

# Annual Report 2023

**General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG**





# Contents

Mission Statement, Vision, Values _____	1
Introduction from our Chairperson – Emmet O’Hanlon _____	2
General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG _____	4
Trustees/Directors _____	4
Board of Directors 2023 _____	4
Company Secretary _____	4
Company Information _____	4
Premises _____	5
GSBAA Organisational Chart _____	5
Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland _____	6
Highlights for 2024 _____	7
Financial Information _____	9
Contact Information _____	11

## Mission Statement, Vision, Values

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The mission of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG is to support, enhance and develop the efficient operations of the Fellowship of AA on the island of Ireland to ensure that the still suffering alcoholic will be supported to become involved in AA and receive the help they need'. The document 'Terms of reference' supports this mission statement very clearly.

### Vision

“Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

Alcoholics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship dedicated to helping one another. The Twelve Step programme is AA’s suggested programme for recovery from alcoholism and its effects.

AA’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can relieve the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become an active participating member of his/her family and society as a whole.

AA’s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which AA maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.

There are approximately 700 AA Groups in Ireland with an estimated 13,000 – 15,000 AA members and meetings held each week nationwide.

Full Information is available from our website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

The General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG will actively promote policies to protect its mission and values.

### Values

This Code of Ethics is based upon a foundation of strongly held values. The commitment of the Board and staff to the ethos of the service guides all those involved in formulating and adhering to the Code of Ethics that follows:

Members and their desire for sobriety are the priority of GSBAA. GSBAA ensures that the services which it provides are of the highest possible standards. Equality, fairness and confidentiality in the delivery of our services are some of the core values of the service.

## Introduction from our Chairperson – Emmet O’Hanlon

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Welcome to the Annual Report of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland. In this year’s report, hopefully I can remind you of some of the projects and achievements that we have accomplished and the direction for plans we have for the future.

As an introduction, I’d like to mention National Public Information (PI), which is something that is now firmly in our focus. During 2023, we set up a National Public Information team, with the aim to develop and implement our National PI Strategy. The team’s focus is to work on what can be achieved now, in the midterm and the longer term. The team has quite a lot of energy and has just recently completed a short and informative TV campaign. This will continue and most likely roll out nationally this year. There are other events and projects that we are working on, including updated National Posters, Presentations, Image Branding, Media awareness. We have been working on plans to liaise with Professionals, Institutions, government agencies and bodies to remind the public that Alcoholics Anonymous is not only still very active, but that it is currently full of energy and thriving.

Of course, National PI events can generate a lot of interest, and that interest generates loads of calls. When members of the public call our number we need to have people available to help. This again is another one of the challenges that we face. The challenges are twofold, we need to have resources including a phone system that can accommodate the volume of calls that we anticipate. We also need people who are available to answer calls and help people that have a desire to stop drinking. We need to be able to manage the volume of calls and the number of willing volunteers that we have available to meet the demand.

We are in the process of implementing a new cloud-based telephone system that we believe will be fully scalable, cost effective, and most importantly, will allow every caller to reach a friendly voice.

During 2023 we spent quite considerable about of time working out the infrastructure needed to have in place to best achieve that goal. Internally, we have upgraded most of our systems from analog to digital and will continue to explore further ways to maximize background technology where feasible.

Last year we undertook a full redesign of our website, and since then we haven’t stopped developing it. We have been building many blocks behind the scenes to make the experience smoother, more dynamic and simpler.

Recently, we added new functionality where our online store had the facility to display items in euros or pounds. This really helps our members in Northern Ireland.

Behind the scenes we have been working on other ways to help our customers with their shopping experience. We want our customers to know what exactly the status of their order is, and when they can expect delivery.

We are working to enhance the find a meeting page, to make it easier for our members to find a meeting and with more precise results.

We also decided to devote some more time to the Road Back publication. Kenny has joined the team and will drive some new energy into each edition. It's our intention and plan to have each publication filled with articles and stories from our membership in Ireland rather than rely on content from other countries.

For our members, there has been once again a significant increase in the number of meetings that have reopened, many in new premises. There has also been a significant adjustment to the balance of online and physical meetings. This is great news for our organisation. Statistically, our members are finding that physical meetings are better attended than online meetings, but many of our online meeting goers continue to find them exceptionally useful.

We finished the year in a healthy financial position, something that is directly attributed to the extreme generosity of all our members. This is something that we never take for granted, and something that we would like to acknowledge and thank the fellowship for.

The General Service Office (GSO), our operations hub, was joined by two new staff members in 2022. During 2023, they have really grown in their roles, and have become extremely valuable at helping those who contact them. The entire GSO team have been fantastic with their ideas and enthusiasm on how things can be done better while maintaining the values of AA. I hope that you can continue and support and help them in whatever way possible as they work to assist all that contact the office for assistance.

While the GSBAA is responsible for the daily operations of GSO, on behalf of the fellowship, we could not continue to deliver the service without your very generous support. This is very much appreciated.

From a governance perspective, on the horizon, there are a lot more changes being introduced which will affect all charities, so in time, there will be additional requirements needed to prepare and submit our accounts in line with the Charities SORP for audit. This is the first time that charitable companies will be subject to CRA regulations. While this will inevitably be more time consuming for us, it will further add to the transparency that we as a charity are already fully conforming with.

On the GSBAA board, we welcomed Diarmuid McKeown, Marie McGrath, James O Sullivan and Kenny Paisley who all joined during 2023. They have some incredible skillsets and techniques that are already benefiting us as an organisation. Unfortunately, leaving the team during 2023 was Seamus Boylan. We would like to thank Seamus for all his work on the board and especially thank him for all his help with the Ulster team.

As we move into 2024, I'd like to thank you for your continued encouragement, support, and assistance. I look forward to working and contributing to the work of the Board in the coming year. It is a privilege to work with you.

Warm regards,

*Emmet*

## General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG

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The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG is the company name of the registered charity known as AA or Alcoholics Anonymous, a company limited by guarantee (CLG), not having a share capital, and registered under the Companies Act 2014.

### Trustees/Directors

The GSBAA consists of seven Trustees/Directors. These comprise of four AA Member Trustee/Directors (also known as Provincial Trustees) and three Non-AA Member Directors.

The main responsibility of the GSBAA members is to manage the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG in accordance with the Constitution of the Company as approved by the company members.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG and the General Service Office (GSO) is GDPR compliant.

Our Privacy Statement is available on our website at [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

### Board of Directors 2023

- Martin Crowley
- Emmet O' Hanlon
- Seamus Boylan
- James O'Sullivan
- Cindy O'Shea
- Diarmuid McKeown
- Maire McGrath

### Company Secretary

- Anthony McNamee

### Company Information

Registered Company in Ireland 64287

Charitable Status CHY 6014

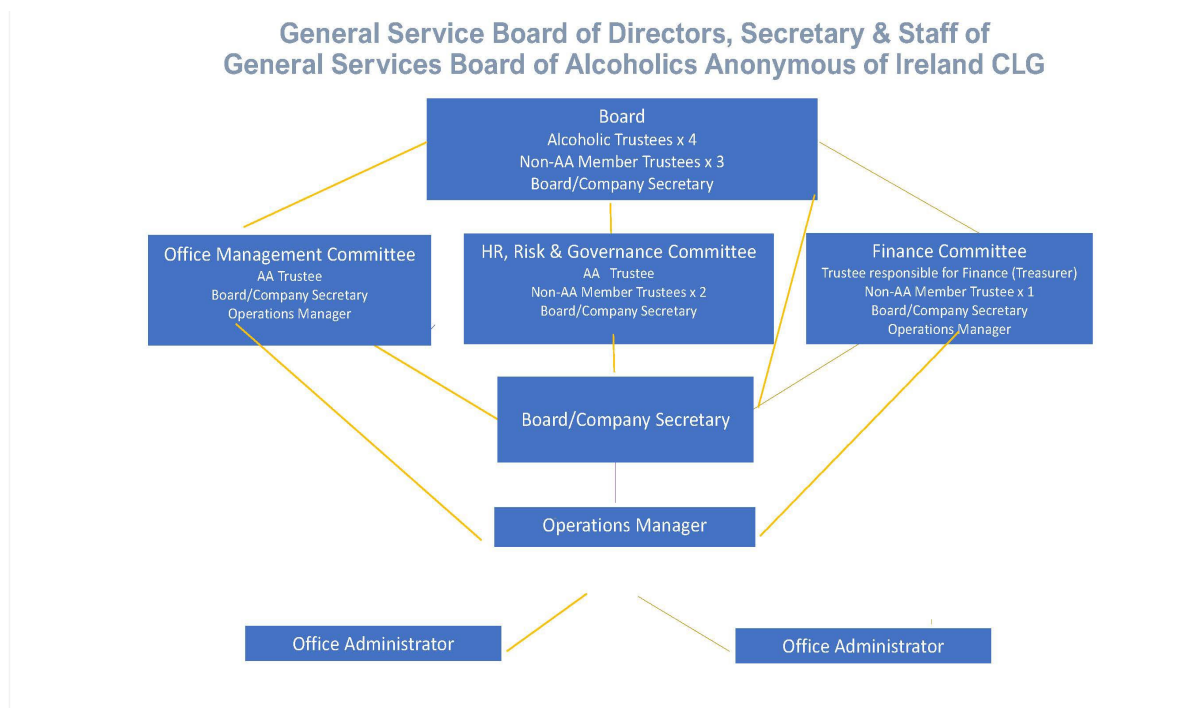
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### Premises

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG, (GSBAA) is in legal possession of two properties.

These are, the General Service Office (GSO) at Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Dublin 9, D09 H584. This property is held on a 20-year lease, which commenced in January 2007.

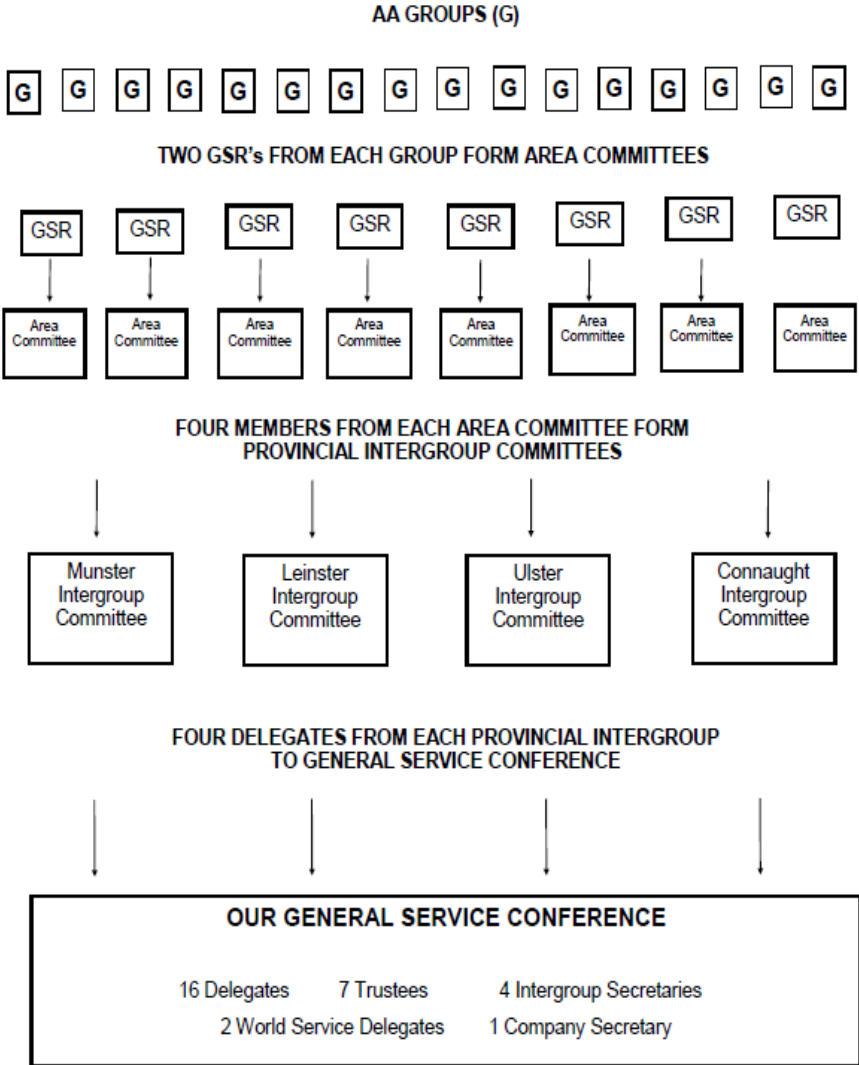
### GSBAA Organisational Chart





# Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland

## STRUCTURE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN IRELAND



## Highlights for 2024

### Website

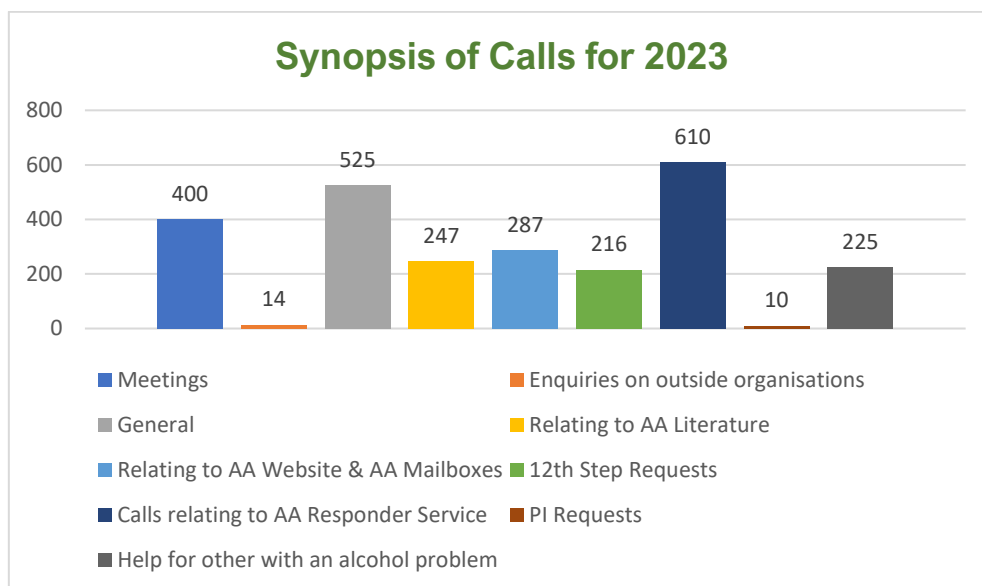
Since the full launch of our new website, we are still visited by more than 2,000 daily visitors. Our find a meeting page has had more than 400,000 hits in the past year, with more than 120,000 visitors coming to our home page. We have also had more than 45,000 visitors finding out further information about being New to AA and about our types of meetings.

- We continue to update the website regularly with News & AA Events.
- Additionally, we are working on further improving the find a meeting experience, as we try to list more meetings that are upcoming.
- We recently added the ability to see prices in Euro our Pounds for our customers in Northern Ireland
- We are rolling out a new experience for customers to keep track and have full visibility on the status/progress of their order.

### Telephone Call Report 2023

The call report for 2023 shows an overall decline in calls to the General Service Office, this year we received 2534 calls compared to 3467 the previous year. This can be attributed to the increase in members and the public using the AA website to access information on our services. Online literature sales have increased, this too is reflected in the decline in calls to the office from members placing orders by phone.

The AA responder service continues to play a pivotal role helping anyone that reaches out to AA for help for an alcohol problem. These calls can also be redirected by staff to this team of AA members who, through their own experiences, can give guidance to those who suffer from alcoholism and seek help from AA.



### **Subscribe to Updates**

Our audience for email subscription to news or updates has doubled in the past year to approx. 600 individual users. We continue to work to personalize the information that is shared with each subscriber. Individual members can subscribe or unsubscribe to this service via the website.

### **The Road Back Publication**

The Road Back is published quarterly and continues to incorporate the AA Service News. We continuously strive to include stories that originate from the perspective of members living in Ireland. We aim to include current information, AA Service News, and general updates that we hope interest you. The entire publication is produced by a team within GSO rather than outsourced.

### **Media & Public Information**

We have appointed a National PI director who along with its newly formed team, is rolling out a National PI plan. They have already started to implement some of the ideas. We hope to continue to increase the public's awareness of our organisation through many more channels during 2024.

Additionally, we continue to respond to all requests from the media for interviews, whether it be in print, television or radio. We have once again recently cooperated with our national broadcaster, along with our airing our "One minute to change your life" on TV in Ulster. The PI team are working to increase awareness of organisation throughout the country.

The team has recently produced several resource materials specifically aimed at providing information to the Professional community.

### **Literature Shop**

We are continuing to revamp the online shop and will shortly roll out a process where we will keep you notified of updates as your order progresses through each stage.

Shipping and manufacturing costs have increased significantly in the last year, and this unfortunately is reflected in some of our literature items. We are continuing to explore avenues to source/produce literature items with comparable quality at more competitive prices.

We have further expanded the payment types we can accept, including credit card/debit cards, PayPal, Google Pay and ApplePay.

Euro or Pounds Sterling currency can be selected when using the online shop.

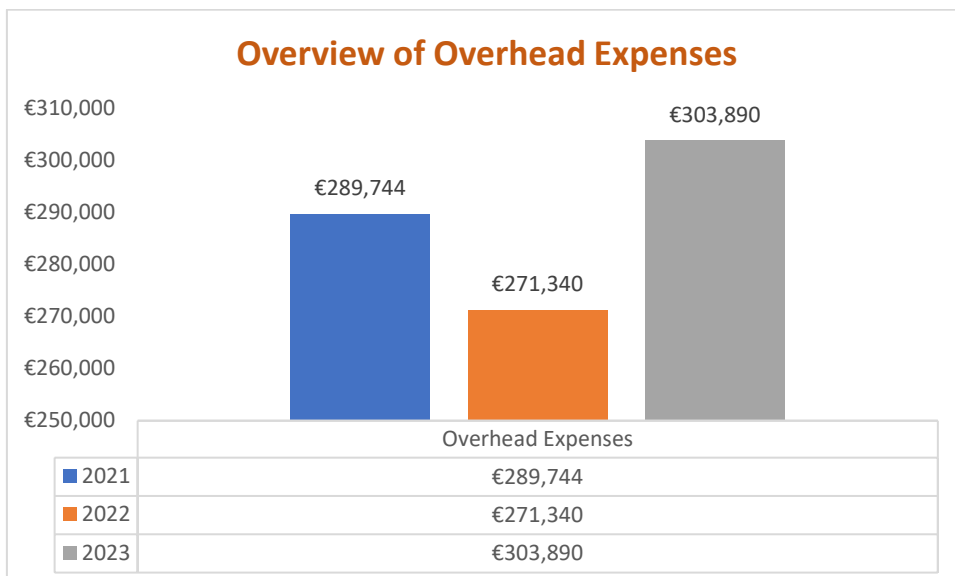
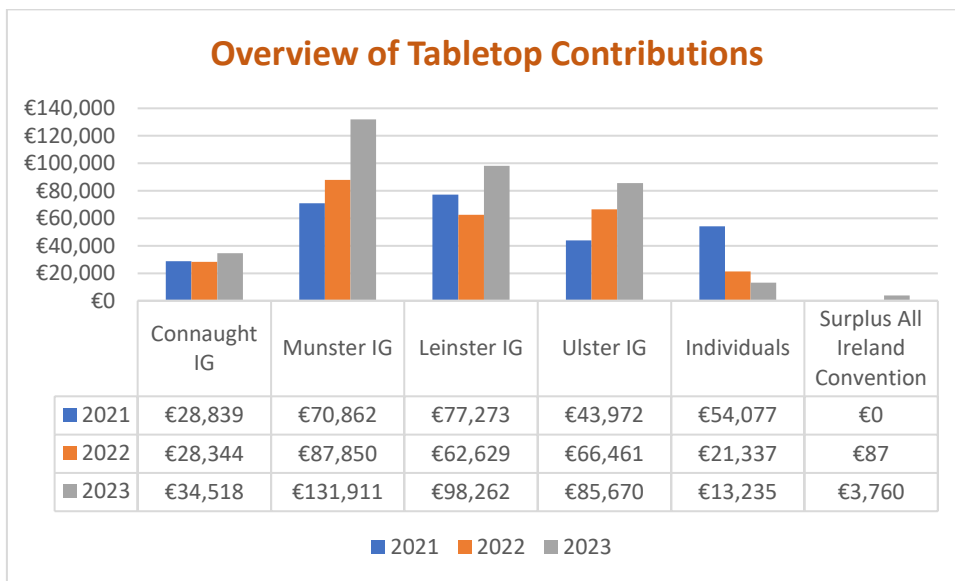
### **Finance**

We are privileged to report that contributions once again appear to be coming through the Structure per pre-pandemic times. Further information is available under the Financial Information section.

## Financial Information

This year's figures show that again the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland remains self-supporting through the contributions of its members, known within the Fellowship as tabletop contributions. Without these contributions the General Service Board would not be able to serve its members and the public and ensure the continued services of the General Service Office in Dublin.

Income and Expenditure figures for 2021, 2022 and 2023 are summarised in the chart below.



The following figures are extracted from the audited accounts for the three-year period 2021 to 2023.

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Contributions	€275,023	€266,281	€363,596
Sale of literature	€71,775	€99,376	€108,014
Annual Convention Surplus	€0.00	€87	€3,760
	<b>€346,798</b>	<b>€365,744</b>	<b>€475,370</b>
<b>Cost of Sales</b>			
Opening Stock	€30,698	€21,407	€27,125
Cost of Literature	€23,545	€56,640	€69,834
Cost of Road Back Publication	€4,292	€1,140	€0
Freight	€969	€751	€969
Closing Stock	-€21,407	-€27,125	-€23,569
	<b>€38,097</b>	<b>€52,813</b>	<b>€74,359</b>
<b>Overhead Expenses</b>	€289,744	€271,340	€303,890
<b>Debtors</b>	€30,712	€28,825	€20,045
<b>Creditors</b>	€25,618	€21,229	€24,566

Income for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 shows a significant increase in tabletop contributions from €266,281 to €363,596 which is upward on the previous financial year. There was an increase in contributions from groups and a decline in individual contributions which may well indicate that some members have reverted to contributing at group level.

This year shows a surplus of €97,121 which is a notable increase compared to the previous year's surplus figure of €42,114, this is encouraging considering there was an increase in overheads of €32,550 on the previous year. However, it is important to highlight that the expenses include a contribution of €10,000 from AA in Ireland to the International Literature. The figures also capture the increase in energy costs and their impact on the expenses for the year. The Board also invested in an upgrade of the internal IT infrastructure.

The General Service Board reviews AA's funds consistently to ensure that AA in Ireland remains in a healthy financial position. A full set of audited accounts is available to view on our website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

**Contact Information**

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**General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG**

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D09 H584**



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**W: [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)**