

## Welcome to our latest update ...

...where you will find information on all our activities to date this year. Despite the on-going restrictions, 2021 has been a busy and positive time for Children in Hospital Ireland. We know that children and their families have had a particularly difficult time over the past year with the immense pressure on hospital services due to the Covid-19 pandemic and now with the added difficulty of the cyber-attack on the HSE IT system. We hope that the coming months will see a return to normal service and a plan to deal with backlogs and delayed appointments. In addition, we envisage that our volunteers will be in a position to return to providing the play service in the autumn months and re-establishing our important connections in hospitals across the country. We were delighted that we were able to maintain contact with our volunteers and use the past few months to update training modules and provide new opportunities for training volunteers.

We have continued our advocacy work in 2021, particularly in relation to continued calls for better supports for parents when they have a child in hospital. We have met with TDs and policy makers to urge them to move towards implementing the recommendations from our research report, Childhood Illness, Financial Stress. Our key recommendation is that the government provides a new social welfare payment to support parents when they have a child in hospital. This payment would be in recognition of the substantial additional costs for parents during this time and also the loss of income due to the necessity to reduce work hours to care for a child.

We continue to facilitate meetings of the Network of Childhood Illness Organisations and this has been a great opportunity to build relationships, identify common issues of concern and develop shared responses or calls to action as appropriate. Later this year we will publish our 50 year memoir of the work of Children in Hospital Ireland and we will also commence work on our new strategic plan. We look forward to engaging with our supporters on both of these events.

I hope you enjoy reading this update and again, I would like to thank you for your continued support of the work of Children in Hospital Ireland.

*Anna Gunning*

### VOLUNTEER SERVICES



### VOLUNTEER IRELAND AWARD WINNER: KAREN BYRNE

This past autumn we received top secret word that one of our incredible team leaders had been peer nominated for the Volunteer Ireland Awards in the Children and Youth Category.



All of our volunteers and team leaders are definitely award worthy, but it was really heart-warming to see volunteers lift each other up for celebration! Karen has been a volunteer since 2017 in CHI at Crumlin on Saturday Mornings.

*Keeping our supporters informed and engaged with our work.*

# SUPPORTER UPDATE

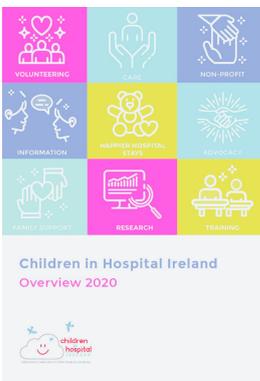
## WE ARE A FINALIST

Out of 520 applications, Children in Hospital are delighted to have made it to the final 36 organisations and projects in this year's National Lottery #GoodCausesAwards. We are one of six finalists in the Health & Wellbeing category. This award celebrates our incredible volunteers all across the country and the impact this service has through providing play and support for children and families in local hospitals every week.

The award ceremony will be live on **Saturday 29th May at 1pm.**

[www.lottery.ie/goodcausesawards](http://www.lottery.ie/goodcausesawards)

## CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL IRELAND OVERVIEW 2020



Our **Overview 2020** will provide you with a summary view of our programme of work during 2020. It was a year where we, along with the rest of world, had to adapt the way we worked in order to respond to the significant challenges posed by the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## ANNUAL LECTURE 2020 CHILDHOOD ILLNESS: THE RIPPLE EFFECT

### The Ripple Effect: Highlighting the wider impact of childhood illness and hospitalisation on families:

We delivered our 2021 Annual Lecture over Zoom on 31st March to over 120 attendees working in the area of, or affected by, childhood illness including: hospital staff (clinical and non-clinical), charities and NGOs addressing issues related to hospitalisation and childhood illness, parents and families, and students and academics working in the field of paediatric healthcare.

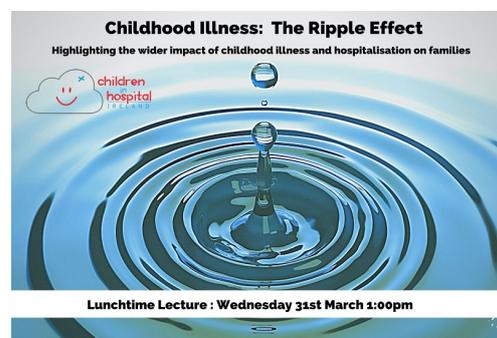
### We were joined by guest speakers:

- Sheila May, Medical Social Worker, Children's Health Ireland, Temple Street
- Dr. Nikki Dunne, Research Officer, Family Carers Ireland
- Sarah Quinlan, Chief Executive, Children's Heartbeat Trust, Belfast
- Margaret Rogers, CEO, Heart Children Ireland

The lecture was moderated by **Children in Hospital Ireland ambassador, RTE2FM Broadcaster and author, Ciara King.**

Contributors at the lecture highlighted the real pressures faced by families when their child is sick or in hospital. Some of the biggest stressors for parents, after the health of their child, include the separation of the family unit as one parent may have to travel to stay with the sick child, the need for counselling for family members, and in some cases, the fear of losing of their home due to the cost associated with a child being in hospital. The lecture also highlighted the work of charities such as Heart Children Ireland and Children's Heartbeat Trust NI, which provide a family support service from the time of diagnosis through hospitalisation and returning home. These supports fill a gap which is not provided for by the state.

We will continue our work to create awareness and understanding of these issues among policy-makers and to highlight to families the supports that are available, and too often hidden, as well as outlining the work that charities are doing to fill the gaps that exist and advocate for better services and support.



## ADVOCACY UPDATE

On behalf of the Network of Childhood Illness Organisations (NCIO) we submitted a successful grant application to **The Wheel's Training Links Programme 2020-2022**. The Programme is based on an approach that incentivises organisations to work and collaborate with other organisations to identify shared training and support needs. The funding we received covers the development and implementation of strategic, innovative and cost-effective training and development solutions chosen jointly by the NCIO to focus on:

- Enhancing leadership and management skills to increase organisational impact, including strong governance, well-formed strategy, and agile and effective management and planning
- Achieving high-quality, impactful, consistent and responsive services (responding especially to ongoing COVID-19 related realities); demonstrating impact, and communicating effectively



To date we have held 3 Training Links sessions on the topics of social media training, grant writing and the impact of play on health and recovery with further sessions planned throughout the rest of the year.

## WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

During the pandemic our website has been a vital channel of communication and promotion – along with all of our social media channels. We have recognised the need for an update and redesign which will include enhancements to allow for more interactive capability for training and volunteer resources. As part of our programme of advocacy work we will aim to develop a **Parent / Family Support Hub** where we will be able to connect with parents, guardians and families, help them to access the supports and advice they need and encourage them to influence our policy and advocacy work.

## TWO JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**We are currently recruiting for two roles within the team:**

- Volunteer Co-ordinator position p/t - [view the role details here](#) - the closing date for this position is Sunday 30th May 2021
- Research and Advocacy Officer - [view the role details here](#) - the closing date for this position is Friday 4th June 2021

## CHARITIES INSTITUTE OF IRELAND RESEARCH DURING COVID-19

New research commissioned by Charities Institute Ireland reveals interesting trends in how the public has reacted to the Covid-19 pandemic with younger people leading the way in responding to requests for support from charities hit by the Covid-19 crisis.

- Younger people (18-24), are leading the way in responding to requests for support from charities hit by the Covid-19 crisis;
- A major shift to online donations;
- Confidence in online giving;
- A strong preference for supporting charities focussed on providing services in Ireland rather than overseas.

[Link to the full report.](#)



## FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS REVIEW

### BUY A BOOK FOR A CHILD IN HOSPITAL - MARCH 2021

For children in hospital, books and stories are particularly important – they provide distraction, entertainment and can transport a child to another world.

**Author and columnist with the Irish Times, Lorraine Levis,** approached us with this lovely idea for a fundraiser linked to World Book Day on 4th March. We asked people to donate a small amount to our **“buy a book for a child”** campaign which enabled us to supply brand new books to children’s bedsides all around the country.

While our play volunteers are unable to provide services due to Covid-19 we have been distributing activity packs and books directly to children’s bedsides.

We received fantastic support for this campaign from children’s authors including **Sarah Webb, Eve McDonnell, Jane Curtin, PJ Lynch, Natasha Mac a Bháird, Patricia Forde, Gerry Daly and Alan Nolan** who all produced video stories telling children what their favourite books were and why. **Publishers, Penguin Books and O’Brien Press lent their support to this fundraiser also and are helping us choose the perfect books for children in hospitals. This campaign has raised over €3,000 as well as some fabulous signed book donations and we are so grateful to all who have contributed to the campaign, thank you.**



SUPPORTER UPDATE

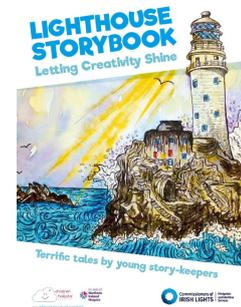
Keeping our supporters informed and engaged with our work.



### THE LIGHTHOUSE STORYBOOK

We were very fortunate in quarter four last year when **The Commissioner of Irish Lights** together with **Fighting Words** produced **The Lighthouse Storybook**. This book was written by children and illustrated by Irish volunteer illustrators. We launched the campaign at Christmas selling the book online with all funds directly supporting Children in Hospital Ireland and Northern Ireland Hospice. It was an unanticipated income and very welcome, particularly when so many other planned fundraising campaigns had to be cancelled.

So far over **€10,000 has been raised from the sale of the storybook**. That was Phase 1 of the campaign and we plan to launch Phase 2 in the coming months to take full advantage of the opportunity



We hope to partner with schools as an opportunity to include copies of the book in their school libraries and reach out to corporate organisations that support educational activity within their local communities. There was much interest from book shops in stocking the book for resale and we will be exploring this possibility. Keep an eye out for the book in your local bookshop.



10,000 Isolation Play Packs / resources sent to 21 hospitals over 10 month period



Approx. 145 families supported per week in CHI at Temple Street from October 2020



Over 8,000 children supported in a six month period from September 2019



Over 500 volunteers providing play and respite in 14 paediatric units