



CEO REPORT

MARY STRINGER

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

We've had a busy start to the year and are looking forward to the arrival of spring. This month, we say goodbye to our Chairperson, Nessian Vaughan, after three years of dedicated service. As he moves on to exciting new opportunities within the sector, we want to express our sincere gratitude for his commitment and support throughout his tenure. On behalf of the entire organisation, I would like to thank him for his hard work and dedication and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

In addition to continuing with our Supported Living and Boarding services, we are currently conducting a chaplaincy review. If you would like to share your thoughts and take part in the survey, please visit our website. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping the future of our chaplaincy service.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter!

HUMAN RESOURCE

TARA DALY

Tara Daly

It has been busy on the HR front as we near the end of the first quarter in 2025, with many new but exciting changes taking place over the past number of months.

In Recruitment, our services have held ongoing recruitment drives for Support & Social Care Workers and Social Care Leads, which has resulted in a total of 5 new positions across our Boarding & Supported living services. In early 2025 Reach Deaf Services also recruited for a vacant Policy Officer Position which was successfully filled in late January. In March 2025, we also fulfilled recruitment for a fixed-term, part-time staff Nurse who will provide services to our Boarding Campuses. There have also been some exciting internal recruitment changes so far this year with the internal appointment of the Practice, Culture and Development Manager in the Supported Living Services and the Fixed-Term Secondment of a Community Support Manager to One Touch Health Project lead.

Reach Deaf Services will have ongoing Recruitment for positions such as, Transport Escort, Transport Driver, Social Care Leads and Operations Administrator into the second quarter of 2025.

This year, Reach Deaf Services has a big focus on not only internal process improvement but also the development of skills for individual roles. Due to this, some staff who are involved in our payroll function were offered the opportunity to complete an IPASS certificate in Payroll Techniques which commenced in February 2025. Alongside this we have also had internal HR workshops on psychological safety, and a selection of managers across the organisation completed a Leadership and Management QQI Level 6 course in collaboration with the CDETB.

Our usual roster of mandatory employee training is also in full swing for the year across areas such as Adult Safeguarding & Child Protection, Manual & People Moving and Handling, Medication Management, Risk Management along with Tool talks in Service User Finance safeguarding and Trust in Care policy Training for applicable roles.

In late 2024, Reach Deaf Services implemented a new Care/Payroll system called One Touch Health. The system has now been successfully integrated into the services with all staff now accessing such to record their daily working hours and leave requests. Reach Deaf Services recognize that this will be an ongoing process of fully imbedding the full site potential into our services and department practices and to ensure a continued smooth transition, Community Support Worker Carmel Duggan was Seconded as One Touch Health project lead to steer all future needed actions & training over the next 6-month period.

ISL TEAM

TRACEY DALY

Tracey Daly

A Busy Start for the ISL Department

The ISL department has gotten off to a busy and positive start this year! Our ISL classes have been going really well. Staff who took part in the Level 2 course are now waiting on their results—best of luck to them. The recent Level 1 course has also finished up, and results have already been sent out. Well done to everyone who took part!

We've just launched plans to run a regular ISL induction every two months. These sessions will offer a basic but important introduction to working with the Deaf community and will be run in partnership with the Practice Lead team.

Our monthly ISL catch-ups are still happening on the last Friday of every month. It's a relaxed space to stay connected, keep learning, and practice using ISL—everyone is welcome to join in whenever they can.

Beyond the Surface: 2-Day Training Recap

Earlier this month, we held Beyond the Surface – Language, Privilege and Culture, a two-day training designed to support a deeper understanding of the Deaf experience and the importance of the ISL strategy. The training aimed to build awareness within the management team about why this strategy matters and how it can be meaningfully implemented across the organisation. This first round of training was delivered to members of the management team, with a view to extending it to the wider staff group in the near future.

A massive thank you to Carmel Grehan, who led the two days—her experience and insight were invaluable. Through open discussion and practical exercises, staff were encouraged to go beyond surface-level understanding and engage more fully with inclusive, person-centred practice. We're excited to keep the learning going and to continue building a more inclusive environment for everyone.



SUPPORT LIVING SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY - HEAD OF SERVICES



Sharon Murphy

We've had a quiet and calm start to 2025 with clear plans to focus on our Leadership and Development across the management team.

Active focus and engagement from management teams to self-reflect and develop processes to maintain an effective safe service whilst developing quality initiatives.

We launched our ISL strategy this year and the Supported Living Service are looking at ISL initiatives to support the ISL strategy through our Staff Information Meeting and our weekly ISL Chat! Ongoing encouragement and promotion of ISL has been at the forefront of our priorities as all management are expected to use ISL at all meetings which is having a significant impact on ISL development across the team. Our staff team are attending weekly ISL classes being hosted by our ISL Team.

Our new Practice Culture and Development Manager Gemma Mc Dermott is liaising with DFI and HSE around Safeguarding Developments and implementing practices into the service.

We said goodbye to our Policy Officer Gemma Devine in February as she embarked on a move to Australia. She will be sadly missed but we warmly welcome our new Policy Officer Tammana Joon who is part of the Practice Team but also supports the wider services in relation to Policy and procedures. Tammana has already gotten in the swing of things picking up where Gemma left off.

We have engaged a Project Lead, Carmel Duggan, for the implementation of a new software system and to support our management team and staff to ensure a smooth transition.

Support Managers are now actively encouraging people to plan holidays as the nicer weather commencing and we look forward to seeing where people travel to in 2025 as the travel bug was sparked in 2024 with more people opting to travel abroad. We look forward to sharing some stories in 2025 of trips to Europe and beyond.

We want to plan more in-person meetings and connections with the wider support team to connect and enhance the morale across the service.

EDUCATION SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY - HEAD OF SERVICES



Rosalind Whelan & Ruth Kelly

Healthy Food Made Easy Programme

In January this course was rolled out again for the senior boarders, with a view to preparing them for independent living. Mary our chef and facilitator ran this course for 6 weeks. It was a little different to the first course as this one was geared towards our senior group, with the aim to prepare them for moving into the independent house, or for independent living. Mary, the facilitator had this to say about the senior group;

‘Your staff interpreters made me feel incredibly welcome and supported. All the students were so polite and helpful to me. The students were very interested in cooking, learning new skills and eating their food. Thanks again for allowing me to help and support your students’.

All the boarders received Certificates of participation on completion of the course.

A visit from our previous boarder Caoimhe O’Connell

We invited Caoimhe O’Connell, who used to board with us, to come and give a talk about her experience playing futsal in Brazil. We have a few young footballers at Boarding, and it was a great opportunity for them to meet Caoimhe and learn about her experience. The young boarders are now inspired and are keen to play for Deaf Women Ireland’s team!

Pancake Tuesday

The boarders were excited to get stuck into pancake day. The first ones didn’t make the cut, but everyone messes up the first ones, right? Some were more well done than others, but they were gobbled up all the same.

St. Patrick’s Party

To mark St. Patrick’s, we all wore green and had face paints. Maya did an amazing job doing our face paints. The boarders enjoyed green milkshakes. There were fun games and we played bingo too. Kyle and Gabriel won spot prizes for bingo.



Chinese New Year

We celebrated Chinese New Year in Boarding by tasting Chinese treats such as bao buns, various candies and even tried some spicy crisps. We learned about the Chinese zodiac animals and each person then discovered which animal they were and read about the characteristics pertaining to each zodiac. Everyone cracked open their fortune cookies and read out their fortune, we are yet to see if they came true!

Staying Active

When it comes to staying active, our boarders have been loving the chance to get together for swimming and football. It's become a highly competitive, yet fun. No matter the skill level, everyone gets involved, and there's always plenty of banter on the field. After scoring, two boarders have even started a hilarious tradition of polishing each other's shoes as their signature goal celebration!

Culture Nights

We host culture nights at Boarding to celebrate different cultures. Dominika started boarding with us last September and is Polish. We had a Polish Culture night, where we tried different food and did a quiz about Poland. We learnt a lot about the country and its culture. We asked Dominika to write about herself.

Dominika Florek

Hello, my name is Dominika Florek. I am Polish and my parents are from Poland. I'm Deaf and I was born in Cork in Ireland. I'm fourteen years old, turning 15 soon in October. My favourite hobbies are coding, tennis, football, digital art, drawing and science. I am in first year now. I have a sister named Maja and she is a toddler. I love reading such as romantic and mystery books. There are my favourite book genres.

I also love listening to music and studying. I'm currently living in Boarding in Dublin because Holy Family School for the deaf is the best option for me. It provides special education and supportive, also ISL which means Irish Sign Language. It has English too. It's much better than mainstream because it has small classes.

I found Boarding hard at first but now it is very good, and I like it here. In Boarding, we had Polish Culture night. People and staff have opportunity to try Polish food like Pierogi, Krokiety and so on.



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Frankie Berry

Each year, the church has a theme 'Pilgrims of Hope.' for the 12 months starting with Pope Francis knocking on the Holy Door in the Vatican, Rome 24th Dec 2024. Throughout the year, we are asked to be Pilgrims, go on our journey, sharing the hope we have as Christians in your homes, upon meeting people on their travels as pilgrims locally, or aboard.

A JUBILEE – or Holy – Year is marked every twenty-five years by the Universal Church as a time of dedicated prayer so as to re-connect a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. It also encourages each of us to be messengers of hope in our very troubled world.'

We will have a group of Deaf People travelling to Rome to mark this Jubilee year of hope on 26th April – 5th May '25. We will have the privilege to witness the making of Bl **Carlo Acutis** as Sainthood on 28th April 2025.

Carlos Actuis

Carlo, a Catholic Italian teenager, 15 years old, who died 10th Oct 2006. He was a gamer and computer programmer who loved soccer and the Eucharist. Pope Francis referred to Carol as a model of holiness in a digital age.

His body was transferred to the cemetery in Assisi, the same town where St Francis of Assisi, is buried. Carlo's body is exhibited inside a glass case. His remains are in excellent condition, yet it cannot be said that they are incorrupt.



Jubilee of Hope

Logo

The cross of Christ is the hope that cannot ever be abandoned because we are always in need of it, especially in the most difficult moments.



The Cross, in the shape of a sail, is transformed into an anchor that imposes itself over the waves in motion. A universal symbol of Hope.

The figures represent humanity from the four corners of the World. They are embracing each other to illustrate the solidarity between the peoples, as the first holds onto the cross.

The rough sea is a reminder of the difficulties of the pilgrimage of life. Often, personal events as well as those of the world, press on us more intensely, demanding a greater hope.



DI CASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION
DIPARTIMENTO PER LE QUESTIONI FUNDAMENTALI DI CRISTIANITA'
RIGUARDANDO L'EVANGELIZZAZIONE IN TUTTO IL MONDO



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