

VOLUNTEERING



CARE



NON-PROFIT



INFORMATION



HAPPIER HOSPITAL STAYS



ADVOCACY



FAMILY SUPPORT



RESEARCH



TRAINING

Children in Hospital Ireland

Overview 2020



Making hospital a happier place for children through play and advocacy

Chairperson's Welcome Note



As 2020 began, the members, staff and Board of Children in Hospital Ireland were looking forward to an exciting year ahead. It was to be a year in which there would be not only steady advances in the organisation's volunteer service and its advocacy work but during which the 50th anniversary of the founding of the organisation would be publicly celebrated in a number of ways. However, before even a quarter of the year had gone by, Children in Hospital Ireland, like every other organisation in the country, found itself faced with having to rapidly and radically adapt its plans and its methods of work in order to respond to the significant challenges posed by the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic.

By the end of March, all Children in Hospital Ireland volunteers had to be withdrawn from the 14 hospitals around the country where the hospital play service is provided, as well as from the JustAsk information service in CHI at Crumlin. In addition, staff members had to make the significant change to working from home. Over the course of the remainder of the year, all meetings of the Board and its sub-committees had to be held by Zoom, scheduled fundraising events had to be postponed, and the Annual Lecture and a planned 50th anniversary conference had to be cancelled.

In the face of such severe disruption of plans and significant changes in how work could be undertaken, Board members

and staff sought ways of ensuring that as much as possible of the activities of the organisation could continue. During the year, there was considerable progress in the areas of research and advocacy and in updating and revising the organisation's governance instruments. There were some new initiatives to provide a service for children in hospital and their parents, and ongoing efforts to maintain contact with the volunteers for the organisation's play service, as well as with personnel in the hospitals where the service is provided.

Despite the difficulties which are still being presented by Covid-19, Children in Hospital Ireland faces into 2021 with optimism that it can continue to make progress in many areas of its work; in particular, it looks forward to the prospect of its volunteers being able to return to the paediatric wards and hospitals when this is deemed safe by hospitals.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Children in Hospital Ireland members, volunteers and Board for their commitment to the organisation and its work. I would like especially to commend and thank the staff members for their hard work, flexibility and initiative which enabled the organisation to continue operating throughout 2020.

Margaret Burns
Chairperson
Children in Hospital Ireland

Volunteer Update



Before our volunteer services had to be paused in mid-March two workshops on Adapting Play Volunteering for Teens had been hosted in February. A successful team leader day was held on Zoom in

April. In addition, we gathered to thank our volunteers and have some fun with 4 Paint by the Pints social zoom sessions, facilitated by Crumlin volunteer, Brittany Beckart, to end 2020.

We were grateful for some excellent virtual volunteering in response to our request with some wonderful storytelling, craft activities and brainteasers that were shared on social media and distributed to the hospital play specialists and CNM's to bring to the bedsides of children in hospitals around the country. We know this is no replacement to the physical presence of our volunteers, however, it is helping to sustain our connection and commitment during the pandemic.

In June we welcomed a small number of volunteers back. 23 volunteers did an incredible job of supporting children and families arriving to CHI at Crumlin's

Outpatients Department. This role served as a model to return a team of 5 volunteers to CHI at Temple Street's Outpatients Department supporting families 3 days a week from late October. Also in late October, a team of six volunteers returned to play volunteering for the first time since March as a dedicated support team in CHI at Crumlin's Transitional Care Unit.

500
Over 500 volunteers
across 14 paediatric units.



Diversity

16

Nationality

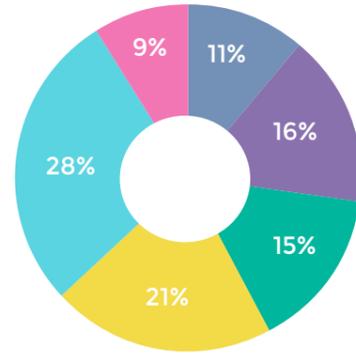
Volunteers have self-identified as 16 different nationalities .



18-65+

Age

- Age 18-25
- Age 25-34
- Age 35-44
- Age 45-54
- Age 55-64
- Age 65+



39

Length of volunteering

39 volunteers active for 10 years or more, 4 of those for 20 years or more.



8,000

Impact of Volunteer Roles

Over 8,000 children supported in a six month period of September 2019 through February 2020.



145

Families Impacted

Approximately 145 families were supported per week in CHI at Temple Street Outpatients Department from 28th October 2020.

10,000

Impact of COVID Isolation Play Packs

In March 2020 when volunteer services were paused in all hospitals, playrooms were closed, and ward toys removed. Children in Hospital Ireland used our successful model of play packs for children in isolation rooms, to continue to support play for children in hospital.

Between March and December 2020 119 boxes with approximately 10,000 isolation play packs or play resources were sent to 21 hospitals with paediatric wards in Ireland.



Quality Award

In July 2020 Children in Hospital Ireland was proudly awarded the Investing in Volunteers Award. The Investing in Volunteers Award represents the organisation's commitment to nine quality standards in recruiting, supporting and recognising volunteers and ensuring safe practice.



Fundraising

Main fundraising events. Thank you to:

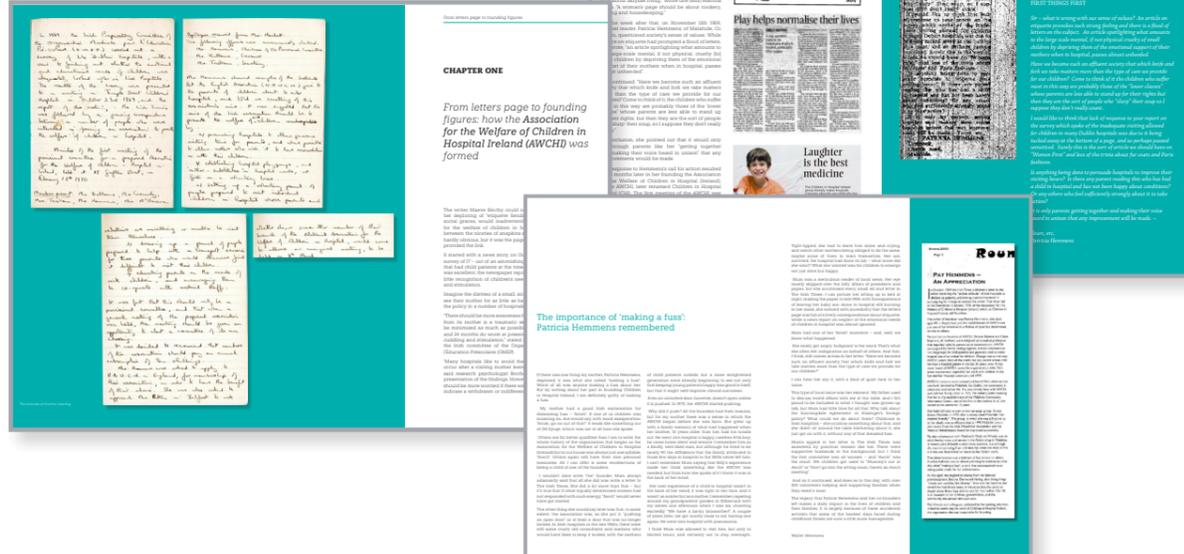
- St Andrew's School PTA for funds raised at their parent's lunch.
- The Commissioner of Irish Lights and Fighting Words for producing the beautiful Lighthouse Storybook with all sale proceeds supporting our services and Northern Ireland Hospice.
- Volunteers who ran, baked, made and sold crafts to raise funds and those who donated to our isolation packs fund.
- Everyone who sold or purchased our beautiful Christmas cards in December.



Sincere thanks to every individual and organisation for their generosity in helping us to keep supporting children in hospital and their families.

Memoir

We plan to launch this commemorative book in quarter four of 2021 – here are some snapshots of how it is progressing.



Advocacy & Research

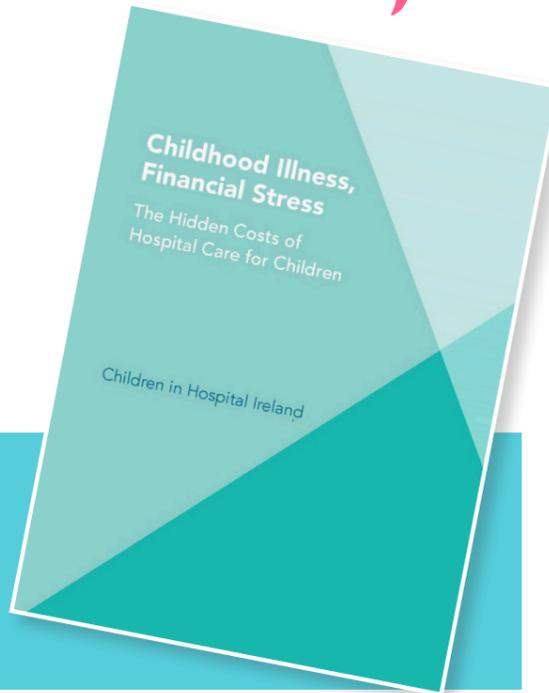
Research: Childhood Illness, Financial Stress

On 27th October Fergus Finlay joined us for our online launch of the research report **Childhood Illness, Financial Stress: The Hidden Costs of Hospital Care for Children**. The research findings were featured in the Irish Times on the day of the launch.

We made a strong start into the long process of advocating for the implementation of the report's recommendations.

This includes highlighting to Government:

the need for a new social welfare payment designed specifically to assist parents whose children spend prolonged periods of time in hospital.



Advocacy Work

We made a number of submissions to ensure that the perspective of families and children are included in policy documents, including to:

- HIQA scoping consultation which will inform the development of Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services,
- Future Direction of Nursing for Children and Their Families in Ireland which will outline a vision and a strategic framework for the future direction of children's nursing in Ireland for the next 5-10 years.
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Disability which invited submissions on the lived experiences of people with disabilities.



Network of Childhood Illnesses Organisations (NICO)

We hosted four Network of Childhood Illnesses Organisation meetings during 2020. These meetings strengthened our ties with other organisations, sharing valuable knowledge and experiences.

We successfully applied for a Training Links grant, awarded by The Wheel, and have begun planning a programme of training for 2021 for the network.





EACH (European Association for Children in Hospital)

EACH released a statement calling upon all governments, policy makers, staff in hospitals and in all other healthcare facilities to respect the needs and rights of children regarding the consequences of Covid-19, as stipulated in the EACH Charter.

We were delighted to arrange for the Chief Executive of the Mental Health Commission and two young members of Jigsaw to virtually present to EACH on Irish mental health services for children and young people.

AGM 2020

Our AGM took place virtually by Zoom. We were delighted to welcome David Coleman, Clinical Psychologist and Broadcaster as our guest speaker. David spoke so enthusiastically about the importance of the work our volunteers do and how the benefits of play cannot be understated.

David spoke about how children “get lost in play” and how they can work out a lot of their problems through the process of play. He also reminded us that when children are at play it is the only time that nobody wants



anything from them, they can just “be” and if volunteers needed any reassurance that they were doing something really impactful, then this was it.

Reach & Communications:

To maximise our reach and engagement we use a three-pronged approach:



SOCIAL MEDIA

We utilise social media as our conversation driver using as much visual content as possible.



NEWSLETTER

Our newsletters explain the substance and fuller detail of our impacts and project work.



Email marketing

Email marketing is vital to personalise our content to our varied audiences to ensure the relevant content reaches our engaged community.

2020 saw a notable increase in social media followers, donors and revenue. In particular, embracing Instagram has led to a number of unsolicited fundraising activities and donations by retailers, artists and individuals. Instagram will continue to be an important medium to tell our story and grow awareness of our services.

During the pandemic our proposition and the tangible difference that we made (particularly in delivering isolation packs) was very evident through our visual story-telling and particularly suited to Instagram.



Our volunteers were enthusiastic in sharing their storytelling and arts, crafts and activity skills via video to stay in touch with children in hospitals and to reach out to children in general through our social channels garnering strong engagement. 2020 saw digital really gaining pace as a driver for fundraising, awareness and increased revenue.

