



**Áiseanna Tacaíochta**

**Annual Report**

**2019**





## ***Mission Statement of Áiseanna Tacaíochta (ÁT)***

*“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”*

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# Chapter One

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## **Introduction**

Áiseanna Tacaíochta (ÁT) was founded as a pilot project in 2010 by four people with the lived experience of disability, who depend on daily support and PA services in their own lives and is the first organisation in Ireland to offer a Direct Payments model to people with disabilities. We provide leadership and support to our members - who we call Leaders - empowering them to live with the independence and freedom they are entitled to.

We act as an intermediary between each of our Leaders and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to set up a Direct Payment to the person, enabling Leaders to move from a service delivery model to choosing and managing their own services, mainly Personal Assistant (PA). This empowers them to decide when and how they use their supports, ensuring that they fit in with their lives, not the other way around.

Ours is a hugely innovative and progressive approach, which drives the shift towards personalised models of support that give power back to the person, in line with Government policy and HSE commitments.

We are unique in that we work right across disability, facilitating Direct Payments to people with all types of different disabilities who self-direct their services, as well as family members directing on behalf of a person with a disability.

Over 600,000 people in Ireland live with a disability. Disability can happen to anyone at any time; our chances of acquiring a disability increase with age. It affects every area of life, not just our health: it is an enduring, societal matter. It will always be necessary to provide help and support; at ÁT, we have created a truly empowering way of doing so.

Our goal is to make Independent Living open to everyone, establishing it as a recognised right for people with disabilities. We aim to change the way we think about disability and to enable people with disabilities to re-write their roles in society.

## **Legal Structure:**

The ÁT Network operates under the registered business name of Áiseanna Tacaíochta Company Limited by Guarantee.

Company Number 489250.

Charity Number CHY 19324

Charity Regulatory Authority Number 20075675



**Board of Directors:**

Members of the Board of Directors who served during the financial year and up to the date of approval of the Annual Financial Statements on 22 October 2020 are as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Kevin McCoy
Vice Chairperson:	Ann Kennelly
Company Secretary:	Emma Caparangca
Board members:	Owen Collumb
	Peter Moore
	Dr Mary Keogh
	Brian Duncan
	Morgan P. Mc Knight
	Gordon Ryan

**Registered Office:**

Ground Floor, Chase House,  
City Junction Business Park,  
Northern Cross, Malahide Road,  
Dublin 17. D17 AK63

**Chief Executive Officer:**

Paul McBride

**Executive Team:**

Emma Caparangca	Finance Manager
Aisling Whelan	Member Relations Manager
Mary T Cahill Kennedy	Member Relations Officer
Dearbhla Ni Mhaolagain	Administrative Officer

**Auditors:**

Hunt & Company Accountants Limited  
52 Manor Street  
Dublin 7

**Principal Bankers:**

Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2  
Bank of Ireland, Northern Cross, Malahide Road, Dublin



## Chairperson's Address

This time last year who could have believed that we would be in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic, having endured a national lockdown of the like never before imagined. Who could have believed that at the time of writing, 1,806 of our citizens would have lost their lives to the deadly Covid-19 virus. On behalf of the entire ÁT organisation and all its Leaders, I wish to extend my sincerest sympathies to all of their families who have had to endure their loss in isolation, not just from their communities, but in many cases from each other. May they rest in peace.



As some of us emerge from the national lockdown and attempt to live alongside this virus, the very sad truth is that very many of our citizens remain in lockdown; innocent victims of this cruel virus, as they wait for our government and the international community to find solutions that deliver protections equally across all sectors of the community. Many disabled people and many elderly, and many with underlying conditions remain locked down in their own homes or worse still, in institutional settings, waiting and hoping for an inclusive recovery plan.

I commend all front line workers for their unfailing dedication during this pandemic; most particularly our very own ÁT social care workers, whether employed directly by ÁT or by the ÁT leaders. They have delivered a tremendous service during one of the most difficult times imaginable and they deserve a very special word of praise and thanks for their unfailing dedication at this time.

I am proud to be the Chair of ÁT at this time; and to see how the organisation has worked together to support Leaders during a very worrying and uncertain period in our national and global history. The virus remains very much with us at this time and the same level of vigilance is required now as was required at the outset. The coming months are expected to be very difficult, so please stay alert to the risk, follow the national public health guidelines around social distancing (or use of PPE when this is not possible), hand hygiene, cough etiquette and be vigilant to the symptoms. If there is any doubt consult your doctor and seek a test.

The HSE and the staff of ÁT continue to be ready and willing to support our Leaders in any way possible so please get in contact should you have any concerns on any matter.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to my fellow ÁT Board members and to the executive team who continue to work diligently to sustain and develop the organisation, for the benefit of the members.

I wish each and every one of you well in the coming months and hope that with careful management we will come through this period unscathed.

Dr Kevin Mc Coy  
Chairperson





## CEO's Report

2019 was an extremely active and busy year at Áiseanna Tacaíochta. As an organisation we were actively involved in many events across a spectrum of topics throughout the year (see chapter 2: 2019 year in review below). We also commenced our Peer Support Pilot program in order to evaluate the possible benefits and pitfalls in developing a more formal structured program going forward. We concluded our review and assessment of training opportunities for Leaders and we engaged with the Personalised Budgets Taskforce Project Team on a number of occasions.



Our growth in membership during 2019 at approx. 6% was below our initial target, and this was due in the main to longer than usual periods of engagement being required with HSE throughout 2019, in respect of the process involved in members transferring their service, thus resulting in delays in new Leaders joining. This was across all CHO's.

During 2019 we worked diligently with the Board to achieve compliance with the Charities Regulators Governance Code and in December of 2019 the Board declared our compliance with same. We also worked very diligently through 2019 with the Board appointed Strategy Committee to develop a Draft Strategy for 2020-2022. This was submitted to and approved by Board in February 2020.

Our Head Office team continued to engage with all leaders on the "One to One" leader engagement program and this was welcomed by all of the leaders as a very helpful initiative.

During 2019 we welcomed a new member of staff to the Head Office team as Dearbhla Ni Mhaolagain joined ÁT as our new Administrative assistant as we bade farewell to Sarah Johnson who departed for new horizons.

And finally, we were all greatly saddened by the passing of ÁT Leader Francis Roberts in February of this year. We lost a very valued Leader in Francis. He was a member of ÁT since April 2016 and through the direct payment model he lived independently at his home in a very beautiful part of rural Co. Waterford. He managed a dedicated and professional staff of 7 PA's. May he rest in peace.

In the early part of 2020, the speed of engagement from HSE improved significantly, and we had plans to grow our membership this year by 16%. However, the unprecedented pandemic that is Covid-19 disrupted those plans for many months, as everyone's attention turned to surviving the virus and inhibiting its spread. However I am glad to say that in recent months this engagement has resumed with HSE and we believe that we are still on track to achieve that growth in membership by end of year, all being well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the HSE, both at CHO and National level, for their continued support for our model.

Covid-19 lockdown came in early March 2020 and our world changed immeasurably. Leaders and all staff worked closely together to ensure that plans were in place to deal with the impact of same, as

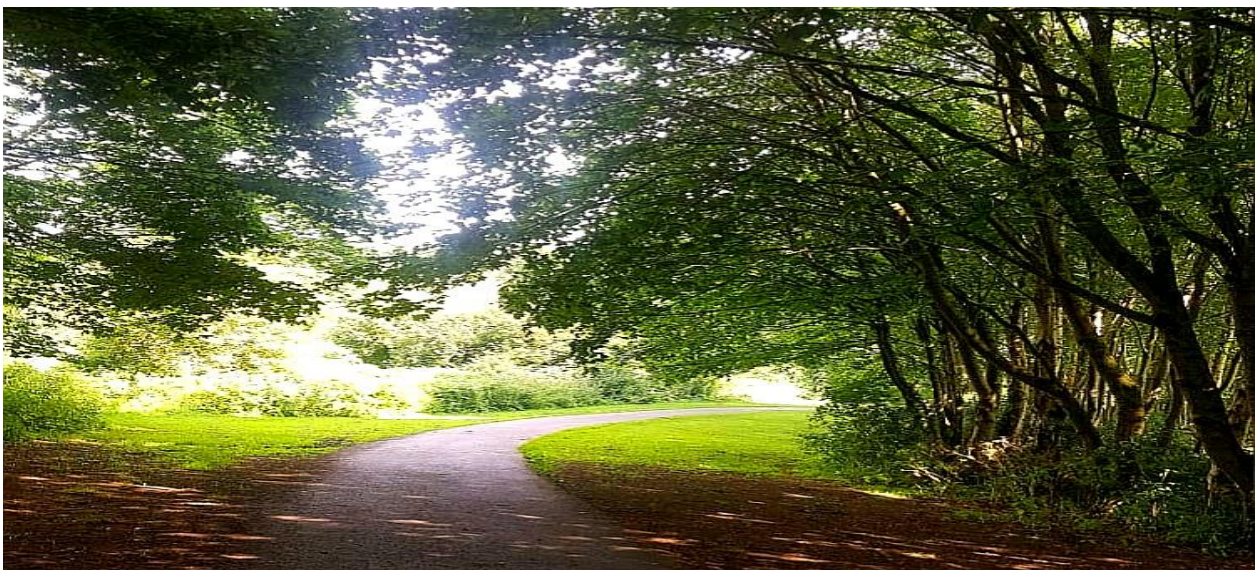
much as possible. HSE provided important guidance and online staff training which ÁT in turn passed on to all Leaders and staff. The ÁT Head Office team worked diligently on the area of PPE and managed to secure sufficient quantities, for the most part, either from HSE or in some cases procured privately. We continue to receive PPE from HSE for onward supply to leaders. ÁT PA staff were unwavering in their continued provision of the vital direct day to day supports to Leaders and on behalf of all of the leaders and the ÁT Board I wish to thank each and every one most sincerely for their service.

At the time of writing Covid-19 is still very much with us and ÁT have assisted all leaders to develop Covid Response Plans in consultation with their staff. These plans are simple common sense plans to support leaders and staff in the prevention of the virus spreading. We urge all leaders and staff to stay alert to the risks and continue to maintain the layers of contingency in their personal support plans which they each developed in the early days of Covid-19 so that, in the event that this deadly virus does make a resurgence, that they will have sufficient options to maintain safe levels of support.

In these uncertain times we wish all of our Leaders, our Board and all of our staff all the very best indeed.

Please stay safe.

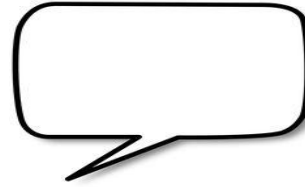
Paul McBride  
CEO





# Member's Testimonials

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## Catherine Shortt

My name is Catherine and I live in Cork. I am a wheelchair user and have been availing of my own PA service since 2015 when I joined Áiseanna Tacaíochta.

Previously my PAs were provided through a third party agency which had complete control over the management of the service. I wanted more of a say and an input into my PA service. That is why I opted for the Direct Payments model as piloted by AT and five years on I have never looked back.

Through my own company, which was established to receive HSE funding on my behalf, I recruit my own PAs; I manage my own hours and I decide how to make best use of the PA service in order to allow me to live a full and independent life.

Being independent and having self determination in my life are huge benefits, but they do not come without their challenges. There is a lot of work involved in running a company, for example paperwork, administration, management of staff. But I have always had huge support in the form of AT, my Circle of Support, my PAs and other people who assist me. And these challenges in themselves have afforded me new skills in organisation, IT and governance and I am always learning.



A more recent challenge was that presented by Covid-19. It was a worrying time and there was concern that there may be disruption in my service. But again in working together with my support systems and the HSE, contingency plans were put in place and no major problems arose. Also there was increased administration due to new policies and safety protocols but again I looked at it as a learning experience.

I would highly recommend the Direct Payments method of providing a PA service. It has given me independence, control and self-determination. And whilst it has been challenging, I have learned much from it and I have grown through the experience. I live independently in the community, I have a permanent job and I feel I am a contributing member of society. None of this would be possible without my PAs and I consider that being able to manage this service myself is a huge achievement. I have strong hopes that self-directed PA services would become the norm and that people like myself would have the opportunity to control their own lives.



## Thomas Connoles

I write this progress report to keep the HSE and AT abreast of how my service is being utilised to me to continue my independent living and I have received 14 extra funded hours a week, this allowed me to continue employing my current staff with the addition of three new members of staff. This has given me the ability to continue my life journey as independently as possible in the comfort and security of my own home, 2020 has been a difficult year so far, due to my own health issues and the outbreak of Covid 19. At the start of the Covid outbreak I temporarily lost three members of staff. This caused me huge distress however my family stepped in to fill in any gaps in service required. AT have been of huge support in terms of the provision of personal protective equipment and training for which I am very grateful.



My social life has also been greatly impacted by this as I am no longer able to attend various outings from concerts to booking a few days away, however my family, friends and my personal assistants have been of great support through all of this in ways such as setting me up on zoom so I can remain in contact with the outside world and the various organisations I am involved in and arranging social nights at home with my personal assistants.

While Covid 19 has been a big challenge for everyone to face, and necessary changes and adjustment have been to the way we live, this time of "lockdown" has been extremely frustrating it has also given my body the time and space it needs to recover and I look at this as a silver lining to my experience in this global pandemic.

I would like to end this report on positive note by thanking the HSE, AT, my support circle and everyone else who contributes to my independence, and strives to improve and maintain my quality of life. May we continue to work together long in to the future.



## Jessica Gough

Since availing of the direct payments model in December 2017 my day-to-day life has changed for the better. Put simply, availing of direct payments has empowered me to finally live my life on my own terms.

Before joining ÁT, I always had a very strong sense of independence, but always felt that it was independence on someone else's terms. Having experienced personal assistance services in university and then having lived, studied and worked in France, Spain and Austria, I have gained an invaluable insight into how traditional personal assistant services are provided in Ireland and in other European countries. I have also experienced the challenges that go with trying to gain access to those services first-hand. Armed with the knowledge and experience I gained from my in university and my time abroad, I returned home to Ireland and was determined to find a model that would allow me to live independently and on my own terms. And that is exactly what ÁT's Direct Payment Model has allowed me to do. In light of my experiences abroad, I, like Martin Naughton, believe that ÁT's model could and should also be a model for Europe so that people with disabilities throughout Europe are empowered to live their lives on their own terms, and to exercise their right to free movement in order to live, study or work in another country within the EU if they so wish.

I would encourage anyone with a disability who feels that they would like the freedom to choose and employ their own personal assistants, and to live their lives on their own terms, to consider the direct payments model. It will have an incredibly positive impact on their lives and allow them to experience real independence.



## **Fiona Weldon**

My name is Fiona Weldon and I am a Researcher with the Anti-Bullying Centre in Dublin City University and a Trainer delivering Bespoke training that encourages, empowers and supports disabled people to live the life that they want.

As a disabled person I need human support that enables me to work, live and play. This support comes in the form of Personal Assistance which is the cornerstone of true Independent Living.

The provision of Personal Assistance (funded by the HSE and brokered through Áiseanna Tacaíochta (AT)) is a tool that allows disabled people to achieve Independent Living. Independent Living is a philosophy, a belief, and a particular way of living life. It grew out of a grassroots movement of disabled people fighting for their human rights and voicing their reality of struggling in a “disablist world”. This worldwide movement made up of disabled activists/researchers/believers who are tirelessly working together FOR ONE COMMON GOAL - to just have the same life chances as everybody else in society.

Áiseanna Tacaíochta facilitates this “particular way of living”. Over the past 2 years, I have set up my own Company, employ an accountant and now directly employ my own Personal Assistance with confidence. I am totally in control and have backup support from AT if I need it.

As a member of AT I am able to employ human support that meets my particular needs. Hence, this agency can, and is playing a leading role in supporting all those that want to live the philosophy of Independent Living in Ireland



# Chapter Two: 2019 Year in Review

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## Taskforce Recommended Demonstration Projects: Progress Report

A Project Manager was appointed on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to manage the Personalised Budgets Demonstration Projects. ÁT held two meetings with the Project Manager during 2019; once on 12<sup>th</sup> March And again on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019. At that time ÁT were informed that there would be three types of payment models explored across three different governance levels. There was due to be 180 participants invited to join the projects and they were due to be completed in two phases, each lasting 2 years, with the first phase commencing in October 2019 and the second phase in April 2020. Each phase would be for two years with participants requiring to spend at least 12 months in the scheme.

The Broker Model which is one of the three models to be tested was due to commence in April 2020, yet there has been no further information regarding same and we have been unable to gain any information from HSE despite our best efforts.

At the time of writing (Sept 2020) some ÁT members who had applied for phase 1 in October 2019 have only recently received written confirmation from HSE that they have been accepted into phase 1, and are now awaiting further guidance on next steps. Also phase 2 has opened and HSE are calling for expressions of interest.

It is our sincere hope that all participants will fare well in these demonstration projects and that a model (or models) will emerge that can be then be made available nationally as a standard option for those who would wish to choose it. It is in everyone's interest that these projects are successful and it is vitally important in that context, that they are adequately resourced so as to support individuals to succeed. We will continue to attempt to receive updates as to progress on same.

## Francis Roberts (RIP):

We were all deeply saddened by the untimely passing of ÁT Leader Francis Roberts in February of 2019. Francis was an ÁT Leader since April 2016 and as a result was able to live at home in a beautiful part of rural Co. Waterford. He managed a staff of seven personal Assistants and was due to take part in the Peer Support Pilot Programme before his unexpected passing. May he rest in peace.





## ÁT in the European Parliament:

ÁT were invited by the European Disability Forum (EDF) & European Network on Independent Living (ENIL); with the support of Marian Harkin MEP; to present an overview of the ÁT model to the European Parliament in Brussels. The event was entitled "Towards Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities: Emerging practices from the European Union".

In keeping with our basic principle of "nothing about us without us" a Leader with lived experience, Jessica Gough, was invited to attend and speak on behalf of ÁT. Jessica gave a very clear explanation of how AT works, and how it offers an alternative to the standard provision of support in Ireland. She also mixed this with her own personal story of enjoying the right to freedom of movement in the EU. The feedback was exceptionally positive with one representative from the European Commission, during the conference, describing it as the most important presentation of the whole event. The Board wish to express their deep appreciation to Jessica for travelling to Brussels to represent the organisation in such an impressive manner.



## Cycle Against Suicide:

In April 2019 we attended the annual Student Leader Congress for Cycle Against Suicide in the 3 Arena, to watch one of our leaders Jenna Fitzgerald tell her inspiring story.

The Student Leader Congress for Cycle Against Suicide is an annual event attended by 8,000 second level students from schools all over Ireland. The aim of the event is to raise awareness among the students on the importance of looking after your mental health in a fun and inclusive environment with the main focus being on building resilience. A range of people with many different backgrounds came to speak at this event and tell their stories.





## Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities:

Technological University Dublin (Formerly DIT) held a seminar during June 2019 seeking to understand the supports that are currently available in Ireland to people with disabilities who wish to become self-employed. The stated ambition of the event was to identify what future actions can be taken to make entrepreneurship a more visible option within the community.



*From left Helen McQuillan (Employability Clare), Des Henry (WALK), Brian Aird (TEAMWork Cooperative, Canada), Prof Tom Cooney (TU Dublin), Marion Wilkinson (National Disability Authority), Prof Yvonne Galligan (TU Dublin), Fergus Finlay (Chair of the Implementation Group for 'Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities'), Eileen Daly (The AT Network), Noelle Daly (Mobility Mojo)*

ÁT were delighted to be invited to speak at the event and again in keeping with our basic principle of “nothing about us without us” our Leader Eileen Daly spoke very eloquently, and informatively about her own experience of establishing her own business and the challenges she faced and the types of supports that should be in place to support people with disabilities in becoming entrepreneurs. Reflecting on the event Eileen provided an account “The seminar provided delegates with an opportunity to explore, discuss and reflect upon the entrepreneurial options available to people with disabilities. Presenters were asked to deliver a Ted X style presentation which I like so I was comfortable.

I explained the AT model and the ways in which it differs to the traditional service user provider relationship. It was an opportunity to highlight the freedom and flexibility which managing my own staff and budget and having my own company gives me. I also explained that it has challenged me to personally up-skill and to recruit staff with varying skill sets so that they can support me with the administrative responsibilities associated with running my company. Entrepreneurship increases your confidence in your own abilities, it takes you out of your comfort zone and you take true responsibility for your choices, decisions and actions. Support is vital but everyone is equal and you are the expert in your own life. It is my hope that the seminar will have challenged delegates to reflect on their own views and opinions and assist them to see disabled people as entrepreneurs and consumers and not merely as service users who are passive recipients of care. As an entrepreneur, I lead a full, busy and active life which also facilitates me to contribute to and participate actively in my community with my family and friends.” – Eileen Daly

The Board wish to express their deep appreciation to Eileen for representing the organisation in such a professional fashion and we look forward to this initiative gaining some momentum.

## **Beyond Limits - Ombudsman:**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 we exhibited at Beyond Limits summit in Croke Park hosted by the Ombudsman for Children.

The summit was the first of its kind with the aim to Empowering young people with disabilities, a summit for young people with disabilities hearing about the achievements of those with disabilities, learning about technology, education and employment opportunities, seeing sports and activities in action, and providing a platform for conversations about inclusion and relationships.







It was a successful event where we met with many new people within the community and part took in the conversation of empowering young people with disabilities while spreading awareness of our organisations mission and values.

## Annual Disability Special Interest Group Conference:

In late October our leader Jessica Gough was asked to speak at the Annual Disability Special Interest Group Conference which was hosted by Social Care Ireland at NCBI. The events topic was the Journey to de –congregation. Jessica gave a two-part presentation where she gave an overview of ÁT Direct



Payment Model and then spoke about her own personal experiences with the focus being the benefits of living, studying and working abroad and Identifying and addressing how to overcome the challenges associated with disability while living abroad. On the day Christy Lynch (retired CEO KARE) spoke about personalised budgets and the task force he was the chair of in 2018. Fionn and his father spoke about their journey with direct funding. Selina Doyle, Practice Development Manager, St Patrick's Centre, Kilkenny & Tara Doheny, Programme Manager, Genio-Transforming Social Services, shared their story on a collaborative project that supported de-congregation for people with disabilities using services in Kilkenny.

## Peer Support Pilot Programme: Conclusion and Evaluation

We are delighted to report that the Peer Support Pilot Programme concluded, for the most part, at the end of December 2019 with the final independent evaluation report being published in quarter 1 of 2020. This pilot programme was led by Eileen Daly who is a vastly experienced peer with extensive expertise across many areas including the area of education. Eileen recruited a number of peer mentors to work alongside her in developing and rolling out a programme for two ÁT Leaders who had volunteered to be the mentees for this pilot programme. A sincere word of thanks goes to all participants in this programme, for their commitment and energy during the year.

The objective of this internal pilot program was to assess the potential value of developing a formal peer support program that could be designed with, and tailored to, each individual leader. Based on the particular areas of focus that each Leader selected, mentors would then be assigned in accordance with their appropriate experience, qualifications and lived experience. The Mentor and Mentee would then work together to achieve set goals for the Mentee.

ÁT commissioned to have this pilot program independently evaluated by external academics Dr Pauline Conroy and Maire Meagher for the purposes of assessing the benefits of such a program, identifying likely pitfalls and to make recommendations as to the required structures and governance going forward.

The independent evaluators report found that there are very significant benefits to be gained by leaders participating in such a scheme and their report recommends that a properly structured program be developed going forward. They also reference international experience in support of these recommendations.

The Board of ÁT considered the recommendations of the independent evaluator in considerable depth and are encouraged by these findings. However, it is also clear to the Board that the development and delivery of such a program to the required standard will require resource, together with the appropriate structures and governance; and have concluded that ÁT in its current form is not equipped to deliver this.

Rather than not pursue what is clearly a vitally important program for people with a disability choosing to live independently, the Board of ÁT have decided to seek the support of other, better resourced, national organisations in the development of such a program.

ÁT received funding from the **National Lottery** and the **Cork Street Fund** for the purposes of the pilot programme and our thanks go out to both organisations for their generous support.



## One-to-one individualised support meetings with Leaders

During 2019 ÁT continued with this new initiative for Leaders whereby the ÁT member support team hold one to one individualised support meetings with each leader to provide tailored support where they most need it. We recognise that everyone is different and each Leader will have different areas where they require support or focus. These supports meetings have been universally welcomed by all as being a positive step in improving the supports provided on an ongoing basis.

*See below some images from some of the meetings that were held between ÁT Leaders and the ÁT Member Support Team in 2019:*



# Chapter Three: Update 2020

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## Strategy 2020-2022

At the February 2020 Board meeting the ÁT Board formally signed off on the ÁT Strategy for the next 3 years. The strategy sets out the vision and mission of ÁT as a national organisation, and comprises 4 main strategic themes and 11 strategic actions; all of which is underpinned by the agreed values of Rights, Equality, Collaboration, professionalism, Positivity and Self-Determination.

The Áiseanna Tacaíochta Corporate Strategy 2020-2022 is available on the ÁT website.

## Training

After a considerable degree of research, involving a number of educational providers, in March of 2020 we selected three online training courses for Leaders and Circle Members to help equip new members for the challenges of managing their own support service. These courses selected are available in online format in order to facilitate leaders / Circle members who may not be in a position to travel to classroom based training; and for the reason that the course content remains available to participants for up to 12 months. These courses are now mandatory for all new entrants and are available to existing members on a voluntary basis. They are:

1. Employing Staff and Managing Human Resources
2. The Companies Act – Implications for Companies Limited by Guarantee
3. Risk Management

## 10 Years old – Happy Anniversary Áiseanna Tacaíochta!

In October of 2020 Áiseanna Tacaíochta will be 10 years old and in that time we have developed from a pilot, to a demonstration project to a leading organisation in the Independent Living movement in Ireland by facilitating an innovative Direct Payments model to people with disabilities. Over those years, despite the limitations on funding that were placed upon us as the Government and policy makers caught (and are still doing so) up with citizens' rights and needs, we have grown our membership to circa 40 Leaders employing over 100 Persons assistant staff.

Sadly in that time we have lost our beloved founding member Martin Naughton (RIP) who left this world in October 2016 and in honour of his memory we remain steadfastly resolute in our determination to offer the model that was Martin's vision, to as many of those as we can, who would wish to avail of it.



It was our intention to mark this 10 year anniversary by organising a celebratory event where Leaders, Circle members, family members and staff could all gather to mark the occasion with songs and stories, however Covid-19 has ensured that this will not happen this year and our Board have decided that we should postpone our plans until next year when, hopefully, things may be different and we can all safely gather together.

## New Leaders – welcome

During 2020 so far we have welcomed four new Leaders into membership of ÁT. We offer them a very warm welcome and wish them every success as they embark on a new level of independent living. They can be assured of our support in every way.

## Covid-19

In 2020 our local, national and global landscape changed utterly with the arrival of the deadly Covid-19 virus. We commend all of our Leaders and all of our staff; Head office staff and most particularly our frontline PA staff; who have shown tremendous dedication to the continued provision of vital supports to leaders at this very difficult time.

At times there have been a tsunami of information and training directed at all parties, leaders and staff alike, and everyone has managed this in a truly positive spirit. On behalf of the Board we thank you!

As the Chairman has stated in his address earlier we are not out of the danger zone with this virus yet; not by a very long way; so we urge everyone to remain vigilant in the coming months. Remain on high alert for the risks, stay focused on social distancing (and the use PPE where this isn't possible), hand washing and hand sanitisation, cough etiquette and follow the latest HSE guidance in all things to ensure your own safety and that of staff members. We must hope that in time we will surely overcome this challenge and return to some form of normality.

# Chapter Four: Our Board

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We are hugely grateful to our Board – composed entirely of volunteers – who bring with them a huge weight of experience and expertise, which has helped to guide everything that we do.

## **Dr Kevin Mc Coy | Chairperson**

Dr Kevin McCoy began his social work career as a social work assistant in Co. Down, Northern Ireland. He trained in Social Work at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and the College of Deaf Welfare, London. He holds a degree in Economics and Social Policy and a master and doctorate in Public Policy. He was employed by Down County Welfare Committee in various posts from 1963 – 1972 following which he joined the Department of Health and Social Services as a Social Work Adviser. He was appointed Senior Social Work Adviser in 1973 and Assistant Chief Inspector in 1985. In 1989 Kevin was appointed Chief Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate and retired from this position in November 2000.



He was appointed by the Government in the Republic of Ireland as a Commissioner on the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in December 2000. He left the Commission in May 2003. Since then he has provided consultancy services to a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

## **Ann Kennelly – Vice Chairperson**

As an Occupational Therapist (OT), Ann's role has seen her provide a range of assessment and therapeutic OT services to people with physical and sensory disabilities. Ann worked in both the hospital and community public services in Ireland, the UK and Canada, and in the voluntary sector as an OT and a Regional Manager with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). She joined the South Eastern Health Board in 1994, moving to a number of different positions within the health service until 2010, when her final year working with the HSE was spent in the role of Interim National Assistant Director for Disability Services. Ann now works in a private capacity as an OT and is involved with many voluntary groups and individuals with disabilities.



### **Owen Collumb**

As a founding member of ÁT and a person with lived experience of disability, Owen brings first-hand knowledge and understanding to the Board. Owen works in Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI). He is also a trained instructor in manual handling. He is an active board member for a Lucan Disability Action Group and has been for number of organisations, including Greater Dublin Independent Living (GDIL) and Cheshire Ireland.



### **Brian Duncan**

Brian is a native of Galway. He worked for many years as a solicitor with Irish Life Assurance PLC and Legal Aid Board. Since his retirement, he is currently working as volunteer solicitor with the Irish Refugee Council. He was involved with the National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI) as a fundraiser. He is also involved with a charity which supports deprived children in Thailand. He used to lecture on family law as a citizen advice volunteer



### **Peter Moore**

Peter says he was greatly influenced by Liam Maguire, the disability rights activist he met through the Irish Wheelchair Association. When Maguire died in 1983 Peter employed his first personal assistant (financed mainly through funds Peter received as compensation for a minor road accident) in order to research and write Liam Maguire's biography. This book was published in 1990 by Poolbeg under the title *Rebel on Wheels*.



During the 1980s, as well as working on his book, Peter also got involved in his local community in Donaghmede. He joined the committee of the local soccer club Donaghmede Celtic, and helped found Grange Kildonagh Integration, a group of mainly parents of children with disabilities whose aim was to bring children with and without disabilities together. This group ran a summer playgroup for children with disabilities and their siblings, and also got some children with disabilities into local groups, such as the girl guides and boy scouts.

In 1990 Peter was one of seven people with significant physical disabilities who came together, to move forward into the future, independent of their families without institutional care. This led to the establishment of the first Centre for Independent Living in Ireland in 1992. Peter says the years from



1992 to 1994 seem ideal. The policy of employing administrative staff who had no previous experience of working for established disability organisations ensured they fully bought into the philosophy of independent living.

In November 2015 Peter joined ÁT and established his company Eagle Free. He says he did so to take back control of his PA service.

### **Gordon Ryan**

Gordon has been living in his own house in Baldoyle, Dublin 13 with the support of his Personal Assistants (PAs) for the past twenty years. He is an active member of the disability movement and has a broad range of experience such as being a co-founder of Áiseanna Tacaíochta and as part of this he developed his own PA service. When he was a Leader in Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) he self-directed his service for sixteen years, he is also a member of the Leader Consultative Group, a forum for Leaders and IWA senior management.



Gordon worked for many years in the Accounts Department of the Citizens Information Board (CIB) and is a fellow member of the Institute of Accounting Technicians of Ireland (IATI). He participates in the Strasbourg Freedom Drive, an event taking place every two years and organised by the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL).

For the past fifteen years Gordon has been involved with the Centre for Independent Living (CIL) which was rebranded as Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI). He is an active board member at (ILMI) and he passionately believes in the philosophy of Independent Living. He has been involved in researching models of Direct Payments with CIL for the past four to five years, because he believes it is the future.

### **Morgan McKnight**

Morgan is a career Civil Servant currently working the Department of Justice and Equality. He Holds a Graduate Diploma in Policy Analysis, a Master Degree in Public Management and a Professional Certificate in Corporate Governance.

In 2009 he was seconded to People with Disabilities in Ireland a Ltd Company for a period of 3 years. The Company advocated on behalf of people with disabilities throughout Ireland and he has previously worked on the UN Convention for People with Disabilities. He is an experienced administrator and continues to offer support to the Disability sector.



## Chapter Five: Acknowledgments

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ÁT would like to happily acknowledge the core funding received from the HSE this year to maintain existing levels of service provision in 2019. We also appreciate the collaboration and cooperation of **HSE staff** in the following areas: Carlow, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin North, Galway, Kildare, Laois, Louth, Meath, Roscommon, Sligo, Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow.

ÁT also greatly values the contribution of the **ÁT Board** and **staff** including their dedication, heart and talents.

We would like to thank **ÁT Leaders, Circles of Support** and all volunteers for going on this journey with us. We recognise and appreciate the contribution of everyone who has sat on a Circle of Support, supported the shift to Direct Payments and played a role in facilitating access to equal rights for people with disabilities.



# Chapter Six: Financial Information

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## Áiseanna Tacaíochta CLG

### (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

#### Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Note	2019 €	2018 €
Income / Funding	5	2,631,892	2,407,329
Gross surplus		2,631,892	2,407,329
Administrative expenses		(2,586,372)	(2,357,385)
Operating surplus/(deficit)	6	45,520	49,944
Other interest receivable and similar income	8	-	-
Interest payable and similar charges	9	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities		45,520	49,944
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year		45,520	49,944

All the activities of the company are from continuing operations.

The company has no other recognised items of income and expenses other than the results for the year as set out above.

**Note:****Income / Funding**

The whole of the income / funding is attributable to the principal activity of the company wholly undertaken in Ireland.

**\*HSE Service Funding for individuals in relation to CHO areas.**

<b>HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO)</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Recognised</b>	<b>Deferred to</b>
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
	€	€	€
CHO 1	146,198	142,147	4,051
CHO 2	216,327	216,327	-
CHO 3	31,019	31,019	-
CHO 4	137,595	137,595	-
CHO 5	165,651	134,501	31,150
CHO 6	290,422	209,541	80,881
CHO 7	268,203	262,889	5,314
CHO 8	390,430	375,816	14,614
CHO 9	819,285	816,906	2,379
National HSE	109,663	109,663	-
<b>Total HSE Service Funding</b>	<b>2,574,793</b>	<b>2,436,404</b>	<b>138,389</b>

\*The HSE Service Funding is in respect of individual funding that ÁT received on behalf of and disbursed to individuals.

**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 31 December 2019**

	2019		2018	
	€	€	€	€
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtor	243,392		213,350	
Cash at bank and in hand	454,444		348,222	
	<u>697,836</u>		<u>561,572</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	(334,675)		(243,931)	
	<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>	363,161		317,641	
	<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	363,161		317,641	
	<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Net assets</b>	363,161		317,641	
	<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Capital and reserves</b>				
Profit and loss account	363,161		317,641	
<b>Members funds</b>	363,161		317,641	
	<u></u>		<u></u>	



**Statement of cash flows**  
**Year ended 31 December 2019**

	<b>2019</b>	2018
	<b>€</b>	€
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	<b>44,520</b>	49,944
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Other interest receivable and similar income	-	-
Interest payable and similar charges	-	-
Accrued expenses/(income)	<b>1,581</b>	28,226
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	<b>(30,042)</b>	(78,623)
Trade and other creditors	<b>89,163</b>	88,888
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash generated from operations	<b>106,222</b>	88,435
Interest paid	-	-
Interest received	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash from operating activities	<b>106,222</b>	88,435
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>106,222</b>	88,435
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</b>	<b>348,222</b>	259,787
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>	<b>454,444</b>	348,222
	<hr/>	<hr/>

# Áiseanna Tacaíochta 2019 Annual Report

**A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Charity Registration Number CHY 19324 (Ireland)**  
**Company Registration Number 489250**  
**Charity Regulatory Authority Number 20075675**

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