

# Directors' Report and Financial Statements

for the year ending 31 December 2019



**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 2019

- 22q11
- Ag Eisteacht
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Amnesty International Ireland
- An Cosán
- ASH Ireland
- AslAm
- Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)
- 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
- Child Care Law Reporting Project
- Childhood Development Initiative
- Childminding Ireland
- Children in Hospital Ireland
- COPE Galway
- Cork Life Centre
- Crosscare
- CyberSafeIreland
- Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
- Dental Health Foundation of Ireland
- Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- 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
- Independent Hospitals
- Association of Ireland
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors
- Irish Aftercare Network
- 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
- Jigsaw
- Katharine Howard Foundation
- Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership
- Mecpaths
- Mental Health Reform
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- Mothers’ Union
- Museum of Childhood Project
- Music Generation
- My Project Minding You
- 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
- Psychological Society of Ireland
- Rainbows Ireland
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Realt Beag
- Respond Housing
- SAFE Ireland
- Saoirse Housing Association
- SAOL Beag Children’s Centre
- Scouting Ireland
- School of Education UCD
- Sexual Violence Centre Cork
- Simon Communities of Ireland
- Social Care Ireland
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Sonas Domestic Violence Charity
- Special Needs Parents Association
- SPHE Network
- SpunOut.ie
- St. Nicholas Montessori College
- St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers’ Association
- St. Patrick’s Mental Health Services
- Step by Step Child & Family Project
- Suas Educational Development
- Teachers’ Union of Ireland
- Terenure Rugby Football Club
- 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
- Youngballymun
- Young Knocknaheeny
- Young Social Innovators
- Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
- Youth Work Ireland

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# **Directors and Other Information**

▶ Chair	Tom Maher
▶ Treasurer	Colm Bryson
▶ Directors	Mark O'Connor
	Colm Bryson
	Maureen Dillon
	June Tinsley
	Katie Mannion
	Tom Maher
	Marie Cumiskey (resigned 09/05/2019)
	Mary Lawlor (resigned 15/11/2019)
	Grainia Long (resigned 10/05/2019)
	Orla Cunningham (appointed 23/03/20)
	Ciáirín de Buis (appointed 23/03/20)
▶ Company Secretary	Katie Mannion (appointed 02/01/2020)
	Tom Maher (resigned 02/01/2020)
▶ Charity Number	CHY 11541
▶ Charity Registration Number	20031909
▶ Company Number	316758
▶ Registered Office and Business Address	7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7
▶ Auditors	Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm, Paramount Court Corrig Road, Sandyford Business Park, Dublin 18
▶ 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

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# **Chairpersons' Report**

**For the year ended  
31 December 2019**





**The Children's Rights Alliance has had one of its most successful years to date particularly in terms of its campaign efforts to address child poverty and in winning the Good Governance Award 2019.**



## Chair's Foreword

I became Acting Chair of the Children's Rights Alliance on 15 November 2019 when Mary Lawlor stepped down. I am a longstanding Board member and have served as Vice Chair and Company Secretary. I have also been a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. In taking up the role of Acting Chair, I am aware that the Children's Rights Alliance has had one of its most successful years to date particularly in terms of its campaign efforts to address child poverty and in winning the Good Governance Award 2019.

However, I am also aware of the challenges for the Children's Rights Alliance in developing its next Strategic Plan when there are so many pressing issues and the need to fundraise so that the Alliance can deliver the plan. In particular, the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to change how the Alliance operates for the foreseeable future. The impact of the virus itself and the social distancing rules has also changed the context and economy for a generation of children. However, poor outcomes are not inevitable.

All board members are very proud of the achievements of the Children's Rights Alliance in 2019. The Children's Rights Alliance and its members had a unique opportunity in 2019 to run a joint initiative with *The Irish Times* to change the national conversation on child poverty and to lead to increased investment in public services for children in Budget 2020. This unique and once in a lifetime opportunity provided a platform for children and young people experiencing poverty to talk about its impacts. It also created a space for politicians to make important investments

to address child poverty. Going forward I want the Alliance to continue its child poverty campaign and to advocate that child poverty is a key focus for the next Programme for Government and the next National Children's Strategy for Children and Young People.

We know that it can be difficult for many parents, professionals and young people to access information and legal advice on children's rights. I was delighted that the Children's Rights Alliance launched its Know Your Rights pack in 2019 providing easy-to-read information on children's rights and entitlements. It was a huge piece of work and it's a valuable resource for the sector. I was also pleased that the Alliance was able to support the Law Society of Ireland to run a training programme for lawyers on how to represent children and young people in legal proceedings. The Alliance launched an information helpline in March 2018, and we found that the numbers of calls grew in 2019. Going forward the Alliance will have to increase its staffing capacity to effectively deal with the calls. At the same time, we also found that children and families contacting us also wanted basic advocacy support on individual cases and not just legal advice and that is something we will address in 2020.

Reforming Direct Provision for refugee children has also been a priority for the Children's Rights Alliance. In August 2019, the Government published National Standards for people in the protection process. These standards have the capacity to transform the reception system for people seeking protection if they are fully implemented. The Standards provide important rules on how to support children and families, including the provision of own-door accommodation. In terms of next steps, the Alliance will be advocating for HIQA to be made the inspection body for refugee accommodation.

In terms of my hopes and aims for the future, the Alliance invested considerable resources in meeting its legal obligations in 2019 and in the development of a new policy on staff pay and compensation. Going forward I want to explore new ways to identify how the legal compliance burden can be shared with other organisations and I want the Alliance to develop its own quality management system. In 2020 I will be ensuring that the Alliance is compliant with the Charities Governance Code and that the Board is fully aware of its obligations under the Code.

I will also be prioritising the development of the next Strategic Plan (June 2021-2024) and taking account of the new reality of Covid-19. There is no doubt that our focus will have to change.

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 wanted to thank Fintan O'Toole and *The Irish Times* board and journalists for their extraordinary work in highlighting the impact of child poverty in Ireland. I also wish to thank the funders for their continued support for 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.

I wish to pay a special tribute to Mary Lawlor, the outgoing Chair. Mary took up the role in 2017 and had to step down due to other external commitments, in particular, Mary was appointed the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2020. I also wish to thank my colleagues on the Children's Rights Alliance board for their time and commitment that they have made to the organisation. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Chief Executive and the staff of the Alliance for their continued dedication, energy and drive in delivering the Alliance's mission.

## **Tom Maher** **Chairperson**



Dil Wickremasinghe joins with Ronan Costello from Twitter, a young person who helped us launch our Know Your Rights guide and Julie Ahern, Legal and Policy Manager



Tanya Ward with Judge Catherine McGuinness at the launch of Report Card 2019



Taoiseach, Michéal Martin TD and Saoirse Brady our Head of Legal, Policy and Public Affairs supporting No Child 2020

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# **Directors' Report**

**For the year ended  
31 December 2019**

**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 2019.**

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.**
- **People, systems, structures and resources.**
- **Financial review.**
- **Structure, governance and management.**
- **Plans for the Future.**

## ► 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.**

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In order to meet the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 a special resolution was put to members in December 2019 to enable the Board to change the name from Children's Rights Alliance – Republic of Ireland Limited to Children's Rights Alliance – Republic of Ireland.

The Children's Rights Alliance is a registered charity (CHY 11541) and in 2019 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:

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

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

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Consult with children and young people when appropriate.

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

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Foster positive working relationships with the media.

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Reflect an ongoing strategic and cost-effective approach.

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Ensure openness and transparency.

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Incorporate regular monitoring and evaluation of its work.

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

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## Priority Issues for 2017-2020

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 2017-2020

The six strategic objectives set out below have been developed with the aim of progressing the realisation of children's rights and ensuring a measureable 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**

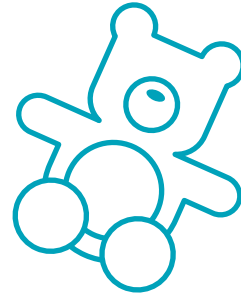
To put a **spotlight** on serious children's rights violations, in particular, the rights of children seeking international protection and in direct provision.

**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 by 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. In 2019, our annual milestone was to use our collaboration with *The Irish Times* newspaper to change the conversation on child poverty, offer solutions and mobilise action to create the conditions for change.

“No Child 2020 was ultimately a battle against hopelessness and indifference.”

*Fintan O'Toole, The Irish Times, 21 December 2019*

The No Child 2020 campaign was a unique national collaboration between *The Irish Times* and the Children's Rights Alliance. Fintan O'Toole came up with the No Child 2020 concept and the campaign was inspired by the centenary of the Democratic Programme. In parallel with this special editorial focus on child poverty by *The Irish Times*, the Children's Rights Alliance with its 100+ members ran a bespoke political advocacy campaign to complement *The Irish Times* coverage. This centred on Five Key Asks (see box).

#### The No Child 2020 Campaign Asks

Poverty isn't inevitable and there are solutions. We are calling on the Government and decision-makers to act upon five key asks:

1. **Food:** Every child will have a hot nutritious meal every day
2. **Health:** Every child will have access to basic healthcare when they need it
3. **Participation:** Every child will have the opportunity to take part in community-based arts and cultural activities
4. **Education:** Every child will receive free primary education including free schoolbooks
5. **Housing:** Every child will live in secure and affordable housing.

The No Child 2020 campaign provided a unique opportunity to make a real difference on child poverty. With funding from the Community Foundation for Ireland and the Tomar Trust, the Alliance was able to recruit a Campaign Strategic Advisor, Denise Charlton, formerly of Together for Yes, Marriage Equality and President Higgins's last presidential campaign, to guide and direct the project.

“It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.”

*Democratic Programme of the first Dáil, 1919*

Our campaign was primarily a campaign aimed at politicians and civil servants, to ensure five asks, in Budget 2020. In May 2019 we organised a political panel debate on child poverty with party leaders – the first time in 10 years. We ran a local and European election campaign with 468 local election candidates and 25 MEP candidates signing up to a pledge to tackle child poverty. We also ran a day-long political briefing for Oireachtas members in Buswells Hotel in June 2019 and 41 individual meetings took place with political representatives over the period.

In terms of media outputs, *The Irish Times* itself produced over 100 pieces of content and the Alliance was cited in almost a quarter. The level and quality of coverage generated by *The Irish Times* ensured political attention and support from the outset. The Chief Executive also contributed two opinion pieces and participated in *The Irish Times Politics Podcast* with Hugh Lenihan and Fintan O'Toole and the *Reboot Republic Podcast* with Rory Hearne.



No Child 2020 child poverty supplement in *The Irish Times*



**Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures**

While No Child 2020 was a public facing campaign, the Alliance was able to use its position on the National Advisory Council

for Children and Young People to influence the national agenda on child poverty. The Chief Executive is Chair of the Council and child poverty is a key priority.

In 2020, the Council prepared its own submission to influence the national budget and recommended to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to carry out research to understand the drivers of child poverty in Ireland. Subsequently, the Minister commissioned research to understand children's experiences of child poverty in Ireland. This will provide an important evidence-base and will inform policy making for many years to come.



Our members Karen Kiernan and Jelena Simic from One Family supporting #NoChild2020



Making history as political leaders across the spectrum support our No Child 2020 child poverty campaign



Our members Rachel Morgan and Orla Cahill from Focus Ireland supporting No Child 2020

In terms of impact, Budget 2020 committed to:  
**Free School Books:** €1 million for a pilot scheme for free books for primary school children in 50 schools; **Hot School Meals:** €4 million for over 35,000 children in primary school to get hot school meals in 2020, as well as children in 45 non-profit early learning settings; **Medical Cards:** While the threshold for medical cards was not increased, the

Government expanded **Free GP Care** to children under eight and free dental care for children under six; **Targeted Payments:** Working lone parents will now earn extra €15 per week and keep their payment while families on Working Family Payment can earn an extra €10 per week. Children on welfare payments will get an extra €2 per week for under 12s and €3 for over 12s. In terms of Childcare an additional €54 million was allocated to the National Childcare Scheme.

In summary the campaign was successful in securing additional funding into public services which is one of the main ways to reduce child poverty. At the same time, the Government was criticised in Budget 2020 for delaying increasing the national minimum wage because of the UK's actions during the Brexit negotiations and for raising social welfare rates.

At the end of the No Child 2020 campaign, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs with the Alliance agreed to organise a conference in December 2019 to identify ways to step up the Government's actions on child poverty and to inform the next National Children's Strategy on Children and Young People. The event was co-organised and took place in the Department's conference facilities and it was attended by over 80 people. Professor Mary Daly from the University of Oxford provided a keynote speech.

Thank you to *The Irish Times*, the Community Foundation for Ireland, the Tomar Trust and our members who actively contributed to the campaign (Barnardos; The Ark; Early Childhood Ireland; Irish National Teachers' Organisation; Children in Hospital Ireland; One Family; National Youth Council of Ireland; Association of Secondary School Teachers in Ireland; Focus Ireland; Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Irish Heart Foundation).

“It was a big effort on a topic that goes to the heart of what *The Irish Times* is about. A special thanks to our partners in the Children's Rights Alliance. There is a long way to go but No Child 2020 has already resulted in policy changes and a fresh political focus on the issue.”

Katie Mannon, Irish Refugee Council and Alliance Board member with Lisa Collins from ISPCC showing their support to end child poverty



Tamara Nolan from St. Patrick's Mental Health Services joins with Emma Archbold our Senior Communications Officer and the Campaign Co-ordinator of the No Child 2020 campaign





## Priority Area 2: Early Years

Traditionally the rights of children in early childhood have been overlooked. Early childhood is a distinctive period in human development and the ideal approach to early childhood development is integrated, child-centred, family focused, community based and focuses on health, learning and behavioural development. 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.

The Government published its ten-year Early Years' Strategy in 2018 and in June 2019 published an implementation plan. The Oireachtas also enacted the Childcare Support Act 2018 which provided the legal basis for a new universal affordable childcare scheme. In setting Annual Milestones for 2019, the Alliance decided to focus on two milestones that would help support the roll out of a universal affordable childcare scheme. In particular, the Alliance committed to encouraging Government to publish the Childminding Action Plan that sets out a clear roadmap to regulation including requiring that childminders have a Level 5 minimum qualification. Childminders make up the majority of childcare support in Ireland and focusing on their regulation and qualifications would help deliver better quality services to children. The Alliance set an annual milestone seeking higher level subsidies for lone parents and people in deprivation in need of childcare services.

### Annual Milestone: Publish the Childminding Action Plan

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, established a Childminding Working Group to provide policy proposals on the future of the sector in 2018. The Children's Rights Alliance participated on this Working Group previously and its recommendations have informed the development of a Childminding Action Plan. The *Programme for a Partnership Government* committed the Government to publishing a Childminding Action Plan. The Alliance publishes an Annual Report Card which grades the Government on delivering on its promises to children. The Alliance gave the Government a 'C' grade for its work in developing a Childminding Action Plan. The Government published a draft Childminding Action Plan for consultation in August 2019 and ran a considerable number of sessions with childminders around the country. The Alliance participated in this consultation and called on childminders to be excluded from receiving subsidies through the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) in the event they were not registered with Tusla and did not have a Level 5 qualification.

## **Annual Milestone:** Higher Level Subsidies for Lone Parents and People in Deprivation in Need of Childcare Services

Launched in November 2019, the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) will largely replace targeted childcare subsidies and the universal childcare subsidy by 2021. The NCS aims to provide a streamlined, user-friendly single subsidy scheme and 'a system of progressive financial support towards the cost of childcare aligned with the Government's efforts to support access to education and employment and to reduce poverty'. The development of the NCS is an extremely positive development for families. However, in April 2019, Single Parents Acting for Rights of Kids (SPARK) provided an example of a lone parent that will face increased costs of up to €350 per month to avail of full-time provision (40 hours per week) under the NCS. In summer 2019, the Children's Rights Alliance met with representatives of SPARK to gain a deeper understanding and learned that parents either in study or work would struggle to pay afterschool costs under the initial design of the NCS. This was partly due to the number of hours available under the scheme and the fact that childcare costs vary hugely across the country. Approximately 50 per cent of lone parents in Ireland are living in consistent poverty and good quality work supported by good quality childcare is one of the main ways families can get out of poverty. The Alliance therefore decided to prioritise this issue in 2019.

The Alliance subsequently convened a wider group working with SPARK involving One Family, Treoir, the Clondalkin Partnership, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Association of Childhood Professionals, SIPTU, Early Childhood Ireland and the National Women's Council of Ireland. In addition, to the issues identified above, the group also identified challenges with how vulnerable children whose parents are not engaging in training/work could potentially lose out on childcare support with the move to the NCS. The NCS makes special arrangements for some children to be referred for childcare support by a specified 'Sponsor Body', who will make a recommendation for hours of care. In such cases, the family will not be required to satisfy the scheme's eligibility, income or enhanced hours requirements and the Scheme will cover the cost of childcare, with no requirement for any parental co-payment. However, the Group was concerned that the threshold for enhanced hours requirements could be placed too high under this scheme with vulnerable children potentially losing out.

The Alliance prepared a submission on behalf of the group for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and learned that the Minister was seeking €6.5 million to extend the numbers of hours available under the scheme so that lone parents could benefit. The Alliance with the Group organised a press conference in the run-up to Budget 2020 seeking the €6.5 million for the extension of the Scheme. This achieved coverage in *The Irish Times*, *Virgin Media News* and on *Newstalk*. The Alliance also wrote to the Minister for Public Expenditure, Paschal Donohue TD, and participated in the National Economic Forum and called for further investment into the NCS to help lone parents. Budget 2020 delivered the additional €6.5 million to help lone parents and others in deprivation. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs also announced that she had secured additional funding to allow parents who were on alternative schemes which provided better support (for example CETS) to remain on those schemes until September 2021.

The Alliance did not identify a specific annual milestone in relation to the professionalisation of early years' professionals. However, the Alliance did participate on the National Early Years' Forum which advises the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and its Professionalisation Sub-Group. The latter worked on a Code of Practice for Early Years' educators in 2019 which the Alliance contributed to. The Government announced the development of a Workforce Development Plan as part of its obligations under *First Five – the National Early Years' Strategy*. The Children's Rights Alliance was also invited to participate on this group.

The Alliance used the screening of *RTE Prime Time* investigation *Behind Closed Doors* in July 2019 to call for the establishment a Professional Body to regulate the sector and to discipline staff that mistreat children in early years' settings. The Prime Time programme had highlighted extremely poor practice in an early years' provider documenting: up to 17 babies being left in the care of one adult, babies being forced to sleep with their heads shoved down onto mattresses; milk being watered down; parents being lied to about what babies were fed and serious breaches of fire safety. The Alliance appeared on *Newstalk* the next morning and on RTE's *The Sean O'Rourke Show* and RTE's *Marian Finucane Show*. While the Children's Rights Alliance achieved significant coverage at this time, the Alliance will need to step up its media profile in 2020 in order to be an influential voice when it comes to shaping the national early years' agenda.



RTE Investigates  
Creches: Behind Closed Doors



Tanya at a pre-budget press conference in Buswells Hotel with Louise Bayliss, SPARK - Single Parents Acting For Rights of Kids, Tricia Kielthy, Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Karen Kiernan, One Family

 **Annual Milestone:**  
Support the Development of  
a Child Health Workforce

The Children's Rights Alliance, in its campaign work around the *National Early Years Strategy – First Five* in 2017/2018, called for the establishment of a public health nurse system supported by a health visitor strategy to support families at home with new babies. This is because the first years of life are the most important from a child development point of view and support to children at this early stage can result in children being better able to regulate their own behaviour, being able to play and being school ready. *First Five* commits to developing a child health workforce to support young children and their families. With funding from the Tomar Trust, the Children's Rights Alliance completed a scoping study with a view to commissioning an independent consultant to examine how such a service could be developed in Ireland through a specialised public health nurse system. However, the Alliance tendered for a consultant in early 2019 but received no tenders in response. Subsequently the Government established its own Steering Group and agreed to commission its own study.

Tanya speaks about the importance of early years in a landmark video with then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD and Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone TD, marking the launch of First 5, a whole-of-Government strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and families



## 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.

In 2019, the Children's Rights Alliance set out to provide children, young people, their families and second-tier advice givers with: (1) reform of the Guardian *ad litem* ensures that all children get a GAL that need one and that they are provided with adequate legal representation when necessary; (2) high profile launch of updated Know Your Rights; (3) up to 30 lawyers upskilled on communicating and taking instructions from children and young people; (4) 500 children and families helped through our legal information helpline and (5) 144 children and families given legal advice through our clinic.

### ▶ What is a guardian *ad litem*?

A guardian *ad litem* is a person who represents the best interests and the voice for a child in childcare law proceedings.



### Annual Milestone:

The reform of the Guardian *ad Litem* service ensures that all children get a GAL that need one and that they are provided with adequate legal representation when necessary

Reform of the Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) service has the potential to make a real impact and advance the fulfilment of the constitutional right of the child to have their voice heard in child care proceedings. The service has operated without regulation since it was first introduced by the Child Care Act 1991, which provided for a child's views to be heard through a GAL in child care proceedings. Following a period of pre-legislative scrutiny, the Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2019 was introduced in the Dáil in August 2019. The Bill passed the Committee Stage in October and was expected to become law in 2020 but lapsed with the dissolution of the Dáil on 14 January 2020. The Bill aimed to provide a regulatory basis for a GAL service and address many of the challenges associated with the appointment of GALs to date.

The Bill restricts the functions of the GAL to essentially providing an expert report to a judge and raising issues. The Alliance was concerned that provisions in the Bill could restrict the ability of the GAL to vindicate the rights of children in proceedings by for example launching judicial review proceedings against the State or a judge. While children themselves can be made party to a case under Section 25 of the Childcare Act 1991, the Alliance is concerned that children without capacity (babies/young children and children who are non-verbal and have learning difficulties) will have no representative to play this role. The Children's Rights Alliance wrote to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, in 2019 to raise our concerns and carried out a number of advocacy meetings with her department. When the Bill progressed to Committee stage in the Oireachtas, the Alliance recommended an amendment that would provide that a GAL would be a representative of the child. This amendment was carried. However, with the dissolution of the Government and the General Election the Bill has fallen and will have to be re-introduced.

✔ **Annual Milestone:**  
High profile launch of updated Know Your Rights

Our [Know Your Rights Information Guide](#) provides information on children's rights and entitlements in plain English. The Alliance published an updated version in 2019. The new Guide took longer than anticipated to produce as the new version was longer and covered additional areas. Launched in Twitter's Dublin Headquarters, the launch was covered by *Newstalk*, *Today FM*, *FM 104* and *DCU magazine* and was widely disseminated. The Alliance also organised follow-up Know Your Rights training sessions with funding from Comic Relief on the rights of refugee children for second-tier advice givers and refugee children themselves.



Audience member making a comment at launch of Know Your Rights guide in Twitter HQ, Dublin

✔ **Annual Milestone:**  
Up to 30 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 ran 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. Modules that have run to date include Active Listening training (Caroline O'Sullivan, ISPCC), Taking Instructions (Andy Sirel, Just Right Scotland) and working with trauma (Dr. Sharon Lambert). 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.



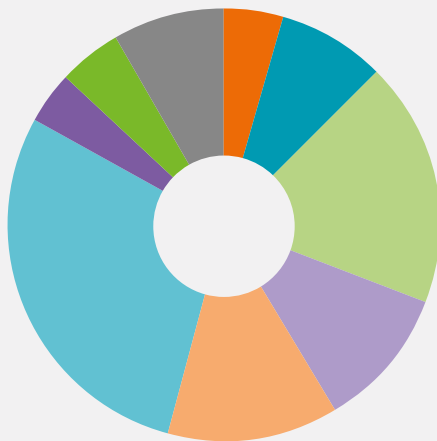
Saoirse and Julie following their presentation on family law to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality

**Annual Milestone:**  
 500 children and families helped through our legal information helpline and 144 children and families given legal advice through our clinics

As part of a One Foundation funded project established in 2018, the Children's Rights Alliance runs a standalone phone number 01 9020494 and email [help@childrensrighs.ie](mailto:help@childrensrighs.ie) to provide legal information to a wide range of people who may need information and guidance. The information line also acts as a filter for the legal advice clinics and is used to channel clients to the clinics.

In 2019 we helped 366 children/families through our legal information line. Each individual case includes a number of contacts. This is an increase of 18 per cent on the 2018 figures. The highest number of contacts we received in 2019 related to family law (105 cases – 29 per cent) followed by children's rights (67 cases – 18 per cent), education (47 cases – 13 per cent) and disability (39 cases – 11 per cent).

Individual queries presenting on our dedicated legal information phonenumber



- Family Law - 105
- Children in Care - 29
- Children's Rights - 67
- Child Protection - 17
- Education - 47
- Immigration - 17
- Disability - 39
- Housing - 15
- Other - 30

\*number relates to individual cases

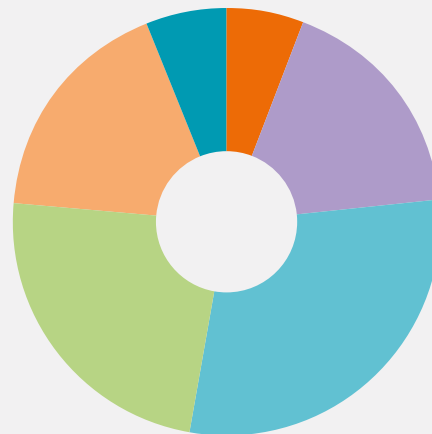
In relation to family law, people were calling us to get information on children's rights in access proceedings and how the court hears the voice of the child. We got calls from parents who did not understand how the proceedings or the courts work and needed information on how they could ensure that the views of their children are heard.

In relation to the general heading of children's rights the main thing people were seeking was information on legal ages. They were asking what age a child could be left at home at, what age a child can consent to medical treatment, what age a child can babysit at and what age a child can work. On the issue of education we have mainly been getting calls when parents are in dispute with schools about various issues such as detentions or expulsions. We also received a number of calls this year where parents were unable to access school places or appropriate school support for their child with special educational needs.

Parents made up the largest proportion of people contacting us with 242 (66 per cent) of the contacts. The main issues parents contacted us on were family law and education. 17 per cent of contacts were from another adult, usually a grandparent or family friend with NGOs accounting for six per cent and statutory bodies for four per cent.

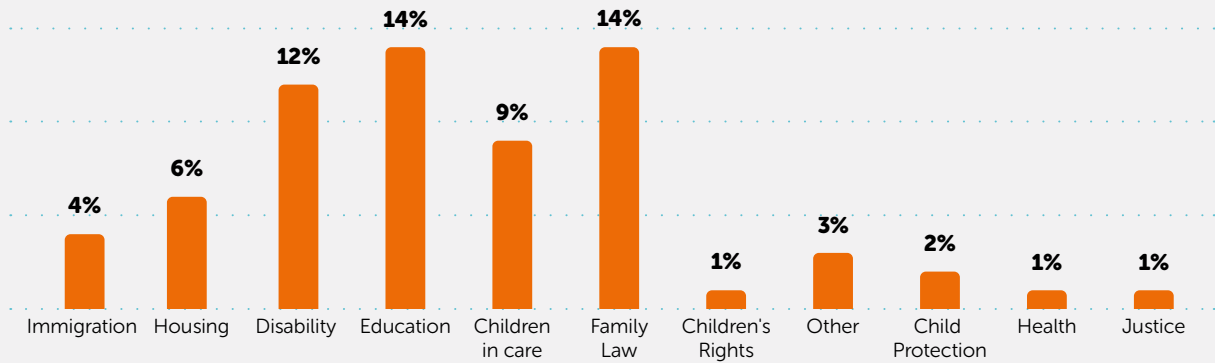
In 2018 we had 18 children (5 per cent) who contacted our service directly looking for information on their rights. The largest area that they were seeking to get information on was what age they can do various things. We also had 4 young people contact us with education issues such as expulsion and discrimination in school.

Individual queries from children and young people



- Children's Rights - 6
- Family Law - 3
- Education - 4
- Child Protection - 1
- Children in Care - 3
- Housing - 1

### Issues Presenting in our Legal Advice Clinics



\*number relates to individual cases

The Alliance realised towards the end of Quarter 3 that it did not have sufficient resources to deal with the demand on the phonenumber and could not reach our target as a result. We 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.

We helped 67 children and families through or legal advice service. This is 37 per cent increase on 2018, however the service was only operational for part of 2018. The main issues presenting are education (21 per cent), family law (21 per cent), disability (18 per cent) and children in care (14 per cent).

We have held clinics in the offices of Inclusion Ireland and in venues suggested by the Irish Foster Care Association. The ISPCC and the Cork Life Centre have been very helpful in hosting clinics in regional areas.

What we have noticed so far is that people are coming to us after having tried other options but having failed to get a solution. What we are offering is unique in helping them to solve their problems or pointing them in the right direction. One of the recurring themes we are seeing is people who have nowhere else to go to get legal advice. Many people coming to us would not have means to engage a private solicitor.

Our first Annual Report for the Helpline was launched in July and secured 32 pieces of coverage for the organisation (15 per cent of our media coverage) and successfully raised awareness of the service as well as the issue trends we aim to track as part of the project.

In terms of moving the project forward, the Alliance indicated to Community Law and Meditation (CLM) who was providing the legal advice clinics through a contract for services that it was intending to carry out a mid-term review of the project with a view to moving resources to address the needs at the phone line and for advocacy supports. The contract ended with CLM and the Alliance with the support of the Public Interest Law Alliance has identified a potential *pro bono* partner to deliver free legal advice clinics in 2020.





## 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.

In 2018, the Children's Rights Alliance had met its target of seeking an increase in the weekly welfare payments for children in the protection process to €29.80 since Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty TD, increased the payment from €22.60 to €29.80 in Budget 2020. In setting the annual milestone for 2019, the Alliance decided to focus on reception conditions for children and young people because of the deteriorating situation.

The population of people in Direct Provision (the system of accommodation provided to people seeking protection) increased to over 6,000 people, the highest level since 2009. This was due to a 26 per cent increase in people seeking protection on the previous year and the fact that close to 800 people with refugee status could not move out because of the housing crisis. The Government tried to address the crisis by seeking emergency accommodation for newly-arrived applicants and by opening new Direct Provision centres and leasing apartments around the country. The Children's Rights Alliance was concerned about the emergency accommodation solutions because of a lack of access to services for newly-arrived families and the fact that these new centres did not have any duty to comply with the Children First Act 2015 – legislation that helps keep children safe from abuse. The situation was compounded for the Government on account of protests that took place in many communities around Ireland when the Government tried to open new centres and facilities.

### ► Case Study: National Standards

After 20 years of the Direct Provision system, the Government published National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process in August 2019. The Standards had been a recommendation in the Working Group on the Direct Provision and Protection Process (McMahon Group) which the Alliance participated on in 2014/2015. The Alliance also participated on a Department of Justice and Equality Advisory Group in 2018 to develop the Standards.

If the National Standards are implemented effectively they will transform the reception system for children seeking protection. The Standards include own-door accommodation and standards specific to children and young people including that they will be consulted on changes in the centres; staff will have social care qualifications and are qualified to work with children; the service provider, in planning, designing and allocating accommodation within the centre, is informed by the identified needs and best interests of residents, and the best interests of the child; accommodation centres have adequate and accessible facilities, including dedicated child-friendly play and recreation facilities and the service provider takes all reasonable steps to protect each child from abuse and neglect and children's safety and welfare is promoted.

 **Annual Milestone**  
**Publication of the Government's National Standards and the Appointment of HIQA to carry out Independent Inspections**

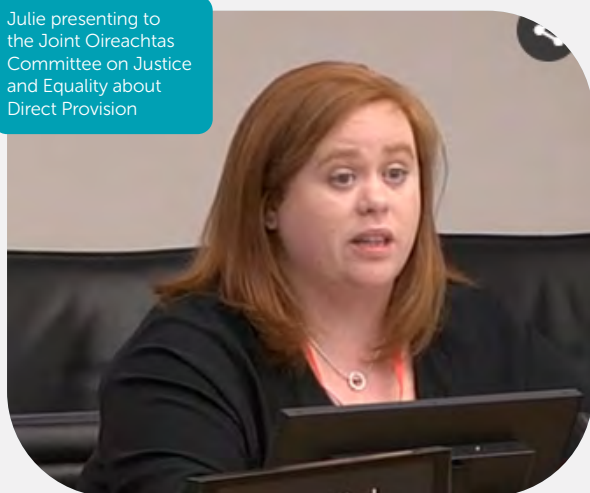
The main focus of the Children's Rights Alliance's work in 2019 was on the publication of the National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process, and on calling for the Health Information Quality Authority (HIQA) to carry out independent inspections of reception accommodation. The *Programme for a Partnership Government* committed to 'reform the Direct Provision system, with a particular focus on families and children'. The Alliance publishes an annual Report Card which grades the Government on delivering on its promises to children. The Alliance gave the Government a 'C' grade for its steady progress in developing the National Standards and for increasing the weekly payment for children in Direct Provision. At the same time the Alliance used this opportunity to call for HIQA to be made the inspection body. The Minister for State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton, TD subsequently met with the Children's Rights Alliance to discuss the Report Card findings.

The Children's Rights Alliance was aware that the Reception and Integration Agency (the Agency is part of the Department of Justice and Equality and is tasked with managing accommodation) was waiting for staff to be replaced from Tusla focusing on child protection and the Alliance wrote to Tusla

outlining our concern at this delay. The Alliance was also invited to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality to outline its concerns in relation to the Direct Provision system on 12 June 2019. The Alliance used this opportunity to note the staffing gaps in the Reception and Integration Agency around Child Protection and to note our serious concern about the potential lack of services and overcrowding in emergency accommodation. The Alliance also called for HIQA to be appointed the inspection body for refugee accommodation. The Alliance's concerns were covered by Sorcha Pollak in an article entitled, 'Kids living here don't have a normal childhood' for *The Irish Times* in the No Child 2020 campaign on 6 July 2019 and in a follow-up special series on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Direct Provision in November 2019. In the same month, the Alliance also took part in Newstalk's *Between the Lines* hosted by Andrea Gilligan on a special edition that focused on Direct Provision.

In terms of impact, Tusla subsequently sped up its recruitment process and a social worker was soon seconded to the Reception and Integration Agency. The Government published the National Standards on 15 August 2019 on foot of a spending review on Direct Provision and the Alliance took part in a training session for Direct Provision centre managers in November 2019 on the standards. The Justice Committee also published its report on the Direct Provision and Protection system and made a range of recommendations to address the rights and needs of children in the protection process. It also noted the need for "regular, unannounced monitoring and inspections of Direct Provision centres, possibly by extending the remit of HIQA."

Julie presenting to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality about Direct Provision



Julie, Tanya with other NGOs and advocates following their presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality on how to improve Direct Provision for children and families



## Annual Milestone

The Children's Rights Alliance research identifies gaps for child refugees resettled and relocated to Ireland and the Alliance secures commitments to improve the Irish Refugee Protection Programme

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was established on 10 September 2015 as a direct response to the humanitarian crisis that developed in Southern Europe on foot of mass migration of people fleeing conflict in the Middle East and Africa. Under this programme, the Government pledged to accept a total of 4,000 persons into the State. The Children's Rights Alliance relied on funding from the Tony Ryan Trust and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to commission an exploratory study on the needs of refugee children arriving through the International Refugee Protection Programme. The study was published in September 2019 at the Mansion House and it was carried out by Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh, Dr. Karen Smith and Dr. Jennifer Scholtz. The report, entitled 'Safe Haven' made recommendations in relation to trauma, mental health, education, language, health and cultural awareness.

“He sees nightmares, and bedwetting, because of the fear that we experienced in Syria.”

*Refugee parent speaking about her young son*

“When I was first time when I went to the psychology I was really—I was have really depression. So I was staying there in my room all the day and I was really sad at the time. It's like depression.”

*Young person who had lived in an Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre*

Quotations taken from *Safe Haven, The Needs of Refugee Children Arriving in Ireland through the Irish Refugee Protection Programme: An Exploratory Study*

The Children's Rights Alliance used the launch to call for a clear integration policy for the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and for unaccompanied minors. The report received broadcast and print media coverage by 11 media outlets including in *The Irish Times*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Examiner* and on *RTE*. ie. Tabloid coverage included the *Daily Mirror* and the *Irish Daily Star*. The launch trended on the social media platform, Twitter. In terms of follow-up advocacy, the Children's Rights Alliance met with the David Stanton, then Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration (November) and was invited to present the report's findings before the Irish Refugee Protection Programme Taskforce in December.

To conclude, the Children's Rights Alliance did not set a milestone for 2019 in relation to making the International Protection Process more child-friendly. This is because the Alliance had not really delivered on this objective under the Strategic Plan due capacity in the team. However, the Alliance did use the opportunity before the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality in June 2019 to critique situations where protection applications for unaccompanied minors can sometimes not be submitted on their behalf by Tusla until they are over 18 years. Child-friendly justice principles requires that any judicial and administrative proceedings should be expedited as soon as possible. However, it appears that Tusla does sometimes delay submitting applications on behalf of children if they feel they do not have a solid protection claim or if they are unable to deal with the process. In its December report, the Justice Committee did take up this issue and recommended that the applications should be submitted by Tusla as soon as possible.

Lastly, the Alliance did not set an annual milestone in relation to government prioritising children and building public support for child refugees. Again, this was down to capacity on the team. Nonetheless, the Government in a very welcome move did commit in December 2019 to relocating a further 2,600 refugees by 2023.



## ► People, Systems, Structures and Resources

### Organisational Development

In 2019, 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'.

### Management and Staffing

The Children's Rights Alliance has retained a dedicated hardworking team. The organisation is managed by a Chief Executive who is supported by: a Head of Legal, Policy and Public Affairs; a Legal and Policy Manager; a Social Policy Analyst; a Head of Governance and Finance; an Office and Finance Manager; a Head of Communications and Development; a Senior Communications Officer and a Membership Officer. At the end of 2019, one staff member had 11 years' service; one staff member had eight years' service; one staff member had seven years' service; one had six years' of service; one staff member had four years' experience; one staff member had 1.8 years' service; one staff member had 1.4 years' service and one staff member had three months service. Two posts were to be filled in early 2020.

In terms of staff changes over the year, Edel Quinn, Legal Research and Public Policy Manager, took up a position with Twitter after 7.5 years at the Children's Rights Alliance. Following an external recruitment campaign, Julie Ahern, the Alliance's Access to Justice Manager, moved into this post. Liz Kerrins took up a role at Early Childhood Ireland after three years with the Alliance. Hilary Harmon worked as the Child Refugee Project Manager for two years and took up a role with the Oak Foundation UK.

To increase capacity in the Communications and Development Team, it was decided that Emma Archbold, who held a communications/membership brief would focus solely on communications. The Alliance then ran two recruitment campaigns in 2019 to fill the Membership Officer post. Edel McDevitt joined the Alliance in October 2019. She has formerly worked with Goal, the Irish Cancer Society and the European Commission. The Alliance also created a new post Social Analyst Post to continue its work on Early Years', Child Poverty and Children's Services. Following a recruitment campaign in late 2019 Mary Nicholson, former Head of Advocacy as the ISPCC, and former Director of Services at the Daughters of Charity, took up the role but started in January 2020.



The Children's Rights Alliance team, October 2019.



Tanya with our Founding Patron, Prof. Geoffrey Shannon and Dr. Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

► Founding Patron Geoffrey Shannon

Professor Geoffrey Shannon was appointed the Children's Rights Alliance's Founding Patron in 2014. Professor Shannon is Ireland's leading expert on children's rights/child care law and is the State appointed Special Rapporteur on Child Protection and first Chair of the Adoption Authority of Ireland. Professor Shannon in his role as Founding Patron continued to provide support to the Children's Rights Alliance by providing legal opinion on certain children's rights and child care law matters. We are very grateful to Professor Shannon for being our Founding Patron and we thank him for injecting his passion for children's rights into our work.



Welcoming new Catherine McGuinness Fellow, Triona Jacob BL and farewell to outgoing Fellow, Lewis Mooney BL. Joining them is our Founding Patron, Prof. Geoffrey Shannon and Judge Catherine McGuinness herself

The Children's Rights Alliance runs the Catherine McGuinness Fellowship Programme with the support of The Bar of Ireland and the Irish Family Lawyers' Association. The purpose of the Programme is to provide a recently-qualified barrister who is practising at the Bar with a year-long Fellowship at the Alliance where they advise and support the Legal and Policy Team and Initiatives. Lewis Mooney completed his year-long Catherine McGuinness Fellowship in 2019 funded by The Bar of Ireland and the Irish Family Lawyers Association. Triona Jacob BL was appointed as the new Catherine McGuinness Fellow in 2019. Prior to commencing practice, Triona has worked as an Immigration Case Worker for a Solicitor firm, as a Case Processing Panel Member at the International Protection Office and as a Policy and Administrative Assistant at the Irish Council for Civil Liberties. She has also worked abroad with the SUAS programme in Kenya and as an intern at Fair Trials International in London.



Judge Catherine McGuinness chairing the launch of Report Card 2019



“ The Children’s Rights Alliance Catherine McGuinness Fellowship was established during my first year of practice at the Bar, and long before submitting an application, I had known that it would be one of my early career goals to become a recipient of the Fellowship. Being awarded a fellowship in the name of Catherine McGuinness is one of the greatest honours that has been bestowed upon me – a fledgling lawyer, who would be satisfied if, through my career at the Bar, I managed to make even a fraction of the positive impact that Mrs Justice McGuinness has had on Irish society.

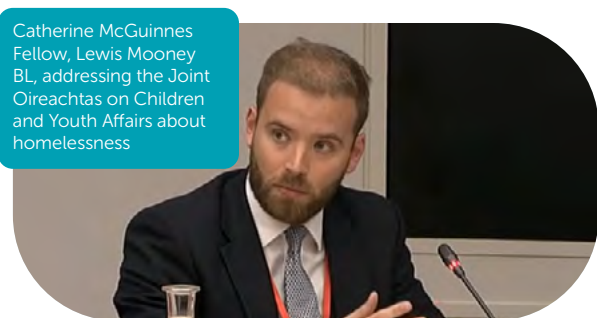
The Fellowship provided me with unique opportunities to develop both personally and professionally, allowed me to work with and learn from a team of passionate and incredibly knowledgeable experts, and pushed me to make a positive impact during my year at the Alliance, however small that might have been.

During the year-long fellowship, I had many experiences that developed my skill set and that will enrich my future career. I appeared as a witness in respect of child homelessness at a Joint Oireachtas Committee hearing, I advocated for the rights of children in meetings with senior decision-

makers in relation to reform of the guardian ad litem system, and I had the opportunity to contribute to a number of the Alliances’ renowned publications including its annual Report Card.

My time at the Children’s Rights Alliance had a remarkable impact upon me, and it will continue to motivate me to make whatever contribution I can in seeking to realise the organisation’s primary goal - to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. I will forever be grateful for my experiences as the Catherine McGuinness Fellow and the opportunities that were afforded to me by the Children’s Rights Alliance. ”

*Lewis Mooney, BL, Outgoing Catherine McGuinness Fellow*



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. Staff are then required to prepare monthly individual plans and report on progress in their monthly staff supervision meetings with their line-manager. The purpose of these meetings is to provide employees with a predictable time where they have their line-managers' undivided attention. Staff supervision at the Alliance contributes to good morale, productivity and the prevention of problems.

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 2018, the Alliance organised training for staff on mental fitness with Niall O'Brien, on child protection, on conducting staff supervision/appraisals for line-managers and two staff completed fire marshal training. The Alliance also supported staff to undertake specific courses. Julie Ahern, Legal and Policy Manager, and Emma Archbold, Senior Communications Officer, commenced a 'Leadership for Social Change' course with the Social Intelligence Associates. Patricia Hoey, Office and Finance Manager was supported to attend the CIPD Certificate in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland.

## Communications

In 2019, the Alliance's principal focus on communications was on supporting the No Child 2020 campaign and promoting awareness of the Children's Rights Alliance's information helpline. The volume of the work involved in the No Child 2020 campaign meant that the redesign/redevelopment of the Alliance's website had to be put on hold.

The Children's Rights Alliance issued 20 press releases down from 22 in 2018, and significantly lower than the 40 released in 2017. There was a total of 205 media mentions last year compared to 265 in 2018 however, both were higher than 2017 (195 mentions). This would suggest that the Alliance has established itself as an expert voice in the field. This is particularly evident when we look at the media coverage of topical issues that arose last year. The Prime Time Investigates *Hyde and Seek* crèche expose (just over 10% of media inquiries related to this issue in 2019). Even on issues that the Alliance did not formally respond to, media interest was high. On example of this was the murder of Anna Kriegel case by two teenagers. The Alliance did not issue a press statement or reaction but were sought out for comment on multiple occasions.

### Social Media Trends 2018-2019

The Alliance set out to improve its social media presence by 10% in 2019. This target was reached in terms of followers on Twitter. However, growth overall in numbers was slightly down on previous years, despite increased activity.

#### Twitter

In 2018, the Alliance had attracted 2,086 new followers. In 2019, the Alliance got 1,630 new followers bringing the total number to 16,185.

#### Facebook

In 2019, the Alliance received 558 new Facebook page likes.



The number of proactive media pitches lessened due in part to a strategic collaboration with *The Irish Times* to place an editorial focus on child poverty and related children's issues. The launch of the Report Card was the best-performing media opportunity both in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, it peaked again and it was one of the peaks in terms of media mentions with 18 media outlets covering the publication and a digital reach of 1.2 million.

We received 37 media inquiries about No Child 2020/child poverty last year. Our first Annual Report for the Helpline was launched in July and secured 32 pieces of coverage for the organisation (15 per cent of our media coverage) and successfully raised awareness of the service as well as the issue trends we aim to track as part of the project. Almost a third our media engagements in 2019 was radio, an increase from 2018 and 2017. There was also an equal balance of national broadcasts and local radio segments.

“When you live in poverty, it's the little things that matter. I visited a direct provision centre and met a teenager a number of years ago. I asked her what the worst thing about living in direct provision was, and she talked about her hair. At that time, her parents only got €9.60 each week to cover everyday expenses for each child, and she just didn't have enough money for shampoo. She talked about washing her hair with cheap generic soap from the communal bathrooms. It made her hair frizzy and lank, and she was often ashamed going to school.”

*Tanya Ward, Chief Executive in an Op Ed to The Irish Times, 21 December 2019*

Email communications improved last year with No Child 2020 campaign updates helping to significantly increase engagement with an Oireachtas database. In 2019, the Alliance redesigned the e-bulletin for members to a longer Quarterly Newsletter to increase open rates.

The Alliance launched its first ever radio ad campaign for the information helpline. The ad ran on *Today FM* in two-week periods, three times over the course of the year. The ad helped boost awareness of the Helpline and the Alliance more generally. While we cannot track the traffic directly from the radio ad, anecdotally, it was effective in encouraging more queries to the helpline. However, Facebook advertising provided much more effective in terms of Return on Investment (ROI). Using free Facebook ad credit, we trialled advertising the helpline to increase awareness among a target audience with great success.

“Growing up in the North in the 1980s had a few obvious drawbacks. But I'm beginning to realise how lucky I was when it came to school supports like free school books, hot school meals and music lessons that I previously took for granted.”

*Saoirse Brady, Head of Legal Policy and Public Affairs, opinion article in thejournal.ie, 18 June 2019*

thejournal.ie FORA THE 42

Irish Politics International Voices Family Culture Business Brexit Covid-19

Tags # CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE # CULTURE CARDS # NOCHILD2020 # OPINION

### Opinion: All children should have equal access to creative and artistic learning

Cost is a key barrier to the participation of children and young people in creative, recreational activities, writes Saoirse Brady.

Jun 18th 2019, 7:01 AM 5,885 Views 14 Comments Share 43 Tweet Email 1

**GROWING UP IN** the North in the 1980s had a few obvious drawbacks.

But I'm beginning to realise how lucky I was when it came to school supports like free school books, hot school meals and music lessons that I previously took for granted.

I'm from Newry, an hour's drive from Dublin yet my experience of school was very different from my friends and colleagues who grew up in the South.

Saoirse Brady  
Legal & Policy Director

Tanya speaks to the media outside Leinster House about how Budget 2020 would impact on children



The media interviewing Tanya about Report Card 2019 outside the Mansion House



Saoirse talks to the media about the impact of child poverty at our historic political panel session

## 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 terms of fundraising results, the Alliance had another good year. In 2018, the Alliance created more office space for rental in its building and this led to an increase in rental and management fees from €35,656 in 2018 to €42,671 in 2020.

This is probably the maximum the Alliance can generate from its own assets at this time. Income from membership also increased from €45,398 (2018) to €49,524 (2019). Training income also increased significantly from €516 in 2018 to €9,050 on account of the Alliance supporting the delivery of a new training programme for solicitors to take instructions from children in conjunction with the Law Society of Ireland. The Alliance's focus in 2019 was on increasing philanthropic funding to support the No Child 2020 campaign. This meant the funding income from philanthropic sources increased from €330,399 in 2018 to €467,246 in 2019.

A good deal of resources in 2019 went into funder relationship management and complying with reporting obligations. The Alliance examined how it could increase its capacity to fundraise and decided to free up the Head of Communications and Development by moving all press management and IT management activities to the Senior Communications Officer. The goal of the funding team going forward will be to identify new funding sources to support the delivery of the organisation's new Strategic Plan which is due to be adopted in June 2021.



Emma McKinley is Head of Communications and Development and leads on all funding campaigns and initiatives for the Alliance.

## Building a Strong Membership

The size and diversity of our membership gives the Children's Rights Alliance its credibility, mandate and voice for children. The Children's Rights Alliance is member-led, member-informed and unites 120 member organisations and bodies, one associate member and 37 individual members.

The overall strategic objective of the Alliance is to grow the membership by 20% by the end of 2021. However, this was not a focus of the Alliance's work in 2019 due to the demands of the No Child 2020 campaign. A decision was made in 2019 to create a separate Membership Officer post mid-year and Edel McDevitt started with the Alliance in October 2019. Going forward growing the membership and reaching the Strategic Plan target will be a key priority for 2020.

In 2019, the Alliance grew the membership from 114 to 120 members and received six applications for full membership in the year. Three members were removed as they were no longer in operation. While this modest growth is welcome, the Alliance will have to place a significant emphasis on growing our membership in 2020 in order to meet the strategy target.

“Joining as a member of the Children's Rights Alliance has enabled us to become more connected into the conversations, policies and debates that are

shaping the future of children and young people's lives in Ireland. As new members, the team at the Alliance took the time to get to know our organisation and continues to offer the support and resources we need to think and plan in a rights-focused way. For us, the benefits of membership have already ranged from increased knowledge, to access to expertise and participation in an influential network.”

*Music Generation, new Alliance member in 2019*

In 2019, the Alliance issued a wide range of information supports to members including 32 Oireachtas Monitors cataloguing child/youth developments in the Oireachtas and four newsletters.

In 2019, the Alliance received many requests from members with regarding to the upcoming General Election. As a result the Alliance organised training for members in July for key members on political messaging around child poverty with the Frameworks Institute and in Quarter 4 with the Communications Clinic on how to influence political manifestos and the Programme for Government.



Jan Ni Fhlanagáin from Walk in my Shoes radio station, an initiative of St. Patrick's Mental Health Services interviews Emma Archbold about No Child 2020



A packed house in the Davenport Hotel for our political panel session on child poverty at AGM 2019

## Membership List for Organisations/Bodies at the end of 2019

- 22q11
- Ag Eisteacht
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Amnesty International Ireland
- An Cosán
- ASH Ireland
- AslAm
- Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)
- 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
- Child Care Law Reporting Project
- Childhood Development Initiative
- Children in Hospital Ireland
- COPE Galway
- Cork Life Centre
- Crosscare
- CyberSafeIreland
- Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
- Dental Health Foundation of Ireland
- Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Educate Together
- EPIC
- Extern Ireland
- Focus Ireland
- Foróige
- Gaelscoileanna Teo
- Good Shepherd Cork
- Home-Start National Office
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Independent Hospitals Association of Ireland
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors
- Irish Aftercare Network
- 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)
- ISPCC
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Irish Youth Foundation (IYF)
- Jack & Jill Children's Foundation
- Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice
- Jigsaw
- Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
- Lifestart National Office
- Mecpaths
- Mental Health Reform
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- Mothers' Union
- Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project
- Museum of Childhood Project
- Music Generation
- My Mind
- National Childhood Network
- National Parents Council Post Primary
- National Parents Council Primary
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Novas
- One Family
- One in Four
- Parentstop
- Pavee Point
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Rainbows Ireland
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Realt Beag
- Respond Housing
- SAFE Ireland
- Saoirse Housing Association
- SAOL Beag Children's Centre
- Scouting Ireland
- School of Education UCD
- Sexual Violence Centre Cork
- Simon Communities of Ireland
- Social Care Ireland
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Sonas Domestic Violence Charity
- Special Needs Parents Association
- SPHE Network
- SpunOut.ie
- St. Nicholas Montessori College
- St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association
- St. Patrick's Mental Health Services
- Step by Step Child & Family Project
- Suas Educational Development
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Terenure Rugby Football Club
- 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
- Youngballymun
- Young Social Innovators
- Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
- Youth Work Ireland

## Member Working Groups

We act as a coordination point for organisations working directly with children and young people:

### ▶ Child and Youth Homelessness:

This group brings members together with a view to considering how to minimise the impact of homelessness on children. It met once in 2019.

### ▶ Early Years:

Involving both members and external stakeholders to guide the Alliance's early years work, the group met twice in 2019 and was chaired by Professor Nóirín Hayes.

### ▶ Child Poverty:

The Alliance in 2018 formed a members' group to guide its work on child poverty. This group met on five occasions in 2019.



Dublin MEP candidates at our children's hustings for the European Elections in May – a joint event with our member, Educate Together



Edel McDevitt joined the team in October 2019 and leads on all things membership.



Our members Ian Power of Spunout.ie, Suzanne Connolly of Barnardos and Kathleen Lawrence of Pavee Point join with Judge Catherine McGuinness and Tanya Ward to launch Report Card 2019.

## Evaluation and Monitoring

Since 2012, the Children's Rights Alliance has adopted an evaluation and monitoring framework developed by Compass Partnership that monitors objectives, outputs and outcomes under the Strategic Plan 2017-2021. As part of this process, the Board sets annual objectives in line with the Strategic Plan and this process begins in October each year. In terms of the monitoring process, the Children's Rights Alliance team comes together on a quarterly basis to review progress against the outputs set in the Alliance Annual Work Plans. 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. An independent evaluator will be appointed in 2020 following a commissioning process to undertake an independent evaluation at the mid-point in the plan to identify key impacts, challenges, risks and any need for readjustment of the Strategic Plan objectives.

## Premises

The Children's Rights Alliance is a co-owner of a building, 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7 with Empowering People in Care Limited (EPIC). A formal agreement is in place between the two organisations to cover all aspects of managing the building. The Strategic Plan goal requires the Children's Rights Alliance to implement 'a development plan for the management of the Alliance offices and 7 Red Cow Lane to provide a supportive and positive working environment for staff, the Board and members'. The Alliance working with EPIC has been implementing a programme of structural improvements. In 2019, we focused on health and safety improvements including: electrical testing; installing new security cameras and lighting in common areas.



The Children's Hub at 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7 - the building that the Alliance co-owns with its member EPIC, Empowering Children in Care



## ► Financial Review

The financial outcome for 2019 is set out in the statement of financial activities.

The net surplus in the Financial Statements of the Alliance for the financial year 2019 was €51,176 (2018: deficit of €77,866). Total income in 2019 was €870,344 which is an increase €144,383 on the 2018 income. The total expenditure in 2019 was €819,168 which is an increase of €15,341 on 2018 expenditure.

Results	31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2018
Net (deficit) income for the financial year	€51,176	(€77,866)

The net surplus of €51,176 is split between an unrestricted surplus of €27,233 and a restricted surplus of €23,943. The unrestricted net surplus relates to additional unrestricted income received in the year 2019 which was not anticipated. The Alliance received additional income in membership fees, training and rental and management fees.

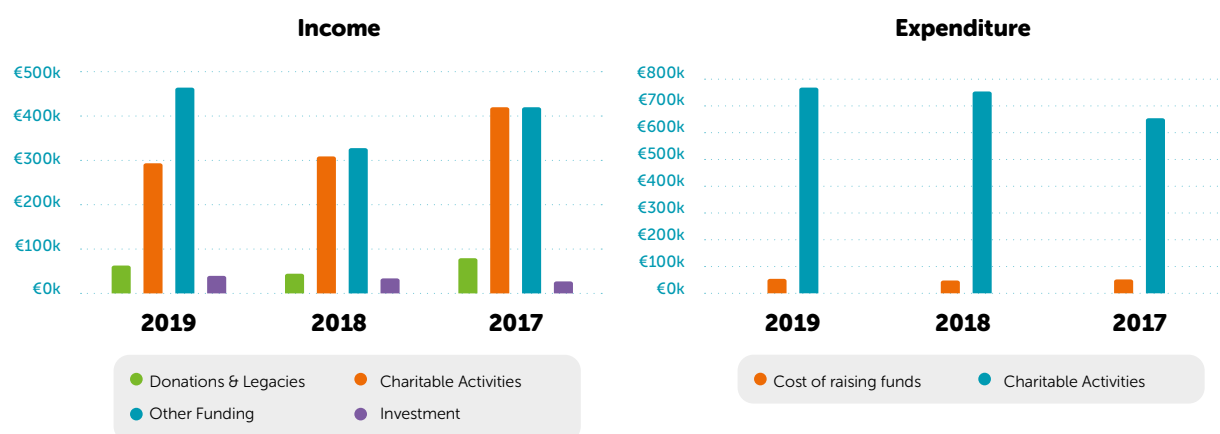
Unrestricted funds are funds for the use at the discretion of the board in furtherance of the strategic plan. The restricted net surplus relates to funding received in the year 2019 but the associated expenditure for the funding will happen in 2020.

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 2019, 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.



In 2019, the Children’s Rights Alliance received a total of €763,534 (2018: €462,976) in restricted income which represents 88% of the total income. The increase in restricted income is mainly due to additional grants received in the year 2019 from Community Foundation for Ireland (€89,184) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs income (€180,000) which was included in restricted income in 2019. This grant was not restricted in previous years. There were two principal sources of restricted income during 2019: Government grants (39%) and philanthropic sources (61%). Government sources included the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Rural and Community Development, Pobal and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Philanthropic funding continues to be an important source of funding for the charity and helps ensure its independence. The principal philanthropic sources came from Tomar Trust (€376,952 which is the second and third instalment of a three-year project to address child poverty and the need to invest in public services for children and an amount of €188,476 which is for activities in 2020 and which is accounted for in deferred income); Access to Justice Project (€107,096 which is the second instalment of a three-year project); The Community Foundation for Ireland (a total of €139,184 split between €30,000 for the Report Card project, €45,184 for the Child Refugee project, €20,000 for Comic Relief -Know Your Rights roadshow and €44,000 for the No Child 2020 project); Katharine Howard Foundation for the Early Years project (€21,490); The Bar of Ireland and the Irish Family Lawyers’ Association (€11,000 to fund a Catherine McGuinness Fellowship Programme which supports a barrister to work within the Alliance’s Legal and Policy Team one day a week).

In 2019, the Children’s Rights Alliance received a total of €106,809 (2018: €262,986) in unrestricted income which represents 12% of the total income. The reduction in unrestricted income is mainly as a result of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs grant (€180,000) being restricted in the year 2019. This grant was not restricted in previous years. There is one principal source of unrestricted income in the year 2019: Donations/ fundraising and investment income (12%). Donations/ fundraising and investment income included Membership income/direct donations (€49,524) which has increased by 6% from 2018 due to an increase in uptake of membership for the Alliance in 2019. Rental income and management fees (€42,671) have increased by 20% from 2018 due to additional rental income received following a reorganisation of office space in the year 2018 and we had full rental occupancy in the year 2019.

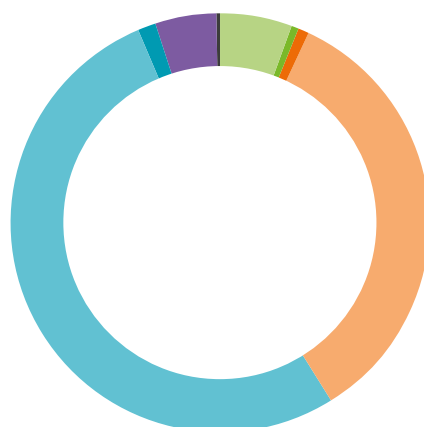
In 2019, total expenditure was €819,166 (2018: €803,827). The charitable activities expenditure in 2019 of €760,154 (2018: 754,503) increased by 0.7% in the year. The increase in expenditure in 2019 is mainly as a result of the No Child 2020 project and the updated Know Your Rights guide. Included in cost of raising funds and charitable activities is staff costs of €507,724 in 2019 (2018: €616,916) which represent 62% (2018: 77%) of the overall expenditure for the Alliance. The decrease in the staff costs of 17% in the year 2019 relates to the departure of three staff members during the year.

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.



## Income Sources



● Membership	<b>€49,524</b>	5.6%
● Donations	<b>€4,346</b>	0.5%
● Training	<b>€9,050</b>	1.0%
● Government grants	<b>€296,288</b>	34%
● Philanthropic	<b>€456,246</b>	52%
● Other income	<b>€12,156</b>	1.3%
● Rental and management income	<b>€42,671</b>	4.9%
● Interest	<b>€62</b>	0.007%

## 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 €827,702 of which €144,793 were restricted and €682,909 were unrestricted. Given that the overall expenditure in the year 2019 amount to €819,168, this meant that the Alliance exceeded the six-month policy reserve by €273,326. 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 5% of the excess reserve in 2020.

## Policy for Investments

The Alliance's policy for investments is to retain its cash reserve in low-risk vehicles. In March 2019 the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee invited Goodbody to discuss the investment environment and outlook. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee decided that the Alliance should invest in Prize Bonds over the next few years. In the year 2019 the Alliance purchased €50,000 in prize bonds. It is anticipated that a further €50,000 will be purchased in 2020 depending on cashflow.

## Apportionment

In 2019, 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:

- It 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;
- It puts an agreement in place with an IT provider to put an IT security system in place that mitigates against ICT risks;
- It 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;

- It closely monitors emerging changes to regulations and legislation on an ongoing basis;
- It ensures that staff and board members of the organisation have the required training to maintain appropriate governance levels;
- It has minimal currency risk and credit risk. The company has no interest rate risk due to the fact that the company has no borrowings;
- It continues to adopt best practices in order to mitigate against reputational risk;
- It 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 due to 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 goal is to ensure 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'. This is an important goal for the organisation. However, the organisation finds implementing its governance commitments, charity obligations and legal compliance duties very challenging given its size. Year-on-year, the Alliance finds it is investing more in staff time in meeting these demands.

“ Good governance is about accountability. It shows the world that we work transparently, honestly and effectively. ”

*Tom Maher, Chair, Children's Rights Alliance*

The Children's Rights Alliance has fulfilled the recommended guideline actions for compliance as a Type C organisation which is defined by the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland. The formal board decision giving effect to this was made in September 2015 and the Children's Rights Alliance is listed on [www.governancecode.ie](http://www.governancecode.ie) as one of the fully compliant organisations. The Board completed a three-year compliance review with this Code in 2018.

The Strategic Plan commits the Alliance to communicate effectively and is transparent and accountable to its members, stakeholders and funders and has Triple Lock Status from the Charities Institute Ireland. The Alliance has a Governance Handbook which 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. The Board of Directors engaged in a yearly Board review effectiveness and skills audit process in June. Areas identified for further strengthening Board effectiveness included

strengthening the Board expertise through Board co-options in public affairs/communications, business skills and equality/diversity. To address these skills shortages the Alliance ran a recruitment campaign in late 2019 through Boardmatch with a view to recruiting new board members in 2020.

In order to continue upholding high governance standards, the Alliance created a new post, Head of Governance and Finance on a three day a week basis. That post is filled by Theresa Burke, a registered accountant with 17 years' experience. However, the Board recognises that the legal compliance duties are born out primarily by the Chief Executive and the Office and Finance Manager. In order to free up both posts the Board is looking at options in 2020 which may include a potential merger or creating a new Legal Compliance post.

In 2019, the Board prepared worked towards preparing the organisation for compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code by conducting a review and organising training with the Carmichael Centre.

In 2019, the Children's Rights 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.

Mary Lawlor, our former Chair celebrates winning a Good Governance Award with Theresa Burke our Head of Governance and Finance and Patricia Hoey our Office and Finance Manager



## Directors

The Children's Rights Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors with a maximum number of 10 people. All Board members work in a voluntary capacity and do not receive any remuneration or expenses.

The Board of Directors met six times in 2019. Under the Board Rotation policy (see below), Marie Cumiskey resigned from the Board on 9 May 2019. Grainia Long

resigned from the Board on 10 May 2019 due to personal commitments.

The Board is supported by a committee structure which deals with specific aspects of the company's business. There were three standing committees in 2019. The Chief Executive, Tanya Ward, was in attendance at all these subcommittees. The Head of

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### Board Profiles for the financial year 2019

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► **Mary Lawlor**

Mary is the former Executive Director of Front Line Defenders, an organisation she established in 2001 to meet the immediate security and protection needs of human rights defenders at risk around the world. Mary is widely respected in the international human rights movement and has been a leading figure in developing rapid response mechanisms and institutional responses for HRDs. Prior to Front Line Defenders, Mary was Director of the Irish Section of Amnesty International from 1988 to 2000. She became a Board member in 1975 and was elected Chair from 1983 to 1987. Mary was awarded the Irish Life WMB Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2008. In 2011, she received the Irish Tatler Woman of the Year Special Recognition Award. In 2014, Mary was awarded the French insignia of Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur and an honorary degree of Doctor in Laws from Trinity College Dublin. In 2015, she was appointed Adjunct Professor in the School of Business Trinity College Dublin.

► **Tom Maher**

Tom 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.

► **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.

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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 the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

In November 2019, Mary Lawlor stepped down as Chair and was proposed by the President of the UN

Human Rights Council for the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. The Human Rights Council are due to approve this appointment on 20 March 2020. Tom Maher, the Alliance Vice Chair, took up the role of Acting Chair and the Board will be proposing Tom as Chair at the AGM in May 2020. Due to this change, the role of Company Secretary moved from Tom to Board member Katie Mannion.

### Board Profiles for the financial year 2019

- ▶ **Maureen Dillon** Maureen is a member of Irish Girl Guides since 1988. Holder of many positions at Executive Board level in the organization including President and Assistant Chair of Board. Currently a Board member of Irish Girl Guides Trust Corporation by CLG. A recipient of a third level qualification in Youth and Community Work (NUI, UCC.) A volunteer leader with IGG in Kells, Co. Meath. Currently works on a weekly basis with girls and young women aged 10 years to 17 years in the field of informal education.
- ▶ **Grainia Long** Grainia is Belfast's first Commissioner for Resilience, appointed in June 2018. She is also Chair of Thames Valley Housing, a housing association building and managing social and affordable homes in London and the South East. From 2015-2018, she was Chief Executive of the ISPCC- the national child protection charity in Ireland, and from 2011-2015 was Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, an international professional body for people who work in housing. She served two terms as a Commissioner in the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, from 2011 to 2017.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Katie Mannion** Katie Mannion is 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 recently co-authored a chapter on child migration in "Immigrants as Outsiders in the Two Irelands".
- ▶ **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 re-election at the last annual general meeting.

Board Members	Board meeting attendance for 2019
▶ Mary Lawlor [Chair]	5/5 (stepped down as Chair on 15/11/2019)
▶ Tom Maher [Vice Chair]	4/6 (appointed Acting Chair on 15/11/2019)
▶ Colm Bryson [Treasurer]	4/6
▶ Marie Cumiskey	3/3 (resigned on 9 May 2019)
▶ Maureen Dillon	5/6
▶ Grainia Long	1/3 (resigned on 10 May 2019)
▶ Katie Mannion	6/6
▶ Mark O'Connor	3/4
▶ June Tinsley	5/6

## 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. The Office and Finance Manager acts as Secretary to the Committee and the Head of Governance/Finance and the Chief Executive attend meetings. Susanna Lyons was successfully recruited as the new independent members of the FAR Committee in 2019 through Boardmatch.

### New independent member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee 2019

Susanna Lyons is the Head of Regulation at the Housing Agency. Susanna has responsibility for the implementation of the Regulatory Framework for Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), assessing organisation's Governance, Financial Viability and Performance Management. Prior to joining the Housing Agency, Susanna specialised in risk, financial management, strategy, liquidity management and stress testing with a number of US multinationals in Europe and Canada. Susanna is an independent member of the Audit & Risk Committee of Barnardos and a member of the panel of Judges of the Good Governance Awards.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee	Attendance for 2019
▶ Colm Bryson [Treasurer] (appointed March 2018)	5/5
▶ Katie Mannion	4/5
▶ Tom Maher	5/5
▶ Susanna Lyons (independent member)	3/3

## 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. The Chief Executive acts as Secretary to this Committee. The Committee met three times in 2019 and had full attendance. In 2019, the Remuneration Committee signed off on a new Staff Pay and Compensation Policy which will be implemented in 2020.

## 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 two occasions in 2019 and had full attendance. The Head of Governance and Finance acts as Secretary and the Chief Executive was in 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 €5,000;
- 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;
- 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 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.

## 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 when there is an identified need. In 2019, training was organised for the Board with the Carmichael Centre on the new Charities Regulator Governance Code.



## 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 2019, 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 2019, the organisation put emphasis on implementing its GDPR policy in particular around on managing external relationships with data processors. The organisation implemented recommendations from a Health and Safety and an ergonomic review carried out by EasySafe.

## ► 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 2020. The Alliance is currently tendering for an independent consultant to review the organisation's progress against its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and develop a new plan. Diversifying the funding base and identifying funding to deliver the new Plan will also be an important goal for the year.

The Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing rules pose serious issues for children, young people and families in Ireland. The closure of schools and other education settings means that many children have to engage in learning at home. If a child doesn't have effective access to technology, if they aren't getting the right supports or their parents are struggling, this shutdown could cause a major disruption to their education. Job losses and extra costs related to children being at home all the time also means that families are experiencing higher levels of poverty.

Service providers are reporting that food poverty is particularly acute with children missing out on school meals and families on welfare/low wages struggling to get food on the table. In the health area, some young people are experiencing a disruption to accessing disability services and mental health reports. And in the child protection and welfare area there are concerns about the fall in child protection referrals which stems from the fact that teachers are not making the same referrals to Tulsa because they are simply not seeing the children in question.

The Children's Rights Alliance's strategic focus going forward will have to involve addressing the impact of these issues on children and young people. At the same time, the Alliance will look at the potential opportunities to relook at the focus of services for children. The reform of the early years' sector is a case in point which is led by 70 per cent for profit entities, where fees and supply vary hugely with some children getting a poor-quality service or no service at all. Other countries have addressed this issue by introducing a national public programme. This is a potential option ahead for the incoming government.

### The next Programme for Government

The next Programme for Government provides a chance to deliver the change that is needed to transform the lives of children and families across the country. In 2020, we will run a campaign to influence the negotiations between the political parties that will work out the next Programme for Government. Our focus will be on addressing child poverty, promoting online safety, affordable housing, investing in school meals, free school books, free travel for under 18 year olds, the professionalisation of the early years' sector, providing free childcare to families in deprivation and reform of reception accommodation for refugees.

### The next National Children and Young People's Strategy

The new Government will be formed at a critical time as it will be tasked with developing the next National Children and Young People's Strategy in 2020. This is because *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The Policy Framework for Children and Young People* will finish in December 2020. The Children's Rights Alliance will work in partnership with Early Childhood Ireland and the National Youth Council of Ireland to carry out a civil society consultation gather ideas on what needs to be included in the Strategy as well as building consensus.

## European Child Guarantee

A European Child Guarantee will be included in the next EU budget (2021-2027). The ambition of the Child Guarantee is that every child in Europe has access to free healthcare, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. It will particularly focus on vulnerable children and those experiencing poverty, including refugee children. The European Parliament has proposed that the European Social Fund Plus

(ESF+) allocates €5.9 billion for the implementation of the Child Guarantee. In 2020, the Alliance with funding from Eurochild will lead the Irish part of a European Campaign on Early Childhood Development. As part of this campaign, we aim to influence the scope and implementation of the EU Child Guarantee in Ireland by organising a national conference and advocating to Government.

### **In 2020, on our specific projects we will:**

#### Access to Justice

Run a month-long campaign to promote our Know Your Rights pack on children's rights and entitlements to make sure that second-tier advice givers, children and young people and their families get access to the pack. We will also run bespoke training events on Know Your Rights with Tusla. We will also ramp up our capacity to take more calls on our helpline and provide advocacy support to children and families as this is where the need is. We will continue to provide free legal advice clinics to children and families on a reduced basis.

#### Child Refugees

Advocate for that new National Standards for Reception Accommodation for people seeking protection will be fully implemented in our Programme for Government campaign work. We also continue to advocate for HIQA to be appointed the independent inspection body for reception accommodation. We will place a particular emphasis in 2020 on community, family and youth supports for refugee children by carrying out advocacy meetings and working in partnership with national bodies and stakeholders.

#### Early Years

Our focus in 2020 will be on shaping the development of the new funding model that is being developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for childcare. We will also support efforts to professionalise the workforce to ensure quality childcare for children.

## 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
- Tom Maher
- Marie Cumiskey (Resigned 09/05/2019)
- Mary Lawlor (Resigned 15/11/2019)
- Grainia Long (Resigned 10/05/2019)
- Katie Mannion (Appointed as secretary 02/01/2020)
- Tom Maher (Resigned as secretary 02/01/2020)

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

In early 2020 the coronavirus pandemic hit the world. The initial effect has been an economic slowdown and the loss of many jobs across many businesses. Restrictive measures have been put in place as Ireland implements the delay phase of its strategy against the virus. To date the virus has resulted in an increase in work for the Children's Rights Alliance. This is because the impact of school's closures in the main and social distancing rules. The Alliance responded to Covid-19 by working with its members to identify issues for children and young people and to advocate on their behalf. The Alliance also sought to address gaps in support for vulnerable children including sourcing playmats for children in Direct Provision and introducing a food provision scheme for children under the age of 6 years. Going forward the Alliance will need to rethink its overall strategy as the context for children and young people has changed. The Alliance is preparing a new strategic plan and it will need to take account of the new reality. In addition, while funding is not an issue for the organisation at the current time the Alliance is aware the economic fallout from Covid-19 will impact on its philanthropic sources of funding due to reduced yields. Reduced government revenues and reductions in member incomes will also have a negative effect on funding sources.

Other than as outlined above there are no post balance sheet events which require disclosures.

## 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

The Board of Directors acknowledge that they have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation is fully compliant with their obligations under the Companies Act 2014. To this end, the Finance Audit and Risk Committee 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.

## 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.

## Auditors

The auditors, JPA Brenson Lawlor resigned and Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited were appointed on a casual vacancy. They 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

30 Jun 2020



**Colm Bryson**  
Director

30 Jun 2020

## Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

### For the year ended 31 December 2019

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the 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 apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards: and
- 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 proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to 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 1963 to 2009, and all Regulations to be construed as one with those Acts. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity 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.

Signed on behalf of the Board



**Tom Maher**  
Director

30 Jun 2020



**Colm Bryson**  
Director

30 Jun 2020

**4**

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

# Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

## Opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Children's Rights Alliance - Republic of Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2019 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position, 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.

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.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the charity's affairs as at 31 December 2019 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland;
- have been properly 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 company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of 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 as a basis for our opinion.

## Emphasis of Matter - Covid-19

We draw attention to Note 2 of the financial statements which includes a description of the potential effects of Covid-19 on the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our opinion is not qualified in this respect.

## 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 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, other than the financial statements and our Auditors' report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, 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 Generally Accepted Accounting Practices

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 Director's Report.

## Respective responsibilities

### Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Statements


As explained more fully in the Directors' Report set out on page 7, the Directors 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 trustees 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 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 trustees either intend to end the 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: [https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/ISA-700-\(Ireland\)](https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/ISA-700-(Ireland)). This description forms part of our Auditors' report



**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 : 30-Jun-2020

## Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating An Income And Expenditure Account)

for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds ▶ €	Restricted Funds ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2018 ▶ €
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>					
Donations and fundraising income	1	62,920	-	62,920	47,229
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>					
Government grants	1	-	296,288	296,288	312,602
Other funding	1	1,156	467,247	468,403	330,399
Investment income	1	42,733	-	42,733	35,731
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>106,809</b>	<b>763,535</b>	<b>870,344</b>	<b>725,961</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
- Costs of raising funds	3	90	58,923	59,013	49,324
- Expenditure on charitable activities	3	79,486	680,669	760,155	754,503
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>79,576</b>	<b>739,592</b>	<b>819,168</b>	<b>803,827</b>
<b>Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers</b>		<b>27,233</b>	<b>23,943</b>	<b>51,176</b>	<b>(77,866)</b>
<b>Transfers</b>					
Gross transfers between funds		2,070	(2,070)	-	-
<b>Net incoming resources before other recognised gains and losses</b>		<b>29,303</b>	<b>21,873</b>	<b>51,176</b>	<b>(77,866)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>653,606</b>	<b>122,920</b>	<b>776,526</b>	<b>854,392</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>682,909</b>	<b>144,793</b>	<b>827,702</b>	<b>776,526</b>

Approved by the board on and signed on its behalf by



**Tom Maher**  
Director

30 Jun 2020



**Colm Bryson**  
Director

30 Jun 2020

## Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2019

Notes	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	51,176	(77,866)
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>51,176</b>	<b>(77,866)</b>

## Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2019

Fixed Assets	Notes	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Tangible Assets	8	312,993	319,852
Investments	9	50,000	-
		<b>362,993</b>	<b>319,852</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	10	358,651	640,653
Cash at bank and in hand	11	722,987	586,668
		<b>1,081,638</b>	<b>1,227,321</b>
<b>Creditors</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(616,929)	(770,647)
Net Current Assets		<b>464,709</b>	<b>456,674</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>827,702</b>	<b>776,526</b>
<b>Represented by</b>			
Accumulated funds - general	17	682,909	653,606
Accumulated funds - restricted	18	144,793	122,920
		<b>827,702</b>	<b>776,526</b>

Approved by the board on and signed on its behalf by



**Tom Maher**  
Director

30 Jun 2020



**Colm Bryson**  
Director

30 Jun 2020

## Cash Flow Statement

### for the year ended 31 December 2019

Cash flows from operating activities	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	<b>51,176</b>	(77,866)
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	<b>15,168</b>	11,002
Investment income	<b>(62)</b>	(75)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	<b>282,002</b>	193,131
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	<b>(153,718)</b>	(339,743)
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>	<b>194,566</b>	(213,551)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	<b>(8,309)</b>	(38,084)
Investment income	<b>62</b>	75
<b>Net cash from investing activities</b>	<b>(8,247)</b>	(38,009)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	<b>186,319</b>	(251,560)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year	<b>586,668</b>	868,228
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year</b>	<b>722,987</b>	586,668

## Accounting Policies for the year ended 31 December 2019

### General Information

These financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, 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 2019.

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.

### 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.

### Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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 FRS102 and Section 291(5) of the Companies Act 2014.

### Currency

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

### 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.

### 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. 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 was no donated service and facilities during the year ended 31 December 2019.

## Expenditure Recognition

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

Cost 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 comprise 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% 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.

## 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 provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual value, of each asset systematically over its expected useful life, on a straight line basis, as follows:

- Freehold buildings                      • 2% Straight line
- Computer equipment                    • 20% Straight line
- Furniture & equipment                 • 20% Straight line

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.

## 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.

## Impairment

Assets not measured at fair value are reviewed for any indication that the asset may be impaired at each balance sheet date. If such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, or the asset's cash generating unit, is estimated and compared to the carrying amount. Where the carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount where the impairment loss is a revaluation decrease.

## Cash

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Comparative Figures

Where necessary comparative figures have been regrouped on a basis consistent with the current year.

## 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 financials. The charity contributes 10% employer pension contribution to an individual's PRSA once probation is passed.

## Taxation

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



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019

### 1. Income

	Unrestricted Funds ▶ €	Restricted Funds ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2018 ▶ €
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>				
Donations and fundraising income				
- Membership Fees	49,524	-	49,524	46,570
- Donations in Kind	4,346	-	4,346	659
- Training	9,050	-	9,050	-
	<b>62,920</b>		<b>62,920</b>	47,229
<b>Income from Charitable Activities</b>				
Government grants				
- DRCD/Pobal	-	89,948	89,948	89,948
- Social Partnership	-	18,840	18,840	18,840
- Department of Children & Youth Affairs	-	181,500	181,500	203,814
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	-	6,000	6,000	-
		<b>296,288</b>	<b>296,288</b>	312,602
<b>Other Funding</b>				
- KHF (Early Years' Grant)	-	21,490	21,490	64,176
- CFI (Report Card)	-	30,000	30,000	30,000
- CFI (Comic Relief)	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
- CFI (Child Refugee)	-	45,184	45,184	-
- CFI (No Child 2020)	-	44,001	44,001	-
- Fundraising	1,156	-	1,156	25
- The Bar of Ireland	-	9,000	9,000	5,720
- Family Lawyers' Association	-	2,000	2,000	2,000
- Tomar Trust	-	188,476	188,476	208,478
- Access to Justice	-	107,096	107,096	-
	<b>1,156</b>	<b>467,247</b>	<b>468,403</b>	330,399
<b>Income from Investments</b>				
Rental and Management fee Income	42,671	-	42,671	35,656
Interest Received	62	-	62	75
	<b>42,733</b>		<b>42,733</b>	35,731
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>106,809</b>	<b>763,535</b>	<b>870,344</b>	725,961

## 2. 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 €722,987 at the 31 December 2019. 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.

### 3. Costs of Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2019 ▶ €	Restricted Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2018 ▶ €
Direct staff costs	90	58,923	59,013	49,324

#### 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 2019 ▶ €	Direct Aim Costs 2019 ▶ €	Direct Staff Costs 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2018 ▶ €
AIM 1	9,705	9,373	47,416	66,494	105,238
AIM 2	77,641	108,474	47,416	233,531	122,732
AIM 3	9,705	4,264	54,642	68,611	153,967
AIM 4	48,526	69,866	65,595	183,987	117,789
AIM 5	9,705	12,736	51,363	73,804	149,605
AIM 6	38,821	25,651	69,256	133,728	105,172
<b>Total</b>	<b>194,103</b>	<b>230,364</b>	<b>335,688</b>	<b>760,155</b>	<b>754,503</b>
Unrestricted				79,486	203,928
Restricted				680,669	550,575
<b>Total</b>				<b>760,155</b>	<b>754,503</b>

**Support Costs**

	AIM1 ▶ €	AIM2 ▶ €	AIM3 ▶ €	AIM4 ▶ €	AIM5 ▶ €	AIM6 ▶ €	Total funds 2019 ▶ €	Total funds 2018 ▶ €
Salaries and office costs	6,094	48,752	6,094	30,470	6,094	24,376	121,880	123,864
Office expenses	1,253	10,027	1,253	6,267	1,253	5,013	25,066	26,543
IT support costs	512	4,091	512	2,557	512	2,046	10,230	10,034
Depreciation and maintenance	846	6,769	846	4,230	846	3,384	16,921	13,585
Professional fees	409	3,274	409	2,046	409	1,637	8,184	11,845
Governance	591	4,730	591	2,955	591	2,364	11,822	14,026
	9,705	77,643	9,705	48,525	9,705	38,820	194,103	199,897
Unrestricted							51,100	128,202
Restricted							143,003	71,695
							194,103	199,897

**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 2019 ▶ €	Restricted Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2019 ▶ €	Total Funds 2018 ▶ €
Audit fee	6,796	-	6,796	5,535
Non Audit fee	-	-	-	615
Annual Report and AGM	-	4,527	4,527	6,584
Board meetings	499	-	499	1,292
	7,295	4,527	11,822	14,026

**4. Surplus/(Deficit) on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation 2019**

Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities is stated after charging/crediting	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Depreciation of tangible assets	15,167	11,060
Auditor's remuneration		
- audit services	6,796	5,535
- non audit services	-	615

## 5. Directors' Remuneration and Transactions including Key Management Personnel

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 (2018: €85,980). In addition 10% of her salary was paid as employer contribution into a defined contribution pension on her behalf.

## 6. Staff Costs

### Number of Employees

The average monthly number of persons employed by the company (excluding Directors) during the financial year analysed by category, was as follow:

	2019 ▶ Number	2018 ▶ Number
Administration	2	2
Policy and Research	7	8
Communication and Information	3	3
	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

The aggregate remuneration comprised of:	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Wages and Salaries	<b>421,635</b>	516,607
Social Welfare Costs	<b>45,781</b>	55,514
Pension Costs	<b>40,311</b>	44,794
	<b>507,727</b>	616,915

All the amounts stated above were treated as an expense of the company in the financial year. No amount was capitalised into assets. Holiday pay is not provided for as annual leave is not allowed to be carried forward unless in exceptional circumstances.

The number of higher paid employees was:

### Salary Band

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
€60,000 - €70,000	<b>1</b>	1
€70,001 - €80,000	-	-
€80,001 - €90,000	<b>1</b>	1

## 7. Retirement Benefit Information

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Retirement benefit charge	<b>40,311</b>	44,794

## 8. Tangible Fixed Assets

### Cost

	Land and buildings freehold ▶ €	Fixtures, fittings and equipment ▶ €	Computer equipment ▶ €	Total ▶ €
At 1 January 2019	309,469	65,437	23,590	398,496
Additions	-	8,309	-	8,309
At 31 December 2019	309,469	73,746	23,590	406,805
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 January 2019	24,755	50,639	3,250	78,644
Charge for the year	6,188	4,260	4,720	15,168
At 31 December 2019	30,943	54,899	7,970	93,812
<b>Net book value</b>				
	Land and buildings freehold ▶ €	Fixtures, fittings and equipment ▶ €	Computer equipment ▶ €	Total ▶ €
At 31 December 2019	278,526	18,847	15,620	312,993
At 31 December 2018	284,714	14,798	20,340	319,852

The Directors have considered the value of the fixed assets as at 31 December 2019 and they provide for impairment if necessary. There is no impairment required in 2019 (2018: Nil).

## 9. Financial Fixed Assets

### Investments Cost

	Unlisted Investments ▶ €	Total ▶ €
At 1 January 2019	-	-
Additions	50,000	50,000
At 31 December 2019	50,000	50,000
<b>Net book values</b>		
	Unlisted Investments ▶ €	Total ▶ €
At 31 December 2018	50,000	50,000
At 31 December 2019	-	-

## 10. Debtors

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Trade debtors	<b>332,055</b>	638,335
Other debtors	<b>25,576</b>	1,402
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>1,020</b>	916
	<b>358,651</b>	640,653

## 11. Components of Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Cash at bank and in hand	<b>722,987</b>	586,668

## 12. Creditors

### Amounts falling due within one year

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Credit card	806	27
Trade creditors	22,089	16,916
Taxation and social welfare (Note 13)	8,732	14,706

### Accruals and deferred income:

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Deferred income	558,990	713,595
Accruals	26,300	14,255
Pension accrual	12	11,148
	<b>616,929</b>	<b>770,647</b>

### 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.

### Included in deferred income for 2018 are:

- Tomar Trust in the amount of €376,940 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 €214,192 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 €44,974 to cover future staff costs of the Alliance covering period January 2019 to June 2019.
- Early Years grant for the year 2019 in the amount of €20,529.
- The Community Foundation for Ireland in the amount of €30,000 to fund future expenses to be incurred in the production of the annual Report Card for 2019.
- Katharine Howard Foundation (previously Start Strong funding) in the amount of €22,843. This funding relates to future years expenditure.
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the amount of €1,500 for future costs to be incurred on the Children's Rights Study.



- Rental income in the amount of €1,460 received in advance.
- Management fee income in the amount of €1,156 received in advance.

### 13. Taxation and Social Welfare

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Creditors: PAYE	8,732	14,706

## 14. Government Grants Deferred

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 - Pobal	Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community & Voluntary Sector (SSNO)	Salaries & Wages	€269,844 Term: July 2016 - June 2019	€44,974	SSNO Expenditure reports are submitted every 6 months, as set out in Agreement. Additional reports submitted at certain intervals. No capital grant received.	We do not provide any employee benefits other than Employer Pension contributions.
Department of Rural and Community Development - Pobal	Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community & Voluntary Sector (SSNO)	Salaries & Wages	€269,946 Term: July 2019 - June 2022	€44,991	SSNO Expenditure reports are submitted every 6 months, as set out in Agreement. Additional reports submitted at certain intervals. No capital grant received.	
Department of Rural and Community Development	Social Partnership related Funding for the Community and Voluntary Pillar 2019	Salaries & Wages	€18,840 Term: Jan-Dec 2019	€18,840	Annual Report and Application submitted each year. No capital grant received.	
Department of Children & Youth Affairs	<p>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.</p> <p>2. Consolidate and enhance children's rights and entitlements through engagement with frontline services and through the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Structures.</p> <p>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 CRA member organisations where required.</p> <p>4. Agree a workplan with representatives from the units in DCYA Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division early in 2019.</p> <p>5. Progression of activities in line with agreed workplan</p>	Salaries & Wages, Event Costs, Overheads	€180,000 Term: Jan - Dec 2019	€180,000	Agreed workplan submitted and an annual report submitted each year. No capital grant received.	
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Communicating Europe Initiative 2019. Know Your Rights: A guide to children's European rights online.	Produce a children's guide on EU digital rights, design & publish	€6,000	€6,000	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 - €40,311

## 15. 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 2019 was 120 full-time members and 36 individual members (31 December 2018: 118 full-time members 24 individual members)

## 16. Reserves

	Accumulated Funds ▶ €
At 1 January 2019	776,526
Surplus for the year	51,176
At 31 December 2019	827,702

## 17. Accumulated Funds - General

	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	29,303	38,945
Opening members' funds	653,606	614,661
Closing members' funds	682,909	653,606

## 18. Restricted Funds

## Current Year

	01/01/2019	Income Expenditure		Transfer	31/12/2019
	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €
DCYA - Core Funding	-	180,000	(180,000)	-	-
DCYA - Human Rights Study	3,500		(3,500)	-	-
Child refugee research	3,504	1,500	(3,500)	-	1,504
SSNO	-	89,948	(89,948)	-	-
Social Partnership	-	18,840	(18,840)	-	-
Communicating Europe	-	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 Card)	-	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
Pól Ó'Murchú	643	-	-	(643)	-
	<b>122,920</b>	<b>763,535</b>	<b>(739,592)</b>	<b>(2,070)</b>	<b>144,793</b>
	01/01/2018	Income Expenditure		Transfer	31/12/2018
	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €	▷ €
Government Grants	8,217	132,602	(132,685)	(1,130)	7,004
CFI (Child refugee project)	50,876	-	44,999	-	5,877
KHF (Early Years Grant)	3,551	64,176	(64,231)	328	3,824
CFI (Report Card)	-	30,000	30,000	-	-
CFI (Educational Needs)	3,143	-	(3,500)	357	-
Access to Justice	100,958	-	(78,770)	357	22,545
The Bar of Ireland	4,803	7,720	(6,580)	-	5,943
MDAC (European Lawyers)	2,070	-	-	-	2,070
Tony Ryan Trust	64,577	-	(47,994)	-	16,583
Tomar Trust (Child refugee projects)	-	208,478	(150,047)	-	58,431
Tomar Trust	893	-	(1,500)	607	58,431
Pól Ó'Murchú	643	-	-	-	643
CFI Comic Relief	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-
	<b>239,731</b>	<b>442,976</b>	<b>(560,306)</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>122,920</b>

## 19. Operating Lease Commitments

At 31 December 2019 the company had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

Expiry date:	2019 ▶ €	2018 ▶ €
Within one year	2,208	7,504
Between one and five years	-	2,208
	<b>2,208</b>	<b>9,712</b>

## 20. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments given by the company as at 31 December 2019 which require disclosure. (2018: Nil).

## 21. Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities as at 31 December 2019. (2018: Nil).

## 22. 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 own this property and, during 2016, jointly agreed to lease space to other charitable organisations.

The Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF) is a 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.

The Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance. PEIN rented an office on the third floor until September 2019.

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.

## 23. Post Balance Sheet Events

In early 2020 the coronavirus pandemic hit the world. The initial effect has been an economic slowdown and the loss of many jobs across many businesses. Restrictive measures have been put in places as Ireland implements the delay phase of its strategy against the virus. To date the virus has resulted in an increase in work for the Children's Rights Alliance. This is because the impact of school's closures in the main and social distancing rules. The Alliance responded to Covid-19 by working with its members to identify issues for children and young people and to advocate on their behalf. The Alliance also sought to address gaps in support for vulnerable children including sourcing playmats for children in Direct Provision and introducing a food provision scheme for children under the age of 6 years. Going forward the Alliance will need to rethink its overall strategy as the context for children and young people has changed. The Alliance is preparing a new strategic plan and it will need to take account of the new reality. In addition, while funding is not an issue for the organisation at the current time the Alliance is aware the economic fallout from Covid-19 will impact on its philanthropic sources of funding due to reduced yields. Reduced government revenues and reductions in member incomes will also have a negative effect on funding sources.

Other than as outlined above there are no post balance sheet events which require disclosures.

## 24. Approval Of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 30 June 2020.

# Celebrating our Supporters

Thank you to all our funding partners and supporters in 2019. Because of you we can help make Ireland one of the best places in Ireland to be a child.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



An Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



The **One** Foundation



THE IRISH TIMES

Tomar Trust  
*National influence, Local implementation*



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.

Thank you to all our funders including:  
Comic Relief; Communicating Europe; Community Foundation for Ireland; Department of Children and Youth Affairs; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Department of Rural and Community Development; Family Lawyers' Association; Katharine Howard Foundation; Law Society of Ireland; One Foundation; Pobal; Tomar Trust; Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; and, The Bar of Ireland

Special thanks also to those who provided *pro bono* support during 2019 including Arthur Cox Solicitors, the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA) and Business in the Community.



Tanya and Julie with one of our brilliant funders, Lye Ogunsanye from the One Foundation at the launch of our Know Your Rights guide



# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Uniting Voices for Children

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

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