



INTERIM CEO REPORT

Welcome to our 11th newsletter.

Given all the changes that 2021 brought us, we began the New Year by looking forward to what 2022 would bring. To keep us focused and to maintain momentum we developed a business plan for the year which was approved by our Board. This plan is linked to our goals as set out in the strategic plan. This will help to ensure that we keep focused on providing quality services for service users and boarders while also ensuring that we are continuing to develop as an organisation.

At the end of last year, we rolled out a new risk management policy. As a follow on from this, in the first part of the year, there has been much focus on the implementation of a new risk register and risk management process. We provided training for all managers and the next steps are to provide training for all our staff.

We are continuing to ensure compliance with the Charities Governance Code and have begun to work on our annual report. We will reflect on the feedback we received from the Good Governance Awards. We are hopeful that we will be able to win the award, but at the very least be shortlisted again!

2022 has seen a lot of the restrictions lifted in regard to Covid 19, however, as an organisation we remain vigilant and maintain very high levels of infection control all the while ensuring that a good quality service is provided to service users and boarders. This would not be possible without our employees and their dedication to ensuring that everyone who uses our services remains safe



HR REPORT

Mary Stringer

As we headed into 2022 it was full steam ahead with our ongoing recruitment process for the community and boarding service.

At the end of last year we had approval for funding of ISL teachers and I am happy to say that we have been successful in recruiting three people into these positions. I would like to welcome Wendy Murray, Genevieve McGirr and Eugene Philips to the team. Wendy has been employed with us as a support worker for three years and has a lot of knowledge around the language needs of the organisation which will enable the team to hit the ground running. ISL is at the core of what we do in Reach Deaf Services so we are looking forward to seeing how these roles will bring us further in providing quality support.

We welcomed a new team of nurses in community and boarding. In the community service our Community Nurse Manager Andrea Eble was joined by Fiona Leahy and Temitope Ogunniran and in boarding we welcomed back Juliette Byrne to cover a period of maternity leave. Juliette worked as a staff nurse in the boarding campus a number of years ago so it was nice to welcome back a friendly face.

During the pandemic we had to put a lot of training on hold with the exception of mandatory training, but I am happy to say that we are back on track to providing training for all staff. In February we held management training for all managers and there is a program of SRV that will be delivered in the coming months.

We are currently upgrading our Time Management System. This system will be a one stop shop for employee records. It will allow employees to clock in using their phones and they will also have access to their staff file and information. We hope to have this complete by the end of March.

PROPERTY & MANAGEMENT REPORT

PAUL RYDER

Reach Deaf Services Campus

Planting of new trees

We planted 22 new trees (mixture of Betula fascination, Prunus Kansan, Sorbus Aucuparia, Quercus Petrea and Prunus Illicifolia) in the green area (beside Curam Nursing Home)



Main gate on Navan Road

We replaced an underground motor of the automated gate and the gate is now operated by a timer. This will improve security by restricting access to the campus after work hours

Streetlight

We replaced two damage fittings and bulbs. This will improve safety for boarders, students, staff, and guests using the campus at night-time.

New ACO Channel

We installed a new ACO drainage system in the disability car park spaces in the DVI carpark. This will help remove surface water away from the area and prevent the creation of pools of water.

Independent Living for Boarder

We are developing an independent Living house adjacent to the Holy Family school (Post Primary) for the Deaf young adults which will support Independent Life Skills Programme which focuses on preparation for leaving boarding and school. We are currently refurbishing the house which includes bringing it up to fire safety standards, upgrading the kitchen, bathroom and painting etc. We hope the house will be ready in April 2022



DEAF INTERPRETER COURSE

Reach Deaf Services staff Emily Matassa, Mary Duggan, Sally Byrne, Wendy Murray, Sabrina Hanley, Joanne Chester, Lianne Quigley and Susan Whelan recently qualified as Deaf interpreters from a year long programme with Trinity College Dublin's Centre for Deaf Studies course,

This was the first formal training of Deaf Interpreters to be held in Ireland and their new qualification means that they can register with the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) which was set up after the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act in 2017. This register ensures to improve quality and standards of interpreters for the Deaf community in Ireland.

The training happened during COVID and was held in zoom which proved problematic at times as Community Support Manager Susan Whelan explains: "It was an interesting experience having the training on zoom, Irish Sign language is such a 3D language and having to do it through a screen was problematic at times but we developed our own zoom etiquette and got used to doing it through zoom. Even our exams were held through a zoom session".

What is a Deaf Interpreter? They are Deaf people who are fluent in Irish Sign Language having grown up in the Deaf community and able to adapt to a variety of signing styles such as men/women signs, regional signs, Deafblind signs and working with older and younger people. The aim of the Deaf interpreter is to work with our hearing interpreters to ensure that a Deaf person has full access in their primary language.

As Susan says "...with the skills I have learnt on the Deaf Interpreter course, I can use the new skills to work with service users in our community and support them and I know that my colleagues who also qualified are looking to use their skills within our service too"

Congratulations to the seven new Deaf Interpreters!



HEAD OF ADULT SERVICES

Linda Tierney



LINDA TIERNEY REPORT

We had hoped to fully embrace our new service in January 2022 but as we entered into the fourth wave of COVID 19 it added an additional strain to staffing levels which ultimately impacted on our plans. Our support team worked extremely hard over the festive period and I am very proud of the safety and protection they provided all our service users during a very difficult time.

While we will forever hold fond memories of St Joseph's House, we are delighted to be fully transitioned in the community supporting twenty one service users within fifteen homes across Dublin.

We are still actively recruiting to complete our staffing levels and ensure consistency of support. Our focus for this year is to settle into our new service and develop our workforce by upskilling in specialised training to provide a quality support service. We have our new structure in place which we believe will support the success of our support service. We are delighted that Sharon Murphy has taken on the role of as Practice Culture & Development Manager, Sharon has been a key staff in transition and she will now have the ability to embed a quality practice and develop our support service. To support the Practice development of our workforce we have two new positions of Practice Leads , one of which is Donna O'Halloran our previous Discovery Coordinator, who will guide support staff on providing consistent support across the service in line with our policies and best practice. We will also be enhancing our person – centred support with Social Role Valorisation and our SRV practitioner will guide us throughout the year to enhance the lives of the people we support. We are also delighted that two of our existing staff have taken on the Social Care Worker roles, Kathlyn Errington and Ciara Mohan, we look forward to their progress over the coming months. We have recently recruited eight new support workers since 31st March and we look forward to creating consistent team to ensure a quality support service can be provided. Our Quality Standard and Policy Development Manager role is a shared role with our Boarding service and we are currently reviewing this role.

Our Team Leaders title has now changed to Community Support Managers given the nature of their role in the community and they continue to lead support teams provide person centred supports. Our Community Nurse Manager role was filled by our existing Nurse Andre Elbe and she has two nursing staff Fiona Leahy and Temitope Ogunniran who are actively visiting service users in their homes and upskilling our support staff in clinical awareness.

We are delighted that Gemma McDermott will be returning from maternity Leave on the 14th March and we look forward to having her back. We have said farewell to some staff but we wish them well in their new ventures.

As restrictions eased, we are delighted to see life returning to normal in relation to social connection and opportunities to attend more events.

I am aware we are still in a settling period of transition for those who transitioned in November but I can honestly look forward with confidence that we will continue to transform lives and support the people who avail our service have access to the good things in life, as we have seen in the lives of the people who have previously transitioned. Our transition journey has been extraordinary as we did it through a pandemic and while I acknowledge it was not perfect I know it will be worth it as we are dedicated to develop our service and ensure we put the people we support at the heart of our service and ensure our staff are well resourced and supported to provide a quality service.

STAFF - JOURNEY

Donna O'Halloran



Hello, my name is Donna O'Halloran. I am one of the practice leads for the community support service. My journey to this role has been exciting and challenging.

I first started working for Reach Deaf Services in 2016 as a support worker in St. Joseph's house. In 2017, we were informed of the HSE policy 'Time to Move on' which meant service users had to move into their own homes in the community. At first I was not really on board with this idea as had no experience or idea of how this would work. I also thought all the service users were happy where they were. I was hesitant at first to the idea.

In late 2019, I was moved to work in the community to support two service users. At the start it was difficult to change my mindset from an institutionalised practice as well as it was for the service users. I worked in the community for one year and by the end of the year, I was able to reflect and see how far the service users have come in their development. Not just their development but my own also. I got to see the experience first handed and understand why this policy was put in place by the HSE. With that, there was a job advertisement for a Discovery Coordinator to which I applied for as working in the community, it made me realise I would love to be able to use my experiences to support others along their journeys, not just when they move out but the process of the whole thing from the start.

I then got the job as Discovery Coordinator where I was able to support two individuals on a 1-1 basis in their transition from SJH to their own homes. I absolutely loved it. I was able to see the process from a different angle which was so interesting. Being able to support them on their journey from the very start has been exciting. This was not an easy journey however due to Covid hitting shortly after I started this role so there was a lot of restrictions around what could be done. A lot of things were put on hold. In October 2021, everyone had moved out and secured their own homes.

Discovery ended in Jan 2022 when an opportunity came up for a practice lead, I applied for this as I would like to continue supporting the service in their transition to community support but this time supporting the staff as opposed to service users. I have since secured this job and have just started in it. I am looking forward to continue working within the organisation and supporting the organisation to develop.

STAFF

Sharon Murphy

Hello! My name is Sharon Murphy and I'm the Practice, Culture and Development Manager for Reach Deaf Services.

I was previously the Service Transition Co-Ordinator in the Discovery Team.

I joined the Discovery Team in 2019, just two weeks before the first service user moved to his new home. It was a very exciting time, as new properties were coming up for other service users and there was a great buzz within the team. From June 2019 to Feb 2020 we helped five service users move into their new home and we had plans for seven more to move in 2020.

However, as we all know, Covid-19 came along and put the majority of plans on hold for a very long time. When everything opened back up we then worked to transition those seven service users to their homes by Jan 2021.

Even though another lockdown hit while the housing shortage reached an all-time high, and the deadline for the closure of St. Joseph's House was creeping closer and closer, we somehow managed to move out the remaining nine from September to October 2021.

As you can imagine, at the time it was a logistical nightmare – you could not even begin to write some of the challenges we faced in those final weeks; service users signing the night before we had to move, mould being found in a service users home a week before they were due to move, and even vital fire equipment being stuck in Customs! But all the staff worked together to get the remaining service users out and into their new homes.

While the experience was incredibly stressful for everybody involved, the service users, their families and all the staff, and though the process may have been far from perfect, I'm proud of what we all achieved as a service under such difficult circumstances. We've definitely achieved a lot with the Discovery Process for the service users.

The Discovery Project came to an end in early 2022 and I have since moved to a new role as Practice, Culture and Development Manager. I feel this role is a natural progression from working to enable services users to move into their homes, to now working with the staff team and the service users to ensure they live the life they want and deserve.



HEAD OF BOARDING CARE

Claire Bowe



BOARDING CAMPUS

This term in boarders saw the lifting of the restrictions in February which was very much welcomed by both the boarders and staff. This meant that both St.Marys and St.Jospehs could mix together freely in an indoor setting which was a joy to see. It was really evident how much the boarders enjoyed mixing and playing games together after such a long period of time of keeping them separated.

In St.Marys we were saddened to see Charlene Gannon move to St.Jospehs but with this we saw the arrival of Seeta Manjeshwar to St.Marys taking on the role as Team leader. We wish both Charlene and Seeta every success in their new roles.

This term the girls in St.Marys enjoyed many outings to the local shopping centers, the city center, art galleries and to Dun Laoighire. As well various in-house activities such as the celebration of International womens day were the girls were given a talk about womens rights.

This term had been a busy one with our fourth and fifth year students taking part in their work experience which they all got on brilliantly at. Our third and sixth year students completed their mocks in February and we are all very proud of all the hard work that they put in to their exams and we wish them all the best with their up and coming state examinations in June.

NEW STAFF

Justin Smith

In 2019 I worked in St.Josephs house Stilorgan as a support worker up until October 2021 when St.Josephs House closed. When St.Josephs House closed all the service users moved to new homes in the community and it was nice to see them have their own place to which they now consider their homes. In January 2022 I decided to move to a new job as a social care worker in St.Marys boarding. I really enjoy the work in St.Marys boarding as it is a new challenge for me and I really enjoy it. All the staff and boarders are very friendly and I look forward to working with them further.

Seeta Manjeshwar

After four years of working with Deaf adults in St. Joseph's House and in the community, I am excited to have this fantastic opportunity of working with the boarders. I look forward to promoting the children to thrive and ensure their boarding experience is a meaningful and memorable one.

I have fond memories of my own experience growing up in a boarding school and staying in the boarding residence. I wish that will be the same for our boarders.

Juliette Byrne - Clinical Nurse Manager

Nicholas O'Halloran- St Joseph's Boarding

We wish them every success and fulfillment in their work.

RUTH KELLY

Congratulations and best wishes to Ruth who has been appointed Acting Head of Care of Phoenix House Residential Services. This is part of Oak Lodge School in Wandsworth, London. Ruth is on a career break for one year and we wish her every success in her work.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Our recent visit to the National Wax Museum was filled with wonder, fun and entertainment.

In the museum, there is a great journey through the time vaults of Irish history.

What's inside- Father Teds Room, Music & Entertainment which includes Jedward, Pierce Brosnan as James Bond 007, Wax World- Harry Potter and Mad Eye Moody and all your Superheroes. Well worth a visit.

A visit to the Phoenix Park on a beautiful spring day was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It is a wonderful place for us to go for a walk. It is the perfect place to surround yourself with nature and look at the deer who live a peaceful life. We were fortunate to see these beautiful animals and take great photos.

Our senior boarders enjoyed a game of bowling in Blanchardstown. This activity always provides great competition and fun.

This was followed with some appetizing treats in McDonalds.

FUN DEAF AWARENESS - CHILDREN ACTIVITY WORKSHOP FOR DEAF BOYS (4 WEEKS)

Irish Deaf Society(IDS) received the fund from St. Stephen's Green Trust to organise workshops for Deaf children.

Claire Power gave the boys a great presentation and get them to be involved in the activity. They learned about deaf culture. They meets all five sociological criteria(language, values, traditions, norms and identity).

She comes in every Tuesday for 4 weeks and it lasts for 45 minutes.

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

After two years of structured activities being restricted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, everyone was delighted when we could start planning for them to commence again. The Activities Committee in both Boarding Campuses (St Mary's- Sara Kelly and Justin Smith and St Joseph's Boarding- Emma Shaw) have been getting feedback from the boarders before liaising with Deaf Sports Ireland to try and organise a timetable of structured activities such as boxing, swimming, football and basketball. The hope is that these can commence over the next week or two. It will be great to give the boarders, some of whom only started boarding during the pandemic, a chance to experience the service we would have always provided pre Covid-19. They are all extremely excited to get started! In the absence of the activities mentioned above, staff have organised outings to various places such as Leisure Plex, Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Phoenix Park to feed the ducks and deer as well as local playgrounds. It is safe to say these outings were enjoyed by all (Staff included!).



REDUCTION OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR US IN BOARDING

The arrival of Covid-19 back in March 2020 came as a huge life changing experience for all of us throughout the world. We had to adapt to new practices and for a long period of time we had to restrict our movements in order to prevent the spread of this deadly virus. It challenged everyone to comply and be responsible in our daily lives.

In boarding guidelines were put in place for all of us to follow. These were very challenging times and we adapted well. It meant we had to have separate pods, no longer could we have joint social events, play football and basketball collectively, visit each other to have that chat and cup of coffee. Now to our great delight all of that has changed with the reduction of the Covid-19 restrictions. We can visit each other and have that chat, plan our social and outdoor activities. This announcement is great news.

Everyone in boarding is so relieved and happy to be able to go back to our daily routine. We should still be mindful that Covid-19 is still around and we need to be careful in large settings.

Here are some comments from the boarders and staff on hearing this great news.

"Happy to visit the other house"

"Have the option of wearing a mask"

"We can play basketball with the girls in St. Mary's ."

"It was amazing we can visit the senior house and have a chat."



BOARDERS FIRST YEAR IN BOARDING

Emma Hamilton

My boarder experience so far has been definitely been memorable. It has been an adventure getting to know everyone and finding out what we plan to do everyday. It's so crazy how quickly I now consider everyone in boarding as family.

BOARDERS TALENTS

Nathalie has played football for the under 13 Bohemian girls football team for two years now. Nathalie trains twice a week in Blanchardstown and she has really integrated well into the team. During Nathalies time with the Bohemian football team she was given the opportunity to be a ball girl for the Ireland womens team and we in boarders are very proud of Nathalie for doing an outstanding job on the day.

Nathalies comments on playing football:

I like playing football because I make good friends on the team. The girls on the team are nice to me and they have learnt sign language to help me feel more welcomed. I like watching football and I want to play football for the Ireland football team when I grow older. I liked being a ball girl for the Ireland Womens team because I want to be the same when I'm older.



BOARDERS TALENTS

This is Sean, a final year student in St. Josephs. Sean is an accomplished artist. He is very creative and passionate about his work. Here are some of the drawings from his Art portfolio which are truly amazing.



EUROPEAN DEAF FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIPS QUALIFIER 2022

European Deaf futsal Championships qualifier took place in Brussels on 18 19 20th March. We were delighted and proud of one our boarders Marcus Conroy who was selected for the team. He played in the winger position. The team put a lot of preparation in for this championship. He said that although they did not win the competition, it was a great experience and new friendships were formed.

Well Done to everyone.

GRADUATION DATES

TY - 11AM 19TH MAY

JCSP - 1PM MAY

SCHOOL LEAVERS - 1:30-20TH MAY



CHAPLAIN FOR NCDP

Fr Paddy Boyle



REPORT BY FRANKIE BERRY

We continue to be looking out and caring for one another in these challenging times as we enter into the start of 2022. As restrictions have eased it has been relief to see that this certainly had made a difference in peoples lives. We are now working with the new normal of living, working, and socializing with heightened awareness of staying safe and COVID free.

With that said little did we know that more traumatic times were ahead of us with the war in the Ukraine, The world watched in horror, with millions of people being forced to flee from their homelands. Many European countries have responded with such generosity in providing medical / clothing/ food/ shelter. Likewise, here in Ireland we responded with ongoing support with money and opened doors to welcome these Ukrainians into our country. The chaplaincy has been part of the response to supporting Deaf people from the Ukrain

Pope Francis has asked and is encouraging all people of God to be part of this new universal Synodal pathway. We are part of this communion, and this is a good opportunity for the baptized faithful to participate through time of reflection and prayer by making our contribution either by paper or video. All of this is to make changes happen, to improve for the better and for the Church to survive. This helps us to become witness to see God's spirit in us, love and work of Jesus Christ. Next Summer 2023, there will be a Synod of Bishops in Rome where they will listen to our contributions made during 2022. All of this is to enable them, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to discern, and determine the new way forward in making new beginnings within the Church as People of God.





Curam Care home, on the Navan Road, close to DVI, opened their doors in June 2021. Currently there are at least 60 residents living there and among them are many Deaf people. It is good to see that Spiritual services are provided for these residents by having bi-monthly mass with ISL Interpreter and monthly anointing of the sick from Fr Paddy Boyle. He is also contactable at anytime for Curam Care Home. We continue to provide Saturday vigil mass, with an ISL interpreter, at 4pm from Emmaus Chapel and it's great to have the live congregation in our midst to make it a real presence, and if you cannot attend in person, you can watch online: WWW.Churchservices.tv/DVI. Weekly Sunday Mass at 11.30am with ISL interpreter, in Bonnybrook. Deaf people are welcome to attend in person. For those who can't attend in person can view online: Bonnybrook.Parish.TV.

Our annual one day pilgrimage to Knock, hopefully will take place on Saturday 27th August, 2022. The Dublin Diocese Pilgrimage to Lourdes will happen in 7th-12th September 2022. This year will be different type of pilgrimage to other years, as there will be no sick pilgrims allocated in the Accueil. The able bodies pilgrims will be staying in hotels and more detailed programme will be given closer to the date from the Dublin Diocese office.

Let us not forget the people whom we have known and loved, parents, siblings and especially those who were part of our community. May they dwell in God's house and enjoy His love forever.

Frankie Berry
Chaplaincy Team Member



@REACHDEAF1845

Reach Deaf Services
Deaf Village Ireland
Ratoath Road
Cabra
Dublin 7

Tel : 01-830 0522

Email: info@reachdeafservices.ie



Reach Deaf Services

CHY: 1394
RCN: 2002138

Editor: Alan Smyth
Email: alan@reachdeafservices.ie