



The world has changed utterly since my last report. While we thought we had many difficult challenges facing us this time last year, no one anticipated the health and safety challenges and the risks that we would have to try to live and work with in the last 6 months and for some time to come.

It seems strange to consider writing about anything other than the challenges of operating a service in these Covid 19 times but as Joan will cover this in her report, I will mention the challenges that we faced before March 2020.

### **Governance**

We continued with Director's meetings and moved to Zoom meetings as soon as practicable after lockdown. Head of Windmill, Joan, and myself keep in regular phone contact and also meet regularly to discuss issues as they arise.

In particular, we ensured that we provided our service users and parents with up to date information over the last 6 months as we all struggled with the risks and restrictions that have to be addressed.

The work of amending the Memorandum and Articles of Association to better reflect our current aims and our future ambitions was completed. The revised M&A were presented and signed off by the Board in 2019 and were then presented to the Charity Regulator. Some technical issues arose and unfortunately with Covid 19, we haven't resolved these as yet.

As the Board needs to ensure that we keep up to date with all governance issues, I am registered to attend a, Charities Regulator Governance Code Training, in October.

### **Funding**

Until the end of 2019, we struggled with what we thought was our biggest challenge — the withdrawal of Pobal funding. This was signalled to parents and raised with politicians as they canvassed. The issue was also highlighted in the local newspaper. After much negotiation and huge effort from all, we had verbal agreement from the HSE before Christmas that the shortfall, would be replaced by them subject to the overall 1% cut for all Disability Services. In January, the HSE Service Agreement reflected the increase for the Pobal shortfall.

The level of the Monthly Subscription rate was also discussed both before and after Covid 19 lockdown.

The issue of the lack of payment of the 7% pension fund was also discussed and needs to be taken up again this year.

### **Fundraising**

All funds raised are greatly appreciated.

### **Sub Committees**

Sub Committees — Finance

Governance

Independent Living

Fundraising

The committees were making good progress up until Christmas but with Covid 19, some of the planned work and meetings have been interrupted. There needs to be renewed efforts to make further progress under these headings as the demand for independent living supports, in particular, continues to increase.

### **Conclusion**

While almost all Day Services closed completely in March 2020 and have remained closed, Thanks to Joan and her management team, we were able to offer critical supports to some people initially and the team have been working tirelessly to increase and offer hours of support both virtual and face to face to all our service users. To do so management and staff have had to completely restructure their working day.

I want to express our appreciation and thank them for all their work and support.

Maria Meyler Chair

Sept 2020