



Áiseanna Tacaíochta

Annual Report

2020



Mission Statement of Áiseanna Tacaíochta

*"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

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 disabled people. 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 disabled people. We aim to change the way we think about disability and to enable disabled people 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 (Deceased 29/04/2021)
Vice Chairperson:	Ann Kennelly
Company Secretary:	Emma Caparangca
Board members:	Owen Collumb Peter Moore Brian Duncan Morgan P. Mc Knight Gordon Ryan Fiona Weldon Áine Sperrin

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:

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

Auditors:

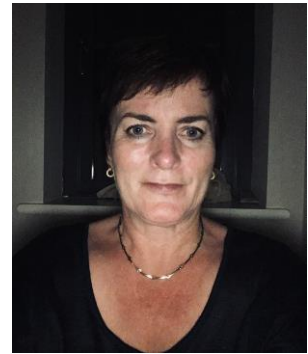
Hunt & Company Accountants Limited
52 Manor Street
Dublin 7

Principal Bankers:

Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2
Bank of Ireland, Northern Cross, Malahide Road,
Dublin 17

Acting Chairperson's Address

It was with profound shock and sorrow that we experienced the untimely and sudden passing of the Chairman of ÁT in 2021, Dr Kevin Mc Coy, after a brief illness. On behalf of all members, staff and volunteers associated with ÁT, I would like to extend our sympathies and condolences to Kevin's family and friends on the death of a much loved family man, friend and real gentleman. May he rest in peace.



Kevin was a truly excellent Chairperson and he had such wisdom and experience to offer. He is very much missed. His death created a vacuum in our organisation and the role of Chairperson is currently in the process of being filled. Consequently, I am acting in the role of interim Chairperson and have great pleasure presenting this Annual Report.

For more than a year now, we have been in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic and enduring the most difficult national lockdown which was very challenging on a number of fronts for our members. As time progressed, we did everything possible to assist our members, PA's and staff to stay safe and the relief was palpable when the vaccines were being rolled out. Thankfully, as this report shows, we managed to keep all our services going. With the support of the HSE, AT continues to thrive.

I wish to extend my thanks to all the front line workers for their unfailing dedication to supporting our Leaders during this pandemic and to our Leaders who had to make huge sacrifices and show real flexibility in how they made sure their staff stayed safe. The challenges of this pandemic are far from over and the staff at ÁT will continue to do everything possible to get through these difficult times safely.

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 want to thank them and the staff for the support given to me and I look forward to welcoming a new Chairperson to this great organisation – new ideas and new contributors will enhance the work of the Board and we look forward to that.

Ann Kennelly
Acting Chairperson

CEO's Report

In some respects the less said about 2020 perhaps the better. It was a global "annus horribilis" where the world endured the onset of a global pandemic of a scale not seen for generations; and as a direct consequence the manner in which we went about our daily lives changed utterly. So many of our citizens lost their lives to Covid-19 and our sincerest sympathies go out to the families of each and every one.



During that time of great adversity and fear; the ÁT Leaders and their families and circles of support adapted very effectively to the new way of living, embracing the Public Health / HSE guidelines and this resilience has seen us through what is hopefully the worst of the pandemic. We did not come through it entirely unscathed but thankfully all Leaders and staff remain well at this time.

A sincere word of thanks must go especially to all our PA staff who worked tirelessly and with absolute dedication to support Leaders during this difficult year; and continue to do so to this day. Also to our small but dedicated head office team who have worked above and beyond the call of duty, during this very difficult time.

The vaccine rollout nationally has been very effective and this is evident in the fact that, despite the continued threat of the delta variant, case numbers whilst high are stabilising. However, risk remains and we must all remain vigilant and continue to take all necessary precautions as per current public health guidelines.

I am happy to report that for the most part delivery of the key objectives as set out in our business plan for 2020 across areas such as Training, Quality Improvement, Leader support, Peer Support, lobbying and Membership Growth were for the most part unaffected by the global pandemic. Individual elements of this will be touched on later in the report. Overall we had targeted growth in membership of 16% for 2020 and this was achieved, though not precisely in the way intended due to changes arising as a result of the pandemic. I would like to extend a very special welcome to all Leaders who joined ÁT during 2020.

As we moved into 2021, quarter one saw the pandemic surge significantly in Ireland and much of our time and effort was focused on supporting Leaders and PA staff in managing the risks. In April of 2021 our dear friend and colleague; the Chairman of our Board; Dr. Kevin McCoy passed away unexpectedly which came as a great shock to many of us. Kevin was a highly respected person in a wide variety of circles. He was the Chairman of the Board of Áiseanna Tacaíochta since February 2017 and contributed in a significantly positive way to the development of ÁT as an organisation, giving of his time in a voluntary capacity. I find it particularly poignant writing this piece for this year's annual report as he and I would always have liaised on this item and this year I find myself writing it alone and about him. Rest in peace dear Kevin.

Another major development at the end of 2019 and into 2020 was of course Brexit; though it did get eclipsed to some degree by Covid. The impact of Brexit for ÁT was in the area of insurance where Leaders' previous insurers were no longer able to offer cover in the republic of Ireland and despite

significant efforts all Irish insurers refused to offer a quote. We did get the issue resolved eventually through a different UK insurer, at a significant cost increase. See more details below.

We also continued our lobbying of policy makers in 2021, in the area of Personalised Budgets, with an appearance before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters in July 2021. More on this in the report below.

My task at ÁT would be impossible without the support, sheer hard work and dedication of the ÁT staff. I also want to thank the ÁT Board for their support during an eventful and challenging year. We welcomed two new Board members in 2020. A very warm welcome to Fiona Weldon and Áine Sperrin. See Board section below for more details.

Thank you, also, to the ÁT Leaders who continue to leap into unknown territory and who continue to challenge ÁT. I would also like to express appreciation to all those on the Circles of Support, who play a crucial role in the lives of Leaders, providing confidence and support to individuals and promoting their inclusion and equality in local communities

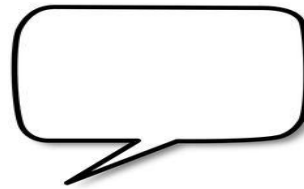
Finally, my thanks to HSE National Office for their continued support of our model; to the many HSE Disability Managers, HSE Case Managers and HSE staff who have shown a willingness to put disabled people to the fore of their thinking. The burden of reporting to the HSE remains a challenge for individual Leaders and this is something that ÁT will hope to continue to address with HSE and the Demonstration Projects going forward.

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

Please continue to stay safe.

Paul McBride CEO

Member's Testimonials



Mark Pollock Testimonial

My name is Mark Pollock and I have been a member of Áiseanna Tacaíochta since mid-2020. In partnership with ÁT, I have set-up my own Direct Payments Company to administer the funding that I receive from the HSE to employ my personal assistance (Pas).

Now, with the extremely friendly and professional support of ÁT, I recruit, schedule and manage the PA's that work with me to achieve maximum independence in my daily living.

All of this has enabled me to have better control over how my service is organized. And, I have more flexibility around all aspects of my life from personal to social, fitness and work. The result is reduced stress and increased independence.



John O'Brien Testimonial

Hi, my name is John O'Brien and I live in Co Meath. I have a C4/C5 complete spinal cord injury. My independence has grown so much since I have joined the ÁT Network. Now I have complete control over how I run my timetable and roster my PA's. Before this I had very little control over the matter. The direct payment scheme has made a huge difference to my life, it has given me so much self-confidence, self-belief and increased my self-esteem. Before I became a member of ÁT, I was basically being told what to do, now all of a sudden, I have control back of my life. By running my own company and hiring my own PA's it helps me to live a more flexible and enjoyable life.

When I first joined ÁT, they were excellent at helping me understand the process of running a company. At first it seemed daunting but they helped me so much and put me at ease. Everything was explained so clearly, small steps were made and they are always at the end of the phone or an email away if I ever need any assistance with any issues that may occur.

This has certainly been a building block in my life in helping me realise my potential. I have gone on to study various courses in social care and public speaking and have currently enrolled in a BA in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Having PA's that are flexible and being able to control my own timetable has definitely helped me push on and achieve some goals that maybe I might not have achieved if I hadn't have joined the direct payment scheme.



Overall, I am delighted that I have made this decision and I would hugely recommend it to others who are may be considering it. With the right support around you, a good mindset and with the excellent assistance of the staff of AT, it is certain to improve your quality of living, your mindset and to help you achieve whatever you wish. It has certainly worked for me in my case.

Padraig Schaler

Pádraig suffered a devastating brain injury in 2013 that dramatically changed his life and the life of those around him. Áiseanna Tacaíochta, the AT Network, allowed him to gain back some control over his life by putting him in charge of his care arrangements. He is no longer the object, but the subject of his care, he is in control. For Pádraig and his family, the very professional support provided by Áiseanna Tacaíochta to achieve that level of independence and inclusion has been invaluable. Their knowledge and understanding of the needs of people with disability is grounded in the inclusion of people with disability in the organisation itself and its culture. Very few organisations have had such a positive impact on Pádraig's life and that on those in a similar situation.



- Pádraig, Patricia, and Reinhard

Al Young

Joining the ÁT Network was the right decision for me. I can manage my carer's schedules so they can be there when I need them. Unfortunately, I have a very small number of hours, so it's not so difficult to manage and the ÁT are always there to support me.



Chapter Two: 2020 Year in Review

Covid-19

Much of 2020; certainly the months between March and September; were devoted almost entirely to managing the risk of the Covid-19 virus spreading. Leaders and staff alike faced into the pandemic head on; implementing all of the necessary safety measures as advised by Public Health / HSE, preparing layered contingency plans to manage any possible disruption in service, upgrading / updating staff training around IPC and PPE usage in light of the new risks, updating their risk assessments and preparing individual Covid response plans to deal with the risk of the virus on a daily basis. All of that effort on the part of Leaders and staff resulted in everyone coming through the pandemic safely, to date. The virus very much remains within the community at this time (July 2021) and whilst the vaccine rollout would appear to be effective we must all remain vigilant, and continue to rigorously implement the guidelines advised by Public Health.



Beginning of the PPE deliveries to the Leaders



Thanks to Gordon Ryan and his PA, Jimmy, for the support regarding PPE deliveries.



Emma and Dearbhla in the office

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.

Growth in Membership – Welcome New Leaders

During 2020 growth in membership of approximately 16% was planned; to be supported through a combination of existing resource and new resource planned for the latter end of the year. There was also expected to be an offset in those numbers with the planned exit of a number of Leaders to join the demonstration projects. Due to the impact of the pandemic it was decided to postpone the hire of the new resource until we returned to working at the office. However, despite that setback, we did welcome six new Leaders into membership of ÁT during 2020. Our membership numbers were also sustained by the fact that those leaders who were due to exit to the demonstration projects did not do so given the delays, with the result that we did actually achieve our 16% membership growth target.

We offer a very warm welcome to all our new Leaders 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.

Leader Training

After a considerable degree of research, involving a number of educational providers, in March of 2020 we selected a number of 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 mandatory for all new entrants and are available to existing members on a voluntary basis. They are:

1. The Philosophy of Independent Living
2. Employing Staff and Managing Human Resources
3. The Companies Act – Implications for Companies Limited by Guarantee Governance and company law course
4. Risk Management
5. Finance – The Basics
6. Safeguarding

Taskforce Recommended Demonstration Projects

A Project Manager was appointed on 5th February 2019 to manage the Personalised Budgets Demonstration Projects. 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.

The Broker Model which is one of the three models to be tested was due to commence in April 2020.

By Sept 2020 some ÁT members who had applied for phase 1 in October 2019 had only just, at that stage, received written confirmation from HSE that they have been accepted into phase 1, and were awaiting further guidance on next steps. Also phase 2 had opened and HSE were calling for expressions of interest.

Clearly Covid has impacted the progress of these projects in a significant way; and to date (July 2021) there is very little clear information in the public domain regarding the extent to which these projects are progressing.

It is in everyone's interest that these projects are successful and it is vitally important in that context, that a focus is maintained on them and 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.

Peer Support Pilot Programme: Conclusion and Evaluation

The Peer Support Pilot Programme concluded at the end of December 2019 with the final independent evaluation report being published in quarter 1 of 2020. 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. ÁT commissioned to have this pilot program independently evaluated 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 were encouraged by the findings. However, it was also clear to the Board that the development and delivery of such a program to the required standard would have required appropriate resource, together with the appropriate structures and governance; and the Board therefore concluded that ÁT in its current form was not equipped to develop such a program.

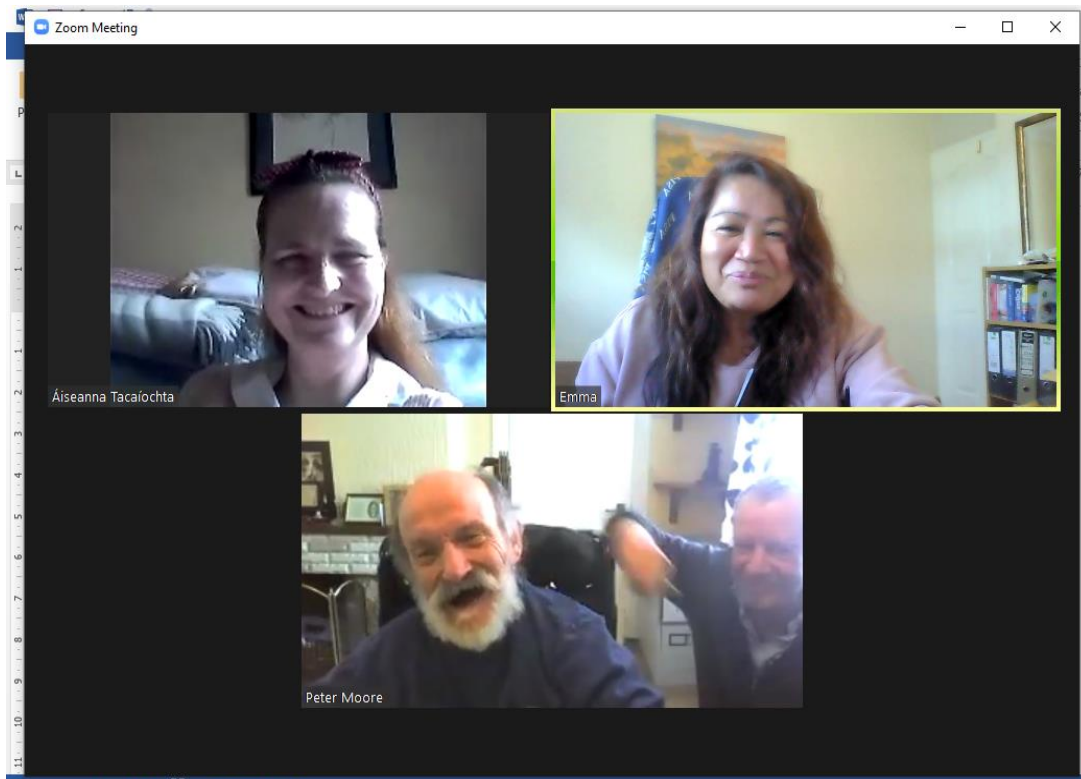
ÁT received funding from the **National Lottery** and the **Cork Street Fund** for the purposes of the pilot programme and our thanks go out to both organisations for their generous support.

One-to-one individualised support meetings with Leaders moved to an online platform

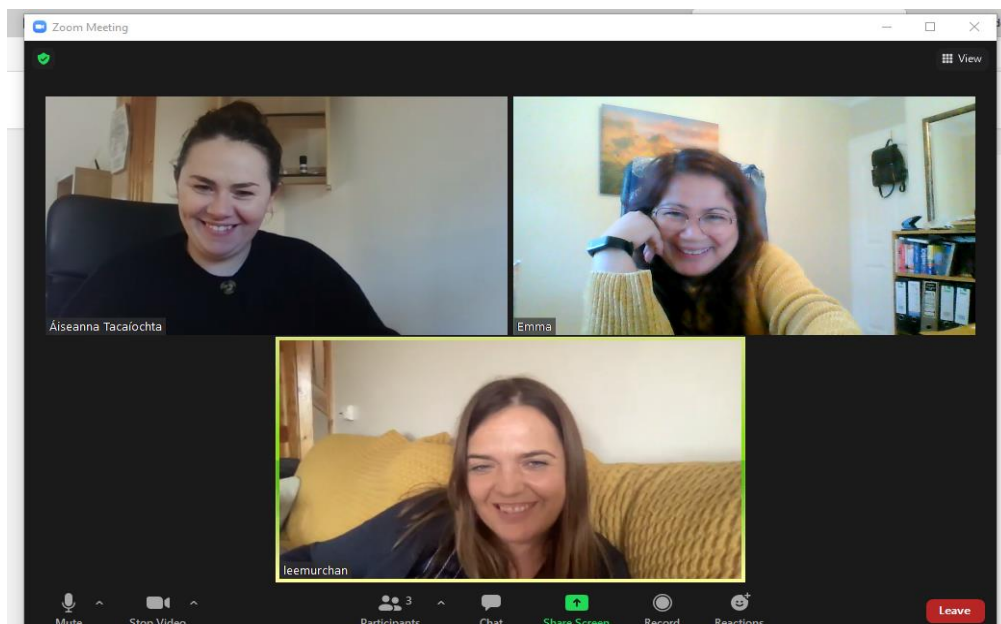
During 2020, the onset of Covid-19 impacted this Leader engagement program for a period of time due to the national lockdown; however, like very many other organisations, ÁT quickly adapted to this setback

and moved these meetings to an online platform. This has worked very well, with any necessary accommodations being made as required.

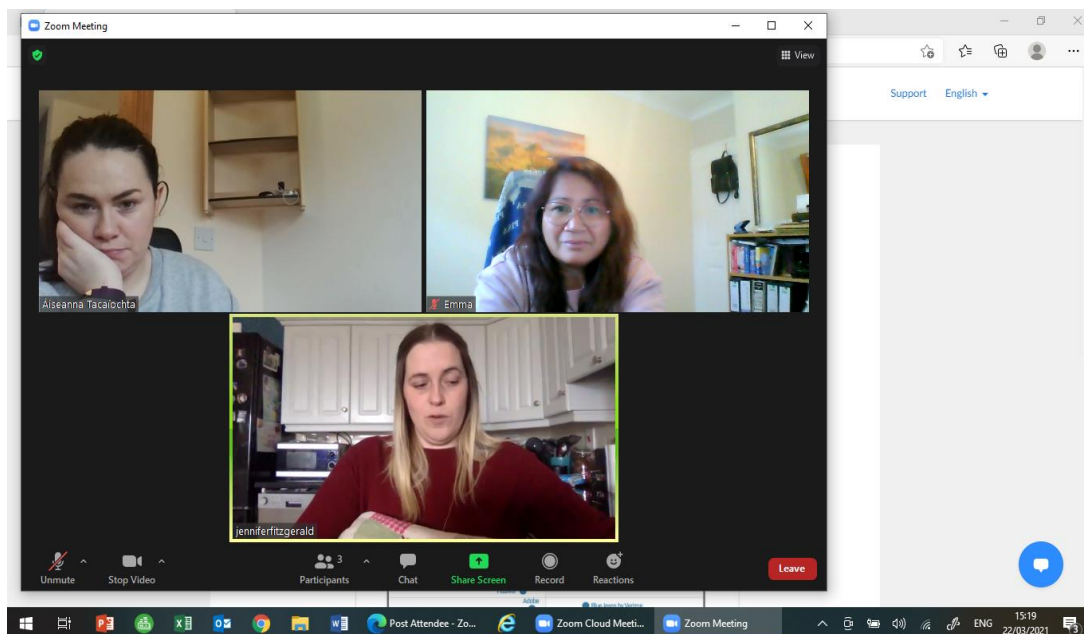
See below some images from some of the meetings that were held between ÁT Leaders and the ÁT Member Support Team in 2020-2021:



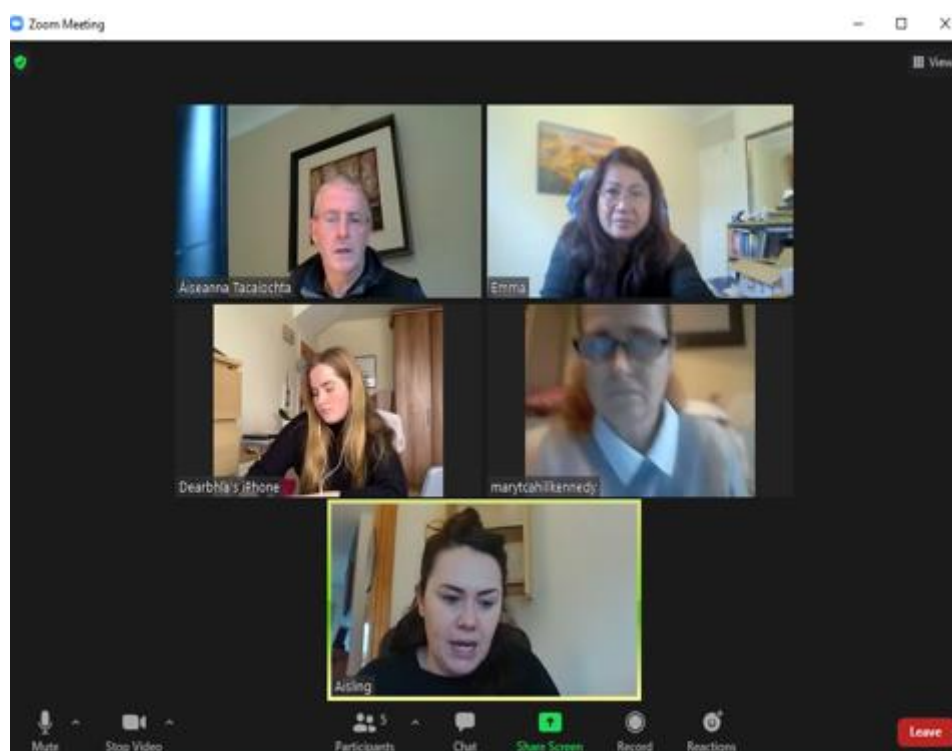
One to one meeting with Peter M, Brian B Mary T Cahill and Emma C. 02/04/2021



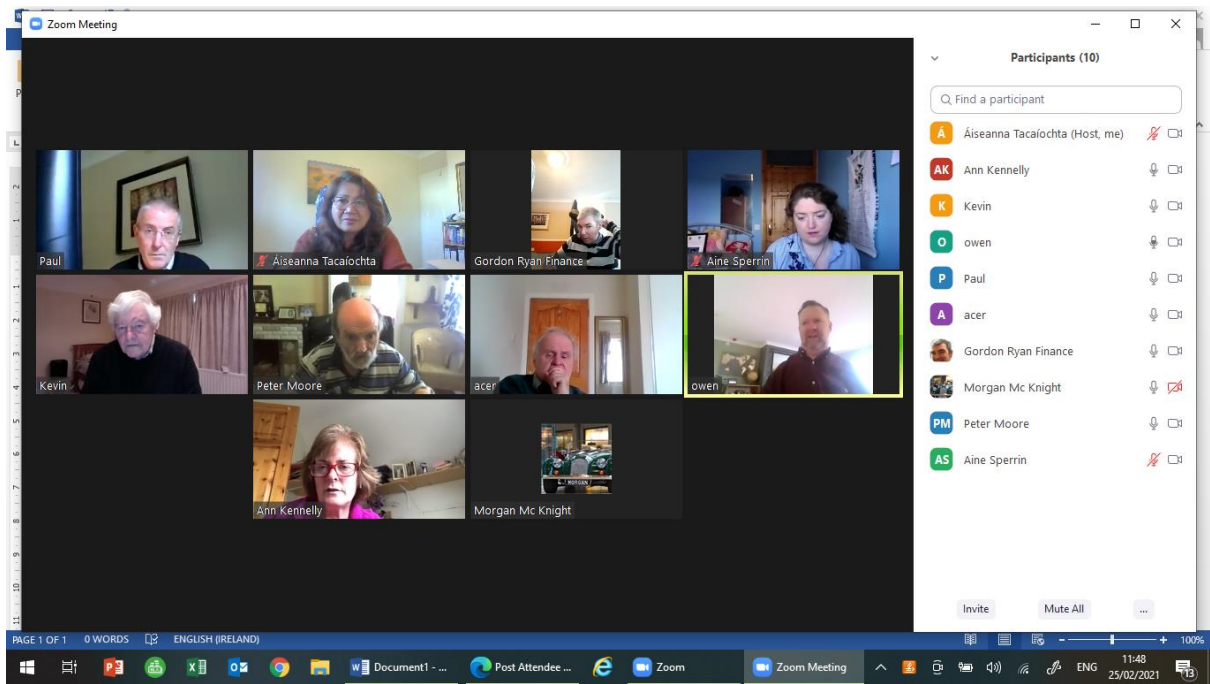
One to one meeting 24 March 2021 with Edel Murchan, Aisling and Emma



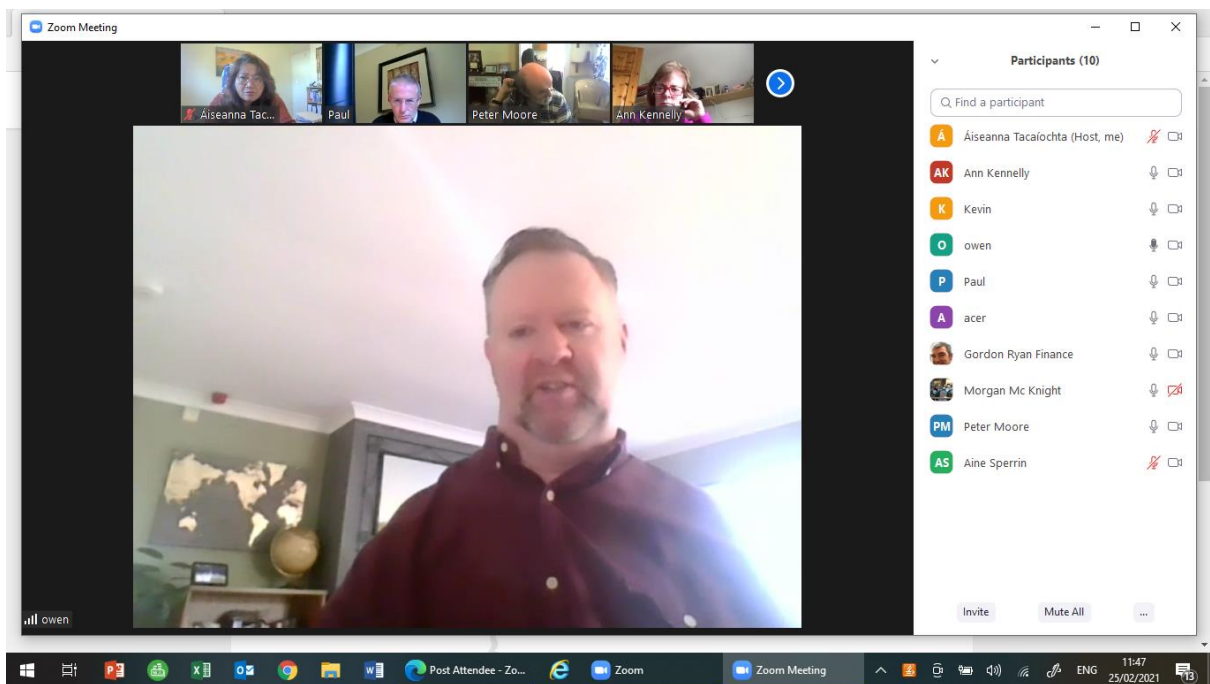
One to one meeting with Jenna FitzGerald, ÁT Leader, Aisling and Emma



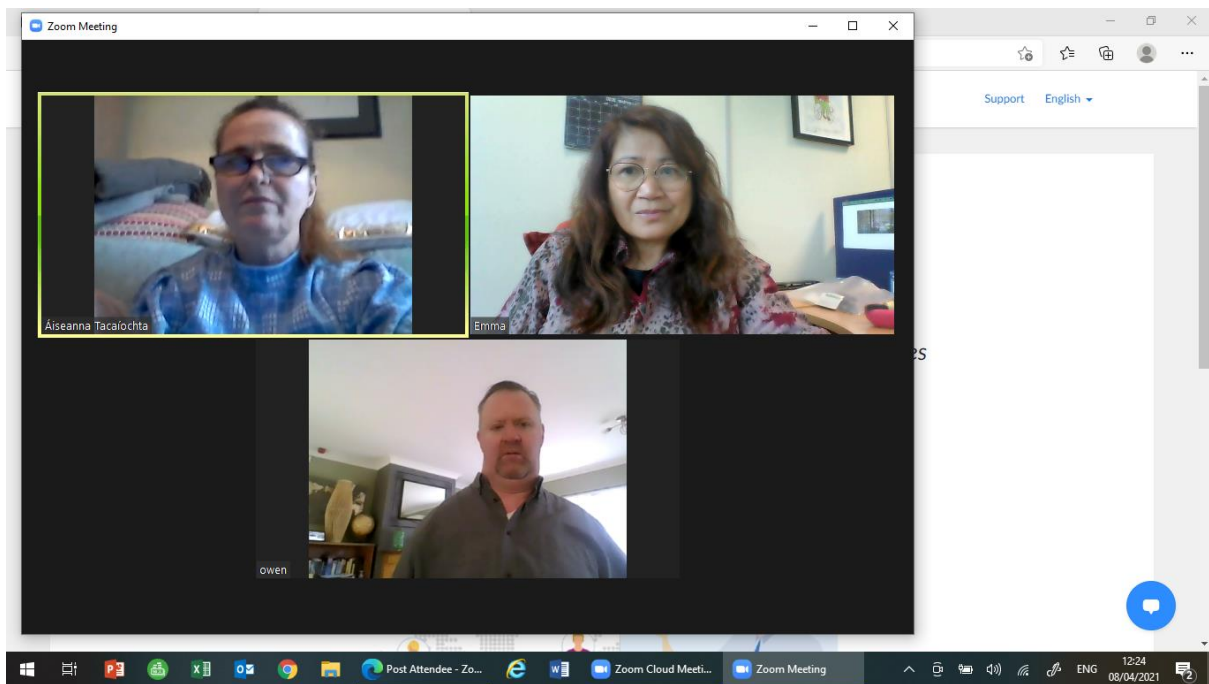
ÁT CORE STAFF MEETING: Paul, Emma, Dearbhla, Mary and Aisling



ÁT Board Meeting



ÁT Board Meeting



One to one meeting with Owen Collumb, ÁT Leader with Mary and Emma

€20m Strengthening Disability Services Fund

In October of 2020 Minister Rabbitte announced the launch of the €20m Strengthening Disability Services Fund under the Transforming Lives reform process, to be paid in once-off grants to voluntary disability service providers towards achieving additional measurable progress in reforming disability services, to build the capacity of disability organisations, and to improve the quality of life of those who rely on these services.

Áiseanna Tacaíochta applied to this fund under *“strand 1 – improving person-centred delivery under Transforming Lives”* with the intention of investing those the funds; if successful in our application; in the creation of additional capacity to on-board additional members over a two-year period. Our application was denied on the basis that “The personalised budgets Demonstration Project continues to be the focus in this area”. We have appealed this decision and have been promised a response to same by HSE National Disability Strategy office.

Lobbying:

In our strategy and business plan for 2020 we stated among our objectives:

- Lobbying appropriate stakeholders to make this model more readily available nationally
- Lobbying appropriate stakeholders to ensure that Leaders who successfully complete the ÁT process will be facilitated to move to full independence and

- Take up our place on the Disability Participation and Consultation Network. This will enable ÁT to provide feedback and to influence policy development on disability matters.

The opportunities to lobby policy makers during 2020 was limited with the impact that the pandemic had on society generally; all focus being on dealing with the virus for much of the year. However, toward the end of 2020 the Government decided to set up the *Disability Participation and Consultation Network*. The aim of the network is “to make sure that disabled people are heard directly when the government makes important decisions”.

Áiseanna Tacaíochta applied and gained membership of this important network in the latter months of 2020; and our Board Member Fiona Weldon was appointed as the ÁT representative. Our sincere thanks to Fiona for her continued work with this network.

As regards the first two objectives listed above; we also made a written submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matter in November of 2020 on those two important items. This helped to inform the committees work. See update in 2021 section.

10 Years old – Happy Anniversary Áiseanna Tacaíochta!

In October of 2020 Áiseanna Tacaíochta was 10 years old and in that time has 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 disabled people. Over those years, despite the limitations on funding that were placed upon us as the Government and policy makers caught up (and are still doing so) with citizens’ rights and needs, we have grown our membership to 42 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 made that impossible and our Board have decided that we should postpone our plans until a more appropriate time when we can all safely gather together.

Chapter Three: Update 2021

Covid-19

The first quarter of 2021 was a particularly difficult period in the ongoing Covid pandemic where hospitalisations and deaths from Covid soared. Again, during this difficult time the Leaders and staff of ÁT continued to implement the necessary protective measures against the spread of the virus and thankfully came through without serious impact. Our thoughts and prayers are with those families who were bereaved as a result of this dreadful 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.

We recognise that at times, there has 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!

And while we are now hopeful that the signs are there of some gradual return to “normal” living we are not out of the danger zone; 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.

New Leaders

At this time and in the context of our current resource, we are at our limit in terms of membership numbers as set down by Board. As some Leaders move away during 2021 to join the demonstration projects we will on-board new Leaders to replace them, thereby maintaining our membership at the current max. Furthermore, we had intended to on-board an additional four new Leaders in the final quarter of 2021 once we had recruited the new member support officer which was budgeted to be in place by Q3 2021. As stated this was dependent on the level of Covid restrictions and is now delayed at this time. We will keep this under review.

Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters

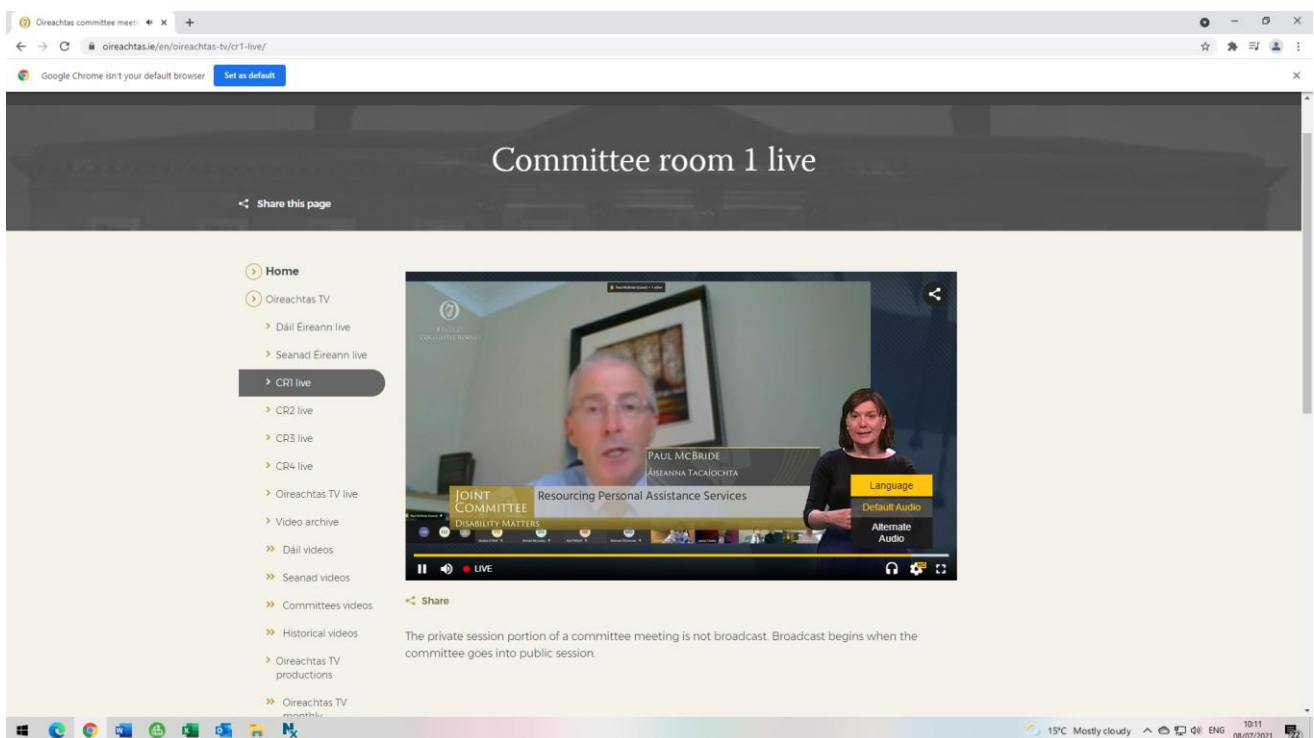
In November 2020 we made a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters seeking:

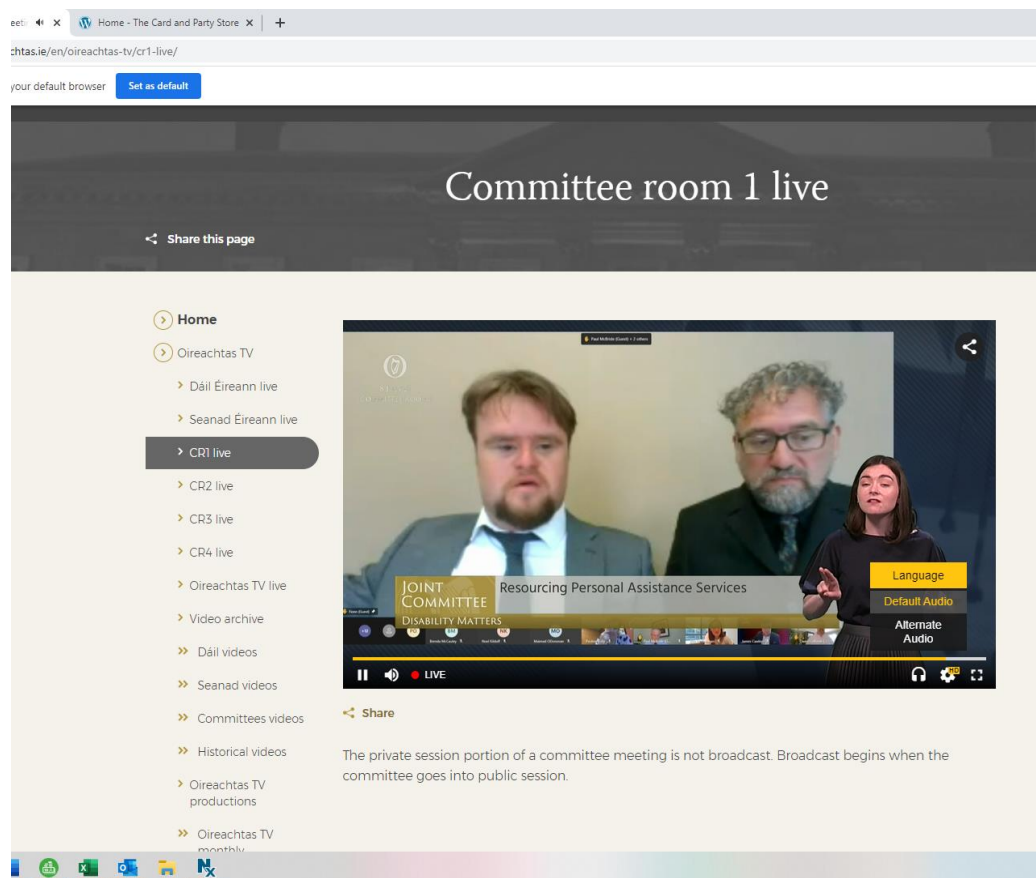
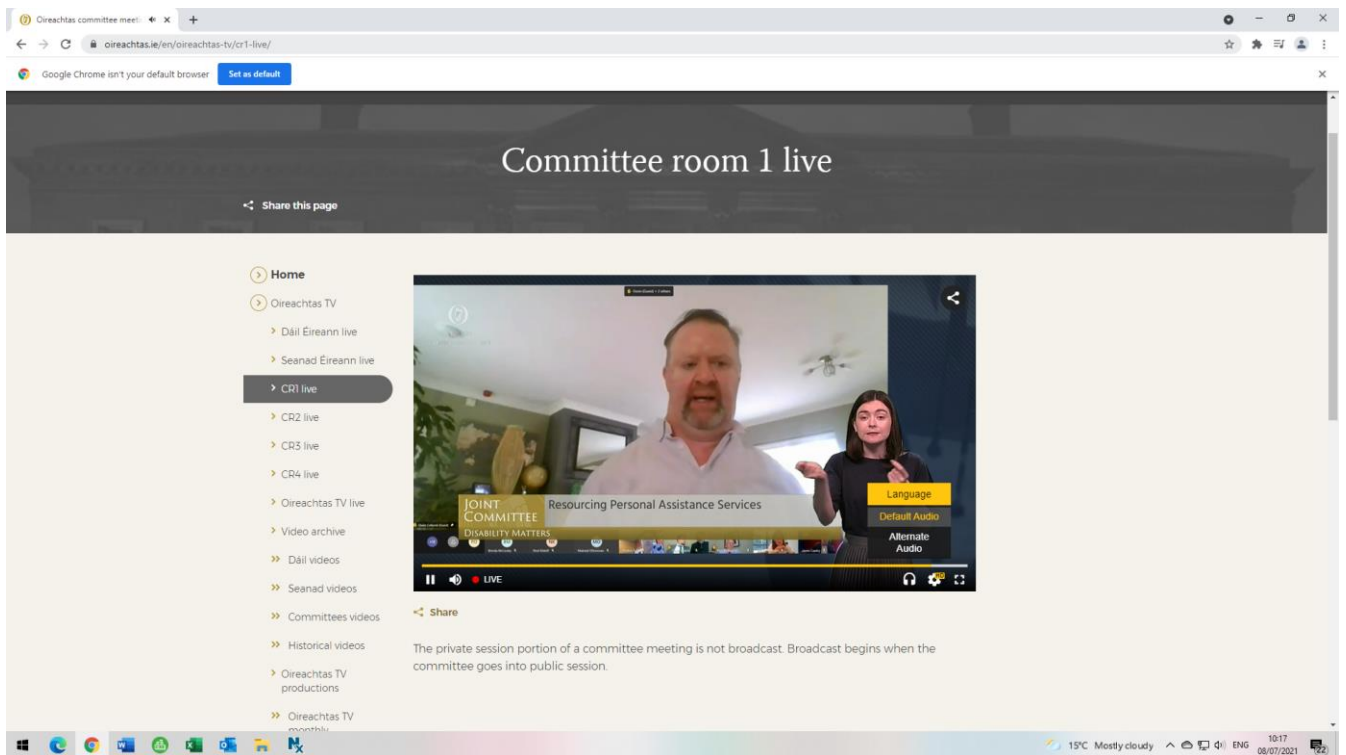
- political focus on the progression of the Personalised Budgets Demonstrations Projects;
- Interim funding for organisations like ÁT to develop capacity in the short terms whilst we await the outcome of the Demonstration Projects; and finally

- A commitment to the development of a mechanism that allows ÁT leaders to leave ÁT once they have developed their capacity to manage their own supports and enter into a direct agreement with HSE.

As a follow on to our submission, in July 2021, we were invited to appear before the Joint committee on disability matters on the subject of Personalised budgets. ÁT Board Members Owen Collumb, Gordon Ryan and Fiona Weldon together with ÁT CEO Paul McBride attended on behalf of ÁT. Subsequently the committee thanked the delegation for their contribution and assured us that it informed their pre-budget submission published in July 2021.

Also present at the Joint Oireachtas Committee meeting was ÁT Leader Fionn Crombie Angus together with Jonathan Angus.



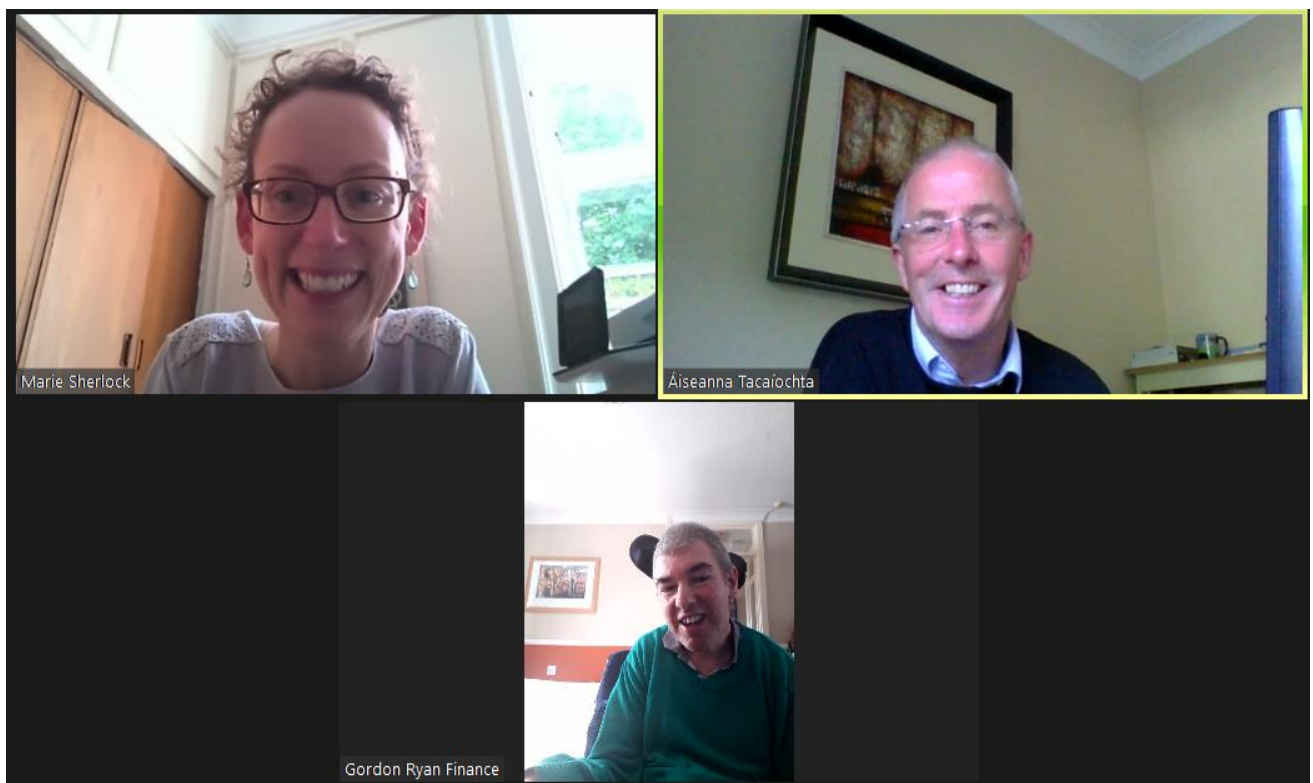


Insurance

The impact of Brexit for ÁT was in the area of insurance. The broker / insurer that Leaders had used previously, found themselves unable to provide cover in the republic of Ireland; despite it being flagged to that broker by ÁT many times and well in advance; and as a consequence we had to seek alternative options. Many Leaders attempted individually to get their own cover and ÁT also worked through a number of individual brokers, Insurance Ireland, Brokers Ireland and the Financial Services Ombudsman to secure quotes. Despite our combined best efforts, no Irish based insurance companies were prepared to even provide a quote. This was quite shocking and is unacceptable in modern-day Ireland that disabled employers are refused even the option of employers and public liability insurance cover for their enterprises.

We subsequently secured cover through a UK based insurer at a significantly increased premium which impacts directly on the number of support hours the affected Leaders can obtain. Estimates suggest that circa 1,773 support hours will be collectively lost as a direct impact of this increase in insurance costs. We have written to all members of the *Cabinet Sub-Group on Insurance Reform*, the Chair of the *Office to Promote Competition in the Insurance Market*; all members of the *Joint Oireachtas Committee on Public Expenditure and Reform*, the Chair of the *Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters* and to the Minister for Disability and the *Alliance for Insurance Reform* to make them aware of this issue and to try to find a solution ahead of renewal in 2022.

See below photograph of ÁT representatives Gordon Ryan (Founder and Board Member) and Paul McBride (CEO) meeting with Senator Marie Sherlock, on 6th September 2021, to discuss the issue.



Chapter Four: Our Board

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 (Deceased 29 April 2021)

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 held 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. Following that he 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 disabled people 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.



Dr Áine Sperrin

Dr Áine Sperrin is newly elected AT board member in October 2020 and currently a Post-Doctoral researcher with the Re(al) Productive Justice Project at the Centre for Disability Law and Policy. Her PhD research focused on independent living in post-conflict countries for adults with intellectual disabilities and was funded by the Irish Research Council.



Áine has worked with a wide variety of Irish and International human rights groups including Dublin Simon Community, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, National Platform of Self Advocates, Disability Federation of Ireland, Oxfam Ireland, Rights Watch UK and Amnesty International USA. The rights of persons with disabilities, housing and community participation of marginalised communities are of particular interest to her. Áine is also a Board Member of the Sibéal Feminist and Gender Studies Network. Áine obtained her Bachelor of Civil Law from UCD in 2010 and received her Masters of Law from Trinity College Dublin in 2011.

Fiona Weldon

Fiona is newly elected AT Board member in October 2020. She is a highly motivated individual and has over 30 years' experience in working and engaging with the disability sector both as a Researcher and Trainer. Currently she is employed as a Project Worker with Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI). This project, "Strategies for Change" is a new Innovative Online Training Programme with legacy learning resources that will build and support the development of Disabled Activists across Ireland. All of her work is motivated by the reality of the fallouts of segregation, exclusion and the effects of non-disabled professionalism.



Henceforward promoting the need for a Rights Based Model of Support to people that are labelled disabled that is driven by both the Social Model of Disability and the Philosophy of Independent Living.

Fiona's initial work in this sector involved setting up a local Independent Living Service offering Personal Assistance to local disabled people that wanted more choice and more control over the human supports that they needed to assist them with their daily living tasks.

Fiona holds an MA in Disability Studies and has worked for many disability services delivering evidenced based bespoke training to both users and staff members.

Fiona has a passion in supporting the empowerment process of those that are labelled disabled. It is her lived and learned experience that disabled people need to truly believe "deep down" that they are deserving, and have a right to the same freedoms, the same choices and the same opportunities to live their lives like everyone else.

Chapter Five: Acknowledgments

ÁT would like to happily acknowledge the core funding received from the HSE this year to maintain existing levels of service provision in 2020. We also appreciate the collaboration and cooperation of **HSE staff** in the following areas: Carlow, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin North, Galway, Kildare, Kerry, 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 disabled people.



Chapter Six: Financial Information

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 €	2019 €
Income / Funding	2,722,188	2,631,892
Gross surplus	2,722,188	2,631,892
Administrative expenses	(2,679,902)	(2,586,372)
Operating surplus/(deficit)	42,286	45,520
Other interest receivable and similar income	-	-
Interest payable and similar charges	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities	42,286	45,520
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	42,286	45,520

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 Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO)	Received	Recognised	Deferred to
	2020	2020	2021
	€	€	€
CHO 1	146,999	137,445	9,554
CHO 2	216,327	216,327	-
CHO 3	48,272	48,272	-
CHO 4	125,185	121,160	4,025
CHO 5	144,854	93,613	51,241
CHO 6	392,426	249,124	143,302
CHO 7	118,576	107,057	11,519
CHO 8	386,054	372,202	13,852
CHO 9	1,095,139	1,052,280	42,859
National HSE	216,000	108,000	108,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total HSE Service Funding	2,889,832	2,505,480	384,352
	=====	=====	=====

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 2020

	2020		2019	
	€	€	€	€
Current assets				
Debtor	244,665		243,392	
Cash at bank and in hand	716,739		454,444	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	961,404		697,836	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(555,957)		(334,675)	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Net current assets	405,447		363,161	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total assets less current liabilities	405,447		363,161	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Net assets	405,447		363,161	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Capital and reserves				
Restricted Fund	12,375		12,262	
Unrestricted Fund	393,072		350,899	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Members funds	405,447		363,161	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	

Statement of cash flows
Year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 €	2019 €
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	42,286	44,520
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Other interest receivable and similar income	-	-
Interest payable and similar charges	-	-
Accrued expenses/(income)	973	1,581
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	(1,273)	(30,042)
Trade and other creditors	220,309	89,163
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash generated from operations	262,295	106,222
Interest paid	-	-
Interest received	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash from operating activities	262,295	106,222
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	262,295	106,222
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	454,444	348,222
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	716,739	454,444
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Áiseanna Tacaíochta 2020 Annual Report

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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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