

Volunteer Newsletter

Children in Hospital Ireland AGM 2020

Our AGM took place this year virtually by Zoom. This was a new departure for us and it went smoothly and was very well attended. We were so delighted that David Coleman, Clinical Psychologist and Broadcaster could join us 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. He 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.



It is unfortunate that we have paused our traditional volunteer recruitment during this

time. It is, however, encouraging that people are still getting in touch with an interest in volunteering. When we are able to safely return teams of play volunteers more fully to hospitals we will explore safe and creative ways to also return to recruiting new volunteers. For our current volunteers, we will be launching an online refresher training course so that all volunteers can begin volunteering again with confidence.

We will be opening a small recruitment for new volunteers to support the modified Outpatients roles in both Crumlin and Temple St. If you, or someone you know may be interested in joining these volunteer teams please get in touch.

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter of Children in Hospital Ireland.

Despite the significant challenges and changes to our work since March this year, it has been an incredibly busy period for us as we continue to support children in hospital and their families. Our first thoughts are to the families of children in hospital who have had a really challenging time with restricted visiting, cancelled appointments and delays in accessing services due to Covid-19. We know that this has meant increased stress for children and parents alike and we have highlighted these frustrations on your behalf whenever we can.

While our physical volunteer presence in the hospitals has been significantly decreased since the pandemic, we are working hard to ensure that play materials are delivered to hospitals, activities for children are available on line and that wherever possible, we can re-introduce volunteers back into the hospitals in modified roles. It has been a real silver lining of this challenging year to have been able to expand our relationships and support with staff in more children's wards in Ireland.

Our policy and advocacy work has increased with the launch of the findings and recommendations of our research into the non-medical costs associated with having a child in hospital - Childhood Illness Financial Stress. This is a significant report which highlights how having a child in hospital care can impact on a family's financial wellbeing. Children in Hospital Ireland carried out a similar study in 2004 and it is disappointing to see how little has changed for families in the intervening years and that we are still calling for many of the same changes to be made.

The celebrations for the 50 year anniversary of Children in Hospital Ireland were largely put on hold in 2020 but we have taken this time to reflect on past successes and achievements of the organisation and the very many people who have contributed to our rich history. We look forward to publishing our 50 year memoir early next year.

We know that the coming winter will be difficult for everyone and there are specific difficulties for children in hospital and their families. We will continue to work to support them and we thank all our volunteers, members and supporters for your continued support. We wish good health to you all and hope that you will stay in contact over the coming months.

Anna Gunning CEO



Volunteer service

We began returning volunteers to hospitals to support children and families from the last week of June. Since then, both Play and JustAsk volunteers took on a modified role focusing on outpatients in Crumlin Hospital. Volunteers are helping to welcome families into main outpatients, ensure clinic waiting areas do not become overcrowded, that families can access the outpatients safely without anxiety of missing their turn or their appointments due to social distancing restrictions. Volunteers are also handing out colouring packs and supporting children and families with the smiles and conversation that all our volunteers do so well.

Jane and Elizabeth would especially like to thank those volunteers who have so generously given their time to support these roles. We really appreciate that volunteers have taken on new roles to support families, often very different to their previous roles.

Following on from the success with this service, we have begun a similar service in Temple Street's outpatient's department offering volunteer support two mornings per week. Volunteers have also returned to play for the first time since March at the end of October. A small team of volunteers have been facilitating play to children most in need of additional play support in the Transitional Care Unit, Crumlin.

We continue to work with all hospitals, looking for possibilities to return volunteers safely, as well as other creative ways to support children and families in these incredibly challenging times. We have expanded our Isolation Play Pack campaign to all public hospitals with paediatric wards across Ireland and have sent over 120 boxes with many thousands of play packs since March. Our most recent posting of approximately 1,800 isolation play packs in the last week of October went to 21 hospitals and additionally included a large donation of Disney face masks for children, families, staff and volunteers. With playrooms closed and restrictions on sharing toys for play on wards, play in hospital continues to be largely dependent on single use toys and materials during COVID19. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of individual and corporate donors in enabling us to purchase the activities, compile the packs and get them distributed across the country.



Volunteers Wanted



WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER IN CHI@CRUMLIN
OR CHI@TEMPLE STREET OUTPATIENT
DEPARTMENT?

OPEN TO ALL PLAY & JUST ASK VOLUNTEERS FROM
AROUND THE DUBLIN AREA

THIS IS A KEY ROLE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES IN THE
OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT AND TO HELP PROVIDE A
CALM AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

PLEASE CONTACT CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL IRELAND
VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR, JANE CARTER AT 087 6990950

Thank you




Welcome / staff changes

Julia, Children in Hospital Ireland's Office Administrator who you all know, is now on maternity leave. She has embarked on her most important role to date, motherhood. We wish her the best of luck over the coming weeks and months ahead. Sarah Cook has joined our team for the duration of Julia's maternity leave. Sarah joins us from Canada where she previously worked with a number of non-profit organisations in a range of administrative and finance roles. She specializes in the management and administration of international development projects, but she is eager to begin focussing her experience in local, community based initiatives, particularly while she is living in Dublin.

We are also delighted to welcome a new member to the team Laura Austen-Gray, who joins us in a part time capacity as Advocacy Officer. Laura has 3 years' experience managing the national coordination of European projects. She is also the Irish Correspondent for the European Commission's youth policy initiative 'Youth Wiki'.

Jessica Lockhart, an intern from UCD, is undertaking a three-month placement with Children in Hospital Ireland as part of her studies. Jessica is studying a joint major degree in Information and Communication Studies and Social Justice.



Our Advocacy Work

Children in Hospital Ireland made a number of submissions to ensure that the perspective of families and children are included in policy documents. The submissions included:

- 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.
- The 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. We drew on the findings of our recent research for this submission.

European Association of Children in Hospital (EACH) AGM 2020

Due to Covid-19, Children in Hospital Ireland were not able to welcome our European partners for the AGM of EACH this month. Instead, we had a virtual meeting of our partner organisations with some very interesting updates on how the pandemic is impacting on children in the healthcare system across Europe.



We also had inputs on the issue of mental health services for children and young people, from John Farrelly, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Commission and also from two young members of Dublin Jigsaw.

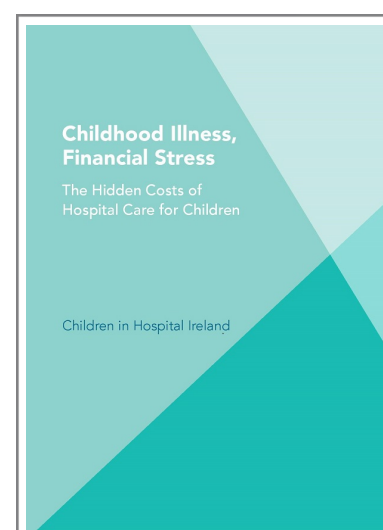
Governance Award Children in Hospital Ireland was one of 5 organisations shortlisted for the Governance Improvement Initiative Award 2020. Unfortunately we did not win in our category but the shortlisting was a significant achievement.

Launch of Financial Research Report [Download here](#)

On October 27th, we were delighted to have Fergus Finlay speak at the launch of our research into the non-medical costs of having a child in hospital. The report, Childhood Illness, Financial Stress, provides compelling evidence of the significance of the non-medical financial costs associated with the hospital care for a child. They reveal a wide range of additional costs which arise for parents and include: Loss of earnings; Cost of accommodation if they cannot stay in the hospital or access free, charity provided accommodation; Cost of meals, tea/coffee during a day; Travel costs and parking and Childcare for other children

These costs amount to an average cost of €108.00 per day.

Our key area of work following the publication and launch of these findings is to highlight to Government, the need for a new social welfare payment designed to assist parents whose children spend prolonged periods of time in hospital. Currently there is no statutory payment designed specifically for the purpose of assisting parents meet the non-medical costs that arise when a child is in hospital, yet our findings show that families are likely to have additional rather than fewer costs during a child's time in hospital. Not only do parents want to be with their child, they have to be, the hospital system depends on it, yet there is no recognition of the increased expenses and the decreased earning power experienced by the parents of such children and the cumulative impact such costs have on the financial well-being of families.



Investing in Volunteers award (IiV)

Children in Hospital Ireland is so proud to have been awarded the Investing in Volunteers Award in 2020. Children in Hospital Ireland joins only 12 other Irish charity and volunteer involving organisations to have achieved the award since it began in Ireland in 2013.

The Investing in Volunteers Award is the national quality standard in volunteering and volunteer management assessed by Volunteer Ireland in the Republic of Ireland. It represents the organisation's commitment to 9 quality standards including: volunteer roles which bring benefits to the volunteers,

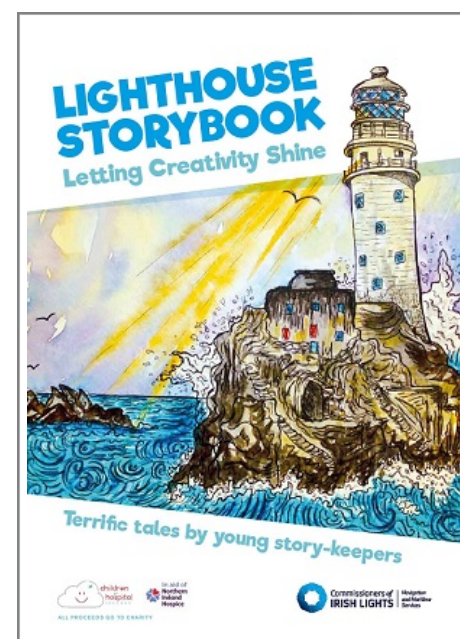
providing appropriate resources and supports, welcoming diversity, protecting volunteers from physical emotional and financial harm due to volunteering, fair recruitment, support and supervision needs, and volunteer recognition. <https://www.volunteer.ie/organisations/quality-in-volunteer-management-iiv/>

The assessment process took 1 year beginning with a self-assessment of the 9 standards and 46 practices, and then closing gaps in a development plan with the support of a mentor. Following the preparation, an independent assessment was carried out by Volunteer Ireland over 4 days. The assessor interviewed 43 volunteers from 5 hospital locations, 4 members of staff, and the chairperson of the board. Volunteers were selected from an anonymised list of volunteers for a spread of representation across experience lengths, genders and volunteer roles; 5 team leaders and both Play and JustAsk volunteers were interviewed.

In our assessment report we were inspired once again by the incredible enthusiasm of our volunteers, of the joy they receive from volunteering and play, and most of all, by the dedication volunteers and especially volunteer team leaders show in their support of one another. Children in Hospital Ireland could not support 500 volunteers in 14 locations allowing for thousands of children and families to engage in play in hospital each month without the volunteers leading the way in each hospital.

Important Fundraising initiatives as we approach the end of 2020 (thank goodness!)

We have just the perfect stocking filler for you. For €10 you can purchase this wonderful Storybook written by children for children and raise much needed funds for Children in Hospital Ireland and Northern Irish Hospice #Lighthousestories #Storykeeper #Happierhospitals [Order here](#)



Never has it been more important to stay in touch with loved ones. Our beautiful Christmas Cards are a lovely way to do this - they are selling fast so place your orders

@Headintheclouds.ie #Christmascards all proceeds supporting the work of @Childreninhospital email info@childreninhospital.ie to order visit www.childreninhospital.ie

€5.00 for pack of six assorted cards.

Donate the price of a coffee in November to highlight World Children's Day

20th November was World Children's Day and we are asking people if they can, to donate the price of a cuppa & cookie 5.00 any time this month. Donations will be helping us to provide play materials for children in hospitals around the country and to continue to support their parents and families when they need it most.

Click here to listen to 2FM Broadcaster Ciara King tell her story to Ryan Tubridy - a difficult story, beautifully told and one which highlights why she is a strong advocate and ambassador for Children in Hospital. We are so grateful that Ciara has allowed her personal story to encourage fund raising for our work.



2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. Unfortunately, our fundraising has decreased significantly due to the cancellation of fundraising events. The pandemic still poses a massive challenge to our services for vulnerable patients and their families - this is our last important fundraising drive for the year and if you can share, like, endorse, any of these initiatives among

Thank you to all of you for your support and being the wonderful ambassadors that you are for Children in Hospital..