



CEO REPORT

MARY STRINGER

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

Back in April, we welcomed our new Chairperson, Deirdre O'Keeffe. Deirdre brings a wealth of experience, having spent most of her career in the Civil Service. She held senior management roles in the Departments of Transport, Justice, Education, Marine, and Finance, worked as a Statistician with the Central Statistics Office, and served as Director/Secretary to Fáilte Ireland.

Following a recent recruitment campaign, we are also pleased to welcome four new Board members - Declan Treanor, Caitriona Carton, Catherine Duffy and Seamus Sheedy. They bring with them a diverse range of expertise across the disability, legal, commercial, and psychotherapy sectors. Alongside our Chair, we look forward to the valuable insights and contributions they will bring to the Board.

We are still actively seeking Board members from the Deaf Community, and we encourage anyone interested to get in touch or help spread the word.

We recently marked the end of ISL Awareness Week—an important time each year that gives us the opportunity to reflect on our work in the context of the Deaf Community.

Much has happened over the summer months, and you'll find many of these highlights featured in this edition. Now that we're well into autumn, the pace hasn't slowed—we're as busy as ever! We hope you enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter.

HR REPORT

JUSTINAH BELLO & KRISTINA HARRIS

My name is Justinah Bello, and I'm delighted to join the team as the new HR Manager. I bring over 20 years of experience in Human Resources across various sectors, with a strong passion for people management, employee relations, driving positive change, organisational development, and innovating HR processes to improve efficiency and the overall employee experience.

Over the years, I've become known for my genuine care for employees' growth, happiness, and welfare in the workplace. I enjoy maintaining an open-door policy and have a deep commitment to creating a supportive and positive workplace culture where strong collaborative relationships can thrive.

What matters most to me is building an environment where we can all do our best. I value honesty, teamwork, and mutual respect, and I look forward to us working together with these values in mind while staying aligned with our organisation's core values.

I'm looking forward to getting to know each of you and achieving great things together!

We have maintained a steady level of recruitment activity so far this year, processing a variety of vacancies across our services. These have included roles such as Support Workers and Social Care Workers. We also have ongoing recruitment for School Transport Escorts across 3 routes with further interviews to take place in the coming days.

In Addition, we have recruited a Part-Time Accounts assistant, with the position pending to commence.

Our most recent vacancy advertised is for a Community Support Worker, Maternity leave cover as well as some new vacancies being recruited.

There have also been some internal changes to roles such as both the Acting-Up Community Support Managers and a fixed-term Practice Lead position being changed to Permanent.

To date in 2025, Reach Deaf Services has filled a total of 11 vacancies.

We wish to take this opportunity to welcome all who have recently joined our services and to congratulate those who received a status change to their current positions.

The HR Department is placing a big focus on Policy & Practice improvement this year for our services. Within this focus is our current Employee Relations policies of which a number have been updated to date to be in line with best practice. The HR department has also undergone a full update of the Reach Deaf Services employee handbook which is in its final approval stage.



In addition, HR has contributed to the development of a few new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across our services. These SOPs provide better guidance to management teams on areas such as training scheduling/shift assigning and allocation/managing employee rota's and changes etc.

To correspond with these improvements, HR is currently standardising several processes and will be hosting tool talks in the future with the wider management teams on topics such as Employee Relations issues, Employee Probation Process, Induction process and Complaint Management process. These initiatives aim to support managers and enhance overall efficiency. Further updates will be shared as these processes are rolled out.

As part of our ongoing projects, HR has also been preparing HR records and forms for the new One Touch Health system. This will create a better, centralized HR function, improve transparency of employee information and give employees easier access to their documentation and work-related information.

PROPERTY & MANAGEMENT REPORT

PAUL RYDER

St. Joseph's Boys Boarding – Summer 2025 Renovation Update

As part of our continued commitment to improve our properties and services, we have completed a minor renovation project in St. Joseph's Boys Boarding in Summer 2025. The project involves;

- Downstairs toilet remodeling,
- New sensory, Medication & Staff rooms,
- Updating cinema room,
- Updating night staff room,
- Paint interior walls,
- Replacement of main doors & windows of the stairs landing,
- Improve WiFi signal around the buildings,
- Arrangement of furniture and accessories,
- Other electrical & plumbing works,
- New Playground

It truly speaks volumes about the professionalism, commitment, and teamwork of the maintenance team, who not only met expectations but went above and beyond. They put their heart and soul into every task, staying focused and determined to deliver results under pressure. Full credit goes to the maintenance team for their tireless dedication, their ability to adapt quickly to constraints, and their unwavering determination to see the project through successfully.

SUPPORT LIVING SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY - HEAD OF SERVICES



Support Living Services Manager - Sharon Murphy

As always, our staff team have had a busy few months, working to improve our processes and procedures to ensure we continuously improve the service we deliver. We've been concentrating on our risk management and processes for roster management to date. Our team has also had a fun summer with the people we supporting heading off on retreat in Knock and Lourdes, doing some adventuring around Ireland and planning a big cruise for some people next month. We've also been working with the people we support to get them more involved in their community, with some going to evening classes with the Irish Deaf Society and one person becoming Minister of the Eucharist for Emmaus Chapel in Deaf Village Ireland.

Sadly during this time we lost Barry, a beautiful man who is deeply missed by his family and our team. We miss his quick wit and his unbridled joy for life. May he rest in peace with his best pal Eddie.

And some of our staff team have been studying and upskilling to complete a Level 6 Award for Advocacy with South East Technological University. Congratulations to our recent graduates; from left to right; Sinead Smith, Donna O'Halloran and Nicholas O'Halloran.

We're delighted to see our staff team developing and upskilling themselves and their motivation continuous development. As we head into Autumn, the C word has been on our lips already .. Christmas. We're planning an organising and putting ideas together to prepare the people we support and our staff team to have a lovely Christmas.



Geraldine - Minister for the Eucharist in Emmaus Chapel, Deaf Village Ireland

Last February, Geraldine Neylon was asked by Reach Deaf Service's Chaplain Frankie Berry if she'd be interested in becoming a Minister of the Eucharist. Geraldine was delighted to be included in her community and attended all the required training and meetings and really wanted to be involved in the weekly Mass.

Geraldine has diligently worked to become a Minister of the Eucharist in Emmaus Chapel in Deaf Village Ireland, and since May this year, is enjoying giving back to her community.

"I felt proud to become the Eucharistic person to her Deaf Community in Emmaus Chapel and I like to be in Jesus's shoes and be a part of his life. I love giving Holy Communion to each person in the church and love to be involved in the Church."



Memorial Tree Planting in Honour of Anne Murphy

Earlier this month, we held a special memorial event to celebrate the life of Anne Murphy, a remarkable lady we were privileged to support. Anne dedicated much of her life to advocating for the Deaf and Deafblind community. Her impact and legacy lives on through the many lives she touched and the awareness she helped to build.

To honour her memory, a beautiful Cherry Blossom tree was planted on the grounds of Deaf Village Ireland; this was carefully chosen by her family. A plaque has been placed alongside it, bearing her name and a tribute to her inspiring work.

The memorial gathering brought together Anne's family, the staff team that supported her in her home, and those who knew Anne through her time with us. We heard heartfelt words from both her family and members of our team, sharing stories, laughter, and reflections on her life and achievements. It was a moving and meaningful moment of connection and remembrance.

Following the event, we received a lovely card from Annes's family, expressing their thanks for the tribute and felt that Anne was with us on that day and said, "they found the whole event very moving". All staff at Reach Deaf Services are truly honoured to have been a part of her journey, and her memory will continue to inspire us all.



CHAPLAIN FOR NCDP

FR PADDY BOYLE



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Frankie Berry

Knock 2025

A good turnout for the annual pilgrimage to Knock. The day started with a tour of Knock, where new events have been added in recent years to enhance the experience for visitors. Pilgrims, whether first-timers or regular visitors, took time for quiet reflection by praying in Knock's beautiful surroundings.

The highlight of the visit was being inside the Basilica to see and feel the presence of the sacred space, with beautiful mosaic artwork on a large wall in the sanctuary. This is the same place where many local people witnessed the apparition of Our Lady on a wet day in 1879. Over 50 Deaf people were at Mass and afterward had the chance to socialize over tea and treats.

Lourdes 2025

Three new helpers, under the umbrella of Dublin Diocese Pilgrimage to Lourdes, along with four others, participated in the training for the Child/Vulnerable Adults Lourdes Pilgrimage in mid-August. The training was given by Fr. Paddy Boyle.

Four Deaf persons stayed in the Accueil throughout the five-night pilgrimage to Lourdes. Upon returning from Lourdes—a place where they honoured Our Lady, prayed the rosary, participated in the liturgy of different masses, and partook in the historical journey of St. Bernadette's life in the village—the volunteers spoke of their newfound experience as helpers. Three of the helpers received Silver medals for 5 year service from Archbishop Dermot Farrell. They described the week of giving and caring for others as rich and worthwhile. Many of them found joy, their hearts filled with wonder, and made new lifelong friends. The pilgrims were likewise ever so thankful to have these helpers and were pleasantly surprised to see a number of the hearing helpers who knew some Irish Sign Language.






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