

Directors' Report and Financial Statements

for the year ending 31 December 2020



**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE**

Our vision is
that Ireland will
be one of the
best places in
the world to
be a child.

Membership List for Organisations/Bodies at the end of 2020

Founded in 1995, the Children's Rights Alliance unites over 100 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services.

- Ag Eisteacht
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Amnesty International Ireland
- An Cosán
- AslAm
- Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)
- ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd
- Atheist Ireland
- Barnardos
- Barretstown Camp
- Bedford Row Family Project
- BeLonG To Youth Services
- Care Leavers' Network
- Catholic Guides of Ireland
- Childrens Books Ireland
- Child Care Law Reporting Project
- Childhood Development Initiative
- Childminding Ireland
- Children in Hospital Ireland
- COPE Galway
- Cork Life Centre
- Crosscare
- CyberSafeKids
- Dalkey School Project National School
- Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
- Dental Health Foundation of Ireland
- Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Doras
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Educate Together
- EPIC
- Extern Ireland
- Focus Ireland
- Foróige
- Gaelscoileanna Teo
- Good Shepherd Cork
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors
- Irish Aftercare Network
- Irish Association for Infant Mental Health
- Irish Association of Social Workers
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
- Irish Foster Care Association
- Irish Girl Guides
- Irish Heart Foundation
- Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
- Irish Penal Reform Trust
- Irish Primary Principals Network
- 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)
- Jack & Jill Children's Foundation
- Jigsaw
- Katharine Howard Foundation
- Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
- Mecpaths
- Mental Health Reform
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- Mothers' Union
- My Project Minding You
- Museum of Childhood Project
- Music Generation
- National Childhood Network
- National Forum of Family Resource Centres
- National Parents Council Post Primary
- National Parents Council Primary
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Novas
- One Family
- One in Four
- Pavee Point
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Private Hospitals Association
- Psychological Society Ireland
- Rainbow Club Cork
- Rainbows Ireland
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Realt Beag/Ballyfermot Star
- Respond Housing
- SAFE Ireland
- Saoirse Housing Association
- SAOL Beag Children's Centre
- Scouting Ireland
- School of Education UCD
- Sexual Violence Centre Cork
- SIPTU
- Simon Communities of Ireland
- Social Care Ireland
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Sonas Domestic Violence Charity
- SPHE Network
- SpunOut.ie
- St. Nicholas Montessori College
- St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association
- St. Patrick's Mental Health Services
- Suas
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland
- The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children
- The Prevention and Early Intervention Network
- The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
- Traveller Visibility Group Ltd
- Treoir
- UNICEF Ireland
- Young Ballymun
- Young Knocknaheeny
- Young Social Innovators
- Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
- Youth Work Ireland

Contents

1 Directors and Other
Information Page 6

2 Chairperson's
Statement Page 8

3 Directors' Report Page 12

Objectives, Activities, Achievements and Performance Page 14

Priority Area 1: Child Poverty Page 22

Priority Area 2: Early Years Page 28

Priority Area 3: Access to Justice Page 31

Priority Area 4: Child Refugees Page 36

People, Systems, Structures and Resources Page 39

Organisational Development Page 39

Management and Staffing Page 39

Communications Page 40

Building a Strong Membership Page 42

Fundraising Page 45

Financial Review Page 46

Policy for Holding Reserves Page 49

Policy for Investments Page 50

Apportionment Page 50

Principal Risk and Uncertainties Page 50

Structure, Governance and Management Page 52

Governance Page 52

Directors Page 53

Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee Page 56

Remuneration Committee Page 57

Nominations Committee Page 57

Decision-Making Page 57

Reporting Page 58

Evaluation and Monitoring Page 58

Legal Compliance Page 58

Plans for the Future Page 59

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities Page 64

4 Independent
Auditors' Report
to the Members
of the Children's
Rights Alliance
Page 65

Statement of Financial Activities Page 68

Statement of Comprehensive Income Page 69

Balance Sheet Page 69

Cash Flow Statement Page 70

Accounting Policies Page 71

Notes to the Financial Statements Page 70-86

1

Directors and Other Information

▶ Chair	Tom Maher
▶ Treasurer	Colm Bryson
▶ Directors	Tom Maher
	Katie Mannion
	Ciairín de Buis
	June Tinsley
	Colm Bryson
	Orla Cunningham
	Catherine Joyce (appointed 29 July 2020)
	Michelle Griffin (appointed 29 July 2020)
	Nita Mishra (appointed 29 July 2020)
	Karen Hannify (appointed 25 February 2021)
	Mark O'Connor (resigned 29 July 2020)
	Maureen Dillon (resigned 29 July 2020)
▶ Charity Number	CHY 11541
▶ Company Number	316758
▶ Charity Registered Number	20031909
▶ Registered Office	7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7
▶ Company Secretary	Katie Mannion
▶ Auditors	Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited, Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm, Paramount Court, Corrig Road, Sandyford Business Park, D18 R9C7
▶ Bankers	Bank of Ireland, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
	Allied Irish Bank, 7/12 Dame Street, Dublin 2
▶ Solicitors	Shannon & O'Connor Solicitors, 26 Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin 2

2

Chairperson's Statement

**For the year ended
31 December 2020**



2020 was one of the most significant years in the Children's Rights Alliance history. Children and young people's rights were severely impacted leading to learning loss, poverty, exposure to violence and neglect in the home, anxiety and poor mental health.



Chair's Foreword

2020 was one of the most significant years in the Children's Rights Alliance history. The global Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on children and young people resulting in early years and school closures, job losses, falls in incomes, spikes in domestic violence incidents and a major reduction in child protection referrals. Children and young people's rights were severely impacted leading to learning loss, poverty, exposure to violence and neglect in the home, anxiety and poor mental health. The pandemic affected all children with certain groups being disproportionately impacted including children with disabilities, refugee/migrant children and Traveller/Roma children. At the same time, we witnessed an extraordinary effort to address the fallout nationally, regionally and locally. Children and young people played an incredible role during the lockdown by helping people in their local communities, by informing key decisions, by getting their voice heard on the national stage and working hard to help control the spread of Covid-19. Early years services, schools, youth services, family support services and community/voluntary services worked hard to reopen and to control the spread of Covid-19. Children's Rights Alliance members adapted and were at the forefront in responding to the needs of children and young people across the country. Without the work of members the impact of Covid-19 would have been far greater.

Engagement with members was the cornerstone of the Children's Rights Alliance's work in response to Covid-19. Members met regularly, identified issues for children/young people and came up with solutions that the Alliance was able to advocate for. A big focus was getting early years and schools reopened for children and young people as well as extending the school meals programme during the summer months. The Alliance also tackled head-on the ill-treatment that children were being subjected to because of the initial misunderstanding around whether children were vectors of the virus. The Alliance also created many opportunities for members to dialogue with key decision-makers across government on critical issues such as child protection and welfare. The Alliance for the first time in many years (with support from the Community Foundation of Ireland/Katharine Howard Foundation) raised €151,484 raised from the Bank of Ireland, Community Foundation of Ireland, Oakfield Trust, Shared Access and Infant Development Fund (KHF/CFI). These funds went into a direct food provision programme with the support of CYPSES involving 21 organisations and helping 4,200 children. An additional €13,016 from the Oakfield Trust went into a Tusla/IPAS initiative involving the distribution of baby mats to children in the refugee accommodation system (Direct Provision) benefiting 248 babies under the age of two years.

As well as dealing with Covid-19, it was business as usual for the Children's Rights Alliance. After the General Election in February 2021, the Alliance launched its Annual Report Card and ran campaigns to influence the Programme for Government that was negotiated by the Government parties. Those campaigns were successful in securing some key commitments on food poverty and online safety. However, the loss of a cabinet Minister for Children and Young People became a major priority in Quarter 2. Working closely with members, the Alliance launched #TheDCYAMustStay campaign and engaged in extensive lobbying, which gained great traction. The end result was that the DCYA was retained and with the inclusion of 'Equality' and 'Integration' (including Direct Provision) from the Department of Justice and 'Disability' from the Department of Health.

The Children's Rights Alliance started its work preparing for Ireland's fourth examination on its children's rights record in 2022 by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Alliance Members were briefed on the new reporting procedure that Ireland has to follow, and after a consultation, the Alliance submitted a first document on behalf of civil society to the UN Committee. In turn the UN Committee issued

its first set of questions to the Irish Government to answer. This mechanism offers a unique way to get issues addressed that are falling off the table at home. The Alliance will prepare a major report for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2021 and will attend a special session with the UN Committee in 2022. I am hopeful that the Children's Rights Alliance and its members will be able to use this opportunity to address serious children's rights issues for children and young people going forward.

In terms of my hopes and aims for the future, a considerable amount of work has gone into preparing for compliance with the Charities Governance Code and this year I want to prioritise reviewing the organisation's strategic direction and the adoption of a new Strategic Plan that will respond to Covid-19 as well as the uncertain financial circumstances ahead of the Alliance. The Alliance postponed the development of its own quality management system last year to focus on Covid issues and I want that work to be finalized in the coming year.

On behalf of the Board and staff of the Alliance, I wish to say thank you to the Children's Rights Alliance members for their involvement and ongoing support to the organisation. I also wish to thank the funders for their continued support of the Children's Rights Alliance. Without their interest, belief and commitment to the Children's Rights Alliance, the organisation would simply be unable to deliver for children and young people. Finally, I want to thank my Board colleagues for their hard work throughout the year and their support of the Alliance. I also wish to acknowledge the Chief Executive and the Alliance staff for their continued dedication, energy and drive in delivering the Alliance's mission. It is amazing what a small group of dedicated people can achieve to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child.

Tom Maher
Chairperson



3

Directors' Report

**For the year ended
31 December 2020**

The Directors present their annual report and audited financial statements of the Children's Rights Alliance "the company" or "the charity" for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The charity is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. Although not obliged to comply with the Charities SORP, the charity has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these accounts. The main activities of the charity are charitable.

The content of the Directors' Report is set out in the following headings:

- **Objectives/activities, achievements and performance**
- **Financial review**
- **Structure, governance and management**
- **Reference and administrative details**
- **Exemptions from disclosures**
- **Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others**

► Objectives, Activities, Achievements and Performance

Governing Document

The Children's Rights Alliance is a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in the Republic of Ireland under the Companies Act 2014. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of the members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding one Euro.

The company was set up under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by a Constitution and is managed by a Board of Directors. The objectives for which the Children's Rights Alliance are as follows:



To act as a charity for the benefit of children in Ireland regardless of race, religious belief, gender, family status, sexual orientation, disability, social and economic status, membership of the Traveller Community.



To promote awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Ireland.



To disseminate information and views on the implications of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



To provide and assist in the provision of public education on matters relating to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



To support and enhance the teaching of a children's rights perspective to all relevant professionals and in all relevant subject areas.



To promote the relief of poverty among children in Ireland and to raise funds and to help raise funds for any such relief or for charitable purpose.



To advance the education (including academic, social and physical training) of children within Ireland.



To advance the study of, promote research in, and organise study conferences, courses and seminars relating to, children and their rights within Ireland and throughout the world.

The Children's Rights Alliance is a registered charity (CHY 11541) and in 2020 complied with its obligations to submit annual returns on its core activities to the Charities Regulator.

Mission

The Mission of the Children's Rights Alliance is to realise the rights of children in Ireland through securing the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Children's Rights Alliance will have succeeded in its Mission, when there is: An Ireland that has given full effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which will mean that children's rights are:

**Integrated
into our
mindsets**

**Protected
by our
laws**

**Reflected
in our
policies**

**Evidenced
in wider
society**

Values

A core set of values guides all aspects of the Children's Rights Alliance work which should:

Reflect concern for the rights and needs of all children, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Facilitate the active participation of member organisations in the development and implementation of its objectives and policies.

Consult with children and young people when appropriate.

Foster positive working relationships with other organisations, both statutory and non-statutory, in pursuance of its aims and objectives.

Foster positive working relationships with the media.

Reflect an ongoing strategic and cost-effective approach.

Ensure openness and transparency.

Incorporate regular monitoring and evaluation of its work.

Ensure dynamic and flexible responses to changes in the environment regarding children's rights.

Priority Issues for 2017-2021

We identified four priority issues for the lifetime of the plan which were selected reflecting the interests of our members, gaps in the protection of children's rights, current opportunities for change, financial constraints and where the value and expertise of the Children's Rights Alliance is needed. We then embedded these within our six strategic objectives. The four priority issues include:

1

Child poverty rates are a significant socio-economic rights issue for children. The rates of consistent child poverty doubled from 6% in 2008 to 11.5% in 2015. A strong, united voice across society is needed for concerted action and radical rethinking of how we address child poverty which makes this a priority for this plan. This is core work for the Alliance and child poverty can be addressed across the strategic objectives for this period. It will be addressed specifically through strategic Objective 2, ensuring the Government implement a 'whole of government approach' with concrete actions and plans to reduce the numbers of children living in consistent poverty.

2

Early Years reform is a priority for this plan because the timing is right to put a push on policy development and investment in the early years. The driver from a children's rights perspective is to ensure that law reform and policy is not solely motivated by labour activation measures but that it is about the best interests of the child. It also provides leverage for the development of universal services, early intervention and prevention, re-orientating national budgeting approaches, investing in services and educational reform in order to achieve better outcomes for children (see Objective 3).

3

Access to justice for children and young people is essential for the protection and promotion of children's rights. With the securing of the children's rights referendum, the reform of the Guardian ad Litem system and the recognition of the need for child friendly courts, now is the time to focus a concentrated effort on this critical area for realising rights. This work will be progressed through both the core areas of the organisation's work – monitoring and influencing policy and legislation and specifically through a body of funded work under strategic Objective 4.

4

The rights of **refugee children** to protection, survival and development are seriously at risk in Europe and in Ireland through the direct provision system. As a very vulnerable group, with no political weight, refugee children need a spotlight to be placed on their experiences and lives and pressure to be built within Government and in the Oireachtas to address the inhumane direct provision system and provide a reception approach that respects their rights. This work will be progressed under strategic Objective 5, placing a spotlight on grave violations of children's rights which is central to the mission of the Children's Rights Alliance. Other grave violations, once identified, will be progressed under this strategic objective, organisational capacity allowing.

Priority Objectives for 2017-2021

The six strategic objectives set out below have been developed with the aim of progressing the realisation of children's rights and ensuring a measurable improvement in the State's response to each of the Alliance's priority issues.

1

To **secure** changes in law to give meaningful effect to children's rights.

2

To **shape** national policy to give meaningful effect to children's rights and drive momentum across the State to meet its obligations to children and young people.

3

To **drive** home the need to invest in children early, and **build** political support for greater access to quality services to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled.

4

To **promote** access to child-friendly justice in civil, criminal and administrative proceedings.

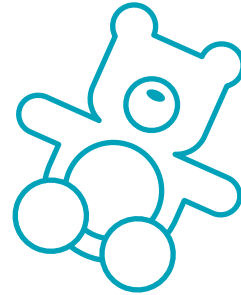
5

To put a **spotlight** on serious children's rights violations, in particular the rights of children seeking international protection and in Direct Provision.

6

To continue to **build** a strong membership and ensure that the Children's Rights Alliance has the people, systems, structures, procedures and resources in place to deliver on our strategic objectives.

These should set us on a path towards the achievement of our +10 years long-term outcomes, which are ensuring that:

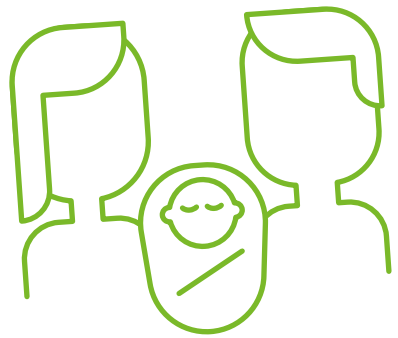


We have a legislative and policy framework that respects and protects the rights of children and young people.

Children and young people know and can access their rights.

The voice of the child informs policy legislation and practice.

The State progressively realises socio-economic rights and invests in high quality services for children and young people, emphasising early intervention and prevention.



Achieving our long-term outcomes would mean that:

All children and young people enjoy their rights on an equal basis and without discrimination including those who are vulnerable due to family background, age, race, disability or any other reason (Articles 2, 23, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

All children and young people enjoy the best possible health and are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and ill-treatment (Articles 19, 24, 34, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

All children and young people can access high-quality education that enables them to develop their personality, talents and abilities to the fullest extent possible (Articles 28, 29, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

All children enjoy an adequate standard of living (Article 27, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

All children and young people can access remedies when their rights are violated (Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

All children and young people in conflict with the law are treated with dignity and their rights are respected (Article 40, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

► Activities, Achievements, Performance

Priority Area 1: Child Poverty

Ireland's child poverty rates are mainly due to unemployment caused by the recession, the nature of precarious work and the high cost of rent and childcare. Historically, the Government used income supplements, including Child Benefit, to address child poverty. However, countries that use a combination of income supplements and investments in services are more likely to have lower child poverty rates. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014-2020) includes a target to reduce the numbers of children living in consistent poverty by approximately 100,000 in 2020. The Alliance's Strategic Plan commits to address Ireland's child poverty rates specifically by supporting the implementation of a 'whole of Government approach' with concrete actions and plans to reduce the numbers of children living in consistent poverty.

Over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan, the Children's Rights Alliance benefited from the cross-government structures provided under the [Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Policy Framework](#) to influence successive budgets by producing policy papers and engaging in meetings with officials. Wins include increases to welfare payments, investment in school meals and early years' services. In 2019, the Alliance had a unique opportunity to run a campaign – [No Child 2020](#) – alongside *The Irish Times*. Under the No Child banner, *The Irish Times* provided a sustained journalistic focus on child poverty delivering over 100 pieces of content and created a No Child platform that attracted over 100,000 hits on launch day. The Alliance ran a public affairs campaign that helped pave the way for critical increases in Budget 2020. For example, a pilot scheme providing free hot meals in 36 primary schools in the 2019/2020 academic year and to extending the scheme to another 35,000 children from September 2020; €4 million towards hot school meals for an additional 35,000 children; a hot meals pilot scheme in early years; €1 million free school-books pilot; increases in welfare payments and childcare hours for families. In 2020, the Alliance focused on the next Programme for Government and Budget 2021 to continue to address child poverty.

Kitty Holland's excellent piece from 2019 that explains what child poverty means in Ireland.



► [Read: What is Child Poverty and why we must try solve it?](#)
Kitty Holland, *The Irish Times*

Annual Milestone:
 The next Programme for Government includes key commitments (child poverty, hot meals, free childcare, free transport for under 18 year olds, on the professionalisation of the early years' workforce)

The General Election took place on 8 February 2020. In election week, the Children's Rights Alliance, working with the Ark, Barnardos, the ISPCC and Young Social Innovators, ran a children's hustings with the goal of raising the profile of children and young people's issues just before the final vote. Politicians from Fianna Fáil (Deirdre O'Donovan), Fine Gael (Deirdre Duffy), the Green Party (Patrick Costello), the Labour Party (Ivana Bacik), People Before Profit (Richard Boyd Barrett) and the Social Democrats (Tara Deacy) had to respond to questions from children and young people from across the country. The event was covered in the national media and it trended throughout the day.

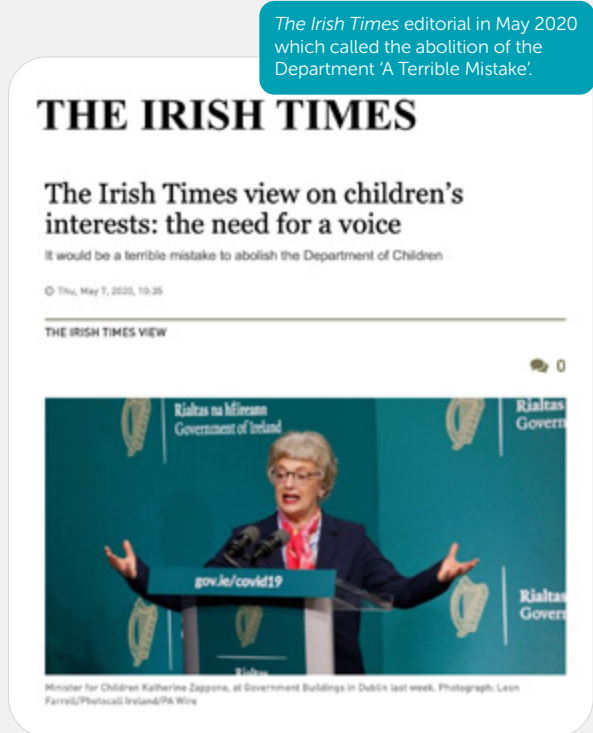
After the election, the Children's Rights Alliance's campaign, **Every Child, Every Chance**, focused on the political parties and their negotiators who spent over four months agreeing a Programme for Government. The Alliance designed a campaign leaflet, sought the support of an external consultant for lobbying activities, ran a social media campaign and directly targeted the political parties by email and phone. During the political party negotiations, the Alliance became aware that the negotiating political parties had decided to merge the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) with another government department. The Alliance had called for the retention of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in its Every Child, Every Chance campaign to ensure that children had a voice at the Cabinet Table. Our main concern was that children and young people's issues would be overshadowed if it was merged with another lead department meaning that the Minister could not effectively deliver on the brief and symbolically losing a children's minister would send the wrong message to children and young people.

The Alliance issued press releases, a joint letter with 65 members, launched a social media campaign with the hashtag #TheDCYAMustStay and engaged in extensive lobbying meetings targeting Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and members of the Green Party. The Alliance also worked with well-known children's champions Judge Catherine McGuinness and Fergus Finlay and

secured high profile media outings. A signed letter with over 100 children's advocates was also sent to political party leaders. The issue got traction in the media as the Ombudsman for Children, Dr Niall Muldoon, noted his concern at abolishing the Department and questions were put to the Taoiseach Dr Leo Varadkar at Leaders' Questions in the Dáil. The outgoing Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, called for the retention of the Department and *The Irish Times* issued an editorial calling the abolition of the Department 'a terrible mistake'.



Dil Wickremasinghe speaking with participants at our children's hustings on 4 February 2020.

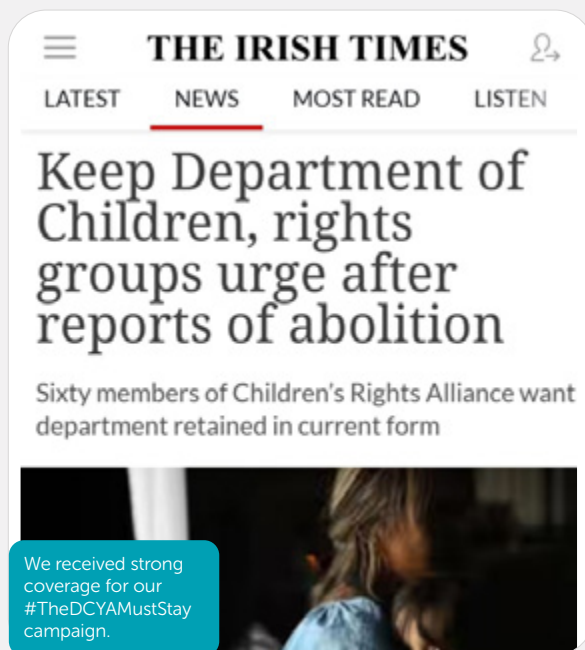


The Irish Times editorial in May 2020 which called the abolition of the Department 'A Terrible Mistake'.

A range of other influential stakeholders also supported the campaign to retain the Department including youth representatives. This helped build momentum in a short timeframe. For example, the National Youth Council of Ireland launched a campaign and its Youth Panel started a petition. SpunOut produced blog posts and a podcast by young people; Barnardos and ISPCCC issued a joint letter; the Irish Association of Social Workers started a campaign and the Chair of Tusla, Pat Rabbitte, called for the Department's retention in the media.

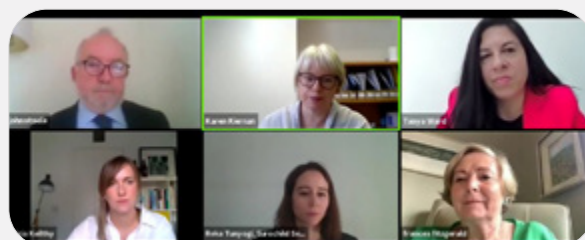
The final outcome was that the DCYA was retained and with the inclusion of 'Equality' and 'Integration' (including Direct Provision) from the Department of Justice and 'Disability' from the Department of Health. While there is some concern that the Department's brief is large, the expanded scope essentially provides the new Department with a strong human rights and equality mandate and the possibility of closer strategic working between these new areas.

The focus on retaining the DCYA did impact on the Alliance's general [Programme for Government](#) campaign work as it meant shifting the focus away from our specific campaign asks and using our political capital on retaining the Department. In any case, the Every Child, Every Chance campaign did have some key impacts. The Alliance called on the incoming Government to make ending child poverty the primary focus of the next National Children and Young People's Strategy, and while Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael's initial framework document for negotiations (15 Apr) committed to focusing efforts to reduce child poverty and disadvantage, child poverty was not specifically named in the Final Programme for Government. However, the Programme for Government did commit to implementing a new National Children's and Young People's Policy Framework and working across government to address food poverty in children and ensure that no child goes hungry. It also committed to commencing a free school book pilot in September 2020. The Alliance also called for additional funding for youth services and access for every child to prevention and early intervention supports and secured a Programme for Government commitment to invest in both youth services and family support services. By far the biggest focus on children in the Programme for Government is on early years services (this is dealt with under Priority Area 2 in this report).



Annual Milestone:
 The Alliance influences the scope and implementation of the EU Child Guarantee in Ireland

The **European Union Child Guarantee** aims to improve the lives of children experiencing poverty and disadvantage, by ensuring they have access to free healthcare, education, early childhood education and care, nutritious meals and decent housing. In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance consulted with members/stakeholders to feed into Irish country surveys at the request of the European Commission to shape the implementation of the Child Guarantee. With support and funding from Eurochild, the Children's Rights Alliance organised a webinar in November to promote awareness of the EU Child Guarantee and what role it could play in addressing child poverty in Ireland. High profile speakers included Professor Hugh Frazer, Professor Mary Daly and Frances Fitzgerald MEP.



We organised a conference on the European Child Guarantee in September with Eurochild. Chaired by Karen Kiernan, One Family, the panel included Frances Fitzgerald, MEP, John O'Toole, Department of Social Protection, Reka Tunyogi, Eurochild, Tanya Ward, Children's Rights Alliance and Dr. Tricia Keilthy, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Annual Milestone:
 The 'List of Issues' submitted to the Irish Government from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is shaped by the Children's Rights Alliance and its members

Ireland's progress under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) will be reviewed using the Simplified Reporting Procedure. The procedure includes a new first step where the Committee on the Rights of the Child issues a List of Issues to the State prior to the Government submitting their report. NGOs can send short submissions to the Committee on key issues and emerging trends to influence this list. The Alliance organised a members' briefing involving Lara Hynes, Principal Officer with the DCYA, in June 2020 to outline the new process under which Ireland's progress under the UNCRC will be reviewed. The Alliance prepared a List of Issues Submission on behalf of the membership in Q3 which focused on a number of key strategic issues and suggested questions for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to ask Government in areas such as homelessness, criminal age of responsibility and undocumented children. The Committee published their list of issues and all of those raised in the Alliance submission were included.

Annual Milestone:
 The Annual Budget includes measures to address child poverty (welfare payments, school meals, free access to childcare, public health nurses) and increased investment in the professionalisation of the early years' sector

The Budget process is one of the biggest events in the Alliance calendar. In 2020, Covid-19 and the unprecedented financial implications it brought, cast a shadow on the Budget and the prospects for securing our ambitious asks around child poverty and youth services. There was also a very pressing need to really push for investment in Tusla as they strained under Covid-19 demand (see the Children's Rights Alliance's 2021 Budget Analysis [here](#)). A digital campaign ran for the week and linked in member campaigns as they pertained to the four primary asks. The total views on our Budget animations was 3,522 on Twitter, with a total of 175,381 impressions (indicator for visibility) for the campaign. The Alliance met with the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD prior to Budget on the issues of Early Years and Tusla and took part in the annual meeting with the Community and Voluntary Pillar and the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Budget delivered an additional €61 million to Tusla to plug a major deficit in their funding. It also included increases in the Qualified Child Allowance welfare payment by €5 for children over 12 and €2 for children under 12. Our Budget 2021 campaign secured modest print coverage: *The Irish Times*, *Irish Examiner*, *Irish Sun*, *Irish Daily Mail*, *Extra.ie*. There is no doubt that the absence of a physical Budget Day impacted media coverage.


TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 24.8K impressions

It is BUDGET DAY

#Budget2021 comes at a key time for children and young people. Decisions made now will have a lasting impact on their future as learn to live alongside **#Covid19Ireland**

We will be live tweeting from 1pm, keeping a close eye on 4 priority areas for children
pic.twitter.com/EnXL3iyO9k



11 22



► **Case Study: Responding to Covid 19**

When school closures commenced in March 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance organised a series of member meetings to identify pressing issues for children and young people. On foot of those concerns, the Alliance wrote to the Taoiseach and the Ombudsman for Children.

In May, the Alliance wrote to Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, to outline concerns about the impact of the continued closures on children that was leading to learning loss and widespread disengagement from education. At this point the Chief Executive appeared on radio calling for a national effort to get schools open again.

Schools remained closed for the rest of the term with learning occurring online with very mixed results. Significantly when the new Government was formed in June 2020, it prioritised the reopening of schools over other sectors, and invested heavily in a schools Covid relief fund. Schools successfully reopened in September 2020.

In autumn 2020, the Alliance publicly advocated to keep schools open in line with public health advice. In November the Alliance met with members to discuss the challenges presented in keeping schools open safely during the period of Covid-19 restrictions under Level 5. The most significant issue raised was the fact that Special Needs Assistants, for example, were being used to help implement Covid-19 rules in schools, and not support students to access the curriculum.

► **Special Member Covid Events and Policy Papers**

March 2020: Joint submission to Dr Tony Holohan on lone parent families accessing supermarkets

March 2020: Alliance letter to Taoiseach outlining key issues for children

24 April 2020: Briefing on child protection/welfare issues with Tusla CEO, Bernard Glouster, and Michele Clarke, Principal Social Worker, the then Department of Children and Youth Affairs

1 May 2020: Briefing on education welfare issues with the Tusla CEO, Bernard Glouster, and Head of the Tusla Education Support Service, Noel Kelly

May 2020: Alliance letter to NPHET

June 2020: Submission to the Covid-19 Committee on Early Education and Education

June 2020: Submission to the Covid-19 Committee on the Impact of Covid-19 on Education

29 June 2020: Children's rights in the aftermath of Covid-19 webinar with Prof Aoife Nolan, Prof Sonia Livingstone, Prof Helen Salford

2 September 2020: Educational disadvantage and Covid-19 webinar with Prof Dymphna Devine, Dr Paul Downes and Miriam Hurley, Principal



In 2020, the Alliance joined an international campaign co-ordinated by Eurochild – First Years, First Priority. Launched formally in December 2020, it seeks to develop an evidence-base across Europe.

Priority Area 2: Early Years



The Children's Rights Alliance Strategic Plan aims: 'To drive home the need to invest in children early and build political support for greater access to quality services to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled'. The Plan seeks the following outcomes: (1) The Government develops an Early Years' Strategy that is rights-based and contains a significant commitment to increase investment in early years; (2) the Government promotes family friendly policies in workplaces including paid parental leave; (3) the Government develops a universal affordable childcare scheme and invests in raising the quality of early years' services and childminding, including the recognition of early years' professionals as educators; and (4) the principle of 'progressive universalism' underpins the development of a consortium of child-centred universal and targeted services and that an early intervention and prevention approach is adopted by Government aimed at improving child development and well-being.

In the earlier years of the Strategic Plan, the Alliance focused on shaping the Government's National Early Years' Strategy and on the development of a national affordable childcare scheme. *First Five*, the National Early Years' Strategy was published in 2018 and the National Childcare Scheme was launched in the same year. In subsequent years the Alliance advocated for increased funding for the National Childcare Scheme to ensure that low-income families achieved higher rates of subsidisation and more extensive support. In 2020, the Alliance responded to the basic needs of young children by running an emergency food provision scheme and advocating for the reopening of early years' services for vulnerable children. The Alliance also chose annual milestones centred on outstanding issues in early years, for example, the professionalisation of the early years' profession.

► Case Study: Responding to Covid 19

On 12 March 2020, the Government announced the immediate closure of all preschools and schools. Sustainability of the early years' sector was the most prominent issue because it is a market-led system and government introduced a Wage Subsidy Scheme to save jobs and provided core funding. The Alliance was immediately concerned about the impact of the closures on the most vulnerable children given the fundamental role early years' plays in their lives.

Persistent hunger in small children makes them irritable, feel unloved and effects their development and Alliance members were reporting that families were experiencing food poverty. To bridge the gap in early years' closures, the Alliance raised emergency funds and ran an emergency food project to feed young children with the support of the Children and Young People Services Committees (see key project facts below).

- 21 organisations supported to provide food packs and hot meals
- 4,200 children benefited (2,000 under 6 years)
- 1,200 families benefited
- Estimated 48,000 meals disseminated
- €151,484 raised from the Bank of Ireland, Community Foundation of Ireland, Oakfield Trust, Shared Access, Infant Development Fund (KHF/CFI)

Alongside delivering the food project, the Alliance advocated for early years' services to reopen for vulnerable children (the UK had adopted a similar policy over the same period). The Alliance wrote to the Taoiseach (March 2020) seeking the reopening of schools/early years for vulnerable children and called for the reopening of early years' services in media outings (April/May 2020). The Alliance also wrote to Dr Tony Holohan, the Chief Medical Officer, in May 2020 and directly lobbied the then Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone. The Government had originally planned to reopen early years' services for health workers on 29 June 2020 but our campaign helped ensure that early years' settings opened for all children on that day.

“

I cried on my knees when I saw the big bag of spuds, vegetables and meat.

Family Testimonial

I am a lone mother of 5 children... I can't tell you how much your help with food has meant to me. It was just fantastic, I see it as a blessing. Thank you.

Family Testimonial

”

Annual Milestone: Build agreement with key stakeholders on a pathway to professionalisation of the early years' sector

The Government is developing a Workforce Development Plan for the Early Learning and Care, School-age Childcare and Childminding Sector and this is one of the main vehicles for sectoral reform. In 2020, the Alliance was represented on the Stakeholder Group for this plan and presented to its Steering Group in March 2020 on the need for proper qualifications for childminders. It subsequently made a submission to the Government in response to a consultation call. At the same time the Alliance participated on a Professionalisation Sub-Group that has its mandate from the Early Years Forum, another Government mechanism.

One of the best ways to ensure that young children get access to quality childcare is to ensure that the workforce is well-qualified with good terms and conditions of work. The Alliance used its membership of these groups and its Early Years Advisory Group to promote the professionalisation of the sector. However, a critical challenge for the Alliance is that there is a multiplicity of actors promoting alternative proposals.

With the onset of Covid-19, certain groups were calling for the de-professionalisation of the sector in order to respond to workforce gaps. In particular, that unqualified staff would be allowed to do cover when a qualified staff member was out sick. The Alliance was deeply concerned at the prospect of Covid being used to rollback hard-fought wins that would negatively impact on children.

For example, the Government introduced a requirement to ensure that all staff have a Level 5 qualification (equivalent to the Leaving Certificate) after a 2013 Primetime Programme exposed serious harm being perpetrated against children. The Alliance wrote to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD in October 2020 and met with him to indicate the organisation would oppose any row back on staff qualifications. We also called on the Minister to provide greater balance on government early years' structures to ensure that children and families were better represented. The Minister subsequently established a new structure – the Early Learning and Childcare Stakeholder Forum – in December 2020 with a much

broader membership.

Despite significant investment in early childhood care and education and school age childcare through schemes, such as the National Childcare Scheme and the Pre-School Programme, Ireland spends the second lowest amount on early learning, for three to five-year-olds in the OECD, with 0.4 per cent of GDP compared to 1 per cent in Norway, Sweden and Iceland. Investing in a public childcare system and advocating for this systemic change would alter the landscape of ECEC in Ireland.

The Government set up an [Expert Funding Model Group](#) to examine the allocation of public funding to 'deliver services that align with national policy objectives, resourcing quality provision and requiring affordability for participation in the new model'. This initiative is one of the main vehicles for helping to direct investment in early years' services. In October 2020, the Alliance made two submissions to the Expert Group. The Alliance also prepared a submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on the Review of the Operating System for Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare.

In May 2020, the Alliance partnered with SIPTU, the National Women's Council of Ireland and Early Childhood Ireland to influence the Programme for Government negotiations. In particular, the aim was to call for increased investment in early years and for the continuation of the wage subsidy scheme for workers as the starting point for establishing a sustainable system. The new Programme for Government published in June commits to 'a robust model for high-quality subsidised childcare for children aged nine to 36 months' for children and families. After its publication, the Alliance organised a webinar on the Future of Early Years that attracted over 500+ participants involving the key stakeholders.

In 2020, the Alliance also joined an international campaign co-ordinated by Eurochild – First Years, First Priority – aimed at increasing investment in early years' services across Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, France, Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Serbia, Spain and Romania). This campaign was formally launched in December 2020 and will start with developing an evidence-base across Europe.



► **Case Study: Report Card**

The Annual Report Card tracks how the Government is delivering on its promises in the Programme for Government. **Report Card 2020** was launched on 3 March 2020 in the middle of Government formation talks and on the cusp of the Covid-19 pandemic. The then Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, issued a press release in response and the Report Card launch trended on Twitter.



Tanya Ward presenting at the launch of Report Card 2020.



Launch of Report Card 2020 chaired by Tom Maher, our Chair, Grainne McKenna, DCU, Caroline Fahey, Social Policy Analyst and Judge Catherine McGuinness.

**Priority Area 3:
Access to Justice**

Access to justice is essential for the protection and promotion of children's rights including through the Constitutional amendment on children (Article 42A). It is especially important for protection from discrimination, violence, abuse and exploitation. When faced with the justice system, children are thrown into an intimidating adult world which they cannot understand and are most vulnerable when they come in contact with it as a victim, witness or defendant or when judicial or administrative interventions are required for their custody or protection. The Children's Rights Alliance Strategic Plan sets out to "promote access to child-friendly justice in civil, criminal and administrative proceedings". The Strategic Plan aims to achieve the following outcomes: (1) Children, parents, caregivers and second-tier advice givers are informed about children's rights and entitlements and remedies available when they are violated; (2) children have a right to be heard and express views in civil, administrative and criminal proceedings either directly in their own right or indirectly through an appropriate representative; (3) professionals in the legal system having direct contact with children are trained in communicating with them at all ages and stages of development; and (4) children have access to free legal advice, and representation where necessary, either through statutory or NGO sources.

Access to justice has a strong focus in the Children's Rights Alliance's Strategic Plan. Over the years, the Alliance established a standalone helpline (01 9020494) and email help@childrensrighs.ie to provide legal information to a wide range of people who may need information and guidance. The Alliance commenced providing free legal advice clinics in 2018 by contracting services to an independent provider. In 2019, the Alliance also focused on the Government's Child Care Amendment Bill 2019 providing for the regulation of the *guardian-ad-litem* service, which will provide expert reports to judges when making decisions in the child protection/welfare system. The Alliance's advocacy in that year focused on addressing the potential narrowing of the guardian role. However, in 2020, the Alliance did not work on this as the 2019 Bill fell with the outgoing government. The new Bill will need to be reintroduced by the next Government..

Annual Milestone:
 500 children and families helped through our legal information Helpline in a timely fashion (10 days), 60 children and families helped with advocacy support and 40 children and families helped with the legal advice clinics

In 2020, the Helpline saw over 320 cases and had 490 contacts. This is a decrease of 12 per cent on the 2019 cases. The highest number of contacts we received in 2020 related to education (77 cases – 21 percent) followed by family law (66 cases – 18 percent), children’s rights (48 cases – 13 percent) and disability (22 cases – 6 percent). The Alliance fell short of reaching the 2020 milestone due to a range of factors including reduced capacity both in terms of staff on the phonenumber and to engage in sustained promotion of the Helpline throughout the year. The onset of the pandemic and the first lockdown saw an initial reduction in the number of cases presenting to the service, this coupled with a number of newly established helplines that were heavily promoted during this period also had an impact.

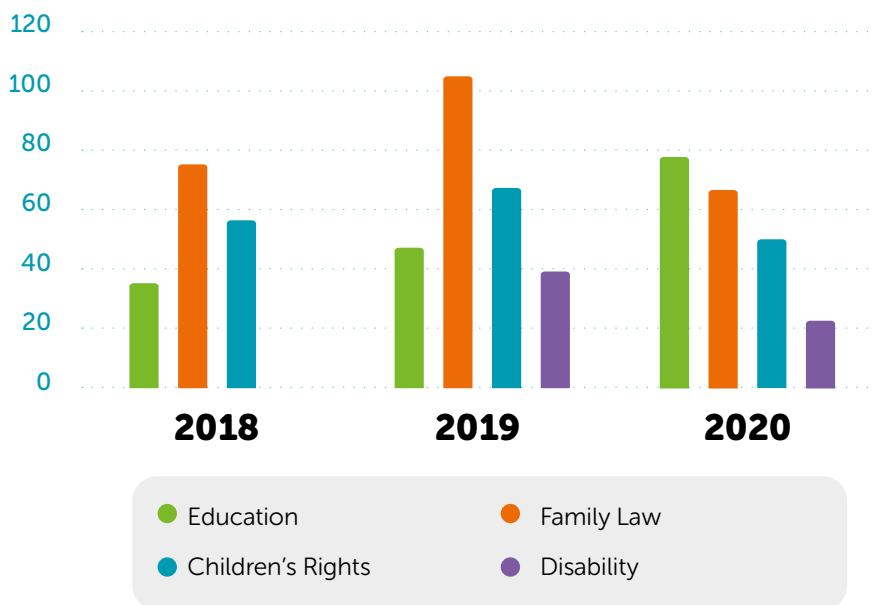
In January 2020 we engaged in a mid-project review. The Alliance identified that many children and families did not want legal advice and wanted advocacy

support. For example, help with writing a letter or making a phone call. To reach the milestone in the coming year we need to increase capacity on the Helpline to allow it to open for more hours and have dedicated communications time to engage in the necessary promotion.

In relation to education the majority of queries we received were about the impact of Covid-19 on children’s school lives (refer to Case Study Box Covid-19 on page 33).

Parents often contact us when they feel their child’s rights are being denied in the education system. When we look deeper at the cases coming through under Education, we see a large majority relate to disputes with schools, with parents and guardians seeking advice on how to engage with the school on matters of detention or expulsions. Often families need information on how to navigate the process and may not be aware of the statutory appeals’ mechanisms that they can avail of. Other common queries include questions on how to make a complaint so their child’s rights can be vindicated in situations where children’s access to bathrooms is being restricted by schools during certain times of the day, and where there have been difficulties in accessing the appropriate supports in school for children with disabilities, for example where a child has had their Special Needs Assistant’s (SNA) hours reduced or cannot access services such as speech and language therapy. One of the

Emerging Trends 2018-2020



most concerning issues emerging from calls to the Helpline is the use of reduced school days or reduced timetables. We have heard from families with children as young as six who have been placed on a reduced school day. This is one of the most serious human rights issues impacting on children in education. For most families who contacted us, the child had special educational needs and the school was not providing adequate support to help maintain the child in full-time education. In these cases, we were able to offer parents information on how to make a complaint and we also referred them to our legal advice clinics where they received advice from a solicitor.

A recurring query on the Helpline in 2020 was advice on how to engage with a school's Board of Management when it concerns an issue with the school's own policy. We have received calls asking for information and advice on how to raise concerns or dissatisfaction with the school policy on uniforms and on suspensions. With an increase of queries on Education, for the first time Family Law became the second most common issue on the Helpline. Family law callers would often be ineligible for civil legal aid and may have engaged a solicitor but could no longer afford to do so. As the first Lockdown commenced in March 2020, we saw an increase in the number of queries coming to the Helpline on the impact of lockdown on family law.

Two in three of our calls came from parents seeking information or advice for their child (67 per cent). Notably, for the third year in a row, the same issues are emerging as distinct trends: Family Law, Education, General Queries about Children's Rights, and Disability. Adults and carers other than parents, represented one in five callers to the Helpline in 2020. These were usually calls from a grandparent, sibling, neighbour or family friend and were across all the areas.

Eleven per cent of calls were referrals to our Helpline services from other NGOs and statutory bodies. These are often complex cases that require further legal assistance and advice and include complex and often intersectional issues such as housing and homelessness issues intertwined with other issues such as a disability. We have had a number of queries from other organisations regarding their obligations on issues such as data protection and consent forms. The level of complex cases being referred through other organisations highlights the need for services like our Helpline and Legal Advice Clinics that offer specialist information and advice across a breadth of issues.

In 2020, in 16 cases, children or young people contacted us directly. In 2020, most queries from

children were about education, with general queries about their rights, including questions about what legal age they can do certain things at, the second highest. Following on from our realization that many families were in need of advocacy support we had intended on developing an advocacy service for children and families in 2020. However, due to the commencement of lockdown we delayed this.

In 2020, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the public health restrictions we could not provide face-to-face legal advice appointments in the same way. Instead we provided legal advice on a case-by-case basis online with thanks to Gareth Noble of KOD Lyons. We provided legal appointments in 14 cases in 2020, down from 67 in 2019. This fall was due to a number of reasons. Firstly, there was a reluctance on the part of people contacting the Helpline to engage with legal advice, particularly due to the first lockdown as they felt it was not necessarily a priority and some people intended on waiting until services re-opened in person to access legal advice, thinking the lockdown would not last as long as it has. Secondly, without a regular scheduled clinic where people could be offered an immediate appointment with the date and time, there and then, people were less likely to take up the offer of the consultation appointment. We have also identified that many children and families did not want legal advice and wanted advocacy support. For example, help with writing a letter or making a phone call.

The main issues that parents were seeking legal advice on were for children with disabilities. These cases ranged from parents having difficulties accessing an appropriate school place for their child's needs to looking for advice on how to get SNA support in school for their child. The issue of reduced timetables continued to come through our legal advice clinics also as well as difficulties in accessing home tuition, assessment of need and residential placements.



Noeleen Healy, a newly-qualified barrister, worked as part of our legal and policy team.



► Case Study: Responding to Covid on the Helpline

Family Law and Covid-19

From March 2020, there was an increase in queries about access visits between separated parents and their children. Parents were confused about the potential impact of restrictions. In some cases, parents told us that their child's other parent would not take them on access visits, and in other cases, some parents wanted to continue to see their child were being denied access. As the lockdown continued, the Minister for Justice, the President of the District Court and the Government clarified that access visits were considered to be a valid reason for travelling beyond the restricted area. Other queries related to maintenance payments and whether they should continue and what should happen if a parent who was liable to pay maintenance had no or a reduced income. The Alliance provided parents information on their options to have maintenance orders enforced including agreement, mediation and making an application to the courts.

Accessing Shopping Centres

At the early stages of the pandemic, some shops refused to allow children to enter with or without their parents. The Alliance received calls from parents with children as young as five who were told they had to leave their children outside the shop. These measures had a disproportionate impact on people parenting alone and people whose partners were frontline workers.

The Children's Rights Alliance, along with Free Legal Advice Clinics (FLAC) Ireland, National Women's Council of Ireland, One Family, SPARK Ireland and Society of St Vincent de Paul, wrote an [open letter](#) on the issue which was also sent to Government. Subsequent Covid government briefings asked shops to adopt a common sense approach for families with children and to take the different circumstances into account when letting them into shops.

Facemasks in Schools

In September 2020, many helpline calls relating to wearing of masks in schools. Calls mainly related to young people in secondary schools who had medical reasons for not wearing masks, for example, asthma. Sometimes parents could not get letters of exemptions from doctors. Other times parents noted that schools would not accept the letters. This impacted children with Autism. In many cases families were told their child would not be allowed to access education if they did not wear a facemask. In these situations, we were able to give families information on what the public health advice was and how the family could make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children and to the Department of Education where a child was being denied an education.


Early Years

Parents called about being asked by their child's creche to continue to pay full fees, despite the fact that children were not attending creche. Parents were told that the creche would not keep the child's space open after the lockdown unless the parents paid the fees. We explained to parents that the agreement to provide early years' services is a private arrangement and parents are not obliged to pay but neither is the operator obliged to keep a child's space in the preschool.

Facemasks in Schools 2


Helena* contacted the helpline because the school was refusing her son John* access to education if he did not wear a facemask. She had a letter from John's doctor to explain that he had a medical reason for not wearing it. The school accepted this letter initially but then reversed their position, stating John had to wear a facemask. She tried to come to a compromise where her son would wear a facemask in the corridors but not for extended periods of time. She made a complaint to the principal and the Board of Management, without success.

We were able to give Helena information on how to make a complaint to the Department of Education and Skills and the Ombudsman for Children.

 **Annual Milestone:**
A digital safety Know Your Rights Guide developed for children/young people

In November 2020 we published the first spin-off of our Know Your Rights guide focusing on children's rights to online privacy and safety under EU law. The Guide aims to raise awareness among children, young people, parents, guardians and second-tier advice givers about the rights children and young people have when it comes to the online world. In developing the guide we received pro-bono research support from the Data Protection team in Arthur Cox Solicitors on the initial draft of the guide.

The initial launch post had 3,000 views alone and there were 300 downloads of the Guide in the first day. The total audience reach of the launch social media posts was a strong 55,582 on Twitter alone. The total impressions for the week on Twitter were 76,456. The subsequent promotion of the Digital Guide on Facebook reached 8,500 people. The CEO did an interview the next morning on RTE's Morning Ireland which helped boost engagement with the Guide even further, reaching an audience of 491,000 listeners.

 **Annual Milestone:**
15 lawyers upskilled on communicating and taking instructions from children and young people

During 2019 we worked with the Law Society of Ireland to develop a training course to upskill lawyers working with children to gain the practical skills to communicate effectively and take instructions from children and young people. The course commenced in September 2019 and was due to run until March 2020. The course provides hands on practical skills training in how to take instructions from children equipping participants with effective active listening and interviewing. There are 12 solicitors taking part in the training from general practice, juvenile justice, the legal aid Board and family law practices. This is less than our original target as we believe we set our annual target too high in the first year.

 **Annual Milestone:**
Know Your Rights is disseminated to all CICs and Tusla staff and relationship strengthened with both

As part of the dissemination of the new Know Your Rights Digital Guide, we aimed to deliver the Guide to as many community organisations and networks across the country. The Citizens Information Centres (CICs) operate in 215 locations around the country providing free information, advice and advocacy and were therefore a target audience for us in terms of promotion of the new Guide. We engaged the Citizens Information Board to send out information and a digital copy of the Guide to their CICs and the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) teams.

In 2020 we were funded by Tusla to deliver Know Your Rights workshops for their Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Programme staff in four regions around the country. The workshop is based on our Know Your Rights guide on children's rights. A special focus was placed on the right of the child to be heard and children's rights in education, family law and the rights of children with disabilities as this came up in the needs assessments conducted beforehand.

With the onset of public health restrictions, the roll out of the training was delayed to Q4 and moved to online sessions delivered over Zoom. Six three-hour workshops with over 100 participants in attendance were delivered. As part of the training programme with Tusla, they commissioned a print run of 1,000 copies of our Know Your Rights Guide to be disseminated to staff. While it was initially challenging to move to online learning, feedback was very positive and participants said it would be helpful in their day to day work in supporting and advocating for families. We have received a similar level of funding from Tusla to roll out more workshops in 2021.



► **Case Study: Reduced Hours**

Abigail* contacted us in relation to her son Sam* aged six who was put on a reduced day by his school. He was in senior infants. His reduced timetable meant that he was only in school for one hour a day.

When Abigail contacted the principal he said that he could not provide Cian with a Special Needs Assistant (SNA). She also got in touch with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) from the National Council for Special Education who confirmed that the school had been given extra resources to support her son.

We were able to provide her with steps she could take herself to try resolve the matter. As a first step, we gave her information on how to make a complaint to the Board of Management of the school and explained to her the rights her son had to education. We also gave her information on how to contact the Ombudsman for Children and explained that she had an option to make an appeal to the Department of Education.

We offered Abigail a legal advice appointment and she decided to wait and see if she could resolve the issue herself first.

**Priority Area 4:
Child Refugees**

The Children's Rights Alliance identified the treatment of child refugees and asylum seekers as its foremost initial spotlight issue for the current strategic plan. In particular the Alliance Strategic Plan 2017-2021 set out to ensure that: (1) reception conditions and accommodation for children, young people and their families seeking protection respects their rights; (2) increase welfare payments for children in the protection process to €29.80; (3) the international protection system adopts child friendly justice principles; (4) the Government prioritises children and public support for child refugees is increased; and (5) government services for incoming refugees are organised and delivered in a family-friendly way and that the needs of refugee children are addressed.

Over the course of the Strategic Plan, the Alliance has delivered on several goals, including securing increases in the weekly payment for children (the payment reached €29.80 in 2019) and advocating for the introduction of new national standards for reception accommodation that provide for own-door accommodation for families. The latter was particularly important to address the institutionalisation of children and families in certain congregated settings. The Government published child centred and family centred National Standards for reception accommodation in 2019.



The Alliance appeared in the media advocating for the rights of refugee children.

 **Annual Milestone:**
The new Government commits to investing in the implementation of new National Standards and making HIQA the inspection body for reception accommodation

 **Annual Milestone:**
Tusla commits to adopting a specific family support plan for addressing the needs of refugee families and Children and Young People's Service Committees (CYPSCs) adopt a plan to work with refugee families

The Children's Rights Alliance ran a [public affairs campaign](#) to influence the Programme for Government negotiations that took place between March and June 2020. In particular, the Alliance called on the political parties to:

- Transform the lives of children seeking international protection by providing own door accommodation and developing alternatives to Direct Provision.
- Make HIQA the inspection body for refugee accommodation to ensure it meets the new National Standards.

The asks were disseminated to all political parties and the Alliance engaged in direct meetings with negotiators.

The previous Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan TD, established the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including accommodation to persons in the International Protection Process (the Catherine Day Group). The Alliance was invited to present to this Group in April 2020 and highlighted the importance of implementing the National Standards and making HIQA the inspection body for Direct Provision. The Alliance was also invited to make a follow-up submission in summer 2020 specifically on child and family supports needed by families as part of an orientation process.

The Programme for Government was published in June 2020 and included the strongest commitments to date to end the Direct Provision system and replace it with a not-for-profit model. It also committed to publishing a White Paper by the end of 2020, informed by the Catherine Day Group setting out how to end Direct Provision. The Government published

the Catherine Day Report in October 2020 and the Alliance issued a press release welcoming its publication. It recommended a two-part reception process where protection applicants would be housed in short-term stay centres and relocated to living in the community after a three-month period. It also recommended that children in the system should receive the same welfare payments as children ordinarily resident in the country. These recommendations were picked up by the Day Report which importantly includes a recommendation that families be provided with social work support to help families prepare for life and to make referrals to follow-on services. The Day Report did not go into specific detail regarding community structures and how they might work with families living in the community.

In another major development, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD, confirmed in October 2020 that HIQA will be the inspection body for reception accommodation, and work is underway to determine how this will be rolled out. This was a core ask for the Alliance and is a very welcome development providing crucial accountability to ensure that children's rights are adhered in accommodation in line with the National Standards.

In November 2020, the Alliance convened a members' meeting to develop a submission to inform the White Paper on Ending Direct Provision and targeted key decision-makers in the newly configured Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Alliance focused on the provision of own-door accommodation for families, the implementation of national standards, implementing HIQA as the inspection body and specifically focused on the role of Tusla and Children and Young People's Service Committees in the refugee reception system. The Alliance also submitted a follow-up paper in December 2020 with key recommendations for welfare payments for children and young people in the system.

The White Paper on Ending Direct Provision was published in February 2021 and represents the single most important government policy for children and young people within the protection system. It includes important recommendations for children and young people and in 2021, the Alliance will focus on implementation.



► **Case Study: Responding to Covid 19**

The Children's Rights Alliance was concerned about the impact of the lockdown measures on children in Direct Provision. We heard from members that children were struggling living in confined spaces and congregated settings. They were sometimes too afraid to leave their rooms for fear of getting Covid. We also heard that some children did not have sufficient access to technology to enable them to take part in online learning.

In March and April 2020, Government focused on securing additional accommodation to deal with the Covid outbreak. We centred our advocacy on the Departments of Justice and Equality and Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla (Child and Family Agency). The Department of Justice and Equality asked us to prepare a newsletter with key information supports for children and young people in the Direct Provision system which our members contributed to. We also supported an initiative targeting small children in Direct Provision.

The "My Place to Play" programme promotes the development and well-being of very young children living in accommodation that has a limited amount of space available for free movement and play. The programme involves the distribution of playmats with special toys for very young children living in limited spaces for play and training for link workers on their distribution to parents. We called for the introduction of this initiative during the lockdown and supported the International Protection Service and [Children and Young People's Services Committees National Office](#) who led the roll out [My Place to Play](#) project in all International Protection Accommodation Service (Direct Provision) services across the country. This project was made possible thanks to the generous funding of €13,016 from the Oakfield Trust. The Alliance was a partner, raised the funds with the support of the Katharine Howard Foundation and managed the grant.

Key Project facts:

- 248 babies under the age of 2 years/families participated
- 248 play mats and resources were distributed
- 47 International Protection Accommodation Centres participated



► People, Systems, Structures and Resources

Organisational Development

In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance set out to ensure that it is well-managed and conformed to all governance and legal requirements. The detail of governance and membership activities are covered in the section on 'Structure, Governance and Management'. In March 2020, the Alliance moved to completely working from home and put measures in

place to support staff by purchasing new equipment. The Alliance was concerned about the impact of school closures on staff and of living through a global pandemic. A special effort was made to provide flexible working arrangements throughout the year, and to invest in wellness activities to support positive mental health among staff.

Management and Staffing

The Children's Rights Alliance retains a dedicated and high performing team, which includes a Chief Executive; Head of Legal, Policy and Public Affairs, Legal and Policy Manager, Social Policy Analyst; Head of Communications and Development, Senior Communications Officer, Membership Officer; Head of Governance and Finance and an Office and Finance Manager. In 2020, the Alliance had one volunteer.

At the end of 2020, one staff member had 12 years' service; one staff member had 9 years' service; one staff member had eight years' service; one had seven years' service; one staff member had four years' service; one staff member had over two years' service and two staff members had over one year's service. One Staff member provided maternity leave cover (Sept 2020-March 2021) on a temporary contract and another provided sick leave cover/supported operations (May 2020-March 2021).

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD met with our members at the Alliance's AGM in July 2020.



The Alliance suspended the recruitment of a Legal Information Officer in early 2020 due to the Level 5 lockdown and instead sought the services of a barrister to support the Helpline. The Alliance intends to recruit a Research and Policy Officer and a Legal Information Helpline Officer in 2021.

The Strategic Plan sets out to ensure that 'the team is supported and effective, its performance is managed and linked to organisational objectives, and its leadership outward looking and strategic'. In implementing this Strategic Goal, the Alliance ensures that individual staff performance is monitored and evaluated using an organisational performance and development review. Staff are allocated tasks in their annual appraisal based on actions from the annual work plan which the Board approves. Staff are then required to prepare monthly individual plans and report

on progress in their monthly staff supervision meetings with their line-manager. Staff are also monitored in a bi-annual/final appraisal and are required to complete project updates against project plans, and to complete quarterly reports on progress against the annual work plan. The structure and process for the Chief Executive's annual appraisal is agreed with the Remuneration Committee, conducted by the Chair, and reported as completed annually to the Board.

In 2020, the Alliance organised two online team building exercises and training for staff including on: the GDPR; Health and Safety during Covid; ergonomics; trauma informed approaches with Dr Sharon Lambert (UCC); managing stress during Covid with St Patrick's Mental Health Services and Caring for Caregivers with the Sanctuary.

Communications

In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance set out to have a strategic communications approach to further the strategic objectives of our Strategic Plan. This included: developing a communications strategy ensuring that communication is reviewed and consideration is given to how to utilise members more; reviewing the tone and positioning of the organisation in the media; and reviewing the capacity of the organisation to deliver this strategy, re-organising resources accordingly. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the organisation adopted an interim strategy aimed at supporting and collaborating with members to ensure children's issues were central to public discourse. This meant putting the website redesign on hold. The Alliance also prioritised supporting communications on the Information Helpline.

The Children's Rights Alliance issued 21 press releases in 2020 which was comparable to previous years (20 in 2019, 22 in 2018). There was a total of 272 media mentions last year, the highest in the past three years (205 in 2019 and 265 in 2018). These figures do not capture all broadcast mentions and in 2021 a new provider has been put in place for our media monitoring. In 2020, **Radio** accounted for 26 per cent of our media coverage (70/272), a slight decrease on 2019 when it made up almost a third of all media items. The radio coverage was well balanced between national and local.

Print Media (newspaper/magazine) accounted for over half of the total media coverage in the year (57 per cent) and with an equal balance of national and local outlets (56 per cent/46 per cent respectively). However, a large portion of the local spread was due to the reach of the announcement of our initial Covid-19 grant from the Bank of Ireland and the food provision scheme it helped to launch.

While the Report Card was the biggest media launch of the year, the focus of our communications work in the year is not the biggest media event in the Alliance calendar. In fact, a big focus of the work was addressing the emerging pandemic. The Alliance had very specific objectives regarding how we could add value to the narrative around children, young people and the pandemic and how we could best utilise our communications capacity to highlight and drive issues that members were raising in our consultations. The most pressing issues included **Food Poverty, Education and School Closures**, and **Child Protection/Welfare concerns**. The success of these strategic goals is evident in the strong presence of these issues in our media coverage throughout the year.

The Alliance set out to improve its social media presence by 10 per cent in 2020, with a noted stall in audience growth in recent years on Twitter and Facebook. In 2020, the Alliance digital communications outperformed initial targets. On Twitter, the Alliance attracted 2,506 new followers, ending the year with 18,694 followers (increase of 15 per cent). In the first few months of the Covid-19 pandemic (February – June), the Alliance consistently almost tripled its visibility using Twitter as its main platform for digital communications. Reviewing the engagement from our audience, we can see that our efforts behind Covid-19 messaging were returning very high engagement (*Helpline, Covid 19 impact on children, School Closures, Mental Health*) but they were also balanced with Alliance priority issues remaining among the top messaging with our audience (*Children's Hustings, Child Poverty, Know Your Rights*).

The Alliance ended the year on 9,157 followers/9,284 likes on Facebook. Our Future of Early Years webinar recording had over 6,000 views on the day, for example, without any paid promotion behind it. We received great traction on our promoted posts including our child poverty event and our Know Your Rights Guide however, the call to action was specific to the project rather than to follow or like the Alliance and so did not yield any big increase in following as such.

There was a total of 272 media mentions last year, the highest in the past three years.

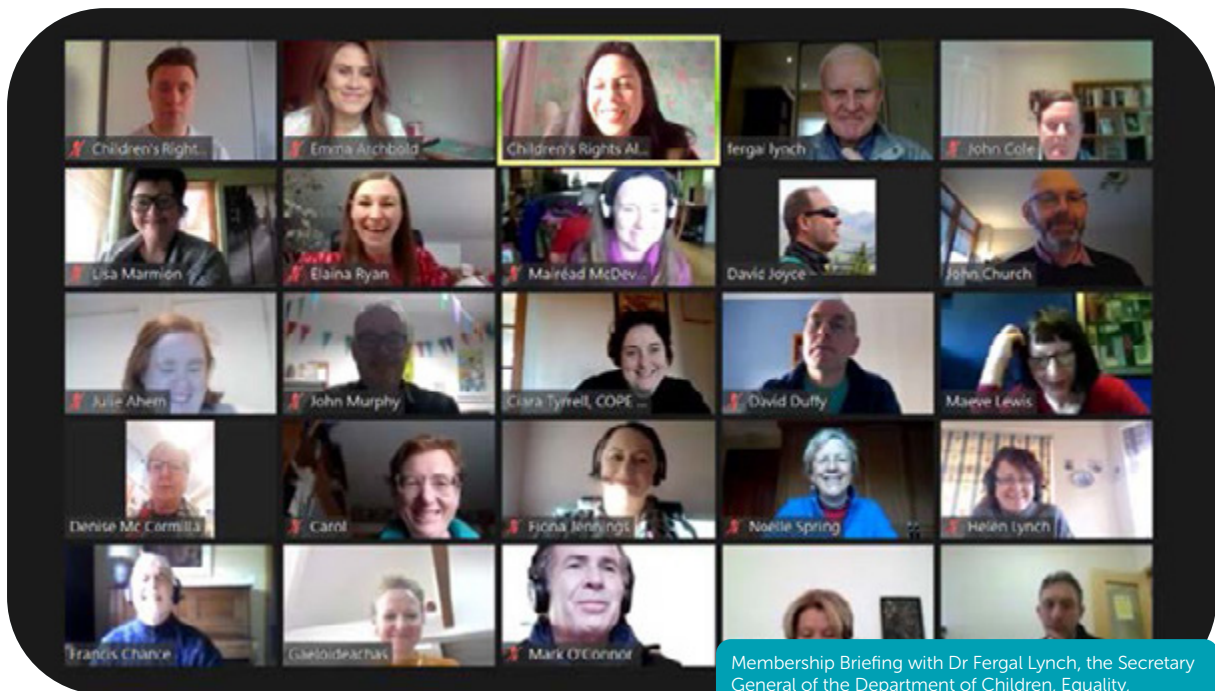


Building a Strong Membership

The diversity and growth of our membership gives the Alliance its mandate, credibility and unique opportunity to speak on behalf of all children in Ireland and to advocate for their rights. The positive changes that we have made over the last 25 years has been informed and supported by our members. At the end of 2020, the Alliance membership included 119 full members (not-for-profits/non-governmental organisations), 48 individuals and one associate member. The Strategic Plan includes a goal to increase the number of full members by 20 per cent over the life of the plan by June 2021. The Alliance experienced a good year in terms of membership growth. A total of 13 new member organisations joined in 2020 as compared to 6 in 2019. However, the Alliance also lost 13 members leaving in the same year. Members left in some cases due to financial constraints or on account of winding down. The Alliance also welcomed 14 new individual members in 2020 (compared to one in 2019).

In 2020, the Alliance committed to improving engagement with new and current members. Over the year, the Alliance issued a range of updates, organised briefings and member consultations. Alliance members are working at the coalface with children, young people and families, which helps the organisation identify problems, develop solutions and bring about change. Throughout a truly challenging 2020, the impact of Covid-19 was keenly felt by many working in the community and voluntary sector. Alliance members played a vital role this year in providing a spotlight on these key issues and informing the Alliance's strategic leadership decisions, particularly around school closures, educational disadvantage, child protection, food provision and more.

Having a dedicated Membership Officer and a focus on ensuring at least 95 per cent of members were fully paid up meant that membership income grew from €49,524 (2019) to €61,488 (2020) – the highest figure achieved to date.



Membership Briefing with Dr Fergal Lynch, the Secretary General of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, December 2020.

► Membership Communications and Events

Information Outputs

Jan – Dec 2020: 24 weekly Oireachtas Monitors

Jan 2020: Summaries of political parties' election manifestos for members

March – May 2020: Four Covid-19 member newsletters

Jan – Dec 2020: Four 'Children's Rights Now' Newsletters

March – May 2020: Four member meetings on responding to Covid-19 issues

Apr 2020: The Next Programme for Government: The Government Framework Document – Actions for Children

June 2020: Programme for Government Analysis for members

Oct 2020: Briefing paper for members on what Budget 2021 means for children and young people

Membership Consultations and Events

Jan 2020: Member briefing event on European Child Guarantee with Prof. Hugh Frazer

Feb 2020: General Election Hustings focussing on children and young people

March 2020: First member dialogue meeting with Tusla CEO, Bernard Gloster

Apr 2020: Member briefing with Tusla and DCYA (Bernard Gloster, CEO and Michelle Clarke, Chief Social Worker)

May 2020: Member briefing with Tusla and Tusla Educational Support Services (TESS) (Bernard Gloster, Tusla CEO and Noel Kelly, Director of TESS)

May 2020: Member consultation on UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Fifth Periodic Review of Ireland

May 2020: Members consultation on their statement of technological need during Covid-19

Sept 2020: Member consultation on the Review of the Child Care Act 1991

Oct 2020: Second member dialogue with Tusla CEO, Bernard Gloster

Oct 2020: Members consultation on keeping schools open safely

Nov 2020: Member consultation to inform the White Paper on Ending Direct Provision and policy paper

Dec 2020: Member consultation meeting on responding to children's rights issues for Travellers and Roma Children

Dec 2020: Member briefing with Fergal Lynch, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Full members (not-for-profits) at the end of 2020

- Ag Eisteacht
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Amnesty International Ireland
- An Cosán
- AslAm
- Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)
- ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd
- Atheist Ireland
- Barnardos
- Barretstown Camp
- Bedford Row Family Project
- BeLonG To Youth Services
- Care Leavers' Network
- Catholic Guides of Ireland
- Childrens Books Ireland
- Child Care Law Reporting Project
- Childhood Development Initiative
- Childminding Ireland
- Children in Hospital Ireland
- COPE Galway
- Cork Life Centre
- Crosscare
- CyberSafeKids
- Dalkey School Project National School
- Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
- Dental Health Foundation of Ireland
- Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Doras
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Educate Together
- EPIC
- Extern Ireland
- Focus Ireland
- Foróige
- Gaelscoileanna Teo
- Good Shepherd Cork
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors
- Irish Aftercare Network
- Irish Association for Infant Mental Health
- Irish Association of Social Workers
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
- Irish Foster Care Association
- Irish Girl Guides
- Irish Heart Foundation
- Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
- Irish Penal Reform Trust
- Irish Primary Principals Network
- 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)
- Jack & Jill Children's Foundation
- Jigsaw
- Katharine Howard Foundation
- Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
- Let's Grow Together! Infant and Childhood Partnerships CLG
- Mecpaths
- Mental Health Reform
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- Mothers' Union
- My Project Minding You
- Museum of Childhood Project
- Music Generation
- National Childhood Network
- National Forum of Family Resource Centres
- National Parents Council
- National Parents Council Post Primary
- National Parents Council Primary
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Novas
- One Family
- One in Four
- Pavee Point
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Private Hospitals Association
- Psychological Society Ireland
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Rainbow Club Cork
- Rainbows Ireland
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Realt Beag/Ballyfermot Star
- Respond Housing
- SAFE Ireland
- Saoirse Housing Association
- SAOL Beag Children's Centre
- Scouting Ireland
- School of Education UCD
- Sexual Violence Centre Cork
- SIPTU
- Simon Communities of Ireland
- Social Care Ireland
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Sonas Domestic Violence Charity
- SPHE Network
- SpunOut.ie
- St. Nicholas Montessori College
- St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association
- St. Patrick's Mental Health Services
- Suas
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland
- The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children
- The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
- Traveller Visibility Group Ltd
- Treoir
- UNICEF Ireland
- Young Ballymun
- Young Social Innovators
- Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
- Youth Work Ireland

Fundraising

Fundraising is the responsibility of the Directors and they are charged with ensuring the short-term and long-term viability of the Alliance. The organisation has formally adopted and adheres to the Charities Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

In 2020, the Alliance set out to retain its current funding and secure additional core funders. While the organisation was successful in attracting project funding, it was unsuccessful identifying additional core funding to fund its administrative function. This is of concern to the Board given the organisation's grant from the Tomar Trust, which does fund core activities, is being spent down. In response the Board commissioned a review of the organisation's sustainability and fundraising operations in quarter 1 2021 and aims to take action later in the year.

Funding from government sources largely remained the same in 2020 with a total of €296,022 from four sources: the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for core work (€180,000) and (€4,200) for child poverty work; the Department of Rural and Community Development/ Pobal SSNO Scheme (€89,982); the Department of Rural and Community Development for Social Partnership work (€18,840) and the Department of Foreign Affairs for the Communicating Europe Initiative (€3,000).

Funding income from philanthropic sources grew from €467,246 in 2019 to €539,340 in 2020 with the increase related to emergency funding which was allocated to projects aimed at helping vulnerable children during Covid. A total of €151,484 was raised for a national food poverty programme that was run with the support of the Children and Youth Service Committees. The Lakeside Fund contacted the Alliance in late 2020 to donate €23,650 to beneficiary organisations from the food poverty programme. While this exceptional initiative addressed a critical need for children, it did increase the funder reporting burden given that 22 separate organisations were funded and the Alliance had to ensure due diligence in relation to the monies spent.

Training income increased from €9,050 in 2019 to €16,576 in 2020 due to a contractual agreement with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to deliver children's rights training to its staff.

► Financial Review

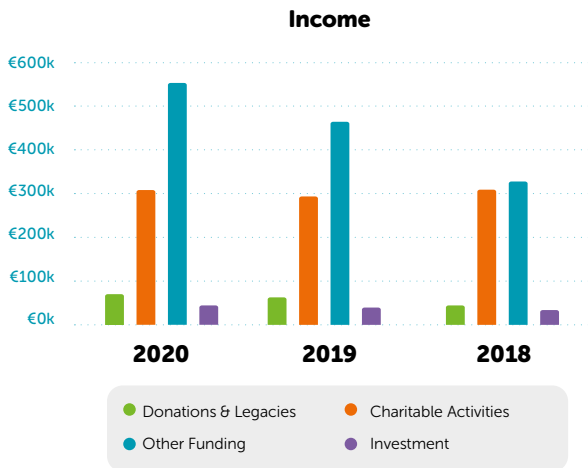
The financial outcome for 2020 is set out in the statement of financial activities.

Results	31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2019
Net Surplus for the financial year	€183,130	€51,176
Income	€970,224	€870,334
Expenditure	€787,094	€819,168

The net surplus for 2020 of €183,130 is split between an unrestricted surplus of €40,590 and a restricted surplus of €142,540. The unrestricted net surplus relates to additional unrestricted income received and reduced unrestricted expenditure due to Covid-19 in the year 2020 which was not anticipated. The Alliance received additional income in membership fees and rental income and the reduction in general overheads due to Covid-19. Unrestricted funds are funds for the use at the discretion of the Board in furtherance of the strategic plan. The restricted net surplus relates to funding received in the year 2020 but the associated expenditure for the funding will happen in 2021.

Restricted funds represent income received that can only be used for particular purposes as set out in the funding agreements. If, during the year, the funds received are not fully utilised the balance is presented in the restricted reserve at the year end (see note 16 in the financial statements). The accounting treatment for this is dictated by FRS 102 SORP. The Children's Rights Alliance is financed by a mix of donations and legacies, charitable activities (government grants), other funding (philanthropic) and income from investments.

In 2020, the Alliance continued to implement its strategy to diversify its funding base to ensure that it remained independent, sustainable and able to deliver its core objectives. The Alliance continued to focus on the generation of additional core sources of funding rather than pursuing small grants.



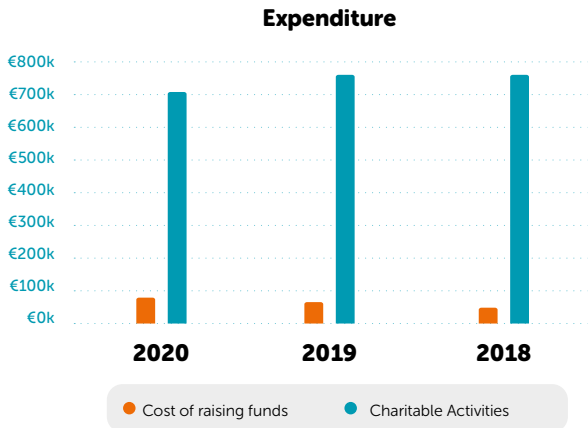
Government Grants

Government sources included the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Rural and Community Development, Pobal and the Department of Foreign Affairs. (Note Income - to the financial statements).

Other Funding

Philanthropic funding continues to be an important source of funding for the charity and helps ensure its independence.

In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance received a total of €107,286 (2019: €106,809) in unrestricted income which represents 11 per cent of the total income. There are two principal sources of unrestricted income in the year 2020: Donations and legacies (60 per cent) and Income from Investments (40 per cent).



In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance received a total of €862,938 (2019: €763,535) in restricted income which represents 89 per cent of the total income. The increase in restricted income is mainly due to additional grants received in the year 2020 for Covid-19 Response - Food Poverty Scheme (€187,650).

There were two principal sources of restricted income during 2020: Government grants (32 per cent) and philanthropic sources (57 per cent).

Tomar Trust

€188,462	This is the third and final instalment of a three-year project to address child poverty and the need to invest in public services for children
----------	--

Access to Justice

€107,096	This is the third and final instalment of a three-year project for the Access to Justice project
----------	--

Community Foundation for Ireland

€17,750	Programme for Government
---------	--------------------------

€108,000	Covid-19 response – Food Poverty Scheme. Included in the €108,000 is collaboration funding received from Bank of Ireland of €50,000
----------	---

Covid-19 Response – Food Poverty Scheme

€45,000	Oakfield Trust
---------	----------------

€23,150	Lakeside Fund
---------	---------------

€7,800	The One Foundation
--------	--------------------

€3,700	Shared Access
--------	---------------

Katharine Howard Foundation

€21,882	Early Years' Project
---------	----------------------

Eurochild

€4,500	Child Guarantee Event
--------	-----------------------

€12,000	Early Childhood Development
---------	-----------------------------

Catherine McGuinness Fellowship Programme (supports a barrister to work within the Alliance's Legal and Policy team one day a week)

€9,000	The Bar of Ireland
--------	--------------------

€2,000	Irish Family Lawyers' Association
--------	-----------------------------------

Donations and Legacies

Donations and Legacies included Membership income (€61,488) and Donations and Training (€2,541).

Membership income has increased by 24 per cent from 2019 this is due to an increase in uptake of membership for the Alliance in 2020. Donations and Training have reduced by 85 per cent from 2019.

Income from Investments

Income from Investments relates to rental income and management fees (€42,998), no material increases from 2019. Full rental occupancy in the year 2020.

In 2020, total expenditure was €787,094 (2019: €819,167). The charitable activities expenditure in 2020 of €708,882 (2019: €760,155) decreased by 7 per cent in the year. The decrease in expenditure in 2020 is mainly as a result of reduced staffing cost, specific campaigns completed and reduced general overheads due to Covid-19. Included in the cost of raising funds and charitable activities is staff costs of €461,909 in 2020 (2019: €507,727) which represent 58 per cent (2019: 62 per cent) of the overall expenditure for the Alliance.

The decrease in the staff costs of 10 per cent in the year 2020 relates to reduction in project staff.

The Directors have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue its operational activities for the foreseeable future, being a twelve-month period from the date of the approval of the financial statements. Accordingly, the Directors have continued to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual financial statements.

We would like to pay tribute to the generosity of our funders and members for the continued belief and support in the work of the Children's Rights Alliance.

Policy for Holding Reserves

The Children's Rights Alliance Board has put a reserve policy in place to ensure that the charity's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. This takes account of the cost of making staff redundant in an emergency situation, risks associated with variances in planned income versus expenditure and the charity's contractual commitments. The Alliance must carry a minimum of six months operating costs in a readily realisable form. The reserve threshold is advised by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in line with the Annual Budget and is approved by the Board. The reserve is held in a 30-day deposit account, Prize Bonds and current account and the Committee reviews the interest rate bi-annually to ensure the highest return on savings.

The Chief Executive and the Treasurer monitor the reserve on a quarterly basis by reviewing the management accounts. The reserve policy is constantly under review.

At the end of the year, the Alliance's total funds were €1,010,832 of which €287,333 were restricted and €723,499 were unrestricted. Given that the overall expenditure in the year 2020 amounts to €787,094, this meant that the Alliance exceeded the six-month policy reserve by €329,952. The reason that the Alliance exceeds the policy is due to the continuing dependency on discretionary income from year to year. It is anticipated that the Alliance will use 13 per cent of the excess unrestricted reserve in 2021.

Policy for Investments

The Alliance's policy for investments is to retain its cash reserve in low-risk vehicles. During the year 2020 the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee continued to review the investment policy of purchasing Prize Bonds. It was agreed by the committee that no additional purchase of Prize Bonds would take place in 2020 due to uncertainty within the environment due to Covid-19. It is anticipated that a further €50,000 will be purchased in 2021.

Apportionment

In 2020, the Children's Rights Alliance continued to use the budgeting template that allows clear apportionment of income against activities and related expenditure. In addition, the Alliance's systems allow for grant income to be apportioned against funded costs.

Principal Risk and Uncertainties

The Children's Rights Alliance uses its Risk Register to monitor and mitigate risk arising across the full range of its activities. The Risk Register is reviewed on an annual basis by the Financial, Audit and Risk Committee and approved by the Board. The Alliance's Risk Register identifies risks under the following themes: Governance and Regulation, Business and Operational, Human, Financial and Reputational and Political.

The Directors are aware of the key risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operation and finances of the company and are satisfied that there are appropriate systems in place to address these risks. The Alliance mitigates its core financial and operational risks as follows:

- Continually monitors the level of activity, prepares and monitors its budgets, targets and projections
- Internal/operational control risks are minimised by the implementation of financial policies and procedures which control the authorisation of all transactions and projects
- Puts an agreement in place with an IT provider to put an IT security system in place that mitigates against ICT risks
- Has a policy of maintaining reserves of six months' operational expenditure, which allows the company to meet its statutory obligations. The company has developed a strategic plan which will allow for diversification of future funding and activities in order to minimise liquidity risk

- Closely monitors emerging changes to regulations and legislation on an ongoing basis
- Ensures that staff and Board members of the organisation have the required training to maintain appropriate governance levels
- Has minimal currency risk and credit risk. The company has no interest rate risk due to the fact that the company has no borrowings
- Continues to adopt best practices in order to mitigate against reputational risk
- Ensures that there are sufficient staffing levels to avoid staff burnout.

The Alliance has carried out a risk assessment on the internal environment and has put mitigating factors in place, restrictions on working in the office that respect social distancing. The organisation also examined the impact of Covid-19 on 7 Red Cow Lane (the building that it owns with EPIC) and again put measures in place to protect building users. The principal risk for the Alliance going forward is to ensure that the team can operate effectively working from home as well as in the office once social distancing restrictions are lifted. The latter will involve an investment in office works to ensure effective partitioning. Another principal risk is the funding environment in 2021 and 2022 will mean that funding sources could be seriously diminished following the impact of the economic shutdown. In order to manage this risk, the Alliance will need to expand the capacity of the team to invest in and drive fundraising.



► Structure, Governance and Management

Governance

The Strategic Plan commits the Alliance to ensuring that: 'Governance is maintained at the highest standards, from Board level, the organisation is legally compliant, strategic, protective of its independence, and invested in growing its reputation'. The Children's Rights Alliance is fully in compliance with the Type C organisation which is defined by the Voluntary Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland and this is listed on www.governancecode.ie. The Board last completed a three year compliance review with this Code in 2018. Compliance with the Charities Regulator [Governance Code](#) is now mandatory for the sector and in 2020 the Alliance carried out a review to ensure that it was fully compliant.

The Strategic Plan commits the Alliance to communicate effectively and to be transparent and accountable to its members, stakeholders and funders. On foot of this, the Alliance achieved Triple Lock Status from the Charities Institute Ireland. The Alliance's Governance Handbook sets out the organisation's governance policy, procedures and practices to ensure that the Alliance uses transparent decision-making to direct its resources and exercise power in an effective and accountable way. In Winter 2020, the Board conducted an effectiveness and skills audit and identified it could strengthen its expertise on youth policy/non-formal education. In response the Board ran an open recruitment in December 2020 and recruited Karen Hannify who is currently Director of Marketing, Communications and External Relations at [Foróige](#).

The organisation finds implementing its governance commitments, charity obligations and legal compliance duties to be challenging given its size and the fact that fundraising for the administrative function is challenging. The Alliance does have a Head of Governance and Finance but finds other staff members are increasingly involved in supporting legal compliance. In 2020, the Alliance explored a potential merger with another organisation as a possible avenue to share core costs but this did not progress with the other organisation. In Quarter 1 2021, the Board commissioned a review on the sustainability of the organisation and its future direction and as part of this review it is examining the core roles that it needs to continue its work.

Good Governance

In 2020, the Alliance won the Good Governance Award (Category 2, income between €250,000 and €1 million). The Good Governance Awards recognise, support and encourage adherence to good governance practice by non-profit organisations in Ireland.



Directors

The Children's Rights Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors with a maximum number of 10 people. Six members are elected from the membership and four are appointed through co-option. All Board members work in a voluntary capacity and do not receive any remuneration or expenses.

Selection and Induction of Board Members

The Board of Directors of the Children's Rights Alliance is a body of elected or, in a minority of cases, appointed (co-opted) individuals (Board members) who jointly oversee and govern the activities of the organisation. The Children's Rights Alliance Board act on behalf of, and is subordinate to, the member organisations of the Children's Rights Alliance.

In line with the Articles of Association, the number of Directors shall not be less than three or more than ten. At every AGM, one third of elected Board members must retire under rotation arrangements prescribed therein. If the number of elected Board members is not divisible by three, then the nearest number to a third must retire. All Board members who retire by rotation are eligible for re-election if they wish to continue on the Board. However, Board members can only serve a total of three terms. The Board can also co-opt a Director onto the Board and co-opted Directors hold office only until the next AGM after which time they may either be reappointed or vacate the office.

Board induction occurs as soon as possible after an individual has been selected to join the Board. In all cases this is scheduled to take place before attendance at the first meeting. Induction is the responsibility of the Chairperson and the Chief Executive and involves a face-to-face training session covering, the role and aims of the Children's Rights Alliance, its governance structures, responsibilities, its core activities, history and successes. A new Director is also furnished with an induction pack with all key documents. A Board meeting is organised in June which also introduces new Board members to the organisation's legal

obligations, the organisation's policies and their review periods. Follow-up training is also organised for Board members to keep members up to date with changing obligations and where there is an identified need. In 2020, Board members took part in data protection training.

The Board of Directors met four times in 2020. Under the Board Rotation policy, Maureen Dillon (nominated by the Irish Girl Guides) and Mark Costigan (nominated by Inclusion Ireland) retired from the Board on 29 July 2020 at the AGM. Catherine Joyce (nominated by the Irish Traveller Movement), Michelle Griffin (nominated by Crosscare) and Nita Mishra (nominated by the National Parents Council Post Primary) were elected on the same day.

Board Profiles for 2020

- ▶ **Tom Maher** Tom is the Chair of the Children's Rights Alliance and is currently employed as the Director of Services at St. Patrick's Mental Health Services. This service comprises a mental health service that includes three Approved Centres (including a mental health service for Children and Adolescents), a network of community mental health clinics and a Wellness and Recovery Centre that includes extensive day services. Clinical activity includes 3,000 inpatient admissions per year, in excess of 15,000 community appointments and 15,000 day service attendances. The role includes responsibility for the development of and efficient delivery of all clinical services, clinical and corporate governance, service quality and negotiation of funding contracts with all health insurers. These services are delivered by approximately 360 clinicians including social work, nursing, medicine, clinical psychology, occupational therapy, psychotherapeutic staff and the associated administrative staff necessary for such delivery.
- ▶ **Ciairín de Buis** Ciairín is Vice Chair of the Children's Rights Alliance. Ciairín is currently an independent consultant, working with clients such as Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and the Open Doors Initiative. She was recently the interim CEO of Extern and was previously the CEO of Women for Election, a non-partisan organisation inspiring and equipping more women to succeed in public life. Ciairín has worked in the area of children's rights having led Start Strong, a children's rights organisation focused on children's early years, and was previously a member of the *National Children's Advisory Council*, the *Expert Group on Early Years*, the Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years amongst others. She is a former Board member of Sonas and was twice appointed by the Minister for Justice to serve on the Parole Board.
- ▶ **Colm Bryson** Colm is Treasurer of the Children's Rights Alliance. Colm joined the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the Alliance as an independent committee member in November 2015 and was then co-opted on to the Board and to the position of Treasurer in February 2018. Colm is a fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) and holds a Bachelor of Business & Legal Studies degree from UCD. He has been the Head of Finance at IPB Insurance since May 2012. He is involved with coaching of underage GAA and rugby teams and is also the Treasurer of the Belvedere College Past Pupils Union.
- ▶ **Katie Mannion** Katie Mannion is Company Secretary for the Children's Rights Alliance. She is currently Managing Solicitor of the Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre. She has a particular interest in child migration and representing children and young adults. She wrote 'Child Migration Matters', which was published by the Immigrant Council of Ireland in 2016, and coauthored a chapter on child migration in "Immigrants as Outsiders in the Two Irelands".
- ▶ **Orla Cunningham** Orla has been a co-opted Board member of the Children's Rights Alliance since March 2020. She worked with Bank of Ireland for c30 years and has held numerous leadership positions and managed multiple projects during her career which include Outsourcing, GDPR, IT change, Procurement, Operations Management, Facilities Management, Real Estate restructure, Training and COO Markets and Treasury. She holds a Bachelor of Business Studies degree from Trinity College and a CIPD diploma in Human Resource management from the National College of Ireland. She is also a Board member of Carmichael and Common Purpose Ireland.
- ▶ **Maureen Dillon** Maureen's involvement with youth work began when she joined as a member and an adult Leader within Irish Girl Guides and has gained an amount of experience thanks to this organisation working in the voluntary sector both with children and adults. She holds a certificate/diploma in Youth and Community studies (UCC). She is currently one of the voluntary leaders in a Guide Unit in Co Meath, where she works with girls and young women aged 10 to 16 years. She has held the following positions within Irish Girl Guides: chairman of Board of Louth/Meath/Cavan/Monaghan counties, assistant to the chairman of the national governing Board, chairman of IGG National Programme and Training Committee and national president of that organisation for the last six years. On a day-to-day basis she assists her husband and son in running the family's mixed farm of arable, livestock and bloodstock. She is also secretary of her local community council and a committee member and horse section secretary of the local Royal Meath Show.
-

Board Profiles for 2020

- ▶ **Michelle Griffin** Michelle was first elected to the Board on 29 July 2020. Michelle is the Manager of Finglas Youth Service, a project of Crosscare and has over 15 years' experience in the non-profit sector. Michelle also worked in the Combat Poverty Agency on policy issues and research relating to poverty and social inclusion. She holds a Masters in Social Policy, a Certificate in Leadership & Management in Community Based Projects, and recently completed an MBA in Trinity College. Michelle has a keen interest in children's rights and particularly in the area of youth justice, poverty and young people's participation.
- ▶ **Karen Hannify** Karen was co-opted to the Board on 25 February 2021. Karen is Director of Marketing, Communications and External Relations with Foróige. She joined the organisation in 2002, having previously worked in Public Relations Consultancy. As a member of Foróige's Senior Management Team, Karen is responsible for Internal and External Communications; Public Affairs; Brand Development; Reputation Management; Digital Media Management; Corporate Engagement and Relationship Management. Karen has served a number of terms on the Boards of both Léargas and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), including a term as Vice-President of NYCI. She works closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, particularly the Youth Participation Unit, managing a number of their flagship events including Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase. Karen holds a Masters Degree in Public Relations.
- ▶ **Catherine Joyce** Catherine was first elected to the Board on 29 July 2020. Catherine Joyce is a prominent Traveller and human rights activist. Catherine has advocated for Travellers' rights for over 35 years and is a former director of the Irish Traveller Movement. She has contributed to national and international forums on progressing Travellers' human, social and cultural rights. She is currently Manager of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group. Catherine was a recipient of a People of the Year Award in 1991. Catherine Joyce was prominent in Irish Travellers being formally recognised by the then Taoiseach Enda Kenny as a distinct ethnic group in 2017.
- ▶ **Nita Mishra** Nita was first elected to the Board on 29 July 2020. Dr Nita Mishra is a researcher on Social Inclusion in the Dept of Food Business & Development (UCC) and part time lecturer on International Development. She is the current Chair of Development Studies Association Ireland. Her research interests include feminist methodologies, gender, environment, NGOs, rights-based approaches, and right to food. Nita's poetry has been critically acclaimed as contributing to the future of Irish Feminism.
- ▶ **Mark O'Connor** Mark O'Connor is Community Engagement Manager in Inclusion Ireland. He has led on campaigns for children with disabilities to have greater access to therapy services, mental health services and appropriately supported inclusive education. Retired on 29 July 2020 at the AGM.
- ▶ **June Tinsley** June Tinsley has worked in the area of social policy for nearly twenty years. She has continuously tried to improve the laws, policies and services for those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. She worked in the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed before moving to Barnardos. In Barnardos she championed children's rights, lobbying and campaigning for improvements in children's access to childcare, education, health, housing and child welfare and protection system. Now, working for the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, she is increasing awareness of the needs of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Unless otherwise stated the following have served as Directors for the entire period following either an election or cooption.

Board Members	Board meeting attendance for 2020
▶ Tom Maher [Chair]	4/4
▶ Ciarán de Buis [Vice Chair]	4/4 Co-opted on 23 March 2020
▶ Colm Bryson [Treasurer]	4/4
▶ Katie Mannion [Company Secretary]	4/4
▶ Orla Cunningham	4/4 Co-opted on 23 March 2020
▶ Maureen Dillon	2/2 Retired on 29 July 2020
▶ Michelle Griffin	1/2 Elected on 29 July 2020
▶ Catherine Joyce	0/2 Elected on 29 July 2020
▶ Nita Mishra	2/2 Elected on 29 July 2020
▶ Mark O'Connor	2/2 Retired on 29 July 2020
▶ June Tinsley	4/4

The Board is supported by a committee structure which deals with specific aspects of the company's business. There were three standing committees in 2020. The Chief Executive was in attendance at all these Subcommittees except the Remuneration Committee when her own remuneration, terms/

conditions and performance review were being discussed. The Head of Governance and Finance was present for the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and is Secretary to the Nominations Committee. The Office and Finance Manager was present for two Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for effective review and monitoring of financial risks; reliable management and financial reporting; ensuring compliance with laws and regulations; and maintenance of an effective and efficient audit.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee	Attendance for 2020
▶ Colm Bryson [Treasurer]	5/5
▶ Tom Maher [Chair]	3/5
▶ Katie Mannion [Company Secretary]	5/5
▶ Susanna Lyons [Independent Member]	5/5

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee of the Alliance consists of the Office Holders of the Alliance Board of Directors. The Remuneration Committee is responsible for advising the Board on the remuneration policies for the Chief Executive/staff and reviews the Chief Executive appraisal.

Nominations Committee

Involving the Chair and Vice Chair, the Nominations Committee is responsible for advising the Board on policies and procedures for maintaining strong effective structures, succession planning for the Board and the selection of candidates for Board co-option. The Committee met on three occasions in 2020 and had full attendance.

Decision-Making

The Board has the following matters specifically reserved for its decision:

- Approval of the company's strategic plans, annual business plans and budgets;
- Projects outside the scope of the strategic plan;
- Significant acquisitions, disposals and assets of the company;
- Major investments and capital projects, delegated authority levels, financial and risk management policies; oversight and approval of procurement contracts over €10,000;
- Approval of all organisational policies including, governance, risk, staffing, financial, child safeguarding statement, data protection, health and safety;
- Appointment/removal of Committee chairs and members;
- Final appointment and approval of the auditors;
- Approval of annual reports and accounts;
- Approval of new staff positions, appointment of senior staff, including the Chief Executive, and signature of employment contracts;
- Appointment, remuneration and assessment performance of the Chief Executive;
- Approval of changes to the membership, membership categories and rates;
- Membership and endorsement of external campaigns or initiatives and litigation.

The Board delegates authority on certain duties and responsibilities to sign legal documents, contracts for services and funding contracts to the Chief Executive. The day-to-day management is also delegated to the Chief Executive and staff. This includes contributing to and the implementation of the strategic plan; leading, recruiting and managing the staff; managing the organisation and its finances effectively and efficiently; consulting and linking with members; representing the Children's Rights Alliance; contributing to national policy development affecting children and developing mechanisms for involving children and young people in the work of the organisation.

Reporting

The Chief Executive reports directly to the Board. Board meeting agendas are planned in advance between the Chair, the Head of Governance and Finance and the Chief Executive using a Board Planner Tool showing the full projected business of the Board spread throughout the year. A Board Report is prepared by the Chief Executive/Head of Governance and Finance and submitted to the Board one week in advance of meetings. Organisational information gathering systems have been established to ensure that Board reports contain accurate and relevant information. The Board Report follows a prescribed format with key standing items such as the Chief Executive report

and the Finance, Audit and Risk Report. The Board papers report against performance objectives set by the Board and focuses on strategic developments and impacts, as well as on difficulties and risks.

The Board's Finance, Audit and Risk report is approved by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in advance of meetings of the Board. This report summarises the overall organisational position and reports against a budget approved by the Board. Variances are calculated and explained. Trend analysis and projections are included together with a comparison against expenditure from the previous year. Key issues are identified with sufficient explanation.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The Alliance's evaluation framework monitors objectives, outputs and outcomes under the Strategic Plan 2017-2021. As part of this process, the Board sets annual milestones in an Annual Work Plan in line with the Strategic Plan and the team review progress against these milestones on a quarterly basis. This exercise is impact/outcome focused and captures whether planned activities are on-track, delayed or have been postponed or otherwise changed. Information from these quarterly reviews is used to generate Board reports and funder reports. Dr Gráinne Healy and Dr Kathy Walsh were appointed in 2020 following a commissioning process to undertake an independent evaluation to inform the development of a new Strategic Plan.

Legal Compliance

The Strategic Plan commits the Alliance to ensuring that the Children's Rights Alliance Board and management complies with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and that appropriate internal financial and risk management controls are in place. In 2020, the Alliance submitted its Annual Report to the Charities Regulator, its reports under the Lobbying Register and returns for the Companies Registration Officer on time. In 2020, the organisation put emphasis on implementing its data protection policy in particular around managing external relationships with data processors. The organisation implemented recommendations from a Health and Safety audit in response to managing Covid-19 in the workplace and training was organised for staff on health and safety during Covid-19/working from home, including data protection and ergonomics.

► Plans for the Future

New Strategic Plan

The development of a new Strategic Plan will be a key focus for the Children's Rights Alliance in 2021 and a critical focus of this plan will be addressing the impact of the pandemic on children and young people.

Information Helpline and Legal Advice

The Alliance will adapt the Information Helpline to provide a follow-up advocacy service. Legal Advice Clinics will be provided through a new pro bono partner, Eversheds, on a pilot basis.

Ireland's Next Examination under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Ireland will be examined on its children's rights record under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in May 2022. In 2021, the Children's Rights Alliance will prepare a civil society report on behalf of our sector for the UN Committee and unite our members to run an international campaign to influence the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations on Ireland. This will be an important opportunity for members to get involved.

National Child Poverty Plan – EU Child Guarantee

In 2021, the Children's Rights Alliance will continue to campaign to reduce child poverty by focusing on the timely introduction of a Child Guarantee at European Union (EU) level in the first quarter of 2021. The Child Guarantee will require the State to spend at least five per cent of the money allocated to it under the European Social Fund Plus to help lift children out of poverty. The Child Guarantee will focus on key measures that are recognised to help lift children out of poverty including free access to quality early childhood care and education, education, health, decent housing and adequate nutrition. This year, the Alliance will focus our efforts on ensuring that the Government develops a National Action Plan to tackle child poverty, with tangible and result-orientated actions, which will put children at the heart of Ireland's Covid-19 recovery plans.

Special Annual Campaigns

Online Safety

In 2021, the Children's Rights Alliance will coordinate a year-long national campaign focusing on online safety in the aftermath of Covid-19. In Ireland, 93 per cent of children aged eight to 12 own their own smart device and 65 per cent have their own social media account. Since mid-January 2020, online traffic has increased by over 25 per cent - the fastest usage increase since the internet was developed. The introduction of public health restrictions and school closures has resulted in children spending more time online for educational, entertainment and social purposes. While the internet brings unparalleled opportunities for children to learn, create, connect and socialise it also brings unparalleled risk, including the loss of personal data, exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, negative impacts on health, wellbeing, online grooming and extortion. Interpol has reported a sharp increase in child exploitation online because traffickers cannot use the usual channels to harm children. The campaign will build a broad coalition of support, with the help of an advisory group of Children's Rights Alliance members, for solutions that will make children and young people safer online, focusing primarily on the establishment of a dedicated Online Safety Commissioner and the enactment of online safety legislation underpinned by children's rights.

Children's Rights on the Island of Ireland: Responding to the Uncertainty of Brexit and Beyond

The Children's Rights Alliance is partnering with the Children's Law Centre (CLC) in Belfast on a joint project about Children's Rights on the island of Ireland: Responding to the Uncertainty of Brexit and Beyond. As part of our joint campaign, we will commission research on the impact that the Withdrawal Agreement, the Northern Ireland Protocol and subsequent political agreements and associated legislation will have on children's rights paying particular attention to legal rights and entitlements, access to services, child poverty, child protection, anti-trafficking and family law arrangements as well as certain groups of children who may be disproportionately impacted. A national dialogue has begun on the future of the island of Ireland and the Irish Government has created a new unit to seek a shared island consensus. The Alliance and the CLC will

jointly consult with child and youth representatives and youth reference groups to ensure that the principles underpinning this work will take account of children's rights and include real opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds to participate in a national dialogue. We will convene a high-level advisory group of influential figures with the expertise and experience to navigate this new political reality to ensure that children's rights are respected and protected going forward.

Ending the misuse of reduced hours/school suspension in Ireland

Children in both primary and secondary schools are being put on 'reduced timetables' which means that they are required to start school late or finish school early or they are only allowed to come to school for certain days of the week. The practice of reduced hours/school suspension has a serious effect on children's right to access to education. We understand that there are complex reasons for placing a child on a reduced timetable but it appears that sometimes this is wrongly used in response to a child having learning difficulties or behavioural and social or emotional issues. There is currently no formal system for recording reduced hours in the education system despite the fact that it is an interference with a child's rights to access education. We have had families contact our Helpline about children as young as six being put on a reduced day due to behaviour difficulties. In 2021 the Alliance will launch a campaign to address this serious issue for children and young people. Our campaign will focus on responding to the Government's promised Guidelines when they are published and highlighting any gaps, advocating for the publication of the policy on Alternative Education, publishing a scoping paper to promote awareness of the issue, running an information campaign and holding a national conference.

First Years, First Priority Campaign

The First Years, First Priority campaign launched in December 2020 and is one of the key Alliance campaigns for 2021. The Alliance is the national coordinator for this Europe-wide campaign on Early Childhood Development run by Eurochild, the International Step by Step Association, the European

Public Health Alliance and the Roma Education Fund. We will aim to influence policies, plans and funding to increase investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) for children aged zero to six, with a particular focus on families and children who are at greater risk of discrimination and exclusion. The campaign will focus on two key areas in the Irish context: the need for a dedicated child health workforce and the introduction of a quality, affordable, public early childhood education system that is accessible to all children and is free for the most vulnerable. Working with our Early Years Advisory Group, we will provide up-to-date data in the Irish context, identify data gaps and raise awareness of the campaign to ensure stakeholder buy-in. The campaign will provide stakeholders and decision-makers with clear information on why ECD is important, a road map detailing what needs to happen to improve ECD in Ireland and on the importance of the EU Child Guarantee. Stakeholders will also gain an awareness of the national and European funding opportunities and policies in relation to ECD.

In 2021, the Children's Rights Alliance will coordinate a year-long national campaign focusing on online safety in the aftermath of Covid-19.



Reference and Administration Details

The names of the persons who at any time during the financial year were directors and secretary of the company are as follows:

- Mark O'Connor
- Colm Bryson
- Maureen Dillon
- June Tinsley
- Katie Mannion
- Tom Maher
- Michelle Griffin (appointed 29/07/2020)
- Nita Mishra (appointed 29/07/2020)
- Katie Mannion (appointed 02/01/2020)
- Tom Maher (resigned as secretary 02/01/2020)
- Orla Cunningham
- Catherine Joyce (appointed 29/07/2020)

Chief Executive and senior management to whom responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity is delegated:

▶ Chief Executive	Tanya Ward
▶ Head of Governance and Finance	Theresa Burke
▶ Office and Finance Manager	Patricia Hoey

Exemption from Disclosure

The charity has availed of no exemptions. It has disclosed all relevant information.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The charity does not hold any funds or other assets by way of custodian arrangement.

Events after the End of the Financial Year

There were no events since the year end which require disclosure.

Research and Development

The charity carried out research relating to its activities during the year.

Political Donations

The charity did not make any political donations in the year.

Accounting Records

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of the company are located at the charity's premises, 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7.


Directors' Compliance Statement **Auditors**

The Board of Directors acknowledge that they have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation is fully compliant with its obligations under the Companies Act 2014. To this end, the audit and finance subcommittee review the internal controls in place on an annual basis. They confirm that

- Adequate controls are in place in order to meet the obligations of the company.
- Appropriate arrangements and structures are in place that is, in their opinion, designed to secure material compliance with the company's relevant obligations.

The auditors, Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

This report was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf



Tom Maher
Director

11 May 2021



Colm Bryson
Director

11 May 2021

Statement of relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with Section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- each Director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a Director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

For the year ended 31 December 2020

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable Irish laws and regulations.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council, and promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. Under company law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the surplus or deficit of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

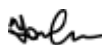
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102)
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK and Ireland Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business

The Directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and with Irish Statute comprising the Companies Acts 2014, and all Regulations to be construed as one with those Acts. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Directors on and signed on its behalf by



Tom Maher
Director

11 May 2021



Colm Bryson
Director

11 May 2021

4

**Independent
Auditors'
Report to the
Members of
the Children's
Rights Alliance**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Children's Rights Alliance for the year ended 31 December 2020 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Accounting Policies and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. In applying that framework the Directors have elected to have regard to the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities ("SORP 2019").

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2020 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charitable company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The Directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Directors' Report and Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of Directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of Directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities, the Directors (who are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial

statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

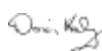
Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: [http://iaasa.ie/publications/isa-700-\(ireland\)](http://iaasa.ie/publications/isa-700-(ireland)). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

The purpose of the audit report and to whom we owe our responsibilities.

This report is made solely to the members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Damien Kealy

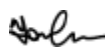
For and on behalf of
NEXIA SMITH & WILLIAMSON (IRELAND) LIMITED
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm,
Paramount Court, Sandyford Business Park, Dublin 18
Date : 24-May-2021

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating An Income And Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 December 2020

Income and Endowments from:	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2020 ▶ €	Restricted Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €
Donations and Legacies	3				
Donations and fundraising income		64,029	-	64,029	62,920
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3				
Government grants		-	296,022	296,022	296,288
Other funding	3	200	566,916	567,116	468,403
Investment income	3	43,057	-	43,057	42,733
Total Income		107,286	862,938	970,224	870,344
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	5	76	78,236	78,312	59,013
Charitable activities	5	66,620	642,162	708,782	760,155
Total Expenditure		66,696	720,398	787,094	819,168
Net movement in funds		40,590	142,540	183,130	51,176
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		682,909	144,793	827,702	776,526
Net movement in funds		40,590	142,540	183,130	51,176
Total funds carried forward		723,499	287,333	1,010,832	827,702

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 64 to 81 form part of these financial statements.



Tom Maher
Director

11 May 2020



Colm Bryson
Director

11 May 2020


Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Total Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €
Gross income in the reporting period	970,224	870,344
Less: Total expenditure	(787,094)	(819,168)
Total comprehensive income	183,130	51,176

Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2020

Fixed Assets	Note	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Tangible Assets	9	301,347	312,993
Investments	10	50,000	50,000
		351,347	362,993
Current Assets			
Debtors	11	157,272	358,651
Cash at bank and in hand		834,575	722,987
		991,847	1,081,638
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(287,371)	(616,929)
Net Current Assets		704,476	464,709
Total assets less current liabilities		1,055,823	827,702
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	14	(44,991)	-
Net Assets excluding pension asset		1,010,832	827,702
Total Net Assets		1,010,832	827,702
The funds of the charity			
Restricted funds	19	287,333	144,793
Unrestricted funds	20	723,499	682,909
Total charity funds		1,010,832	827,702

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Directors on and signed on their behalf by:



Tom Maher
Director

11 May 2021



Colm Bryson
Director

11 May 2021

The notes on pages 65 and 81 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2020

Cash flows from operating activities	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Surplus for the year	183,130	51,176
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	16,388	151,168
Investment income	(59)	(62)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	201,379	282,003
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(284,567)	(153,718)
Net cash generated from operating activities	116,271	194,567
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(4,742)	(8,309)
Purchase of investment	-	(50,000)
Investment income	59	62
Net cash from investing activities	(4,683)	(58,247)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	111,588	136,320
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	722,987	586,667
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	834,575	722,987

Accounting Policies for the year ended 31 December 2020

1. General Information

These financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes constitute the individual financial statements of Children's Rights Alliance - Republic of Ireland for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.

Children's Rights Alliance - Republic of Ireland is a charity Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital, incorporated in the Republic of Ireland. The Registered Office is 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7, which is also the principal place of business of the charity, The nature of the charity's operations and its principal activities are set out in the Directors' Report..

2. Accounting Policies

2.1 Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice - Charities SORP (FRS 102) "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2014 except for the entity invoking the true and fair view override with regard to the profit and loss and balance sheet formats in Schedule 3 of the Companies Act 2014 as permitted in Section 3.4 of FRS 102 and Section 291(5) of the Companies Act 2014.

2.2 Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charities SORP (FRS 102) "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

2.3 Currency

The financial statements have been presented in Euro which is also the functional currency of the company.

2.4 Fund Accounting

The following funds are operated by the charity:

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for the specified purposes as laid down by the donor/grantor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is allocated to the fund.

Unrestricted Funds

General funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Such funds may be held in order to finance working capital or capital expenditure.

2.5 Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Income is categorised under the following headings:

- Donations and legacies
- Income from charitable activities
- Investment income

Donation and Legacies

Donations and Fundraising Income

Donations and fundraising income are credited to income in the period in which they are receivable. Donations received in advance for specified periods are carried forward as deferred income.

Membership Fees

These are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities of the year in which they are receivable.

Income from Charitable Activities

Grants and Other Funding

The charity receives government grants in respect of certain projects. Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met, then these amounts are deferred income.

Investment Income

Interest and investment income is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably, this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank. Rental and management fee income is recognised on an invoice basis.

Donated Services and Facilities

Where practicable, donations of goods and services are included in donations in the financial statements at their fair value. If it is impracticable to assess the fair value at receipt or if the costs to undertake such a valuation outweigh the benefits, then the income and associated expenditure is not recognised.

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item and any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of

the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market, a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). There were no donated services and facilities during the year ended 31 December 2020.

2.6 Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

It is categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds;
- Expenditure on charitable activities; and
- Other expenditure.

Costs of Raising Funds

Costs of raising funds includes expenditure directly associated with generating fundraising income, including attracting voluntary income and grant income.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities

Expenditure on charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the pursuit of the charity's objectives and in the delivery of its activities and services. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly such as wages and salaries, and costs of an indirect nature necessary to support the delivery of its activities and services.

Other Expenditure

Other expenditure represents those items not falling into the categories above.

Allocation of Support Costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the activities and services of the charity. Support costs are allocated to expenditure on charitable activities. Costs relating to a particular project are allocated directly. Others are apportioned on an appropriate basis such as staff time.

Retirement Benefit Costs

On completion of a probationary period of six months. The company pays 10 percent employer pension contribution into a personal retirement savings account (PRSA). Retirement benefit contributions in respect of the scheme for employees are charged to the income and expenditure account as they become payable.

2.7 Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets are initially recorded at historic cost. This includes legal fees, stamp duty and other non-refundable purchase taxes, and also any costs directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management, which can include the costs of site preparation, initial delivery and handling, installation and assembly, and testing of functionality.

A review for impairment of tangible fixed asset will be carried out if events or change in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any tangible fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of tangible fixed assets and their recoverable amounts will be recognised as impairments. Impairment losses will be recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

- Freehold property - 2%
- Fixtures and fittings - 20%
- Computer equipment - 20%

An amount equal to the excess of the annual depreciation charge on revalued assets over the notional historical cost depreciation charge on those assets is transferred annually from the revaluation reserve to the income and expenditure reserve.

The residual value and useful lives of tangible assets are considered annually for indicators that these may have changed. Where such indicators are present, a review will be carried out of the residual value, depreciation method and useful lives, and these will be amended if necessary. Changes in depreciation rates arising from this review are accounted for prospectively over the remaining useful lives of the assets.

2.8 Trade and Other Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised initially at transaction price (including transaction costs) unless a financing arrangement exists, in which case they are measured at present value of future receipts discounted at a market value. Subsequently these are measured at amortised costs less any provision for impairment.

A provision for impairment of trade receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the agreement.

Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

2.9 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits.

2.10 Trade and Other Creditors

Trade creditors are measured at invoice price, unless payment is deferred beyond normal business terms or is financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate. In this case the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction and the financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Provisions are recognised when the company has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of

past events: It is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation and the amount of the obligations can be estimated reliably.

2.11 Deferred Income

The charity recognised deferred income where the terms and conditions have not been met or uncertainty exists as to whether the charity can meet the terms or conditions otherwise within its control, income is then deferred as a liability until it is probable that the terms and conditions imposed can be met.

Some of the grants received are subject to performance related conditions or time periods. When these performance related or other conditions are met the deferred income is released to income in the statement of financial activities.

2.12 Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

2.13 Employee Benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. The charity does not allow annual leave to carry forward and as such no provision is required in the financial statements. The charity contributes 10 percent employer pension contribution to an individual's PRSA once probation is passed.

2.14 Taxation

No charge to current or deferred taxation arises as the charity has been granted charitable status under Section 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, Charity No CHY 11541.

2.15 Critical Accounting Estimates and Areas of Judgment

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(a) Establishing useful economic lives for depreciation purposes of property, plant and equipment

The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on the estimated useful economic lives of each type of asset and estimates of residual values. The directors regularly review these asset useful economic lives and change them as necessary to reflect current thinking on remaining lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in asset useful lives can have a significant impact on depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. Detail of the useful economic lives is included in the accounting policies.

3. Income

	Unrestricted Funds ▶ €	Restricted Funds ▶ €	Total Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €
Donations and Legacies				
<i>Donations and fundraising income</i>				
- Membership Fees	61,488	-	61,488	49,524
- Donations in Kind	1,187	-	1,187	4,346
- Training	1,354	-	1,354	9,050
	64,029		64,029	62,920
Income from Charitable Activities				
<i>Government grants</i>				
- DRCD/Pobal	-	89,982	89,982	89,948
- DRCD/Social Partnership	-	18,840	18,840	18,840
- DCEDIY	-	184,200	184,200	181,500
- Department of Foreign Affairs	-	3,000	3,000	6,000
		296,022	296,022	296,288
<i>Other Funding</i>				
Tomar Trust	-	188,462	188,462	188,476
Covid-19 Response - Food Poverty Scheme	-	187,650	187,650	-
Access to Justice	-	107,096	107,096	107,096
Tusla	-	16,576	16,576	-
CFI (Programme for Government)	-	17,750	17,750	-
CFI (Report Card)	-	-	-	30,000
CFI (Comic Relief)	-	-	-	20,000
CFI (Child Refugee)	-	-	-	45,184
CFI (No Child 2020)	-	-	-	44,001
KHF (Early Years' Grant)	-	21,882	21,882	21,490
Eurochild - (Child Guarantee Event)	-	4,500	4,500	-
Eurochild (Early Childhood Development)	-	12,000	12,000	-
The Bar of Ireland	-	9,000	9,000	9,000
Family Lawyers Association	-	2,000	2,000	2,000
Other fundraising income	200	-	200	1,156
	200	566,916	567,116	468,403
Income from Investments				
Rental and Management fee income	42,998	-	42,998	42,671
Interest Received	59	-	59	62
	43,057	-	43,057	42,733
Total income	107,286	862,938	970,224	870,344
Unrestricted	-	-	-	106,809
Restricted	-	-	-	763,535
				870,344

4. Going Concern

The Trustees have carefully considered the impact of Covid-19, noting the widespread disruption to normal activities and the uncertainty over the duration of this disruption.

The organisation has cash and cash equivalents of €834,575 at the 31 December 2020. The Directors have considered available resources and have also considered the availability of future funding and the support of its funders. The Directors are in a position to manage the activities of the organisation such that existing funds available to the Trustees together

with committed funding will be sufficient to meet the organisation's obligations and to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date of the financial statement.

On that basis, the Trustees do not consider that a material uncertainty exists in relation to going concern and have deemed it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. The financial statements do not include any adjustments that would result if the organisation was unable to continue as a going concern.

5. Costs of Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 €	Restricted Funds 2020 €	Total Funds 2020 €	Total Funds 2019 €
Direct staff costs	76	78,236	78,312	59,013
Unrestricted				90
Restricted				58,923
Total				59,013

Expenditure On Charitable Activities

Expenditure on charitable activities is analysed under the six main aims of the organisation:

- **AIM 1** - Using the law to give meaningful effect to children's rights
- **AIM 2** - Shaping national policy to give meaningful effect to children's rights
- **AIM 3** - Investing in children early and building political support for public services
- **AIM 4** - Promote access to child-friendly justice
- **AIM 5** - Spotlight on serious children's rights violations, including refugee children
- **AIM 6** - Strong membership and people, systems, structures, procedures and resources to delivery strategy

	Support Costs 2020 ▶ €	Direct Aim Costs 2020 ▶ €	Direct Staff Costs 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €
AIM 1	9,036	7,997	29,114	46,397	66,494
AIM 2	72,287	26,524	56,671	157,482	233,531
AIM 3	9,036	183,567	45,465	238,318	68,611
AIM 4	45,179	20,868	44,477	111,775	183,986
AIM 5	9,036	366	21,869	31,521	73,804
AIM 6	41,144	11,818	74,328	123,289	133,728
Total	185,718	251,139	271,925	708,782	760,155
Unrestricted				66,620	79,486
Restricted				642,162	680,669
Total				708,782	760,155

Support Costs

	AIM1 ▶ €	AIM2 ▶ €	AIM3 ▶ €	AIM4 ▶ €	AIM5 ▶ €	AIM6 ▶ €	Total funds 2020 ▶ €	Total funds 2019 ▶ €
Salaries and office costs	5,452	43,613	5,452	27,258	5,452	21,806	109,032	121,880
Office expenses	1,623	12,980	1,623	8,113	1,623	6,490	32,450	25,066
IT support costs	515	4,123	515	2,577	515	2,062	10,308	10,230
Depreciation and maintenance	819	6,555	819	4,097	819	3,278	16,388	16,921
Professional fees	343	2,748	343	1,717	343	1,374	6,869	8,184
Governance	284	2,268	284	1,418	284	6,134	10,671	11,822
	9,036	72,287	9,036	45,179	9,036	41,144	185,718	194,103
Unrestricted							59,769	51,100
Restricted							125,949	143,003
							185,718	194,103

Allocation Of Support Costs

Salaries and staff costs are actual per each of the aims. The remaining support costs have been apportioned as follows:

AIM 1 - 5% **AIM 2** - 40% **AIM 3** - 5% **AIM 4** - 25% **AIM 5** - 5% **AIM 6** - 20%

Governance Costs

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 ▶ €	Restricted Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2020 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €
Audit Fee	5,228	-	5,228	6,796
Annual Report and AGM	-	5,000	5,000	4,527
Board Meetings	443	-	443	499
	5,671	5,000	10,671	11,822
Unrestricted				7,295
Restricted				4,527
Total				11,822

6. Directors' Remuneration and Expenses

No Directors who served during the year, received any remuneration or expenses from the charity.

Key Management Personnel

Key Management personnel includes the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive's salary for the year was €85,980 excluding Employer PRSI (2019: €85,980). In addition, 10 percent of the salary was paid as employer contribution into personal retirement saving account (PRSA).

7. Staff Costs

	2020 €	2019 €
Wages and salaries	384,976	421,635
Pension costs	33,313	40,311
Social security costs	43,620	45,781
	461,909	507,727

All the amounts stated above were treated as an expense of the company in the financial year.
No amount was capitalised into assets.

The average number of persons employed by the Company (excluding Directors) during the year was as follows:

	2020 ▶ Number	2019 ▶ Number
Administration	3	2
Policy and research	5	7
Communication and information	3	3
	11	12

The number of higher paid employees was:

Salary Band	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
€60,000 - €70,000	1	1
€70,001 - €80,000	-	-
€80,001 - €90,000	1	1

Salary includes Gross salary and PRSI but does not include pension costs.

8. Retirement Benefit Information

	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Retirement benefit charge	33,313	40,311
	33,313	40,311

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Freehold property ▶ €	Fixtures and fittings ▶ €	Computer equipment ▶ €	Total ▶ €
Cost or valuation				
At 1 January 2020	309,469	73,746	23,590	406,805
Additions	-	-	4,742	4,742
At 31 December 2020	309,469	73,746	28,332	411,547
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2020	30,943	54,899	7,970	93,812
Charge for the year	6,188	4,842	5,358	16,388
At 31 December 2020	37,131	59,741	13,328	110,200
Net book value				
At 31 December 2020	272,338	14,005	15,004	301,347
At 31 December 2019	278,526	18,847	15,620	312,993

The Directors have considered the value of the fixed assets as at 31 December 2020 and they provide for impairment if necessary. There is no impairment required in 2020 (2019: Nil).

10. Financial Fixed Assets

Cost or valuation	Unlisted Investments ▶ €
At 1 January 2020	50,000
At 31 December 2020	50,000

Net book value	Unlisted Investments ▶ €
At 31 December 2020	50,000
At 31 December 2019	50,000

11. Debtors

Due after more than one year	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Trade debtors	44,991	-
	44,991	

Due within one year	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Trade debtors	110,782	357,631
Prepayments and accrued income	1,499	1,020
	157,272	358,651

12. Components of Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Cash at bank and in hand	834,575	722,987

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Credit card	600	806
Trade creditors	955	22,089
Taxation and social welfare	10,612	8,732
Pension accrual	745	-
Accruals	17,217	26,300
Deferred income	257,242	559,002
	287,371	616,929

Included in deferred income for 2020 are:

- Department of Rural and Community Development - Pobal, in the amount of €134,990 to cover future staff costs of the Alliance covering period July 2019 to July 2022.
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission grant for the year 2021 in the amount of €19,000.
- Community Foundation for Ireland grant for the year 2021 in the amount of €15,000.
- Community Foundation for Ireland - RTE Comic Relief grant for the year 2021 in the amount of €133,243.

Included in deferred income for 2019 are:

- Tomar Trust in the amount of €188,463 to support the core and covers a range of projects. This grant relates to future years expenditure; subject to performance conditions being met.
- An amount of €107,096 to fund future costs for the position of an Access to Justice Manager and any other costs relating to the Access to Justice Project. This grant relates to future years expenditure.
- Department of Rural and Community Development - Pobal, in the amount of €224,972 to cover future staff costs of the Alliance covering period July 2019 to July 2022.
- Early years grant for the year 2020 in the amount of €21,882.
- Tusla, the Child and Family Agency in the amount of €16,576 to be incurred on the Know Your Rights Project.

14. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
Deferred income	44,991	-

15. Taxation and Social Welfare

Creditors	2020 ▶ €	2019 ▶ €
PAYE/NI	10,612	8,732

16. Charity Funds

	Accumulated Funds €
At January 2020	827,702
Surplus for the year	183,130
At December 2020	1,010,832

17. Government Grants

The Children's Rights Alliance received the following grants and they are disclosed in line with circular 13/2014 issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. No capital grants were received from Pobal or any Government Department and the Children's Rights Alliance is tax compliant as per the relevant grant circulars, including circular 44/2006.

(a) Name of Grantor	(b) Actual name of each individual grant	(c) Purpose for which funds are applied	(d) Amount and term of the total grant awarded	(e) The amount of the grant taken to final income in the financial statement	(f) Where relevant, the amount of capital provided and the reporting policies being used in relation to current future instalments	(g) Employee Benefits, excluding Employer Pension Costs
Department of Rural and Community Development	Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community & Voluntary Sector [SSNO]	Salaries & Wages	€269,946 Term: July 2019 - June 2022	€89,982	SSNO Expenditure reports are submitted every 6 months, as set out in Agreement. Additional reports submitted at certain intervals. No capital grant received. Annual Report and Application submitted each year. No capital grant received.	We do not provide any employee benefits other than Employer Pension contributions.
Department of Rural and Community Development	Social Partnership related Funding for the Community and Voluntary Pillar 2019	Salaries & Wages	€18,840 Term: Jan - Dec 2020	€18,840		
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	1. Support in the coordination of activities relating to the community and voluntary sector as they relate to the implementation of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures and the advancement of the cross- sectoral priorities therein. 2. Consolidate and enhance children's rights and entitlements through engagement with frontline services and through the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Structures. 3. Facilitate consultations and events on children's issues with key groupings as needs arise from the implementation of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures; and, in line with the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015 - 2020), facilitate consultation with children represented by Alliance member organisations where required. This facility would be provided to inform the work of the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures implementation structures from Consortium level through to Children and Young People's Services Committees. 4. Agree a workplan with representatives from the units in DCYA Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division early in 2020. 5. Progression of activities in line with agreed workplan.	Salaries & Wages, Event Costs, Overheads	€180,000 Term: Jan - Dec 2020	€180,000	Agreed workplan submitted and an annual report submitted each year. No capital grant received.	
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	Research Services to complete work on child poverty.	Consultant costs	€4,200	€4,200	Research paper submitted. No capital grant received.	
Department of Foreign Affairs	Communicating Europe Initiative 2020. Know Your Rights: A guide to children's European rights online.	Produce a children's guide on EU digital rights, design & publish.	€3,000	€3,000	Report to be submitted during and at completion of project. Financial report to be submitted. No capital grant received.	

Overall figure for Total Employer Pension €33,131

18. Membership

The Children's Rights Alliance - Republic of Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital.

Every member is liable for the debts and liabilities of the company in the event of a winding up, for such amounts as may be required but not exceeding €1 each. The total number of member organisations at 31 December 2020 was 119 full-time members and 48 individual members (31 December 2019: 120 full-time members 36 individual members).

19. Summary of Restricted fund movement

Current Year

	01/01/2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfer	31/12/2020
	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €
DCEDIY - Core Funding	-	180,000	180,000	-	-
Child Refugee Research	1,504	-	410	-	1,094
DCEDIY - Child Poverty Research	-	4,200	4,200	-	-
Tusla, the Child and Family Agency	-	16,576	16,576	-	-
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Child Refugee Project)	25,295	-	60	-	25,235
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Comic Relief)	5,116	-	-	-	5,116
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Programme for Government)	-	17,750	14,215	-	3,535
Communicating Europe Initiative 2019	6,000	-	5,981	-	19
Communicating Europe Initiative 2020	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Katharine Howard Foundation (Early Years Grant)	-	21,882	21,882	-	-
Catherine McGuinness Fellowship	9,803	11,000	10,389	-	10,414
Access to Justice	30,134	107,096	45,254	-	91,976
Tomar Trust	66,941	188,462	125,445	-	129,958
SSNO	-	89,982	89,982	-	-
Social Partnership	-	18,840	18,840	-	-
Covid 19 Response (Food Poverty Scheme)	-	187,650	181,275	-	6,375
Eurochild - (Child Guarantee Event)	-	4,500	4,458	-	42
Eurochild - (Early Childhood Development)	-	12,000	1,429	-	10,571
	144,793	862,938	720,397		287,333

Prior Year

	01/01/2019	Income	Expenditure	Transfer	31/12/2019
	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €
DCEDIY - Core Funding	-	180,000	(180,000)	-	-
DCEDIY - Human Rights Study	3,500		(3,500)	-	-
Child Refugee Research	3,504	1,500	(3,500)	-	1,504
Social Partnership	-	18,840	(18,840)	-	-
Communicating Europe Initiative	-	6,000		-	6,000
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Child Refugee Project)	5,877	45,184	(25,766)	-	25,295
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Comic Relief)	-	20,000	(14,884)	-	5,116
Community Foundation for Ireland - (Report Cards)	-	30,000	(30,000)	-	-
Community Foundation for Ireland - (No Child 2020)	-	44,001	(44,001)	-	-
Katharine Howard Foundation (Early Years Grant)	3,824	21,490	(25,314)	-	-
Catherine McGuinness Fellowship	5,943	11,000	(7,140)	-	9,803
Access to Justice	22,545	107,096	(100,150)	643	30,134
MDAC Innovating EU Lawyers	2,070	-	-	(2,070)	-
Tony Ryan Trust	16,583	-	(16,583)	-	-
Tomar Trust	58,431	188,476	(179,966)	-	66,941
Pol O'Murchu	643	-	-	(643)	-
	122,920	763,535	(739,592)	(2,070)	144,793

20. Summary of Unrestricted Fund movement

	2020 ▷ €	2019 ▷ €
Surplus for the year	40,590	29,303
Opening members' funds	682,909	653,606
Closing members' funds	723,499	682,909

21. Financial instruments

Financial assets	2020 ▷ €	2019 ▷ €
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss	834,575	722,987
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	205,773	357,631
	1,040,348	1,080,618
Financial liabilities	2020 ▷ €	2019 ▷ €
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	332,362	616,929

Financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss comprise cash at bank and in hand.

Financial assets that are debt instrument measured at amortised cost comprise financial fixed assets, trade debtors and other debtors.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise trade creditors, other creditor, accruals, taxation and social welfare.

22. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments given by the company as at 31 December 2020 which require disclosure. (2019: Nil).

23. Operating Lease Commitments

At 31 December 2020 the Company had no commitments. At December 31, 2019, the Company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2019 ▶ €
Within one year	2,208
Between one and five years	-
	2,208

24. Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities as at 31 December 2020. (2019: Nil).

25. Related Party Transactions

On 18 December 2014, the Children's Rights Alliance entered into a contract together with Empowering Young People in Care Limited [EPIC] to jointly purchase a property at 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7. EPIC and the Children's Rights Alliance jointly owns this property and during 2016, jointly agreed to lease space to other charitable organisations.

The Katharine Howard Foundation [KHF] was a member and funder for the Children's Rights Alliance and is also a joint tenant to EPIC and the Children's Rights Alliance and occupies the fourth floor.

Child Care Law Reporting Project [CCLRP] is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance. CCLRP rents offices on the third floor.

In the case of all tenants, they have been charged rent at market rate and management fees are calculated on the relevant running costs from the previous year.

There were no related party transactions with Directors.

26. Post Balance Sheet Events

Other than those disclosed in the financial statements, there have been no significant events affecting the company since year end.

27. Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 May 2021.



Thank You!

A big thank you to our 120+ members for supporting us in everything we do.

Thank you also to the public for supporting our campaigns, projects and initiatives.

Thank you to all our funders and donors including: Bank of Ireland; Comic Relief; Communicating Europe; Community Foundation for Ireland; Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; Department of Foreign Affairs; Department of Rural and Community Development; Eurochild; Family Lawyers' Association; Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission; Katharine Howard Foundation; Lakeside Fund; Law Society of Ireland; Oakfield Trust; The One Foundation; Pobal; Shared Access; Tomar Trust; Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; and The Bar of Ireland.

Special thanks also to those who provided *pro bono* support during 2020 including Prof. Geoffrey Shannon, Child Law Expert and Children's Rights Alliance Founding Patron, Arthur Cox Solicitors, the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA) and Business in the Community.



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Uniting Voices for Children

Founded in 1995, the Children's Rights Alliance unites over 100 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services.

**7 Red Cow Lane
Smithfield, Dublin 7
Ireland**

**Ph: +353 1 662 9400
Email: info@childrensrights.ie**

www.childrensrights.ie