



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

Uniting Voices For Children

## Who We Are

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.

## What We Do

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.

We identify problems for children. We develop solutions. We educate and provide information on children's rights. We unite our members and put pressure on government to put children first.

## Our Record of Success

Our work has had a real impact for children in Ireland.

This includes:

- > A referendum to strengthen children's rights in the Constitution
- > The most significant law reform for children and their families in a generation under the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- > The establishment of Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children and an extension of the Office's remit to include asylum-seeking children
- > An end to smacking children in the home
- > A new practice of placing separated refugee children in safer care settings
- > An end to the detention of young boys in adult prisons
- > A legal prohibition on the practice of female genital mutilation in Ireland
- > Ratification of a mechanism to allow children and their families to complain directly to the UN if they feel their rights are not being vindicated at home
- > The first increase in sixteen years to the weekly payment to asylum-seeking children living in Direct Provision accommodation.

## Get involved

Follow us on Twitter @ChildRightsIRL

Like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/childrensrightsalliance](http://www.facebook.com/childrensrightsalliance)

Watch us on YouTube [www.youtube.com/user/cradub](http://www.youtube.com/user/cradub)

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# Foreword

Welcome to the 2015 Annual Review, and my first as Chairperson. This period we are living through will be seen historically as a momentous one for children in Ireland. The ground-breaking Amendment of 2012, putting children's rights at the heart of our Constitution, finally passed into law in 2015. And also, Ireland faced its first examination by the United Nations since 2006 on its stewardship under the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

In these and many other historic developments, I am proud to record the continuing central role played by the Alliance in undertaking the painstaking groundwork required in a thoroughly professional manner, and with considerable passion and flair. Both the Board and membership of the Alliance owe heartfelt thanks to our talented staff team led by Chief Executive, Tanya Ward. An organisation like ours trades on its excellence and in particular its reputation with stakeholders, both governmental and civil society based, and we are indeed fortunate to have a group of staff that is held in high esteem and seen as a resource on so many issues and challenges.

With the introduction of our annual Report Card since 2009, the Alliance has added an invaluable additional barometer of the state of children and families in Ireland. In turn, the Report Card results have provided the raw material to identify particular challenges to be addressed and *Report Card 2015* was no exception. While positive progress is recorded in important areas, such as in literacy, serious problems persist especially in the area of child poverty, which scored a dismal 'F' grade.

The Alliance has taken a leadership role in promoting the Government Framework on child and youth policy, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and in particular supporting efforts to make tackling child poverty as an overarching priority, working closely with officials. We look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs on this and other common issues in the year ahead.

The members of the Children's Rights Alliance continue to be the lifeblood of the organisation. We look to our members working at the coalface with children and families to tell us where the gaps are, so we can unite voices, develop solutions and make change.

2015 was a year of transition, with the departure of my predecessor Paul Gilligan after six highly successful years as Chair, as well as our Treasurer and Board member of long standing, Aine Lynch. I wish to thank the current Board most sincerely, not least for their patience as I settle into the Chair, and also bearing in mind that several of them were themselves recent recruits. Thanks to one and all – Michael Barron, Denise Charlton, Fergus Finlay, Noreen Flynn, Catherine Keane and Tess Noonan.

I look forward to an Alliance that is well led corporately and adhering to the highest standards. I have learned in my first year that we are well on the way to excellence and I look forward to consolidating that.

**Tom Costello**  
Chairperson



# Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Review 2015. As I think you'll agree, it was a year packed full of important impacts.

The Report Card, our annual flagship publication tracking commitments to children, awarded the Government with a 'C grade' for the third year in a row. Positive progress was achieved around school buildings and child literacy. Yet, dismal E and F grades were given for child poverty and support to Traveller, Roma and migrant children.

Working with members, we submitted a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and travelled to Geneva to present it. This was the first time in ten years that Ireland was examined. We called our report *Are We There Yet?* – even though lots has been achieved for children, life is very far from perfect for others. A case in point is homeless children. As the homelessness crisis rocketed throughout 2015 we became more aware that this was becoming a seriously urgent issue.

It was an historic year with the passing of the Marriage Equality referendum that we were thrilled to be a part of, helping to change forever what it is to be an LGBT young person growing up in Ireland.

We represented children on a unique Working Group on direct provision and the protection process, securing important commitments. Subsequently, a small increase was made to children's payments and the Ombudsman for Children will soon be able to receive complaints from children. Far more is needed but this is a start.

The Children and Family Relationships Act was passed. This is the most important family law reform in a generation and our influence proved vital. Now, what's best for children is a guiding principle in family law proceedings and children born inside and outside marriage are protected equally.

Thanks to another change in the law sponsored by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, James Reilly, TD, and Senator Jillian van Turnhout, it is no longer legal to smack your child. We've campaigned for this change for many years and it's a giant leap forward that will help to change attitudes so children are better protected from violence.

We continued to build sustainability through diversifying funding sources and securing new opportunities. We are overjoyed to have purchased our very own building with EPIC, thanks to funding from The Atlantic Philanthropies. This has allowed us to create a forever home and children's rights hub in the heart of Smithfield, Dublin.

Our members are our lifeblood. We look to them for their knowledge to tell us where the gaps are. We translate the issues they are encountering into all our advocacy work. Much of 2015's work was shaped through select working groups. If you're not already, why not become a member?

I would like to thank the wonderful staff of the organisation for their incredible commitment and hard work. Once again, we can stand proud over all our achievements for children.

**Tanya Ward**  
Chief Executive

# Aim 1

## Shared Vision

Bring About a Shared Vision that will Realise and Defend Children's Rights

### Key publications under Aim 1 in 2015:

- > Are We There Yet? Parallel Report to Ireland's Third and Fourth Combined Report under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- > Picture Your Rights, A Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from Children Living in Ireland
- > Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Replies of Ireland to the List of Issues
- > A Plan to End Child Poverty Among Children and Young People
- > Essentials for Children, Key Asks for the Next Government
- > What are the Political Parties promising for Children in Election 2016?
- > Briefing Note on Children and Young People's Report to the UN.

### Top UN Body on Children's Rights puts spotlight on Ireland

We led the development of a Civil Society Parallel Report for Ireland's examination by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. We influenced the questions put to Government and the UN Committee's findings on Ireland.

The biggest and most exciting focus for us in 2015 was the lead up to the examination of Ireland's children's rights record by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee, a group of international children's rights experts, had not reviewed Ireland since 2006 – so there was lots to tell them about.

After an epic nationwide consultation with our members and stakeholders who work at the coalface with children and families in Ireland, we gained a better understanding of the multi-faceted problems facing children in Ireland today in all areas of their lives. We subsequently submitted our Parallel Report on behalf of civil society in May to the UN Committee. The report provides a no-holds-barred view of what life is like for children in Ireland outlining where their rights are not being protected.

In June, a group of Children's Rights Alliance staff, our Founding Patron, Professor Geoffrey Shannon, Board member, Michael Barron and young people headed to Geneva to attend a confidential briefing with the UN Committee. Working with UNICEF Ireland, and with funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, we supported five young people from the *Picture Your Rights* group to present their report to the UN Committee at this time (see opposite). We were able to track our strong influence on the Committee when a few weeks later they published their 'List of

Issues'. This is a list of questions to the State seeking clarification on certain issues which included direct provision, child poverty and access to mental health services.

We launched *Are We There Yet?* on 27 October in the Mansion House in Dublin with Fintan O'Toole from *The Irish Times* as the keynote speaker. The launch trended on Twitter under the hashtag #UNCRC and we received extensive media coverage.

We gratefully acknowledge funding received from the Katharine Howard Foundation and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to help us complete this project.



Top: Launching the Picture Your Rights report outside Leinster House  
 Middle: Some of the young people who wrote the Picture Your Rights report  
 Bottom: Fintan Dwyer (young person), Peter Power (UNICEF Ireland), James Reilly, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and our own Tanya Ward

### Picture Your Rights – what it's like to be a child in Ireland today

In this project, the children of Ireland designed a report that directly influenced the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's examination of Ireland.

*Picture Your Rights* is a report by children and young people that was presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in June. Together with UNICEF Ireland, we brought together 31 young people representing our membership organisations and from a cross-section of Irish society. Their report is a snapshot in time of what it is like to be a child living in Ireland.

The young people designed the entire report from start to finish, deciding on the methodology, themes and the use of quotes and photographs via Instagram to depict children's rights. The report represents the issues the group should be addressed for children and a particular focus was given to respecting teenagers, bullying and mental health, direct provision and religion in schools.

The consultation process was extensive involving 3,000 children and young people.

In June, five of the young people aged between 12 and 17 years from the group travelled to Geneva to meet with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Reflecting how empowered and energised they felt, they took the somewhat unusual decision to take full control and chair the meeting themselves. The Committee's Secretariat remarked that it was one of the best forms of direct participation that they had witnessed. The young people made a significant impact on the Committee's examination. A

number of key points raised in the report and by the group in Geneva were subsequently reflected in the Committee's 'List of Issues' for the Government including child poverty, direct provision and religion in schools.

The Report was officially launched in the European Parliament offices in Dublin and presented directly to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr James Reilly TD on 10 June.

We are extremely proud of this project and feedback from the young people was overwhelmingly positive with many saying that they never felt more listened to in their lives before.



*"Thanks for great day yesterday. I got a lot out of it, you had a great line up of speakers and great facilitation and organisation as always."*

*Feedback from a participant in 'Turning Wrongs to Rights' training*

### Understanding Children's Rights

By providing accessible training based on real life scenarios, we educate and mobilise people to bring children's rights to the centre of their work.

If you want to learn about children's rights, we are the people to talk to. We design all our training sessions so that participants come away with a better understanding of what children's rights are and more importantly, what to do when these rights are breached. Using a children's rights approach can prevent children from being harmed, denied access to a service/ opportunity or from experiencing discrimination.

We are especially proud of the inter-active training session we ran in November called 'Turning Wrongs to Rights' in the excellent venue at St. Patrick's Hospital. The aim of this session was to de-mystify and provide information on the remedies and redress bodies that can be accessed when children's rights have been violated. This day-long session brought together 20 participants from a range of sectors from our membership and beyond and included advice givers, students, lawyers, family and parental support workers, youth workers and others supporting children, young people and their families.



### Launch of Know Your Rights for Children

**Our Know Your Rights information pack equips children and their families to learn about their rights. Timely information, advice and intervention on children's rights and entitlements can remove barriers, prevent children from being harmed, denied access to a service/ opportunity or from experiencing discrimination.**

Our Know Your Rights Guide is a one-stop shop on the rights of children that we developed with the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL). Written in plain English and approved by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), the Guide addresses basic information gaps and sets out the legal rights and entitlements that children have in areas such as: equality and making my own decisions, education, health, protection from harm, rights in the family, as a migrant, in dealing with criminal law and the Gardaí and where to go for help.

In 2015, there were 4,349 page visits to the Know Your Rights homepage on our website. Spunout.ie, an information hub for approximately 80,000 active readers each month summarised sections of our pack into a series of factsheets.

*"The prestigious Fellowship is mutually beneficial, in that I can contribute to the organisation through the utilisation of my legal skills while continually developing as a champion of children's rights."*

**Catriona Doherty BL**, inaugural Catherine McGuinness Fellow



### Children's Rights Alliance and The Bar of Ireland Catherine McGuinness Fellowship

In 2014, the Children's Rights Alliance was privileged to establish a prestigious one-year Fellowship Programme for newly-qualified barristers. The fellowship is named in honour of Judge Catherine McGuinness, one of Ireland's greatest children's rights champions. The Fellow works as part of the Children's Rights Alliance's Legal and Policy Team. Catriona Doherty BL was appointed as the first Catherine McGuinness Fellow and her work with the Children's Rights Alliance has been hugely successful during 2015.

The importance of the Fellowship has been fully recognised by The Bar of Ireland who has extended the Fellowship to a three-year partnership with the Children's Rights Alliance to further endorse and support the Fellowship. The Family Lawyers Association of Ireland has also lent their vital endorsement and support. Through these partnerships, the Fellowship can continue to pitch itself as unique, highly-valued and prestigious.



Top: Edel at a Know Your Rights information stand at St. Patrick's Youth Mental Health Fair  
Bottom: A special launch for young people championed by disability rights activist, Joanne O'Riordan. Also: Walter Jayawardene, ICCL, Maria Corbett, Children's Rights Alliance and Michael Barron, BeLonGTo



Catriona Doherty, BL and Judge Catherine McGuinness at The Bar of Ireland



# Aim 2

## Implementation

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

### Key publications under Aim 2 in 2015:

- > Report Card 2015
- > Making Rights Real for Children, A Children's Rights Audit of Irish Law.

### Report Card 2015

The value of the Report Card lies in its ability to drive the implementation of promises to children in the *Programme for Government* that changes children's lives for the better.

Our annual flagship publication, Report Card, is our unique tool for tracking the Government's promises to children in the *Programme for Government*. Valued by Government officials, the Oireachtas, the media, the community and voluntary sectors and children/young people, the Report Card has consistently helped to highlight important issues for children and young people.



HIGHEST AND LOWEST GRADES 2015	
Child Literacy	A
School Buildings	A
Child and Family Agency	B
Inequalities in Family Life	B
Ryan Report Implementation Plan	B-
Children's Referendum	B-
Constitutional Convention	B-
Mental Health	E
Traveller and Roma Children	E+
Migrant Children	E+
Child Poverty	F

The Government received an overall 'C' grade in Report in 2015, for the third year in a row. It was awarded two 'A' grades for sustained investment in 'School Buildings' and the first significant improvement in 'Child Literacy' scores in thirty years. The Child and Family Agency (Tusla) had a successful first year, the Children and Family Relationships

Bill was published and Budget 2015 provided some breathing space for families.

However serious problems remain in the areas of mental health, protection from discrimination and in combatting child poverty, all of which leaves too many children behind.

The Report Card is based on solid research and consultations and it is graded by an independent assessment panel chaired by Judge Catherine McGuinness.

We secured blanket media coverage for the launch of *Report Card 2015* on 23 February. There was a total of 38 references and/or interviews in online, print or broadcast media. Our Chief Executive, Tanya conducted most of the media, in addition to Board, member organisations and the Report Card panel. RTÉ coverage

was broadcast on RTE's *Morning Ireland* and *Drivetime* with other broadcast slots included Today FM's *The Last Word*, *Newstalk Breakfast* and TV3. We secured print coverage in the *Irish Examiner*, *Irish Independent* and in tabloid and local newspapers.

Social media once again played a critical role in 2015 in driving traffic to the Report Card. Our Twitter handle and #ReportCard2015 trended on the launch day and steered traffic to our web site. There were more than 1,193 visits to Report Card pages of the website in February 2015.

A big thank you to the funders of *Report Card* which is an independently funded project: The Atlantic Philanthropies, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, The Community Foundation for Ireland, The Ireland Funds, Irish Youth Foundation and the Katharine Howard Foundation.



### Top of the Class 2015

Top was the Department of Education and Skills, under the direction of the Minister Jan O'Sullivan TD, gaining two laudable 'A' grades for continued investment in school buildings and for the roll-out of the national literacy and numeracy strategy. A close second came the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, James Reilly TD, who received a 'B' for the Child and Family Agency and a 'B-' for developments to protect children as set out in the Ryan Report Implementation Plan.



### Bottom of the Class 2015

Bottom was Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, who received an 'F' for Child Poverty. The Department of Justice and Equality did little better with two 'E+' grades for the lack of clear social inclusion measures to deal with the marginalisation of migrant children and Traveller and Roma children. An 'E' in Mental Health also reflected badly on the Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch TD.



### Making Rights Real for Children: A Children's Rights Audit of Irish Law

A compilation of inputs from experts in their fields, the Audit is a stock take and a roadmap pointing to the legal gaps in children's rights and child law.

We joined forces with the Law Centre for Children and Young People to develop this unique publication *Making Rights Real for Children: A Children's Rights Audit of Irish Law*. With children's rights strengthened in the Irish Constitution, we turned our attention to the legislation that governs the lives of children in Ireland and with this audit, aimed to highlight gaps in legal protection across a range of areas affecting children. While the audit focuses on areas of importance to vulnerable children, including children in care or in the asylum process, there is also a focus on non-discrimination and children's access to justice – of importance to all children.

Each chapter is written by a different legal expert in their field and was peer reviewed. Themes reviewed include: non-discrimination and equality; access to justice and decision-making; guardianship, access and custody; health and healthcare; welfare and material deprivation; education; youth justice; immigration and asylum law; and, child care law.

You can find the Audit on the Children's Rights Alliance website.

Heartfelt thanks to our funders: Úna Ní Raifeartaigh, SC; Pól Ó Murchú, Solicitor; Public Interest Law Alliance, PILA; Shannon & O'Connor Solicitors and Muriel Walls, Solicitor.



### Gratitude to our Founding Patron, Professor Geoffrey Shannon

We are honoured to have Prof. Geoffrey Shannon as our Founding Patron. Appointed in 2014, and a leading legal expert in children's rights, Geoffrey's list of accolades is long and includes the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection and the first Chair of the Adoption Authority. Geoffrey's immense insights and knowledge coupled with his deep passion for children's rights provide us with a constant support and inspiration. Thank you to Geoffrey for being our Founding Patron and for continuing to believe in the work of the Children's Rights Alliance.

### Thank you XL Catlin Insurance

A team of 30 volunteers from XL Catlin Insurance painted two floors of our building on 10 September 2015. They purchased all supplies and paint in our brand colours, and provided the necessary manpower to complete the painting – saving us thousands of Euro. As a result, our offices have been opened up for use to our over 100 member organisations and for rental income from other non-profits. The XL Catlin team is worth its weight in gold – because of them our vision to grow a children's rights hub has become a reality.

We would also like to give a big shout out to Marcus Reid, Architect who provided invaluable interiors advice on the use of brand colours and materials. Our offices look great!



A packed house at the launch of our Child Law Audit in The Bar of Ireland's Distillery Building



The brilliant staff of XL Catlin who painted our offices





# Aim 3

## Securing Change

Secure Legislative Change and Policy Changes to Give Meaningful Effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

### Key publications under Aim 3 in 2015:

- > Analysis of Budget 2016 and its Impact on Children
- > Pre-Budget 2016 Submission to the Department of Social Protection
- > Briefing Note on the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- > Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on the Victims of Crime Bill 2015
- > Submission to the Department of Health on the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015
- > Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on the International Protection Bill 2015
- > Briefing Note on Food Poverty as a Children's Rights Issue
- > Submission to the Department of Education and Skills on Transgender Children and Young People in Schools
- > Written submissions to and extracts Relating to Children and Young People in the Final Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process.

### Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020

By working directly with Government and our members, our role is central to the roll-out of the most important national policy for children and young people in Ireland today.

*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years). The purpose of this framework is to coordinate policy across Government to achieve better outcomes for children. A successful national policy for children in all aspects of their lives should provide a clear and cohesive plan of action across departments and agencies with targets, lines of responsibility and a defined budget.

We are proud to have been designated a central player in its implementation and we have been working hard to make sure that the voice of our members is brought to the table. Tanya is on the National Advisory Council alongside the



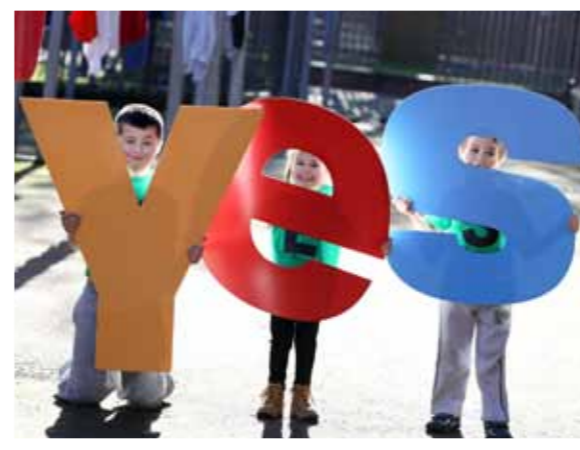
The Children's Rights Alliance is using the ambitious commitments for children and young people in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* to address key problems in Ireland today. For example, one third of children live in or are at risk of poverty. The Children's Rights Alliance is co-convening a Sub-Group with the Department of Social Protection with a view to informing an implementation plan that will lift 97,000 out of consistent poverty by 2020. This sub-group has been formed under the auspices of the National Advisory Council for

### Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures adopts five outcomes for children and young people:

- > Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
- > Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development
- > Are safe and protected from harm
- > Have economic security and opportunity
- > Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

ISPCC, One Family and many other members. Launched in 2014, the Council has successfully begun to complete its agenda as a platform for members of civil society to guide the implementation of the Framework and deliver its many innovative and far-reaching commitments for children.

Children and Young People. We are also supporting the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to implement the human rights and equality commitments under this policy framework and are using our role on the Council to address child homelessness and mental health issues for children.



Middle: James Reilly, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs signing the commencement order to effectively ban smacking  
Bottom: Children's Rights Alliance members and friends with Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald, TD, in Dublin Castle for seminar on Children and Family Relationships Act

### Children's Referendum becomes part of the Irish Constitution

At last, the amendment on children (Article 42A) is written into the Constitution of Ireland.

In November 2012, the Irish people voted in favour of inserting a new article on children into the Irish Constitution. There were many problems up to that point whereby not all children were adequately protected or treated equally. After almost two and a half years tied up in a legal challenge in the courts, finally, the amendment to strengthen children's constitutional rights was signed into law in April 2015.

### No More Smacking

Children are now safer and better protected thanks to the Children's Rights Alliance and its members.

In November, we witnessed the end of the defence of 'reasonable chastisement' to the corporal punishment or smacking of children in Irish law. We know the harm smacking or hitting causes to children, affecting their self-esteem and damaging the parent-child relationship. Abolition is something that we have been working towards for many years, in particular, with the ISPCC. While this change is not a magic wand to protect children, we know from other countries that this is a tool for change that will reduce abuse levels against children overall and support parents in their use of non-violent alternatives to discipline.

Congratulations to Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr James Reilly TD, and independent Senator, Jillian van Turnhout, who co-sponsored this amendment to the Children First Bill in the Seanad, paving the way for this momentous change. We also commend the Government and An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, for their leadership and commitment on the issue.

### Children and Family Relationships Act 2015

Working closely with our members, we secured real and tangible change for children in family law.

The Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 is a new piece of law responding to the increasing diversity of family life. Children cared for outside the marital family – up to one-in-four children – as well as children from LGBT families were amongst those whose rights were not fully protected. As the most important family law reform since the foundation of the state, our influence was essential.

The Children's Rights Alliance's endorsement of this legislation was fundamental to its success. Our impact on the Act secured momentous achievements – now, the best interests of children are a guiding principle in all custody, guardianship and access arrangements. There is legal certainty for children around their parentage and guardianship, and the cruel discrimination faced by children in non-marital families is no longer. Another very positive component is that there is a national Donor-Conceived Persons' Register meaning that children can obtain their genetic heritage on reaching adulthood – avoiding the pain that many adoptees have experienced in trying to uncover their genetic past.

### How we were successful

- > **Uniting Voices:** We did this by uniting the voices of our membership through a Working Group of 15 members. We co-ordinated activities, met regularly and organised closed briefings on the impact on the Bill with key experts.



Top: Saoirse Brady discusses the Children and Family Relationships Act on RTE News  
 Below: Tanya joins with Fergus Finlay, Barnardos and Grainia Long, ISPCC in calling for marriage equality  
 Middle: BeLonGTo YES coalition of children and youth rights groups  
 Right: Tanya writes an opinion article about marriage equality for The Irish Times

- > **Analysing the Bill and Co-ordinating Advocacy Activities:** We analysed the Government's legal proposals at all stages and advocated with the Minister for Justice and Equality on behalf of the Working Group. We also provided written briefings and organised advocacy meetings with Oireachtas members, political parties and major stakeholders.
- > **Building Consensus:** We built consensus among our members and in the media. We organised a major seminar in Dublin Castle in March involving the Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD.

### Marriage Equality Referendum 2015

**We made history by helping change forever what it means to grow up LGBT in Ireland and paving the way for equal marriage.**

Before the Marriage Equality Referendum, thousands of LGBT children felt like second-class citizens and children growing up

in LGBT families could not fully access their rights. We supported our members working on the 'Yes Equality' and 'BeLonG To YES' campaign which delivered a historic 'Yes' vote in the referendum in May.

The BeLonGTo YES coalition of children and youth rights organisations, of which the Children's Rights Alliance was a central player, had a huge role in securing this positive result on two counts, Firstly, by making the case as to why marriage equality is in the best interests of children and that it in no way undermines children's rights – deflecting an argument put forward by opponents of the referendum. Secondly, by activating a huge grassroots network of children, youth and family groups. This inspired young people and ensured a huge youth turnout on voting day.

The 'Yes' vote changed a lot about Ireland, but it particularly changed what it meant to be a young LGBT person in Ireland. The Children's Rights Alliance is incredibly proud to have been a small part of making such history.



Tanya on RTE News discussing children's rights

### Influencing Budget 2016

**Together with our members we discouraged attacks on children and achieved the most family friendly Budget of the last Government. We also informed our members and stakeholders to improve their understanding of how the Budget impacts on children.**

The Budget outlines the Government's proposed revenues and spending for the financial year. Each year, we engage in a highly effective and sustained campaign to discourage the Government from making budgetary attacks on children and families. We propose solutions and alternatives so that children are shielded from harsh budgetary decisions and can live their lives free from poverty. Our approach paid dividends with the first family-friendly budget for children by the Government during

its tenure. We welcomed a number of important decisions to benefit and improve the lives of thousands of children and families.

Though it is a very crowded space on budget day, the media was interested in what we had to say. Tanya was interviewed for RTE's *Morning Ireland*, *Newstalk News* and their dedicated Budget talk show, *Today FM* and *UTV Ireland*. Broadcast references were included in the *Irish Examiner* and *Evening Echo*.

Within 48 hours of the Budget being issued, the Children's Rights Alliance issued its hotly-anticipated, in-depth post-budget analysis providing a detailed analysis of the budgetary spend on children. This highlighted the positives and negatives, informing our members and stakeholders to better understand the actual impact on children and their families.

### Our Analysis of Budget 2016

#### Positives of Budget 2016

- > The extension of free GP care for all children under 12 years
- > The introduction of two weeks' paid paternity leave
- > The extension of the free pre-school year to children upon reaching three years of age
- > Extending subsidised childcare by 8,000 places so it is more widely available for families on low-incomes throughout the country
- > €15 million in 2016 to support children with disabilities to access early childhood care and education (and €33 million from 2017 onwards)
- > An investment of €3 million in afterschool services and €3.5 million to improve the quality of childcare
- > An additional €3 million for the School Meals Programme
- > An increase in the Family Income Supplement by €5 for a family with one child and by €10 for a family with two or more children
- > An increase by €5 to the Child Benefit payment bringing it to €140 per month
- > An extra €38 million for Tusla, the Child and Family Agency bringing its budget to €662 million
- > An additional €8 million for therapeutic services for children, including speech and language therapy
- > A tax increase of 50 cent on a packet of cigarettes to help deter children from a life of addiction.

#### Negatives of Budget 2016

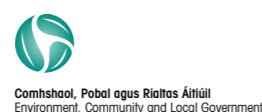
- > No increase in the Direct Provision payment for children
- > Limited measures to protect families at risk of homelessness
- > No increase in the excise duty on alcohol.



### Our Role as a Social Partner

**As a dedicated Social Partner, we bring children's issues to this unique form of engagement with Government to secure change.**

The Children's Rights Alliance is a nominated Social Partner on the Community and Voluntary Pillar. This allows us to give a children's rights perspective to engagement with Government Departments on a range of issues, most notably budgetary issues. This high-level of interaction can help to ensure that decisions are made protect children from harsh budgetary cuts so they can grow up free from poverty.



### Securing Change for Children in Direct Provision and the Protection Process

**We represented the voice of children on a Working Group that made recommendations on child protection, welfare and developmental issues for children in direct provision.**

There are nearly 1,300 asylum seeking children living in a system of direct provision where they largely live in B&B and hotel type accommodation. The problems for children in direct provision are well documented by the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection, Professor Geoffrey Shannon. Their experience varies hugely with some children growing up their whole lives never seeing their parents cook a meal or living in overcrowded bedrooms. HIQA reported in May 2015, that many children were experiencing extreme poverty with not enough clothes or toys.



Athlone, Co. Westmeath direct provision centre

We were appointed as the only children's representative by Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald, TD and Minister for State with responsibility for New Communities, Culture and Equality, Aodhán Ó Riordáin TD at the Departments of Justice and Equality to the Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process.

We worked very hard to successfully bring the voice of children to the decision-making table and shape far-reaching recommendations in the report. This was a unique endeavour involving five NGO and representatives from all government departments. The final recommendations were difficult to secure yet represent the most significant change in government policy on asylum seekers in 15 years.

Since the report was published in June, the Children's Rights Alliance has worked hard to ensure that the child-related recommendations were implemented. We ran a campaign event in December outside the gates of Leinster House with the support of Barnardos and ISPC to encourage the Government to increase the direct provision payment for children. This resulted in the first increase in nearly 16 years by €6. A small amount but it's a start.

We also succeeded in encouraging the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Reception and Integration Agency to carry out the first Government-led consultation with asylum seeking children. This will be published in 2016. The Government also agreed to lift restrictions preventing asylum seeking children from complaining to the Ombudsman for Children.



Our Catherine McGuinness Fellow, Catriona Doherty BL presents to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice

### New Law to Protect Victims of Crime

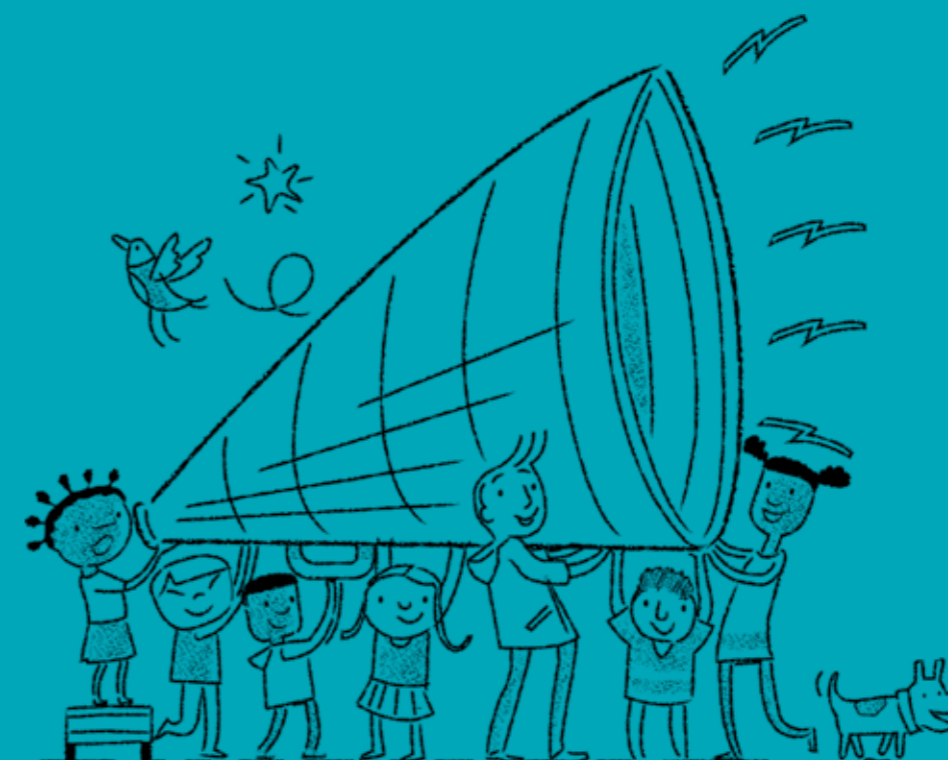
**We made recommendations so that child victims will be better protected in law.**

Childhood is a precious place and child victims of crime deserve every protection possible – up to now this has not been the case. During 2015, we completed a child-focused review of the General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2015. This new law puts forward many changes to better protect victims of crime and is long overdue, keeping Ireland in line with a key EU Directive. We presented at an Immigrant Council of Ireland seminar in September, providing a critique of the weakness of the General Scheme to provide a right of access to services for child victims. We also presented to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality in October. The impact of these activities will be fully understood as the Bill progresses through the Oireachtas.

### International Protection Act 2015

**We shaped the law so that it is more child-friendly for refugee children.**

This Act is important as it impacts on extremely vulnerable children who have been trafficked or separated from their parents. We wrote several papers to identify issues for children, and we presented before the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality to help shape the development of this law. We were very pleased when in December, Frances Fitzgerald TD, the Minister for Justice and Equality announced she would improve the protection of children in the Bill. She said this was prompted by "helpful engagement" from the Children's Rights Alliance. The Minister accepted amendments from the Alliance to make the protection system more child-friendly.



### Protecting Children from Smoking

We supported a campaign to introduce plain packaging for cigarettes that will help stop children from smoking.



Tanya at photocall marking introduction of legislation banning smoking in cars with children, alongside James Reilly, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Leo Varadkar, TD, Minister for Health and Senators

Smoking is the largest cause of preventable death in the world so we support any steps made to reduce the numbers of children from smoking. We continued to work with the fantastic campaign by the Irish Heart Foundation, the Irish Cancer Society and a coalition of children's charities to support the Government's plans to standardise cigarette packets to stop children from smoking. In March, the Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Act 2015 was enacted, introducing standardised packaging for tobacco products.

During the year, we also made submissions to the Department of Health on the introduction of an EU Directive on Tobacco and on legislation around the sale of tobacco and e-cigarettes.



## Aim 4

### Building Internal Capacity

Ensure the Children's Rights Alliance has the Internal Capacity to Fulfill its Strategic Aims

#### Key publications under Aim 4 in 2015:

- > Annual Review 2014
- > Weekly Oireachtas Monitors
- > Information E-Bulletins for Members and Friends.

Top: Some members of staff and Board of the Children's Rights Alliance



### Robust Governance

#### Structure

The Children's Rights Alliance is a company limited by guarantee without a share capital. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended at our AGM on 28 May 2013.

#### Compliance

We are registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority. We comply with The Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland. We are fully signed up to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising drawn up by the Irish Charities Tax Research Ltd. You can read our Donor Charter and Public

Compliance Statement on our website under 'Our Promise to Alliance supporters'.

#### Board

The Children's Rights Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors who are elected by the members, and with additional limited provision for up to two co-optees to provide additional expertise/perspective. Elected potential board members are nominated by members and elected by secret ballot at AGMs. At every AGM, one-third of the Board must retire or stand for re-election. The independent Chair of the Alliance, Tom Costello, is the sole co-optee currently. Co-optees are subject to reappointment at each AGM.

BOARD MEMBERS	MEETING ATTENDANCE
Paul Gilligan, Chair (retired in April 2015)	2/2
Aine Lynch, Vice Chair (retired in May 2015)	3/3
Noreen Flynn	6/7
Fergus Finlay	7/7
Jackie O'Callaghan	0/7
Michael Barron	4/7
Denise Charlton	5/7
Tom Costello	6/7
Tess Noonan (elected in May 2015)	6/6
Catherine Keane (elected in May 2015)	4/4
Robert Martin (co-opted in May 2015)	1/3
STAFF IN REGULAR ATTENDANCE	
Chief Executive	7/7
Office and Finance Manager	7/7

"... I find all CRA [Children's Rights Alliance] processes inclusive and have a strong impression CRA listens to its membership - nice one!"

Quote from a Children's Rights Alliance member

The Board is supported by a committee structure which deals with specific aspects of the company's business. There were two standing committees in 2015:

<p><b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b> This Committee is responsible for effective review and monitoring of financial risks; reliable management and financial reporting; ensuring compliance with laws/regulations; and maintenance of an effective and efficient audit. The Audit Committee meets four times a year in advance of Board meetings.</p> <p>This Committee was expanded to become the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in September 2015.</p>	<p><b>MEMBERS</b> Aine Lynch (retired in May 2015) Denise Charlton (retired in May 2015) Noreen Flynn Robert Martin (retired in December 2015) Michael Barron (retired in May 2015) Tom Costello Colm Bryson, Independent</p> <p><b>Staff in regular attendance</b> Chief Executive Office and Finance Manager</p>
<p><b>REMUNERATION COMMITTEE</b> This Committee meets once a year to set and review all staff salaries and pensions.</p>	<p><b>MEMBERS</b> Tom Costello Denise Charlton Robert Martin (retired in December 2015) Noreen Flynn</p> <p><b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive</p>

## Finance

The management accounts are prepared in the Children's Rights Alliance by appropriate personnel with the necessary expertise and in accordance with best practice. In 2013, the Board adopted a Financial and Internal Controls Policy and the accounts are prepared in accordance with this policy.

The audited accounts comply with the requirements of Companies Act 2014 and although not obliged to comply with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), we have implemented its recommendations in our audited accounts.

### Financial Overview

Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 December 2015

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	2015	2014
Income	€701,896	€753,299
Expenditure	€530,385	€802,253
Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources for Year	€171,511	(€48,954)
Total General Funds carried forward at end of year	€599,693	€428,182

## Auditors

The annual audit of the Children's Rights Alliance is undertaken by JPA Brenson Lawlor Chartered Accountants. They were appointed at our AGM in May 2015.

## Farewell and Welcome to Chair and Board Members

We bid a very fond farewell to Paul Gilligan who was our highly-regarded Chairperson since 2009. Paul was an excellent chair and deeply committed to the children's rights cause. Always a fantastic source of advice and wisdom, perhaps the greatest highpoint during his tenure was the passing of the Children's Rights Referendum, something Paul had called for over many years. We held a special event for Paul in March to formally thank him for his incredible contribution. We look forward to ongoing, future collaboration with Paul and his fantastic team at St. Patrick's Mental Health Services.



Top: Paul Gilligan, outgoing Chairperson  
Bottom: Tom Costello, new Chairperson

In 2015 we welcomed our new Chair, Tom Costello. Tom joined the Board in 2014 as the Vice-Chair. He recently finished as Programme Executive at The Atlantic Philanthropies after 14 years advising on investments spanning programmes for Children, Older People, and in Education and Community Development. He is a member of the Charities Regulatory Authority Board and has held positions on the Faculty of the Irish Management Institute, and as Director of Programme Development with FÁS and the Youth Employment Agency. Tom's early career in the voluntary sector included stints as Director of the National Youth Council of Ireland and President of the Union of Students in Ireland. We are thrilled to have Tom as our new Chairperson and look forward to working with him.

In 2015 we bid a farewell to longstanding Board member Áine Lynch. Áine was a terrific asset to the Children's Rights Alliance as Treasurer and Vice Chair. At the end of 2014, Carmel Corrigan also stepped down from the Board and we heartily thank her for all her work. Robert Martin retired from the Board in December 2015 and we thank him for his input. Jackie O'Callaghan departed from the Board in December 2015 also. In 2015, we welcomed Tess Noonan (ISPCC), Catherine Keane (Alcohol Action Ireland) and Robert Martin (Independent) onto the board.

## Impactful Communications 2015

2015 was another impactful year for the Children's Rights Alliance in terms of our communications.

We secured sustained broadcast, online and print media interest throughout the year, particularly at the time of the launch of *Report Card 2015*, the Children and Family

Relationships Act 2015, *Are We There Yet?* Report and in relation to HIQA reports on Direct Provision and Ballydowd special care unit, as well as on the issue of corporal punishment.

Our new and responsive frontend to the website continued to load faster, look cleaner and work well on mobile devices.



**Website:** We had 107,396 unique users visit the website in 2015. This is a 27% increase on 2014.

**Social media:** 1,775 new followers on Twitter (total end 2015 approx. 8,275) and 842 new Facebook page likes (total end 2015 approx. 5,572).

**Press releases:** 39 press releases were issued in 2015, an increase of 21 from 2014.

**Radio and television:** We appeared on all major national news agenda setting stations and local stations and there were at least 250 broadsheet, tabloid, regional and online newspaper mentions of us in 2015. Television and radio interviews included: RTÉ Radio 1 Morning Ireland, RTÉ Radio 1 Drivetime, RTÉ News at One, RTÉ Television News, RTÉ Nuacht, TV3 News, TV3 Tonight with Vincent Browne, UTV Ireland, Today FM's The Last Word, Newstalk Breakfast and numerous regional stations.

## Building a Sustainable Organisation

The Children's Rights Alliance continued to receive core funding from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Affairs for our work in representing children's issues on Social Partnership and to act as a national network. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs also supported the Children's Rights Alliance to deliver critical projects relating to Ireland's review under the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and supporting the national implementation of policy for children. In total we received €193,314 in government grants.

The Atlantic Philanthropies has been a champion of the Children's Rights Alliance through its Children and Youth Programme. Atlantic made a three-year investment in the Alliance from 2014-2016. This includes a capital grant to enable the Children's Rights Alliance to purchase a permanent building.

We also raised a further €151,286 (excluding membership, see below) for other projects, training, consultancy and donations.

Our flagship annual Report Card project continued to benefit from three-year funding campaign from the Community Foundation for Ireland, the Katharine Howard Foundation and the Irish Youth Foundation covering 2014 to 2016. Representing a total of €127,500, their support of the Report Card will help us achieve many more changes for children in Ireland. A funding partnership was agreed with The Bar of Ireland to endorse and support the Catherine McGuinness Fellowship for three-years and funding was also secured from the Family Lawyers Association of Ireland for this project.

Being a strong independent voice for children is core to the work of the Children's Rights Alliance. Membership income is an important way to guarantee that independence. Members pay a fee ranging from €70 (for organisations with an income under €50,000) to €1,000 (for organisations with an income over €2 million). Thanks to our many members, our membership income increased from €27,858 in 2014 to €30,220 in 2015. To further sustain the organisation, a Member Development Fund has been established to provide greater funding for the organisation to ensure our independence and responsiveness to members.

*"...It helped clarify how you can meaningfully engage in government policy development. While not everything we were looking for came about, it was clear that the process impacted on the legislation that was brought about."*

*Quote from a Children's Rights Alliance member*



7 Red Cow Lane – our forever home

## The Atlantic Philanthropies – Champions for Children

Overall, the Atlantic Philanthropies has invested \$1.2b in Ireland over almost thirty years to advance higher education, human rights and services for the young and old in Ireland. The Children's Rights Alliance has been a recipient of core funding from Atlantic since the late 1990s and year-on-year, this support has been the largest source of funding to us. The value of such core funding cannot be overstated. Such support has allowed us to fully retain our independence with the freedom to react to a range of children's rights issues as they arise. This has helped us to secure many important milestones for children over the last number of years, perhaps most important of these has been ensuring children's rights are better reflected in the Constitution. A massive thank you to The Atlantic Philanthropies for continually believing in us and helping us make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child.

The  
**ATLANTIC**  
Philanthropies

## Our Forever Home - Children's Rights Hub in Red Cow Lane

Along with our member organisation, EPIC – Empowering People in Care, in 2015 we purchased our 'Forever Home' at 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7. By securing a donation of €200,000 from The Atlantic Philanthropies along with some of our reserves, we purchased a five-storey building in the heart of one of the most up-and-coming areas of the city. The team moved to the new building in February. This will undoubtedly help create a sustainable future for the organisation. Our vision is to create a children's rights hub for members and other non-profit organisations, while securing valuable rental income at the same time. This dream is coming to fruition and we have already rented out some of the space to organisations including EQUATE, the Prevention and Early Intervention Network and the Katharine Howard Foundation.

A special thanks is due to our solicitor Eamonn Shannon, to John McKay in Ganly Walters and to Jane Forman in The Atlantic Philanthropies for their help in making this happen!

## Thanks to our funders

Our work for children could not happen without the support of our funders. We thank you for believing in us.

Top: Emma McKinley our Communications and Development Manager oversees the sustainability plan, media activities and is our brand guardian  
Bottom: Children's Rights Alliance website

*"Very well briefed by CRA [Children's Rights Alliance] and CRA happy to take views on board"*

*Quote from a Children's Rights Alliance member*

## Membership

The size and diversity of our membership gives the Children's Rights Alliance its credibility, mandate and voice for children. Our members are integral to our work, informing our advocacy and helping us translate the reality that children and families face into national policy making. We have established a number of working groups comprised of members and stakeholders to work on specific issues. In 2015, groups worked on:

- > *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020
- > Parallel Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Project
- > Children and Family Relationships Bill
- > Working Group on the Protection Process
- > Child and family homelessness.



A busy members meeting on homelessness at 7 Red Cow Lane in September

### Membership Benefits

By joining the Children's Rights Alliance, members can:

- > Be part of a well-recognised national voice that is led by its members and works collectively to achieve real change for children
- > Inform our research, shape our policy and set our agenda
- > Receive our information updates, newsletters and weekly Oireachtas/parliamentary monitor detailing what is happening for children
- > Access to our expertise, networking opportunities and training on children's rights.

### Membership Survey

In 2015 we surveyed our members to ensure that we are being effective. The results of this survey were incredibly positive and will be used to guide the review of our Member Strategy for the next two years.

Our impact on members

- > 95 per cent of the members surveyed view membership as being value for money
- > 75 per cent of members surveyed view membership as being quite or extremely important to their work
- > 54 per cent of members surveyed had taken part in member working groups
- > 89 per cent of members surveyed are happy with the strategic direction of the Alliance.

### New Members

We welcomed nine new full members in 2015, increasing our membership to 113 by the end of December 2015. We also now have 21 individual members and one Associate member.

#### 22q11 Ireland Support Group

The 22q11 Ireland Support Group was set up in 2007 to provide help, support and accurate information to Irish families. Our children are heroes. They are born with a chromosomal disorder that not too many people know about (including us!) which means that basically they grow up in a world surrounded by adults who do not understand their condition. Apart from their many medicinal problems the neuro-cognitive profile of 22q 11 is not very well recognised and this lack of awareness can and does cause distress both to the children themselves and those involved in their care.



#### Disability Federation of Ireland

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) represents the interests and the expectations of people with disabilities to be fully included in Irish society. It comprises organisations that represent and support people with disabilities and disabling conditions.



#### Dental Health Foundation

The Dental Health Foundation (DHF), governed by a Board of trustees from both public and private dental practice, is a charitable trust with the aim of improving the oral health of the Irish people. Since its establishment the DHF has emerged as a unifying voice in the field of oral health promotion, working with a wide variety of interested parties to champion change.



#### Extern Ireland

Extern Ireland works with young people at the edge of care/ custody and their families. They aim to change people's lives, by meeting them at their point of need bringing solutions and delivering quality services reconnecting them with society, building better communities for us all. They provide supports to young people and families in their local communities as they are committed to positive community inclusion and believe everyone has the ability to contribute positively in society.



#### Gaelscoileanna Teo

Gaelscoileanna Teo is a national support organisation in the pre-school, primary and post-primary Irish medium education sector. It offers support, advice and assistance to all those who wish to have their children educated through Irish as well as support and advocacy to the naionraí and schools and the entire sector.



#### Irish Association for Infant Mental Health

Affiliated with the World Association for Infant Mental Health, the Irish Association for Infant Mental Health (IAIMH) is a non-profit national organisation of professionals from a range of disciplines, who work with infants, toddlers, and their families. IAIMH's mission is to raise awareness about the social and emotional development of babies and toddlers and the importance of early care giving relationships including the role of families, community, and culture. It also supports education, training, research, clinical practice, and policy development in the area of infant mental health.



#### Suas Educational Development

The vision of Suas Educational Development is a world where all young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Suas believes education can transform lives. They provide education to the children that need it most in Ireland, India and Kenya. They educate young people about global issues that cause poverty and inequality.



"A fine organisation, thanks for all that you do!"

Quote from a Children's Rights Alliance member

**The Prevention and Early Intervention Network**

The Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) is a network of evidence-based practice, advocacy and research organisations across the Republic of Ireland that share a commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and their communities. The majority of our members specialise in delivering prevention and early intervention programs to help children, families and communities to realise their potential. Their network website showcases more than 40 such programmes in the Republic of Ireland which have been delivered and independently validated.



**Teachers' Union of Ireland**

The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) is a Trade Union organising teachers and lecturers in Ireland engaged in post-primary, higher and further education. TUI represents over 14,500 members at second and third level in the education service. The Union is made up of 62 Branches in 19 Areas.



**Oireachtas Monitor and eBulletin – Children's Rights Now!**

We publish a weekly Oireachtas Monitor for members, providing a round-up of children's issues discussed in the Oireachtas. The updates include debates, written and oral questions and Committee sessions that have taken place in the previous week. In our membership survey the Members rated the monitor as the most useful publication that we develop. This unique publication is produced by Julie Ahern, our Membership and Public Affairs Officer and is disseminated by email to members and placed on our website.

Julie also compiles our very successful *Children's Rights Now!* eBulletin. Launched in 2014 and totally unique to members, it provides Children's Rights Alliance updates, legal, policy and political developments, as well as employment, training and funding opportunities for the sector.



Julie Ahern, Membership and Public Affairs Office compiles the popular Oireachtas Monitor, the eBulletin and implements the membership strategy

**Our People**

The Children's Rights Alliance benefits from a dynamic, expert and committed team of individuals.

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE STAFF (AT DECEMBER 2015)**

**Tanya Ward**  
Chief Executive

**Legal and Policy Team**  
**Maria Corbett**  
Legal and Policy Director & Deputy Chief Executive  
**Edel Quinn**  
Senior Legal and Policy Officer, Attorney-at-Law  
**Catherine McGuinness Fellow**  
Catriona Doherty, BL

**Communications and Development Team**  
**Emma McKinley**  
Communications and Development Manager  
**Julie Ahern**  
Membership and Public Affairs Officer

**Administration and Finance**  
**Patricia Hoey**  
Office & Finance Manager

In 2015, we also gained from the invaluable support of several interns including: Cathleen Day (University of Tulsa), Lisa Ennis (Maynooth University), Lauren Flanagan (UNCRC Intern), Hazel Kerrigan (UCD Clinical Legal Education), John Morrissey, Ceara Martin (Maynooth University), Jennifer Murphy (Carlow IT). We greatly appreciate their time and commitment!

We said a sad goodbye to Ken Reid our Information Officer after eight years. Ken was an integral part of the team and is very much missed. We also bid farewell to Saoirse Brady, Research and Projects Manager, a valued member since 2013.





## Promoting Children and Young People Externally

The Children's Rights Alliance promoted the rights of children by participating and being represented on the following entities during 2015.

### International

- > Eurochild
- > Child Rights Connect

### Government / Statutory

- > *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*: National Advisory Council for Children and Young People
- > Child Poverty Sub-Group co-convened with the Department of Social Protection and the Children's Rights Alliance under the auspices of the National Advisory Council for Children and Young People as part of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*
- > Community and Voluntary Pillar, Social Partnership
- > Working Group to Report to Government Working Group on the Protection Process on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers (until June 2015)

- > Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights
- > Ryan Report Implementation Plan Monitoring Group

### Non-Governmental Organisations

- > Children's Mental Health Coalition
- > Child Care Law Reporting Project Advisory Group
- > Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Initiative led by Amnesty International
- > EQUATE (Advisory Board)
- > Equality and Rights Alliance
- > Health and Children's Charities Standardised Packaging Alliance
- > *Our Voices, Our Rights*, NGO coalition responding to the second review of Ireland under the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights led by FLAC, Free Legal Advice Centres.
- > Prevention and Early Intervention Network
- > Saving Childhood Ryan Group
- > Turn Off the Red Light led by the Immigrant Council of Ireland



Edel Quinn, our Senior Legal and Policy Officer representing us in Brussels with Eurochild

**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.**

22q11

Ag Eisteacht

Alcohol Action Ireland

Alliance Against Cutbacks in Education

Amnesty International Ireland

ASH Ireland

Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)

ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd

Atheist Ireland

Autism Network Ireland

Barnardos

Barretstown Camp

Bedford Row Family Project

BeLonG To Youth Services

Care Leavers' Network

Catholic Guides of Ireland

Childhood Development Initiative

Children in Hospital Ireland

COPE Galway

Cork Life Centre

Crosscare

Dental Health Foundation of Ireland

Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC

Disability Federation of Ireland

DIT – School of Social Sciences & Legal Studies

Down Syndrome Ireland

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project

Early Childhood Ireland

Educate Together

EPIC

EQUATE

Extern Ireland

Focus Ireland

Foróige

Future Voices Ireland

Gaelscoileanna Teo

GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network

Headstrong - The National Centre for Youth Mental Health

Healthy Food for All

Immigrant Council of Ireland

Inclusion Ireland

Independent Hospitals Association of Ireland

Inspire Ireland

Institute of Community Health Nursing

Institute of Guidance Counsellors

Irish Association for Infant Mental Health

Irish Association of Social Workers

Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)

Irish Foster Care Association

Irish Girl Guides

Irish 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

Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice

Kids' Own Publishing Partnership

Law Centre for Children and Young People

Lifestart National Office

Mental Health Reform

Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project

MyMind

National Childhood Network

National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)

National Parents Council Post Primary

National Parents Council Primary

National Youth Council of Ireland

One Family

One in Four

Parentstop

Pavee Point

Peter McVerry Trust

Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)

Realt Beag

SAFE Ireland

Saoirse Housing Association

SAOL Beag Children's Centre

School of Education UCD

Scouting Ireland

Simon Communities of Ireland

Social Care Ireland

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Sonas Domestic Violence Charity

Special Needs Parents Association

SpunOut.ie

St. Nicholas Montessori College

St. Nicholas Montessori Teacher's Association

St. Patrick's Mental Health Services

Start Strong

Step by Step Child & Family Project

Suas Educational Development

Sugradh

Teachers' Union of Ireland

Terenure Rugby Football Club

The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children

The Gaurdian Childrens Project

The Prevention and Early Intervention Network

The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

Traveller Visibility Group Ltd

Treoir

UNICEF Ireland

youngballymun

Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)

Youth Work Ireland

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Uniting Voices For Children

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.

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## **Children's Rights Alliance**

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