

A close-up portrait of a young girl with light brown hair and numerous freckles. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

PIETA HOUSE

**INVESTING IN
HOPE**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2023

OUR VISION

A world where suicide, self-harm and stigma have been replaced by hope, self-care and acceptance.

OUR MISSION

To support people and communities in crisis by providing freely accessible, professional services to all.

OUR VALUES

We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
We are rooted in compassion and care.
We generate and nourish hope.
We empower.

INTRODUCTION



Through the work of Pieta House, Ireland is slowly developing a world-class national suicide service.

Today we operate a network of centres across the country, employing 270 qualified therapists. In 2017 we saw over 7,000 clients who were either at risk of suicide, engaging in self-harm or who have been bereaved by suicide. In the same period, we also responded to over 16,000 calls to our 24/7 crisis helpline, delivering more than 50,000 clients sessions across our nationwide network. By the end of 2018 we will experience a significant increase in the needs for our services.

We are passionate about our life-saving work and all our services are delivered free of charge to our clients. We treat people based on their need and not on their ability to pay. This has always been a hallmark of our service and this ethos will not change. Demand for our one-to-one professional counselling services continues to grow year on year. To ensure this

need for such a critical service in our society does not go unmet, we have developed a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to deliver on our growth agenda.

The strategy that we outlined in this document is ambitious. Central to our plan is increasing our network of centres to ensure more equitable access in all parts of the country. We will also reach out to those sections of our community who are marginalised or disadvantaged by establishing out-reach and in-reach services. Our aim is to continually provide urgent access to those most at risk and we will not allow waiting lists to ever grow beyond what is minimally acceptable.

While all this growth is underway to meet the needs of those at risk, we must also invest more in early prevention strategies. Effective prevention will, in time, reduce demand for our intervention and bereavement services. Successful prevention services offer the highest return on investment in terms of the

quality of life of those we serve. We have identified secondary schools as an area that warrants specific focus for our prevention work in the years ahead.

Perhaps more than any other component of the Irish Health service, Pieta house is owned by the Irish people. The Irish people have taken our mission to heart. We share a common goal, where no-one among us should ever feel so alone or afraid that suicide or self-harm becomes the option they choose.

It may come as a surprise to many to learn that over 80% of our income comes directly from the Irish public, with the remaining 20% of our income coming from the State. It is clear that we will not be in a position to implement our strategy without increased Government support. Over the life of this

strategy, our ambition is to migrate from the current 80/20 split to a more appropriate 50/50 partnership, where the Irish people and the Irish Government co-sponsor the future of these essential services. We will also build on our flagship fundraising initiative, Darkness Into Light, a global movement of which we are very proud. It is how the Irish people and our global supporters demonstrate, in a moving and visible way, how much they want Pieta House to deliver on its mission to make Ireland a better and safer place to live, especially for our young people.

The board commits to energetic implementation of this strategy and to working with our senior management team, our staff, our partners and with relevant state agencies to deliver on achieving a world class suicide prevention service.

THE STORY SO FAR

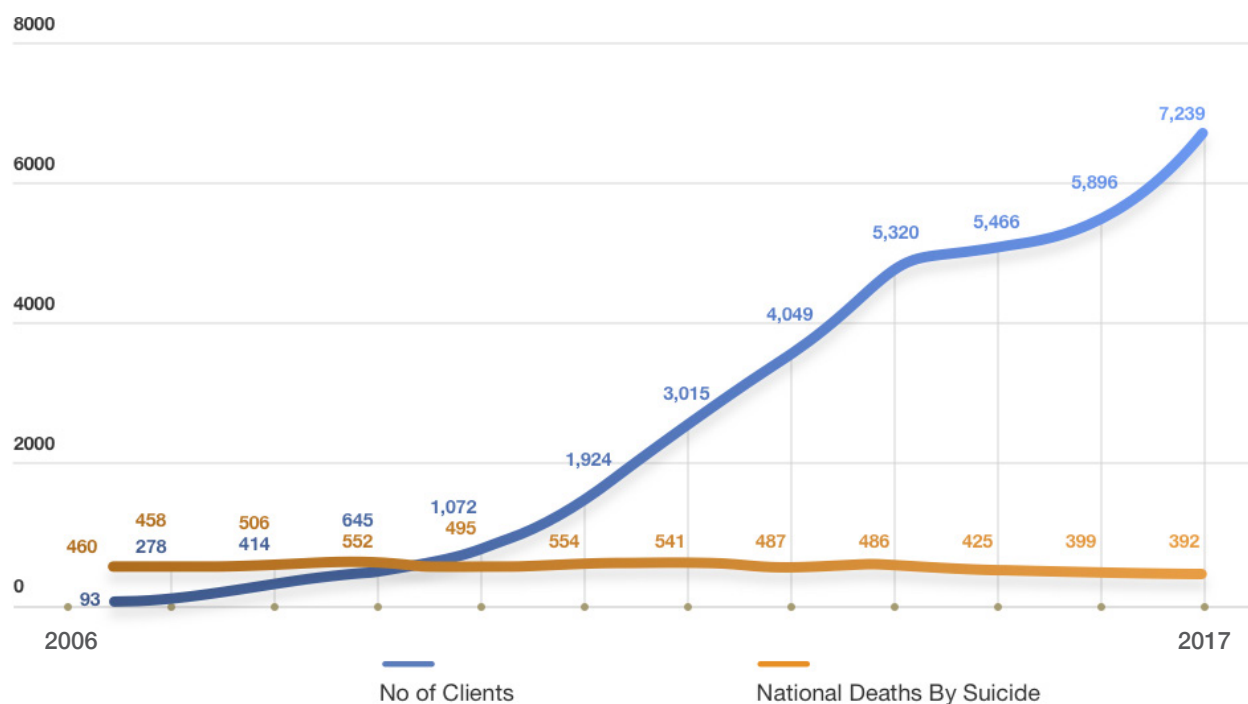
The number of Pieta House centres has increased by over 50%. Staff numbers have also increased alongside this to 270.

We exist because of the needs of the people of Ireland. We have developed our services to meet those needs. People have taken Pieta House to their hearts and because of their generosity we have been able to provide free counselling, therapy and support.

We have one common goal where no-one should feel so alone or so afraid that suicidal ideation or self-harming becomes an option they choose.

We now need Government support and are looking for a 50/50 partnership with the Government to expand services and help fund our lifesaving work.

The graph below illustrates the development of our services since 2006, overlaid with the national suicide statistics which show a gradual reduction in the numbers of deaths by suicide. The success is evident. However, the progress is slow and it is now time for a deeper partnership with the State and the Public in our work.





A close-up portrait of a young girl with light brown hair, freckles, and blue eyes. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

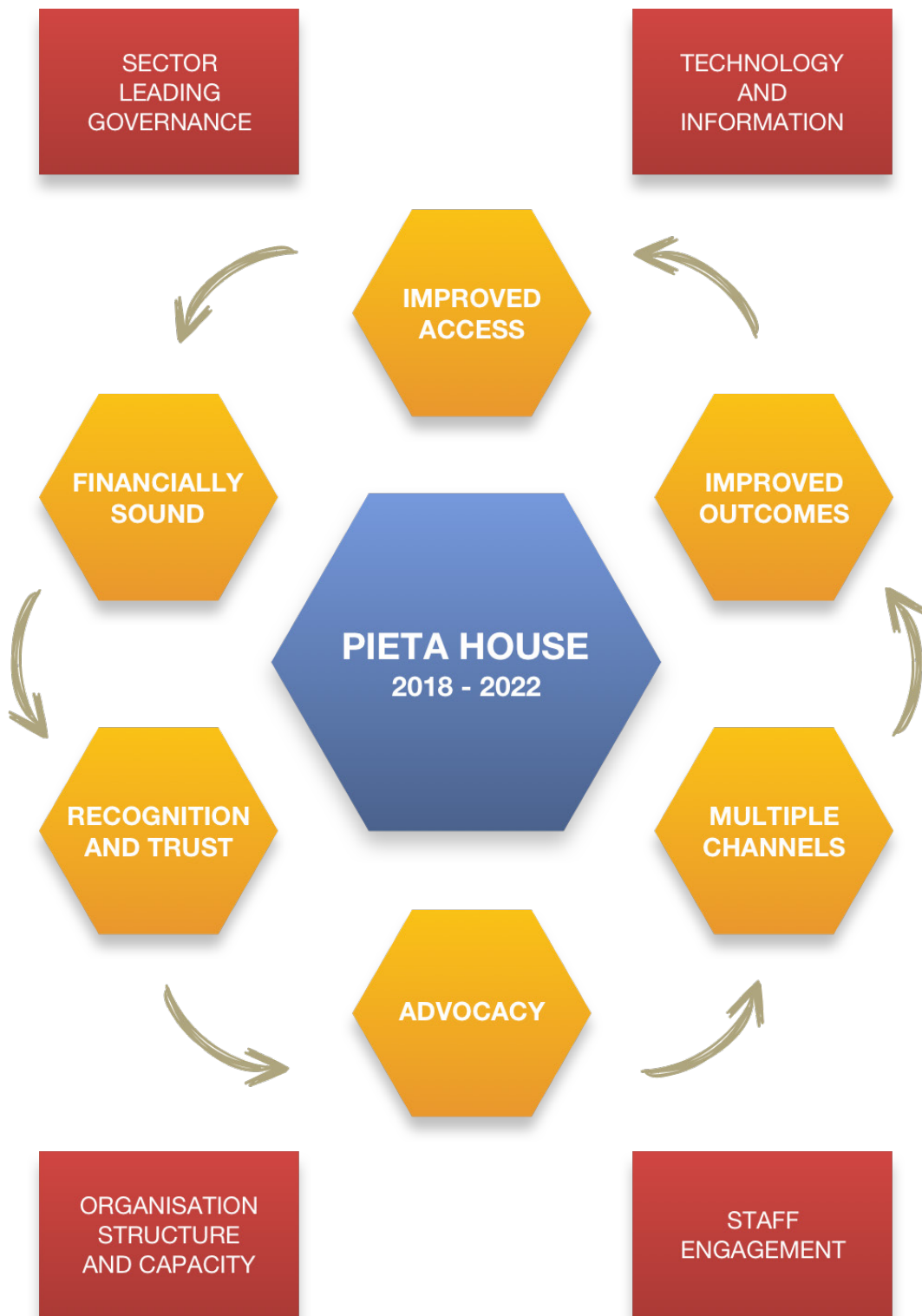
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**WE ARE
PASSIONATE
ABOUT OUR
LIFE-SAVING WORK**

THREE PILLARS OF THE PIETA HOUSE MODEL



OUR STRATEGY





OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

IMPROVED ACCESS

We will provide easy access to world-class suicide and self-harm prevention, intervention and postvention services in all parts of the Republic of Ireland.

WHY?

- It is important that those in need of our help have fast and frictionless access to our service. For some prospective clients, significant courage is needed to ask for help. Having summoned that courage, our job is to make access to the help they need quick and easy.
- Currently our service is easily accessible to about 60% of those who need it, and we need to get this to 100%.
- Improving access will help us continue on our journey towards providing the best quality services and becoming widely recognised as the “go to” agency for those at risk of suicide or self-harm, or those who have been bereaved by suicide.
- As we continue on this journey, those who develop a need for our services will increasingly and automatically know where to turn to for help. We want to become the natural ‘default’ provider of suicide and self-harm services in Ireland.

HOW?

- By ensuring we have a sufficient number of properly staffed centres to provide a service with minimal waiting times for clients.
- By continuously monitoring waiting lists very closely and by taking appropriate measures to clear any blockages.
- By communicating very effectively with prospective clients and health professionals to ensure widespread understanding of the services we provide and how to access them.
- By also ensuring a widespread understanding of the services we can and cannot offer, to ensure that prospective Clients receive the most appropriate services for their needs. Where those referred fall outside the scope of our services, we will become highly proficient at providing onward referral to appropriate services. This will increase confidence among referrers over time.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- We will invest in our information systems to ensure that we have real-time, accurate information about how many are waiting to access our service, and for how long.
- We will design a penetrating public engagement strategy to promote widespread understanding of our service.
- We will ensure ease of access to our services and seamless onward referral to other service providers when appropriate.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

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We will constantly improve the outcomes we achieve for our clients.

WHY?

- We believe that our clients deserve the most advanced and effective evidence-based service available.
- We want to be a learning organisation that constantly strives to improve and which is recognised internationally as a leading organisation in the fields of suicide and self-harm.

HOW?

- By developing comprehensive outcome measurement tools for all of our intervention and postvention services.
- By placing greater emphasis on monitoring and reviewing all of our programmes.
- By introducing a more comprehensive client feedback model which will guide changes to our service and our methodology.
- By elevating our research capacity, both internal and external.
- By constantly striving to improve the outcomes our clients achieve so that confidence in our service is justifiably high.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- We will design and implement an internal therapeutic quality assessment tool, drawing on the latest research and using international best practice standards as a key reference point.
- We will continue to refine our client feedback tool that will enable us to constantly identify opportunities for improvement of our services.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

MULTIPLE CHANNELS

We will innovate in order to be able to deliver our services to more people over multiple channels.

WHY?

- To become a truly national service provider, we need a mix of more physical centres and new virtual/online locations from which services can be provided.
- Our traditional core service of face to face counselling will remain critically important. In addition, we need to innovate to meet the changing needs of clients who increasingly need out of hours and/or online services. This is particularly relevant to younger clients. We need to be “always on”.
- We also need new channels that are more suited to the delivery of early prevention services, particularly for young people.

HOW?

- We will invest heavily in the development of the Pieta House “Resilience Academy”.
- By enhancing our prevention capabilities, with particular focus on young people through the roll-out of a bespoke programme for secondary school students.
- By investing in the enhancement of our 24/7 contact centre to respond to people in need of our services, when they need them and where they need them.
- By exploring options for services to be delivered online.





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**DARKNESS INTO LIGHT HAS
BECOME SO MUCH MORE
THAN JUST AN EVENT.
IT HAS BECOME A
MOVEMENT.**

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- We will identify those parts of the country where new Pieta House centres are required in order to ensure equitable access to our service across all parts of the Republic of Ireland.
- We will establish out-reach and in-reach services where it is more appropriate to engage with clients in settings other than a Pieta House centre (e.g. universities, partner organisations' premises).
- We will maximise efforts to achieve a secure funding source for the Resilience Academy. We will prioritise the roll-out of this important service to secondary schools.
- We will design a model for a 24/7 contact centre that not only offers a 24/7 helpline and text support service, but which also offers 24/7 online support and which has the capacity to offer out-bound calls to those visiting the Pieta House website who may be in crisis.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

ADVOCACY

We will become the most respected advocate and trusted voice in Ireland on the issues of suicide and self-harm.

WHY?

- The incidents of suicide and self-harm in Ireland need to be brought closer to zero. To achieve this, a Government-supported, multi-agency collaboration is necessary. To bring this about, we need to become a more effective advocate for change.
- We need to fight the stigmas and shame that lead people to the point of suicide or self-harm.
- We need to inform and support society in our collective contributions to both the causes of suicide and self-harm and the solutions to them.

HOW?

- By investing in our internal data systems and research capabilities.
- By partnering with national and international academic institutions to increase our publication output.
- By deploying a well-executed communications strategy that will increase awareness and understanding among policy-makers and the general public on issues relating to suicide and self-harm.
- We will enhance our capability in the areas of public speaking and media engagement, and we will develop a communications strategy to increase our media share of voice, using our thought leadership as a way to influence the agency on suicide, self-harm and stigma in Ireland.



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- We will invest in our IT capabilities to better leverage the extensive and growing data we generate to inform our thinking.
- We will invest in our research capability and

we will form deeper relationships with leading academic institutions.

- We will develop our relationships with key policy-makers.



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**WE WANT TO
BRING OUR
SERVICES TO ALL
WHO NEED THEM,
WHEN THEY NEED
THEM, WHERE
THEY NEED THEM.**

5

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

RECOGNITION AND TRUST

Pieta House will be increasingly recognised and trusted, not only as the leading suicide and self-harm service provider, but as one of Ireland's most valued charities.

WHY?

- We will not be able to meet the needs of all our clients, or to reach our full potential as an organisation, without the continued strong support of both the Public and the State.
- To enjoy such support, we need to communicate very effectively with these partners and to continue developing meaningful and sustainable relationships with them, which are built on trust, transparency and shared vision.
- Our engagement strategy will be the platform for achieving our objectives of delivering a world-class, nationwide, 24/7 service.
- Increased positive profile and engagement will fund our services, engender confidence and support, allow us to drive our fundraising agenda and, in turn, help more people.

HOW?

- We will keep in regular, open contact with our partners.
- We will thread the values of Pieta House throughout all our communications.
- We will design a detailed communication plan to support our strategy. This will be delivered in the print and broadcast media, on social media and in advertising.
- We will use our research to underpin our reputation as trusted experts in the fields of suicide and self-harm.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Conduct in-depth stakeholder mapping exercise to clearly define stakeholder groups.
- Develop tailored engagement programmes for each group.
- Enhance our social media and online presence.
- Implement a strategically aligned marketing and promotion campaign.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

FINANCIALLY SOUND

6

We will grow our fundraising revenues and we will seek to increase our State funding to 50% of our overall income.

WHY?

- We cannot develop or grow our services without additional funding.
- We currently get less than 20% of our funding from the Government. This places significant pressure on us as providers of critical health services.
- It is not prudent or sustainable to set out on an ambitious strategy implementation and presume that we will continue to be able to raise over 80% of the money we need by ourselves.

HOW?

- We will continue to work hard to increase our fundraising income.
- We will diversify our income streams in order to reduce over-reliance on a small number of events.
- We will begin a dialogue with the State to develop the “Pieta Partnership” where, through us, the people and the State partner with each other on a 50/50 basis to fund the essential services we provide.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Continue to nurture and grow Darkness Into Light, in recognition of the fact that it is the single most important fund and awareness raising event we have.
- Develop a number of additional corporate and private fundraising initiatives so that we are not reliant too much on any one single event for our funding.
- Develop a sophisticated strategy for engagement with Government to secure a commitment to the Pieta Partnership where the contributions of the State and the People who support us are equally matched on a 50/50 basis.







OUR STRATEGIC ENABLERS

STRATEGIC ENABLER

SECTOR-LEADING GOVERNANCE

We will become an exemplar of good governance in the charity sector.

WHY?

- Everything we do is built on trust. The trust of our clients, our staff, our supporters and our partners is critical to our success. These parties are entitled to a binding commitment from Pieta House that we will always act with absolute integrity and professionalism.
- There is an ever-increasing focus on governance, particularly in the charity sector. We embrace this. We believe that good management practices, underpinned by high levels of accountability and transparency, should be the benchmark against which leading charities like Pieta House are judged.



HOW?

- We will identify best governance practices. We will actively and continuously work to close any gaps that exist between our current approach and recognised best practices.
- We will ensure that our board has an appropriate mix of talented trustees who, individually and collectively, have what it takes to ensure that Pieta House is well governed.
- We will set clear annual objectives for the organisation's leadership team and ensure strong compliance and reporting, which is underpinned by a culture of openness and accountability.



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- In line with best practice we will continually review and update our Governance practices, setting out clearly how the organisation will be governed and led.
- Continue to strengthen the board by identifying and recruiting high-calibre trustees with significant relevant experience and who possess a shared sense of commitment to the mission of Pieta House.



STRATEGIC ENABLER

TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION

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We will invest in technology to enable us to enhance our services and increasingly leverage the value of our data.

WHY?

- Our current systems are not “scale-ready”. To realise our strategic ambitions, we need to significantly expand our IT capabilities.
- We need improved Management Information Systems to actively and effectively manage access (waiting lists) and to optimise the use of our resources.
- We need to be able to effectively analyse our data to gain better insights, so that we can constantly improve the outcomes we achieve for our clients.

- In a world where some of our clients are exposed to risk factors online 24/7, we need to innovate in order to be “always on”, and this requires material enhancement of our digital capabilities.
- To operate a central contact centre 24/7, that has the ability to schedule clients in real time into any one of our centres nationally, we need an enhanced IT infrastructure.

HOW?

- Design a new IT strategy and implementation plan to address the systems gaps that are identified in this strategy.
- Ring-fence an IT budget sufficient to fund the investment needed in this area.
- Ensure the leadership team has access to necessary expertise and advice.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Establish an IT Steering Committee, to prepare an integrated IT strategy and implementation plan for Pieta House.
- Source ring-fenced funding to invest in the implementation of the new IT strategy.



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STRATEGIC ENABLER

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE AND CAPACITY

We will re-organise ourselves to ensure that we are best structured and organised to implement our strategy.



WHY?

- Our existing internal structures were designed for a time when we were smaller. The scale of our ambition, as set out in this strategy, cannot be delivered under our current structures.
- Some of what we need to do in order to successfully implement our strategy requires us to develop new competencies and to organise ourselves differently, to address new priorities and/or new areas of focus.

HOW?

- We will design a new organisational structure, including the Board, the leadership team and functional departments as necessary, to support delivery of the strategy.
- Where necessary, we will change work practices and processes to support strategy implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Refresh our board by recruiting new members who bring the skills and experience necessary to pilot the organisation through the life of this strategy.
- Determine what internal structural changes are required to make us “fit-for-purpose” such that we give ourselves the best possible shot at a highly effective implementation of our strategy.
- Design and roll out a comprehensive internal

communication plan to ensure widest possible understanding and alignment.

- Design and relentlessly adhere to a strategy implementation tracker, such that as we are going about our busy day jobs serving our clients, we are constantly working in parallel to progress the various initiatives needed to implement our strategy.



STRATEGIC ENABLER

STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

We will communicate openly and regularly with our staff and offer them career and professional development opportunities whenever we can.

WHY?

- Everything in this strategy is aimed at delivering our vision of a world where suicide, self-harm and stigma have been replaced by hope, self-care and acceptance.
- Ultimately this can only be delivered through and by our staff and volunteers.
- Pieta House staff are already recognised as highly professional and engaged. This must be maintained and improved through the next phase of our development if we are to achieve our strategic objectives.

HOW?

- We will encourage each other to be the best we can be in pursuit of our objectives.
- We will treat each other with dignity and respect.
- We will recognise that every member of the Pieta House team has a very valuable contribution to make to achieving our vision.
- We will strive to make Pieta House not only the best place for clients to receive care, but also the best place for therapists to deliver care and for all other staff to work.
- We will offer career and professional development opportunities whenever we can.
- We will remain true to our values.
- We will recognise and celebrate performance at all levels and in all areas of our best work.



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Communicate our strategy clearly to all staff and be explicit in relation to our expectations of everyone in terms of delivering on our vision.
- Identify training needs and wherever possible meet those needs such that our people develop

professionally and reach their full potential, while also enabling them to play as full a part as possible in the delivery of our services and the implementation of our strategy.

PIETA HOUSE

Suicide and Self-Harm Crisis Service and Bereavement Services

Pieta House provides freely accessible, one-to-one professional counselling for people who are in suicidal crisis, those who are self-harming, and people who have been bereaved by suicide.

Pieta House has centres across Ireland, and our therapeutic approach is rooted in compassion and care.

24/7 Helpline 1800 247 247 Text Help to 51444 www.pieta.ie

PIETA HOUSE

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Greenhills Road, Tallaght
Dublin 24, D24 RH59

01 4585490

Helpline: 1800 247 247

Text Help to 51444

www.pieta.ie