

Update from Children in Hospital Ireland



It has now been over two months since hospitals began to suspend voluntary services across the country. It is hard for so many of our volunteers, who really miss their weekly volunteering in hospitals all across the country. We have been in frequent contact with staff in every hospital in order to see what supports are needed, what we can provide and how things are evolving each week.

We put a call out to volunteers about creative or alternative ways in which we could provide support to children in hospital and we had a terrific response with many volunteers opting to read / tell stories, or deliver craft tutorials virtually. You can take a look at some of the stories here in our [Fun Stuff](#) section of our website. We are planning for how we might be able to begin volunteer play services again, with creative alternatives or adjustments as needed, and are in discussions with some of the hospitals about how volunteering might work in our new normal.



Loss of fundraised income will of course be an issue facing every charity at this time. We have had some significant fundraising events cancelled for this year and have been working on how we might create new, virtual events to raise income. We have also applied to Pobal for the new Stability Scheme Grant for voluntary organisations affected by the pandemic. **Staff are currently working from home and can be contacted by email or on their mobile phones.** We hope that you, our members are all keeping safe and well during this time and we thank you for your continued support.

Anna, Maura, Elizabeth and Julia

ISOLATION PLAY PACKS DURING COVID-19

We launched a fundraising campaign on social media in April to enable us to enhance and expand our long-standing project of supporting play and creativity when in isolation. (Thank you to those of you who donated to this campaign). It is very hard for children in hospital at the moment with very restricted visiting, no play volunteers and ward toys having been removed in favour of single use items for infection control purposes. We had a great response and raised over €2,000 to date. So far we have delivered over 40 boxes full of items for children in isolation or without access to the usual playrooms. We are continuing to send packs as needed. Playing cards, craft kits, play-doh, crayons and toys for babies were the most requested resources.



MEETING WITH CHILDREN'S HEALTH IRELAND

Our chairperson, Margaret Burns and CEO, Anna Gunning met with Eilish Hardiman and Grainne Bauer in Children's Health Ireland in February to update on developments. Among the items discussed was the issue of confusion over names since Children's Health Ireland re-branded and are now using 'CHI' in their name. Children in Hospital Ireland highlighted the concerns we had and the significant association which we have with the acronym CHI. In addition, the confusion in the public domain and with other professional organisations is causing issues for us. Children's Health Ireland took the comments seriously and said that they would get back in contact with us in the early Summer. We will keep you updated on this issue.



INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS

We are currently working to achieve the Investing in Volunteers (IiV) award, the national quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. The standards provide organisations with a framework to benchmark the quality of volunteer programmes, provide guidance in putting the necessary steps in place to improve volunteer retention, help organisations to manage volunteer programmes more easily and effectively, enhance an organisation's reputation as a charity where volunteers want to be involved and ultimately help organisations to deliver a quality service.

The process of achieving this quality mark involves a self assessment process and a review of all of our volunteer policies and and procedures. It also involves interviews with 10% of volunteers who are randomly selected . Our assessor from Volunteer Ireland has managed to carry out all interviews via zoom or phone call over the past few weeks.

CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL IRELAND ANNUAL REPORT 2019



We have recently published our 2019 Annual Report and you can find the full report on our website at:

<https://www.childreninhospital.ie/governance/>

UPDATED POLICIES

CHARITIES GOVERNANCE CODE

Children in Hospital Ireland have been preparing for our first year of reporting on the Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code. This has involved a full review of all our policies and procedures and ensuring best practice in our governance and running of the organisation.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 2020 - 18TH TO 24TH MAY

We have had to cancel our Annual June Volunteer Get Together day due to Covid-19 restrictions however we are still hopeful that our AGM on September 5th will be able to go ahead in some form, and with this an opportunity to gather for a volunteer event. National Volunteer Week 2020 was scheduled from 18th - 24th May and although official events were postponed we decided to go ahead and take the opportunity to profile our volunteers and say "thank you". We asked if any of our volunteers wanted to share their story about why they volunteer with Children in Hospital Ireland - many of our volunteers were delighted to share and we posted video stories on our social media channels throughout the week. You can listen to some of our volunteer stories by clicking the links below

[Becky Pinckheard, Cork Volunteer ; Luke O'Neill, Volunteer, Crumlin;](#)

[Lorraine Ayres, Drogheda Volunteer; Gabrielle Fischer, Sligo Volunteer;](#)

[Annemarie Sharkey, Volunteer, Crumlin; Tracey Heffernan, Volunteer, Crumlin](#)



Volunteer Stories

THE NETWORK OF CHILDHOOD ILLNESS GROUPS

The Network of Childhood Illness Organisations (facilitated by Children in Hospital Ireland) have had two meetings in 2020, the most recent at the beginning of May by Zoom.

Covid-19 is impacting families of children with underlying illnesses in so many ways. Members raised issues being faced by their families due to this situation such as cancellation of routine and outpatient appointments and the fear that parents are delaying necessary consultations because of being afraid of attending the hospital. The issue was also raised that many staff had been re-deployed to deal with the Covid-19 crisis and there was a fear that if they are not deployed back into their specialist areas, there may be a shortage of staff when services resume. We are also very aware that the current difficulties will mean extended waiting lists and very busy hospitals in the Autumn and the Winter.

One further concern was the lack of clear information coming from the hospitals to let parents and others know what is the anticipated time scale for resuming appointments and therapies. The importance of two-way communication was stressed.

Following this meeting we, Children in Hospital Ireland, wrote to the Minister for Health highlighting the particular issues facing these children and families and called for increased support and communication with those who are experiencing difficulties. We extended an invite to the Minister or a representative to attend our next virtual meeting and hear directly from those most affected.

If you would like to find out more please contact advocacy@childreninhospital.ie

PUTTING THE "FUN" INTO FUNDRAISING

We are encouraging families to **take the 10km challenge** and donate €10.00 to Children in Hospital Ireland

- **travel a distance of 10km**
- **in your own area**
- **with your own family**
- **in your own way – run, walk, cycle, skate, scoot, skip – divide it up and have fun!**
- **donate €10.00 to support our services**
- **share your progress on social media and with us.**

**TAKE THE 10K
FAMILY CHALLENGE
FOR CHILDREN IN
HOSPITAL IRELAND**

Complete 10k in
your own way
your own time
your own area, with your own family
Donate €10.00 to Children in Hospital Ireland
Making hospital a happier place for children.

Thank you
www.childreninhospital.ie/donate



Making hospital a happier place for children through play and advocacy



Thank you as always for your ongoing support. Stay safe and well. If you would like to make contact do please email us at info@childreninhospital.ie