encourages behaviour that characterises a feeding or eating disorder'.



Barry attended an inaugural event called the People's Inquiry on Big Tech Harms in Dublin. Organised by the Uplift campaign, this included panel discussions, with a mixture of researchers, advocates, technology and policy experts.

Topics discussed included

- ✓ Health and mental health
- ✓ Marginalised communities and online hate
- ✓ Data misuse and the environment
- ✓ Threat to democracy.

In **November**, the media reported that TikTok had removed access to beauty filters for those aged under 18. Barry attended the Safer Internet Forum (online), an engaging event informed by experts and youth perspectives. Issues discussed included

- ✓ Young people's exposure to harmful content and behaviour online
- ✓ Online harms - finding the balance between protection and empowerment
- ✓ How to foster children's and young people's mental health and well-being online and act against cyberbullying.



Connecting with other groups

Barry attended the Network of Childhood Illness Organisations (NCIO) online meetings hosted by Children in Hospital Ireland (CIHI), the Family Carer Research Group (FCRG) meetings organised by Care Alliance Ireland, the Social Policy Network and the Men's Health Forum Ireland (MHFI).

Mental Health Reform (MHR)

Barry attended MHR's Policy and Advocacy Working Group meetings through the year. In October, Mental Health Reform welcomed the Department of Health's allocation of an additional €143.5M for mental health services for 2025.



MHR's 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

MHR's Pre-budget submission 2025

MHR described reasons for change in their pre-budget submission. Along with 83 member organisations and their grassroots advocates, they highlighted that every one of us as a reason to demand better.



Mental Health Reform photocall, pre-budget submission 2025. Photograph: Conor McCabe

International developments

In September, Bodywhys joined the Consortium for Research in Eating Disorders (CoRe-ED), a first-of-its-kind international initiative that brings together all people involved in eating disorders research - researchers, clinicians, people with lived experience, advocates, not-for-profit and industry representatives - globally.

CoRe-ED was developed by Dr Gemma Sharp, Monash University, Australia. Barry met Dr Sharp in Dublin in June.



Dr Gemma Sharp and Barry Murphy in Dublin



Supporting Researchers

This year, we shared calls for participants for research projects including:

- ✓ An exploration of the lived experiences of individuals with ADHD who have recovered from an eating disorder
- ✓ Exploring body image and disordered eating in primary school teachers: the role of body talk, with self-objectification as a mediator
- ✓ An exploration of orthorexia nervosa tendencies in young adults in Ireland
- ✓ An exploration of clinicians' experience of working online with young people and their families using the Maudsley family-based treatment for anorexia nervosa (FBT)
- ✓ Exploring the relationships between eating disorders, autism, alexithymia and interoception
- ✓ Development of the adolescent sibling experience of eating disorders scale (ASEEDS)
- ✓ A mixed methods evaluation of caregivers' experiences in caring for a young person with an eating disorder
- ✓ An inner view of the outer self: an investigation into the relationship between body image and attitudes towards aesthetic procedures in Irish adults across the lifespan
- ✓ Exploring predictors of orthorexia in exercisers: perfectionism, body image, social media and vulnerability to disease
- ✓ Assessing the influence of caregiver factors on family-based treatment (FBT) for child and adolescent eating disorders
- ✓ Eating and core beliefs
- ✓ Investigating cognitive factors related to eating disorders
- ✓ The relationship between menopause and disordered eating survey
- ✓ What's on your plate? The impact of major life events and locus of control on eating habits
- ✓ Personality style of therapists in Ireland
- ✓ Engagement to digital mental health interventions among university students with mental health difficulties: qualitative study
- ✓ Cyberbullying experiences and mental health impacts among higher education students in Ireland.

The research requests were from a variety of institutions, such as Dublin Business School, Dublin City University, King's College London, Northumbria University, Swinburne University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Buenos Aires, University College Dublin, University of Edinburgh, University of Galway, University of Melbourne, University of New England, University of Roehampton and the University of Sydney.

Consultations / Engagement with the Mental Health Community

Bodywhys completed the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) stakeholder survey online. Bodywhys and 23 other agencies completed a survey about recommendations 61 and 63 within *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone*, with a focus on cultural competency and services for refugees and asylum seekers.

Attendance at Events

Month	Focus	Organisation
February	Engaging the challenge of eating disorder recovery through spiritual programmes	Spirituality Institute, SETU
April	State of our Young Nation: A Report into the Lives of Irish 18–29-year-olds	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
May	Developing Ireland's first mental health research strategy	HRB
	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) report	University of Galway (online launch)
July	Pre-budget submission 2025	CARED Ireland and MindEveryBody
	Pre-budget submission 2025 photocall and AGM	MHR
	Review of Connecting for Life, HSE suicide prevention strategy	MHR
August	Online Safety Code	Children's Rights Alliance members' meeting (online)
September	HSE Patient and Service User Forum meeting, Dublin	HSE, Dublin
	Promoting safe and sensitive media reporting of suicide and self-harm event	HSE NOSP, Dublin
	Child Health Research Festival	Trinity College Dublin
	Green Ribbon 2024 launch	Shine, Dublin
October	Meeting with the Secretary General of Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Children's Rights Alliance
November	Safer Internet Forum	European Commission
	Adolescent Eating Disorders Research Consortium	British Eating Disorders Society (online)
December	Research Showcase Networking Event	School of Nursing, Trinity College Dublin
	National Carers Strategy 2.0	Care Alliance Ireland (online)

NOSP event: Promoting safe and sensitive media reporting of suicide and self-harm

Key points from the NOSP event

- ✓ Stories of recovery from a suicide crisis can contribute to fewer suicides
- ✓ Silence increases stigma
- ✓ Overly detailed or sensationalist reporting is unhelpful. Authentic representation is key
- ✓ Strong social supports, community links and supportive relationships can play a role in postponing suicide
- ✓ For journalists, newsrooms can feel like 'macho' workplaces where it's expected to not show vulnerability
- ✓ Copycat or contagion is not caused by social media.



Dr Khalid Saeed, Regional Advisor, Mental Health and Substance Use programme, Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, World Health Organisation



Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, TD



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Mental Health and Recovery Research Theme





Fundraising

Fundraising



Niamh Nutty
Office Manager



Thank You!

Bodywhys would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who fundraised for us in 2024. For example, those who raised money based around their birthdays, sporting events and through donations. We are so grateful that you chose to support Bodywhys.

In **April**, Molly met with a group of Transition Year students in St. Brendan's College, Killarney. They raised €770 for Bodywhys as part of their Young Social Innovators (YSI) campaign titled, **"Men Have Mirrors Too"**, which focused on raising awareness of eating disorders and body image issues in men and boys. Thanks to the TY group for the funds they raised for Bodywhys and for such an important campaign.



Noticeboard displayed in St Brendan's College as part of the "Men Have Mirrors Too" project.



Molly with the Transition Year students in St. Brendan's College, Killarney



Anna Webster
who raised €1,765
for Bodywhys by
completing a half
marathon in Rome.

Pictured: Anna Webster and her family

In **November**, Harriet opened University College Cork's Dance Society dance night in aid of Bodywhys. This event raised an incredible €5,715.60 for Bodywhys.





Financial Statements and Balance Sheet

THINK BODYWHYS Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Financial Activities

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
		2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	Notes	€	€	€	€	€	€
Incoming Resources							
Voluntary Income	5.1	26,402	-	26,402	44,509	-	44,509
Activities for generating funds	5.2	553,111	55,098	608,209	468,936	50,000	518,936
Other income	5.3	55,167	-	55,167	-	-	-
Total incoming resources		634,680	55,098	689,778	513,445	50,000	563,445
Resources Expended							
Raising funds	6.1	44,965	-	44,965	4,500	-	4,500
Charitable activities	6.2	593,918	46,410	640,328	580,279	35,788	616,067
Total Resources Expended		638,883	46,410	685,293	584,779	35,788	620,567
Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers		(4,203)	8,688	4,485	(71,334)	14,212	(57,122)
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds for the financial year		(4,203)	8,688	4,485	(71,334)	14,212	(57,122)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds beginning of the year	14	544,828	65,802	610,630	616,162	51,590	667,752
Total funds at the end of the year		540,625	74,490	615,115	544,828	65,802	610,630

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year.
All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 19 August 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

IMELDA REDMOND
Trustee

JASON COSTELLO
Trustee

THINK BODYWHYS Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Current Assets			
Debtors	10	55,047	9,456
Cash at bank and at hand	11	612,566	649,454
		667,613	658,910
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(52,498)	(48,280)
Net Current Assets		615,115	610,630
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		615,115	610,630
Funds			
Restricted trust funds		74,490	65,802
Designated funds (Unrestricted)		226,730	226,730
General fund (unrestricted)		313,895	318,098
Total Funds	14	615,115	610,630

Approved by the Board of Directors on 19 August 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

IMELDA REDMOND

Trustee

JASON COSTELLO

Trustee

Acknowledgements

The Chair, Board of Directors and Staff wish to record their sincere thanks to all those who volunteered, supported, or donated to Bodywhys in 2024. Your interest in, and support of our work is much appreciated.

Department of Health and Staff

Health Service Executive and Staff

St. John of God Brothers: CEO, Staff and Order

Sully Productions: Eavan O'Sullivan

All of those who undertook fundraisers for or who donated to Bodywhys during the year



Organisational Structure and Governance

Overview of Company Structure

Directors	Sene Naoupu
	Henry Blake
	Tiggy Hudson
	Imelda Redmond
	Siobhain McArdle
	Sheila Naughton
	Jason Costello
	Judy Blake (appointed 18/11/24)
Company Secretary	Henry Blake
Registered Office	18 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2
Auditors	Dillon Kelly Cregan & Co. 18 Upper Mount Street Dublin 2
	Think Bodywhys CLG, trading as Bodywhys – the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It was incorporated in 1995. Bodywhys is a charitable organisation registered with the Charities Regulator (CRA) in accordance with the Charities Act 2009.
Company Number (CRO)	236310
Charity Registration Number (CRA)	2003405
Charity Number (CHY)	11961
Principal Bankers	Bank of Ireland, Stillorgan Shopping Centre, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Legal Name	Think Bodywhys a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

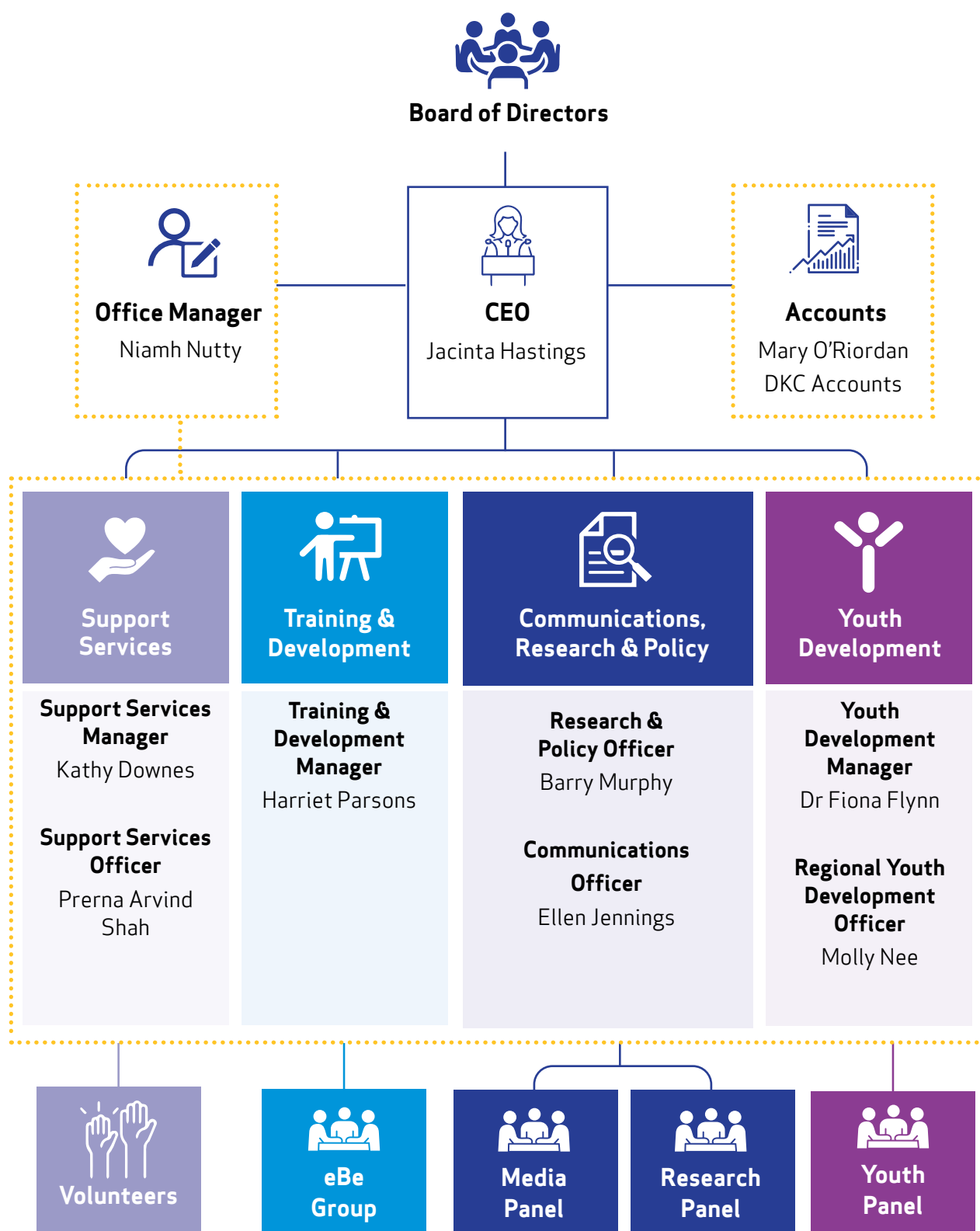
Bodywhys Team 2024	Jacinta Hastings, Chief Executive Officer
	Harriet Parsons, Training and Development Manager
	Christopher Cash, Training and Development Consultant
	Kathy Downes, Support Services Manager
	Terri Coffey, Support Services Officer (until September)
	Perna Shah, Support Services Officer
	Dr Fiona Flynn, Youth Development Manager
	Shauna McGroarty, Regional Youth Development Officer (East, until April)
	Molly Nee, Regional Youth Development Officer (West)
	Barry Murphy, Research and Policy Officer
	Ellen Jennings, Communications Officer
	Niamh Nutty, Office Manager
	Mary O'Riordan, Finance Manager



Mission Statement

“our mission is to ensure support, awareness and understanding of eating disorders amongst the wider community as well as advocating for the rights and healthcare needs of people affected by eating disorders”

Organisational Structure: End of 2024



Governance

Governance

Internal policies and procedures were reviewed and updated as required including the Employee Handbook, Media and Crisis Communications Policy, Vetting Policy, and a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS). Our thanks to Tusla's Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit for their assistance with the CSS.

Think Bodywhys CLG, trading as Bodywhys – the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It was incorporated in 1995. Bodywhys is a charitable organisation registered with the Charities Regulator (CRA) in accordance with the Charities Act 2009.

Board Structure and Composition

Bodywhys is governed by a Board of Directors not exceeding 9 (including the Chairperson). The Board is made up of individuals with experience in law, finance, business, media, eating disorder clinicians, psychology and expert by experience.

All Trustees are non-executive and sit on the Board on a voluntary basis, receiving no remuneration for their time and contribution. In 2024, there was no expense claims raised by the Trustees.

Members of the Board shall be Directors for a period of three years from the date of their appointment and thereafter shall be eligible for reappointment for a further period of three years. Any Director may, after the expiration of such six year term, be subsequently reappointed for one further, but not consecutive, term of three years.

The Board of Directors is empowered to fill a board vacancy on a temporary basis to meet the organisation's specific requirements, any such nomination to the Board must be brought to the next AGM for ratification or alternative nomination proposed for ratification.

Board Meetings and Reporting

The Board of Directors met a total of 5 times in 2024, including the AGM which took place on September 16th. In addition to Board meetings, Trustees are available to consult over the course of the year to review issues which need consideration between Board meetings. The CEO reports to the Board.

The Board Sub-Committee: Finance & Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee consists of five members including the Treasurer and two other members. The Finance and Audit Committee's responsibilities

relate to governance oversight of: reserves and deposits, financial reporting and external audit, internal financial control and risk, budgeting and financial performance, insurance and procurement. The committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending to the Board for approval: the annual budget, monthly management accounts, audited accounts and risk register. The committee met four times in 2024.

Governance Code Compliance

The Board of Directors are committed to maintaining the highest levels of corporate governance and transparency.

In 2024, Bodywhys complied with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code and completed the annual return. Bodywhys is not identified as a complex charity and therefore is not required to adhere to the additional requirements under the Code. In addition to the Charity's Regulators Governance Code, Bodywhys is committed to meeting specific legislation and standards which include:

- The Companies Act 2014
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

Bodywhys is fully tax compliant and has an up-to-date Tax Clearance Certificate from Revenue.

Lobbying

As required under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015, Bodywhys records all lobbying activity and communications engaged in with the Designated Public Officials (DPOs). It has made all the returns and submissions required by the Act during 2024.

Director's Remuneration

No remuneration or other benefits were paid to any directors directly or indirectly.

Remuneration

The CEO's salary for the year was €76,855. In addition, 5% of her salary was paid as employer contribution into a defined contribution pension on her behalf.

The CEO is appointed by the Board of Directors but is not a Board member. Apart from the CEO, no employee of the organisation earned more than €60K in 2024. All staff members who worked for the organisation during the financial year fell within the following bands:

Salary Bands	No. of Staff
€20,000 – €29,999	1
€30,000 – €39,999	5
€40,000 – €49,999	2
€50,000 – €59,000	1
€60,000 – €69,000	0
€70,000 – €79,000	1

Memberships



BODYWHYS

The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland

Postal Address: P.O. Box 105, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Office: 01-2834963

Helpline: 01-2107906

Office email: info@bodywhys.ie

Email support: alex@bodywhys.ie

Websites: www.bodywhys.ie and www.bodywhysbodyimage.ie

Think Bodywhys CLG, trading as Bodywhys – the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, is a company limited by guarantee.

Registered Company Number 236310. Registered Office 18 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2.

Registered Charity Number 20034054. CHY number 11961