



# National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

*Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)*



## Annual Report 2020



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## Chairman's Statement

March 2020 saw member organisations make difficult decisions which resulted in the closure of day, respite and support services and significant impacts on the lives of the people we support and their families. These decisions were made with only one focus in mind: keeping the people we support, their families, our colleagues and the community safe.



The response of the membership both individually, and collectively through the focused and determined work of the National Federation Secretariat, resulted in a truly cohesive and coherent approach across the sector. We acknowledge and thank the staff members across our member organisations, who without hesitation put themselves in the frontline of supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities, in spite of the risks involved.

The pandemic demonstrated in very real terms the effect that a truly cohesive, collaborative and supportive Federation can have on the very lives of the people we support. This was achieved despite facing some of the most significant and serious challenges this sector and our country has ever faced.

The support provided by an amazing Secretariat team was of a scale and significance that belies their small number. Their contribution to the success in keeping people with Intellectual Disabilities safe cannot be underestimated as they gathered and shared information and guidance, collaborated with other umbrella bodies and worked with national HSE and Public Health Teams. The support and advocacy that they provided during this time enabled providers to focus on their work, safe in the knowledge that the Secretariat were working diligently on their behalf.

My thanks go out to my fellow Board Members, who were always available, generous with time, support and advice despite managing the effects of the pandemic and the consistent and changing challenge. I also wish to place on record our sincere thanks to the many representatives from the Federation membership who are nominees on a wide range of important national working groups and committees, our Pension Trustees and the Chairs of our Federation Sub Committees and Working Groups, who undertake significant work on behalf of members.

Lastly and most importantly, on behalf of the people we support, the Board and all the members, I would like to acknowledge and thank the entire Secretariat for your extraordinary commitment, creativity, support & diligence over the past 12 months.

Sean Abbott,  
**Chairman**

# About

## The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

Approximately 70% of disability support services in Ireland are provided on behalf of the State by HSE funded Section 38 and Section 39 organisations. The National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Supporting People with Intellectual Disability is the national umbrella organisation of not-for-profit agencies providing direct supports and services to people with intellectual disability in Ireland. Across our almost 60 organisations, our members support more than 26,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families, providing services and supports throughout the lifespan. National Federation member organisations have community presence and connection across large urban centres and small villages throughout Ireland.

## Our Mission

The work of the National Federation is guided by our Mission:

**To provide the leadership and support that will enable voluntary organisations to adapt to a radically changing operating environment, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that people with intellectual disability live a life of their choosing.**

## Our Vision

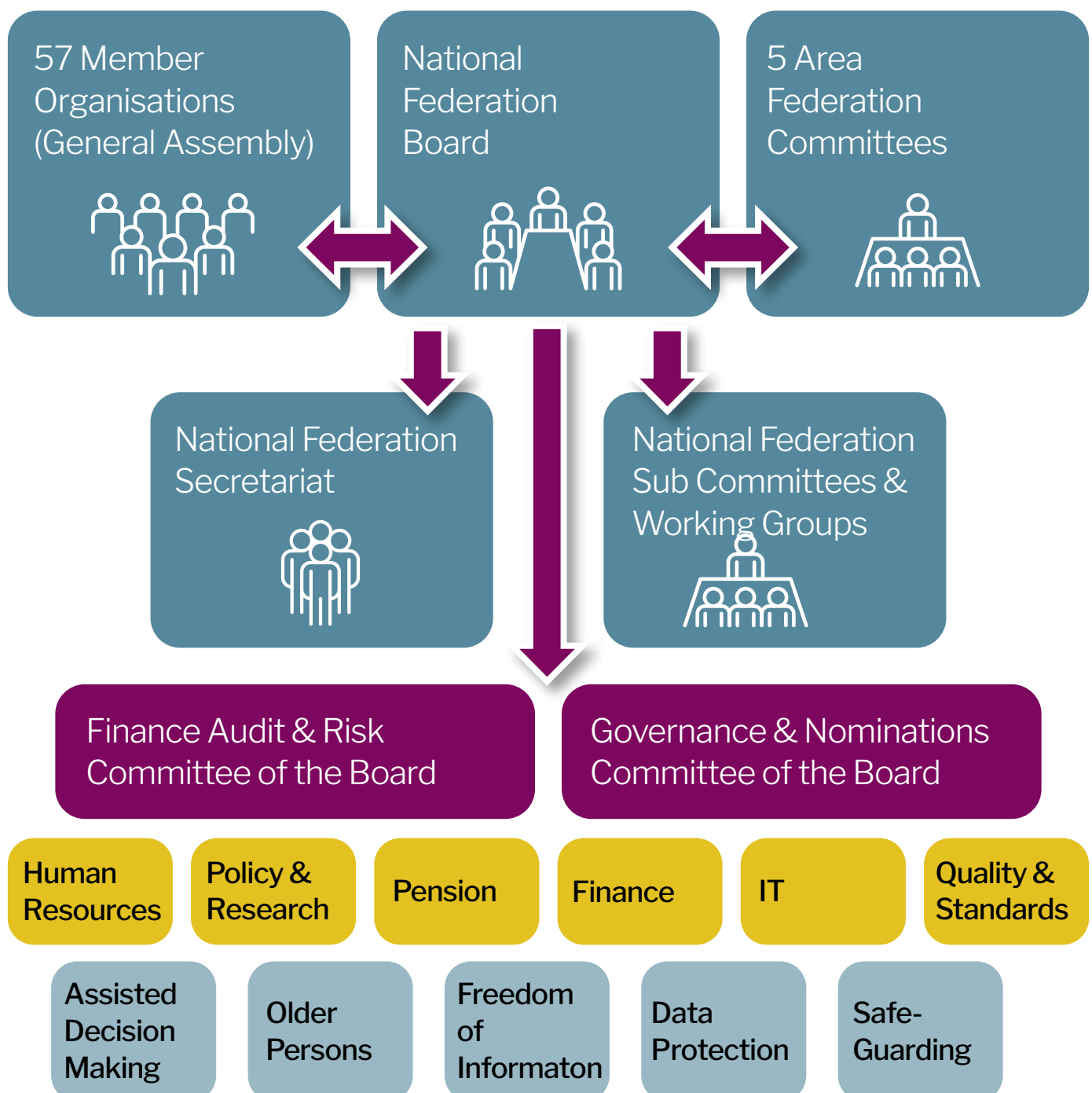
The vision of the National Federation is that people are supported to live a life on their own terms:

**Above all people have a deep rooted desire to belong, to be in relationship, to live within the intimacy and security of their family and friends, to be included in the greater life around them with all its attendant possibilities for hope and fulfilment and to do so, to the greatest extent possible, on their own terms. The implications of this simple truth will determine our actions on behalf of all citizens with Intellectual Disabilities.**

# Our Structure

**The work of the National Federation is governed by its Board, which consults with and represents the General Assembly; and its five Area Federation Committees.** We support this work through our committee, sub-committee and working group structures which include:

- **Standing Committees of the Board:** Finance, Audit & Risk; Governance & Nominations
- **Operational Sub-Committees:** eg. Human Resources; Quality & Standards; IT; Finance.
- **Working/Reference Groups:** eg. Safeguarding; Older Persons; Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act; Freedom of Information; Data Protection.
- **Administration of the National Federation's Pension & Life Assurance Scheme.**



**Member Organisations:** We have 57 member organisations, all of whom are HSE funded Section 38 or Section 39 non-profit service providers to people with intellectual disabilities.

**General Assembly:** Each member organisation nominates two people who may act as their representatives at the National Federation General Assembly, which meets on a quarterly basis, and at its Annual General Meeting.

**Areas Federation Committees:** There are 5 Area Federation Committees:

- Dublin North-East Area Federation Committee;
- Dublin Mid-Leinster Area Federation Committee;
- Southern Area Federation Committee;
- South-East Area Federation Committee; and
- Western Area Federation Committee.

Each Area Federation Committee is made up of representatives from member organisations in the area/region in which they provide services.

**Board of Directors:** In accordance with our Constitution, the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers arranges for the election of its Board of Directors as follows:

Each Area Federation Committee has the power to elect two directors to the Board. In 2020 these were as follows:

- **Dublin Mid Leinster:** Joe Mason, WALK and Breda O'Neill, IRL-IASD
- **Dublin North East:** Natalya Jackson, Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services and Pat Reen, Prosper Group (resigned at term end in March 2020).
- **Southern Area:** Sean Abbott (Chair), Cope Foundation and Marie Linehan, Kerry Parents and Friends Association
- **South-East Area:** Vincent O'Flynn, Carriglea Cairde Services and Fiona O'Neill, WIDA
- **Western Area:** Michael Hennessy, Brothers of Charity Ireland Services

The above Directors have the power to nominate up to 5 co-options, however, our Constitution indicates that one must come from each of the following geographical areas: Dublin North East; Dublin Mid Leinster and Western Region. The co-options to the Board in 2020 were as follows:

- **Dublin North East:** Liz Reynolds, St. Michael's House (co-opted in March 2020)
- **Dublin Mid Leinster:** Clare Dempsey, St. John of God Community Services
- **Western Region:** Vacancy
- **Family Member Representative:** Ms. Gere O'Byrne (resigned at term end in March 2020)



# National Federation Board 2020

The Board elects its chairperson every two years. Sean Abbott, CEO, Cope Foundation was the Chairman of the National Federation in 2020.

## Board Members 2020

**CHAIRMAN – Mr. Sean Abbott**, Cope Foundation

**COMPANY SECRETARY – Mr. Michael Hennessy**, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland

**Ms. Clare Dempsey**, St. John of God Community Services

**Ms. Natalya Jackson**, Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services

**Ms. Marie Linehan**, Kerry Parents & Friends Association

**Mr. Joe Mason**, WALK

**Ms. Gere O'Byrne**, Family representative (resigned in March 2020)

**Ms. Breda O'Neill**, IRL-IASD - St. Margaret's Centre

**Ms. Fiona O'Neill**, Waterford Intellectual Disability Association

**Mr. Vincent O'Flynn**, Carriglea Cairde Services

**Mr. Pat Reen**, Prosper Fingal (resigned March 2020)

**Ms. Liz Reynolds**, St. Michael's House (co-opted in March 2020)



# Key Priorities and Actions of the National Federation in 2020

2020 presented particular challenges to people with intellectual disabilities, their families and the organisations providing services and support. The Covid-19 crisis required a cohesive and coherent response across disability service providers to ensure appropriate measures were put in place to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people who access services. As a result, alongside the priorities that had been planned for the year, the work undertaken by the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers from March 2020 was strongly focused on supporting our members and the wider sector in the response to Covid-19.

## 2020 Priority Areas

Respond effectively to Covid-19 Crisis

Promote investment in services

Advocate for Section 39 Pay Restoration & Parity

Administer National Federation Pension Scheme

Listen to people with Intellectual Disability

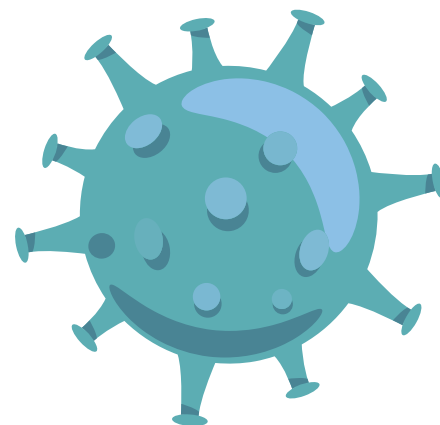
Support and Represent our Member Organisations

Governance and Compliance with Company Responsibilities

Build strategic relationships with key stakeholders

Highlight the contribution and role of the voluntary sector

# Respond effectively to the Covid-19 crisis



## Early response

As the Covid-19 crisis unfolded in early March 2020, the National Federation immediately gathered the key issues which members identified as requiring national guidance; resourcing; or other support. This was collated and shared with the other umbrella bodies. From this a cross-disability list of urgent priorities was then gathered and provided to HSE National Disability Team and the National Public Health Emergency Team's Vulnerable Person's Working Group on 13 March 2020; thereby providing an early collated cross-disability submission to HSE to support the planning for Covid-19 response.

## Coordination of issues requiring support

The National Federation Secretariat worked in close partnership with the disability umbrella bodies and the National Disability Office of the HSE to support the coordination of the response to Covid-19. Throughout the crisis the National Federation has participated on behalf of members on the national structures set up to communicate across the sector. In the earlier stages there were twice-weekly meetings with a group chaired by the Head of Planning and Strategy for Disability with the HSE, Bernard O'Regan, alongside weekly meetings with a group chaired by the Head of Operations, Dr Cathal Morgan. As the response evolved, these structures also changed and at the time of publication of this report in 2021, we are currently engaged with a Covid-19 Operations Group chaired by HSE National Disability Specialist Gerry Tully, which meets once every two weeks and with the Day Services Resumption Group chaired by Anne Melly, HSE National Disability Specialist; which also meets every two weeks.

Alongside these structures, throughout 2020 the National Federation engaged collaboratively in many ad-hoc working groups to develop specific pieces of guidance and solutions to difficulties (e.g., PPE guidance, guidance for the re-establishment of children's services, rights-based infection control guidance) and gathered data from across its members to support the resolution of particular issues (e.g. issues being experienced when mass testing was first introduced). HSE consulted widely with members of the National Federation in developing the development of these resources. The National Federation also engaged extensively with HIQA around the establishment of isolation centres, and the coordination of changed practices for inspections during the crisis to accommodate infection control processes.

To support the streamlining of the huge volume of information passing through at the national meetings and via email, the National Federation established and maintained a system to track and update members on the resolution of queries. We continued to log and track the changes to this documentation on an ongoing basis so that the status of queries could be accessed quickly, and to support communication at and between meetings. At all stages of the process the responsiveness of the HSE National Disability Team, the Department of Health and HIQA was hugely beneficial and much

appreciated by the National Federation and its member organisations. Our member organisations noted the quality and timeliness of the information provided through the collaborative work in answer to their queries through the above process.

## Central Input of National Federation Sub Committees

Throughout Covid-19, the existing structures of the National Federation became vitally important in supporting the actions taken to respond to the crisis; providing up-to-date feedback and information from the member organisations to the national structures and serving as a conduit for the guidance and information that issued back into the system. This was particularly the case for the Quality and Standards Sub Committee and the HR Sub Committee, which met very regularly (in the case of Quality and Standards weekly) and served as a strong foundation for much of the Federation response. The members of the Quality and Standards Sub Committee were also centrally involved in the guidance development work in partnership with HSE. You can read further detail of the work of these sub committees on pages 23 and 25 of this report.

## Development of FAQ resource for members and the wider sector

As the Covid-19 pandemic advanced, and there had been a considerable number of queries raised and resolved through the guidance developed and queries answered, our members highlighted challenges associated with the very high volume of important information being issued at a rapid pace. To support services in streamlining this information, the National Federation collated these responses into a central FAQ document that would serve as a single point of reference for our members and the wider sector. The HSE signed off on this document and a second version was issued with further additional queries dealt with later in the process. The FAQ resource was warmly welcomed by our members.



## Re-instatement of services – papers developed

As the discussions around resumption/reinstatement of services got underway during the summer months of 2020, our National Federation representatives on the New Directions National Steering Group and the Day Services Resumption Group; and our Quality and Standards and HR Sub Committees supported the development of draft papers to identify key factors that members considered important in resumption planning. The first of these papers, which were then the subject of consultation with our Board and membership, focused primarily on day supports; and the second on respite and residential services. They were shared with the HSE's Day Services Resumption Working Group, chaired by Anne Melly and were important inputs into discussions on the planning for resumption of services. The National Federation appreciated the consideration given to the issues raised in these papers in the development of resumption guidance.

## Meetings with Ministers

Over the course of the crisis in 2020, the National Federation engaged on behalf of its members with Minister for Health Simon Harris and Minister Anne Rabbitte to communicate the urgent requirements of the disability sector in the context of Covid-19. These meetings were fruitful and also provided an important opportunity to share the very positive work of the staff and management of our member organisations in safeguarding the health of people we support.

A very significant level of risk was identified at the outset of Covid-19 for people with intellectual disabilities. However, due to the courageous and committed work of the frontline staff, management, families and the actions of the individuals themselves, both the infection rates and the number of people using our services who passed away from Covid-19 was maintained at extremely low levels.

The positive actions of the staff, management, families and people we support have been acknowledged by Minister Anne Rabbitte, Minister Simon Harris, Minister Stephen Donnelly, the Department of Health, the HSE and HIQA.

**We wish to express our deepest condolences to all those who lost family members, colleagues and friends to Covid-19.**

**We acknowledge and thank all who participated in the collaborative partnership to place people with ID at the centre of the Covid-19 response.**

## Sharing the learning

The National Federation was approached by a number of stakeholders to share the Covid-19 response of the disability sector, which had been widely acknowledged as having safeguarded the health of the people we support considering the significant risk profile for many of those using our services in the context of Covid-19. Shared learning has included the development of a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Covid-19 response, and an interview with the National Economic and Social Council in the context of the Dialogue Forum of the Independent Review Group. This interview was published as a case study in a report written by Dr Damien Thomas (NESC) and issued by the Dialogue Forum in 2021. The report can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.nesc.ie/news-events/press-releases/new-relationships-driving-innovation-and-reform-in-health-and-social-care/>

# Promote required investment in services

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic presented an immediate crisis requiring a response by the National Federation, an underlying and serious funding crisis has been causing significant difficulty for a number of years, and so a key priority for the National Federation in 2020 was the promotion of ongoing, sufficient, multi-annual investment in services that support people with intellectual disability to live lives of their choosing. It was a particularly busy year in terms of political engagement to promote this message, as the National Federation members proactively engaged in a number of campaigns. These included the General Election campaign in the early stages of the year; the successful campaign to reverse the €20million cut imposed on disability services which took place throughout the year; and the Budget 2021 campaign in the autumn. In addition, the National Federation lobbied on behalf of members for the required Covid-19 related funding and resourcing (for instance to underpin the supply of PPE, upgrades to locations to support social distancing and the development of isolation centres).

## General Election Campaign

When the General Election was called for 8 February 2020, it became a key priority for the National Federation to ensure that the political system was made fully aware of the urgent priorities of people with disabilities, so that each party manifesto and each political candidate would be clear on the critical needs to be addressed. Work on the Federation's election campaign began immediately in the new year with a meeting of our General Election working group on 7th Jan and a gathering of the full Federation membership on 9th January – to develop a clear and coordinated campaign across members to bring the key messages to all candidates as early as possible. After detailed preparation work of the General Election Working Group, the wider members and the Board, a canvass card was designed and signed off for use by all members in the election campaign. This canvass



**People with disabilities and their families are in crisis**  
What do candidates and parties need to do?

**1. Address unmet needs:**

- Long waiting lists for children's services
- No system for people to access residential supports outside emergencies
- 2500 people remain living in institutions
- Over 1250 parents aged 70 and over (400 aged 80+) are primary carers for adults with ID living in the family home
- People with disabilities are not living lives of their choosing

**2. Uphold Disability Rights:**

- It is time for implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- We need a Minister at Cabinet level and an Oireachtas Committee on Disability to oversee implementation across all Departments

**3. Invest in supports:**

- Investment is urgently required to address needs and uphold rights
- The Government's own figures indicate the need for an investment of €211million per annum for 5 years to begin to address these rights and needs
- However, this January disability services were informed of a €20million cut to their budgets. This cut must be reversed

**These 3 priorities must become commitments in the Programme for Government**

**National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers**  
Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)

**Crisis happening?**

Excessive cuts to disability services. Services reversed.

Compliance have risen.

People with disabilities in our population requiring support.

Living longer. As they do, many have changing needs.

Providers, many service providers are operating in the future continuation of their services at risk of closure and retention. This directly affects their support to people with disabilities.

**"I will never know if early intervention would have worked for my daughter, she aged out of the service while still on the waiting list"**  
Father

**"I want to live on my own and move out of my parent's house. I can't get any support to live independently"**  
Woman aged 42 living in the family home.

**"I dropped my son off at his day service knowing I would not be picking him up and he would not be coming home to live with me. I couldn't cope any longer"**  
Mother of a young man with ID, who is now in emergency residential support.

**#disabilityrights #disabilityGE2020 #disabilityfundingcrisis**



card (pictured above) provided all candidates running in the election and all political parties with a clear outline of the most important priorities for people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and the services supporting them. The messages focused on three key areas – addressing unmet need; upholding rights and investing in supports. The National Federation members circulated 35,000 canvass cards throughout their local constituency, with staff, families and individuals supported using this resource to communicate the urgent requirements of people with disabilities.

Member organisations came together in the context of the General Election campaign to host meetings with candidates in their constituencies, providing a very strong and united message around the key priorities. In some areas this took the form of joint meetings with candidates who met with families and individuals supported to understand their needs, and in some constituencies, there were larger ‘town hall’ style meetings at which all candidates in a particular constituency came together with the member organisations to discuss the necessary requirements for the next Programme for Government.



## Lobbying for Funding requirements – Covid-19 related resources and reversal of 1% cut


Throughout 2020 the National Federation communicated on behalf of members with the HSE National Disability Team to highlight the need for resourcing of Covid-19 related funding requirements and also raised these issues with public representatives and directly with Minister for Health Simon Harris. A paper was prepared for Minister Harris and presented at a meeting held with the National Federation on 20 May 2020, setting out key asks:

- The HSE 1% (€20million) funding cut of 2020 to be immediately reversed
- Funding for Covid-19 related costs, to date and into the future, where they exceed any savings that were possible.
- People with disabilities and their needs being central to the commitments within the national recovery plan.
- The urgent publication of the Health Services Disability Capacity Review to provide an evidence base for the required investment.
- Commitment to a multi-annual funding strategy for the sector provided for in the Programme for Government.


**Following extensive lobbying by the National Federation and our partner disability umbrella bodies Disability Federation of Ireland and the National Disability Services Association, the €20million funding cut was reversed. The Disability Capacity Review has been published in 2021 and its evidence will form the basis of this year's budget campaign by the National Federation, and discussions continue on the need for multi-annual funding.**

## Budget 2021 Campaign

The National Federation's budget campaign in 2021 focused on the underlying funding crisis in disability supports, alongside the additional pressures brought about by Covid-19. We advocated strongly for the publication of the Disability Capacity Review report to provide the evidence to underpin the investment in services required to support the rights of people with disabilities to live in the community, with supports where required. The Federation engaged extensively with political parties across the spectrum and supported TDs and Senators with the information required to champion the need for investment in the planning for Budget 2021.



### Pre-Budget Submission 2021 Forgotten Citizens



**National Federation of  
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*Supporting people with intellectual disability (CLG)*

#### Rights

Budget 2021 must provide **resources to make rights real** for people with disabilities

**Supports for people with disabilities were already in crisis before Covid-19. The pandemic has exacerbated this crisis to breaking point.**

- The resilience of people with disabilities and their families has been severely tested during Covid-19.
- Many lacked essential supports before the pandemic and the reduction of those that they had, has impacted severely. Many have told us they cannot continue to cope.
- Children are on long waiting lists for services with some aging out of the early intervention before receiving supports.
- Almost 3000 people with disabilities are still living in congregated settings.<sup>1</sup>
- 1300 younger people with disabilities under the age of 65 are inappropriately accommodated in nursing homes.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 1250 people are supported in the family home by a primary carer who is over the age of 70, at least 400 of whom are over the age of 80.<sup>3</sup>
- Current resources have allowed services to resume to approximately 40% of capacity pre COVID-19, but this leaves many people without the level of support that they need.

#### Guided by Evidence

Publish the **'Capacity Review of Disability Services'** without delay, to guide the funding decisions for people with disabilities

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that people with disabilities must 'have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community'.

However, there is ample evidence, in numerous reports of these needs being unmet due to a lack of resources.<sup>4</sup>

At this time resources are so scarce that there is no pathway for individuals with disabilities to apply to access supports to live in the community, other than through an emergency.

The sustainability of services to continue to operate is severely challenged by underfunding, which has led to significant deficits being carried by the organisations.<sup>5</sup>

The services provided to individuals supported by Section 39 organisations are further undermined by the lack of equality in terms of pay and conditions, causing a staff retention and recruitment crisis.<sup>6</sup>

**A Capacity Review of Disability Services undertaken by the Department of Health sets out the evidence required to guide the funding decisions to be made in Budget 2021 for people with disabilities. This must be published and acted on without delay.**

#### Resources

Commit to **ringfenced multiannual funding. €211 million is needed per year for 5 years** to address underlying needs, deficits and inequalities.

The publication of the Capacity Review of Disability Services will only be of benefit and have any meaningful impact on supporting the rights of people with disabilities if:

There is commitment to **ringfenced, multiannual investment** in line with the requirements of the report:

- Initial investment of €211 million is made in 2021 to address the most pressing needs, which have become even more urgent in the context of reduced supports experienced due to Covid 19;
- Structural and fundamental issues affecting the sustainability of services to support people are addressed – including deficits and Section 39 parity.

Funding for Covid-19 related costs must be provided to enable services to provide adequate supports in 2021.

#### References

<sup>1</sup> HQA: Annual overview report on the inspection and regulation of disability services in 2019. September 2020. Identifies that 2914 people with disabilities currently remain living in congregated settings in Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Pierce, Kicullen & Duffy (2018) The situation of younger people with disabilities living in nursing homes in Ireland. [https://www.disability-federation.ie/assets/files/pdf/dfi\\_r\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://www.disability-federation.ie/assets/files/pdf/dfi_r_2018_web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers Survey, January 2020

<sup>4</sup> E.g. <http://ndia.ie/Publications/Disability-Supports/Transforming-Lives.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/hse-says-provision-of-disability-services-by-voluntary-bodies-not-sustainable-1.4320197>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2019-12-18/44/>

**People with intellectual disabilities have told us they feel forgotten by the Government**

Following a very disappointing investment of €10million for disability services in the HSE's Winter Plan, the National Federation engaged with the media, with the support of families who were experiencing the funding crisis at first hand, including Tony, Susan and Aoife Murray, whose interview with Ailbhe Conneely on the RTE news provided a vital insight into the urgency of adequate funding being invested in the budget: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/1002/1168878-disabilities/>

A cross-party motion for significant funding for disability services in Budget 2021 was supported during a Private Members debate in the Dáil on 7 October 2020, in the run up to the budget <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2020-10-07/31/>, echoing the importance of the issues at hand, and a very welcome additional €100 million was earmarked for disability services in the budget announcement. It is hoped that this investment will be the beginning of a multi-annual funding programme based on the situations set out in the Capacity Review of Disability to 2032.



# Collaboration with Oireachtas Disability Group

The National Federation engaged in extensive partnership work with the umbrella bodies in the disability sector; the Disability Federation of Ireland, the National Disability Services Association (formerly Not for Profit Association), the Independent Living Movement Ireland, and Inclusion Ireland. Together the umbrella bodies supported the Oireachtas Disability Group in its work to bring the needs of people with disabilities to the forefront of discussions at the political level.



# Advocate for Section 39 Pay Restoration and Pay Parity

For section 39 members of the National Federation, a key concern in relation to their sustainability and ability to deliver consistent support to people with intellectual disabilities is the issue of pay parity. A key priority identified for the 2020 programme of work included (a) a continued focus on the need to progress the issue of pay restoration, particularly for those agencies who were outside the initial pay restoration process and (b) commencing work on a call for pay parity for Section 39 agencies with the aim of securing equality with their public sector counterparts (HSE and Section 38 personnel). This work was overseen by a Task Group, led by Pat Reen, CEO, Prosper Group.

Given the significance of pay restoration for members it was highlighted as a core element of the National Federation's Budget 2021 Campaign. In July 2020 members of the Section 39 Pay Restoration / Parity Task Group regrouped to focus on the issues of pay restoration / parity. To inform this work a comprehensive data collection exercise was undertaken with the organisations involved in summer 2020. The aim was to gather information on the position within agencies in relation to pay and the challenges for organisations arising from the lack of pay restoration / parity. Arising from this exercise, which was wholly supported by the members involved, a position paper, infographic and action plan were developed to inform a continued campaign. Issues of concern identified from the survey undertaken included:

- **Recruitment and Retention of Staff:** The challenges associated with recruiting and retaining experienced staff, particularly in disciplines where there are staff shortages, were highlighted. It was emphasised that high staff turnover rates impact significantly on the continuity of service delivery and the personal relationships established between staff and the people they support.
- **Inequity in Service Provision:** For adults and children with an intellectual disability the quality of service received should not be impacted by whether they are supported by the HSE, Section 38 or Section 39 organisations.
- **Long term viability of organisations:** Current funding levels for Section 39 organisation are impacting on the long-term sustainability of organisations with many organisations in deficit and many unable to respond to new service development needs.

In autumn 2020 the National Federation welcomed the progress made, under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), in relation to pay restoration for the outstanding Section 39 agencies. A comprehensive template was circulated by the HSE to the relevant agencies in relation to their funding requirements with a view of commencing the first in a series of restoration payments early in 2021.

**The National Federation will continue to work closely with members on the joint issues of pay restoration / parity in 2021 with a particular focus on the need for full pay parity for Section 39 organisations.**

# Listen to people with Intellectual Disability

Listening to, promoting, and amplifying the voice of people with intellectual disability is vital to ensuring that the work undertaken by the National Federation is informed by the lived experience of the people we support. Throughout 2020 there were a number of key initiatives undertaken to ensure that the voice of people with disabilities was included in our work. For example, the Budget 2020 campaign was significantly strengthened by the opinions of people we support, who told us that they **'felt forgotten'**; words that were included in our campaign and which echoed across the Dáil chamber as TDs discussed the importance of significant funding being assigned.

The key forum through which we regularly engage with people with ID at the national level is the Inclusive Research Network. National Federation Secretariat staff member and IRN Secretary Brian Donohoe has set out in his report below, the work of the IRN in 2020, describing the importance of the members of the IRN staying connected and keeping going with their research despite Covid-19 – which yielded very positive outcomes both for the researchers themselves and in terms of the national research programme.

## Inclusive Research Network

The Inclusive Research Network has had another busy year in 2020. The year started with a meeting in which members talked about how they would promote the findings from the Doctors & Us study, which had been launched in November 2019. As this Annual Report is published in 2021, we are engaged in a very exciting piece of work together with the Irish College of General Practitioners and the HSE to develop guidance and support for GPs in their engagement with patients who have a disability.



### How to stay connected

From March onwards our in-person meetings had to be cancelled, due to the Covid-19 virus, which had reached Ireland by then. A piece of work was done at the beginning of April 2020 supporting members on **'How to stay connected'**. Many of the IRN members got new iPads and we had our first IRN meeting by zoom on April 29th, 2020. This resulted in many members who would have been cut off, being reconnected to IRN and the Network could continue with its work. In May IRN Members Helen O'Regan and Kathleen McMeal made a video about using their new iPads and staying in touch during Covid-19 and the IRN participated in a national conference organised by the Brothers of Charity National Advocacy Council, to share their positive experiences of staying connected.

## Submission to the Law Reform Commission

In May, as IRN Secretary I wrote a letter on behalf of IRN to the Law Reform Commission stating that they need to make their document on Adult Safeguarding in an easy-to-read version for people with Disabilities. In June & July a working Group from the IRN worked on the Law Reform Commission Report on Safeguarding. The working group completed a submission called '**What the IRN want to say to the LRC about Adult Safeguarding**'. The Law Reform Commission also sent a letter of thanks to IRN for their input.

**Digital Project** - IRN Members met with Dr Esther Murphy from Trinity College to prepare for an application about being part of an upcoming Research Project on how people with ID use technology. We are delighted that this funding application was successful, and work is beginning in 2021.

**IRN Global Advocate** - Fionn Angus was nominated as IRN Global Advocate and Represents the IRN abroad.

**IRN next project:** In September 2020 the IRN began to talk about what it's next research project would be about. We held mini meetings in smaller groups. We came up with 3 possible topics. An online vote took place on the 3 preferred topics and **In/Equality Choice, Health & Support** was chosen as our Next Research Project. Work will begin in 2021 to establish a research method.

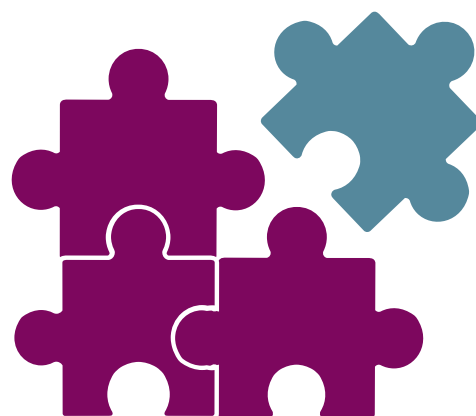
2020 was a challenging but successful year for IRN despite Covid-19 and the lockdown.

# Supporting and Representing our Member Organisations

Supporting and representing our member organisations is a central role of the National Federation Secretariat. Responding to queries from members as they arise therefore, is a key area of work on a daily basis, through telephone queries, emails and via meetings of our Working Groups and Sub Committees. Where required specific meetings are held to deal with emerging issues and gather information across the membership to inform our representation of members.

## Support

Responding to member queries in 2020 in the context of Covid-19 was a particularly important aspect of our work, as there were many urgent and important areas of emerging practice on which members sought support. It was necessary to quickly pivot from holding in-person meetings to new ways of working together through online platforms, as these new ways of working became embedded. This online approach enabled regular meetings to be held as efficiently as possible (such as the weekly meeting of the Quality and Standards Sub Committee); and also facilitated significant engagement from across the geographical spread of our membership, in





the wide range of national meetings that took place –including General Assemblies, Board meetings, and issue-specific consultations such as those to develop position papers. It is likely that the benefits of a blended approach will continue to be harnessed after Covid-19 restrictions are eased, so that a mixture of in-person and online meetings can continue to support members in ways that work best.

Alongside individual responses to member queries, support to our members included the work of the individual Sub Committees and Working Groups during the year (set out from page 23); and distribution of key information including webinars, guidance, and training; much of which took place via online formats in 2020. A very significant support provided to members is the administration of the National Federation's Pension Scheme. Full details of this work in 2020 is set out below on page 31.

## Submissions

The National Federation consults with its members with respect to a wide range of human resources, quality, safeguarding and policy issues; and represents the position of the members on these topics to Government Departments and Statutory Bodies. This was particularly important during 2020 in the context of responding quickly to Covid-19 with key submissions to the HSE and NPHET, and in providing input into the relevant Government Departments, as the remit for disability services began to transition from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

**During 2020, consultation took place to develop the following submissions, made on behalf of our members.**

## Submissions made in 2020

### Submission to:

- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Regarding its Statement of Strategy 2021-2023
- The Department of Health Regarding its Statement of Strategy 2021-2023
- The Review of the Child Care Act 1991 Consultation Paper
- Joint submission by disability umbrella bodies of Covid-19 issues requiring urgent sectoral responses - to HSE and National Public Health Emergency Team, 13 March 2020
- HSE on the Reinstatement of Services – Discussion Points and Factors to Consider
- HSE on the Reinstatement of Respite & Residential Services and Supports -Discussion Points and Factors to Consider
- Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19: Impact of Covid-19 on people with disabilities and the disability Sector
- The Law Reform Commission on 'A Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding'.
- HSE on National Food Nutrition and Hydration Policy for Adults Accessing Disability Residential Care.

# Highlight the contribution and role of the voluntary sector

Throughout 2020 the National Federation took every opportunity available to highlight the valuable and vital contribution that the voluntary sector brings to the provision of disability services and supports. The Covid-19 crisis brought about a new understanding at a general level around those services that can be understood as ‘essential services’. The agile and flexible response of disability services to the emerging crisis and the resulting positive outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities formed the basis of detailed engagements with the Department of Health and Minister Simon Harris; and the pivotal role played by the voluntary sector was warmly acknowledged at a meeting with the Minister on 20 May 2020.

During this meeting, the Minister and Department officials were briefed on the many ways in which the role of voluntary disability service providers was central to the positive outcomes achieved:

- Member agencies’ Boards of Management (made up of parents and friends of the organisations, and all of whom are volunteers), recognised the risk very early and took proactive measures, which included the closure of day services; they altered their visitor policies; and built targeted action-plans and communication systems with clients, families, and carers.
- Staff without hesitation re-deployed from day programmes to support people in their residential homes. Staff volunteered to be redeployed inside and outside of their own organisations and came forward to completely change the way that they deliver supports, reflecting a very deep commitment to the people they support.
- Changes in roster – to benefit the person supported. Staff agreed to work more flexibly – including cancelling of leave and working in a changed model of support.
- Staff volunteered to work in isolation units where they knew they would be putting themselves in line to work with confirmed Covid-19 cases without hesitation.
- Rigorous use of PPE (in a lot of cases had to be sourced from outside HSE when HSE sources could not supply or could not supply quickly enough).
- Opening of isolation units (staffing, governance, fit-out, re-purposing of day facilities, training of staff rolled out extremely quickly – including cooperative approach to regulatory requirements with HIQA). HIQA have been exceptionally supportive in their approach to assist agencies to put in place the necessary solutions in the context of immediate Covid-19 pressures.
- Skilled, highly qualified staff. Relationship-based supports based on long-term commitment to the person and their families. Front line staff highly committed to service users and know them, their needs, and their families very well.

All the above highlights the value of the voluntary sector. Flexible, agile, close to the community, and highly collaborative across the sector with member agencies and the wider umbrella bodies working together on common issues.

# National Dialogue Forum

The collaboration with HSE Social Care division to quickly respond to the unfolding crisis and local and national partnership working between HSE and voluntary disability service providers demonstrated new ways of working that can be harnessed into the future. This partnership working was of particular interest and relevance to the work of the Dialogue Forum set up on foot of the *Catherine Day Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services*.

The Covid-19 crisis meant that the direct meetings of the Dialogue Forum, chaired by Peter Cassels, had to be temporarily postponed, however as outlined earlier in this report, the National Economic and Social Council was commissioned to write a report building on the experience of Covid-19 and making recommendations on improving the relationship between voluntary organisations and the state in health and social care. The National Federation representatives on the Dialogue Forum – Sean Abbott, Pat Reen and Alison Harnett, continued to liaise closely with the voluntary sector umbrella bodies throughout 2020, and this work has gathered pace in 2021 as the Dialogue Forum resumed its meetings.



# Build strategic relationships with key stakeholders

## Representation on Sectoral Working Groups

The National Federation engages with a wide range of external stakeholders to represent the views of its members in relation to policy and practice in the intellectual disability sector. A range of Working Groups and Forums on which the National Federation was represented in 2020 is outlined below:

- **IRG Dialogue Forum** established on foot of the Independent Review on the role of voluntary organisations in the health and social care sector (Catherine Day Report)
- **Oireachtas Disability Group** – TDs and Senators working on disability related issues and highlighting and advocating the need for multi-annual investment and adequate resourcing of disability services. This group is supported and informed by the national umbrella bodies for disability.
- **Housing Sub Group** - implementation of National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability.
- **National Safeguarding Advisory Committee**
- **HSE / Disability Umbrella Groups Safeguarding Reference Committee**
- **HSE Children First Reference Group – National Community Operations – Disabilities and Older Persons**
- **National Children's Oversight Group**
- **National Child Disability Management Information System Implementation Group**
- **HIQA Provider's Forum**
- **Department of Health Disability Consultative Committee**
- **National Council for Special Education Forum**
- **HSE Disability Quality Improvement Forum**
- **HSE-National Umbrella Bodies Covid-19 Operations Group**
- **Day Services Resumption Working Group**
- **New Directions National Steering Group**
- **School Leavers National Working Group**
- **National Joint Council**
- **Joint Information and Consultation Forum**
- **European Working Time Directive Working Group**
- **On-Call Allowance Working Group**
- **Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme (NHASS) Working Group**
- **HSE Patient Engagement Forum**

*We thank the many people from within our membership who take up representative roles on external national working groups and forums on behalf of our members.*

# Governance and Compliance with Company Responsibilities

## Standing Committees of the Board

It was a busy year for the Board of the National Federation, which met regularly to consider the wide range of challenges facing the sector in 2020 and to provide direction and guidance for the work undertaken throughout the year.

In support of the Board's governance of the organisation, and in accordance with its Constitution, the National Federation has two standing committees - **Finance Audit and Risk Committee; and Governance and Nominations.**

**The Finance Audit and Risk Committee** is chaired by Mr. Vincent O'Flynn, Chief Executive of Carriglea Cairde Services. Its responsibilities include overseeing the development of policies relating to the financial management of the company and monitoring their implementation; reviewing and recommending approval of the annual overall operating budget for the company; reviewing management accounts including the cash flow position of the Company and financial reports; and monitoring the integrity of the annual Financial Statements and recommending these to the Board.

Key funding sources for the National Federation include membership fees, grant funding from the HSE and funding from project work and training events. In 2020 the National Federation liaised with Mr Gerry Tully, Disability Specialist HSE to prepare the Service Arrangement which sets out the funding from HSE and two meetings were held to review progress.

The National Federation's **Governance and Nominations Committee** is chaired by Ms. Clare Dempsey, Chief Executive of St. John of God Community Services. The work of this committee includes maintaining the Constitution of the company under regular review; planning for the succession of Directors considering the challenges and opportunities facing the Company and the skills and expertise required; acting as a support to the Chairperson in making decisions; and ensuring that the Company is provided with adequate governance supports. During 2020 planning took place for a detailed review of the National Federation's structures. The review was scheduled for the first opportunity that the Board could arrange a series of meetings in person, due to the ongoing restrictions required for infection prevention and control in light of Covid-19. It was necessary to postpone the planned meetings until 2021 as the second wave of infection prevented them proceeding during 2020.



**Ms. Clare Dempsey,**  
**Chair of Governance and**  
**Nominations Committee**

**The following sections of this Annual Report provide an account of the key areas of work in which all these groups were active during 2020.**

# Work of National Federation Sub Committees and Working Groups in 2020

## Operational Sub Committees, Working Groups and Pension Administration

The operational work of the National Federation is carried out through Federation-wide initiatives such as its annual budget campaign and political engagement; through the work of its Board and Committees and by Working and Reference Groups, supported by the National Federation's Secretariat team. The National Federation Secretariat also administers a Pension and Life Assurance scheme on behalf of its members.

***We gratefully acknowledge the Chairs of the Sub Committees and Working Groups, the Pension Trustees, and the many staff members of National Federation organisations who contribute their time and significant work through these forums.***

## Quality and Standards

Throughout 2020 the work of the Quality & Standards Sub-Committee concentrated on responding to the Covid-19 crisis. Committee meetings, chaired by Margaret Glacken, National Head of Quality, Advocacy, Training and Safeguarding, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, took place on a weekly basis during the early phase of the pandemic with committee members devoting substantial time and expertise to identifying and supporting the actions to be taken in responding to the crisis and ensuring the people we support were protected to the greatest extent possible. The Committee met on 24 occasions during 2020 and core elements of the work undertaken included:



**Ms Margaret Glacken**  
**Chair of Quality & Standards Sub Committee**

- Liaising with the HSE in relation to the Covid-19 issues emerging and support needs arising within services.
- Feeding into the development of Covid-19 guidance documents as the pandemic progressed.
- Planning for the closing / re-opening of services in accordance with the 'National Framework for Living with Covid-19' and identifying the factors to be considered from a service provision perspective.
- Sharing experiences, learning and resources – documents were also shared by members via the Covid-19 section on the National Federation's website.
- Circulating links, slides, and presentations from the various online events / webinars to members which provided practical information and insights into key learning.

**Health Information & Quality Authority:** The National Federation continued to work closely with HIQA during 2020, in particular through the work of the HIQA Providers Forum where issues arising for members could be addressed. HIQA undertook a range of actions during the Covid-19 pandemic which were of considerable benefit to organisations in supporting the wellbeing and safety of those living in residential services.

**Information sharing:** While it was a very challenging year several information sharing sessions / presentations took place which addressed other areas of work encompassed by the Quality & Standards Sub-Committee:

- **Healthcare Audit Group:** Annette Macken, Healthcare Audit, Quality Assurance and Verification Division gave a presentation on the HSE's 'Healthcare Audit Plan 2020' and outlined the programme of work to be undertaken and their commitment to including the voices of those supported in the audit process (February 2020).
- **UNCRPD Shadow Report:** A meeting took place with Jacqui Browne, Chair, DPO Coalition, to discuss the work underway in relation to the development of a shadow report to respond to the State's initial report on progress being made in implementing the Convention (October 2020).
- **National Framework for Medicines Management in Disability Services:** Marie Kehoe O'Sullivan, National Disability Specialist, National Disability Services Quality Improvement Office, Community Operations HSE, provided an update on progress in relation to the development of the Framework document (November 2020).
- **Healthy Ireland Framework:** Maria Murphy, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, provided an input on the Health Ireland Framework and the work of the local Healthy Ireland Committees (November 2020).
- **National Disability Authority:** An information sharing session took place with Dr. Aideen Hartney, CEO, and Dr. Ros Taming, Interim Head of Policy & Research to discuss work underway and the Authorities new Strategic Plan (November 2020).

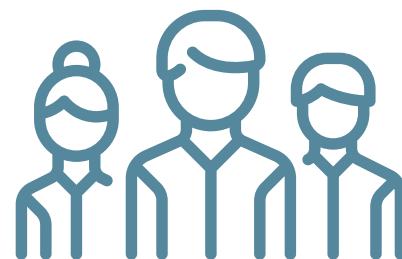
**Open Disclosure, HSE:** Building on the links established the National Federation continued to work with the HSE Open Disclosure Team to ensure that member organisations are meeting their key obligations as Service Providers and ensuring Open Disclosure Leads are appointed and are clear as to their remit and role within services.

**Expert Review Group Report on Nursing Homes:** In September 2020 the National Federation held a workshop to discuss the findings and recommendations arising from the Expert Group Report on Nursing Homes and consider the potential learning to be gained by disability services. A summary report arising from the discussions was subsequently compiled.

**Respite Provision:** The Quality & Standards Sub Committee held a workshop in November 2020 to specifically discuss issues arising in relation to respite provision and consider person centred, innovative ways of providing respite into the future. Denise Fahy, Director of Operations & Service Development, Cheeverstown House, provided a comprehensive input at the workshop setting out the key challenges and considerations that need to be reflected on.

**National Ability Supports System:** In December 2020 the National Federation nominated Paula Mugnier, NASS Implementation Lead, Cheeverstown House, as its representative to the NASS Committee in place of Connie O'Regan, Western Care Association. The primary purpose of NASS is to gather service user information to aid the planning, development, and organisation of HSE-funded disability services. It is managed by the National Health Information Systems Unit of the Health Research Board (HRB) on behalf of the Department of Health.

# Human Resources



During 2020 much of the focus of the work of the National Federation's Human Resources Group concentrated on addressing the considerable staffing related challenges arising due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The National Federation was ably represented by Olive Leonard, Director of HR, Muiriosa Foundation and Brian Leahy, Head of HR, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, on the National Working Groups established by the HSE to deal with the staffing related concerns arising and ensuring that the needs of our member organisations were being effectively addressed. Regular updates were provided to the wider Federation membership via meetings of the Human Resources Group. As the pandemic escalated the range of human resource concerns also increased with the following issues being addressed over the course of the pandemic:

- Developing in-house processes for safeguarding the health, safety & wellbeing of staff.
- Ensuring the necessary IPC precautions were in place.
- Developing processes for supporting cocooning staff.
- Addressing sick leave / leave entitlements / post Covid-19 for affected staff.
- Introducing procedures for dealing with staff returning from leave / travel.
- Looking at alternative means of providing mandatory training.
- Moving to remote working and developing related process/policies.
- Roll-out of vaccinations to staff and managing situations where staff were unvaccinated.

The peer-to-peer support provided by members was invaluable during this period with organisations sharing information, documents, policies, and templates. The dedication of staff over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic is to be applauded as this in no small way minimised the potential negative effects within services.

While Covid-19 was the main focus of the human resources agenda in 2020 as the year progressed, work resumed on a number of matters:

- **Labour Court Recommendation 21900 / INMO Meetings:** Work recommenced at a national level with the INMO in relation to the Enhanced Nurse Practitioner contracts and the LC Recommendation relating to the upgrading of RNID's to CNM1. As there remained several matters in dispute between the parties a separate process was overseen by an independent Chair, Mr. Sean McHugh, to seek agreement. This process will continue into 2021.
- **Out-of-Hours Allowance:** Work continued in relation to the development of a standardised out-of-hours allowance for the disability sector. While the health sector trade unions have been part of this process, they are not in agreement with the rate being proposed by the HSE/National Federation members and so this matter is likely to be referred to the WRC.
- **Behaviour Specialists - Working Group:** During 2020 the Working Group, chaired by Cathal Esler, Director of HR, Ability West, focused on the development of a proposal to be submitted to the HSE seeking to have this role / function included on the Dept. of Health's consolidated pay scales. In particular the group focused on the development of 2 job descriptions - Behaviour Support Specialist and Behaviour Support Specialist Senior. Draft documents were circulated to Federation members for review and discussions were held with the Dept. of Psychology, NUIG, in relation to research the Dept. has conducted in this area.

# Data Protection and Freedom of Information Networks

## Data Protection

The Data Protection Network is made up of representatives from member organisations who work in the area of Data Protection. The purpose of this network is to support organisations in understanding and implementing the requirements of the Data protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The network acts as a source of information exchange and support in relation to Data Protection for its Members. The network meets quarterly and more frequently if required and organises presentations from vendors or experts on various topics of interest. The network also convenes smaller Working Groups to manage specific, time bound projects as required. The Data Protection Network reviewed and discussed the following during 2020:

- Reviewed terms of reference.
- Data Protection Officers – supported in their role under legislation
- Data Protection Notices, Data Access Requests Procedures, Data Breach Procedures, Data Security Procedures.
- The replacement of the National Intellectual Disability Database with the National Ability Supports System in relation to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.
- Data Processing Agreements
- Data Protection Impact Assessments
- Data Protection Audits
- Training for Data Protection Officers
- Renewal of Parking Permits – in some cases made more difficult by the application of GDPR
- Joint Controller Agreements
- SLA and Data Sharing Agreement with the HSE
- Mapping processing (IT Systems to support this process)
- Issues arising from the implementation of GDPR
- E-Privacy – future impact



**Ms Gina Magliocco,  
(Brothers of Charity  
Services, Ireland) Chair  
of the Data Protection  
Network**



## Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Network

The FOI Network is made up of representatives from member organisations who work in the area of Freedom of Information. It is chaired by Ms Marie Grimes McGrath (Daughters of Charity, Disability Support Services), and the purpose of this network is to support organisations in understanding and implementing the requirements of the FOI Act. The network acts as a source of information exchange and support in relation to FOI for its Members. The network meets quarterly but meets more frequently if required and organises presentations from vendors or experts on various topics of interest. It also convenes smaller Working Groups to manage specific, time bound projects as required. A member of this network represents the NRVSP on the Public Sector User Network (PSUN). The FOI Network undertook the following during 2020:

- Review of PSUN minutes
- Looked at the requirements for FOI Training for Decision Makers, Internal Reviewers, HR Managers, and new FOI Officers.
- FOI Statistical Returns and review of template documents
- Discussion on the Model Publication Scheme
- Working Group – produced and published the Guide to Records Management & Retention
- Reviewed the Terms of Reference
- Looked at issues surrounding various FOI Requests and rulings by the Information Commissioner.

## Managing for the Future: Building your skills as a Front Line Manager in a Person Centred Environment'

A further cycle of the successful Frontline Managers Training Programme, which is run by the National Federation in partnership with the University of Limerick, was completed by 19 participants in May 2020. However, the final two months of the semester was delivered online due to the onset of Covid-19.

In the latter part of 2020 planning began for the next programme which resulted in the first fully online programme being organised to commence in January 2021. Being online has opened up opportunities for more people from member organisations to participate and therefore we have seen a huge increase in the numbers with 74 participants registered to take part in the January 2021 cycle.





# Safeguarding – Children & Adults

During 2020 the National Federation continued to work closely with the HSE in relation to the implementation of the adult safeguarding and children first policies / programmes of work. This work stream was informed by the National Federation's Safeguarding (Adults & Children) Group, chaired by David Tuomey, Western Care Association.

## Key highlights of the work programme include:

- Liaising with the HSE to progress the roll-out of the revised HSE Safeguarding Policy. In support of this the National Federation had representatives on the following Working Groups:
  - Adult Safeguarding Practice Development Group
  - National Safeguarding IT Project
  - Safeguarding Training & Education Sub-Group
- Supporting the work of the HSE Safeguarding / Disability Groups Reference Committee and the National Federations internal Safeguarding Group.
- Briefing for members on the HIQA / Mental Health Commission Safeguarding Standards.
- Contributing to the development of the Dept. of Health's Safeguarding Policy.
- Participating in the work of the National Safeguarding Advisory Group and the HSE Children First Committee – National Community Operations–Disabilities & Older Persons.



**Mr David Tuomey, Chair of the Safeguarding Group**

**Information Sharing /Training:** Two key events which took place during 2020 included the following:

**(a) ARMIDILO Training:** In January 2020 a 2-day training programme was held for Federation personnel which focused on the application of the ARMIDILO tool for assessing the risks of people with an intellectual disability who have displayed / committed sexual abusive / harmful behaviour. The programme sought to equip participants to utilise this tool in developing appropriate interventions/ individualised safety plans. Specifically, the training programme focused on:

- A review of best practice intervention and risk management models in residential and community settings for people with intellectual disabilities.
- The development of competence in the application of ARMIDILO-S; &
- Equipping participants to utilise this tool in developing appropriate interventions/individualised safety plans.

Over 30 participants took part in the training and the overall feedback was excellent with participants expressing a desire for further, more detailed training in this area:



**(b) Presentation Research Report – ‘Falling through the Cracks: The case for change, key developments and next steps for Adult Safeguarding in Ireland’:** Dr. Sarah Donnelly, School of Social Policy, Social Work & Social Justice, UCD presented the findings of her research report to members of the Safeguarding Group in November 2020. This was a very informative session which provided an opportunity to discuss both the findings and the additional protections required to ensure that adults at risk are fully safeguarded.

# Information and Communications

As described in earlier sections of this report, the information and communications role of the National Federation Secretariat was utilised extensively in providing members with signposting to Covid-19 related guidance and updates from the Department of Health, HSE, NPHET and other key sources as the pandemic response evolved.

Updates were provided in regular email circulars and at Sub Committee meetings, advising members in a timely manner of new guidance and references to resources provided by key stakeholders. At all times it was our objective to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, so that members would be assured of a trusted source of important updates. HSE provided an extensive range of support and guidance on their 'Partner Resources' page and it was very helpful to be able to advise members as new guidance was provided or changes advised through the range of Working Groups on which the National Federation representatives participated throughout the year – including the Covid-19 Operations Group and the Day Services Resumption Working Group.

## Webinars:

A key source of information and communication which emerged strongly during 2020 were online webinars. There was a clear value to members from around the country being able to access training, discussions, and seminars in an online format.

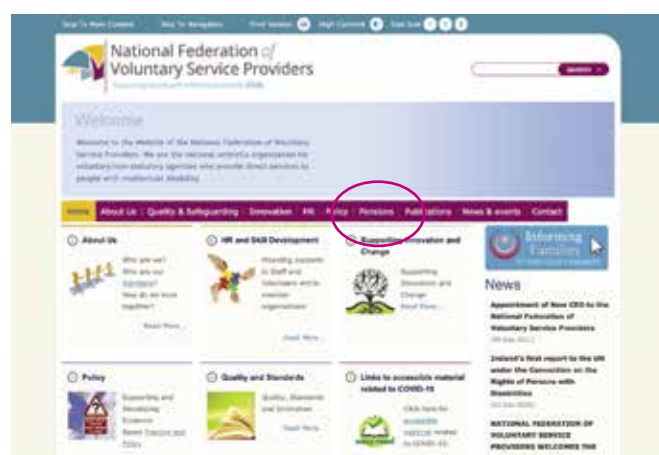
Links, slides, and presentation from Webinars were circulated which kept members updated with details of the various webinars taking place which provided key learning and gave good practical information to members.



# Administration of the National Federation's Pension Scheme

## Pension Website:

The Trustees continued to update the dedicated pension page on the National Federation's website [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie). The website page contains links to the full range of member booklets outlining the main benefits and features of the Scheme, as well as copies of important forms and documents; pension links etc.



## Review of National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers' Pension Scheme:

The Trustees commenced a review of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers' Pension Scheme during 2020 and this work is still ongoing. As part of the review process, the Trustees have secured a significant reduction in the Annual Management Charge (AMC) effective from 1st January 2021, as outlined below. These reductions will be reflected in member's Annual Benefit Statements for year ended 31st December 2021.

Investment Fund Name	AMC Pre 1st January, 2021	AMC Post 1st January 2021	OReduction Secured
Passive IRIS	0.525%	0.33%	0.195%
Pension Cash Fund	0.15%	0.15%	0
Elements	0.725%	0.53%	0.195%
LGIM Diversified Fund	0.625%	0.43%	0.195%
Pension Ethical Fund	0.625%	0.43%	0.195%
Prime Equities	0.625%	0.43%	0.195%

## Investment Review:

The Trustees engaged the services of independent investment consultants, Trident Consultants, in 2019 to review the current range of funds and their suitability for the Scheme membership. Following the review, the Trustees agreed with Trident's recommendations and 3 investment funds were dropped, and 2 additional investment funds were added in 2020. The current investment fund choice now consists of the following:



<sup>1</sup> A Fund related charge of 0.33% per annum applies to this fund.

<sup>3</sup> A fund related charge of 0.53% per annum applies to this fund.

<sup>2</sup> A fund related charge of 0.15% per annum applies to this fund.

<sup>4</sup> A fund related charge of 0.43% per annum applies to this fund.

## Trustees Meetings:

The Trustees had 5 meetings in 2020 (2 Physical and 3 via Teams due to Covid-19 restrictions) and also participated in 15 other Team / Zoom meetings. Regular meetings with New Ireland and Cornmarket were also facilitated.

## Trustee Annual Report & Financial Statements:

As required by Pension Legislation the Trustees prepared a Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/19 and circulated same to each participating employer and recognised Trade Union in line with the 30th September, 2020, deadline for completion.

A copy of the TAR and Financial Statements are available on the National Federation's website [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)



The Scheme currently comprises of 25 participating employers; 5,984 members (4,429 Active members and 1,555 deferred members).



The Scheme's fund value under management is nearly €257m as of 31st December, 2020, most of which is invested in the Default Strategy for the Scheme i.e. the Passive IRIS fund.

## Deeds Executed:

The following Pension Deeds were prepared and executed during 2020:

- Deed of Trustee appointment for James Skehan;
- Deed of Trustee removal for GIT and Mr. John O'Dea.

## Trustees Training:

One Trustee underwent Pension Trustees Training in 2020, in line with requirements that Trustees must undergo Training within 6 months of their appointment and every 2 years thereafter. All other Trustees will undergo Refresher Training in 2021.

## Member and Employer Engagement:

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, engagement with members had to be facilitated in different ways during 2020, and this was accommodated as follows:

### Webinar:

The New Ireland Pension Consultants were unfortunately unable to travel to members' places of work to brief members face to face on the Pension Scheme and therefore, a webinar was produced to ensure information continued to be shared with members about our Pension Scheme.

The webinar provides members with information on:

- The Pension Scheme and members entitlements;
- What investment options are available to members as they save for retirement;
- How has members pension fund performed recently; and
- Where can members get further information on their pension fund and who should they contact.



## Pension Scheme On-Line (PSOL):

In addition to a member's Annual Benefit Statement, a member can also access their pension fund details through New Ireland's Pension Scheme Online (PSOL) service. The PSOL link is available on [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)

By accessing PSOL, each member can:

- Access details on their pension fund at any time;
- View and reconcile online pension contributions paid by them and their employer;
- Check payments over any time period;
- View current fund value;
- View fund information / performance.

A PSOL member video is also uploaded on [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie) to give you further information on how to register for PSOL and the functionality of the platform.

## E-Zine:

An up-to-date fund factsheet which illustrates the key features of the different investment funds available under the National Federation's Pension Scheme, including past performance data, together with a summary of what the different funds are invested in, was made available to members in 2020 and can be accessed via the E-Zine link on the pension tab of [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie)

## Newsletters:

The Trustees produced their first newsletter in 2020 and have agreed to produce two newsletters every year going forward which will consist of the following:

- **Operational Overview** – This newsletter will issue early in the year outlining the Trustees' activity undertaken in respect of the previous year and outlining their workplan for the following year
- **Financial Overview** – This newsletter will issue following the adoption of the year-end financial statements i.e. approx. August / September, which will provide a financial overview of the Pension Scheme and will also include other items being undertaken by the Trustees at that time.



## Member Engagement – Approaching Retirement:

In addition to circulating a Member's Annual Benefit Statement, a personalised letter also issued to all members of the Pension Scheme aged 55 - 59 years of age inviting them to contact their New Ireland Pension Consultant to review their estimated pension fund and consider what is the best option available to them to access and draw down their pension, having regard to their personal circumstances and lifestyle.

A communication also issued to members who are aged 60 years or over, outlining the different "Options" they can invest their pension fund in during the five years prior to their planned retirement date, if they are invested in Passive IRIS. A member should select an "Option" that reflects the way they propose to draw down their pension at age 65. Members are advised to consult with their New Ireland Pension Consultant in respect of this matter or should seek advice from an independent financial advisor.



## Administration & Compliance:

The National Federation Secretariat via the Pension Scheme Manager continued to provide administrative support to the Pension Scheme Trustees in 2020 and acted as point of contact for all key stakeholders to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the Pension Scheme i.e. Pension Trustees; Participating Employers; New Ireland; Cornmarket; Auditor etc.

All employers co-operated with their monthly return of pension contributions to both New Ireland and Cornmarket by their required timelines (10th of the following month). All death claims, applications for retirement on grounds of ill health; pension adjustment orders, transfers applications and purchase of annuity forms etc. were all duly processed in a timely fashion.

**In this regard, the Trustees would like to thank all employers for their co-operation in assisting the Trustees in discharging their duties and ensuring the Scheme is run efficiently and in compliance with Scheme Rules.**

# Audited Accounts

Audited accounts for Year Ended 31 December 2020 were prepared, independently audited and signed off by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 8th September 2021. The full set of accounts is published on the National Federation website at [www.fedvol.ie](http://www.fedvol.ie). Below are some key extracts from the financial statements.

## Balance Sheet As at 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	€	2019 €	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	<b>10</b>	279,372		294,705	
			279,372		294,705
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	<b>11</b>	104,988		14,740	
Cash at bank and in hand		301,792		253,411	
		406,780		268,151	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<b>12</b>	(71,419)		(107,222)	
Net current assets			335,361		160,929
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			614,733		455,634
<b>Net assets</b>			614,733		455,634
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Restricted funds	<b>19</b>		39,800		-
General fund (unrestricted)	<b>19</b>		574,933		455,634
<b>Members funds</b>			<b>614,733</b>		<b>455,634</b>

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on 8 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by

Michael Hennessy  
Director

Audrey Pidgeon  
Director

# Statement of Financial Activities

Financial year ended 31 December 2020

	Note	Restricted €	Unrestricted €	2020 Total €	2019 Total €
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
<b>Generated funds:</b>					
<b>Voluntary Income</b>					
Seminars		-	-	-	2,075
Armidio Training course		3,963	-	3,963	-
<b>Activities Income for generating funds</b>					
Membership Fees		-	167,633	167,633	169,233
NFVB Pension Scheme		100,000	-	100,000	100,000
<b>Investment Income</b>					
<b>Charitable Activities:</b>					
HSE Grants		238,728	-	238,728	238,728
HSE-Next Steps		-	-	-	16,100
National Lottery-Informing Families		7,966	-	7,966	17,615
HSE-Adult Day Services		-	-	-	45,684
<b>Total Income Resources</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>350,657</b>	<b>167,633</b>	<b>518,290</b>	589,435
Administrative expenses		310,857	48,334	(359,191)	638,972
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>(310,857)</b>	<b>(48,334)</b>	<b>(359,191)</b>	<b>(638,972)</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		<b>39,800</b>	<b>119,299</b>	<b>159,099</b>	(49,537)
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>		<b>39,800</b>	<b>119,299</b>	<b>159,099</b>	(49,537)
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
<b>Balances brought forward at start of year</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>455,634</b>	<b>455,634</b>	505,171
<b>Balances carried forward at end of year</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39,800</b>	<b>574,933</b>	<b>614,733</b>	<b>455,634</b>

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on 8 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by

Michael Hennessy  
Director

Audrey Pidgeon  
Director

# Independent Auditor's Report

## Independent auditor's report to the members of National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

### Report on the audit of the financial statements

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers for the financial year ended 31 December 2020 which comprise the profit and loss account, statement of income and retained earnings, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2020 and of its profit for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 23 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- the information given in the directors' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements;
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, are necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the requirements of any of sections 305 to 312 of the Act, which relate to disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions are not complied with by the Company. We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Respective responsibilities

### Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary

to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

### **The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities**

Our report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Richard Grogan

**For and on behalf of  
Grogans Accountancy Ltd  
Chartered Accountants  
4/5 High Street  
Galway**



**10 September 2021**

# Our Member Organisations

- **Ability West**, Blackrock House, Salthill, Galway
- **Ard Aoibhinn Centre**, Belvedere Road, Wexford
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Initiatives**, Unit 3 & 4, Quayside Business Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth
- **Beam Services**, Barrow Haven, Regent Street, Bagnalstown, Co. Carlow
- **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Mid West Region**, (Clare), Banner House, Clare Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
- **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland West Region**, (Galway & Roscommon), Woodlands, Renmore, Galway
- **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Mid West Region**, (Limerick), Blackberry Park, Ballykeeffe, Dock Road, Limerick
- **Brothers of Charity Services Roscommon**, Lanesbro Street, Roscommon
- **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland South East Region**, Belmont Park, Waterford
- **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland Southern Region**, Lota, Glenmore, Co. Cork
- **Cairdeas Centre**, Tullow, Co. Carlow
- **Camphill Communities of Ireland**, Ballytobin, Callan, Co. Kilkenny
- **Carriglea Cairde Services**, Carriglea, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
- **Cheeverstown House**, Templeogue, Dublin 6W
- **Children's Sunshine Home / Laura Lynn**, Leopardstown Road, Foxrock, Dublin 18
- **Clann Mór Ltd.**, Clann Mór House, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
- **CoAction West Cork**, Slip, Bantry, County Cork
- **Cope Foundation**, Bonnington, Montenotte, Cork
- **Cork Association for Autism**, Greenville House, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork
- **County Wexford Community Workshop**, Beelefield, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
- **Cumas New Ross**, Butlersland Industrial Estate, New Ross, Co. Wexford
- **DARA Residential Services**, 36 Maynooth Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
- **Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services**, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7
- **Delta Centre**, Strawhall, Carlow
- **Drumlin House**, Cootehill, County Cavan
- **Gheel Autism Service**, Ballycurraghan, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
- **Holy Angels Day Care Centre**, Strawhall Industrial Estate, Carlow
- **KARE**, Newbridge Industrial Estate, Newbridge, County Kildare

- **Kerry Parents & Friends Association**, Old Monastery, Port Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry
- **L'Arche Ireland Secretariat**, "An Siol", 42 West Street, Callan, Co. Kilkenny
- **Malta Services Drogheda**, Malta House, Fair Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth
- **Moorehaven Centre**, O'Brien Street, Tipperary
- **Muiriosa Foundation**, Moore Abbey, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
- **North West Parents & Friends Association**, Holy Family Day Centre, Ballytivnan, Sligo
- **Peacehaven**, 1-2 Hillside, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
- **Peamount**, Newcastle, County Dublin
- **Prosper Fingal**, Strand Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin
- **Prosper Meath**, Beechmount Industrial Estate, Navan, Co. Meath
- **Praxis Care**, Unit 18, Ardee Business Park, Hale Street, Ardee, Co. Louth A92 C7RW
- **RehabCare**, Roslyn Park, Beach Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4
- **SOS Kilkenny Ltd.**, Seville Lodge, Callan Road, Kilkenny
- **St. Aidan's Service**, Millands, Gorey, Co. Wexford
- **St. Catherine's Association**, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow
- **St. Christopher's Service**, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford
- **St. Cronan's Association**, Grange, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
- **St. Hilda's Services**, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
- **St. John of God Community Services**, Provincial Administration, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
- **St. Joseph's Foundation**, Baker's Road, Charleville, Co. Cork
- **St. Margaret's Centre, (IRL-IASD)** Moorehampton Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
- **St. Michael's House**, Ballymun Road, Ballymun, Dublin 9
- **St. Patrick's Centre (Kilkenny)**, Kells Road, Kilkenny
- **Steadfast House Ltd**, Steadfast Industrial Estate, Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
- **Stewarts Care**, Palmerstown, Dublin 20
- **Sunbeam House Services**, Cedar Estate, Killarney Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
- **WALK**, 1 Longmile Road, Dublin 12
- **Waterford Intellectual Disability Association**, 2 Belmont Road, Ferrybank, Waterford
- **Western Care Association**, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
- **Windmill Therapeutic Training Unit**, Larkins Lane, South Main Street, Wexford



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