



20
21 | Annual
Report



MS North West Therapy Centre Sligo

Providing essential services to people with Multiple Sclerosis,
related conditions and their families.





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MISSION STATEMENT



MS North West Therapy Centre Sligo

**Providing essential services to people with Multiple Sclerosis,
related conditions and their families.**

The Multiple Sclerosis North West Therapy Centre exists to enrich the lives of people with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions by providing essential services and supports to clients and their families.



Chairpersons Welcome





CHAIRPERSONS WELCOME



The Annual Report 2021 gives a brief overview of the Multiple Sclerosis North West Therapy Centre (MS Centre) and its services delivered through the Operational Plan 2021. The report also sets out the activities and plans for 2021 as per the Strategic Plan for the organisation.

The Financial Statements for 2021 will be presented to the Board of Directors for sign-off at the AGM scheduled in May 2022.

The report includes an overview from our dedicated health care professionals on the services and activities during 2021.

2021, like 2020 was a very difficult year where the COVID-19 pandemic in the Republic of Ireland affected many aspects of society and that included the services provided by our organisation. COVID-19 has impacted our services with some necessary closures in our shops and Woodhaven. In addition, we had to cease and reduce some services and completely reconfigure some of our Centre based services. However, the excellent management and staff worked tirelessly to deliver our services via telehealth therefore ensuring our services could still be accessed by our Clients who could not access the Centre in person.

The pandemic again in 2021 hindered our ability to fundraise in many ways however we are extremely thankful to our Clients who have continued to support our monthly Club Draw. We are always looking to increase our subscribers to the draw which comes at a nominal cost of just €10 per month.

We are deeply grateful to all our donors for their generosity in making donations and running fundraising events online during the year. Every euro donated goes towards the running of the services. I would like to take this opportunity to ensure all stake-holders that costs are very tightly managed and controlled. Every euro is put to good use.

Woodhaven, our state of the art short-term holiday facility at Sea Road has unfortunately remained closed since March 2020 due to continuing COVID related restrictions and difficulties in securing qualified staff for daily operations. Woodhaven continues to operate as a training facility for the community; however the Board of Directors are researching and considering other options in the interim for the use of Woodhaven with the long term plan of resuming respite services in the future, where we will hopefully see a more prosperous national landscape that supports respite on a legislative basis.

The risks for the MS Centre, both financial and physical are set out in a realistic fashion. The gap between HSE funding and the cost of running the MS Centre is a cause of ongoing concern. The income from Essential Seconds Charity Shops and the MS 300 Club Draw is



critical. Our fundraising goal remains ambitious for 2022 with majority of our fundraising activities planned to be executed virtually.

I wish to thank the Board members for their continued commitment and dedication towards achieving the goals of the MS Centre during the year.

I thank our managers, staff and volunteers for their excellent work during the year. We are very fortunate in having a team of dedicated caring professionals.

The main governance programmes; Quality Assurance (IQ), Charities Governance Code, Health and Safety and Safeguarding continue to maintain our standards at the highest possible level. We look forward to a brighter year ahead in 2022 where we will hopefully see our service returning to levels seen prior to COVID.

Yours Sincerely,

Geraldine Gordon

Chairperson



SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT



2021 was a challenging year for all voluntary disability organisations including the MS North West Therapy Centre (MS Centre). The pandemic has been tough on the MS Centre, our Clients in particular who were required to adapt to the many changes in how their services are being delivered.

In January 2021, the MS Centre closed its doors for the second time due to surge in COVID19 in Ireland and a Level 5 lockdown. We saw a number of staff re-deployed to SUH to assist with the deteriorating Covid situation. Meanwhile management and staff worked very hard to plan re-opening the MS Centre and move to telehealth and online based services. Telehealth policies and procedures were finalised in February 2021 with the new services launched with the introduction of online classes. In addition all other services were reconfigured with necessary reduction of services delivered in line with public health advice and staff ratios. By March 2021, we once again welcomed the return of in-person services operating four days per week, with some of our services operating out of Woodhaven.

While the organisation has been working very hard to adapt to the new landscape informed by COVID19, we did increase our level of services delivered in comparison to 2020 and have introduced new telehealth services which was a very positive outcome. However, our HBO service has remained closed since March 2020 including the suspension of respite service in Woodhaven in line with public health guidelines and our own capacity regarding staff numbers to run the services. Access to the hydrotherapy pool in Cregg House continued to be suspended throughout 2021 due to concerns pertaining to Infection, Prevention and Control guidelines.

Research undertaken by our Physiotherapy team during 2021 carried out an objective re-assessment of the initial online exercise classes which showed that client participation improved the physical, psychosocial and overall wellbeing of the clients. Many stated they enjoyed the social interaction and overall felt fitter. Therefore, the research showed that overall classes should be promoted and continued as part of the services offered by the MS Centre. In addition, client satisfaction review highlighted Telehealth services were very well received by our Clients with a demand for additional classes. By the end of 2021 there were 6 online exercise classes delivered to our clients which are now physiotherapy assistant lead classes under the close supervision of our Physiotherapists.

Our wonderful holistic team who worked for many months delivering reflexology treatments from our Woodhaven building returned to the MS Centre in June 2021. Socially distanced waiting room also reopened for Clients attending for more than one service. We also welcomed the return of Clients coming from long term residential settings. Our counselling



service offered telephone counselling sessions throughout the pandemic for which we are forever grateful.

Throughout 2021, our wonderful organisation has been hit with service closures, reduction in services delivered, shop closures with a loss of revenue for which we rely on so heavily to bridge our annual funding shortfall as well as traditional forms of fundraising. However, in the face of adversity, we have adapted, reconfigured our services and are making firm plans for 2022 where we plan to only provide services within our the parameters of what our core funding permits on an annual basis. We also foresee a number of traditional forms of fundraising replaced by online activities and events.

In addition, going into 2022 we are committed to continue our work around the implementation of the Charities Governance Code. Through our reporting with the Charity Regulatory Authority, we continue to maintain the highest levels of governance, transparency and accountability in everything we do.

The Board and Management look for the support of the HSE and other voluntary organisations for the provision of funding and staffing to support the continuation of our services. We would like to thank Sligo Social Services and Sligo Leader Project for the provision of care staff, maintenance and administration personnel via their Community Employment projects. Without the collaboration of the aforementioned groups, service delivery could not be maintained. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank POBAL, the main funding stream for provision of services at Woodhaven.

Finally, we would like to thank the voluntary Board of Directors for successfully driving the Organisation to achieve its goal, the wonderful staff, project workers, volunteers and clients who are dedicated and committed to the MS Centre, Woodhaven and Essential Seconds Charity Shops. In addition, much gratitude has to be given to our staff who have remained loyal to the organisation throughout the pandemic.

Finally, we are so thankful to each and every client for their patience throughout the year as it is taking time for us to reinstate our pre-Covid activities, but we are slowly getting back on our feet.

Tamara Mulhern



Financial





AUDITED ACCOUNTS

Multiple Sclerosis North West Therapy Centre Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance Sheet As at 31st December 2021

	Note	2021 €	€	2020 €	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8	640,828		696,695	
			640,828		696,695
Current assets					
Debtors	9	12,779		14,949	
Cash at bank		666,621		565,161	
		679,400		580,110	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(54,588)		(95,651)	
Net current assets		624,812		484,459	
Total assets less current liabilities		1,265,640		1,181,154	
Deferred Income	11	(142,167)		(152,922)	
Net assets		1,123,473		1,028,232	
Reserves					
Capital contributions	12	33,325		32,660	
Contingency reserve	13	271,881		271,881	
Income and expenditure account	14	818,267		723,691	
		1,123,473		1,028,232	

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Small Companies' Regime.

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 26th May 2022 and signed on behalf of the board by:

Geraldine Gordon
Director

Denis Joyce
Director

The notes on pages 12 to 21 form part of these financial statements.



RESERVES POLICY

A formal policy on reserves was agreed by the Board of Directors as follows:

It states: The Board has set a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that the MS North West Therapy Centre's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
- A proportion of reserves be maintained in a readily realisable form.

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle.

It takes into account:

- Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted.
- Planned activity level.
- Organisation's commitments.

The following expenditure was considered for 2021:

- Working capital – Reserves up to 12 weeks to cover all operational costs for all MS North West Therapy services.
- Capital Costs – €10,000 has been projected as a contingency figure to cover unforeseen repairs, breakages and equipment maintenance.
- Developments – A provision of €5,000 has been made to facilitate the costs incurred with staff training, advertising, marketing promotional material regarding services provided by new service at Woodhaven.
- Other Contingencies – covered above under working capital.
- Restricted funds – there are no restricted funds in our reserves.

Summary

The reserves are in place to provide matching funds for projects that require funding such as and any other such projects should they arise. They are also required for working capital purposes on a day to day basis and to provide bridging finance for programmes where grant aid is paid in arrears, as per banking requirements and good practice.

The Board proposes to maintain the charity's reserves at a level which is at least equivalent to three months operational expenditure.



The monies contained in the reserves account is unrestricted, therefore the Board have the right to allocate funding to where it may be required to fund service delivery.

For 2021, the Board agreed that the most appropriate level of reserves should be kept at the level of 4 months operational costs.





RISK MANAGEMENT



In Community and Voluntary Organisations, risk is inevitable and therefore, a process must be implemented to anticipate and develop a plan to mitigate risk.

The MS North West Therapy Centre (MS Centre) like many other charities operate in high risk environments, from coping with changeable funding streams every year to their heavy reliance on voluntary input to bridge funding gaps. Therefore, the MS Centre Board of Directors must be very aware of these risks and must deal with them in the best way they can on an annual basis. The MS Centre takes a very proactive approach to risk management aiming to avoid bad risks but also identify areas for potential development.

The Board of Directors have a remit in reviewing the following categories of risks facing our organisation:

- Compliance
- External
- Financial
- Governance
- Operational
- Reputational
- Strategic



Governance





DIRECTORS ELECTED

Board of Directors elected 7th July 2021

OFFICERS:

Chairperson: Geraldine Gordon

Vice Chairperson: Denis Joyce

Treasurer: Lorraine Dempsey (initially registered as a Director on the 9th December 2020)

Company Secretary: Mary Henry

DIRECTORS:

Rosaleen O'Grady

Leo McNally

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE:

Geraldine Gordon

Mary Henry

Tamara Mulhern, Mairead Martin

Gina Gartlan (Front Office Manager)

MANAGERS:

Tamara Mulhern, General Manager

Mairead Martin, Woodhaven Manager



SECRETARY'S REPORT

The following legal obligations have been carried out for the year 2021:

- The Annual Report and Financial Statement of the MS North West Therapy Centre Ltd. have been signed and will be lodged with the Company Registration Office (CRO) by the date due.
- The Annual General Meeting was held on 7th July 2021. Notice of the AGM was given 3 weeks beforehand as is required.
- Five full Board Meetings and an AGM were held in 2021, notice and agenda for these meetings were given seven days in advance.
- The Register of Directors has been kept updated during the year 2021.
- Minutes of all Board Meetings were proposed and seconded as true accounts and signed by the Chairperson. They are saved as an online copy on the organisation's server.
- Updated B10 forms relating to director changes have been lodged with the CRO.

Board Members resigned during the year:

- No resignations were submitted throughout 2021.



ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS 2021

Five full Board Meetings and an AGM held in 2021.

BOARD MEETING

17th February 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Mary Henry

Leo Mc Nally

Lorraine Dempsey

Denis Joyce

Rosaleen O'Grady

Apologies: All in attendance

BOARD MEETING

28th April 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Mary Henry

Rosaleen O'Grady

Denis Joyce

Lorraine Dempsey

Apologies: Leo McNally

BOARD MEETING

21st July 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Mary Henry (via zoom)

Denis Joyce

Apologies: Rosaleen O'Grady, Leo McNally, Lorraine Dempsey

BOARD MEETING

13th October 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Lorraine Dempsey

Denis Joyce

Apologies: Sr. Mary Henry

DNA: Rosaleen O'Grady, Leo McNally

BOARD MEETING

8th December 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Lorraine Dempsey

Denis Joyce

Rosaleen O'Grady

Mary Henry

Apologies: Leo McNally

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

7th July 2021. Attendance:

Geraldine Gordon

Lorraine Dempsey

Mary Henry (zoom)

Denis Joyce

Gilroy Gannon Accountants – via zoom

Apologies: Rosaleen O'Grady, Leo McNally



MEET THE DIRECTORS



Geraldine Gordon (Chairperson)

Geraldine has a background in banking and was elected as a Director 6 years ago. She acts as director with special responsibility for fundraising and has provided assistance to the fundraising committee in setting up and monitoring the MS Club Draw.



Lorraine Dempsey (Treasurer)

Lorraine comes from an accounting background and more recently qualified as a Quality Financial Adviser. From 2017-2019 she worked as Front Office Manager for the MS Centre. During that time she gained an excellent understanding of how the organisation operates as a charity and the importance of its presence in the community. Lorraine subsequently went on to become treasurer with us in 2020.



Mary Henry (Director)

Mary comes from a background in Occupational Therapy and was Physical and Sensory Disabilities Manager in HSE before her retirement. She was an integral part of the group that set up the MS Centre and was involved both in the original building and fundraising effort. More recently she coordinated the building of our supported holiday facility Woodhaven.



Rosaleen O'Grady (Director)

Rosaleen comes from a background in health. She is a former senior clinical nurse manager with HSE West. She has been a public representative since 1999. She was elected to the Board of the MS Centre in 2014 with special responsibility to assist Woodhaven Manager when needed.



Denis Joyce (Director)

Denis has spent thirty-six years working within An Garda Siochana in a variety of roles. Denis has a diploma in Industrial Relations, Degree in Leadership and a Post Grad in Governance. He is currently Chair of North Connaught/Ulster Citizens Information service and Child Safety Officer for Collera Community games and Collera GAA club.



Leo McNally (Director)

Leo is a local businessman specialising in the area of medical laboratories equipment largely the manufacture of medical and dental instruments and supplies.



DIRECTOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of Board Members to:

1. Act within the governing document and the law – being aware of the contents of the organisation's governing document and the law as it applies to MS North West Therapy Centre Ltd. This is set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association .
2. Act in the best interests of the MS North West Therapy Centre as a whole – considering what is best for the organisation and its beneficiaries.
3. Manage conflicts of interest effectively by abiding with the MS North West Therapy Centre's declaration of interests policy which is kept in the Policy Folder in the Manager's Office.
4. Respect confidentiality – understanding what confidentiality means in practice for MS North West Therapy Centre, its Board and the individuals involved with it.
5. Attend meetings and other appointments on time or give apologies. If three consecutive meetings are missed without apology, you may be asked to step down from the Board.
6. Prepare fully for board meetings – reading papers, querying anything you don't understand and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.
7. Actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings – contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
8. Act jointly and accept a majority decision – making decisions collectively, standing by them and not acting individually unless specifically authorised to do so.
9. Work considerately and respectfully with all – respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoiding giving offence.
10. Work to protect the good name of the MS North West Therapy Centre at all times– avoiding bringing the organisation into disrepute.
11. Directors should not accept gifts and hospitality from stakeholders as set out in the Policy Folder.

Board members are expected to honour the content and spirit of this code.



MEET THE MANAGERS

Tamara Mulhern (Manager)

Tamara joined the MS Centre as Services Manager in 2011. Her background includes working in the private sector but primarily in the Voluntary and Disability Sector for the past 15 years. Tamara has a great interest in the voluntary sector and completed a Masters in Leadership and Management for the Community and Public Sector. Currently her main role encompasses the overall management and co-ordination of services provided by the MS Centre and its services at Woodhaven and retail base Essential Seconds in Sligo town and Ballymote.



Mairead Martin (Woodhaven Manager)

Mairead Martin joined the MS North West Therapy Centre as Woodhaven Manager in 2014. Mairead has over ten years' experience of working in the community and voluntary sector. Mairead has a BA in Applied Social Studies and has also completed an MA in Leadership and Management for the Community and Public Sector. Central to Mairead's role is the provision of an individual holiday based experience for each and every guest that visits Woodhaven.





SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The MS Therapy Centre/Woodhaven has adopted the Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures.

The MS Centre has three Safeguarding Designated Officers as follows:

Claire Smyth (Physiotherapist)

Mairead Martin (Woodhaven Manager)

Tamara Mulhern (Services Manager)

The MS Centre and Woodhaven continue to have a Zero Tolerance approach to any form of abuse and this is publicly declared by a post at the entrance at both the MS Centre and Woodhaven.

No Safeguarding matters have been reported in 2021.

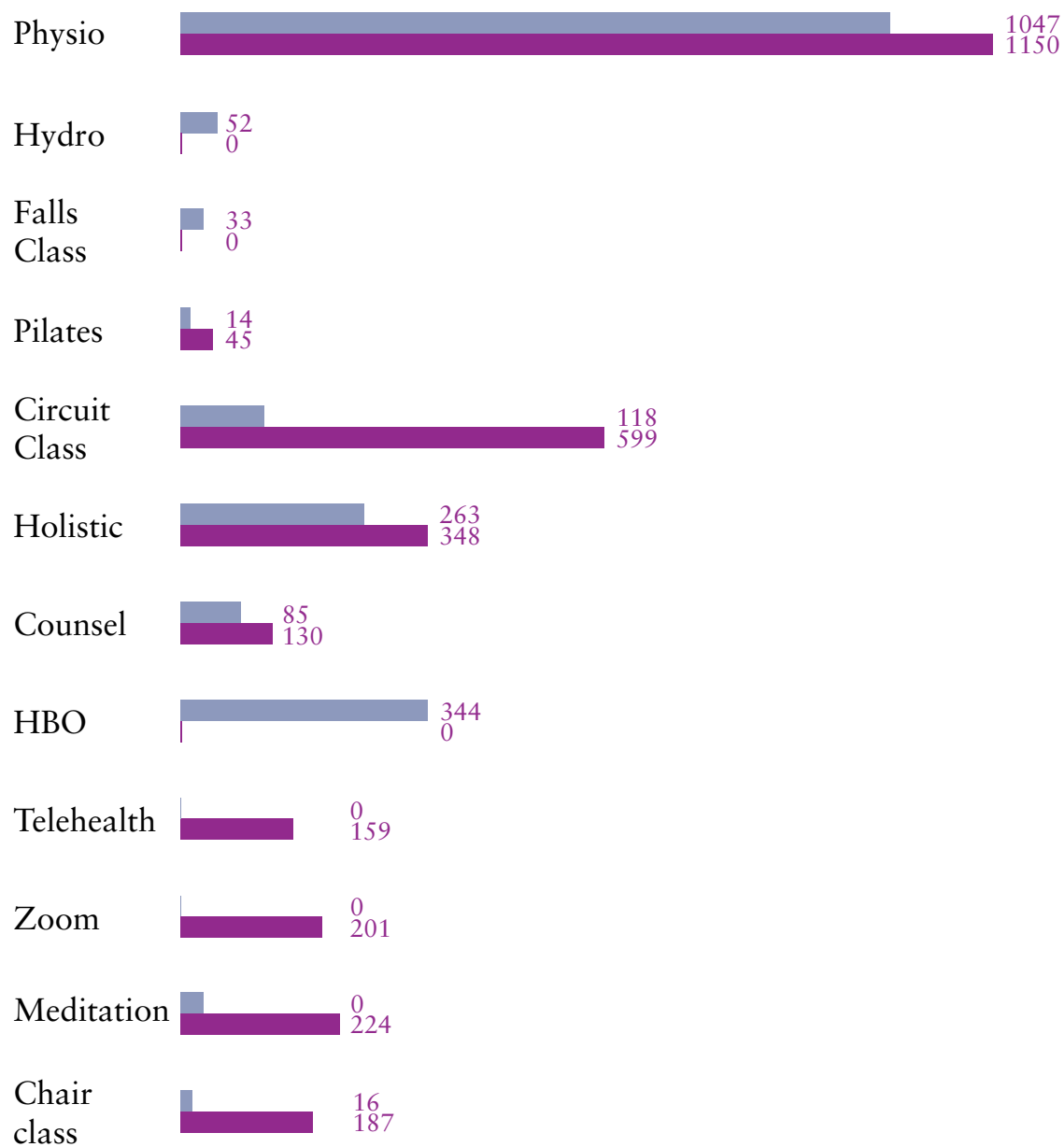


Services





MS CENTRE SERVICES STATS 2021



2020 2021



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Purpose and Vision

The Physiotherapists working in the MS Northwest Therapy Centre continue in their endeavour to support their clients as they live with a life-long chronic progressive neurological condition. We aim to promote health and well-being by offering appropriate and timely advice on symptom management, by delivering evidence-based treatment, and by offering a range of on-line classes to help service-users introduce regular exercise into their daily routine. Our goal is to help clients self-manage their condition, and we hope that through a holistic approach to care we can help them improve their quality of life.

COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021

In line with government guidelines, the MS Centre was once again required to close its doors in January 2021. This was following a nationwide surge in COVID cases after the Christmas period. MS Therapy Centre staff however were able to continue working off-site. Two of the Physiotherapists (PTs), Hannah Gordon and Claire Smyth, used this time to develop policies, procedures, protocols and guidance documentation to facilitate the introduction of tele-health consultations and the provision of on-line classes.

Delivery of classes commenced in February 2021. They were delivered by the Physiotherapy Assistants (PTAs), under the instruction and guidance of a PT.

The Physiotherapy Department in 2021

The Physiotherapy Department is made up of 2.3 whole time equivalent PTs; 1 Senior Grade and 3 Staff-Grade PT. One member of staff, Shane Sweeney, departed in 2021 to pursue new career opportunities, and was replaced by Shauna Brady. There are also 3 Physiotherapist Assistants (PTAs), trained to FETAC Level 5.

Service Trends in 2021

20 new referrals were made to the MS Centre in 2021. Of these 2 clients did not meet referral criteria, 1 was too medically unwell and 1 declined services as was attending Physiotherapy elsewhere. Of the 16 who did attend all had a diagnosis of MS. 9 clients lived in Sligo, 1 was from Mayo, 3 were from Donegal and 3 were from Leitrim. 14 clients were aged 18-65, whilst 2 were aged over 65.

The number of face-to-face physiotherapy treatment sessions delivered in 2021 was 1411, which had increased from 2020, but which was lower than data collected pre-COVID, eg. 2534 attendances in 2018 and 2575 in 2019.

303 cancelled appointments were recorded during 2021, with a further 110 recorded as 'did not attend'.



There were 1096 attendances at exercise classes during 2021, which was a significant increase from 2020. All classes were delivered on-line, due to continued social distancing guidelines.

New Developments / Quality Initiatives in 2021

The main development in services in 2021 was undoubtedly the introduction of tele-health consultations via Zoom, as well as on-line exercise classes. PTs Hannah Gordon and Claire Smyth, with some guidance from MS Ireland's Dr. Susan Coote, were instrumental in developing the necessary policies and procedures to make this possible.

They developed 4 on-line classes : these included an Upper Limb class, Chair-based class, Standing Circuit Class and Midday Meditation. Classes ran twice per week and have proved extremely popular with service-users.

PT Student, Hayley Clarke, under the guidance of PT Claire Smyth, undertook a mini research project in April 2021 looking at the benefits of participation in the on-line circuit class after 3 months. This showed favourable results, with significant improvements in 'MS Impact Scale', 'MS Walking Scale' and '30 second Sit-to-Stand' outcome measures, as well as achieving high satisfaction ratings.

The PT Department further developed its links with MS Ireland via Dr. Susan Coote, by attending their fortnightly online in-service training. This has proved hugely beneficial in facilitating relevant Continuing Professional Development, as well as providing a valuable information-sharing forum.

PT Hannah Gordon, along with Assistant Manager Gina Gartlan, were heavily involved in developing and upgrading the MS Centre's social media coverage, via both the home web-page and Face-book. They continue to collaborate with Marketing Advisor, Conor Lynch, on this project.

Finally MS World Day was delivered wholly on-line in 2021. This took a huge amount of work and commitment from all MS Staff, as well as huge outside help from our Technical Support person Glenn Regan.

Education/Continuous Professional Development in 2021

PT Hannah Gordon and PTA Lorraine Mc Dermot attended an on-line course in 'Understanding MS', which was delivered by the Menzies Institute for Medical Research in New Zealand. This had been recommended by Dr. Susan Coote.

PT Hannah Gordon also completed training in Gait Analysis via an on-line course delivered by the University of Strathclyde.



PT Aideen Melanaphy and Shane Sweeney both completed training in Vestibular Rehabilitation.

As mentioned previously the PTs started to regularly attend in-service training with MS Ireland via Zoom.

Plans for Future Development in 2022

We would hope to re-introduce our face-to-face Pilates classes during 2022, as well as clinically-supported Acupuncture. We also hope to recommence our Lunch-time Talks.

The PT Department plans to up-skill in Foot-drop symptom management, by completing further training in the use of Functional Electrical Stimulation.

The PT Department plans to purchase a new Active-Passive Trainer for community use, pending funding availability from the National Lottery.

Finally, the PT Department continues its involvement in the MS Centre's quality assurance process through participation in the 'Improving Quality' programme. It is hoped that the MS Centre will go forward for accreditation in 2022.



*Aideen Melanaphy
Senior Physiotherapist*



*Claire Smyth
Physiotherapist*



*Shane Sweeney
Physiotherapist*



Hannah Gordon



Dry Needling – Annual Report 2021



We now have two physiotherapists qualified in dry needling – Hannah and Grainne.

The aim of Dry Needling is to reduce muscle pain and dysfunction by releasing tight areas in the muscle known as myofascial trigger points. Normal muscle does not contain these trigger points. Trigger points may cause disturbed muscle function, muscle weakness and restricted range of motion, as well as local or referred pain.

There are several reasons why trigger points develop in muscles. The most common are overuse, over stretch, over loading and trauma to muscles. Dry needling is one way that these trigger points can be treated.

Dry needling is a form of therapeutic approach in which fine solid filament needles are inserted into specific points on the body to relieve pain and improve function. These needles are the same as acupuncture needles but it is not the same as acupuncture. Some of the physiological effects of needling are common in both, but the principles of assessment and treatment techniques are quite different.

If you are interested in dry needling or feel that it is something that may benefit you, then speak to your physiotherapist who can discuss it with you and refer you to Hannah or Grainne if appropriate.



HYDROTHERAPY

In people with MS, research has shown that hydrotherapy (exercising in warm water) helps to improve muscle strength, fitness, gait and mobility, as well as quality of life and wellbeing and reduces spasticity, pain and swelling of the limbs.

The MS Centre utilises the hydrotherapy Pool in Cregg House for its hydrotherapy service. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the related risks outlined in HSE Infection, Prevention and Control guidelines, Cregg House had to make the unfortunate but necessary decision to suspend access to their hydrotherapy pool which included MS Centre Clients.

It is unknown when and if this fantastic service is to resume.





OXYGEN TREATMENT (O²T)



The Oxygen Treatment (O²T) has been provided to people with MS and other related neurological conditions for the past 27 years. The treatment involves breathing in pure oxygen at higher than atmospheric pressure in an enclosed chamber. The increase flow of oxygen stimulates and assists repair of damaged cells throughout the body. It can be very beneficial for people with MS in overcoming fatigue, improving balance and eyesight as well as improving bladder control and general well-being. It is found to be useful in healing soft tissue injuries, sprains and bruising, leg ulcers and circulatory problems. Clients who use the Oxygen Treatment at the MS Centre generally present with MS and other related neurological conditions. However we do offer the service to non-MS clients who pay privately for the treatment.

While people with MS are always a priority, our private clients provide much needed funding in order for us to continue delivering the service to MS Clients.

From March of 2020, our oxygen treatment service was suspended in line with public health guidelines and unfortunately has not resumed throughout 2021. The Board of Directors will continue to review the possibility of resuming this service in 2022.



HOLISTIC THERAPY



The provision of Holistic Treatments continued to be provided at the MS Therapy Centre in Ballytivnan throughout 2021 despite reduced numbers of service users attending the centre due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.

As a consequence of the pandemic, treatment hours were reduced from 20 to 10 hours per week and the therapist base was reduced to one. It is hoped that this will return to normal levels in due course.

Throughout the year, due to the ongoing and ever-changing social distancing and public health requirements the provision of service continued to be disrupted. However, by year end there was a slight increase of 20% on the previous year 2020 but compared to pre-Covid figures of 2019 the provision of holistic service saw a dramatic drop again for the second consecutive year in 2021 of -70.4%.

This proved to be yet another extremely challenging year for service users and therapists alike. It was surrounded with uncertainty where plans to provide and attend a holistic treatment were cancelled or had to be rescheduled due to the high risk of infection, or the vulnerability of the service user base, which was underpinned by the deep-rooted concern of contracting this highly transmissible virus, and the consequences this would have for those service users who were most at risk and vulnerable.





The health and safety protocol of providing touch therapy to the service users continued to be a high priority. The Covid standard operational procedures and risk assessments which were established in 2020 were periodically reviewed, updated and all necessary changes implemented throughout the year. The highest health and safety precautions were taken to protect all those attending holistic treatments. This included adherence to all public health requirements and social distancing measures, the introduction of disposable

materials for use in the treatment room, holistic therapists wearing full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), increased cleaning procedures, daily contact log, the continued use of hand sanitising, in addition to sanitising all touch surfaces and ventilating the treatment room for 15 minutes before and after each treatment.

Despite a slow start to the year where there were only 17 treatments provided between January and March 2021 (compared to 192 in pre Covid 2020), the numbers attending for holistic treatments gradually increased with almost 100% occupancy of the allocated holistic hours between June and November. This can be directly reflected on the roll out and successful uptake of the vaccine programme availed of by the service users. The increase in numbers attending for treatments grew in confidence with the gradual decrease in infection rates resulting in the holistic service becoming more stabilised. However towards the end of the year as public health requirements were reviewed and social distancing measures relaxed, covid cases rose again and so the numbers attending fell below previous years for the month of December.

Throughout the year there was a noticeable increase of newly diagnosed service users requesting holistic appointments. Due to the highly transmissible virus and social distancing measures Reflexology was the only holistic therapy offered in 2021. It is hoped to resume massage and shiatsu treatments when it is safe to do so.

There were a high volume of cancellations and no shows throughout the year and bearing in mind that non-attendance for a scheduled appointment results in another service user being unable to take up that appointment, a system of reminding the service users was introduced towards the end of the year and this was very successful in identifying possible no shows before they arose resulting in higher productivity and take up of the service.



On a more positive note, Deirdre Murray our holistic therapist who has been with us since 2000, was nominated as Chairperson of the national reflexology representative organisation, the Irish Reflexologists' Institute in June 2021. This is a self-regulating membership organisation recognised for representing a membership who provide the highest possible standards of treatment and training. Deirdre has been a member of the institutes board of directors for the past 5 years and has previously held the post of Educational Officer. We wish Deirdre all the very best for the year ahead.

If you are interested in booking a holistic treatment at the MS North West Therapy Centre, please contact us by phone or email and we will be happy to assist you.

Holistic Treatment comparative between 2021 / 2020 / 2019

January - March	2021 - 17	(2020 - 192) - 91%	(Pre Covid 2019 - 241)
April - September	2021 - 224	(2020 - 0) +100%	(Pre Covid 2019 - 592)
October - December	2021 - 83	(2020 - 67) +19%	(Pre Covid 2019 - 261)
Total Holistic	2021 - 324	(2020 - 259) +20%	(Pre Covid 2019 - 1094)

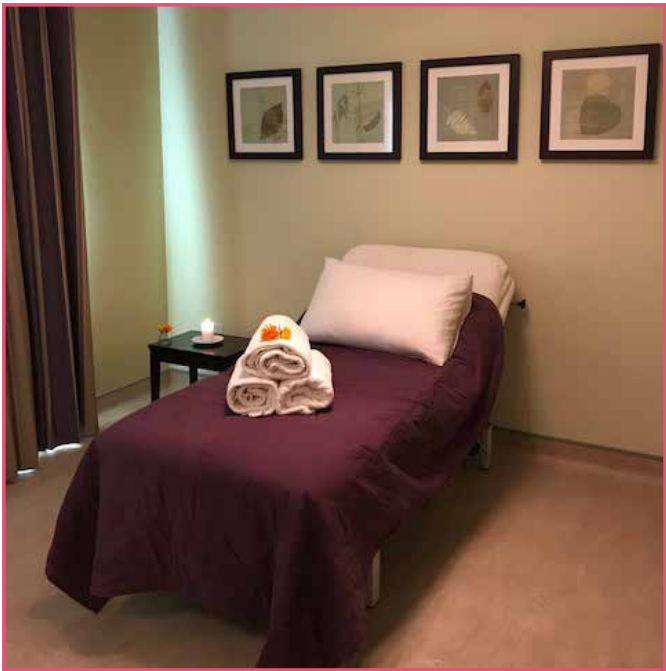




Woodhaven



WOODHAVEN FACILITY





WOODHAVEN REPORT

Woodhaven, our accessible and supported holiday facility, has a choice of five beautifully appointed private bedrooms all ensuite with a choice of profiling beds and overhead hoists if required. Our onsite treatment room ensures that Guests can enjoy some luxurious, well deserved, pampering in the form of reflexology and massage. 2020 has been another difficult year for Woodhaven from the perspective of service provision which has unfortunately but necessarily remained closed for overnights stays. Thankfully Woodhaven was an ideal location to be utilised for the delivery of the MS Centre holistic services up until June 2021.

Woodhaven also has a conference room on site for hire which is ideal for groups meetings and training courses with white boards, projector and kitchenette. Our conference room also has equipment including a profiling bed and hoist which makes it ideal for training groups that require equipment for demonstration purposes. We also have parking available and the building is also wheelchair accessible.

Woodhaven has been very fortunate to secure continued funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Pobal, Community Services Programme since 2015. This funding is a contribution toward our Manager and four full time frontline staff which allows us to grow Woodhaven as a social enterprise. We would like to thank Pobal for their invaluable support over the past year.

In addition, Woodhaven thankfully continues to engage with the Sligo Social Services, Community Employment Project training programme.





TESTIMONIALS FROM WOODHAVEN GUESTS

"It wasn't really any place, it was somewhere else instead. It was between the sea, the oyster beds and the grassy beach over which you looked. But it was beautiful none the less and it was just the place where Countess Markievicz spent her days and as far as any of us know, enjoyed it very well"

-W. B. Yeats

All of this is about my experience of Woodhaven, not so far from that described above, but by the same token, a place instinctively of its own. Lovely lay out in order to accommodate five deserving guests and treat them to the best fare, joy and comfort befitting any Lord or Lady and not ever looked down upon.

The house would be nothing if it were not for the staff, who care for and keep dearly in their hearts, so that it can in turn give a fully open welcome to the people who come and spend their time in Woodhaven. It is a wonderful place of calm, quiet to enable them to return again and again.

- Bob Potter-Cogan

I have been availing of respite breaks at Woodhaven for the past three years. It is a state of the art facility but more importantly the staff make me feel so welcome - it's like "home away from home". I enjoy having the craic with both residents and staff playing cards, listening to music and chatting of course. Another plus is having a reflexology treatment which is arranged prior to arrival.

- Elena



Essential Seconds Charity Shop





ESSENTIAL SECONDS CHARITY SHOP

The MS NW Therapy Centre has two charity shops which are located in Wine Street Car Park, Sligo and Teeling Street, Ballymote. The income generated by our shops is utilised to fund essential services for people living with MS which are delivered from the MS Centre and Woodhaven.



We are delighted to report that 2021 was a much more successful year for our charity shops than the previous year. While we continue to feel the longstanding impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the retail sector resulting from necessary closures throughout the year 2021 has brought improvements.

The shops, now more than ever, are essential in broaching our €100,000 annual deficit that the MS Centre must meet through income from fundraising and our charity shops in order for us to continue providing essential services to people with MS.

We would like to thank all our customers who have supported our shops in Sligo and Ballymote be it either through your donations or shopping with us. Your continued support is integral to the ongoing success of our charity shops. We would also like to thank the landlords of both shops for their continued support.

Most importantly we would like to thank all of our dedicated Volunteers and Staff, without whom the shops would not be in operation. We are incredibly grateful of their time, commitment and support of the shops and the MS Centre. Their unwavering support in what can only be described as an incredibly turbulent number of years is truly invaluable.

We would also like to thank Sligo Leader and Sligo Social Services who sponsor Volunteers who participate on TUS and Community Employment Projects to work in Essential Seconds Charity Shops.

We look forward to welcoming you all to Essential Seconds Charity Shops in Sligo and Ballymote where you are guaranteed to find lots of great deals at magnificent prices.



Fundraising





FUNDRAISING

In order to ensure the ongoing operation of providing services at MS North West Therapy Centre Sligo there is a huge reliance on fundraising events. There is a gap of approx. €100,000 between the funding we receive and the cost of keeping the MS Centre up and running.

Covid-19 had a massive impact on our fundraising drives in 2021. To adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of fundraising brought about by COVID-19, the MS Centre worked tirelessly to move our activities of fundraising online.

We would like to extend our thanks to our Voluntary Fundraising Committee, staff and supporters of the Centre who worked tirelessly to assist in our new virtual fundraising platform and organised virtual events on our behalf. Below is a flavour of some the many events which took place throughout 2021.

January 2021

Facebook Birthday campaigns

February 2021

Facebook Birthday campaigns

March 2021

Gemma Gurrie 250K steps in March challenge
Facebook Birthday campaigns

June 2021

Carns National School
Facebook Birthday campaigns

August 2021

Glencar Swim
Kevin Sweeney Cycle from Derry to Kerry

November 2021

Connaught Motor Club
Facebook Birthday campaigns

December 2021

Yeats County Cycling Club



Glencar Swim



Connaught Motor Club



GEMMA GURRIE

A huge well done to Gemma Gurrie for fundraising €4,750 for the MS Centre throughout the month of March!

At only 24 years of age, Gemma was diagnosed with MS in May of last year. She attended the MS Centre for services a short while later.

Gemma says: “The MS centre was amazing when I was first diagnosed with helping me accept my diagnosis, doing dry needling for me to help with severe back spasms, physio to help my walking and just overall support from each and every member there. I can’t thank them enough, even the little things like counselling and they listened.”

She set up a GoFundMe page and set a target to walk 250,000 steps over the month of March, which she surpassed easily.





CYCLE FROM DERRY TO KERRY

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Kevin Sweeney for fundraising for the MS Centre by cycling from Derry to Kerry!

Kevin kindly agreed to answer some questions that we had.

Kevin describes himself as “a regular Joe from Kinlough, Co Leitrim.” He is 26 years old and was working full-time as an engineer. He recently decided to take some time off work to do something adventurous. That’s when he started looking at the Mizen to Malen Cycle challenge.

The first step for this challenge was putting together a route. Once he knew the route, he was able to plan how far he would have to cycle each day. He started in Derry and worked his way down the country trying to stick to the wild Atlantic way as much as possible for the beautiful views. Luckily, he says, “the weather was on my side and it only rained once for the whole entire trip! Overall the trip was a success and a great experience!”

Kevin decided to raise money for the MS Centre as “MS is something that affects people all across the North-West including my family. MS Therapy Centre has been very helpful to the families across the North-West so I thought it would be appropriate to show them my support.”

His initial goal was to raise €400 and he has surpassed expectations by raising a whopping €1,294! He said: “Wow – I never expected to get where we are at now! Thanks to everybody for their support!”





MS CLUB DRAW 2021

In 2021 the MS Club Draw enjoyed another year of a sustainable fundraising event reporting a successful 6th year since the draw started in 2015. Despite the closures of the Centre due to Covid, the draw continued to take place each month.

Standing order payments continue to be the preferred method of payment. Members that availed of standing order had the security of knowing they were included in each draw even with the closure of the Centre due to Covid. Cash members continued to be included until they requested otherwise. There are now approximately 80% of our members enjoying standing order payments. This method is also less time consuming on the volunteers who administer the payments.

Due to a variety of reasons, the membership of the Club Draw fluctuated each month, but it was supported by between 182 and 196 members for every draw throughout the year. This was mainly made up of past and present service users, past and present directors and staff, extended family members, and friends of the MS Therapy Centre.

The total intake in club draw payments for 2021 was €18,411, down €4,325 on 2020, this was due to some cash members payments for 2021 being received in 2022 and the loss of 20 members due to various reasons. Prize money of €3,600 was paid out to the lucky winners for the year, leaving a net balance of €14,811. This brings the total intake to €135,046 over the past five years. Of this, €21,600 was paid out in prize money, leaving a net total of €113,446.

The draw took place on the last week of every month in the MS Therapy Centre. Each draw was overseen by a member of the fundraising committee and a company director. The results of each draw were notified to the lucky winners, along with their winnings, the day after the draw took place.

We are hoping to grow our monthly club draw and aim to have up to 80 new members in the next 12 months. We are extremely grateful to those who continue to support us, however we are now on a drive to ensure that everyone availing of our service is a member of the Club Draw. Since January 2022 the prizes have increased as follows – 1st prize €200, 2nd prize €100, 3rd prize €50 and 4th prize €50. This support is invaluable to us, and would go a long way in bridging the gap which is a task set for the fundraising team each year. If you would like to support the MS Club Draw, please check with reception for a standing order form.



January

1st Prize €200 Evelyn Marren
2nd Prize €50 Colm Deering
3rd Prize €25 Leon, Niall & Joshua Murray
4th Prize €25 Pat Murphy

February

1st Prize €200 Frances Healy
2nd Prize €50 Claire Clerkin
3rd Prize €25 PJ Booner
4th Prize €25 Charles & Margaret McKenny

March

1st Prize €200 Darren Deering
2nd Prize €50 Frances Higgins
3rd Prize €25 Teresa Cahill
4th Prize €25 Eugene Rooney

April

1st Prize €200 Gillian Lucy
2nd Prize €50 Justin Henry
3rd Prize €25 Patricia Scanlon
4th Prize €25 Bob Potter Cogan

May

1st Prize €200 Lucy O'Hara
2nd Prize €50 Brendan & Annie Cullen
3rd Prize €25 Kevin Nealon
4th Prize €25 Niamh Duffy

June

1st Prize €200 Malcom O'Dwyer
2nd Prize €50 Mary McWeeney
3rd Prize €25 Patricia Fitzpatrick
4th Prize €25 Brendan & Annie Cullen

July

1st Prize €200 Paula Lahiff
2nd Prize €50 Breege Kilcullen
3rd Prize €25 Sinead Wims
4th Prize €25 Ita Scanlon

August

1st Prize €200 Rita & Dennis Kenny
2nd Prize €50 Breege O'Connell
3rd Prize €25 Ronnie Travers
4th Prize €25 Niamh Duffy

September

1st Prize €200 Patrick Ryder
2nd Prize €50 Violet McDermott
3rd Prize €25 Deirdre McCarty
4th Prize €25 Bernie Shannon

October

1st Prize €200 Micheal & Eileen Murtagh
2nd Prize €50 Eugene Rooney
3rd Prize €25 Karen McKenna
4th Prize €25 Gerard Hamilton

November

1st Prize €200 Hugh Bennett
2nd Prize €50 Kathleen Scanlon
3rd Prize €25 Francis Healy
4th Prize €25 Pauline Murphy

December

1st Prize €200 Justin Henry
2nd Prize €50 Sinead Downes
3rd Prize €25 Claire Clerkin
4th Prize €25 Baby Lucy O'Hara





CHARITIES GOVERNANCE CODE

Under the Charities Act 2009, every charity registered in the Republic of Ireland is required to submit an Annual Report to the Charities Regulator. When submitting this report Charities must declare their status in regard to compliance with the Charities Governance Code.

This Charities Governance Code explains the minimum standards you should meet to effectively manage and control your charity. Good governance involves putting in place systems and processes to ensure that your charity achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way.

The six principles of the Charities Governance Code are:

- Advancing Charitable Purpose.
- Behaving with Integrity.
- Leading People.
- Exercising Control.
- Working Effectively.
- Being Accountable & Transparent.

The Board of Directors of the MS Centre holds compliance with the code high on the agenda in relation to governance and has completed the required the Compliance Record Form for 2021.



Improving Quality (IQ)





IMPROVING QUALITY (IQ)

Improving Quality (IQ) is the quality scheme written to be used both as a self-assessment tool as well as external assessment. Its focus is on elements that all not for profit organisations need. IQ is supported by DFI/ SOLA.

There are two levels in IQ, foundation and progression. The MS Centre has embarked on the foundation level with a view to ensuring that we continue to uphold all regulatory, mandatory and best practice requirements throughout the organisation.

Core Principles

Improving Quality is built around 4 core principles as outlined below.

1. **Accountable:** This Element describes requirements for good governance, leadership and management
2. **Welcoming:** This Element is about people – involving service users, managing and developing staff and volunteers, equality and diversity, and working with others
3. **Effective:** This Element refers to the services that the organisation provides and the planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation that the organisation carries out
4. **Sustainable:** This Element covers how the organisation manages risk, money and the resources used to make service delivery happen.

The MS Centre, Woodhaven and Essential Seconds Charity Shops have completed the first Element Accountable and plan to complete the three additional elements in 2021 with a view to securing accreditation in 2022.



The National Ability Supports System (NASS)





NATIONAL ABILITY SUPPORTS SYSTEM

The National Ability Supports System (NASS) collects and stores information about the disability-funded services that people use and need, such as:

- residential services
- respite care
- day services
- personal assistants
- specialist supports like occupational therapy or physiotherapy

The NASS is used to help plan, develop and organise disability services and supports, to tell other health professionals about the number and types of services that people with disabilities need and prove why funding is needed for disability services and supports. The MS Centre is committed to ensuring that information on the NASS is accurate and complete as it informs disability policy and service planning at a national level.

The MS Centre has fully engaged with the NASS in 2021 and has ensured all clients are accurately captured.



Future Plans and Activities





FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES



Going forward into 2022, The MS Centre is committed to continually develop and improve the quality of its services. Please see below a sample of our future plans going into 2022.

As per our operational and service plans for 2022, the Board of Directors are very eager to increase performance service delivery statistics ensuring to stay within tight budgetary guidelines and allocated core funding. However, the Board are highly cognisant that they must ensure to operate carefully within the public health guidelines around infection and control pertaining to Covid-19 related restrictions. The MS Centre is delighted with the introduction of Telehealth services which include one to one physio consults and online exercises which we plan to deliver up to 6 times per week.

We are aware that Covid-19 will remain very much with us going into 2022. However we remain positive that our charity shops will not be subject to additional necessary closures and continue the vital role of income generation to support the service delivery in the MS



Centre and Woodhaven. The income from the shops continues to decrease year after year due to increased competition and consumer spending in regular retail shops. However, we are certain our Clients, friends and supporters will continue to support our shops into the future to help sustain the services we provide.

The Board of Directors are committed to continue expanding the scope of its Audit, Finance and Risk committees in its commitment to good governance on behalf of the organisation.

In line with our Strategic Plan, Woodhaven will endeavour to broaden the scope of its services by connecting with other groups and statutory bodies to potentially sub-let the building when it is not in use by us for the provision of training etc. By the end of 2022 we would envisage to have a firm plan in place for the use of our building Woodhaven allowing the organisation ample time and reserves to plan a return to our own service delivery with the hope that respite will be placed on a legislative footing nationally.

The MS Centre is committed to providing optimum services to people with MS and other disabilities, their families and carers and have engaged in Improving Quality (IQ) – a highly recognised and reputable quality assurance system. While work on the system took a necessary break throughout 2020 due to covid-19, the system has been greatly welcomed with involvement and input from all key stakeholders including –Management, Board Directors, staff from all departments, clients and volunteers who form the core IQ working team. It is endeavoured that the IQ core team will resume their good work in early 2022 with a view to applying for accreditation by the end of 2022.

In addition, the MS Centre has adopted the new The Charities Governance Code. 2019 was the year of learning and preparation for charities and 2020 is the first year that registered charities are expected to comply with the Code. 2021 was the first year that registered charities are expected to report on their compliance with the Code. The MS Centre has complied with the Code and has completed the required compliance record form for 2021.

Finally the MS Centre is happy to report that we are fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority and have submitted all required returns for 2021.





MS North West Therapy Centre Sligo

Providing essential services to people with Multiple Sclerosis,
related conditions and their families.

Multiple Sclerosis North West Therpay Centre Ltd

A company limited by guarantee

Ballytivnan, Sligo

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