



Orchard Care Group



Impact Report 2025

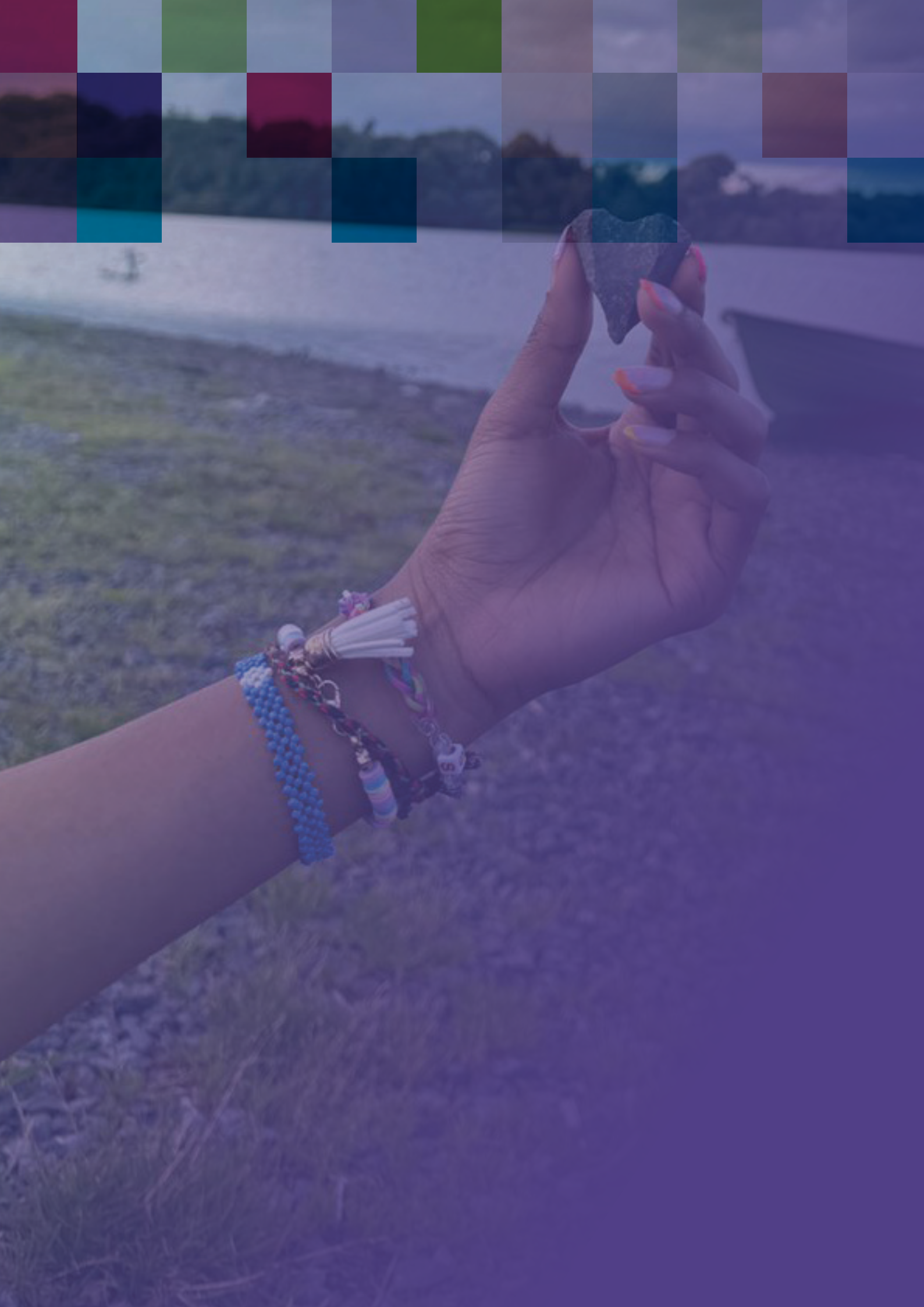


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Welcome to the Orchard Care Group Impact Report 2025



It is my privilege to share with you the Orchard Care Group Impact Report 2025 – a reflection of a year that has been both deeply meaningful and genuinely transformative for our organisation, and most importantly, for the people we are honoured to support.

2025 has been a landmark year for Orchard Care Group. We reached the milestone of proudly employing over 500 colleagues nationwide. In Orchard Community Care we opened six new homes, expanded into the South East region for the first time, and celebrated ten years of Orchard Community Care – a decade defined by growth, learning, and an unwavering commitment to the people we serve. Orchard Fostering, Ireland's leading independent fostering agency, continued to go from strength to strength, and Orchard Residential Care delivered outstanding outcomes for young people and opened two new homes.

Yet what I am most proud of is not the scale of our growth – it is the quality of our support and care. Our mission has always been to uphold the rights, dignity, and voice of each individual we support, and that remains as true today as it was when we began. In every home, in every placement, and in every interaction, our teams demonstrate what it means to put people genuinely first. The stories in this report – James finding his confidence, Chloe achieving her Junior Certificate, Adam pursuing his dreams in the USA – are a testament to what person-centred care, delivered with consistency and compassion, can make possible.

Our focus on quality has never been stronger. We achieved 91% compliance across all internally assessed regulations and strengthened our Quality and Human Rights governance structures. Across every division, quality is not a function – it is a culture. It is everyone's responsibility, and it is experienced every day by the people we support.

None of this would be possible without our people. Our "Growing Our Own Apples" philosophy came to life in 2025 with 69 internal promotions nationwide, as colleagues stepped into leadership roles they had worked hard to earn. We welcomed new team members

from across Ireland and from countries as far-reaching as Greece, Canada, India, and New Zealand – each bringing their own expertise, perspective, and passion to our organisation. I want to sincerely thank every single member of the Orchard Care Group team. Your commitment, compassion, and professionalism are the heartbeat of everything we do.

I am also proud of the progress we have made in sustainability. A 12% reduction in carbon footprint per resident, solar panels installed across ten additional homes, and a 154% increase in hybrid vehicles in our fleet are meaningful steps forward in our responsibility to future generations. Sustainability, like quality, is embedded in how we operate – not as an afterthought, but as a core part of who we are.

As I look ahead to 2026 and beyond, I do so with immense confidence and pride. Orchard Care Group is an organisation that is growing – not simply in numbers, but in depth, in expertise, and in impact. Our direction is clear: better outcomes, stronger voices, and the highest possible quality of life for every child, young person, and adult we are privileged to support.

I hope that as you read this report, you feel the same sense of purpose and possibility that I do – and that you see, in every page, the real and lasting difference that care, when done right, can make.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalya Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

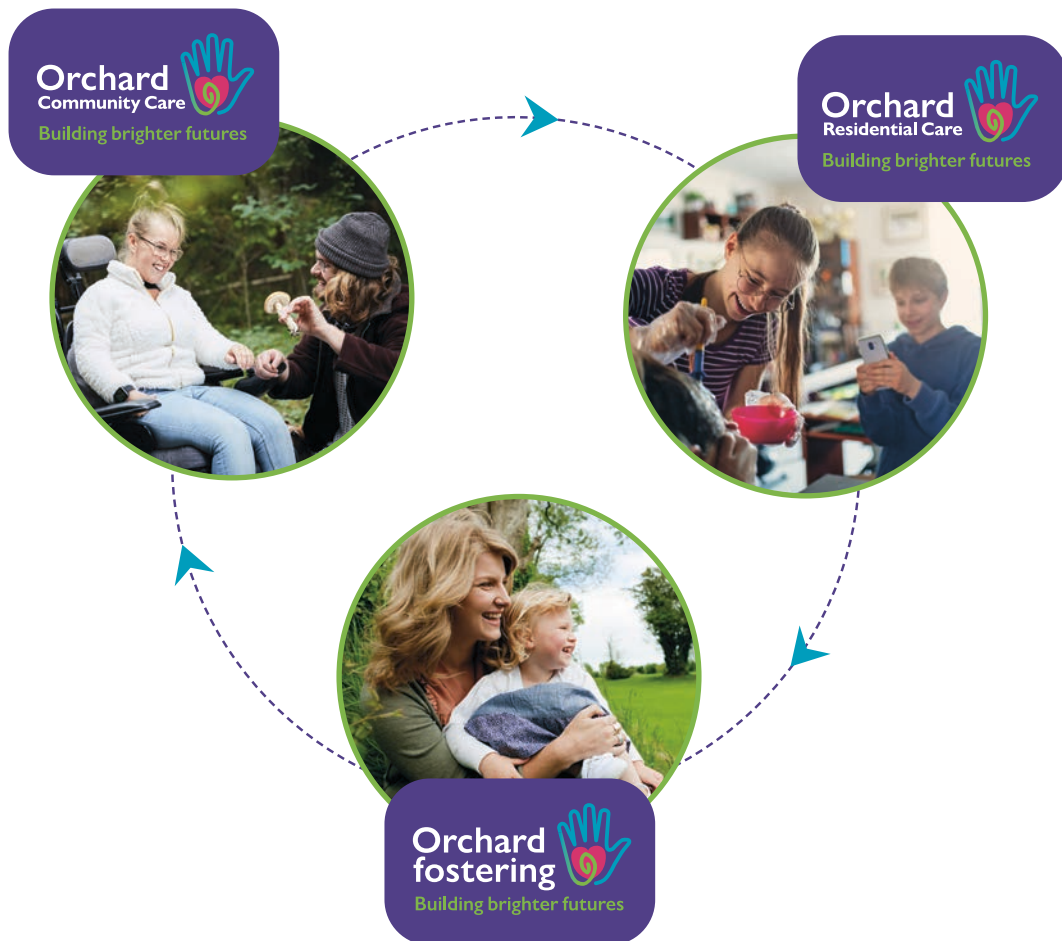
Natalya Jackson
Chief Executive Officer, Orchard Care Group

About Orchard Care Group

Who We Are

Orchard Care Group is a leading provider of person-centred social care services across Ireland, supporting children, young people, and adults with a wide range of needs. Our services are grounded in a rights-based approach, underpinned by strong governance, and focused on delivering safe, high-quality, and responsive care.

Orchard Care Group is made up of three distinct but connected divisions, each working collaboratively to deliver specialised supports:



*Together, these services ensure a continuum of care that is **flexible**, **responsive**, and **tailored to the individual needs** of those we support.*

What We Do

Orchard Community Care supports children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism, and physical and sensory needs. Services are designed around the individual and include:



Building brighter futures

Orchard Community Care supports children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism, and physical and sensory needs. Services are designed around the individual and include:

- ✓ DAY SERVICES
- ✓ OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS
- ✓ RESPITE CARE
- ✓ SHARED CARE
- ✓ RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The focus is on promoting independence, inclusion, and meaningful participation in community life.



Building brighter futures

Orchard Residential Care provides residential services for children and young people who are in the care of the State, including those seeking international protection. The service offers safe, stable, and nurturing environments where young people are supported to develop, build resilience, and achieve positive outcomes.



Building brighter futures

Orchard Fostering supports children in foster care and the foster carers who care for them. The service is committed to ensuring that children experience stable, supportive family environments, while foster carers receive the training, guidance, and ongoing support needed to meet each child's needs.

Across all divisions, Orchard Care Group works in partnership with individuals, families, multidisciplinary teams, and external agencies to ensure coordinated, effective, and person-centred care.





Our Mission

Our mission is to **provide high-quality, person-centred care that upholds the rights, dignity, and voice of each individual**, supporting them to live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be **a trusted leader in social care**, recognised for excellence, innovation, and the delivery of safe, rights-based services that enable individuals to thrive and be active participants in their communities.



Our Values

Our values are central to everything we do and guide how we deliver care and support:



Human Rights

We uphold and promote the rights of every individual, ensuring dignity, respect, and fairness in all interactions.

Advocacy

We empower individuals to have their voices heard and to actively participate in decisions about their lives.

Integrity

We act with honesty, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of our work.

Excellence

We are committed to continuous improvement, innovation, and delivering high standards of care.

Collaboration

We work in partnership with individuals, families, colleagues, and stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes.

People & Culture

At Orchard Care, our people are at the core of everything we do. Our People & Culture Strategy provides a framework for our organisation’s stability and long-term sustainability. Our commitment to continuous improvement and investment in our people is unwavering in our goal to become the employer of choice with a single positive organisational culture that connects people and empowers them to achieve our mission, vision and values.



Our People

2025 brought further investment in our People. Our Human Resources function grew significantly with new dedicated Talent Acquisition, Learning & Development and Specialist Human Resource Business Partnering teams.

By the end of 2025, we hit the milestone of proudly employing over 500 colleagues nationwide, an increase of 243 new staff, including a significant increase in our Senior Management and multi-disciplinary teams as well as the appointment of dedicated in house trainers.

75% of our teams are employed on a full-time permanent basis giving excellent stability in our teams and ensuring a high level of continuity of care.

All colleagues hold a minimum of QQI Level 5 qualification with 68% qualified to degree level or above.

New services in the South East and South West of Ireland brought the opportunity to widen our reach and all new services opened on time with appropriately resourced teams. Our team ensures our residents receive support from experienced, empowered staff, properly trained and registered to work.



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Our commitment to learning and development supported this and improved retention across all our divisions.

Succession Planning

We have a philosophy at Orchard Care Group of “Growing Our Own Apples” and in 2025 this philosophy began to bear fruit with **69 internal promotions nationwide.**

Our commitment to learning and development supported this and improved retention across all our divisions.

Colleagues moved into Person in Charge, Deputy Manager and Team Leader roles across the country and we continue to actively promote opportunities for further professional development and subsequent promotion from day one of employment for all staff.



International Recruitment

We are proud to be a multi-cultural organisation with colleagues hailing from all over the world. This year we welcomed many new team members from Greece, Finland, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Croatia and further afield from America, Canada, India, Brazil & New Zealand. We continue to seek out the best talent across the world and support them to join us here at Orchard Care Group.



Marino House

The move to our new bespoke offices in Sligo boasts dedicated training areas, hot desking and a centralisation of our corporate services teams. Our new offices were celebrated with a hugely successful Recruitment Open Day in September when we welcomed candidates from across the region.

Ocean FM broadcast live from outside our offices with live on air and fantastic promotion of all the opportunities available. With features on social media, some of our managers who helped out on the day are now officially “Influencers”.

Work Life Balance

Our commitment to our colleagues well being and work life balance was further enhanced this year with the introduction of Rolling Rosters nationwide. Not only does this allow our colleagues to plan their time off to complement their responsibilities and interests outside of work, but it has also resulted in reduced turnover and stable teams.

Orchard Learning Academy

We have embedded a culture of continuous learning across Orchard Care Group, with the Orchard Learning Academy continuing to grow and develop this year, As part of “The Orchard Way” Management programme **20 colleagues completed fully funded leadership management programmes with a further 10 staff completing their level 5 certificate in healthcare support.**

A new comprehensive Person in Charge induction programme was rolled out with complimentary quarterly “New Managers Training Days” led out by our CEO and Executive Team. Bespoke Assisted Decision Making training was delivered nationwide, along with other specialist training and development in line with our residents needs and best practice. The appointment of dedicated in house trainers further enhances our ability to support and develop our colleagues professional development and deliver the best possible quality care to the people we support.

LEAP - Front Line Leader (Level 6) and Emerging Leaders Programme (Level 5)

In line with last year's commitment to providing Continuous Professional Development, this year (September - December), in partnership with LEAP and Skillsnet (as part of the European Social Fund initiative), saw our first cohort of 12 staff complete either the Front-Line Leader Management Programme and Emerging Leaders Programme, targeted at equipping our people with the skills to become leaders of the future and allowing us to continue our initiative of in-house progression - "Growing our own Apples". The cohort was made up of a variety of roles, including Person's In Charge, Deputy Managers and Team Leads, who are early in their management journey or have been identified as management prospects.

In the coming year, we will continue to push our commitment to learning and development and advancement opportunities with further instances of this course planned, which will be supplemented with our new E-Learning Hub and a variety of targeted micro learnings.



Management has embedded a culture of continuous learning within the Group



Mandatory Training & Compliance

100% compliant in mandatory training provision

Extensive training programme for new joiners incl. in-house Studio 3 or TCI



Learning Academy

Internal curated library of learning modules, boosting continuous staff development and elevating the quality of care across Orchard



Orchard Values Champion Award

Monthly award celebrating colleagues who consistently embody the Group's core values in their work



HE Partnership & Bursary

HE Bursary to support employees in pursuing formal education as part of ongoing training & development



Frontline & Emerging Managers Programme

2025 launch of “The Orchard Way” management programme to support colleagues with professional development



CORU Support

Support CORU registration through tailored workshops for social care workers, guiding them through the process

Higher Education Partnership

2025 brought further collaboration with our Higher Education partners across Ireland and further afield in Spain.



Erasmus Partnership



Becoming an Erasmus partner with La Salle University, Madrid was a real highlight for 2025 with the first cohort of 4 students joining our Orchard Residential Care teams in Sligo. All 4 have now taken up permanent roles with the team. We look forward to welcoming our next cohort in Spring 2026.

Atlantic Technological University Student Award

Closer to home, we were honoured to be the primary sponsor of the inaugural Top Student Award at Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. In a proud and fortuitous alignment of events, our very own Eoin Heneghan from Orchard Residential Care was the worthy winner. Pictured here with Natalya Jackson, Chief Executive Officer, Eoin was presented with his award at his graduation on Thursday 30th October 2025.

We were also delighted to be there to cheer on and celebrate so many of our wonderful colleagues on the day.

As an organisation, which has committed to providing a platform for local students and existing staff to be able to pursue studies whilst also being able to enter or remain in the workforce effectively, this was a very pleasing moment in being the title sponsor.



University Careers Events & Student Placements

The busy HR team travelled the length and breadth of the country to attend a variety of Careers events and University open days in Sligo, Carlow, Waterford, Donegal, Mayo, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Limerick and Athlone.

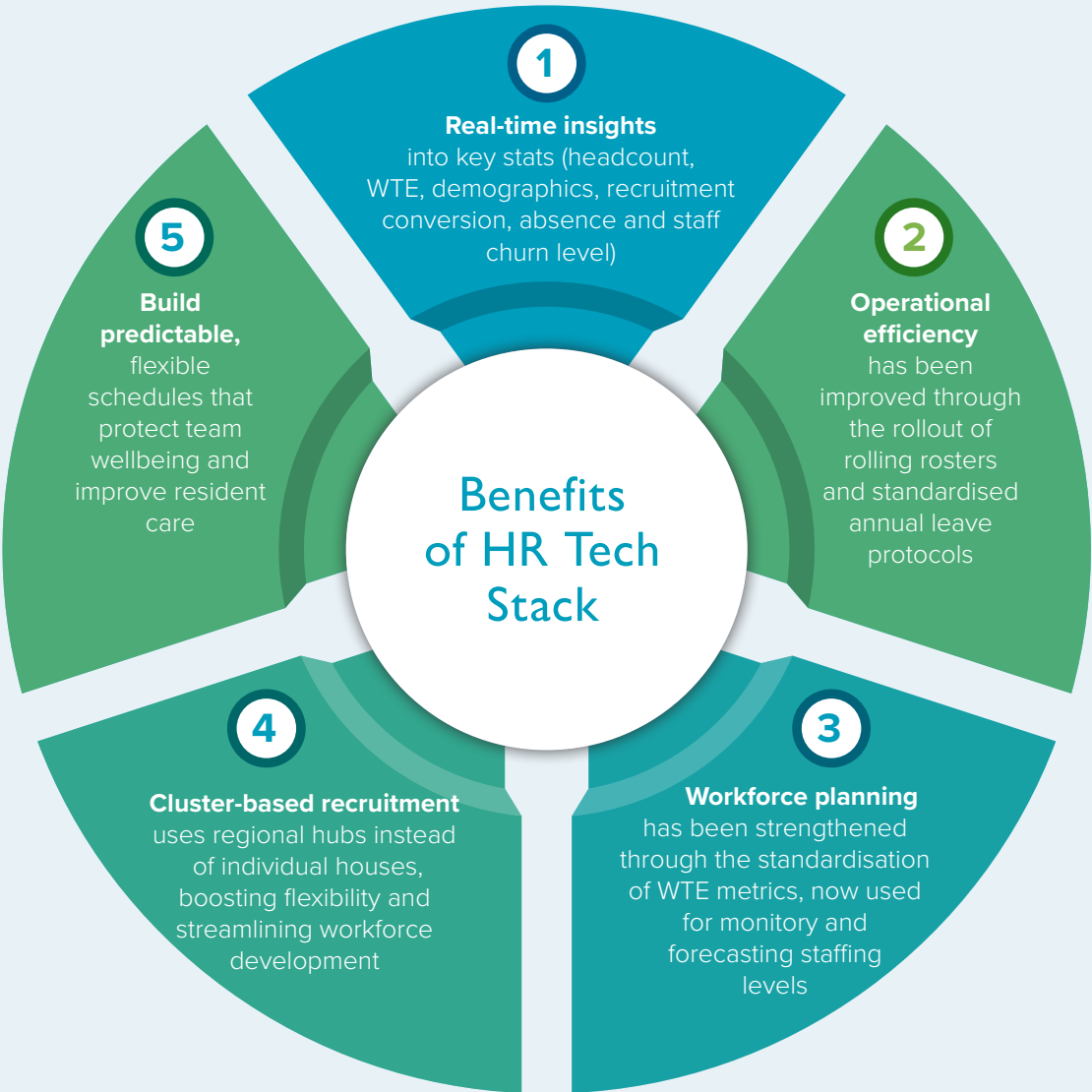
Our partnerships with Higher Education providers are extremely important to us and we give back by volunteering as guest speakers across Ireland.

In 2025 we hosted more than 30 Higher Education student placements, with many of them joining us as colleagues after they completed their degree – a wonderful pipeline for our future talent.



HR Technology

Significant investment in leading HR platforms has provided Management with valuable operational data and insights, facilitating data-driven decision-making in real time.



Refer a Friend Benefit

At Orchard we wish to attract new applicants who have the same commitment to our Values as our colleagues. To support this, we enhanced our “Refer a Friend” reward with a result of 30 new colleagues joining our teams.

Orchard Values Award

The Orchard Values Award is a monthly opportunity for colleagues to nominate their peers and shine a light on those who have embodied the values of the organisation in their role of supporting those in our care to live better lives. As a token of appreciation of their dedication and commitment to our young people, the chosen nomination receives a voucher of €100 which can be spent in stores nationwide. Amongst our winners this year, was a nomination which was received directly from one of your young people in Orchard Residential Care, highlighting *"they has guided me to be an "independent young person" and they have taught me to respect myself and they are always there for me. They are someone who is kind-hearted and they have been inspirational!"*

Here are some of our additional winners this year and what people have had to say about them!



Mohammed Sule, Health Care Assistant in Knocktemple (Orchard Residential Care)

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"Mohammed excels in the area of our values by transforming daily independent living skills, into opportunities for personal empowerment. Instead of simply directing young people, he uses a human rights-based approach, that offers meaningful choices. He teaches budgeting, cooking, and self-care while respecting each young person's autonomy, voice and individual identity. This builds genuine confidence and honours their right to self-determination. Mohammed masterfully blends this developmental work with a fun, vibrant energy that makes the house feel like a home. He organises engaging activities, share laughs, and celebrate milestones, creating a safe space where young people feel valued and heard."



**JP Malley, Residential Care Worker, Seahaven
(Orchard Community Care)**

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"JP is a vital link of the chain in Seahaven, his resilience and calm demeanour help the young person and the team as a whole by encouraging a growth mindset looking at challenges as opportunities to learn.

JP lifts the team with his contagious positive personality, encouraging collaboration, driving long term success. JP leads by example with consistent behaviour, mentoring others, driving engagement and encouraging accountability."



The Impact of Quality

At Orchard Care Group, quality is not a standalone function-it is the foundation of how we deliver care, make decisions, and support people every day. Across all our services, there is a shared commitment to ensuring that every individual is supported in a way that is safe, person-centred, and focused on achieving meaningful outcomes.

Our approach to quality is built on strong governance, continuous improvement, and a deep understanding of what matters most to the people we support. It is reflected in how we plan services, how we monitor performance, and how we respond to learning-ensuring that quality is consistently experienced, not just measured.

A core strength of the organisation lies in how quality is embedded in everyday practice-where **quality is everyone's responsibility**. Across all levels, from frontline staff to senior leadership, there is a shared and consistent focus on delivering care that is respectful, responsive, and shaped around each person's individual needs, preferences, and rights. This collective commitment is supported by strong governance and oversight arrangements, including structured audits, ongoing performance monitoring, and regular review at every level throughout the Group.

Our Quality Team plays a central role in strengthening this approach, working in close partnership with services to provide guidance, challenge, and support. Through ongoing engagement, staff are supported to reflect on practice, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement meaningful change. This collaborative approach ensures that quality is lived in practice and continuously evolving.

We also recognise the importance of learning. Across Orchard Care Group, there is a strong emphasis on shared learning-using data, feedback, and lived experience to inform improvement. Whether through audit findings, inspection outcomes, or the voices of residents, young people, and families, learning is actively captured, shared, and translated into better outcomes.

Quality is further strengthened through our governance structures, including dedicated subcommittees focused on key areas such as Quality and Safety and Human Rights. These provide oversight, challenge, and assurance, ensuring that high standards are maintained and that the organisation continues to grow and improve in a structured and accountable way.

Importantly, our focus on quality is not just about systems and processes-it is about people. It is about ensuring that individuals feel safe, respected, and valued; that they have choice and control in their lives; and that they are supported to achieve their goals and aspirations.

As Orchard Care Group continues to grow, our commitment to quality remains constant. We will continue to invest in our people, strengthen our systems, and build on our culture of continuous improvement-ensuring that high-quality, person-centred care is at the heart of everything we do.



Pamela Fagan

Independent Chair of the Quality & Safety Subcommittee



As Independent Chair of the Quality & Safety Subcommittee of Orchard Care Group, I am proud to reflect on the meaningful progress made throughout 2025 in strengthening the quality, safety, and lived experience of those supported by Orchard services.

At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful aim: to ensure that every resident and young person is supported to live a full, safe, and meaningful life. The Subcommittee plays an important role in guiding this by continually asking how services can grow, improve, and respond to the needs of those they support. This includes not only identifying areas for development but also recognising and building on what is working well across the organisation.

One of the most inspiring moments of the year was the Group Safeguarding Day held in June. Colleagues from across all three divisions came together to share their experiences, reflect on learning, and highlight the positive impact of safeguarding practices in everyday life. The openness and passion demonstrated on the day was a powerful reminder that safeguarding is not just a process - it is lived in the relationships, trust, and respect shown to residents and young people every day.

Across the year, the Subcommittee met regularly to reflect on emerging themes, share learning, and support continuous improvement. A strong focus was placed on how information and data are used to better understand experiences within

services. This has strengthened the organisation's ability to respond quickly, provide additional support where needed, and continue to enhance the quality of care. Importantly, this work ensures that decisions are informed not just by systems and data, but by a deeper understanding of people's individual needs and experiences.

It has also been encouraging to see the strong and visible commitment to quality at every level of the organisation. From frontline staff to senior leadership and the Board, there is a shared focus on doing the right thing for residents and young people, and on continually striving for better outcomes.

I would like to sincerely thank the Group CEO, Natalya Jackson, for her clear and consistent commitment to prioritising quality and safety. I also extend my appreciation to the Group Director of Quality, Service Managers, and the wider Quality Team, whose dedication and collaboration support services every day to meet high standards while keeping people at the centre of all they do.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the staff teams across Orchard Care Group, whose compassion, professionalism, and commitment make a real difference in the lives of those they support.

I look forward to continuing this important work in 2026, building on the strong foundations in place and continuing to enhance the experiences and outcomes for all residents and young people.

Pamela Fagan

Chairperson of Quality & Safety Board Subcommittee

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At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful aim: to ensure that every resident and young person is supported to **live a full, safe, and meaningful life.**



Breda Crehan-Roche

Independent Chairperson of Orchard Care Group's Human Rights Committee

As Independent Chairperson of Orchard Care Group's Human Rights Committee, I am pleased to reflect on the work undertaken during 2025 and the continued progress in strengthening a rights-based approach across all services.

The Committee plays an important role in supporting Orchard Care Group to uphold and promote the rights of the children and adults who use its services. At the core of our work is a shared commitment to ensuring that supports are delivered in a way that is dignified, person-centred, safe, equitable, and respectful of each person's rights, preferences, and individuality.

A key area of focus for the Committee is the oversight and governance of restrictive practices. This includes ensuring that, where restrictions are in place, they are necessary, proportionate, clearly justified, and used only as a last resort for the shortest possible duration. The Committee also supports the development and progression of rights restoration plans, with a clear emphasis on reducing restrictions over time and promoting autonomy, participation, and overall quality of life.

The Committee met on four occasions during 2025-March, June, October, and December. At each meeting, we reviewed restrictions in place, examined trends and emerging themes, and

identified opportunities for improvement. The Human Rights Committee Policy and Procedures, first developed in 2024, were also reviewed to ensure continued alignment with current legislation, best practice, and Orchard Care Group's evolving rights-based approach.

A particularly encouraging development during the year was the near 60% reduction in the use of physical restraint, highlighting the organisation's commitment to dignity, respect, and positive behaviour support.

This represents meaningful and measurable progress, reflecting the commitment across services to move towards more preventative, responsive, and person-centred approaches.

Across Orchard Community Care, the use of chemical restraint was minimal, demonstrating a proactive and tailored approach to review, learning, and care planning. Encouragingly, all restrictive practices within Orchard Residential Care remained exceptionally low, reflecting the organisation's commitment to person-centred and least-restrictive care.

These insights reinforce the importance of ongoing scrutiny, reflective practice, and continuous improvement-ensuring that restrictions are reduced wherever possible and that alternative, less restrictive approaches continue to be developed and embedded.

Throughout 2025, there was also a continued focus on embedding human rights principles in everyday practice across services. This included promoting dignity, choice, safeguarding, participation, privacy, autonomy, and person-centred decision-making-ensuring that human rights are not only reflected in policy but are consistently experienced in the day-to-day lives of those supported.

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At the core of our work is a shared commitment to ensuring that supports are delivered in a way that is **dignified, person-centred, safe, equitable, and respectful of each person's rights, preferences, and individuality.**

The Committee welcomed the organisation’s ongoing investment in training and rights-based learning for staff, families, and Committee members. In particular, training on the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022 has strengthened understanding of will and preference, supported decision-making, legal capacity, and rights-based practice. This represents an important step in advancing more individualised and choice-led approaches across services.

The work of the Committee has also highlighted important areas for continued development, including the need for ongoing training, strengthening practical supports for assisted decision-making, increasing the involvement of lived experience, and continuing to embed culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches. The use of data and shared learning will remain central to driving further improvement.

In November 2025, I met with the Chairman and Board of Directors to provide an update on the work of the Committee, including oversight of restrictive practices, training initiatives, and key learning emerging throughout the year. This engagement is essential in ensuring that human rights remain visible and prioritised at Board level, and that they continue to inform organisational governance and service development.

Human rights are fundamental to the delivery of high-quality care. The work of the Human Rights Committee throughout 2025 has contributed to stronger oversight, increased awareness, meaningful reductions in restrictive practices, and continued progress in embedding a culture where rights are understood, respected, and actively upheld.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the commitment of Committee members, management, staff, the individuals we support, and their families, together with the support of the Group CEO, Senior Executive Management Team, Chairman, and Board of Directors. Their collective commitment is central to ensuring that human rights remain at the heart of care delivery across Orchard Care Group.

The Committee remains committed to continuing this important work in the year ahead.

Breda Crehan-Roche
Chairperson HRC



Sustainability and Our Environmental Impact

At Orchard Care Group, our commitment to quality extends beyond the care we provide-it also shapes how we care for our environment. During 2025, we made meaningful progress in reducing our carbon footprint and embedding more sustainable practices across our services.

This year, we achieved a 12% reduction in carbon footprint per resident-a significant milestone that reflects sustained effort, investment, and a growing culture of environmental awareness across the organisation.

Key Highlights from 2025

12%
reduction in
carbon footprint
per resident

Solar panels installed in

10
additional homes

LED lighting
introduced across all houses

154%
increase in
hybrid vehicles
(rising to 24% of fleet)

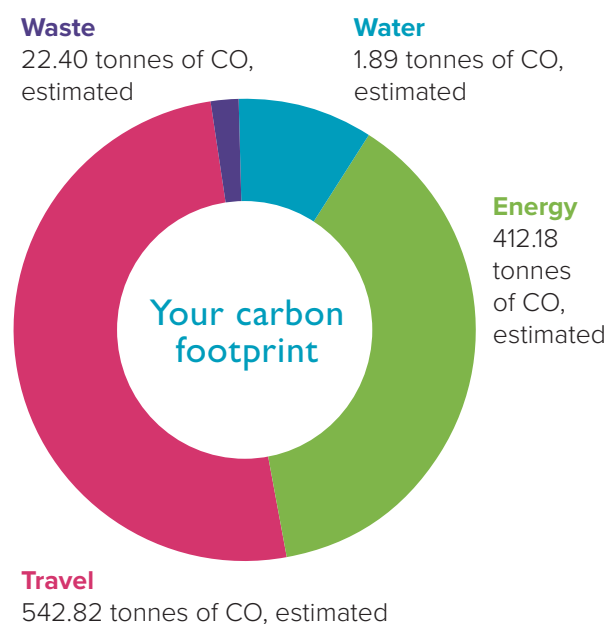
Rewilding initiatives
across multiple sites,
with up to

50%
of some locations
**dedicated to natural
habitats**

This progress has been driven by a combination of practical improvements and long-term investment. Across our homes, we have continued to enhance energy efficiency through better insulation, modern heating systems, and the replacement of older oil boilers with more sustainable alternatives. The introduction of solar energy, alongside improved Building Energy Ratings (BER), has reduced energy consumption while creating warmer, more efficient homes for those we support.

Our commitment to sustainability is also reflected in how we operate day-to-day. The transition to digital systems has significantly reduced paper usage, while the consolidation of office spaces and ongoing staff engagement has helped embed more energy-conscious behaviours across the organisation.

Orchard's 2025 Carbon Footprint



Driving a Greener Future

In 2025, we accelerated our transition towards a more sustainable fleet. **The number of hybrid vehicles increased from 13 to 32 in one year**, with a fully electric vehicle also introduced-marking an important step in reducing transport-related emissions. We remain on track to achieve our target of 30% hybrid vehicles by 2026, demonstrating our ambition to continue driving down our environmental impact.

Connecting Sustainability with Everyday Life

Sustainability at Orchard is not just about infrastructure-it is about people. Across our services, residents are actively involved in initiatives that connect them with nature and promote sustainable living.

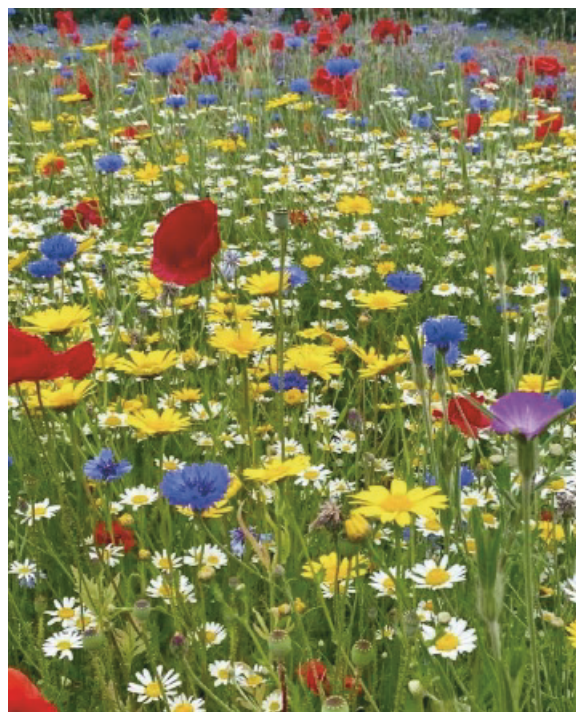
From growing their own fruit and vegetables in accessible gardens and greenhouses, to taking part in biodiversity and rewilding projects, these initiatives support both environmental goals and quality of life. Dedicated spaces for wildlife, wildflowers, and natural habitats are now established across many sites, creating greener environments that benefit both residents and local ecosystems.

These initiatives also create meaningful opportunities for participation, learning, and wellbeing-supporting residents to engage with their environment in a way that is both purposeful and enjoyable.

Looking Ahead

The progress achieved in 2025 represents an important step in Orchard Care Group's sustainability journey. By combining practical environmental actions with a strong culture of awareness and participation, we are building a more sustainable future-one that supports not only the planet, but the health, wellbeing, and everyday experiences of the people who live in our services.

We remain committed to continuing this work, ensuring that sustainability is embedded in how we grow, develop, and deliver care in the years ahead.





Orchard Community Care

Orchard Community Care has continued to grow and develop nationally, reflecting a sustained and values-driven commitment to providing high-quality, person-centred services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, and physical and sensory needs. This period of growth is particularly significant as it coincides with the organisation marking **10 years of service delivery since its establishment in 2015** — a decade defined by learning, development and, most importantly, meaningful impact in the lives of those supported.

Over the past ten years, Orchard Community Care has evolved from a small number of services into a national provider supporting individuals across diverse settings and levels of need. What began with **8 services in 2015** has grown steadily to **24 services by 2025**, representing not just expansion in scale, but a deepening of expertise, complexity and specialisation. This journey reflects a clear and consistent ambition: to build services that are not only compliant, but compassionate, responsive, and firmly rooted in human rights.

This commitment to purposeful growth was further realised in **2025 with the opening of six new homes, alongside expansion into the South East region for the first time**. This marks a significant step in extending Orchard’s reach, ensuring that more individuals and families can access high-quality, community-based supports closer to home. These developments are not simply an increase in capacity — they represent carefully planned, person-centred environments designed to promote independence, dignity, and belonging. The expansion has also strengthened local communities through the development of new teams, multidisciplinary collaboration, and enhanced regional accessibility.

Throughout this growth, the organisation has remained anchored in its core principle that **quality is not defined by size, but by experience**. As services have expanded, so too has Orchard’s capacity to deliver more personalised, flexible and specialised supports, ensuring that each individual—regardless of the complexity of their needs—is supported in a way that is tailored, respectful and empowering. Today, Orchard supports individuals across the full spectrum of need, from mild to profound intellectual disability, including those with complex physical, sensory and behavioural supports, with services designed around the uniqueness of each person.



Parallel to this service development has been the intentional growth of a skilled, values-led workforce. Teams have evolved to become increasingly diverse, multidisciplinary and responsive, ensuring that supports are aligned to best practice and grounded in a deep understanding of each individual. This workforce is central to Orchard's success—bringing not only clinical and professional expertise, but compassion, creativity and commitment to everyday practice.

Reaching this 10-year milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved:

- The creation of safe, homely environments where individuals are supported to live with dignity
- The development of person-centred practices that place individuals firmly at the centre of their own lives
- The strengthening of governance and quality systems that ensure accountability while enabling innovation
- The fostering of community connections, supporting people to live active, meaningful and socially inclusive lives

Importantly, growth has not come at the expense of individualisation. Instead, Orchard has continued to strengthen its focus on **rights-based, person-led care**, ensuring that as the organisation has expanded, it has done so in a way that enhances rather than dilutes the quality of support provided.

This ongoing development is further reflected in the opening of new services, including two residential services in the Sligo region during this period, alongside the broader national expansion. These services represent both strategic growth and continued investment in community-based living, ensuring that individuals are supported in environments that promote independence, wellbeing and connection.

Garrett's Way, supporting adults with intellectual disability and autism, holds particular significance within the organisation. Named in memory of a much-valued colleague who passed away in 2024, this service embodies not only growth, but legacy. It reflects the values he demonstrated throughout his work—respect, person-centredness, and a genuine commitment to supporting people to live full and meaningful



lives. These principles are not symbolic; they are embedded in the daily rhythm of the service, shaping how individuals are supported in their personal development, relationships, community participation and overall wellbeing.

Glendale, set at the foot of Benbulbin, opened its doors in 2025 and provides specialist support to young adults with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities. The service has been developed to deliver highly individualised, structured, and responsive supports within a safe and supportive environment, ensuring that individuals with more complex needs receive care that is both secure and deeply person-centred.



The focus within Glendale is on promoting comfort, communication, stability, and overall quality of life, while also enabling meaningful opportunities for engagement, skill-building, and inclusion wherever possible.

Together, these services — and the wider expansion across regions, including the South East — reflect the direction of Orchard Community Care as it moves into its second decade: **growing with purpose, building on experience, and remaining firmly committed to delivering compassionate, rights-based supports tailored to each individual.**

As Orchard Community Care reflects on ten years of service, the focus remains firmly future-oriented. The learning, relationships and achievements of the past decade provide a strong foundation for continued growth, innovation and quality improvement — ensuring that the organisation not only expands, but continues to enhance the lives of the people it supports in meaningful and lasting ways.

“

Growth is not just about numbers — it is about creating more places where people feel at home, valued, and supported to live their lives their way.



Growing Our Multi-Disciplinary Team

A key area of continued development within Orchard Community Care is the strengthening and expansion of our multidisciplinary team to further enhance the supports available to the people who use our services. We are extremely excited about the growth of these disciplines internally, as they play a vital role in ensuring that our residents receive high-quality, coordinated, and person-centred support that is informed by a range of professional expertise.

The development of in-house Behavioural Therapists, Speech and Language & Occupational Therapy, expertise has already had a significant positive impact on how we understand and respond to individual needs. This integrated approach allows us to deliver more consistent, timely, and holistic supports,

while ensuring that practice remains grounded in best evidence and aligned with human rights principles.

As an organisation, we remain committed to continuously reviewing opportunities to further expand our multidisciplinary capacity. We recognise the value that additional disciplines can bring in enhancing outcomes for the people we support, and we will continue to explore ways to broaden our expertise in line with emerging needs, service developments, and best practice in disability services.

This ongoing commitment reflects our vision of delivering services that are responsive, forward-thinking, and centred on improving quality of life for every individual we support.

Strengthening Voices: Residents Committee & Advocacy in Action



Throughout 2025, the Orchard Community Care Residents Committee has become a powerful platform for advocacy, inclusion, and shared decision-making across services. What began as a small gathering of three individuals representing three services has grown into a strong, representative group of eight members in 2026 — reflecting both increased engagement and the value service users place on having their voices heard.

Meeting quarterly, with venues and dates chosen by the members themselves, the Committee embodies a genuinely person-centred and rights-based approach. It provides a structured, supportive forum where individuals are not only encouraged to speak but are actively shaping the direction of services that impact their daily lives.

At its core, the Committee is driven by three key principles:

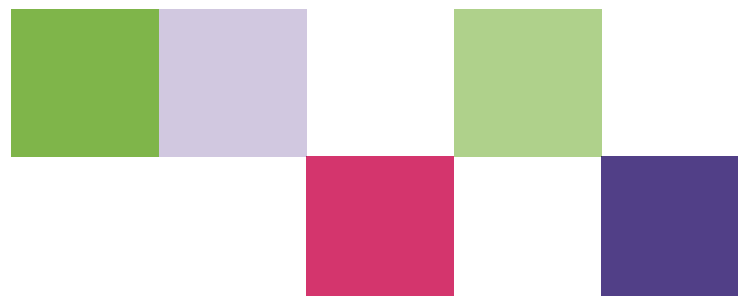
- **Advocacy** – Championing the rights of individuals across residential, respite, and day services
- **Participation** – Ensuring service users are meaningfully involved in the planning and development of services
- **Empowerment** – Supporting individuals to influence decisions that affect their wellbeing and quality of life

This work is already demonstrating tangible impact. Members are engaging directly with senior staff and external experts, asking questions, sharing lived experiences, and influencing discussions that matter. Throughout 2025, the Committee welcomed a range of guest speakers, including representatives from the National Advocacy Service, Orchard's HR leadership, and Citizens Information — providing members with practical knowledge, greater awareness of their rights, and stronger confidence in self-advocacy.



“

This is about being listened to — and knowing that what we say can make a difference.



Supported by dedicated Orchard facilitators, the Committee is not simply a meeting — it is a growing movement of collaboration, respect, and empowerment. It reflects Orchard’s commitment to enabling people to be active participants in their own lives and in the services they receive.

Impact Snapshot (2025)

8

active committee members

representing multiple services

4

quarterly meetings annually,

member-led in planning and structure

3

external expert inputs

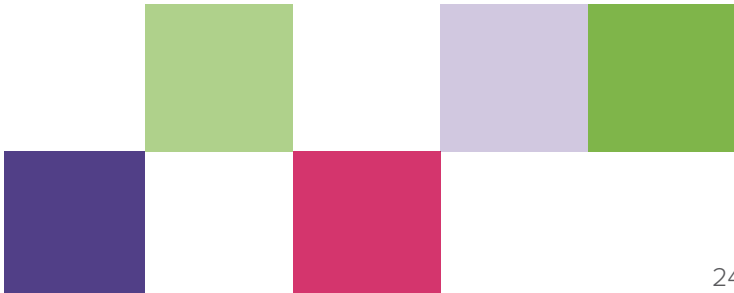
supporting advocacy and information access



Representation

across residential, respite, and day services

As the Committee continues to grow, it stands as a clear example of ‘Quality in Action’ — where listening leads to learning, and learning leads to meaningful change



Quality, Safety and Continuous Improvement

At Orchard Community Care, quality is not just measured - it is experienced. Every day, across our services, we are focused on ensuring that residents and young people are supported to live safe, fulfilling, and meaningful lives. Our commitment goes beyond compliance; it is about continuously improving how we support people and ensuring that their voices, needs, and outcomes remain at the centre of everything we do.



In 2025, Orchard Community Care made a significant and deliberate investment in strengthening its quality infrastructure. The Quality Team expanded with the appointment of **a dedicated Quality Manager and three additional Quality Assurance Coordinators**, ensuring that each region is now supported by a named quality lead.

This expansion represents a meaningful step forward in strengthening governance, oversight, and support — reinforcing our commitment to providing the highest standard of quality care to every individual we support.

The enhanced team has enabled a more visible, consistent, and responsive quality presence across services, working alongside managers and staff to embed best practice in day-to-day care. It has strengthened our ability to:

- Provide proactive, on-the-ground guidance and support
- Embed consistent standards and expectations across all regions
- Strengthen audit, monitoring, and learning systems
- Support services in preparing for and responding to inspections
- Translate insights and learning into meaningful improvements in practice

Importantly, this investment ensures that quality is not viewed as a stand-alone function, but as a shared responsibility — embedded in everyday practice and lived through every interaction.



Stronger Oversight, Better Outcomes

Quality and safety are underpinned by strong governance. Our Quality and Safety Subcommittee-independently chaired and comprising Board members and senior leaders-provides robust oversight, ensuring that risks are identified, performance is monitored, and improvements are sustained.

Just as importantly, we are committed to **listening and learning**. Feedback from residents, young people, families, and staff plays a vital role in shaping our services. **Through structured engagement and open communication, we ensure that learning is shared across the organisation and translated into tangible improvements in care.**

Central to our approach is a deep commitment to listening and learning. Feedback from residents, young people, families, and staff plays a vital role in shaping services and driving continuous improvement.

Through structured engagement and open communication, we ensure that:

- Voices are heard and valued
- Learning is shared across the organisation
- Improvements lead to tangible, meaningful changes in care and outcomes

A Culture of Continuous Improvement

What sets Orchard Community Care apart is our culture. Across all levels of the organisation-from frontline staff to senior leadership-there is a shared commitment to doing better every day. Data and information are used not just to measure performance, but to understand experiences, identify trends, and respond proactively to emerging needs.

This culture enables us to:



Respond quickly
where additional support is needed



Identify opportunities
for learning and development



Share best practice
across services



Continuously enhance
the quality of life for those we support

2025 has been a year of strong performance, meaningful progress, and continued growth. As our services expand, so too does our commitment to ensuring that every individual we support receives high-quality, safe, and person-centred care.



We are proud of what has been achieved-and even more committed to what comes next.



What Our Regulators Have Told Us

Across Orchard Care Group, inspection findings during the period provide rich, independent insight into the lived experience of those supported and the effectiveness of governance systems in place. While areas for improvement were identified in some services, a consistent theme across reports is that individuals are known, respected, and supported to live meaningful lives.

At the heart of inspection feedback is the quality of day-to-day lived experience, where care is shaped around each individual's preferences, routines and goals, delivered by staff who know them well:

“

A residential service focused on the resident's care, support needs and was person-centred, ensuring that the resident enjoyed their time in the centre.

“

Staff were very responsive, supportive and kind in their interaction.

This emphasis on positive relationships and genuine connection is consistently reflected across inspection reports, with residents observed to be comfortable, relaxed and supported by familiar staff:

“

Residents were relaxed and seemed to enjoy the staff member's company.

“

They said that they liked living in the centre, felt safe and felt supported by staff members.



Across services, inspectors highlighted strong support for meaningful activity and community participation, reinforcing the organisation's commitment to quality of life and inclusion:

“

Residents enjoyed taking part in a wide variety of interests... going on day trips, volunteering, attending events and learning new skills.

“

Residents enjoyed a good level of social access... shopping, coffee outings, cinema and community activities.

“

The resident was supported in identifying activities that were relevant to them... walks, cinema, shopping and meals out.

Inspection findings also reflect the importance of creating environments that feel like home, where individuals' preferences and identities are visible and respected:

“

The house was comfortably furnished... and met the needs of the resident.

“

The design and décor of the house created a homely atmosphere.

Alongside these strengths, inspection reports also provide important evidence of Orchard’s learning culture and commitment to continuous improvement. Where improvements were required—particularly in areas such as documentation, communication supports, governance effectiveness and aspects of the physical environment—these were clearly identified:



Crucially, even where improvements were needed, inspectors consistently recognised the commitment and professionalism of staff teams, and the overall intent to deliver high-quality, rights-based care:

“

The centre appeared to meet residents’ needs and strived to promote residents’ rights.

“

It was clear that the provider aimed to deliver a good quality service.

From a governance perspective, there is clear evidence of structured oversight and quality systems, with auditing, accountability and monitoring processes in place to support service delivery:

“

The service was governed effectively and lines of accountability were clearly defined.

“

Effective systems were in place to promote and enhance the quality of care and support.

Across reports, a strong and consistent theme is the promotion of rights, autonomy and participation, with residents supported to make choices and be actively involved in their lives:

“

Residents were regularly consulted and offered choices in their lives.

“

Residents were actively involved in decisions about their care and home.

Inspection findings present a clear and balanced picture of services where:



Person-centred practice is embedded,

with individuals supported in ways that reflect their preferences and goals



Relationships matter,

with compassionate, knowledgeable staff creating positive daily experiences



Quality of life is prioritised,

through meaningful activities and strong community connection



Governance systems are active and evolving,

supporting oversight, accountability and improvement



Learning is continuous,

with inspection findings used constructively to strengthen practice

Overall, these independent insights demonstrate that quality across Orchard is not static—it is lived, reviewed and continuously strengthened, ensuring that people are supported not only to be safe, but to live lives of meaning, choice and connection.

Positive Behaviour Support in Practice: Studio III Training

A cornerstone of Orchard Community Care's commitment to person-centred, rights-based care is the continued investment in positive behaviour support approaches — ensuring that individuals are supported with empathy, understanding, and respect at all times.

In 2025, OCC significantly strengthened its capacity in this area through the expansion of Studio III training, with 232 staff members trained across services — a notable increase from 124 staff in 2024. This growth reflects a clear organisational focus on embedding consistent, evidence-informed approaches to supporting individuals with behaviours of concern.

Studio III promotes a low arousal, non-confrontational approach, equipping staff with the skills to:

- Understand the underlying causes of distress or behaviour
- Respond in ways that are calm, respectful, and proportionate
- Reduce escalation and promote safe, supportive environments
- Prioritise the dignity, autonomy, and emotional wellbeing of each individual

Importantly, 2025 also saw the development of internal capability, with three Orchard staff members progressing as accredited Studio III trainers. This represents a significant step towards sustainability — enabling Orchard

to build internal expertise, maintain training quality, and ensure that learning is continuously reinforced in day-to-day practice.

The impact of this investment is evident across services. Staff report increased confidence in responding to complex situations, while individuals benefit from more consistent, supportive interactions that prioritise their needs and preferences. This approach aligns strongly with regulatory expectations and Orchard's broader quality framework, where proactive, preventative, and person-centred supports are central to service delivery.

Ultimately, Studio III training is not just about skill development — it is about shaping culture. It strengthens Orchard's ability to create environments where individuals feel safe, understood, and supported to live well, even in moments of challenge.



“

When staff respond with understanding, it changes everything — it creates space for trust, calm, and connection.

Impact Snapshot – Studio III Training (2025)

232

staff trained in positive behaviour support
(↑ from 124 in 2024)

3

internal trainers developed to support sustainability and growth



Consistent application of low arousal, person-centred approaches across services

Meet James

When James moved to Corrib View, in May 2024, it marked more than just a change of address-it was the beginning of a new chapter filled with possibility. Like many new beginnings, it came with a few unknowns, but what has unfolded since has been both meaningful and, at times, heart-warmingly joyful.

Today, James sums it up in his own words:

“

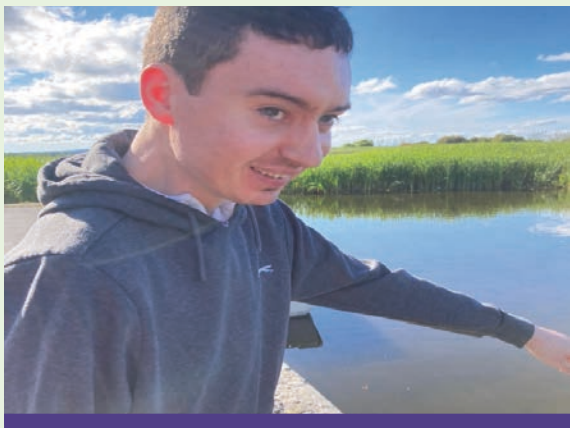
It feels like home.

And it truly shows.

From those early days, James has grown into his new home in a way that is both visible and deeply felt. What was once unfamiliar is now a place where he is relaxed, confident, and very much himself. With consistent, supportive relationships around him, James has built strong connections and has become an active part of daily life in the house.

James is not just living in Corrib View-he is *thriving*.

At home, he is getting involved in everyday routines in a way that reflects both independence and choice. He takes part in menu planning, heads out on grocery shopping trips, and, every now and then, takes to the kitchen-“**if I feel like it!**” These moments are about much more than tasks-they’re about control, confidence, and having a real say in how his day unfolds.



Out in the community, James is embracing life with growing confidence. He enjoys getting out and about, taking part in activities, and learning skills that build his independence. One of his proudest achievements has been mastering the art of using his bank card-confidently stepping up to the till and simply giving it a “tap.” It’s a small action with a big impact: independence, dignity, and maybe the occasional well-earned treat.

Spending time outdoors has also become a real highlight. James now loves being outside, especially cycling his bike-something he hadn’t been able to enjoy for a long time. The sense of freedom and enjoyment this brings is clear, and if you catch him on a good day, you’ll see just how much he’s getting back into his stride (or pedal!).

James is also finding his voice in new and powerful ways. He is communicating more confidently sharing what he wants, what he

“

There’s a noticeable calmness in James now. He is more patient, more at ease, and more comfortable in his surroundings.

needs, and how he feels. There is a growing ease in how he connects with others, whether that's making requests, joining conversations, or simply being part of everyday moments in the house.

With the right encouragement and support, James has also made steady progress in his independence. Daily routines, including personal hygiene, are becoming more familiar and manageable. These are quiet but important achievements that continue to build his confidence and self-belief.

There's a noticeable calmness in James now. He is more patient, more at ease, and more comfortable in his surroundings. He can take his time, wait for things, and move through his day feeling supported, understood, and secure.

Over the past year, James' journey has been one of real and lasting change. He has grown in confidence, independence, communication, and connection but most importantly, he is happier. He is more settled. And he is living a life that reflects his choices, his interests, and his personality (including deciding when *not* to cook!).

James' story is a powerful reminder that quality care is not just about meeting needs—it's about creating the space for people to grow, to enjoy life, and to rediscover the things that make them happy.

At Orchard Community Care, this is the difference we strive to make every day: supporting people not just to live safely, but to truly **belong, grow, and thrive—with a few smiles along the way.**





Orchard Residential Care

Orchard Residential Care (ORC) delivers high-quality, person-centred residential care across 12 services located in rural communities throughout the northwest of Ireland. Each home is intentionally designed to feel safe, welcoming, and genuinely homely creating spaces where young people can settle, feel secure, and begin to rebuild routines, relationships, and confidence.

At its core, ORC's approach is about providing the right environment for each young person to feel safe, supported, and able to move forward.

A Flexible and Individualised Model of Care

ORC provides a range of residential settings, ensuring supports are tailored to meet differing levels of need:



Map of ORC services

Dual Occupancy Homes (5 services | 10 placements)

Small, high-support homes offering calm, low-stimulation environments for young people requiring stability and intensive individual support.

Multi-Occupancy Homes (3 services | 12 placements)

Structured shared homes supporting social development, independence, and positive peer relationships.

International Protection Services (3 services | 18 placements)

Specialist supports for young people seeking international protection, with a focus on **integration, cultural awareness, and stabilisation.**

Bespoke Individual Placement (1 service | 1 placement)

A tailored, high-support environment for a young person with complex needs requiring individualised care.

Capacity, Demand and Reach

- 41 total residential placements
- 98% occupancy rate

This sustained demand reflects both the need for high-quality placements and ORC's ability to provide stable, responsive, and well-matched care environments.

The Power of Place: Rural, Calm, Connected

ORC's rural footprint is a deliberate strength of its care model-offering calm, low-stimulation environments where young people can feel safe, regulate, and recover.

Across services, young people are supported to:

- Build meaningful relationships
- Engage in outdoor and therapeutic activity
- Experience a sense of belonging and normality

Homes are consistently maintained as clean, welcoming, and non-institutional spaces, enabling young people to feel comfortable, settled, and at ease.

Delivering Impact Through Care

- High occupancy, strong regional presence, and diverse service model
- Flexible supports tailored to complex and evolving needs
- Environments that prioritise safety, stability, and wellbeing

Through a combination of small, high-support homes, shared living environments, specialist services, and bespoke placements, ORC



continues to deliver care that is responsive, consistent, and impactful-ensuring that every young person is supported in a setting where they feel safe, valued, and empowered to progress.

2025 was a year of continued growth, resilience, and impact for ORC. As the organisation expanded its service provision, there was a sustained focus on delivering high-quality, responsive care that enables young people to experience stability, build confidence, and achieve meaningful progress in their everyday lives.

By year-end, **ORC operated 12 centres, supporting 39 young people.** Movement within services through admissions and discharges reflected a dynamic and responsive model of care, with supports adapting in line with changing needs. Across all centres, there was a consistent emphasis on ensuring that care remained individualised, nurturing, and focused on helping each young person to feel safe, valued, and supported to reach their potential.

A defining feature of 2025 was the organisation's ability to sustain quality and continuity of care within a challenging workforce environment. Recruitment and retention pressures, reflective of wider sector demands, created ongoing challenges in maintaining stable staffing and achieving full compliance in some training areas. Despite this, teams across ORC demonstrated commitment, adaptability, and strong practice leadership, working together to ensure that young people continued to receive consistent and supportive care.

Even within this context, 2025 was marked by clear strengths and positive outcomes:

Strong Educational Engagement and Progression

Education remained a central part of each young person's journey. High levels of participation were evident across mainstream schooling, Youthreach, and alternative pathways, with many young people not only attending but engaging, progressing, and building brighter future opportunities.

Positive Regulatory and Quality Assurance Outcomes

External inspections by Tusla reflected the quality of care being delivered across services. Several centres received minimal recommendations, with one centre achieving a report with no recommendations-providing strong assurance in the standard of care, governance, and oversight in place.

Meaningful Outcomes for Young People

There was clear evidence of young people achieving personal goals, developing relationships, and becoming more confident in their daily lives. Positive feedback and compliments-many received directly from young people-highlight experiences of feeling listened to, supported, and respected.

Sustained Investment in Teams

Continued focus on staff development and team support helped to strengthen collaboration and maintain a positive culture across services. This was particularly important in supporting teams to navigate pressures while remaining focused on delivering consistent, relationship-based care.

Wellbeing, Participation, and Everyday Experiences

From organised events such as the young persons' sports day to everyday activities within homes and communities, young people were supported to take part in meaningful experiences, build connections, and enjoy a sense of belonging.

High levels of incident reporting throughout the year reflect a strong culture of openness, vigilance, and proactive safeguarding. Systems in place ensured that risks were clearly identified and responded to in a timely and effective way. Notably, there was a reduction in the use of restrictive practices compared to 2024, signalling continued progress in supporting young people through positive, least-restrictive approaches.

Overall, 2025 reflects an organisation that is continuing to grow while remaining firmly focused on what matters most-safe, consistent care and positive outcomes for young people. The experiences of those supported across ORC highlight not just stability, but moments of progress, connection, and achievement that contribute to a more positive future.

This reflects a year of learning, progress, and continued commitment to improvement. It provides a clear and honest picture of performance, recognising both achievements and areas requiring ongoing focus.

At its heart are the lived experiences of young people. Whether through increased participation in education, stronger relationships, greater independence, or improved wellbeing, there is clear evidence of meaningful impact. These outcomes demonstrate how care, when delivered with consistency, empathy, and purpose, can support young people to grow, develop, and move forward with confidence.

There is also a strong emphasis on accountability and oversight, ensuring that services remain safe, responsive, and continuously improving. Challenges are acknowledged openly, alongside the actions being taken to address them, reflecting a culture that is both reflective and forward-looking.

Looking ahead to 2026, the focus is clear: strengthening workforce stability, enhancing quality systems, and continuing to improve outcomes for young people. Building on the foundations of 2025, ORC is well positioned to continue delivering care that not only meets needs but makes a genuine and lasting difference in the lives of those it supports.



Key Impact Highlights

12 centres,
39 young people

– delivering care that is personalised, consistent, and responsive to individual needs.

Reduced
restrictive
practices

– reflecting more positive, relationship-based and least-restrictive approaches to support,



Excellent
inspection
outcomes

– including one centre with zero recommendations, demonstrating strong governance and quality.



Strong feedback
from young people

- highlighting experiences of being listened to, respected, and supported.

High educational
participation

– supporting engagement, progression, and brighter future opportunities

Robust
safeguarding
and oversight

- underpinned by strong reporting systems, transparency, and proactive risk management.



Governance and Management

Strong governance and effective leadership remain central to the delivery of safe, high-quality care across Orchard Residential Care (ORC). Throughout 2025, clear structures, defined accountability, and consistent oversight ensured services remained responsive, compliant, and focused on positive outcomes for young people.

ORC operates within a well-established governance framework, linking operational delivery with organisational strategy. The Regional Director reports directly to the CEO, with oversight of 12 services, supported through Area Managers and Persons in Charge (PICs). Within each service, leadership is strengthened through a structured team comprising a PIC, Deputy Manager, and Team Leaders-ensuring visible leadership, consistent decision-making, and clear accountability at every level.

Alongside strong structures, there is a clear emphasis on **leadership in practice**. ORC promotes a culture where leadership is embedded across teams, empowering staff to demonstrate accountability, compassion, and professionalism in their day-to-day roles.

A **culture of learning and development** underpins this approach. Reflective practice, mentoring, and constructive feedback support

the development of confident, capable teams who are equipped to respond to the complex and evolving needs of the young people supported.

Robust governance systems ensure that quality and safety remain a consistent focus across all services. This is evidenced through:

- ➔ Positive inspection outcomes, with minimal recommendations across services
- ➔ Ongoing internal audits, strengthening oversight and driving continuous improvement
- ➔ Robust risk management systems, ensuring risks are identified, monitored, and managed proactively
- ➔ Structured leadership in every service, supporting consistency, supervision, and accountability

This combination of strong leadership, clear governance structures, and embedded quality systems ensures that services are safe, well-managed, and continually improving-with a clear focus on delivering consistent, high-quality care for young people.

Activities & Community Integration

A key part of growing up in Ireland is the experience of being part of a community—whether that’s on the GAA pitch, taking part in local activities, socialising with peers, or gaining valuable work experience. These everyday opportunities play an important role in shaping confidence, independence, and future pathways.

For young people in care, particularly those who may have experienced trauma, accessing these opportunities can present additional challenges. At Orchard Residential Care, there is a strong commitment to ensuring that every young person is supported to build connections, develop skills, and experience a genuine sense of belonging within their local community.

Across services, teams actively create and support opportunities for young people to engage in meaningful, community-based activities that promote social development, wellbeing, and positive life experiences.

This can be seen in the everyday experiences of young people across services. **Sarah** is a strong example of this in practice. She has been attending a local Social Farming placement for the past five years, something she looks forward to each week. During her time there, Sarah has developed practical skills and confidence while caring for animals including sheep, donkeys, hens, and dogs. She has also taken part in woodworking projects—successfully building a coffee table and currently working on a storage bench for her shed. Her involvement extends to day-to-day farm activities such as cleaning, fencing, and painting, which she completes during her weekly three-hour sessions.

In addition, Sarah has actively engaged with her local Family Resource Centre in Sligo, where she has completed programmes such as *Healthy, Active Me and Healthy Food Made Easy*. These courses have supported her to build knowledge, independence, and confidence in managing her own health and wellbeing.

Sarah is also gaining valuable work experience through a placement in a local coffee dock, where she plays an active role in serving customers and supporting the day-to-day running of the café, including ordering supplies from local businesses. This has provided her with important opportunities to develop social skills, responsibility, and workplace confidence.

Alongside this, Sarah attends weekly **maths tuition** in her local community, held in the newly renovated county library. This consistent support has helped to strengthen both her educational engagement and confidence in learning.

Through these experiences, Sarah continues to build independence, develop practical life skills, and strengthen her connection to her community—reflecting the wider commitment across ORC to supporting young people to participate, belong, and thrive.



Similarly, Jamie's experience highlights how consistent support can enable strong community integration and connection.

Jamie's Story

Jamie, aged 13, has been supported to actively engage in a wide range of social, recreational, and educational opportunities within the local community. Through the consistent support of the social care team, Jamie regularly participates in local Gaelic football and soccer clubs, contributing positively to physical wellbeing, confidence, and teamwork skills. These activities provide important structure and routine, while also supporting broader development through positive peer interaction.

Through sustained encouragement and support, Jamie has become well integrated within the local community. Participation in sports and community-based activities has enabled the development of meaningful friendships and a growing sense of belonging. These connections are central to promoting stability, confidence, and a sense of normality in everyday life.

The team has developed strong links with local clubs to ensure Jamie's continued participation

and inclusion. In addition, staff have worked collaboratively with the families of peers to create further social opportunities beyond organised activities. This includes supporting informal time with friends and participation in family events-experiences that are essential in building social confidence and strengthening relationships.

This coordinated, child-centred approach reflects a clear focus on supporting integration, inclusion, and positive developmental outcomes, ensuring Jamie is not only participating in the community, but is an active and valued part of it.

Across Orchard Residential Care's Separated Children Services, similar approaches are taken to support young people to build independence and life skills. Many young people have been supported to access employment opportunities in local cafés and takeaway outlets, further strengthening community connections and preparing them for future independence.

Delivering these outcomes is made possible through the commitment, skill, and resilience of our staff teams.





Staffing & Workforce

A skilled, supported, and motivated workforce is central to delivering high-quality care across Orchard Residential Care (ORC). Throughout 2025, there was a continued focus on internal progression, leadership development, and staff wellbeing, strengthening both capacity and consistency across services.

Internal promotion remains a key strength. Over the past year, ORC supported:

- 1 Person in Charge appointed internally
- 4 Deputy Managers progressed
- 10 Team Leaders developed from within

This reflects a clear commitment to growing leadership from within, ensuring continuity, experience, and a strong understanding of ORC's care model across all levels.

Investment in training and professional development has further strengthened leadership capacity.

- 3 staff completed QQI Level 6 Front Line Managers Programme
- 3 staff completed QQI Level 5 Emerging Leaders Programme

These structured pathways ensure staff are equipped with the skills, confidence, and knowledge required to deliver safe, effective, and person-centred care.

This commitment to development is reflected in the experience of one staff member who progressed from a frontline Social Care Worker role to Person in Charge:

“

I joined Orchard as a Social Care Worker and was supported to progress through Team Leader and Deputy Manager roles to PIC. Feeling trusted, supported, and given opportunities to grow has been a key reason I have stayed. The most rewarding part of my role is building relationships with young people and supporting them to achieve their goals.

Alongside structured development, ORC continues to promote a culture of learning in practice, where mentoring, peer support, and day-to-day experience all contribute to building competent and confident teams.

Staff wellbeing remains a clear priority. Across services, there is a strong emphasis on:



Team support and collaboration



Open communication and approachable leadership



Work-life balance and manageable workloads



Recognition and appreciation of staff contributions



This supportive environment enables staff to feel valued, secure, and connected, even within the challenges of residential care.

“
What has influenced me to stay is the strong sense of teamwork and support. Knowing I can rely on my colleagues and approach management when needed makes a real difference. Small gestures of appreciation and a positive team environment go a long way.

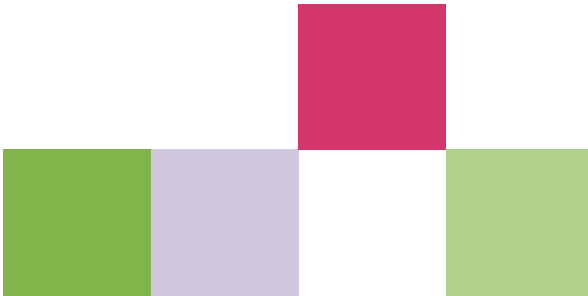
Through a combination of clear progression pathways, meaningful training, and a strong focus on wellbeing, ORC continues to build and retain a workforce that is committed, capable, and focused on delivering high-quality care for young people.

Quality & Compliance

In 2025, Orchard Residential Care (ORC) continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to regulatory compliance, quality care, and continuous improvement across services.

- 5 Túsla inspections completed
- 1 centre achieved 0 recommendations
- All other centres received minimal recommendations (2 each)

Inspections across Glenallen, Abhaile, Cul Cnoc, Lakeview, and Carbury reflected consistently high standards of care, providing strong assurance that services are safe, well-managed, and responsive to the needs of young people.



What Inspectors Told Us

Inspection feedback provides a compelling picture of the lived experience within ORC services-highlighting the strength of relationships, the quality of care, and the commitment of staff teams:

“

A fabulous centre where the team stick with young people and go above and beyond to support the children.

“

The health, wellbeing and development of each child was promoted, protected and improved by the care they received from the team.



“

Staff were attuned to the young people's mental health and the potential impact of past trauma... with a strong focus on building relationships of trust.

“

Inspectors observed staff engaging with young people in a respectful manner which took account of their individual needs.

“

There was a culture of openness and transparency... where both children and staff could raise concerns.

“

Young people were encouraged to develop their individual hobbies and were actively involved in community activities and sports clubs.

“

There was good communication and information sharing between agencies involved in the care of each young person.

“

The promotion of young people’s rights was embedded in daily routines, care practice, and team discussions.

A Consistent Picture of Quality

Across all inspections, a clear and consistent narrative emerged—one of safe, nurturing environments where young people are supported to grow, develop, and feel a sense of belonging.

Inspectors highlighted:

- Warm, caring and committed teams, building strong, trusting relationships
- Trauma-informed, responsive care, supporting emotional wellbeing and development
- Young people’s voice at the centre of care, shaping daily living and planning
- Homely, welcoming environments, promoting safety, comfort, and stability
- Ongoing staff learning and development, strengthening practice
- Effective multi-agency collaboration, supporting coordinated care

There was clear evidence that young people are not only safe, but are actively supported to engage in education, participate in their communities, and develop independence.



Strength in Quality Management

A key theme underpinning inspection findings was the strength and consistency of ORC's quality management systems, which are clearly embedded in everyday practice.

Inspectors observed:

- Robust safeguarding and risk management systems, ensuring risks are identified and managed effectively
- Structured review and learning processes, including team meetings and significant event reviews driving continuous improvement
- Open and transparent communication, both within teams and with external professionals
- Strong management presence and oversight, supporting staff to exercise professional judgement with confidence

This structured approach ensures that learning is captured, shared, and translated into practice, creating services that are not only compliant, but continuously evolving and improving.

Young people were consistently described as being listened to, respected, and supported, with their experiences shaped by a culture that values dignity, safety, and inclusion.

Through positive inspection outcomes, strong external feedback, and well-established quality systems, ORC continues to deliver safe, accountable, and high-quality services-where governance, leadership, and frontline care come together to support young people to feel secure, develop confidence, and thrive.

Quality in Action

Consistently strong inspection

outcomes across all services

1 centre achieved

0 recommendations

Robust quality management

systems embedded in daily practice

Warm, committed teams

delivering relationship-based, trauma-informed support

Strong
safeguarding,
risk management,
and oversight
structures



Young people
listened to,
respected, and
actively involved
in their care

Celebrating Excellence

The impact of this commitment is reflected not only in outcomes for young people, but also in the recognition of excellence across our teams. A highlight of 2025 was the national recognition of the exceptional leadership and commitment within Orchard Residential Care.

Pauline Harrison, Person in Charge (PIC), was honoured with the **CRS Employers' Forum Individual Award 2025**. This is a prestigious recognition celebrating individuals who consistently go above and beyond in delivering outstanding care. This award acknowledges not only professional excellence, but the meaningful, everyday impact of strong and compassionate leadership on both colleagues and the young people supported.

“

Goes above and beyond every day - providing outstanding care, leadership, and inspiration.

Pauline's recognition reflects a leadership approach grounded in consistency, integrity, and a deep commitment to creating safe, supportive, and nurturing environments. The impact of this is evident in the experiences of young people-through greater stability, trusted relationships, and opportunities to grow, develop, and thrive.

The award ceremony, held at the Visual Centre in Co. Carlow, brought together leaders from across the sector to celebrate excellence in residential care. Representation from Orchard Care Group on the day further reinforced the organisation's commitment to recognising and investing in its people, while celebrating the achievements of both individuals and teams.

Orchard Care Group is incredibly proud of Pauline's achievement. It is a clear reflection of her passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the young people she supports every day. The organisation is delighted to see this recognised at a national level, shining a light on the impact of her leadership and the difference it continues to make.

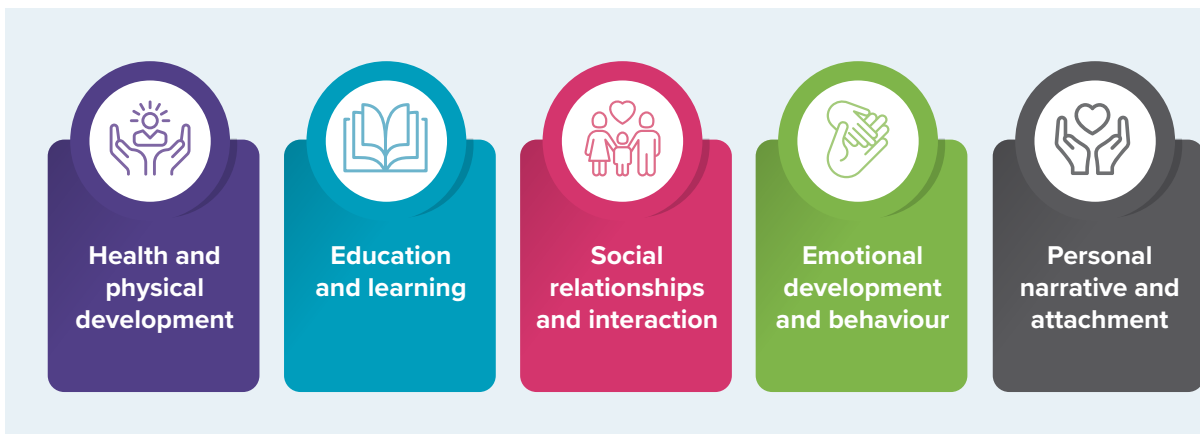
While this award rightly recognises Pauline's outstanding contribution, it also reflects the collective strength of teams across ORC. It highlights a culture grounded in care, professionalism, and commitment, and the vital role that staff play in creating positive, lasting outcomes for young people.



Quality of Care & Support

Person-centred care remains at the core of practice across Orchard Residential Care (ORC), with a strong emphasis on tailoring supports to each young person's individual needs, preferences, and goals. Young people are actively supported to participate in decisions about their care, promoting independence, dignity, and choice in their everyday lives.

This approach is embedded through structured and meaningful care planning processes. Young people are supported to share their views during care planning meetings, ensuring their voices shape the direction of their care. Placement plans establish clear goals and actions, which are translated into individual monthly plans and regularly reviewed through progress reporting to ensure care remains responsive and effective.



Keyworkers play a central role in implementing these plans, with a clear focus on supporting development across key domains:

This structured, outcomes-focused approach ensures that care is purposeful, consistent, and aligned to each young person's evolving needs.

Child in Care Review meetings further strengthen this process, providing a holistic review of each placement. These reviews consider all aspects of the young person's life, including education, health, relationships, independence skills, and future planning-ensuring a joined-up, comprehensive approach to care and progression.

Supporting young people extends beyond the home, with a strong focus on community connection and everyday experiences. The impact of this approach can be seen in the experience of **Gemma (14)**, who achieved significant personal milestones in 2025 despite a history of early trauma, including parental loss.

Gemma experiences anxiety and often communicates her emotions through her teddy bear. While she enjoys school, transitions into the school environment can at times be challenging.

Recognising her interests and emotional needs, staff worked closely with Gemma to build confidence through her passion for music.

She expressed a wish to attend a concert by her favourite artist in Dublin. Following careful planning and comprehensive risk assessment, staff supported her to safely attend the event. Through reassurance, preparation, and



consistent emotional support, Gemma successfully participated in what was a significant and meaningful experience for her.

Following the event, she described it as **“the best day ever.”**

This moment represented more than an outing- it was a clear example of building confidence, overcoming anxiety, and enabling positive life experiences. It highlights the importance of understanding each young person, building on their interests, and providing the right support to enable them to achieve meaningful, confidence-building milestones.

This person-centred approach is further reflected in longer-term journeys, where sustained support enables meaningful and lasting progress.

Meet Chloe

Chloe joined Orchard Residential Care in 2022, following a period of significant instability and challenging life experiences. Before moving into her home, Chloe had experienced multiple placement changes, and as a result, had been out of education since 2021.

When Chloe first moved into Orchard, supporting her to feel safe, settled, and understood was the priority. Over time, through consistent care, routine, and relationship-building, Chloe began to stabilise in her new environment.

A key focus for the team was helping Chloe re-engage with education. Working closely in partnership with local schools and professionals, a suitable school placement was identified. Chloe initially settled well, but like many young people who have experienced disruption, she faced challenges-particularly with peer relationships. These difficulties became overwhelming at times, and in 2024 Chloe disengaged from school again.

Rather than stepping back, the team worked closely with Chloe and her school to adapt supports around her needs. A reduced timetable was introduced, alongside additional emotional and practical supports to help her manage the school day at her own pace.

Through this patient, flexible, and person-centred approach, Chloe gradually rebuilt her confidence. With encouragement and consistent support, she began attending school more regularly and re-engaging with learning.

One of Chloe's most significant achievements came when she successfully completed her Junior Certificate, receiving strong results. This was a hugely important milestone-not just academically, but personally reflecting her resilience, determination, and the progress she has made.

Today, Chloe continues to grow in confidence and independence. Her journey highlights the importance of stability, trust, and working at a young person's pace to achieve meaningful outcomes.





Orchard
fostering 
Building brighter futures

Orchard Fostering

Orchard Fostering was established in 2008 by a group of experienced Social Work Professionals and has become Irelands leading independent Fostering Agency. As part of the Orchard Care Group, an Irish owned company, Orchard Fostering collaborate with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency to provide children and young people with positive care experiences.

We are dedicated to offering our foster carers robust, all-round support, including 24/7 assistance, ongoing training opportunities, peer support groups and regular social events. Our commitment extends to the recruitment, development and long-term support of foster carers across Ireland, ensuring we can meet the diverse needs of children who require safe, stable and nurturing homes.

In 2025, Orchard Fostering grew to a staff of 41. Our Head Office is located in Dublin West, and from there we proudly support our foster carers as they provide fostering placements to children and young people right across Ireland. The young people we support range in age from 0 to 18 and come from many different cultural backgrounds, each with their own unique experiences and support needs.

We provide:

Short-term foster care

which is needed as an interim measure for children who cannot be cared for at home for a period of time.

Long-term foster care

when the best solution for a child is to remain with a foster family for several years or until they are ready to take care of themselves.

Emergency fostering

which comes at short notice when a child needs to be rehoused immediately due to it being unsafe for them to stay where they are.

Respite placements

which is short term care given to a child to support them or foster carers by providing a break for the child's primary caregivers. We have a panel of fully trained and experienced foster carers who provide respite support

Supported lodgings

where carers offer young people aged over 16 the opportunity to learn the skills needed to live independently whilst receiving practical and emotional support. These young people come from a range of different backgrounds including refugees who are displaced from their own countries due to war and violence.



Assessment

Orchard Fostering have a dedicated fostering Assessment Team whose essential role is to ensure that prospective foster carers are appropriately suited and fully prepared to provide safe, supportive and nurturing homes for the children placed in their care. Our Assessment Team is comprised of our Principal Social Worker, Assessment Team Leader, Assessing Social Workers, Fostering Advisor and Senior Administrator. In 2025, the Assessment Team welcomed a new member, Tara, who comes to Orchard with a wealth of experience and has supported a number of families with their assessments to date. We are very grateful to have her as part of our team.

Our Assessment Team carries out comprehensive evaluations of all fostering applicants, beginning at the initial enquiry stage. At this point, our dedicated fostering advisor arranges a phone call with the applicant to discuss the criteria for becoming a foster carer and to address any questions they may have.

In 2025, our Assessment team spoke to 159 potential Foster Carers.

When an applicant meets the initial criteria, our assessing social workers arrange an introductory visit to the applicant's home to explore the fostering process in greater depth and to meet members of the applicant's household. **In 2025, our assessing social workers completed 52 initial visits to potential foster carers.**



After the initial visit, if the applicants and the assessing social worker agree to proceed, the formal assessment process begins. The assessing social worker will then schedule regular visits over a 16-week period in order to gain a thorough understanding of the applicants, their family and their suitability to foster. **There were approximately 180 assessment visits completed throughout 2025.**

During the assessment period, applicants will take part in essential preparation training, which includes an online information session followed by a two-day, in-person training programme. This training covers a wide range of topics to ensure applicants are well-prepared to begin their fostering journey. **Our Assessment Team held 5 preparation training events for foster carers in 2025.** Additional training on relevant subjects is provided to foster carers throughout the year to support their ongoing development.

Once the assessment is complete, the assessing social worker compiles a report which is submitted to the local Tusla area Foster Care Committee who decides on applicants' approval. **In 2025, we welcomed 14 new families into our community and welcomed back 2 dedicated foster families who returned to their fostering journey after a break.**

What our foster families say about the assessment process

One carer who was recently approved as a foster

“

I thought I knew it all, even when attending the Preparation Training, a lot of what was discussed was familiar to me from my SNA training. It was only after and when we began fostering that it all became real and I realised how much I had learned, like, our first time filling out an incident report, I remembered we had discussed that at the training and it wasn't so daunting



Spotlight on our Assessing Team Lead Aine



I have been acting Team leader on the assessment team since March 2025. It has been a particularly busy year with 14 new foster families approved.

This year, the team's focus has been on strengthening preparation and enhancing support for prospective foster carers and their families. Several new initiatives have been successfully implemented as part of this work.

One such initiative is the introduction of a “buddy system”, whereby applicants undergoing assessment are matched with an experience foster carer. This provides applicants with the opportunity to gain first hand insight into the realities of fostering from an active foster carer. Applicants feedback on the buddy system and been extremely positive.

In addition, all applications in assessment are now referred for a psychoeducational session with psychotherapist, who undertakes a significant amount of valuable work with our fostering families. Feedback from applicants regarding these sessions has been overwhelmingly positive.

Where families in assessment have birth children under the age of 18, these children are offered a session with a member of the social care team during the assessment stage. These sessions aim to support children's understanding of fostering, explore their feelings about their family fostering, and consider how they may be impacted. Feedback from applicants indicates that children have responded very positively, enjoying the sessions and engaging through arts and crafts and child friendly fostering resources shared by social care staff. Developing these relationships at an early stage, prior to a foster child joining the family, helps to ensure that any future support required by birth children feels natural.

I would like to commend the team for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to seeing how we continue to develop, grow and further enhance our service.

Aine

Referrals and Matching

A well-matched placement between a foster child and a foster family is fundamental to creating a stable, positive fostering experience for everyone involved. When a child's emotional, developmental, cultural and practical needs are carefully aligned with the skills, strengths and capacities of a foster family, it lays the foundation for a supportive and nurturing environment. This alignment not only helps the child feel understood, safe and valued, but also enables foster carers to feel confident and equipped in meeting the child's needs. In turn, this greatly enhances placement stability, strengthens relationships within the home and promotes healthier long-term outcomes for the child's wellbeing, development and overall care journey.

Our Referrals and Matching Team-comprising our Referrals Manager, Fostering Advisor and Referrals Coordinator-carefully assesses both the individual needs of each child and the specific strengths and experience of our foster carers to determine whether a placement is suitable. When additional needs are identified during the matching process, the team also ensures that appropriate supports and resources are arranged in advance.

In 2025, 13% of young people placed with Orchard Fostering carers were seeking international protection.



Spotlight on Referrals Manager Kelly



Hello! I'm Kelly and I have been in the role of Duty Social Work Team Leader at Orchard Fostering since July 2025. I am responsible for managing the referrals of children and young people into the service by my colleagues in the Child and Family Agency; and matching children and young people with available foster carers and supported lodgings carers within Orchard.

A meaningful understanding of our carers and their experience, strengths and capacity is such an important part of matching and I love being able to develop relationships with carers to ensure that we are making the best possible match with them. A comprehensive matching process is one of the key contributors to placement success and enhances a child's sense of stability and belonging. When I receive a referral, and to ensure that we are getting it right for the child and the carers, I work alongside the child's social worker to gather information about the child's individual circumstances, needs and experiences. I review this information against our cohort of available carers and based on their approval status, capacity and circumstances; I consider whether it might be a suitable match. I liaise with our carers, colleagues in the Child and Family Agency and the team within Orchard to ensure that any matching decision is made with the views and perspectives of everyone involved.

We have made some enhancements to our pre-placement planning in 2025 which has put even more emphasis on gathering the voice of the child at the pre-placement stage. Having a child's voice at the centre of any care planning decision is vital and is another key contributor of placement success. We are always reviewing best practice guidance and shaping our service so that it is responding to the needs of our carers and the children and young people placed with us.

I work closely with my colleagues in the assessment and support teams which helps forward planning for placement changes, endings and beginnings within the service. Where additional needs are identified at the matching stage, I work alongside our enhanced coordinator to ensure that appropriate supports are put in place. This ensures that a placement has the required support from the beginning.

Kelly

Support Team

Our Support Team consists of our Principal Social Worker, Team Leaders, Link Workers and Support Administrators who play a vital role in ensuring that our foster carers and the children placed in their care receive comprehensive support throughout their fostering journey.

In 2025, a member of our support team was available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, ensuring that our foster carers had access to assistance whenever it was needed. Our support team is an essential component of the Orchard Fostering service, and the significance of their daily contribution cannot be overstated.

Each foster family is assigned a dedicated link worker from our support team, who carries out regular support visits to the foster family's home. These visits promote the wellbeing of both the foster carers and the children in their care by providing consistent opportunities for the foster carer and link worker to check in, discuss positive developments, and address any concerns that may arise. **In 2025, our Support Team conducted 897 support visits.**

Link workers also play an important role in supporting carers as they prepare for their foster care review, which takes place every one to three years depending on the carer's individual circumstances. **In 2025, our Support Team assisted 34 families in their successful foster care reviews.**

Children in care often experience significant disruption before entering foster care. A well matched, long term placement gives them a sense of predictability, safety, and routine, which are essential for healthy development. A good match allows children to build secure attachments with their carers.

In 2025, over half of children placed with our carers were long term matched with their foster families.

In 2025 almost 70% of foster children were placed with their foster families for more than 2 years.

Spotlight on our Support Team Leader Jenny



My name is Jenny McDonnell, and I have been working in Orchard Fostering as a Support Team Leader since March 2025. I currently supervise Four Fostering Link Workers who provide direct support to foster carers in Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Limerick, Cork and Kerry.

In my role as Team Leader, I ensure that the families I have oversight of are supported in their role as foster carers. This includes ensuring they receive regular support visits; Foster Care Reviews are completed and any identified support needs for the family are considered. I also complete joint visits with the Link Worker to meet families and provide guidance and support. I work closely with Tusla to advocate on behalf of both our carers and the children for whom they provide care.

Working with Orchard Fostering has been one of the best career decisions I have made. I enjoy working alongside such an experienced, talented and skilled team who I learn from every day. I am equally impressed with the passion, commitment, empathy and drive our foster carers possess. In preparing for my interview with Orchard last year, I read many policies and one line stuck with me – that Orchard Fostering knows the standards and strives to exceed them. I am so proud to work alongside social workers, social care workers, the administration team and most importantly our dedicated foster carers who continuously seek to exceed standards and to provide love, stability and security to children who need it most.

Jenny Mc Donnell



Quote from our Link Worker David

My name is David Lawlor, and I have been working as a Link Social Worker with Orchard Fostering since 2024. I came to social work later in life, and it has been one of the most fulfilling decisions I have made. Working in fostering has given me a strong sense of purpose, and I feel privileged to be part of an organisation that places such value on children, families, and professional integrity.



The role of Link Worker is, at its core, a collaborative one. My work depends on strong communication with foster carers, colleagues, and partner agencies. This includes completing regular support visits, contributing to reviews and maintaining clear and consistent contact with carers. A central part of my role is supporting and valuing the hard work, judgement, and commitment shown by our wonderful carers, who regularly navigate complex situations in caring for children.

What I value most about Orchard Fostering is the quality of the team around me. I see firsthand the difference that is made within a team that shares the same goal: achieving the best possible outcomes for both carers and the young people they care for. A particular strength of Orchard is the ability to put practical supports in place quickly, including social care input, psychotherapy, educational support, 24-hour on-call services, and ongoing training for both carers and staff.

David



Enhanced Placement

At Orchard Fostering, our Enhanced Placement Service offers two distinct types of support. The first is standalone therapeutic support, which provides a specific therapeutic intervention tailored to the needs of an individual child or family. The second is an enhanced placement, which delivers a comprehensive package of supports around a fostering placement. Enhanced placements may include access to social care support, educational assistance and a range of therapeutic interventions, depending on the needs identified. This wrap-around approach ensures that the therapeutic and developmental needs within the placement are fully supported.

Foster carers and Tusla, the child and family agency are heavily involved in the planning and implementation of supports within an enhanced placement, both initially and on an ongoing basis. Through regular core group meetings, the child's needs remain the primary focus and supports can be changed to suit any needs that may arise. In 2025, the frequency of core group meetings increased which reflects the proactive nature of enhanced placements and has led to increased inter agency collaboration.

In 2025, the enhanced placement service grew by 56%. During the year, the diversity of therapeutic supports within enhanced placements also increased through the development of enhanced placements supporting young people towards family re-unification. Joint therapeutic support sessions with foster carers and parents are a feature within this, ensuring the most successful re-unification possible. The diversity of supports offered within the enhanced placement service continues to grow and be led by the needs of the young people and the foster family.

In 2025, all newly approved foster carers were offered psychotherapeutic support through the assessment and matching process, and additional sessions were available, where required. To facilitate this, additional psychotherapists have been contracted to work within the service.

Foster families have also been offered support sessions from the therapeutic team, the purpose of this support is to increase understanding around young people's diagnosis, and their presenting behaviours, and explore how the family unit as a whole can be supported most effectively.

Social Care Team

Our Social Care Team has grown to five full-time staff. In 2025, the team expanded their learning and development, completing Level 1 Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). The team also continues to build expertise in Circle of Security, Non-Violent Resistance (NVR), Theraplay, Life Story Work and Emotional Coaching. They provide ongoing support to birth children, foster children and foster carers throughout their fostering journey. In Summer 2025, team members facilitated Orchard Fostering's first '*Teen Take Over*,' a hugely successful event that will run again in 2026. The young people particularly enjoyed the social interaction and activities, with one describing it as '*the best day ever*'.

In 2025, the Social Care Team provided:

- 228 Enhanced Placement activities
- 257 Respite Support
- 148 direct work activities
- 52 transport pieces
- 44 Access Supervision Access
- The Social Care Team have also commenced Theraplay and began taking cases in 2025.

Our Social Care team ran a workshop for the young people on building trust, friendships and provided young people an opportunity to discuss their concerns.

It was a positive day with great feedback from carers and young people, and we finished with lunch and goodie bags.



Spotlight on our Social Care Worker Sam



Hello. My name is Sam McAuley and I have worked as a Social Care Worker with Orchard Fostering since 2016. Day to day I work with foster carers, birth children and foster children to support them along their fostering journey. I complete a variety of tasks including direct work with foster carers and children, transport and supervision of family visits, respite support and facilitation of group work for children and foster carers.

I am passionate about supporting foster carers to understand trauma and how this can relate to behaviours in children. I have completed training on the 'Circle of Security' parenting programme and facilitate this training with foster carers. This allows me to connect theory to practice and support foster carers to enhance their skillset and develop an increased understanding of how to best support and care for children. I feel fulfilled in seeing the progress foster carers make and how their confidence grows.

I enjoy working with children and seeing them learn, develop and flourish. I prioritise developing relationships with children built on trust, respect and fun. It is important to work with a child at their pace and ensure that their voice is heard. I like to be creative in my approach to working and am always learning new ideas to support children to overcome challenges. I enjoy facilitating groupwork for children which allows them to come together collectively to learn, to meet other children and to develop friendships. I am looking forward to facilitating the 'Teen Takeover' in Summer 2026 and being part of the adolescent education group also.

I thoroughly enjoy my role in Orchard Fostering and particularly like seeing the positive impact my work and the work of the wider social care team has on people. I see first hand how important my role as a Social Care Worker is in supporting foster carers in their role and also to help children learn and flourish to achieve their potential. I believe that 'small gestures make the greatest impact'.

Sam

Education

2025 has been a busy year for the Education Service. We have continued to work on developing the Education Service across all areas. In addition to our core support of our carers and young people, this year we have experienced significant growth in the Volunteer Programme, developed our Individual Education Plans (IEP) and introduced an online Irish Conversation class for exam students.

Volunteer Programme

We have seen a significant increase in demand for education referrals to our volunteer programme. We have now expanded our volunteer team to a total of 14 volunteers who are available to support our young people on our 10-week programme. Volunteers are matched by our Education Coordinator to provide tailored educational support based upon the individual educational needs of the young person and the specific skillset of the volunteer.

- 43 of our families have accessed the education service for support this year.
- 14 young people have completed a ten-week programme

Volunteer quote:



Using a bit of free time to volunteer as a tutor of a young person has been so rewarding. As I see students gain confidence, as I hear them say, 'Oh, now I see', I am constantly reminded that there's no better use of my time. It's one small way of making a difference in a world in which making a difference has become so very difficult.



Carer quote:

“

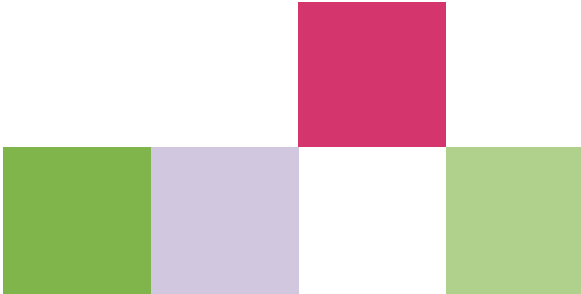
S is availing of extra tuition from the Orchard Volunteer Programme in two subjects -maths and science. We found the programme very helpful. The tutors are very patient. At the beginning S struggled to speak up as she is a shy girl. Now she is more confident and her maths grades have improved.



Young person quote:

“

I found the maths and science tutors very helpful. They helped in my understanding of both subjects. The tutors were very patient and informative, and I see great improvement in my test scores.



Online Irish Conversation Class

This year the Education Service has introduced a weekly online conversational Irish class with a fluent Irish speaker for our exam year groups. This class is hosted by a fluent Irish speaker which gives young people the opportunity to practise spoken Irish in preparation for the oral Irish exams.

The group has been a great success with young people coming together every Monday evening online. Afterwards, our volunteer prepares and sends notes on material covered in the session.

- **6 young people** have engaged with our weekly Irish conversation class.

Exam year/ Third Level Updates

Throughout 2025, our Education Coordinator provided advice to Leaving Certification students in the following areas:

- Further education courses and apprenticeships
- Grant applications
- CAO applications
- College access programmes such as the HEAR/DARE scheme.

Our Education Coordinator continues to develop the relationships with a number of third level institutions such as Trinity College, TU Dublin, UCD and Maynooth. We're delighted to report that we have students undertaking further education in Social Studies, Electronic Engineering and Pre-nursing courses.

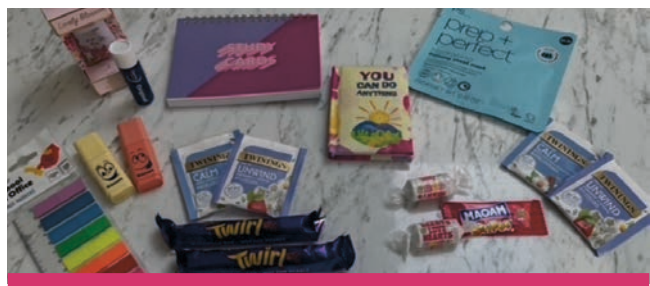
Z: young person who accessed the education service where we advised on a 3-year Advanced Manufacturing Technician Traineeship course which the young person is currently undertaking and doing very well:

“

I honestly can't thank you enough for everything you've done to help me find my path in education. You've been such a steady source of encouragement, reminding me of my strengths even when I doubted myself. Your support has meant more than words can say, and I'll always be grateful for the guidance, patience, and care you've shown me along the way. I truly wouldn't be where I am now without you. It is really difficult to put in all the right words that can reflect the way you have impacted my life (in a good way). But I believe me becoming the best version of myself and succeeding in life would be a way of paying back what I am forever indebted to You and your team, thank you.

- **6 young people** in the agency sat their Leaving Certificate in 2025.
- Our Education Coordinator provided support to our six Leaving Certificate students regarding their options for further education
- **Twenty-five exam packs** were sent out to our Junior and Leaving Certificate students prior to exams.

Exam pack





Internet Safety Workshop for carers facilitated by Our Education Coordinator

In February 2025 our Education Coordinator delivered a face-to-face internet safety workshop as part of our carers training day in Naas. The session focused on raising awareness of what our children are doing online and the associated risks and parental safeguards. The session offered practical advice and resources to carers. The session was well attended, with 10 of our families signing up to attend.

- **10 families** engaged in our Cyber-safety workshop

Direct Support from our Education Coordinator

In conjunction with our volunteer programme, eight young people received direct educational support from our Education Coordinator. These 8 young people received a total of 90 hours of face-to-face support.

**90 hours
direct
support**

from our Education Coordinator



School Liaison

A key area for the Education Service is providing a liaison service between carers and schools.

Areas of support include:

- Securing school places for young people. This can include finding a school for a new placement, identifying alternative school settlings or identifying a suitable school for a young person with additional needs.
- Making funding requests of Tusla for assessments.
- Organising and attending school meetings to secure assessments and support carers around assessment recommendations.
- Reviewing assessment report recommendations with carers advising on implementation of recommendations at home.
- School meetings around attendance or behavioural issues in school.
- Liaison with schools regarding applications for Assistive Technology.

The Education Service secured

3 new school places

for young people this year.



15 families

availed of School Liaison support in 2025

Adolescent Workshops: Supporting the Transition to Secondary School



We recognise that the transition from primary to secondary school can be a challenging time for children and carers alike. Our Education Service and Social work team offer workshops throughout the year to support our 6th class students in navigating this transition.

On the 17th of May 2025, we held our Adolescent workshop for 6th class students.

As part of this initiative, separate social media workshops were delivered by our Education Coordinator for young people and for carers. This provided both groups the opportunity to discuss their concerns and in a safe, environment amongst their peers.





Giving Young People a voice

At Orchard Fostering, we recognise how important it is to listen to the children we support. Our Children’s Ambassador Board, A Young Orchard Voice, was established in April 2020 to ensure young people have a meaningful platform to be heard. In 2025, we had 6 active members who met 6 times throughout the year around their busy schedule.

In 2025, the members of A Young Orchard Voice decided that their focus would be on reaching out to as many of the young people placed in Orchard Fostering as they could to offer them advice and guidance. They decided to develop a Workbook where they introduced themselves and gave advice about what worked best for them when they came into foster care. The workbook featured pages for each young person to write what was important to them. A copy was sent out to all children in orchard fostering.



In 2025, the members of A Young Orchard Voice designed wonderful purple hoodies with Orchard fostering and 'A Young Orchard voice' written on them which they were very proud of and delighted to wear.



Throughout the year, some of the members had a visit to the Dail with thanks to TD Niamh Smyth who welcomed the members and offered them a tour of the Dail. They then got invited to lunch in the Dail cafeteria and sat in on a meeting in which the majority of politicians were present.

Two members attended Michael D Higgins last presidential garden party where they had the opportunity to meet with Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina. Sabina praised the young people for the admirable and important work they are doing.

Administration Team and Events

Our Administration Team plays a vital role in ensuring smooth operations for both foster carers and staff. The team, made up of our Principal Social Worker, Senior Administrators and Administrators - plan and coordinate key events throughout the year, including family days, support groups and foster carer lunches. We had attendance of over 600 across our 10 events in 2025.

In July, Orchard Fostering held their annual summer event at Emerald Park and had 369 foster carers, children and staff attend- the largest number of attendees ever! Everyone had a great day!

Quote from Foster carers who attended Emerald Park:

“

‘it was a truly magical day, full of smiles and laughter. We enjoyed every minute of it. We made memories that will last a lifetime’ and ‘There is so much to do and explore there. It's a lovely venue. It's so nice to bump into people you know, and meet staff in person that provide so much support to us throughout the year’.





In November, we held the carers winter dinner party in the Bloomfield Hotel Mullingar. The night had dinner, drinks and dancing with our foster carer award ceremony held on the night. The awards were thoughtfully designed for each carer and a special award was created called the ‘Micheal S Award’, in fond memory of our dedicated foster carer who passed away suddenly during the year. The award was given to his wife as representation of her dedication to the children in her care. A wonderful night was had by all!

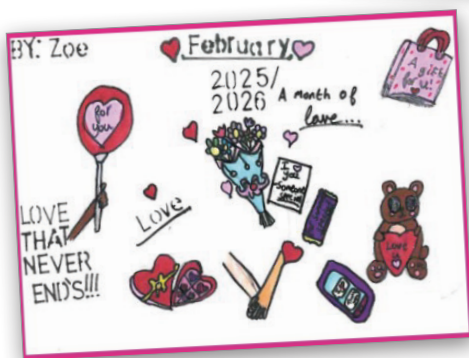
To celebrate the close of 2025, Orchard Fostering held the Community Winter event in the Ospry Hotel, Naas Co. Kildare. The event was packed with entertainment for all ages, finger food, and of course a visit from Santa Claus himself! The event was well attended by our carers, having approx. 120 attendees and described by one child as the ‘best Christmas party by far!’.



At Orchard Fostering, we understand how vital support groups are for our foster carers, offering a space to connect, share experiences and provide practical and emotional support.

In 2025, we hosted peer support groups in Cavan and Kildare, which received excellent feedback from participants.

The Administration Team also organised the creation of our **2025 calendar**, which the young people created beautiful drawings for:



Quote from Christine



My name is Christine Kavanagh, or Chris as I'm known by my colleagues in Orchard Fostering. I joined the then company Orchard Children's Services in 2014 as an Administrator, providing administrative support for the Support & Social Care Teams. I'm at the end of my 11 year tenure with Orchard Fostering. It's been a privilege to work with so many dedicated and talented people, who bring so much to the organisation, and that includes our foster carers and young people in their care. To say I will miss everyone is an understatement, but I am looking forward to spending time with family & friends, doing a little more traveling and getting plenty more snuggles with my Grandchildren. I wish Orchard Fostering & indeed the wider group of Orchard Care Group every success in building brighter futures, Chris.

Christine

Training and Learning Opportunities

Foster carers play a pivotal role in supporting children who may have lived through trauma, loss or major disruption. To effectively meet their needs, carers require ongoing, high quality training that develops their understanding, strengthens their skills and ensures they are fully equipped to provide safe, nurturing and responsive care. In Orchard Fostering, training is overseen by our Principal Social Worker and coordinated by our Quality Assurance Coordinator and Senior Administrator.

All foster carers take part in mandatory First Aid and Children First training when they begin their fostering journey and continue to refresh this training over time. This helps ensure they feel prepared and confident in providing safe, high quality care. **In 2025, we had an overall 100% compliance rating with mandatory training** which demonstrates our foster carers commitment to the children in their care.

In addition to mandatory training, Orchard fostering held 11 training sessions throughout the year on topics such as trauma, managing access, Understanding and Supporting Autistic Young People and ADHD. These trainings were well attended by foster carers and added to our online training library which continued to grow in 2025.

In February, Orchard Fostering held an in person foster carer training event for Care Day. The purpose of the event was to give foster carers an opportunity to attend in person training where they could meet other foster carers, while their children (including birth children) were entertained in a separate space. This event was organised based on carer feedback that they would like to attend in person training but found it difficult to organise childcare for the children. The event was held on the Friday of the mid term break in Mc Auley Place Naas. Foster carers attended training on internet safety and sensory process training. The children were entertained with fair ground games (hook the duck, beat the bleep and inflatable bowling) along with t shirt decorations and age-appropriate games. There was a great turnout of 27 foster carers and 38 children. We received great feedback from the children and foster carers!

In October, Orchard Fostering were nominated for the Irish Healthcare Awards, in the category of 'Healthcare Education Event of the Year' for the 2025 Foster Carer training Day. The Awards took place in early November in Dublin, and although we weren't winners, we were delighted to be nominated amongst such incredible nominees! The event was attended by our CEO, Managing Director, Marketing Executive, Training Administrator and Quality Assurance Coordinator & Training Manager.



Quote from Principal Social Worker Ciara



We were really delighted that our Training Team was nominated for this award. It meant so much to our team, who aim to create meaningful, supportive training for our foster carers. We were very grateful to have the opportunity to support the learning and development of those providing such important care, and the nomination was a lovely reflection of the passion and dedication of everyone involved.

Ciara

Hearing directly from our foster carers is vital. Their day-to-day experience gives us a clear understanding of the challenges and strengths within the foster care system. In 2025, some of the ways foster carers shared their feedback was through direct communication, through our Carer Ambassador Board and through our foster carer survey. Feedback gathered on support, communication, training and events was highly positive, confirming that carers feel well supported. This is some of the feedback we received:

- 95% of carers were satisfied with the support provided by Orchard Fostering
- 96% of carers were satisfied with their relationship to their link worker
- 92% of carers were satisfied with the training provided
- 92% of carers satisfied with Orchard Fostering's communication

Quality

Compliance with foster care regulations, standards and best practice is essential to ensuring that children, young people and foster carers receive the highest quality of support. At Orchard Fostering, quality and compliance are overseen by our Group Director of Quality and delivered by our Quality Assurance Coordinator. Through regular audits and inspections of placements and records, we gather and analyse data to identify trends, highlight strengths and address areas for improvement.

In 2025, 73 audits were completed by our Quality Assurance Coordinator, covering every team within Orchard Fostering. Any actions identified were assigned to the relevant department leads and addressed within set timelines. **Orchard Fostering were also delighted to receive full compliance in external audits from both Tusla ACIMS and HIQA in 2025, emphasizing the agency's commitment and dedication to providing high quality support.**

Quote from our Quality Assurance Coordinator Abbey



I was delighted to see such positive feedback in our 2025 foster carer survey. We greatly appreciate the carers who shared their thoughts and suggestions. Reviewing feedback from carers, colleagues, and external agencies is a key part of my role and helps us continually improve the support we provide.

Abbey

Orchard Foundation

The Orchard Foundation was established to support children and young people across the Orchard Care Group by funding activities, classes and cultural experiences they may not otherwise be able to access. The foundation is guided by a four-member board with expertise in social work, finance, and foster care.

Funding is open to all children and adults within the Orchard Care Group, and every application is considered. We had 22 successful applications over the course of 2025. This ranged from contributing to young people competing in sports at a high level, to driving lessons for young adults building independence, to assistance with sensory equipment to help build social skills.

A's Story

A's story: A moved to the care of his foster carers with his brother in 2017. The carers noticed very quickly that A was a gifted soccer player and the couple wanted to ensure he had every opportunity to make the most of his talent. They brought A to matches, trainings and trials all over the country and abroad to Barcelona for a tournament. It was clear that there would be a lot of expenses for the household given the amount of soccer that A was playing and the level of travel involved.

In October 2023, the Orchard Foundation provided funding to support the cost of A's registration with an agency that would support with applications, soccer trials and educational supports. In March 2024, the Orchard Foundation provided funding for A to sit extra exams. The purpose to ensure that A's grades were attractive to USA colleges. A was successful in his application to College in the USA and was granted a soccer scholarship. In June 2025, the Orchard Foundation provided funding to assist with important items that A would need for his move to the USA and to help him hit the ground running. A moved to USA in August 2025 to pursue his dreams.



Quote from the Thomas Birks, Chairperson of the Orchard Foundation Board

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‘A’s journey and the support that the household received. Personally, I don’t think his USA college move would have been possible without the efficiency of funding via the foundation. This is in addition to the support provided by Orchard Fostering and Tusla’

Looking Ahead – The Next Chapter

As we reflect on 2025, there is a clear and consistent story emerging across Orchard Care Group - one of progress, learning, and meaningful impact. It is seen in the voices of those we support, in the strength of relationships built every day, and in the commitment of staff who continue to go above and beyond.

As we move into the next chapter, our focus is not simply on doing more, but on **continuing to do what matters - exceptionally well**. At the heart of this is **quality**.

Quality is not something separate or abstract within Orchard, it is present in the everyday. It is seen in a young person feeling safe and settled in their home, in a staff member taking the time to listen, in how teams reflect, learn, and continuously strengthen their practice. It is evident in our governance structures, in the consistency of oversight, and in the assurance that services are safe, effective, and responsive.

Quality in Orchard is everyone's responsibility - and it is experienced every day.

As we look forward, we are committed to continuing to strengthen this culture, ensuring that quality is not only maintained, but continuously evolving. This means listening closely to feedback, learning from experience, and ensuring that improvements translate into **real, tangible differences** in people's lives.

Alongside this, we recognise that our impact is driven by our people.

A stable, supported workforce remains central to everything we do. When staff feel valued and confident in their roles, this is reflected directly in the quality of care provided, in the strength of relationships, and in the outcomes achieved. Continued investment in our workforce will ensure that this remains a key strength into the future.

We also look ahead with ambition - strengthening multidisciplinary supports so that care is increasingly holistic and responsive, and continuing to grow our services in a way that is **thoughtful, well-governed, and firmly rooted in quality**.

At the same time, we remain committed to progressing key areas that have a lasting impact:

- **Supporting continued service growth**, ensuring expansion is strategic, well-governed, and aligned with maintaining high standards of care and oversight
- advancing our **sustainability journey**, recognising our responsibility to future generations
- expanding access to supports that enable individuals to **exercise their voice, rights, and choices**

Our direction is clear: better outcomes, stronger voices, and the highest possible quality of life for those we support.

Ultimately, everything we do is guided by one shared purpose;

“

to ensure the best possible quality of life, excellent service, and meaningful, positive outcomes for the children, young people, adults, and carers we support.

There is strong momentum across Orchard Care Group.

A shared sense of pride.

And a clear commitment to continue improving.

As we move forward, we do so with confidence - knowing that the work taking place every day is not only making a difference now, but helping to build brighter futures.

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2nd Floor, Block 14
Parkwest Business Park
Nangor Road
Dublin D12 F9X8

info@orchardcaregroup.ie
01 627 5713