

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2011



The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 100 member organisations working to secure the rights of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It aims to improve the lives of all children under 18, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland's laws, policies and services.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Alliance was formally established in March 1995. Many of its member organisations are prominent in the children's sector – working directly with children on a daily basis across the country. The Alliance's policies, projects and activities are developed through ongoing collaboration and consultation with its member organisations.

## **VISION**

Ireland will be one of the best places in the world to be a child

## **MISSION**

To realise the rights of children in Ireland through securing the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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For any enquiries or to obtain additional copies of the Annual Review, please contact:

#### **Children's Rights Alliance**

4 Upper Mount Street

Dublin 2

**Tel:** +353.1.662 9400

**Fax:** +353.1.662 9355

**Email:** [info@childrensrights.ie](mailto:info@childrensrights.ie)

**Web:** [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)



[www.facebook.com/childrensrightsalliance](http://www.facebook.com/childrensrightsalliance)



[www.twitter.com/ChildRightsIRL](http://www.twitter.com/ChildRightsIRL)

The Children's Rights Alliance is jointly funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the One Foundation.

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION: 2012-2016</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>AIM 1: SHARED VISION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>AIM 2: SECURING CHANGE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>AIM 3: IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>AIM 4: INTERNAL CAPACITY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>LIST OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>19</b>

## FOREWORD

2011 was another important year for the Children's Rights Alliance, with much having been achieved towards delivering the Alliance's vision to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child.

The Alliance played a crucial role in securing a number of key children's rights commitments within the current Programme for Government including the appointment of a Minister for Children and Youth affairs with a full seat at Cabinet and the establishment of a new Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Alliance also played a pivotal role in lobbying the Government on its response to the Ryan Report (which catalogued decades of abuse in Ireland's industrial schools), and was appointed as the NGO representative to the Oversight Group of the Ryan Report Implementation Plan. The most significant achievement of 2011 was securing a commitment by Government to hold a constitutional referendum on children's rights, which is due to be held before the end of 2012.

These successes have built on the achievements of previous years which include the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, the development of the first National Children's Strategy; and a commitment by successive governments to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Since its founding in 1995 the Alliance has grown from strength to strength and is now recognised as the key Irish children's rights advocacy organisation.

The achievements of the Alliance in 2011 are due to the tremendous work of its committed staff led by its Chief Executive Tanya Ward, its dedicated volunteer Board, its funders, particularly The Atlantic Philanthropies, the One Foundation and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and most importantly the Alliance members of whom there are now over 100.

Sadly, in 2011, we lost a true children's champion in Brian Lenihan TD, the former Minister for Finance who was Minister for Children from 2002 to 2007. He was the first Minister for Children to secure a seat at Cabinet, and it was his passion for children's rights constitutional reform that initiated Government action in this area.

I am proud of the work undertaken by the Alliance not only in 2011 but since its founding. I believe that much work remains to be done over the coming years to ensure Ireland becomes one of the best places in the world to be a child. I believe that with the continued commitment of the Alliance and its member organisations this vision can be achieved.

**Paul Gilligan**  
Chair



## INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Review of the Children's Rights Alliance, which provides an overview of the organisation's work in 2011. It should be noted that much of this work was undertaken during the tenure of the former Chief Executive, Senator Jillian van Turnhout. I applaud her for her many achievements. I also want to thank the team, who worked solidly throughout the year, in ensuring that we have an Alliance that makes a real contribution to civil society and to Ireland itself.



We now have a new Strategic Plan. To ensure its successful implementation, we are deepening and broadening our public affairs, legal and policy capacity. With our core funding coming to an end in the very near future, it is crucial that we raise our profile and develop new avenues of funding. 2012 marks the start of this new direction and we will be working hard to move beyond our public affairs work and to raise our profile among the public.

In 2011, there were many successes. The new Government brought in a series of new developments for children, including a Minister for Children and Youth Affairs with full Cabinet status and a new Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Alliance was instrumental in bringing about these changes. Most importantly, there was a real commitment within the new Programme for Government to hold a referendum on children's rights in 2012, based on a comprehensive wording. At the time of writing, this is likely to come to fruition.

It is also worth noting that the Alliance was the only organisation – both statutory and non-statutory – to conduct an evaluation of the first National Children's Strategy. This provided valuable lessons for the development of the second National Children's Strategy. Also worth noting was the appointment of the Alliance as the sole NGO representative on the Oversight Group of the Ryan Report Implementation Plan - this has proved crucial in securing steady progress in overhauling our child protection system.

Looking to 2012, I believe this will be a historic year for the Alliance. Obviously, the commitment to put Children First Guidance on a statutory footing and developing a new Child and Family Support Agency will do much to safeguard children. The proposed referendum is likely to be held in October, and the Alliance will gear itself up to secure a positive outcome. I would ask again that our member organisations and key stakeholders join us in our campaign to finally make children visible in the Constitution.

Real change for all children in Ireland is now within our grasp.

**Tanya Ward**  
Chief Executive

# NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2012-2016

The Children's Rights Alliance works to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. The new Strategic Plan maps out the Alliance's new direction up until 2016; it has four key aims and builds on the Alliance's last plan.

**AIM 1:  
Bring About a Shared Vision That Will  
Realise and Defend Children's Rights**

**AIM 2:  
Monitor and Identify Gaps in the  
Protection of Children's Rights and  
Improve the Effective Implementation  
of Law/Government Policies**

**AIM 3:  
Secure Legislative and Policy Changes  
to Give Meaningful Effect to the UN  
Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**AIM 4:  
Ensure the Alliance has the Internal  
Capacity to Fulfil its Strategic Aims**

The new Strategic Plan is available on our web site, but it is worth noting that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC) remains integral to our work, and drives our agenda. The UNCRC recognises that a child is not property or a possession, but instead an individual with his/her own special rights. These rights take account of the fact that children are dependent on adults for their care and, to all intents and purposes, powerless. Ensuring its full implementation will embed children's rights in Ireland's political and legal culture.

A departure from the last Strategic Plan is the need to engage more with the public. The Alliance will do this through broadening its media relations. With a changing funding landscape, the Alliance will work to make the organisation sustainable. The Alliance will also focus on the membership by ensuring that members are critically engaged in the Alliance's activities and by responding to their needs.

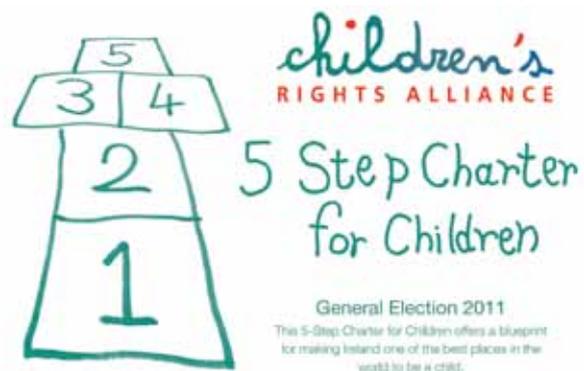
# AIM 1: BRING ABOUT A SHARED VISION THAT WILL REALISE AND PROTECT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN IRELAND

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Working with its membership, the Children's Rights Alliance is one of the leading organisations in Ireland campaigning for constitutional reform since the 1990s. A referendum on children's rights is critical to make children visible in the Constitution and to ensure that judicial decisions result in better outcomes for children.

In 2011, the Alliance set out to keep constitutional reform high on the political agenda, to build the case for change among key stakeholders and to raise awareness of the issue at local level. The General Election was used as an opportunity to lobby each political party; the Alliance was delighted that each key manifesto had a commitment to hold a referendum on children's rights. Many of the commitments contained in *Towards Recovery: Programme for a National Government 2011 – 2016*, agreed by Fine Gael and the Labour Party on 6 March 2011, reflected those advanced by the Alliance in its advocacy activities before and after the General Election.

Most importantly, the new Programme for Government included a quality commitment categorically stating that the Government would hold a children's rights referendum, based on the wording of the constitutional amendment developed by the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children, published in February 2010.



### Our calls

The Children's Rights Alliance calls on all political parties, candidates and voters to believe and invest in children, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The next Government of Ireland must be a champion for children and:

- 1 Make children's rights real: hold a constitutional referendum on children's rights within one year of taking office
- 2 Safeguard childhood: ensure that all children enjoy a childhood free from abuse, neglect and degrading treatment
- 3 Give children an equal chance: ensure that children in poor families are protected from budget cuts
- 4 Invest in the future: break the link between poverty and educational failure
- 5 Prioritise children's wellbeing: guarantee that all children can access timely health and therapeutic services



Constitutional reform was included in the 5 Step Charter for Children which was the Alliance's lobbying tool for General Election 2011



Speaking at the Alliance's AGM on 31 May, the new Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, called on members to work together to ensure the successful passage of a children's rights referendum



*In July, the Alliance held a well-attended Members' Roundtable on the issue in Dublin and introduced Campaign for Children to the membership*



*Keelin Shanley, of RTE's The Eleventh Hour, was a guest speaker on our Electoral Podcast, to discuss the emerging themes and key issues surrounding the Election*

Addressing the Merriman Summer School in Co. Clare on the topic of constitutional reform for children in August 2012, Maria Corbett, the Alliance's Legal and Policy Director's position was endorsed by the then Labour presidential candidate Michael D Higgins. He said, 'Such an amendment would certainly be a powerful legal statement on Ireland's values as a society'.

A major success in 2012 for children's rights was the establishment of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and a Minister for Children and Youth Affairs – now with a full seat at Cabinet. The Alliance directly lobbied for this.



*Maria Corbett, Legal and Policy, Director speaking to RTE News*

### **THE ALLIANCE CALLED ON THE MINISTER TO DELIVER SIX KEY ACTIONS IN HER FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE:**

1. Ensure the holding of a referendum to strengthen children's rights in the Constitution.
2. Develop and publish a new National Children's Strategy to be operational in January 2012.
3. Establish a new Child and Family Support Agency to reform child and family support services.
4. Deliver a programme of legislative and other reforms to meet commitments under the Ryan Report Implementation Plan.
5. Submit the State Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (due in April 2009).
6. End the inappropriate practice of detaining children in St Patrick's Institution, an adult prison.

# AIM 2: SECURE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CHANGES TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING

The Alliance strategically uses international human rights mechanisms to give concrete meaning to children's rights and hold government to account.

In 2011, the Alliance supported its member organisations, the Irish Council of Civil Liberties (ICCL) and the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), in developing a Shadow Report to the UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT). The Committee issued its Concluding Observations in June 2011 and made important recommendations that were of strategic importance to the Alliance, which included, ending the detention of children in St. Patrick's Institution and introducing a prohibition of all corporal punishment of children.

Ireland was examined for the first time under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in October 2011. The UPR is a new mechanism whereby every UN Member is reviewed by its peers through a political process on its human rights performance. The Alliance participated in the UPR Cross Sectoral Steering Group, convened by ICCL ahead of Ireland's State Hearing in October. The Alliance also engaged in substantive lobbying and wrote to the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD, urging the Government to commit to hold a children's rights referendum, ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, source appropriate detention facilities for all children under 18 years and place the Children First Guidance on a statutory footing within 12 months.

The UPR was a great success, with three countries calling on Ireland to hold a constitutional referendum on children's rights. Other countries recommended that Ireland ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; extend the remit of the Ombudsman for Children to include children in detention and asylum-seeking children; consider prohibiting corporal punishment; and eliminate religious discrimination in education.



*Ireland at the UPR, 6 October 2011*

In June, the Alliance was one of a small number of NGOs invited to meet with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, to update him on the current situation in Ireland relating to human rights.



## A NEW NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STRATEGY

*The National Children's Strategy: Our Children, Their Lives 2000-2010* was an innovative step in Irish policy making, being Ireland's first ever national children's strategy and one of the first globally. In February 2011, the Alliance published *Ten Years On: Did the National Children's Strategy Deliver on its Promises?* – the only evaluation undertaken by either a statutory or non-statutory body. The publication was widely disseminated and succeeded in laying the groundwork for the development of Ireland's next Children's Strategy. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is currently convening the National Children's Advisory Council to advise the Minister on the development of the Strategy on which the Alliance plays a pivotal role, together with its members.

## BUDGET 2012

In 2011, the Alliance geared up its 'Smart Budgeting' work programme advocating for prevention and early intervention to become the norm in policy and budgetary decision making. Providing evidence based solutions to Government, it engaged with key organisations working in this area, including the Centre for Effective Services and the Prevention and Early Intervention Network.

The Alliance succeeded in providing member organisations with analytical material from Budget 2012. It published a Budget Factsheet advising members on how to influence the budget making process by mapping out significant diary dates and providing tools for influencing the Budget. It also published its Comprehensive Budget Analysis which is invaluable to its members.



*The Alliance presented a pre-budget submission to the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD at the annual pre-budget forum in September 2012. The Alliance dissected Budget 2012 and provided members with insights on the 'fine print'.*

## IN THE RUN UP TO BUDGET 2012, THE ALLIANCE CALLED ON GOVERNMENT TO:

- **Be fair:** ensure that children's rights are protected in Budget 2012 and consider the impact of all budgetary decisions on children.
- **Be focused:** make ending child poverty a key goal in Budget 2012, in the short and longer term measures it introduces.
- **Be flexible:** build flexibility into the social welfare system so that it can support families to cope with their changing financial circumstances.

## BUDGET 2012

### KEY NEGATIVES

- Child Benefit cut for families with three or more children
- Back to School Allowance cuts of €55 and €50
- Harsh changes to the One Parent Family payment
- School transport costs will double in just one year
- 20% cut to Department of Children and Youth Affairs' Policy and Legislation budget

### KEY POSITIVES

- Allocation of €3 million for the holding of a Referendum on Children's Rights in 2012
- Nearly €10 million earmarked for the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, work on Junior Cycle reform and phased rollout of broadband to second level schools
- Capital investment in school buildings
- Maintained core funding for the one year free pre-school available on a sessional basis to every child in the year prior to commencing primary school
- €35 million commitment to the development of Community Mental Health Teams, as outlined in A Vision for Change

# AIM 3: SECURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATING TO CHILDREN

## REPORT CARD 2011

Now in its third edition, the Children's Rights Alliance's Annual Report Card Series scrutinises the Government's own commitments to children in education, health, material wellbeing, safeguarding childhood and realising children's rights. In highlighting strengths and gaps in the implementation of Government commitments, the Alliance's Report Card offers evidence based solutions to make a real difference to children's lives.



The launch of Report Card 2011 attracted a great deal of media attention

The Alliance awarded the former Government a deeply disappointing overall 'D minus grade', reflecting its failure to live up to its promises to children for the third year running. Of the 30 commitments in *Report Card 2011*, eight made progress during 2010, 15 remained static or information was opaque, and backwards steps were taken on seven commitments.

## KEY REPORT CARD 2011 RESULTS

<b>OVERALL GRADE:</b>	<b>D-</b>
Alcohol:	F
Financial Support for Families:	F
Children First Guidelines:	F
Early Childhood Education and Care:	B
Social Work Provision:	B

## THE RYAN REPORT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Child protection was high on the agenda in 2011. The Alliance aimed to engage with statutory, non-statutory and media bodies to activate change for children's rights, by monitoring and advocating for the full implementation of the *Ryan Report Implementation Plan*. Published in May 2009, the *Ryan Report* collated, and presented for the whole world to read, a horrific litany of abuses on children, whereby children were placed in residential institutions. The Government issued the *Ryan Report Implementation Plan*, as a timetabled and serious response.

On 15 July 2011, the Government published the revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. Following extensive lobbying throughout the year, many of the Alliance's recommendations were reflected in the Guidance. In tandem, the Government started developing legislation to introduce a legal duty on those working with children to report child abuse. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, herself said that there would be no 'a-la-carte approach to Children First'.

The Alliance's integral role in this area of work can be exemplified by the Alliance's membership of the Oversight Group, thus representing the only independent voice on the Group. The Alliance had long called for the Group's membership to be broadened from solely statutory officials to include non-governmental or independent voices.

On 15 February, the European Commission published its first ever strategy on children: *An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child*, which will hopefully serve to boost the rights of children the length and breadth of Europe. The Alliance publicly welcomed the EU Agenda; many of its recommendations to the European Commission were included.



### HIQA (HEALTH INFORMATION QUALITY AUTHORITY) NATIONAL STANDARDS

The Alliance's Legal and Policy Director, Maria Corbett is a member of the HIQA Advisory Group on the development of a set of National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Alliance was asked to nominate members on to the Group also; EPIC (Empowering People in Care) and the Society of St Vincent de Paul took up the places.

### ACTIVATING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

In 2011, the Alliance sought to engage with statutory, non-statutory and media bodies to activate change for children's rights in a broad range of areas.

#### Child Trafficking

The Alliance continued its work as The Body Shop and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking International's (ECPAT) key partner in Ireland on their global campaign to 'Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People'. The aim of the global campaign was to raise funds for national services, mobilise the public and inspire those with decision making power to take action. A global petition was launched in 2011 and was the largest ever by The Body Shop, securing over 7 million signatures in 50 countries.

In Ireland, after two years of solid campaigning, the Irish petition was officially accepted by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, outside Leinster House in July 2011. Over 165,000 signatures were collected and in accepting the petition the Department of Children and Youth Affairs said that 'positive steps' would be taken to ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. States which ratify this Protocol will take steps to protect the rights and interests of child victims of trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography, child labour and especially the worst forms of child labour.



The Alliance and The Body Shop Ireland hand over the petition to Minister Fitzgerald in July

The Body Shop campaign raised over €53,000 for the Alliance, which was used to contract three support projects aimed at improving the lives of separated children and 'aged-out-minors'. Separated children are young people under the age of 18 years who are seeking protection without their families. 'Aged-out-minors' are separated children over the age of 18 years. These activities are:

### 1. Research on Safe Care for Child Trafficking

**Victims:** A report by the Child Migration and Social Policy Research Group (UCC) on how to deliver safe accommodation and adequate care to a child who has been identified as a victim or suspected victim of trafficking.

### 2. Pilot Independent Advocate Programme:

This programme is being carried out by the Irish Refugee Council (IRC) to run and evaluate an advocacy pilot scheme that centres on providing support to separated children to help them find their voice.

### 3. Educational and Social Supports:

Supports have been provided to the Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP) to provide vital educational and social supports to aged-out-minors.

### Children in Detention

In 2011, boys between the ages of 16- and 17-years continued to be imprisoned in St Patrick's Institution – an adult prison. Children on remand were also held with people serving sentences. This became the focus of a key Ombudsman for Children Office report, *Young People in St Patrick's Institution*, which was based on consultations with children and young people in 2011. The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) also published its fifth report on Ireland, and found that St Patrick's Institution did not provide a suitable environment for the detention of children.

The Government committed to ending the detention of children in St Patrick's in the Programme for Government and the Alliance, together with its members, took a very strong stance in monitoring the Government's initially slow progress in this area.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a grave and serious children's rights violation that is practiced in certain parts of the world. Due to the absence of legislation prohibiting the practice in Ireland, many vulnerable children are potential victims.

In 2011, the Alliance continued to work with other non-governmental organisations through a FGM National Steering Committee to campaign for the successful passing of the Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Bill 2011. Demonstrating how a collaborative approach between groups can result in real change, the legislation, subsequently passed in 2012, includes a comprehensive ban on FGM and will protect women and children from the practice in Ireland.



*Emma McKinley, the Children's Rights Policy Officer, represented the Alliance in the FGM campaign. She said: "This shows what is possible when NGOs work together – we are incredibly powerful".*



# AIM 4: ENSURE ROBUST INTERNAL CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN A PROFESSIONAL AND CREDIBLE ORGANISATION

This Strategic Aim is about the Alliance's procedures and practices, including the ways in which it attracts and maintains high-calibre staff to produce timely, solution-focused policy and advocacy. The Alliance sought in 2011 to consolidate its engagement with member organisations, develop its media profile and awareness among key stakeholders.



Ken Reid, the Information Officer, pulls together the Alliance's most viewed publication: the Oireachtas Monitor

In 2011, the Alliance refreshed its public affairs intelligence work, by improving the format of the Alliance Oireachtas Monitor, which provides a round-up of children's rights issues discussed in the Oireachtas, including debates, written and oral questions, and Committee sessions. In the membership survey, it was rated as the most useful publication developed by Alliance staff, as it provides added value to members on a weekly basis.

The web site was updated at the end of 2011 to incorporate a gallery of images, integrate its social media and highlight its work in the media. Web site traffic has gone up by 2,000 visitors since 2010 and it is used regularly by two thirds of its membership.

In 2011, the Alliance worked hard to develop its online media presence, developing its Twitter and Facebook presence, which has received positive feedback among members and key stakeholders. A new Children's Rights Observer paper – the first children's rights paper on the web – was also set up, attracting a number of international followers on Twitter.



The Alliance's new web site



The Alliance developed its social media presence in 2011

## LIST OF KEY ALLIANCE PUBLICATIONS IN 2011

<i>Report Card 2011</i> January 2011	<i>Ten Years On: Did the National Children's Strategy Deliver on its Promises?</i> February 2011	<i>Briefing Paper: Ireland and the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography</i> October 2011
<i>Report Card 2011 – Executive Summary</i> January 2011	<i>Programme for Government 2011-2016: What does it say about children?</i> March 2011	<i>Submission on the National Vetting Bureau Bill 2011</i> October 2011
<i>Response to the Department of Education and Skills consultation on Better Literacy and Numeracy for Children and Young People: A Draft National Plan to Improve Literacy and Numeracy in Schools 2011</i> January 2011	<i>Annual Review 2010</i> May 2011	<i>Submission to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Children's Commercial Communications Code</i> October 2011
<i>General Election 2011 Doorhanger Children's Rights Checklist</i> February 2011	<i>Forum on Patronage and Pluralism: Letter to Minister Quinn</i> June 2011	<i>Alliance Submission on the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure</i> December 2011
<i>5 Step Charter for Children - General Election 2011</i> February 2011	<i>Alliance Budget Factsheet for Member Organisations</i> June 2011	<i>Analysis of Budget 2012 and its Impact on Children</i> December 2011
<i>Children's views on engaging in European and international decision-making: Ireland Report</i> February 2011	<i>Pre-Budget Submission to the Department of Social Protection</i> September 2011	
	<i>Consultation on the draft Council of Europe Strategy</i> September 2011	

## MEMBERSHIP

A survey of the Alliance's member organisations was conducted between April to May 2011. The Alliance was rated very highly for professionalism, courtesy and efficiency; 79% considered the Alliance compared well or very well with other umbrella organisations. In several areas the positive ratings the Alliance received had significantly increased from a similar survey conducted in 2009. The Alliance's publications are sought after, and are believed to be professional, quality documents by its membership.

## BOARD MEMBERS

The Alliance benefits from a high-level, engaged and experienced Board which is committed to promoting the Children's Rights Alliance. At the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Children's Rights Alliance, held on 31 May in Dublin's European Parliament Information Office, Liam Herrick and Fr. Peter McVerry stood down from the Board. Pat Clarke, Chief Executive of Down Syndrome Ireland, was elected on to the Board for the first time.

The Alliance has an Audit Committee which closely monitors its finances. In 2011, the Alliance welcomed the appointment of Pat Clarke, to fill the vacancy left by Liam Herrick's retirement from the Board. He joins the Audit Committee Chair, Michael McLoughlin and Paula Doherty, the Committee's external member from Irlandia investments.

**THE FOLLOWING BOARD OF DIRECTORS WERE ELECTED (AND RE-ELECTED) IN 2011**

Chairperson	Paul Gilligan	
Vice-Chairperson	Margaret Burns	Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice
Treasurer	Michael McLoughlin	Youth Work Ireland
Director	Pat Clarke	Down Syndrome Ireland
Director	Carmel Corrigan	
Director	Fergus Finlay	Barnardos
Director	Áine Lynch	National Parents Council (Primary)
Director	Mary O'Connor	Children in Hospital Ireland
Director	Caroline O'Sullivan	ISPCC

There were seven meetings of the Board during 2011.

**STAFF MEMBERS**

In an exciting development, the Alliance's Chief Executive Jillian van Turnhout was nominated to the Seanad, by the Taoiseach as an Independent Member for her tireless work for children's rights. In December 2011, the Board provided Jillian with a leave of absence to dedicate herself to her Oireachtas activities, where she now leads the Independent Group of Senators. In 2011, Tanya Ward was recruited by the Board to replace Jillian and she formally started in January 2012.

In June, Louise Dromey was employed as the Alliance's Office Manager to provide maternity cover for Mairéad Somerville.



*Senator Jillian van Turnhout, the former Alliance Chief Executive, outside the Oireachtas with Senator Colm Burke*



*The Alliance Staff*

The Alliance was one of 310 organisations that participated in, and offered feedback to, the beta version of the [irishnonprofits.ie](http://irishnonprofits.ie) database. This is the first extensive database of Irish Charities, NGOs and philanthropies derived from regulatory sources (such as the Companies Registration Office), which will be rolled out to more than 8,000 Irish non-profit companies.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Over the summer Niamh Gallagher, the Alliance's Research and Policy Analyst, attended the London School of Economics course on The Political Economy of Public Policy. Emma McKinley, the Alliance's Children's Rights Policy Officer, gained valuable experience in her appointment as Expert to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on the Opinion on Preventive Measures Against Child Abuse.

## INTERNSHIPS

Many thanks to our Interns this year! The Alliance was fortunate to have Saoirse Molloy working as an intern in 2011, providing the organisation with sterling support in developing Report Card 2012, and other key publications. Through the University of Tulsa Summer Program, the Alliance also welcomed Monica Hanna, to assist in developing a briefing on the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

## INFORMATION SUPPORT

The Alliance continued to receive a high number of queries from the public dealing with 165 in 2011. Providing important referrals for vulnerable callers, queries are monitored by the Alliance to keep abreast of issues of public concern and to identify information needs for its knowledge bank, specifically the resources section of the web site and its library.



## NEW MEMBERS

The Alliance was delighted to welcome eight new members in 2011.

**Arc Adoption** provides intercountry adoption mediation services to Ireland, providing homes to between 30,000 and 40,000 children per annum. Operating under the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, Arc's mission is to enable the ethical adoption of assured eligible and available children, in need of a loving and secure home, into eligible and suitable adoptive families. [www.arcadoption.net](http://www.arcadoption.net)

The **Bessborough Care Centre** offers a caring environment for pregnant women and teenage girls experiencing crisis, unplanned pregnancy or early parenting difficulties. The Centre provides modern, caring shelter with assistance for single pregnant women and help for young teenage pregnancy. The centre also offers respite for young children, a crèche and outreach family support. [www.bessboroughcarecentre.ie](http://www.bessboroughcarecentre.ie)

The **Childhood Development Initiative** is an innovative, community-based response to a comprehensive consultation process undertaken in Tallaght West, jointly funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and The Atlantic Philanthropies. Working with a wide range of locally established service providers, the Initiative offers services to children and families that meet identified needs. [www.twcdi.ie](http://www.twcdi.ie)

**MyMind** is a community based provider of mental health services. Open since 2006, MyMind offers services to anyone with mental health difficulties from its two sites in Dublin and its unique online platform, ePsychologist. [www.mymind.org](http://www.mymind.org)

**Rape Crisis Network Ireland** is a specialist information and resource centre on rape and all forms of sexual violence, with a proven capacity in strategic leadership, including expert data collection and using their expertise to influence national policy and social change. The RCNI is the representative, umbrella body for its member centres nationally; RCNI member centres provide service to more child survivors of sexual violence than any other NGO. [www.rcni.ie](http://www.rcni.ie)

**Sevenoaks Community Childcare** aims to provide efficient quality services for children and their parents in the Ballyfermot area. Sevenoaks Early Education Centre provides early education to children aged from 2 years 9 months to five years of age. The centre links with social workers, public health nurses, speech therapists and schools in relation to children's developmental needs. [www.ballyfermot.ie](http://www.ballyfermot.ie)

**St Patrick's University Hospital** is Ireland's largest independent mental health service provider. The hospital is dedicated to providing the highest quality of mental health care and promoting mental health and advocating for the rights of those who suffer from mental illness. [www.stpatrickshosp.ie](http://www.stpatrickshosp.ie)

The **Unmarried and Separated Families of Ireland** promotes, protects and supports the role of the non-marital and separated parents in the family unit in Ireland. It protects the diversity of family life and promotes positive social policies. The organisation is involved in support groups, training and outside programmes and its aim is 'to heal the family with the children being protected throughout'. [www.uspi.ie](http://www.uspi.ie)

## FUNDING

In 2011, the Alliance continued to receive critical funding and support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, the ONE Foundation and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The Alliance is grateful for the funders' continued support.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2011		
	2011	2010
Income	721,644	751,339
Expenditure	741,949	623,355
Net (Outgoings)/ Incoming resources for year	(20,305)	127,984
Total funds carried forward at end of year	344,655	364,960

## LIST OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Alcohol Action Ireland  
Amnesty International Ireland  
Ana Liffey Drug Project  
Arc Adoption  
Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)  
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)  
ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd  
Barnardos  
Barretstown Camp  
BeLonG To Youth Services  
Bessborough Centre  
Border Counties Childcare Network  
Catholic Guides of Ireland  
Catholic Youth Care  
Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway  
Childminding Ireland  
Children in Hospital Ireland  
City of Dublin YMCA  
COPE Galway  
Crosscare Drug and Alcohol Programme  
Crosscare Teen Counselling  
DIT – School of Social Sciences & Legal Studies  
Doras Luimni  
Down Syndrome Ireland  
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre  
Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project  
Early Childhood Ireland  
Educate Together  
School of Education UCD  
Enable Ireland  
EPIC (formerly IAYPIC)  
Focus Ireland  
Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta  
Foróige  
GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network  
Headstrong - The National Centre for Youth Mental Health  
Home-Start National Office Ireland  
Inclusion Ireland  
Inspire Ireland  
International Adoption Association  
Irish Association of Social Care Workers (IASCW)  
Irish Association of Social Workers  
Irish Association of Suicidology  
Irish Autism Action  
Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)  
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)  
Irish Foster Care Association  
Irish Girl Guides  
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)  
Irish Penal Reform Trust  
Irish Refugee Council  
Irish Second Level Students' Union (ISSU)  
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children  
Irish Traveller Movement  
Irish Youth Foundation (IYF)  
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice  
Junglebox Childcare Centre F.D.Y.S.  
Kids' Own Publishing Partnership  
Kilbarrack Youth Project  
Lifestart National Office  
Marriage Equality – Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian People  
Mary Immaculate College  
Matt Talbot Community Trust  
Miss Carr's Children's Services  
Mothers' Union of Ireland  
Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project  
Mymind  
National Association for Parent Support  
National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)  
National Parents Council Post Primary  
National Parents Council Primary  
National Youth Council of Ireland  
One Family  
One in Four  
OPEN  
Parentline  
Pavee Point  
Peter McVerry Trust  
Psychological Society of Ireland  
Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)  
Saoirse Housing Association  
SAOL Beag Children's Centre  
Sevenoaks Early Education Centre  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Spunout.ie  
St. Nicholas Montessori College  
St. Nicholas Montessori Society  
St. Patrick's University Hospital  
Start Strong  
Step by Step Child & Family Project  
Sugradh  
The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children  
The CARI Foundation  
The Childhood Development Initiative  
The Integration Centre  
The Jack & Jill Children's Foundation  
The Unmarried and Separated Families of Ireland  
Treoir  
UNICEF Ireland  
Young Ballymun  
Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)  
Youth Aftercare Support Service (YASS)  
Youth Work Ireland

**Children's Rights Alliance**  
4 Upper Mount Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: +353.1.662 9400  
Fax: +353.1.662 9355  
Email: [info@childrensrights.ie](mailto:info@childrensrights.ie)  
Web: [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)

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**twitter**

[www.twitter.com/ChildRightsIRL](http://www.twitter.com/ChildRightsIRL)

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**RIGHTS ALLIANCE**