



ÁISEANNA TACAÍOCHTA



Áiseanna
Tacaíochta
Annual Report
2012


July 18, 2013



Contents

1. Director's report	4
2. 2012 in Review	5
I. Overview of Services	
II. Independent Evaluation	
3. Update 2013	8
I. Risk Assessment	
II. Governance	
III. Fundraising	
4. Tribute to Sean Gardiner	14
5. Acknowledgements	15
6. Financial Information	17

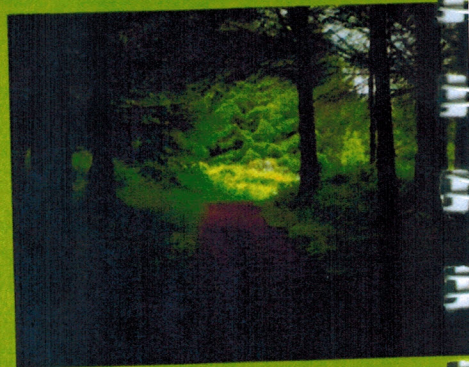




*To provide leadership and support in
Ireland to empower those of us who
have disabilities to direct our own
lives and enjoy the same equality
and freedoms as non-disabled citizens*

Mission Statement of Áiseanna Tacaíochta

July 18, 2013





Dia Dhaoibh,

I am pleased to present the Áiseanna Tacaíochta Annual Report for 2012. It is fair to say that 2012 has been a challenging year for Áiseanna Tacaíochta, as it has been for many other organisations and individuals. During 2012 Áiseanna Tacaíochta reached the final stages of the pilot phase, from which followed a time to assess and appreciate our successes, strengthen our weaknesses and improve our strategy for empowering people with disabilities in Ireland into the future.



In an environment of steadily decreasing financial resources it was always going to be a challenge to establish Áiseanna Tacaíochta as a viable organisation. I am proud to say that though it took a lot of time and effort we, as an organisation but more importantly as a connected network of individuals, rose to meet this challenge with the cooperation and assistance of many colleagues and friends. The following proverb not only sums up our experience from the last year, but can bring us hope for the challenges and victories yet to come:

"There are no great people in this world, only great challenges which ordinary people rise to meet"

- William Frederick Halsey, Jr

We look forward to working together in 2013, strengthening our network, welcoming new members and supporting fellow people with disabilities to live a more empowered life.

Slán,

Martin Naughton

Director

Áiseanna Tacaíochta





2012 In Review

Áiseanna Tacaíochta (ÁT) is a user-led organisation that was founded by Leaders¹. We received seed funding from Genio in October 2010 to develop our pilot of a model of Direct Payments, a first attempt of its kind in Ireland. We believe that we, the individual, should have the right to choose as to how our service is delivered. There are vast amounts of knowledge, research and experience, in Ireland and internationally, about Direct Payments. The strong recommendation from all Leaders is that Direct Payments are feasible and should be available to all.

We aim to be innovative and advocate for a person centred approach as to how Personal Assistant services operate for us in Ireland. We have developed as an organisation as a result of the wishes expressed by Leaders for such a programme of Direct Payments to exist in Ireland.

Overview of Services

During 2012 Áiseanna Tacaíochta continued to support three core members to manage their own individual companies and direct payments model. Three new members also joined the ÁT network in 2012, including some of our first members from outside the Dublin area.

Overall, Áiseanna Tacaíochta channelled a total budget of €450,225 to the individual member companies and supported the provision of, on average, 620 Personal Assistant Hours per week throughout 2012.

¹ A Leader is commonly known in Ireland as a person with a disability who supervises their Personal Assistants





Independent Evaluation

An independent evaluation of the Áiseanna Tacaíochta (ÁT) pilot project was commissioned by ÁT in June 2012 and facilitator Deirdre Hennessy was appointed to carry out this work.

Deirdre conducted facilitated interviews with various ÁT stakeholders including circles of support, family members, the ÁT monitoring group and funding representatives, to name but a few. The facilitated sessions were excellent in terms of learning for the organisation, ensuring that all stakeholders' views were heard and taken into consideration, and overall that ÁT is operating as a transparent and inclusive organisation.

The results from the evaluation illustrated some key strengths of Áiseanna Tacaíochta, along with some weaknesses and recommendations.

Strengths

Individual ÁT members noted the flexibility and independence that came with managing a direct payments model. Whilst there can be no doubt that managing one's own service leads to increased independence, the overall benefit of taking control in this way fosters personal growth through responsibility and is life enriching. Direct payment models facilitate choice, control and options for people with disabilities, who can now arrange the practical aspects of living and required support in order to pursue their life's goals and ambitions. These findings are in line with evidence from many sources, for example TILDA, which shows that having control makes a significant difference to a person's health and prospects, leading to wider social benefits.





Weaknesses

It was found that it would be beneficial to the organisation to quantify in specific terms the cost effectiveness of a direct payments model as opposed to traditional service delivery. To this end Áiseanna Tacaíochta plan to commission a cost-benefit analysis.

Recommendations

Resulting from the evaluation report there were several recommendations for Áiseanna Tacaíochta:

- The governance structure and operational management must be developed and strengthened.
- There are several policy documents which ÁT must have in place which are in line with relevant HSE policy.
- ÁT must secure additional funding in the interim period whilst it reaches a sustainable scale in the coming years.
- ÁT's potential for successful expansion depends on the organisation's flexibility in trying to respond to the needs of different individuals, whilst pursuing independence.
- ÁT must ensure to maintain and build upon the goodwill of stakeholder organisations. It was recommended that ÁT, the IWA and HSE might consider holding an information workshop for providers of PAs to promote an appetite for change. ÁT might also engage with the HSE and others about the wider issue of mainstreaming direct payments.

In conclusion, the evaluation report found that although Áiseanna Tacaíochta shows real promise, further financial support is required along with certain necessary improvements pertaining to operational and governance aspects of the organisation.





2013 Update

Risk Assessment

As 2012 progressed Áiseanna Tacaíochta moved closer to concluding the pilot phase of its development. There were a lot of issues to consider in completing the pilot phase of Áiseanna Tacaíochta. The organisational plan was to work with new members; many people have expressed an interest in joining the ÁT Network and the next stage of development was to work with potential new members and guide them through the process of joining the organisation, developing their circles of support and supporting them to live a life of their own ambition.

However, as noted in previous reports and documentation, Áiseanna Tacaíochta was the first attempt in Ireland of piloting direct payments, and as such this work was carried out in the absence of established policy and procedure pertaining to direct payment methods. A methodical assessment of risk was required before Áiseanna Tacaíochta could successfully move from the pilot phase, along with an independent evaluation of the progress made by ÁT since its inception.

In order for the risk assessment to be carried out, the pilot phase of ÁT was extended to October 2012 and subsequently to the end of April 2013. In terms of legal implications there was a lot to consider around Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) for Personal Assistants who had been seconded from service providers and key ÁT stakeholder, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). ÁT, in collaboration with stakeholder organisations and colleagues from the IWA and HSE, have successfully negotiated these hurdles. We believe that this process sets out a precedent for direct payments in Ireland that did not previously exist; the work of ÁT has formulated a blue print that other organisations can operate from in terms of exploring direct payment options, particularly pertaining to debundling of funding and management of TUPE.





The process of completing the risk assessment, in conjunction with the HSE, commenced in late 2012 and continued through to early 2013. In April 2013 ÁT received confirmation from the HSE that, following on from the risk assessment, they were willing to enter into a new Service Level Agreement with ÁT.

This confirmation was a crucial turning point in ÁT development; the pilot phase was almost completed and ÁT could enter into a new growth and development phase.





Governance

Strengthening of Áiseanna Tacaíochta governance was considered to be a high priority goal during organisational planning for 2013. Several new board members were recruited who have a wealth of experience from both the public and private sector throughout Ireland and the UK. A brief biography of new board members can be found below:

Geoffrey Day

Geoffrey Day is an Independent Health and Social Care consultant with health and social care expertise based on over 30 years working in the health sector in Ireland and the UK, with particular experience in primary care, community care, health promotion, mental health and suicide prevention. Geoffrey managed implementation of Reach Out, the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention and acted as a spokesperson for the HSE on suicide prevention matters. Geoffrey was recently appointed to the panel of investigators for the Irish Prison Service.

Shari McDaid

Dr. Shari McDaid joined Mental Health Reform as Policy Officer in August 2011. Prior to that, Shari worked with Amnesty International Ireland from 2008 to 2011 as policy officer for the mental health campaign. She was previously policy officer at the National Disability Authority and, before that, policy and administration manager at Schizophrenia Ireland. Shari has a B.A. from Northwestern University and a Masters in Social Science from the Open University. Shari received her doctorate in 2008 from the Equality Studies Centre at UCD, with a thesis entitled Power, Empowerment and User Involvement in the Public Mental Health Services in Ireland.



Ann Kennelly

Ann Kennelly qualified as an Occupational Therapist from the College of Occupational Therapy, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin in 1983. In 1994, Ann completed an M.Sc.Econ. in the Management of Care awarded by the University of Wales and the University College Dublin. As an Occupational Therapist, Ann's role as a member of a multidisciplinary team was to provide a range of Assessment and Therapeutic Occupational Therapy services to clients with Physical and Sensory Disabilities. Ann worked in both the Hospital and Community public services in Ireland, the UK and Canada and also worked as an OT and a Regional Manager with the Irish Wheelchair Association in the Voluntary sector. Ann joined the South Eastern Health Board in 1994 and managed a range of hospital services before working as the Director of Disability Services in the South East for 7 years. In 2005 Ann took up a post as Local Health Manager HSE South for PCCC Services in North Cork. Ann's final year working for the HSE in 2010 was spent working in the role of Interim National Assistant Director for Disability Services. Ann now works in a private capacity as an Occupational Therapist and is involved with many voluntary groups and individuals with disabilities.

Máiríde Woods

Máiríde Woods is a writer and researcher and has been involved with disability matters for many years. She had a daughter with disabilities who attended St Michael's House day services and she has been on the Board of St Michael's House for some years. Frontline, an Irish quarterly magazine published for workers and families at the front line of intellectual disability has also been one of her interests and she has written many articles for it. In the 1990s she was a rapporteur on the Transport Group of the Commission on the Status of People with disabilities and also undertook some research with Action for Mobility and the Disability Federation of Ireland. In recent years she worked as an Advocacy Executive with the Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle) and was closely involved with the setting up of the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities and with advocacy services in the Citizens Information Services. Máiríde has a Diploma in Sociology





ÁISEANNA TACAÍOCHTA

and Social Research and a Masters in Equality Studies – both from UCD. She has received a number of prizes for her writing. She has published two collections of poetry and has had stories included in several anthologies and broadcast on RTE. Máiríde was brought up in Cushendall, Co. Antrim but has spent most of her life in Dublin.





Fundraising

ÁT has been working during 2013 to secure additional funding for the organisation in order to expand and develop its work to a point where it will be possible to be financially self-sufficient through volunteerism and membership contributions. To this end, AT have submitted two funding applications, both of which have a strong focus on training and development, highlighting the importance of upskilling Leaders in order to manage a direct payments model, offer peer support to new ÁT members and self-advocate.

Genio 2013

ÁT have made a submission to Genio for funding which would allow ÁT to support two new members and a small cooperative to join the network and manage a flexible direct payments plan. Essential to this project is a programme of training which would strengthen the skills of Leaders, and would encompass areas such as financial management, peer support and self-advocacy.

National Lottery 2013

ÁT have also made a submission for National Lottery funding, based on a project that would encompass a three strand training programme, again aimed at developing the skills and strengths of leaders. Upskilling of Leaders increases the sustainability of the direct payments project, ensuring that once the transitional phase to direct payments is complete Leaders and their support circles feel competent that they can continue to manage direct payments without feeling overburdened by the administrative and reporting obligations. ÁT envisages that Leaders will become pillars of their local community as active citizens, people with purchasing power, employers and employees.





Tribute to Sean Gardiner

ÁT would like to pay special tribute to one of our original core members, Sean Gardiner, who was with us since the commencement of the pilot project and did pioneering work in sharing his lived experience of managing a direct payments model. Sadly Sean passed away in November 2012; however the legacy of his involvement with ÁT will remain with us for many years to come. In agreeing to pilot direct payments with ÁT Sean has greatly contributed to a significant body of knowledge that paves the way for flexible services and independence for people with disabilities for many years to come.

ÁT would also like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work from all of Sean's support team, including his family and his PAs, who worked tirelessly to support Sean in his journey to direct payments.

Special mention must be given to Sean's family, who during very difficult times, ensured that Sean's support company was wound down, and that employees were supported to seek new employment. ÁT staff and members extend their sympathy for your great loss, and our sincere gratitude for the contributions that Sean and his support team have made towards independent living for all people with disabilities throughout Ireland.





Acknowledgments

The work of ÁT would not have been possible without the support of many of our stakeholders, whose input and expertise have been invaluable during our journey.

ÁT would like to express thanks to all of its members and their circles of support. With your investment of knowledge, time and effort disability in Ireland is finally shifting towards a place where people with disabilities are in control and respected as fellow citizens with equal rights.

Many organisations have also dedicated their time and expertise to ÁT since the early days and without this input and support the body of work that has been undertaken would not have been possible. The Irish Wheelchair Association has played a vital role, particularly in terms of working with ÁT and staff members around TUPE. Along with this they have contributed greatly to the direction and guidance of ÁT as part of the stakeholder's group.

The support of the Disability Federation of Ireland has contributed hugely to the success of ÁT. Their expertise and guidance has supported ÁT since day one. Sabrina Lane, Support Staff from DFI, played a central role in completing the risk assessment with the HSE, and with the support of ÁT board members, in particular Anne Kennelly, Máiríde Woods and Joan O'Donnell, submitted two high value funding applications during 2013 which are pivotal in furthering the organisation's work.

DFI have also agreed to become a host organisation for ÁT in the coming years. This hosting arrangement will be central to the development of ÁT, and allows for synergy and mutual benefit between our two organisations. We look forward to working closely with DFI into the future.

Colleagues from the HSE have supported us through every aspect of our work, from supporting the transition of individuals from traditional service models to direct payments, in collaborating with ÁT and supporting the process of the risk





ÁISEANNA TACAÍOCHTA

assessment, and guiding the organisation over the hurdles we have faced.

Most importantly we would like to thank the HSE, and all of our stakeholders, for trusting us in what was and continues to be a very new venture.





Financial Information

Income and Expenditure Account for the year 31st December 2012

	12 months 2012	16 months 2011
INCOME	501,246	70,213
(Continuing operations)		
Administrative expenses	<u>501,158</u>	<u>72,152</u>
Operating (deficit)/surplus	88	(1,939)
Interest receivable and similar income	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
(Deficit)/surplus on ordinary Activities before taxation	88	(1,939)
Tax on (deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities		
(Deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities after taxation	<u>88</u>	<u>(1,939)</u>
STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT IN RETAINED INCOME		
Accumulated (Deficit)/Surplus brought forward	(1,939)	-
(Deficit)/Surplus retained for the year	88	(1,939)
Revenue Movements	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Accumulated (deficit)/surplus carried forward	<u>(1,851)</u>	<u>(1,939)</u>





Financial Information

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2012

	€	2012 €	€	€
Current Assests				
Debtors	5,217		827	
Cash at the bank and in hand	<u>48,894</u>		<u>33,319</u>	
	54,111		34,146	
 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	 <u>(55,962)</u>		 <u>(36,085)</u>	
 Net Current Liabilities		 <u>(1,851)</u>		 <u>(1,939)</u>
 Total Assists Less Current Liabilities		 <u>(1,851)</u>		 <u>(1,939)</u>
 Capital and Reserves				
Income and expenditure account		<u>(1,851)</u>		<u>(1,939)</u>
 Equity Funds		 <u>(1,851)</u>		 <u>(1,939)</u>





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