



Ard Chúram Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

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As Chairperson and as one of the founding members of Ard Chúram, it gives me immense pride to present this Strategic Plan for 2025–2030 on behalf of the Board and Trustees of Ard Chúram Day Care Centre and Fuchsia Dementia Centre. It marks not only the next chapter in our organisation’s journey but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to older people, their families and the wider North Kerry community.

When we first set out to establish Ard Chúram, we had a simple yet powerful vision: to create a place where older people could feel supported, valued and connected. What began as a grassroots response to local need has grown into a highly respected service, providing day care, dementia support and companionship to hundreds of people every year. Along the way, we have built something remarkable — not just a facility, but a vibrant, caring community.



This Strategic Plan is the product of deep listening. It reflects the views of those who know us best, our clients and their families, our dedicated staff and volunteers, our Board of Trustees, the HSE and our many local partners and supporters. I want to sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time, experience and insights. Your voices have shaped this plan and will continue to guide our future.

I particularly want to acknowledge the continued support of the HSE, without whom this work would not be possible. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff, who bring professionalism and compassion to their work every day; to our volunteers, whose generosity of spirit remains the lifeblood of our organisation; and to my fellow Trustees, who give so much of themselves in service to Ard Chúram’s mission.

As we look to the future, I do so with confidence. The values that inspired our founding still anchor us today — community, care and dignity for every individual. This plan ensures those values remain at the heart of what we do, while preparing us to meet the opportunities and challenges of the years ahead.

Together, we will continue to build a stronger Ard Chúram — one that serves the people of North Kerry with pride, purpose and compassion.



Finbarr Mawe
Chairperson

A Community Vision Takes Root (2006–2015)



Ard Chúram was born out of a shared community concern. In 2006, a public meeting in North Kerry highlighted the glaring absence of a dedicated day care service for older people in the region. At the time, one in four older people in the area lived alone. This prompted a group of local volunteers to come together with a clear mission: to create a centre that would offer companionship, nurse-led care and support to those most at risk of isolation.

With the support of the local community and the HSE, we began our first day of care service for older people in a rented room with a nurse, a health care assistant and five clients. The demand for this service grew exponentially and it became clear over the years that it was an absolute necessity to establish our very own purpose built day care centre

Fundraising began in earnest, from concerts and church gate collections to grant applications and generous local donations. With backing from the HSE, the National Lottery, North, East & West Kerry Development (NEWKD) and a major boost from our selection as a Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle beneficiary in 2014, we gained the momentum we needed.

Finding a site proved challenging due to high land prices. Fortunately, the HSE stepped in and leased, on a long term basis, a parcel of land adjacent to Listowel Community Hospital. This generous gesture enabled us to proceed with a purpose-built centre and in December 2015, we proudly opened the doors of Ard Chúram Day Care Centre.

Prior to that landmark event in 2015, where we opened the door of our new, purpose built centre, we had in 2007 already formalised our structure, establishing North Kerry Day Care Centre Ltd., which later became Ard Chúram Day Care Centre - North Kerry CLG. We continue to operate as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Establishing a Centre of Excellence (2015–2020)



With the opening of our day care centre, we quickly became a trusted hub for older people in North Kerry. Our centre offered a warm, welcoming space where clients could enjoy nutritious meals, take part in meaningful activities and receive day-to-day support in a cheerful, safe environment. Guided by a team of trained and compassionate staff, we placed dignity, respect and care at the heart of all we did.

As our reputation grew, so too did our understanding of the evolving needs of older people and their families.

Expanding to Meet Emerging Needs (2018–2025)

By 2018, it was clear that a more specialised service was needed for people living with dementia. Once again, the HSE supported us by leasing an adjoining site, and we began planning a new facility. With planning permission secured and funding in place from the HSE, local support and the J P McManus Foundation, we began building what would become the Ard Chúram Fuchsia Centre, a dedicated dementia day care service.



In August 2021, the Fuchsia Centre opened its doors, initially on a three-day-week basis, offering personalised, therapeutic activities in a supportive and specialist setting.

Our aim has always been to help people living with dementia remain in their communities, connected and respected, for as long as possible.

From very humble origins in 2006 in a rented room, Ard Chúram now operates its day care centre for older people and its Fuchsia centre for dementia on a 5-day week basis and for the year ended 2024 had in excess of 6,000 attendances.

Adapting Through Adversity: The COVID-19 Response



Like many others, we faced significant disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic. But we adapted quickly. With in-person services temporarily suspended, we pivoted to a community outreach model. We delivered hot meals, activity packs and check-in calls directly to our clients' homes. For many, these deliveries were more than just practical support, they were vital connections during a period of deep isolation. As one client described it, Ard Chúram became "an absolute lifeline".

A Legacy of Compassion and Community

From humble beginnings to our current role as a cornerstone of older person's care in North Kerry, our journey has always been grounded in compassion, community, and a commitment to quality. We've grown, innovated and evolved, but always with the same goal: to support older people to live well, with dignity and connection, in the place they call home.

As we look ahead, we carry forward the same energy and belief that drove our founders, that local communities, when mobilised with purpose, can create lasting impact.

Message from the Strategic Planning Facilitators & Strategic Context

This Strategic Plan was commissioned by the Board of Directors of Ard Chúram as part of their ongoing commitment to strong governance, strategic leadership and regulatory compliance. Developed by Yellow Harbour, the plan was shaped through close collaboration with the Board, management, staff, volunteers, clients, family members and key external stakeholders. As facilitators, our role was to support a process that not only defined Ard Chúram's strategic direction for the years ahead but also ensured that the voices of those who use, deliver, fund and support the service were meaningfully heard, valued and reflected throughout the plan for the coming years.

We began the Strategic Planning process in early 2025, informed by Ard Chúram's evolving role within the community and the growing complexity of delivering care services to older people in a rural context. A robust engagement process was undertaken over a period of 6-months, involving:

- **Workshops and one-to-one meetings** with Ard Chúram staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors
- **In-depth consultations** with key external stakeholders including HSE public health nurses, service managers, community partners, and transport providers
- **Online surveys** capturing feedback from clients, carers, staff, board members, volunteers and external organisations
- **Review of existing strategy, operations and documentation**, including Ard Chúram's Annual Reports and previous planning frameworks
- **Incorporation of external research and policy**, including key HSE reports such as the *Model of Care for Older People in Kerry (2021)* and the *Day Service Report (2023)*

Throughout the process, we observed a strong sense of commitment from all those involved, not only to maintaining the quality of care currently being delivered, but also to future-proofing the service for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Why Now?

Understanding the Strategic Context

Ard Chúram operates in a changing and increasingly regulated environment. Like many community-based organisations providing day care and dementia services, it is navigating the growing complexity of care needs, demographic pressure, heightened expectations from funders, families and communities, all within a landscape of rising compliance requirements and governance.

North Kerry has one of the most rapidly ageing populations in Ireland, with nearly 1 in 5 residents now over the age of 65, a figure expected to rise significantly in the coming decade. Many older people in the region live alone and there is increasing demand for high-quality, locally accessible support that enables people to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible.



At the same time, national policy is shifting towards more **community-based, person-centred models of care**, as reflected in Sláintecare and in the HSE's evolving approach to older person services. The development of specialist dementia care supports, the integration of day care into broader care pathways and the expectation of greater collaboration across services are all shaping how organisations like Ard Chúram must plan and adapt.

Finally, this strategy was developed in the context of increased pressure on voluntary Boards and staff capacity, as well as the need to communicate more clearly with funders and statutory partners about how services are aligned to regional and national priorities.



This Strategic Plan aims to balance **vision and ambition with realism and responsibility**. It sets out five clear Strategic Priorities that will guide Ard Chúram through 2026–2030, each rooted in feedback from the community and shaped by the context in which the organisation operates. These priorities are not merely aspirational, they are focused, actionable and aligned with the values that have underpinned Ard Chúram since its founding.

Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to this process, especially the staff and Board of Ard Chúram, whose openness, insight and passion for their work has shaped this plan from start to finish.

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

To enhance the lives of older people across North Kerry by providing high-quality, person-centred day care and dementia services that support independence, promote well-being and foster social connection within a welcoming and inclusive community.

Our Vision

A North Kerry where every older person feels valued, supported and connected, with access to compassionate, community-based services that help them to live well and age with dignity.

Our Values



Respect

We recognise and honour the individual needs, preferences and life stories of every person who uses our services.



Empathy

We provide care with compassion and understanding, always listening and responding with kindness and sensitivity.



Quality

We are committed to delivering safe, reliable and meaningful services that continuously evolve to meet the changing needs of our community.



Integrity & Inclusion

We act with transparency and professionalism, creating a welcoming environment where every older person feels respected, included and part of our community.



Community

We work hand in hand with families, volunteers, funders and healthcare partners to ensure our services reflect the needs of the people we serve.

Ard Chúram Strategic Plan 2025 -2030



Enhancing Care Quality and Accessibility

Ambition

At Ard Chúram, we are committed to delivering high-quality, compassionate day care and dementia care services that help older people in North Kerry live with dignity, independence and connection. Over the next five years, we will build on our strong foundations to expand access, deepen quality and ensure our services continue to meet the changing needs of those we support.

As client dependency levels rise and demand increases, we recognise the importance of evolving our care model so that we can continue to be a cornerstone of ageing well in our community.



Actions:

- **Expand our service capacity and flexibility**, exploring six-day operations and extended opening hours to better meet the needs of clients and families.
- **Improve our referral and admission pathways**, working closely with the HSE to ensure a clear, timely and clinically informed process for all new clients.
- **Introduce a structured care approach** that reflects the medium-to-high needs of our clients, increasing access to tailored care opportunities that enhance quality of life and aligning with the HSE's ethos of '**Making Every Contact Count**' through meaningful, person-centred engagement at every stage of the client journey.
- **Strengthen integration with community and home support services**, creating more seamless pathways of care and clearer communication with external health professionals.
- **Implement a robust clinical governance framework** that reflects best practice in older person services and aligns with the HSE's models of care.
- **Pilot outreach and Reablement Programme initiatives** that help us reach isolated individuals and support those awaiting placement or transitioning from hospital or home.

Building Organisational Resilience and Capacity

Ambition

We recognise that delivering exceptional care begins with a strong, well-supported organisation. As we grow and adapt to future demands, we will invest in our people, systems, and governance to ensure Ard Chúram remains resilient, responsive and forward-looking.

Over the next five years, we will strengthen our internal capacity so that we can meet future challenges with confidence and continue to deliver on our mission with excellence.



Actions:

- **Support and develop our staff team**, nurturing a positive culture of care, professionalism and learning across every role.
- **Invest in leadership and governance development**, ensuring our Board, senior staff and working groups have the tools and training to lead effectively.
- **Clarify and strengthen our internal structures**, defining roles, responsibilities and reporting lines that support operational efficiency and service excellence.
- **Recruit a dedicated Development or Operations Lead**. This person will provide overall day-to-day operational leadership to help us manage our growth, secure new resources, support the Board in executing its governance responsibilities and deliver on our strategic goals.
- **Enhance our internal systems and processes**, improving data management, HR and service scheduling to support effective decision-making and responsiveness.
- **Promote staff wellbeing and retention**, recognising the dedication of our team and creating a workplace that values care, respect and balance.
- **Review and future-proof our volunteer model**, ensuring volunteers are supported, integrated and engaged in meaningful ways across the organisation.
- **Strengthen our long-term sustainability** by securing reliable core funding, exploring diversified income streams and building the financial resilience needed to support future leadership and service development.

Deepening Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Ambition



Our strength lies in the trust we have built with families, volunteers, healthcare professionals and the wider community. We are proud to be a service rooted in and shaped by our local community and over the next five years, we want to build even deeper connections with those who support and rely on us.

By strengthening relationships, listening more actively and inviting collaboration, we will ensure that Ard Chúram continues to reflect and respond to the real needs of our community.



Actions:

- **Work closely with the HSE**, particularly Public Health Nurses and community health networks, to improve referrals, communication, care plans and wraparound care for our clients.
- **Rebuild and expand our volunteer network**, creating new opportunities for meaningful involvement across both day care and dementia services.
- **Enhance our engagement with families and carers**, offering clear communication, opportunities for input, and space for shared learning and support.
- **Collaborate with local community and cultural groups**, such as the Ard Chúram community choir, opening our doors to new partnerships, intergenerational initiatives and wellbeing projects.
- **Increase our visibility with external stakeholders**, including funders, local representatives and partner organisations, helping them better understand our impact and value.
- **Explore new community-led initiatives**, such as carer support programmes, creative ageing activities or men's sheds partnerships, to extend our reach and relevance.

Strengthening Communications and Visibility

Ambition

Effective communication underpins every aspect of our work, from how we support clients and families, to how we collaborate with the HSE and engage the wider community. While Ard Chúram is widely recognised by name, there is still limited public understanding of the full scope of our services. Internally, staff and volunteers want clearer, more consistent communication. And across all levels of the HSE, both frontline and management, stronger dialogue and coordination are essential to ensuring we are aligned, responsive, and understood.

Over the next five years, we will strengthen our communications across all levels, internally, operationally, and strategically, to ensure that our services are clearly described, well understood and fully connected to the wider care ecosystem.



4.a Communication with Clients, Carers, Volunteers and the Wider Community

Objective

Build clear, consistent and inclusive communication with everyone who engages with us, from those who use our services, to those who support or live alongside them.

Actions:

- Develop and implement a Brand Communications Plan that strengthens internal information-sharing with staff and volunteers, including updates on rosters, centre activities, organisational changes and shared care updates.
- Improve how we engage with families and carers, ensuring clear points of contact, accessible updates and opportunities for dialogue and feedback.
- Build greater awareness in the wider community through outreach, local media, information sessions and visibility at community events, helping more people understand the essential role we play in supporting older people and carers.
- Refresh our website and public materials so they accurately reflect the breadth and impact of our services and are easy to access by families, referrers and the public.
- Promote positive storytelling by sharing real-life experiences of clients, families, volunteers and staff to bring our values and impact to life.

4.b Operational Communication with HSE Frontline Staff

Objective

Strengthen coordination with the HSE's frontline staff, especially Public Health Nurses, to improve referrals, admissions and shared care.

Actions:

- Clarify and streamline referral and admissions procedures in partnership with PHNs, creating a transparent, user-friendly system for all.
- Establish clear lines of communication for day-to-day operational matters, including transport logistics, care updates and service availability.
- Offer regular touchpoints and updates for PHNs and referring partners to ensure mutual understanding of client needs and service capacity.
- Provide feedback mechanisms so referrers are informed of placement outcomes and supported in their liaison role.

4.c Strategic Communication with HSE Management

Objective

Build a stronger strategic relationship with HSE leadership, ensuring Ard Chúram is aligned with broader community care goals across Kerry.

Actions:

- Establish formal structures for regular communication with HSE management to discuss strategic direction, service developments and funding.
- Ensure Ard Chúram's role and value are clearly articulated within the HSE's Integrated Health Area.
- Proactively share data, outcomes and case studies that demonstrate the impact of our work on client wellbeing and system sustainability.
- Collaborate on future planning and service evolution, including areas such as dementia care pathways, reablement and community-based supports.

4.d Strengthening Internal Communication and Social Media

Objective

Improve internal communication and strengthen our social media presence, ensuring staff and volunteers are well-informed and engaged, while increasing external visibility and community connection through consistent, purposeful digital outreach.

Strong internal communication is essential for a connected, motivated team. We want everyone involved in Ard Chúram, including staff, volunteers and Board members, to feel informed, included and aligned with our vision. We will improve how we communicate day to day, ensure clearer updates across the organisation and create better opportunities for two-way dialogue.

At the same time, we recognise the growing importance of social media in how we connect with the outside world. We will strengthen our digital presence to help share our story, promote events, celebrate achievements and reach new audiences, including families, supporters, volunteers and the wider public.

Actions:

- Introduce consistent internal communication practices, including team updates, shared calendars, and improved information flow between staff, volunteers and the Board.
- Create regular opportunities for feedback and dialogue, helping build a more inclusive and transparent culture.
- Develop and implement a social media plan that showcases our work, promotes our values and enhances our visibility in the wider community.
- Use digital platforms to increase engagement with clients, families, potential volunteers and supporters.

Innovating for the Future

Ambition

We are proud of our roots in community care, but we also know that standing still is not an option. The needs of older people are changing. The dementia population is ageing and expectations around service choice, flexibility and responsiveness are growing. At Ard Chúram, we are ready to embrace innovation, not for its own sake, but to ensure that our services continue to offer meaningful, relevant and person-centred support into the future.

Over the next five years, we will build a culture of curiosity, creativity and continuous improvement, piloting new approaches, learning from others and staying open to fresh ideas that can enhance the lives of those we serve.



Actions:

- **Explore innovative service models**, including flexible day care formats, Reablement-focused activities, blended social and clinical supports and outreach-based interventions.
- **Trial new activities and therapies**, particularly those focused on sensory engagement, nature-based wellbeing and creative expression for both day care and dementia clients
- **Use data and feedback to drive service improvement**, building better systems to collect, analyse and act on client, family and staff insights.
- **Strengthen our relationship with research bodies and educational partners**, exploring opportunities for joint projects, placements and learning.
- **Stay connected to best practice nationally and internationally**, regularly scanning for new ideas in older person care, dementia services and rural service delivery.
- **Invest in technology where it adds value**, including scheduling, communication, care coordination and accessibility tools for clients and carers.
- **Encourage a learning culture**, where staff are supported to test ideas, share knowledge and continuously develop their professional practice.
- **Enhance the quality of life for our clients** by embedding meaningful engagement, creativity and personal choice into all aspects of service delivery, ensuring that each person experiences purpose, joy and connection in their daily lives.



Prepared by Yellow Harbour
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