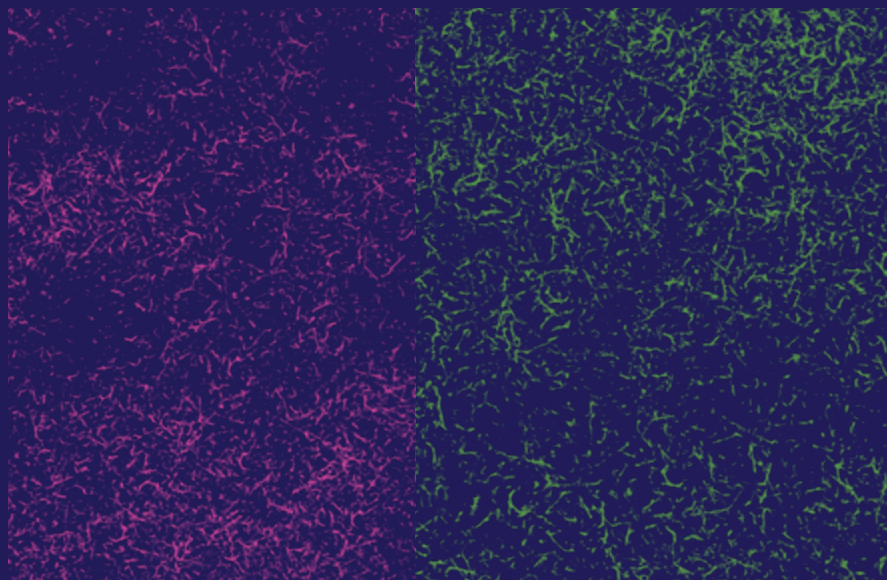
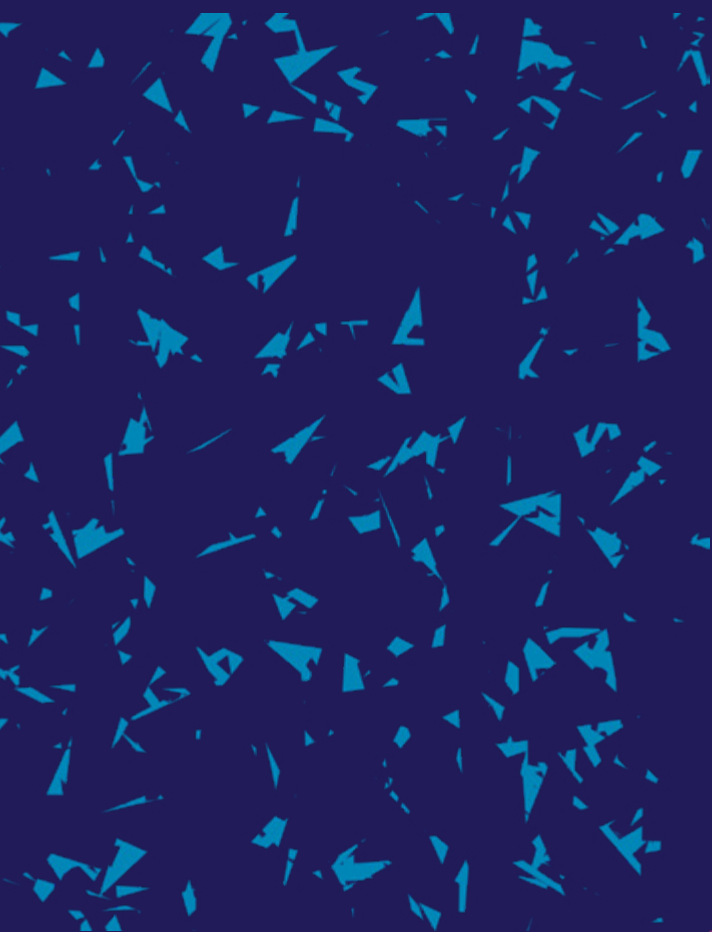
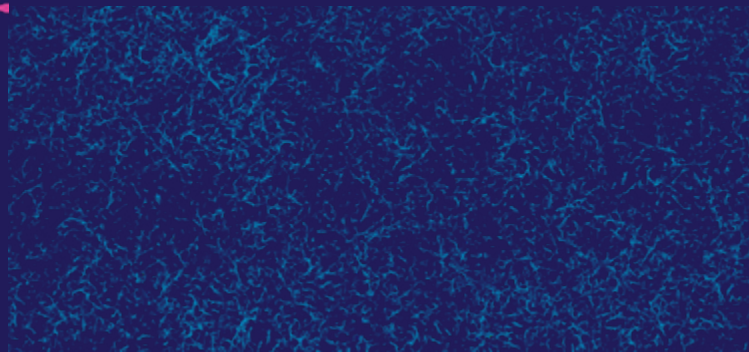




GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD

Impact Report



A word from the Chair

Although it became apparent early in 2020 that Ireland would not be unaffected by Covid-19, the scale of the pandemic and the impact it would have across the year could not have been forecast.

As necessary public health measures were introduced, Gaisce – The President’s Award responded quickly. Operationally, the organisation launched Gaisce sa Bhaile, ensuring that, as much as was possible, young people could continue to start, to carry on, and to complete their Gaisce Award, even from the confines of home. This ‘shoulder to the wheel’ instinct was not without its complications, and I wish to commend the CEO and her team for their efforts which, despite it all, resulted in very respectable levels of participation in Gaisce in 2020 and many moments to be proud of, as can be read in the pages of this Impact Report.

From a governance perspective, Council moved fast too. Technology allowed us to move to the virtual world, but technology is only a ‘means to’: it was the commitment of each and every Council member to adapt to change, to meet more regularly, to take as seriously – more seriously – their responsibilities as trustees of Gaisce, that ensured the CEO and her team were supported throughout what turned out to be a very long year. As Chair, I am truly honoured to lead such a wonderful group of committed volunteers and I thank them wholeheartedly.

Gaisce participants and President’s Award Leaders remain the focus and the heart of what we do in Gaisce and all thanks and praise to the significant numbers who remained active, whether through supporting young people on their Gaisce journey or taking that path themselves.

Thanks are also due to the many supporters of Gaisce, including **Minister Roderic O’Gorman** and the newly constituted Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

We remain indebted, of course, to **Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D Higgins**, and thank him sincerely for the support he gives to Gaisce – The President’s Award including, in 2020, issuing public statements on both **Gaisce sa Bhaile** and **Maith Thú**.

With uncertainty continuing into 2021, our priority will remain ensuring that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to take on the President’s challenge, to Dream Big and to fulfil their potential. It has never been more important that we do.



John Cunningham
Chair, Gaisce - The President’s Award



A Message from the CEO

Not long into 2020, the world as we knew it changed. The change was swift and significant, nothing short of unprecedented in our life time.

Although some important events were able to take place prior to Covid restrictions being introduced, including the **LikeMinded exhibition** in January, the **Disability World Café** and the **Story Exchange** ceremony with Mountjoy Education Unit, from mid-March to the end of the year, Gaisce operated almost entirely virtually. Proximity is energising, motivating, and enabling. That my colleagues were able to transmit these qualities in the virtual world, not only to each other but to President's Award Leaders and other colleagues beyond Gaisce is testament of the marvellous group of people that they are.

Despite the challenges of Covid, Gaisce can be very proud of what it accomplished in 2020 and this Impact Report shines a light on some of these achievements, in particular, being able to continue with some of our important diversity and inclusion projects.

With regret, as storm clouds began to gather again in Autumn, the moratorium on events had to continue, including our beloved Civic Merit Award for President's Award Leaders and the very special annual Gold Award Ceremony.

The resilience and fortitude of President's Award Leaders, of Gaisce Award Partners, of Challenge Partners and, of course, the many thousands of Gaisce participants and Awardees are where we drew our strength from in 2020 and from where, despite continued uncertainty, gives us confidence into 2021 that Gaisce will continue to thrive.

We also look forward with excitement to our special 35th anniversary campaign, which we know you will enjoy reading about in next year's Impact Report.

In the meantime, stay safe and well.

Yvonne McKenna

CEO, Gaisce - The President's Award





21,082

Young people registered

Snapshot

88

Newly registered Gaisce Award Partners across Ireland

Gaisce Award Partners working with young people across our communities nationwide

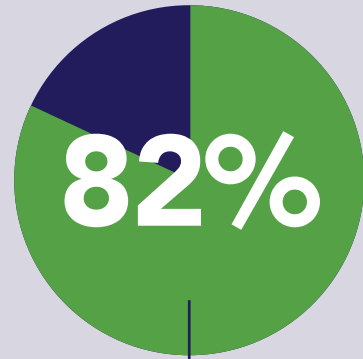
721

1,226

President's Award Leaders supporting and mentoring young people

New President's Award Leaders trained

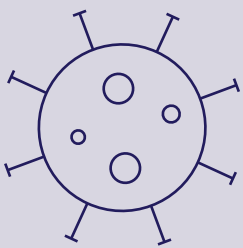
371



Active schools, despite pandemic restrictions and closures

9,270

Awards achieved across Bronze, Silver and Gold levels



Covid is a lot about can't, Gaisce is about can

'Gaisce at Home' / 'Gaisce sa Bhaile' campaign successfully launched

First ever Gold Award Residential hosted online

First ever Gold Award achieved at Oberstown Detention Centre

33% increase in 3rd level Gaisce Awards achieved

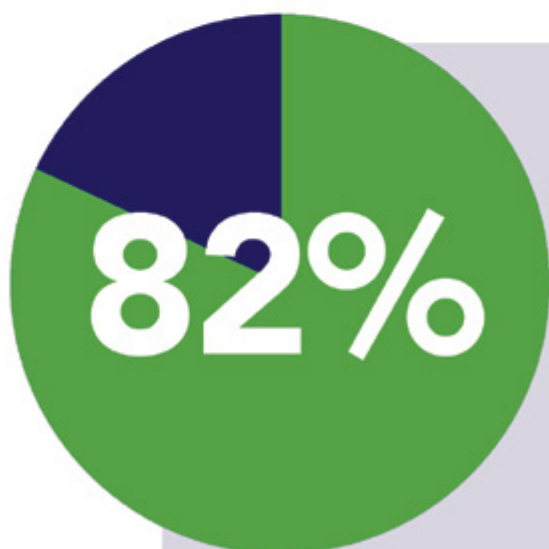
Gaisce's School Programme



Gaisce's School Programme

A great many President's Award Leaders are teachers in post-primary schools.

With schools closed for so much of 2020, we want to say a very special thank you to the very many schools and school-based PALs that continued to support their students on their Gaisce journey in 2020.



Despite Covid restrictions and uncertainty, 82% of all post-primary schools in Ireland delivered the Gaisce programme in 2020

More than 50 post-primary schools either started delivering Gaisce or returned to delivering Gaisce in 2020



Gaisce was delighted to participate in University College Cork's CARL (Community-Academic Research Links) programme in 2020, which saw an MA student focus their thesis on the experience of school-based PALs. The research findings revealed the importance teachers place on being a PAL, particularly for the opportunity it gives them to make a positive difference to the lives of young people and highlighted the commitment of school-based PALs to the holistic development of their students.



Gaisce

responds to the Covid-19 pandemic



PALS Ms Mellerrick and Ms Brosnan from St Aloysius' College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Gaisce responds to the Covid-19 pandemic



Gaisce at Home/Gaisce sa Bhaile

In response to Covid-19, Gaisce created flexible options under the 'Gaisce at Home' campaign to ensure young people could still undertake and complete their awards.

- ✓ Additional Adventure journey options were offered to ensure Gaisce Award completion was possible.
- ✓ Participants could change their activities to suit 'at home' circumstances.
- ✓ President's Award Leader (PAL) training was adapted and offered entirely online and Gaisce successfully trained 371 PALs in 2020.



Message from President Michael D. Higgins

As President, may I congratulate the team at Gaisce on this new initiative, which will assist young people to stay active and engaged in their communities, and to look after their physical and mental health in these special circumstances through which we are living.

It is my hope that as many as possible of the 18,000 young people already involved in the President's Award will use this opportunity to develop alternative ways to achieve their goals, and that this new challenge will be taken up by yet others who also are interested in signing up for the President's Challenge.

By participating in Gaisce, young people are invited to develop their skills, find a new confidence in their abilities, and discover the importance of making a positive contribution to their communities and wider society. At its heart, the Gaisce challenge is about making a pact with yourself to set goals, and to pursue their achievement vigorously.

This is never easy, as no noble task ever is. To do so in these testing circumstances is even more challenging, and I want to convey my congratulations to every participant who decides to embark on this journey.

Beir beannacht.

'Gaisce at home' was cited as a leading example in the Irish Youth sector of a proactive and efficient response to the challenges of Covid-19 in a report on Youth Work responses by the National Youth Council of Ireland.





©INPHO/Gary Carr

“It would be an amazing thing, on the other side of all this (Covid19) that you could stand proudly and say – I was active. I developed myself on a personal level, and I connected with my community no matter what. That’s what doing Gaisce – even at home – will mean to you during this time.”

Philly McMahon, Gaisce Council member

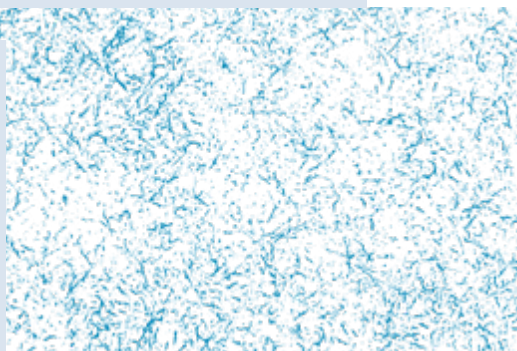
Connection to our PALs

Immediately in March 2020, we made the decision to cancel all in-person events and trainings to ensure the safety of our PALs, participants and our team in the face of uncertainty. We did so reluctantly, but we moved quickly to ensure there was clarity regarding continuing the programme for all participants, and that our PALs felt supported and informed on the ground.

- Development Officers created online motivational talks and presentations for PALs and participants.
- PAL Catch Up online sessions were also initiated with 79 PALs attending in 2020. These sessions offered PALs the opportunity, despite physical restrictions, to meet their Development Officers virtually, share experiences and hear about programme developments.
- Having moved events swiftly online as a Covid response, Gaisce’s actions have proven successful in terms of increasing access to the Gaisce programme and will inform our approach to a hybrid delivery format in the future to ensure accessibility to the programme and our training.

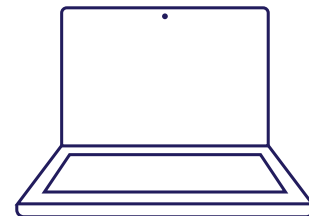


Gaisce also hosted a live workshop with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) to support the programme with TY Co-ordinators.



Gaisce's team moves online

In order to support remote working, there were upgrades to Gaisce's IT and online conferencing capabilities. This enabled several administrative and governance functions to transition to online and ensure productivity was not impacted by the challenges of remote working. Processes that moved online included recruitment, the annual audit and the Garda vetting element of the PAL application process. Gaisce Council and sub-committee meetings were held via video conference.



Gold Award Residential Project offered online

PAL Training moves online

Online GAP Presentations

Maith thú

Gaisce followed Gaisce sa Bhaile / Gaisce at Home with Maith Thú, a campaign that aimed to shine a light on the resilience shown by young people through the pandemic, to commend those who managed to complete their Gaisce Award during restrictions and to encourage others to continue with their Gaisce Award.

Having supported Gaisce sa Bhaile in a public statement in June 2020, the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins issued a special message as part of the Maith Thú campaign to Gaisce participants nationwide.

Message from President Michael D. Higgins

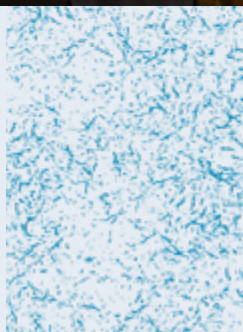
As President of Ireland, may I congratulate all those who took part in the 'Gaisce sa Bhaile' programme, and all those who supported them, lad a thug tacaiocht leo.

By taking part, you have embraced the test that is at the heart of the Gaisce challenge: making a pact with yourself to set goals, and to pursue their achievement vigorously.

Nil se easca, togann se misneach.

*This is never easy, as no noble task ever is. To do so, in these testing circumstances is even more challenging, and I want to convey my congratulations to every participant who has decided to embark on this journey, and to all those who have seen the journey through to the end....
Molaim sibh.*

Beir Beannacht.



Gaisce Gold Award Residential Project: Online in 2020

Perhaps the most difficult Gaisce Challenge to rethink in the context of Covid was the Residential Project. The 'Residential Project' requires Gaisce Gold participants to embark on a 5 day, 4 night residential in an unfamiliar environment with people who are not their usual companions, working towards a common goal.

The first online Residential had 15 Gold Award participants take part - from all over Ireland.

The theme of the Residential was 'Together, But Apart', and took place from July 13th to 17th, 2020, using online platforms, in particular Zoom.

Through facilitated presentations, group activities, individual tasks and guidance from guest speakers, participants developed collaborative and leadership skills on a group project and engaged in fun activities together.

It was a lovely opportunity to meet likeminded people on their Gold Award journey and enabled Gold participants to make lifelong friends through their shared experience. The Online Gold Residential Project covered the requirements for Gold Participants seeking to complete their Award in 2020.

There was no cost for participants to take part and participants received a certificate of attendance following completion of the Residential Project.

We were also delighted that Gaisce Gold participants had another opportunity to engage with the Sustainability Development Goals through the 'Global Goals Jam' and come together to experience a virtual Residential in partnership with NUI Galway, NUIG's Alive Programme and NUIG Launchpad in September 2020.



Projects 2020



The Story Exchange Project

The Story Exchange Project, a collaboration between Gaisce - The President's Award, Mountjoy Progression Unit and Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP), came about following a question posed by a young man in custody participating in the Gaisce Award, "Is this Gaisce that I am doing in here, the same as Gaisce done on the outside?"

This question brought about the concept of bringing together Gaisce participants in the Progression Unit with the MAP students who were also undertaking their Gaisce Awards.

Narrative 4's Story Exchange was the primary facilitation tool used within the project. Story Exchanges work by bringing people together in a room where they are randomly partnered. Following a prompt by the facilitator (trained in the Story Exchange technique) they are asked to tell a story from their own experience.

When they re-group, they retell their partner's story in the first person, thus facilitating the literal and metaphorical walking in another person's shoes. The group met over a 10-week period and reached its conclusion in March 2020 with the presentation of Certificates of Participation, Bronze and Silver Gaisce Awards.

An evaluation by Sarah Meaney of Maynooth University was launched by the partnership at an event hosted by Gaisce in October attended by more than 80 people. A specially commissioned animation created by Eimear McNally summarising the evaluation outcomes was also launched.





A lot of what we were finding out about the higher-ed. needs of prisoners was that prisoners felt a lot of self-stigma, and the Gaisce project and the Story Exchange seemed to be a way that we could address that self-stigma.

You might be from a disadvantaged area, you might not have finished school, but you're doing the same award as the guy who might have got 500 marks in his Leaving Cert.

Gaisce working with the Irish Prison Service, Special Care Units, Probation Services and Youth Services



The partnership between Gaisce and the Irish Prison Service was further developed through the formation of a National Steering Group and working groups to support and progress Gaisce's engagement in prisons.



An internal (participant led) promotional film was created and screened in every prison throughout 2020.



Gaisce also continued to support young people on their award journey in Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Special Care Units and Probation Services.

Gaisce Glas



**Gaisce
Glas**
YOUTH
CLIMATE
JUSTICE
PROJECT



Gaisce - The President's Award is committed to advancing our work and connection to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Gaisce successfully applied for funding under the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' Climate Justice Fund and launched Gaisce Glas, a new climate justice initiative, in Summer 2020. Following a national call out, 12 young people were selected to participate in the 13-week online programme facilitated by Gaisce staff and special guest experts.

Sessions focused on supporting the participants to develop and deliver climate justice actions in their communities. Participation fulfilled the Bronze Award community involvement challenge. The work culminated in a presentation of their activities at a Youth Summit in December 2020 attended by a large youth and adult audience.



LikeMinded

LikeMinded was established in 2019 to support LGBTQIA+ young people and their allies to achieve their Gaisce Award whilst exploring and expressing gender and sexual identity in a supported environment.



It was a direct response by Gaisce to truly live the organisation's values of inclusion and diversity and to ensure that every young person in Ireland is afforded the opportunity to undertake their Gaisce Award. On January 23rd 2020 the Science Gallery hosted the first LikeMinded Exhibition which marked the end of the first year of the project.

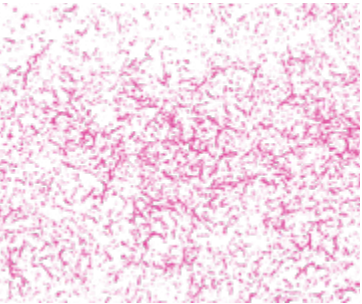
The LGBTQIA+ participants, supported by creative facilitator Shireen Shortt, used artistic means to express their identity and create a community of 'like-minded' peers. Family and friends attended the exhibition, which was a celebration of the participants achieving their Gaisce Awards and a moving tribute to the incredible work the young people created.

CEO Yvonne McKenna and Council Chair John Cunningham presented 12 participants with their Gaisce Awards and were wowed by the talent on display, from installations to embroidery, to dance and spoken word performances.

LikeMinded was made possible by generous funding from Norma Smurfitt and ReThink Ireland.



Eight of the participants continued with the project into the second year and are progressing their Awards to Silver and Gold level.



“working on our projects together was such a joyful experience, it helped us bond through our shared love of art. The exhibition in the Science Gallery had us all beaming with pride”.

Robert, participant

Supporting Refugees and Migrants to achieve their Gaisce Award

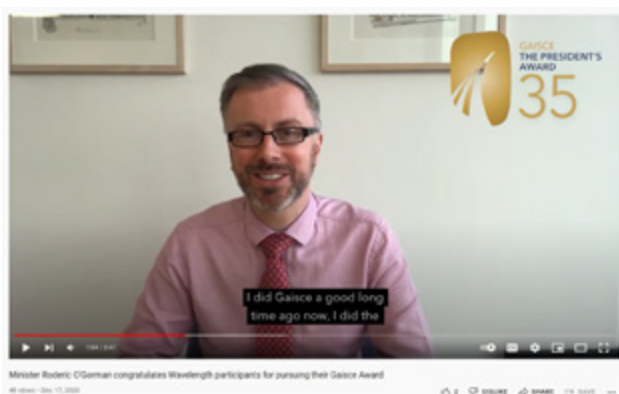


In 2020, Gaisce continued its work with young people who are refugees or seeking asylum through the Wavelength Project.

Across the full age spectrum (14-25), Wavelength had 29 new participants registering for an Award in 2020. Three Wavelength participants, who are

also Irish Girl Guides, achieved their Bronze Award. Gaisce arranged online sessions and events for PALs and participants, including on World Refugee Day and International Migrant Day.

Throughout 2020, Wavelength participants continued to work towards their Award through adjusting activities to be in line with government restrictions and we look forward to them achieving their awards in 2021.



Minister Roderic O’Gorman addressed Wavelength participants and PALs directly in a special message, December 2020. Minister O’Gorman talked about how he himself benefited from the Gaisce Award programme when he was younger.

Disability World Café

For the first time, Gaisce brought together PALs across Ireland supporting young people with a disability for a ‘world café’. The aim of this event was to share information and hear about the experiences of PALs working with young people with disabilities from across the disability sector.

The event facilitated discussions on the opportunities, barriers, and solutions for young people undertaking their Gaisce Award. Recommendations and discussions from the event have informed Gaisce’s work and a follow up event will be scheduled for 2021.

The world café took place on March 5th, 2020 in Ratra House, with **24 President’s Award Leaders (PALs) from 8 disability organisations** in attendance.

Challenge Partners

The President’s Award were delighted to welcome 8 new Challenge Partners to our Gaisce community of partners in 2020. Challenge partners provide opportunities for participants to complete an aspect of their Award challenge area in physical recreation, personal skill or community involvement.



Social Media 2020

Twitter

Impressions
1344.7M

New followers
481

Profile Visits
13,115

Facebook

Engagement
10.8k

Reach
58,185

New followers
454

Website

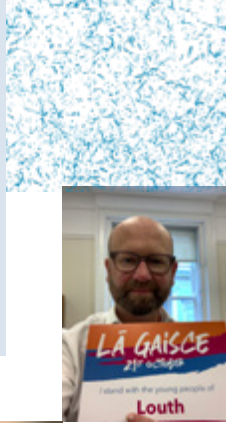
Views
480,848

Unique Users
114,269

#LáGaisce

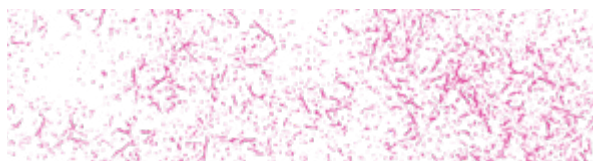
Campaign trended on Twitter

The Lá Gaisce campaign of October 2020 took the theme of 'Standing Up for Young People' and was aimed at elected representatives, encouraging them to show their support through taking a photo of themselves with the 'Stand Up' poster and posting it on social media channels. More than 50% of Oireachtas members participated and the campaign trended for 8 hours on October 21st on the Twitter platform and received broad local media coverage too.



International Day of Sign Languages

CEO Yvonne McKenna delivered a video message in Irish Sign Language.



Reach
813,964

Gaisce in the News

Gaisce at Home/Gaisce sa Bhaile

Gaisce was delighted that its Gaisce sa Bhaile campaign struck a note with the public and gained significant coverage across local, regional and national papers and radio, including:

- The Irish Sun, Philly McMahon, 25 March
- Newstalk, Yvonne McKenna 26 March
- RTE, 'In this together initiative will focus on mental and physical health', 24 April
- Newstalk, Morning Top 5, 10 June

And more Gaisce in

- The Echo, The Magic of Mural, August
- Irish Times, Young people find passion and potential in Gaisce - The President's Award, September 9



Gaisce Council

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to all members of the Gaisce Council, who give their time to support Gaisce - The President's Award's work and governance in a voluntary capacity.

2020 Membership of Gaisce Council



John Cunningham (Chair)



Marcella Bannon



Lydia Bracken



Samantha Briody



Karen Buckley



Pauric Dempsey



Miriam Dollard



Denis Duggan



Dr Emma Farrell



Feargal Hynes



Maura Lyons Kiely



Justin McAleese



James McGovern



Philly McMahon



Paul Sweetman

Gaisce Team

"Gaisce couldn't do what we do without an incredible staff team, who have worked tirelessly across 2020 to adapt, learn and meet the needs of all of our President's Award Leaders, young people, partnerships and organisational relationships."

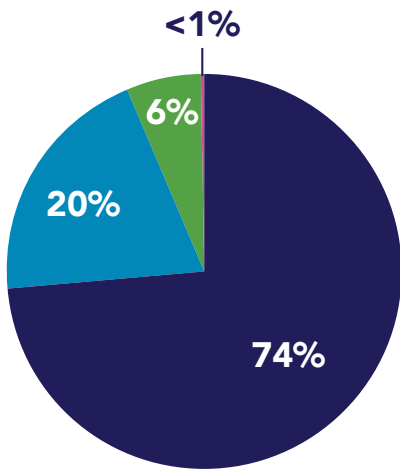
- Yvonne McKenna, CEO, Gaisce - The President's Award



The Council and CEO would like to thank Gaisce's staff team in 2020:

Niall Barrett, Ger Brady, Paul Darby, Alex Davis, Valerie Ennis, Holly Furlong, Sanaz Hedayati, Marion-Irwin Gowran, Kate Kelly, Josh Kennedy, Maria Leavy, Emmet McCabe, Kate Morgan, Eibhlín O Hara, Stephen Peers, Louise Place, Avril Ryan, Hannah Smolenska, Aoife Sweeney, Mary Yore

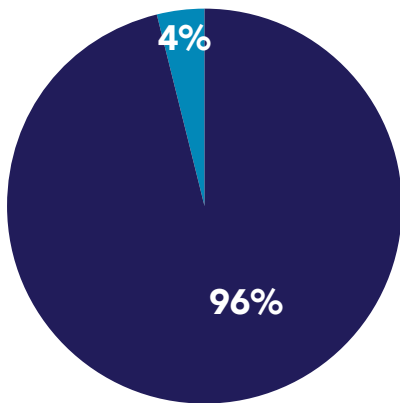
Financial Information



Income 2020

- Statutory Funding and Grants: €930,115 (74%)
- Registration Fees: €253,806
- Non-Statutory Philanthropic and Donations: €77,000
- Other: €2,166

Total €1,263,087



Expenditure 2020

- Charitable Activities: €1,048,928
- Raising Funds: €40,855

Total €1,089,783

The surplus for the year amounted to €173,304 comprising a surplus on unrestricted funds of €88,207 and a surplus on restricted funds of €85,097.

A note regarding our 2020 financial statement

A significant portion of the surplus on restricted funds (€62,305) is the balance of the grant Gaisce received under the Department of Rural and Community Development’s Covid-19 Stability Scheme to support costs incurred between March 2020 and June 2021. The remaining surplus on restricted funds relates to capital grant expenditure that will amortise over the next two years, and funding received in 2020 for special projects that were either still ongoing at year end or not yet due to begin until 2021. As a result of Covid-19 and the restricted operation and/or closure of youth and community organisations, a number of Gaisce’s diversity and inclusion projects, resourced by restricted funds, had to be scaled down or deferred. The organisation wishes to acknowledge the generosity of funders in allowing the organisation to retain funds into 2021 when it can resume full service.

The organisation’s raised income in 2020 was 33% less than the previous year. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on registration levels, at €254K, there was a reduction in fees income of more than 20% compared to 2019. The surplus on unrestricted funds is due to a reduction in programme costs associated with Award ceremonies and medal distribution. In addition, mindful of the uncertain economic future across 2020 and beyond, the organisation took prudent decisions to reduce running costs where possible.

Go raibh maith agat

Thank You



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Project



Supporter

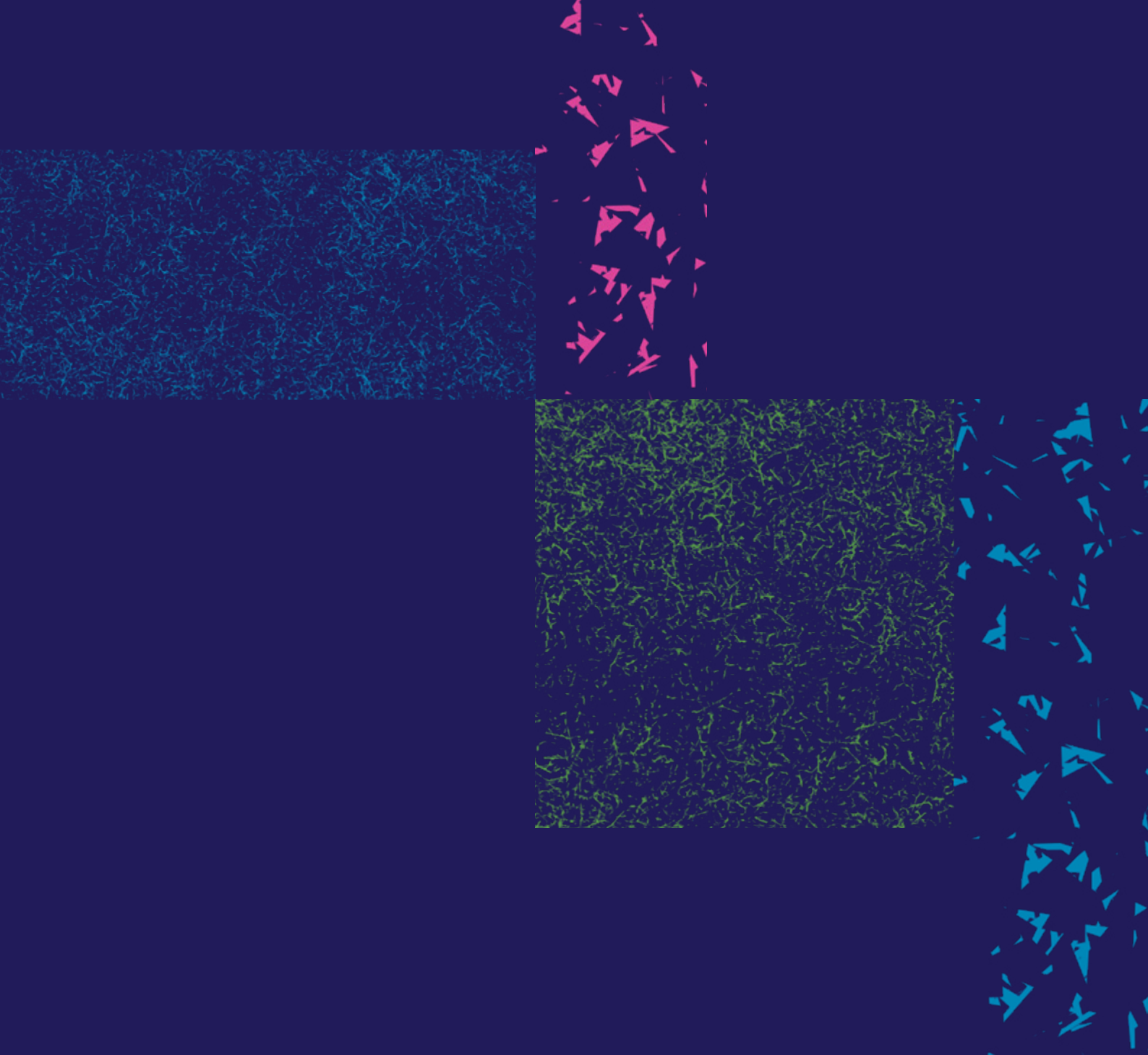


2020 Project Partners



With generous support from





We have printed a limited number of copies of this document to reduce our impact on the environment. However, if you require a physical copy of this report, please request it today from comms@gaisce.ie including your mailing address.

Our Info

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Gaisce - Gradam an Uachtaráin, The President's Award is a company limited by guarantee (CRO 251020) and with a CHY and RCN number (8482 and 20020903 respectively). Our registered address is Ratra House, Phoenix Park, Dublin D08YD62.



Cover Image: Gaisce Participants at High Park Residential Rehabilitation Programme, Drumcondra receiving their Gaisce Awards, February 2020. High Park provides a 14-week fully residential programme, offering clients a period of residential rehabilitation treatment in a drug and alcohol-free environment.