

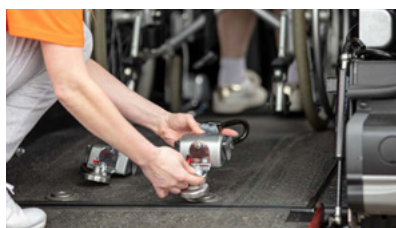


Making Connections

A social return on investment evaluation of Vantastic

 Summary Report

The social value principles



"Life is stressful;
this is one less thing
to worry about."

Foreword

As Vantastic marks its 25th anniversary, we are proud to look back on a journey defined by innovation, community partnership and a deep commitment to supporting people with mobility challenges.

This social return on investment study, Making Connections, carried out by Whitebarn Consulting and assured by Social Value International, provides robust evidence of what many already know: Vantastic delivers meaningful, measurable value for individuals, families, communities and the State.

The findings highlight that every euro invested in Vantastic generates approximately four euros in social value. Although this is a powerful statistic, the heart of Vantastic's impact lies in people's lived experiences. Our minibus and Zingly wheelchair-accessible rental services enable independence, reduce stress, foster social connection, and ensure that thousands of people each year can reach the places that matter: schools, day centres, healthcare appointments, workplaces, family events and community life.

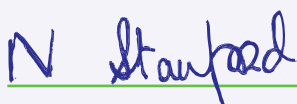
These services are far more than transport; they are enablers of dignity, opportunity and inclusion. They strengthen families, open pathways for participation, and support people to live with greater confidence and autonomy. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, Board, partners and supporters, whose commitment ensures that the organisation stays responsive, compassionate and effective.

This study also reminds us that continued investment is essential to sustaining these outcomes. While challenges inevitably arise in any service that supports people with complex needs, the evidence shows that Vantastic consistently delivers strong value and remains a vital part of Ireland's social infrastructure. A reduction in resources would limit our ability to provide the same level of support, but through careful planning, partnership and ongoing service improvement, we are committed to protecting and growing the positive impact we create.

The Board also warmly acknowledges the recommendations set out in this study and is committed to taking them forward to strengthen Vantastic's impact in the years ahead.

As we look towards the next 25 years, we do so with optimism. With the continued support of our funders, partners and community, Vantastic will remain a connector – linking people, places and possibilities, and ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, can participate, contribute and thrive.

With sincere appreciation



Niamh Stanford

Vantastic Member, Chairperson &
Volunteer Board Member



Don Bailey

Vantastic Member, Honorary President &
Volunteer Board Member



Introduction

Set up in the year 2000, Vantastic is a social enterprise located in Dublin that offers customer-focused, flexible, accessible and affordable transport solutions to people with permanent or temporary mobility difficulties, as well as physical and/or sensory disabilities. It delivers a range of services both directly to individuals, or indirectly in partnership with not-for-profit organisations and statutory agencies set up to support this cohort of people. Vantastic marked its 25th anniversary year by commissioning a social return on investment study that would assess its social value.

Research objectives

- ✓ Review the current impact of Vantastic services and the extent to which these continue to meet people's needs
- ✓ Understand where and how Vantastic generates social impact
- ✓ Report back the findings to everyone affected by Vantastic's work, for reasons of accountability
- ✓ Convince commissioners, funders and investors about the efficiency and effectiveness of Vantastic's services



The research process

We evaluated everything that Vantastic did during the year 2024 and the effect these activities had on people. We reviewed internal documents and external literature in some depth. We then identified those groups of people and organisations who we had most influence on during the year under review as well as those who had the most influence on us. We consulted with well over 400 people in three distinct phases using a mix of interviews, focus groups and surveys.

We sought to understand how we made a difference in their lives and how worthwhile they considered that to be. We used a technique called anchoring to assign equivalent monetary values to the various outcomes. We made sure not to overclaim the results. We then did calculations to establish the total impact generated by us, and were able to determine a final social return on investment ratio. Throughout the report we noted all of the potential limitations associated with our approach.

We used our findings to draw conclusions and make evidence-informed recommendations.

Who we are and what we do

● At its heart, Vantastic is a **connector**. ●

It makes connections between people and places.



Vantastic connects **people with mobility** challenges to the places they need to go, using adapted minibuses and rental cars.



It connects **children** to special schools and adults to day services.



It connects **older people** to healthcare facilities and shopping centres.



It enables **wheelchair users** to undertake journeys of their choosing.

Our rental service

22



Wheelchair accessible cars for short-term or long-term rental



144

renters



311

nominated drivers



4,179

rental days



16,716

trips

40%



of renters were adult children transporting elderly parents

4%



were renting on behalf of themselves



44%



were renting for another family member or friend

12%



were renting on behalf of a resident of a nursing home/ user of a rehabilitation centre

Our minibus service

46 

Multi-occupancy transport services delivered on behalf of statutory and charitable partner organisations

825
unique passengers



on a total of **82,750** 
trips

54,615 
were for the purposes of day activation



 **14,895**
were for health/
shopping/social trips

 **13,240**
were for school travel



“Thank you for getting my aunt to her appointments on time and getting her back home safely.”

“I think Zingly offers a unique service in the Irish marketplace. While other service providers have suitable vehicles available, prices are significantly higher and there is not the same level of understanding of customer needs.”

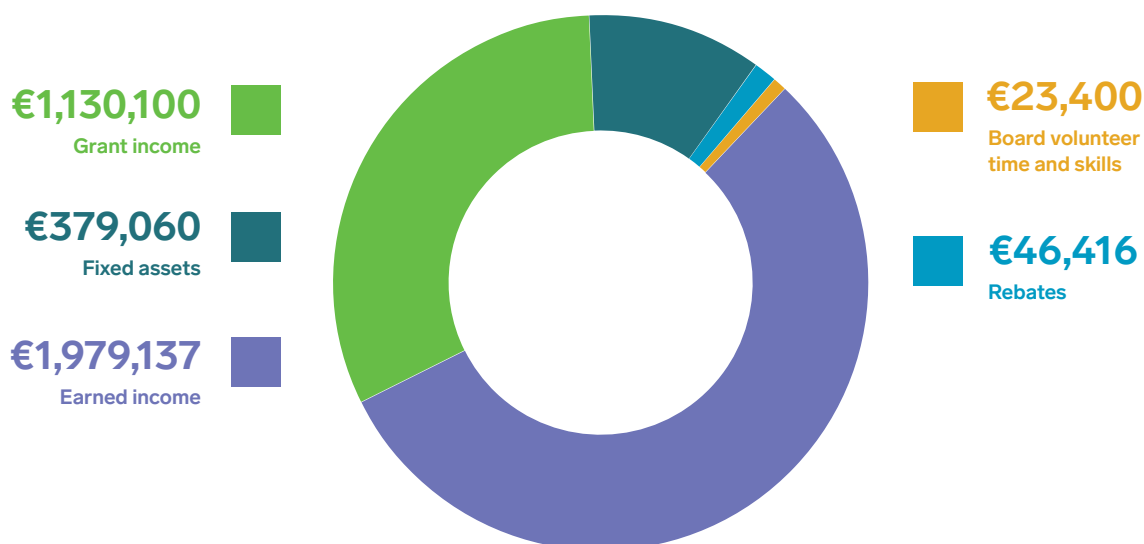


“Vantastic is the only one out of all the transport contractors I deal with that does not cause me grief.”

Inputs

Inputs are all the resources invested into Vantastic that enable it to undertake its activities. These include: capital equipment including its specialist fleet of vehicles; money from a variety of sources; the time and skills of staff and Board volunteers; and less tangible assets such as Vantastic's reputation.

The total for the year under review was **€3,558,113**, made up of:



Social return on investment

The investment of more than

€3.5 million

enabled Vantastic to undertake a wide range of activities that delivered relevant and significant outcomes for beneficiaries.



Together, these outcomes delivered approximately

€15 million

worth of social value.



For every **€1** equivalent invested into the organisation



in the region of **€4** of social value was created

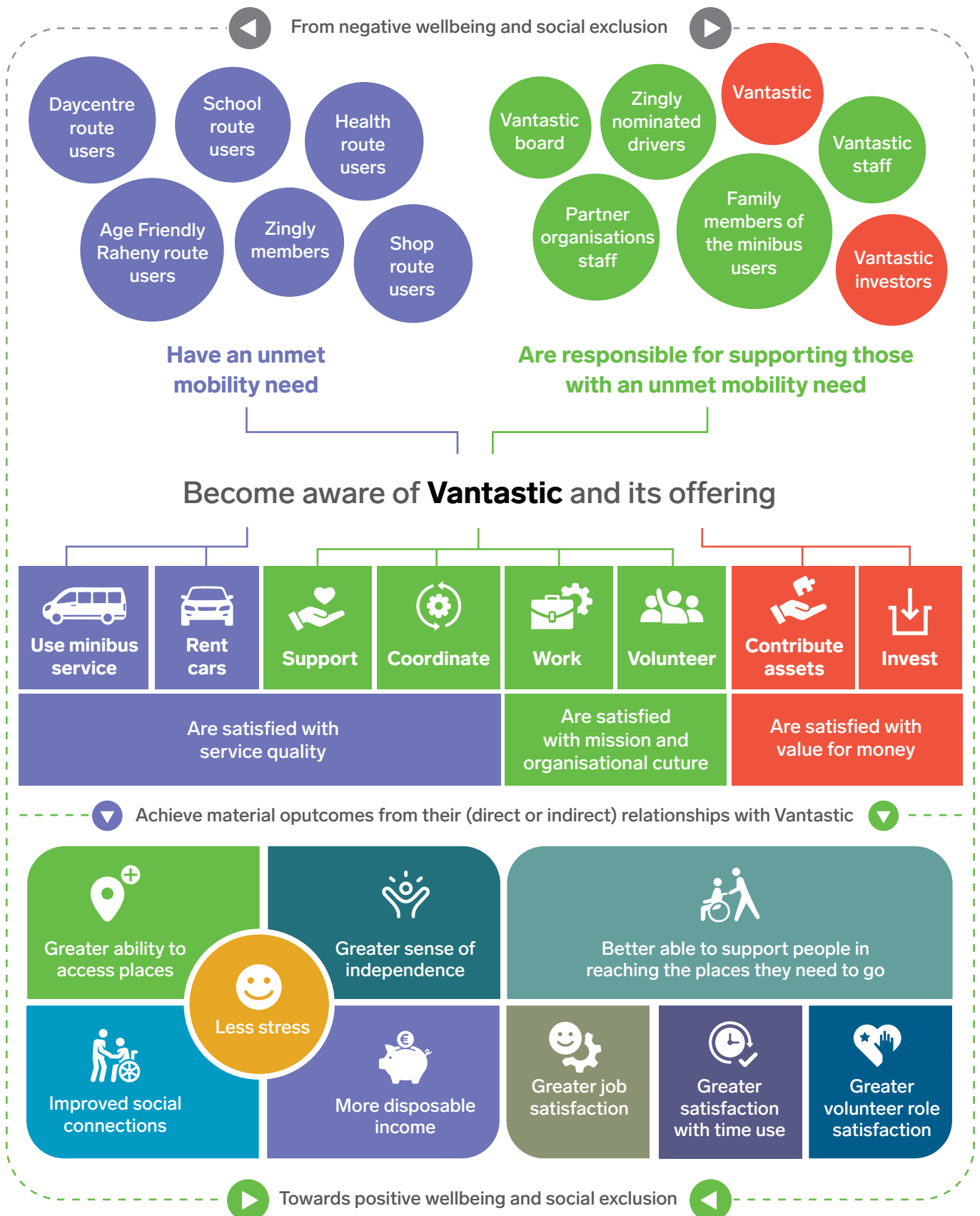


The value of outcomes for beneficiaries

Outcome	Group	Impact value
Better able to support people in reaching the places they need to go	Family members of minibus users	€2,792,030
Less stress	Family members of minibus users	€2,279,766
Greater ability to access places	Minibus passengers (group travel)	€2,108,108
Greater satisfaction with time use	Family members of minibus users	€1,276,538
More disposable income	Family members of minibus users	€1,080,617
Improved social connections	Minibus passengers (group travel)	€1,164,440
Less stress	Minibus passengers (group travel)	€913,890
More disposable income	Minibus passengers (group travel)	€789,111
Better able to support people in reaching the places they need to go	Vantastic staff	€597,413
Greater job satisfaction	Vantastic staff	€309,392
Better able to support people in reaching the places they need to go	Partner organisations and their staff	€263,996
Greater job satisfaction	Partner organisations and their staff	€160,000
Greater ability to access places	Minibus passengers (individual travel)	€147,183
More disposable income	Minibus passengers (individual travel)	€144,689
Greater sense of independence	Minibus passengers (individual travel)	€122,766
Less stress	Minibus passengers (individual travel)	€89,225
Better able to support people in reaching the places they need to go	Zingly nominated drivers	€67,350
Greater ability to access places	Zingly members	€64,175
Less stress	Zingly nominated drivers	€48,753
Improved social connections	Zingly nominated drivers	€48,514
Improved social connections	Zingly members	€47,760
Improved social connections	Minibus passengers (individual travel)	€43,407
Less stress	Zingly members	€36,134
Greater satisfaction with time use	Zingly nominated drivers	€34,766
Better able to support people in reaching the places they need to go	Vantastic Board	€30,851
More disposable income	Zingly nominated drivers	€25,968
More disposable income	Zingly members	€24,424
Greater volunteer role satisfaction	Vantastic Board	€15,426
Total:		€14,726,691

How Vantastic delivers outcomes

Accessible transport solutions that eliminate travel stress and dismantle barriers to social inclusion



Conclusion

The figures in the report are not foolproof. However, every day and in every context, decisions are made about the relative worth of things based on gut feelings alone. Having more robust data – however imperfect – should allow for better decisions to be made, so that social value can be optimised.



Vantastic helps to address societal need and makes a notable contribution to the lives of people who have mobility challenges, and those who support them.

Recommendations

01 Disseminate the research findings as soon as possible to relevant stakeholders in suitable formats and through appropriate channels



02 Celebrate the social value of Vantastic with all key people



03 Keep addressing any arising issues immediately



04 Reflect on the findings of this research, including how the Board can increase the social value for its own voluntary members



05 Strive to foster a harmonious working environment for all and aim to raise overall employee satisfaction rates



06 Lobby senior officials in the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, and Pobal, as well as elected representatives and senior officials in related Departments and statutory agencies, to achieve commitments for ongoing grant funding



07 Discuss and agree on a strategy for the future development of the minibuss and rental services



08 Finalise the high-quality rebrand of the minibuss service



09 Continue to actively manage the organisation's social value



Contact Vantastic for a copy of the full report.

Vantastic CLG

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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