



Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland

2024

Annual Report

Prepared by Autism Assistance
Dogs Ireland

CHY 19293
RCN 20075491

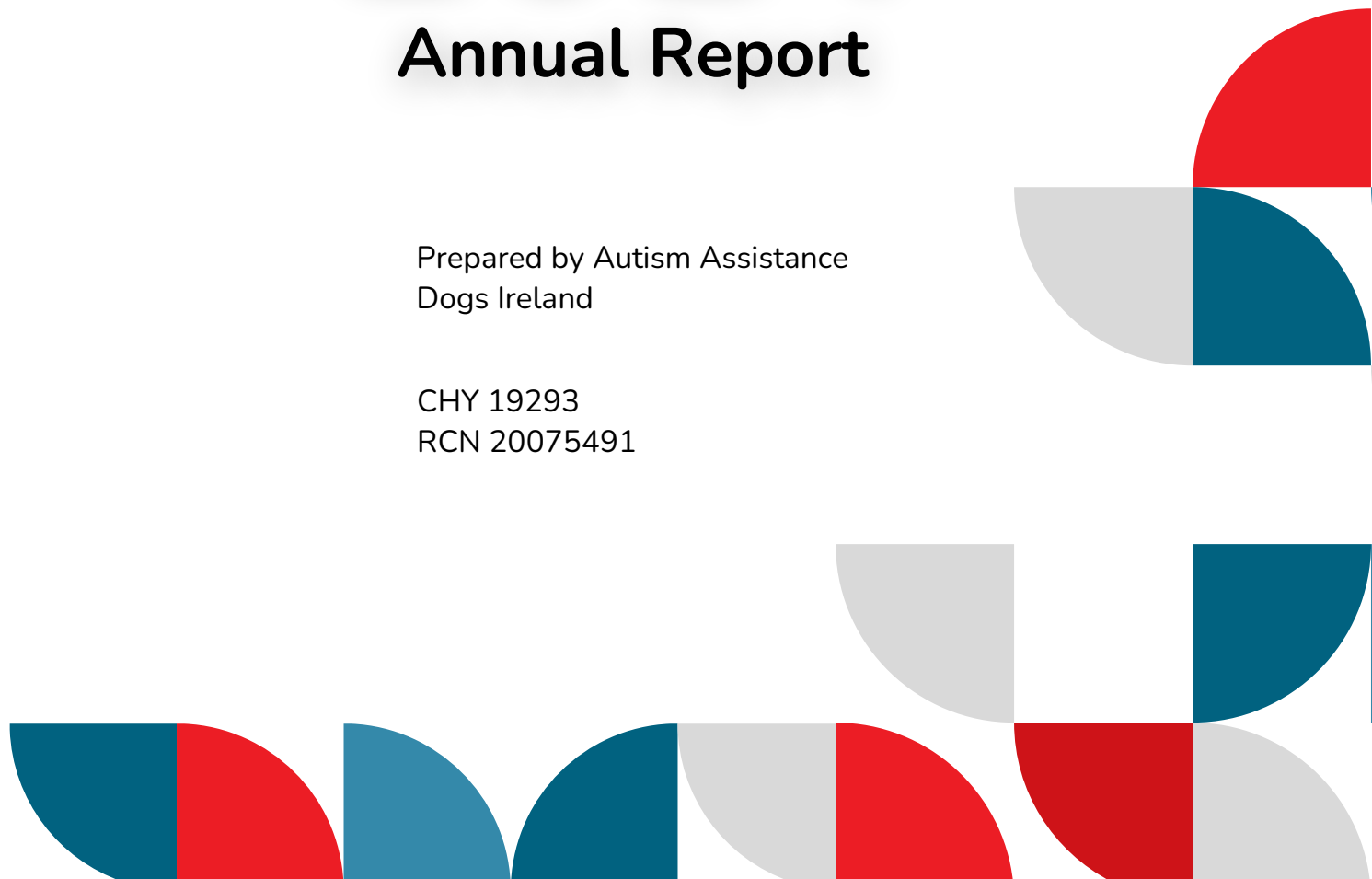


Table of Contents

Chair's Note	03
CEO Message	04
Message from David McCarthy	05
About AADI	06
2024 Year in Review	07
Operational Highlights	08
What A Gift Means For AADI	09
Strategic Initiatives	10
Financial Summary	11
Volunteer Recognition	12
What 2025 Holds	13

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Celebrating 15 Years of Changing the World for Autistic Children

This year marks a significant milestone for our charity—15 years of transforming children's lives through the incredible bond between assistance dogs and their client family. What began as a vision has now grown into a thriving organisation with more than 100 active service dogs, each carefully bred and trained using a scientific approach to ensure the highest standards of safety, support and companionship.

Our journey has been one of continuous innovation, driven by a deep commitment to the children, families and schools that we serve. As we look to the future our long-term ambition is to establish a dedicated training centre—a space where we can further refine our programmes, push the boundaries of excellence, and provide even greater support to our service clients and the autistic community.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our staff, the selfless generosity of our volunteers, and the invaluable contributions from all of our donors. Your support enables us to continue our mission, create meaningful impact, and ensure that every assistance dog is equipped to change lives.

While we have delivered a lot in the last 15 years, we know that much more is possible and we look to the future with optimism and determination. With your support, we will continue to innovate, grow, and empower those who rely on our work.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, representing Irene O'Riordan.



placeholder signature

Irene O'Riordan Board Chair, Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland



CEO MESSAGE

Fifteen years ago, Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland began with one simple but urgent idea—that autistic children deserve the safety, independence, and inclusion that an assistance dog can bring. What started with three placements in 2011 has grown into a national movement.

Today, we serve hundreds of families across Ireland with compassion, professionalism, and a commitment to excellence that drives everything we do. In 2024, that commitment became more evident than ever.



We placed more assistance dogs than in any previous year, expanded our School Support Dog Programme, and deepened the impact of our community engagement through the Fáilte Campaign and our remarkable volunteers.

And we did it without state funding—powered entirely by our supporters and an extraordinary team. But what truly defines AADI is not just the number of dogs placed, or the scale of our growth. It's the way we work. Our operations are sophisticated, strategic, and rooted in data. From behavioural profiling in our breeding programme to outcome tracking in schools, we use evidence to make decisions that change lives.

This year, we also laid the foundations for the future. Vision 2030 is our roadmap to doubling our impact by establishing a world-class training facility and scaling our capacity to meet the growing demand. Because while we're proud of how far we've come, we are even more determined to reach the families who still wait.

What moves me most, after all these years, is seeing the moment a child takes their first confident step tethered to their dog—the moment when everything changes. And that change doesn't happen because of me. It happens because of you. Our volunteers. Our donors. Our community.

There is still so much to do. The need is real, and growing. But together, I believe we can build something enduring—a future where every child who needs an assistance dog has access to one.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Warmest regards,
Nuala Geraghty, CEO



MESSAGE FROM DAVID MCCARTHY



As we reflect on another year of extraordinary impact, I want to extend heartfelt thanks to every volunteer, donor, and partner who has walked alongside us. At Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, we are proud to be recognised as the national leader in autism-specific assistance dog services—a distinction earned through our unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and community.

Our approach is deeply data-driven—from using evidence-based matching to advanced behavioural tracking in training, every decision we make centres on creating meaningful outcomes for children and their families. With sophisticated operational systems and a growing team of expert trainers, we're setting the benchmark for quality in this field.

As we build toward Vision 2030, our mission remains rooted in transforming lives. Every dog we place represents not just hope, but freedom, safety, and possibility. Thank you for being part of that journey.



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Sincerely,
David Mc Carthy
Head of Fundraising and Communications



ABOUT AADI



WHO WE ARE

Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland is a registered national charity dedicated to empowering autistic children and their families through expertly trained assistance dogs. We are proud to operate to the highest international standards, delivering proven outcomes through our core programmes:

Autism Assistance Dogs: Professionally matched through rigorous behavioural profiling to meet the needs of each child.



School Support Dogs: Embedded in mainstream schools to enhance emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and foster inclusion.



Buddy Dogs: Offering comfort and companionship to children not yet ready for an assistance placement.



Fáilte Programme: Building an inclusive Ireland through autism-awareness training for businesses and public spaces.



Every programme we deliver is backed by robust data, trained expertise, and a community of over 340 active volunteers who form the lifeblood of our mission

YEAR IN REVIEW



**SCHOOL
SUPPORT DOGS
INTRODUCED**

4



**ASSISTANCE
DOGS PLACED**

28



**BUDDY DOGS
PLACED**

10



VOLUNTEERS

345

active volunteers
across Ireland



TOTAL FUNDS RAISED

€1,459,988

APPLICATIONS

342

families registered
their interest

**INFORMATION
SESSIONS**

240

families attended

TRAINING PLACES

40

families accepted

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

AADI's operations grew in sophistication and reach throughout 2024. We expanded our staff team with certified instructors and invested in outcome tracking to ensure each placement is successful and sustainable. Our breeding programme was guided by behavioural genetics, enabling us to optimise pairing and reduce attrition.

With an unrelenting focus on quality, we strengthened post-placement support and built new capacity into our aftercare model. Our training methodology—aligned with Assistance Dogs International standards—is now fully integrated with digital tracking to measure milestones, progress, and impact.

This operational maturity isn't just about efficiency—it's about ensuring that every dog placed brings real and lasting transformation to a child's life.



WHAT A GIFT MEANS FOR AADI

€50

Allows one family to be assessed for an Autism Assistance Dog with our Instructors

€100

A routine vet visit for a puppy in training to ensure they are in top condition

€250

An aftercare visit to ensure a family's Assistance Dog is working to its full potential

€500

Providing an Autism Awareness Workshop to educate the public about our work

€750

A four-day intensive class training before the Assistance Dog is placed with their new family

€1,000

A week's worth of one-to-one advanced training for a dog in training with an Instructor



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME: Our Animal Assisted Education (AAE) Programme continues to be a model of innovation, placing trained dogs in schools to support neurodivergent students. Now active in 8 schools, the programme has impacted over 5,000 students, educators, and families.

Independent data shows:

- 70% of students report reduced stress or anxiety
- 83% of staff see improved academic performance
- 75% note stronger peer-to-peer relationships

These results are not accidental—they reflect our strategic use of longitudinal tracking and school feedback to refine dog selection, in-school training, and aftercare. We're proving that assistance dogs belong in education—and we're positioning the programme for national adoption.



Fáilte Campaign: This year, the Fáilte Campaign accelerated—with over 120 businesses nationwide earning the Fáilte Badge for autism-inclusive practices. Our approach blends awareness training with policy guidance, helping organisations evolve from compliant to genuinely welcoming. Parent feedback shows increased confidence in navigating public life—because inclusion starts with understanding.



Community Champions: Local leadership continues to power AADI's grassroots success. In 2024, 38 Champions led over 90 events across Ireland, raising more than €300,000 and creating thousands of community touchpoints for advocacy and action. Their efforts reflect the strength of our new branch model and our belief in the power of volunteer-led change.

Partnerships: Strategic partnerships like those with The Royal Canin Foundation, Woodies, and McCarthy Insurance provided essential funding and visibility. Their support enabled programme growth, volunteer training, and school placements. Together, we are proving that public-private collaboration can drive systemic change.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance sheet As at 31 August 2024

	Note	2024 €	€	2023 €	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9	67,612		81,465	
			67,612		81,465
Current assets					
Stocks	10	38,656		46,839	
Debtors	11	196,125		36,777	
Cash at bank and in hand		705,030		814,961	
		939,811		898,577	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(63,714)		(52,505)	
Net current assets			876,097		846,072
Total assets less current liabilities			943,709		927,537
Net assets			943,709		927,537
Capital and reserves					
Profit and loss account	14		943,709		927,537
Shareholders funds			943,709		927,537

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 12 February 2025 and signed on behalf of the board by:

.....
Emily Ennis
Director

.....
Irene O'Riordan
Director

The notes on pages 14 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Volunteers are the engine of AADI. In 2024, over 340 individuals contributed their time, skills, and compassion—from raising puppies and coordinating events to supporting operations and advocacy. To support and empower this incredible network, we introduced a new regional branch model. With active hubs in Cork, Dublin, Limerick, and Galway, volunteers now have stronger local infrastructure for coordination, training, and community building. These branches serve as accelerators of awareness and action, and we plan to expand this network in 2025. We are not simply grateful—we are deeply proud of our volunteers. They are not auxiliary to our mission; they are essential to it.



What 2025 Holds..

AADI is poised to take bold steps forward. In 2025, our top priority is securing government funding for our School Support Dog Programme. The evidence is clear. The demand is growing. The opportunity to embed our model into the national education system is within reach—and we will not rest until it is recognised as essential support.

We also aim to expand the Fáilte Programme, helping more businesses adopt accessible, inclusive practices through policy templates, training, and consultancy. This will be supported by a broader advocacy strategy to ensure our clients' rights are championed in public life, employment, and education.

Our vision is ambitious. Our impact is proven. But we cannot grow alone. We need supporters, partners, and policymakers who see what's possible—and help us make it happen.





Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland



Thank You

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