



GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD



GAISCE
GRADAM AN
UACHTARÁIN



2024

IMPACT REPORT

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GAISCE – THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Gaisce – The President's Award is Ireland's national youth award and is a personal development programme for young people aged 14-25. It is a **direct challenge from the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins**, to all young people to **dream big and realise their potential**.

Over 520,000 young people have participated in Gaisce since 1985.

Gaisce encourages and rewards young people to **discover their passions and challenge themselves to positively impact the world around them**. It empowers participants to cultivate essential life skills and foster a sense of responsibility and resilience through a nationally and internationally recognised non-formal education framework. The programme also supports young people in becoming more active citizens and making a positive impact in their communities during the critical stage of life from adolescence into adulthood.

The Gaisce Award programme has three Award Levels, starting with Bronze and progressing to Silver and Gold. For each award, participants must undertake Challenge Area activities in **Personal Skill, Community Involvement and Physical Recreation**, along with an **Adventure Journey**.

Young people are guided by more than **1,300 adult mentors**, President's Award Leaders (PALs) supporting young people on the Award journey, encouraging young people to progress through the three Award levels.

PALs support Awardees in Gaisce Award Partner organisations: secondary schools, third level institutions, second-chance and further education services, youth services, disability organisations, sporting organisations, uniformed organisations, youth justice, prison and probation services, organisations working with young refugees and asylum seekers, and more.

Gaisce – The President's Award was established in 1985 to mark the UN's International Year of Youth and was launched in Áras an Uachtaráin by President, Dr. Patrick J. Hillery, Gaisce's founding patron.

In 2005, prompted by the Good Friday Agreement's commitments, young individuals in Northern Ireland gained access to the Gaisce Award through the Joint Award Initiative (JAI), a partnership between Gaisce, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Duke of Edinburgh International Award.

Gaisce Awards are recognised as valuable non-formal education certification in more than 130 countries through our partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

OUR IMPACT IN 2024

Highest number of registrations in the history of Gaisce



26,737 registrations



6.2% increase

Highest completion rate in the history of Gaisce



15,621 completions



5% increase



94% of all completions are Schools and DEIS schools

62% of DEIS schools delivering the Gaisce programme



15% increase in DEIS school completions



3% increase in schools completions



347,000+ volunteering hours in communities by Gaisce participants



130 Awardees from Northern Ireland

through the Joint Award Initiative partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award NI



Gaisce SUAS
Bursary Fund of
€84,000



2,015

young people supported through
Gaisce SUAS Bursary Fund



Distributed to
86 Gaisce Award
Partners



Supporting
**26 Youth Diversion
Projects**
delivered the Gaisce
programme
(116% increase)



792 Organisations
delivering Gaisce



**1,301
PALs**

supporting young people
through their Gaisce journey

Participation

396

young people in
Uniform
Organisations



105%
increase



of Gaisce Award
Partners Retained
(organisations delivering
– increase of 2%)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

On behalf of the Council of Gaisce - The President's Award, I am pleased to present the 2024 report.

"Spark change and inspire hope," concluded the speech of President Michael D Higgins at the Gaisce Gold Award ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin in November 2024. His audience was 73 young people from across Ireland, representing disability groups, youth groups, migrant groups, LGBTQ+ groups, schools and community-based organisations that Gaisce works with every day.

President Higgins reminded us on that day of the importance of the Raymond Williams quote: "Be the arrow, not the target". To be active and not passive when it comes to moments of challenge and change. To lead the change you want to see in the world around you, rather than assume others will chart that course.

This beloved quote of President Higgins will now form the basis of a 2025 call to action for people - of all ages - to undertake a challenge to mark the 40th anniversary of Gaisce. It comes also as we enter the final mile of President Higgins' second term in office.

And so as we prepare for a final year of activities with President Higgins as our patron, I would like to thank Mr Higgins and his wife Sabina Higgins for their constant support and empowerment of young people, helping them realise the meaning of active purposeful citizenship on the island of Ireland today.

The President's "Be the Arrow" refrain serves as a reminder that in a world of constant change and disruption, Gaisce is a stabilising force for good in the lives of our young people in all of their individual diversity and brilliance.

I consider myself fortunate to have met many Gaisce awardees from across our rural and urban school ecosystem, from youth justice programmes, from traveller communities, and so many extraordinary young people with the most complex learning needs. Each of them has received awards in recognition of their skills, strengths, persistence and resilience. Each of them are equal and extraordinary awardees of Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

None of this would be possible without our patron President Higgins and his team at Áras an Uachtaráin, the team at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth led by Minister Roderic O'Gorman, the Gaisce CEO Avril Ryan and her entire team across the country, our ambassadors, PALs and volunteers, our Council members new, current and those whose terms have recently come to an end, in addition to the parents and guardians of our young people who have helped them realise a springboard opportunity that can propel them to greater levels of confidence, self-actualisation, social impact.

We look forward to engaging with candidates contesting an election to become the 10th president of Ireland in November 2025 and connecting them with a new strategic vision for Gaisce spanning 2026 - 2030.

At a time when Ireland boasts the youngest population in Europe, I believe Gaisce can be at the forefront of efforts to make Ireland the best country in the world to be a young person.

In 2025 and beyond, Gaisce will continue to serve our young people with an innate sense of purpose and ambition for them, while copper fastening our commitment to the highest standards of excellence.



Áine Kerr
Chair, Gaisce Council



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In 2024, Gaisce – The President’s Award continued to transform the lives of young people through our nationally and internationally recognised non-formal education award under our youth development framework.

Our programme’s emphasis on self-directed, non-competitive goal-setting fosters confidence and a can-do attitude, building self-belief and ensuring that young individuals aged 14 to 25 are equipped to navigate life’s opportunities and challenges. Now more than ever, the Award opens doors to possibility — delivering positive youth development outcomes, recognising achievements beyond the classroom, and providing young people with the tools and experiences to thrive in education, careers, and life.

Collaboration remains at the heart of Gaisce’s success. Through strong partnerships across diverse youth settings, the Gaisce Awards provide young people with transformative opportunities, broadening their horizons and changing lives. We extend our deepest gratitude to the many partner organisations that believe in young people and in the power of working together to help young people discover their own potential.

Our work in 2024 was guided by the organisation’s Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which is built on three key pillars: Build on Achievement, Tell Our Story and Excellence in What We Do. I am pleased to report that our 2024 work plan delivered and exceeded expectations across all strategic pillars.

2024 Strategic Achievements included:

- Establishment of Gaisce’s Youth Ambassador Programme in November 2024. This dynamic group of 12 Awardees provides invaluable insights into the impact of Gaisce, serving as advocates for young people nationwide. More importantly, they embody the Award’s spirit, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds can see themselves reflected in Gaisce through the voices and experiences of our Ambassadors.
- One of the standout moments of 2024 was recognising our President’s Award Leaders (PALs). Our PAL Appreciation Awards in Farnleigh celebrated the dedication of 24 PALs, who received civic merit awards for their outstanding contributions. This event was further amplified by our

PAL Appreciation Month, during which we shared and celebrated the inspiring stories of the more than 1,300 PALs who deliver the Gaisce Awards. Their dedication to supporting young people in reaching their potential is invaluable, and without their efforts, the Gaisce programme would not be the success it is today.

- The highest participation in the Award was achieved, with almost 27,000 young people starting out on their Gaisce Awards at all levels, demonstrating continued growth and access being realised.
- More young people accessed the programme with the support of our Gaisce SUAS Bursaries, benefiting 2,015 young people from 87 Gaisce Award Partners, reducing barriers to participation in DEIS schools, disability services, youth services, youth justice services, and more.
- Heightened collaboration with our partners in The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on the Joint Award Initiative, ensuring that more young people know they can choose a Gaisce Award in Northern Ireland. In 2024, we celebrated 25 years of this partnership with events in Hillsborough, Armagh, and Belfast.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CONT)

- We continued to expand our digital platforms and enhance both virtual and in-person engagement, increasing our reach and improving efficiencies. Additionally, Gaisce strengthened its commitment to inclusivity and diversity by amplifying youth-led stories and visual resources across our communications platforms, ensuring the Award's benefits resonate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders.
- Other groundbreaking projects and activities that have amplified and increased Award participation include: Breath of Fresh Eire and Outreach, a creative project with Oberstown and Balbriggan Garda station; Direct registration fee support to Youth Diversion Projects by the Department of Justice; Award activity through poetry in Mountjoy Prison, in partnership with Poetry Ireland; Expansion of Approved Adventure Journey Providers, supporting quality Adventure Journey delivery for PALs; Development of the Gaisce Learning Hub, providing resources and learning for PALs in one space; Expansion of Gaisce implementation teams in prisons, in partnership with the Irish Prison Service; The many local and national ceremonies and campaigns including the Gold Award Ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin and Lá Gaisce which gets everyone involved in Gaisce doing something special to celebrate the Awards.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the current members of the Gaisce Council, whose generosity, expertise, and commitment continue to drive our mission forward. I also want to commend the Gaisce Team for their dedication, innovation, and passion in fostering a collaborative and dynamic organisational culture that delivers our mission, vision, and values.

2025 marks a significant milestone—Gaisce's 40th Anniversary—as well as the final year of President Michael D. Higgins' tenure in office. President Higgins and Sabina have been unwavering champions of Gaisce and its participants and Awardees since 2011, and their legacy of support for young people will be remembered and cherished for years to come.

I look forward to celebrating 40 years of Gaisce in 2025 with as many people as possible to continue advancing our mission of transforming young people's lives.



Avril Ryan
Chief Executive Officer



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

May I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the many thousands of young people throughout the country who have completed their Bronze, Silver and Gold Gaisce Awards over the past year. Seeing Gaisce participants prioritise their own personal development in pursuit of finding their true potential and making a difference is inspiring. I particularly commend the positive impact young people contribute to their communities that very often leaves a legacy long after they complete their Gaisce Award.

I would also like to recognise the invaluable guidance and leadership of all the President's Award Leaders who provide such incredible commitment in their mentorship of Gaisce participants. That this work is done entirely on a voluntary basis is something that should be rightfully applauded and appreciated. The success of the Gaisce Awards wouldn't be possible without their selfless commitment.

Taking part in the Gaisce Award is widely seen as a rite of passage for a young person, but in reality it represents so much more. Gaisce plays a vital role in developing social and personal skills, empowering young people as they venture out into the world in future years.

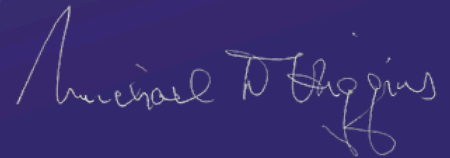
Gaisce's CEO, Council and staff champion diversity and inclusion, ensuring that the Gaisce programme is available and accessible to as many young people as possible.

I was particularly pleased to this year note the Breath of Fresh Air project with Oberstown Children Detention Campus and Balbriggan Garda Síochána, bringing new opportunities to all of those involved. The launch of the Gaisce Youth Ambassador panel has also provided opportunities for past and present participants to use their experiences to engage with and advocate for Gaisce.

It also brought me great joy to welcome 73 young people to Áras an Uachtaráin in November to present them with their Gaisce Gold Award medals, including young people from Northern Ireland. These young people, many of whom came through access and inclusion pathways, were honoured for their outstanding commitment to personal development and contribution to society, and I enjoyed celebrating this special occasion with them.

Finally, I would like to welcome the young people who are now embarking on their Gaisce experience. Last year was the highest number of registrations and completions in Gaisce's history, demonstrating the importance and popularity of the Award throughout the country, and I wish all those embarking on their journey every success and look forward to hearing about their Gaisce Award activities and the outcomes of their participation.

Beir beannacht.



Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland





VISION

An Ireland where young people dream big and fulfil their potential



VALUES

- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Inclusion and Equality
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Excellence



MISSION

To provide a positive youth development programme that encourages and guides young people so that their innate talents and abilities, sense of citizenship and social agency can be fully realised.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

The Gaisce programme of activities in 2024 is informed by our Strategic Plan 2022-2025 under three Strategic Pillars:

1. Build On Achievement
2. Tell Our Story
3. Excellence In What We Do

PILLAR I:

**BUILD ON
ACHIEVEMENT**

EQUALITY OF ACCESS:

Gaisce SUAS Bursary Fund: Expanding Access and Opportunity

In September 2023, Gaisce – The President’s Award proudly launched the **Gaisce SUAS Bursary Fund**, a transformative initiative designed to increase participation in the Gaisce Award programme among young people facing marginalisation or challenging life circumstances. By reducing financial barriers, the SUAS Fund aims to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to realise their potential through the Gaisce journey.

Thanks to a total bursary fund of

€84,000

the programme was delivered through two key funding streams:

- **Uplift**, supported by the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth**
- **Youth Justice**, supported by a private philanthropic partner

We were proud to support

86 organisations

across Ireland through the Gaisce SUAS
Bursary Fund in its inaugural year.

The **UPLIFT FUND** awarded

€50,235 in grants to
56 organisations,

including DEIS schools, special schools, disability services, and youth organisations.

The **YOUTH JUSTICE FUND** provided

€33,725 in support to
30 organisations,

including youth diversion and probation projects, the Oberstown Children Detention Campus, the Irish Prison Service, and other youth justice initiatives.

SUAS Fund Launch

To mark the launch of the SUAS Fund, Gaisce produced a promotional video highlighting the powerful stories of four organisations that had previously benefited from bursary support. These stories underscore the profound impact of accessible youth development opportunities.



Supporting Participation,
Reducing Barriers



https://youtu.be/IEcEaqERkes?si=TPl8vG98YRF2S1_S



**Bridget Bransfield, Horizons Cope Foundation,
Cork (Disability Youth Service)**

“Without this funding some of the students who took part in their Adventure Journey would not have completed their Gaisce Award. Having this funding gave our students the opportunity to take on the challenge of completing their Adventure Journey and be away with their peers. It also meant that families did not have to face financial issues in order for their son/ daughter to take part. The pride in all the students when they completed their adventure journey is something I won't forget and without the SUAS bursary this wouldn't have been possible.”





Gaisce supporting Inclusion and Diversity

Gaisce – The President’s Award celebrated the remarkable achievements of young people across Ireland by presenting Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards to participants from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds.



Honourees included individuals from secondary schools, third-level institutions, and youth services, as well as those engaged through the prison and probation systems, youth diversion projects, and disability support programmes. The awards also proudly recognised young people from the LGBTQ+ community, the Traveller community, and migrant backgrounds — highlighting Gaisce’s commitment to inclusivity, empowerment, and the celebration of personal growth through community engagement and resilience.

**PILLAR 1: BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT
EQUALITY OF ACCESS**



Oberstown Children Detention Campus



Libermann Special School



Prosper Navan



School Completion



Stewarts Care



YES Clondalkin



YDP Gaisce Award Ceremony



Youthreach FET Limerick City



Blakestown & Mountview Youth Initiative



LYCS

Pathways to Potential: Gaisce's Work in Youth Justice

Gaisce – The President's Award remains deeply committed to promoting equality of access, and our work in the area of Youth Justice is a cornerstone of this mission. In 2024, we undertook two significant public-facing initiatives that underscored the transformative impact of the Gaisce Award within the Youth Diversion sector.

Amplifying Youth Voices Through Storytelling

In collaboration with two independent Youth Diversion Projects – **KEEP and CLAY** Gaisce produced a compelling video featuring three young participants undertaking their Gold Award Adventure Journey in Achill, Co. Mayo. The video served as a powerful testament to the personal growth, resilience, and achievement fostered through the Gaisce programme.

To ensure the safety and dignity of the young people involved, two versions of the video were created: one for internal use that included participant identities, and a second version with identities protected for broader public engagement. This approach reflects Gaisce's unwavering commitment to safeguarding and ethical storytelling.

Sector Recognition and National Engagement

Gaisce's impact in the Youth Diversion space was further recognised through an invitation to present at the **2024 National Youth Diversion Conference**. Central to this presentation was the inclusion of youth voices—two of the young people featured in the video joined Gaisce CEO Avril Ryan and Keith O'Driscoll, Project Leader with the KEEP Project, to share their experiences. The video was also showcased, helping to bring their stories to life and ensuring Gaisce's presentation stood out for its authenticity and youth-led narrative.

Strengthening Partnerships for Greater Reach

Our strategic partnership with the Department of Justice continues to flourish. In 2024, **registration support for Youth Diversion Projects expanded significantly** — from 12 projects in 2023 to 26. This growth reflects both the increasing demand for the Gaisce programme within the sector and the strength of our collaborative approach to supporting young people in achieving their potential.



Gaisce presenting at the 2024 National Youth Diversion Conference

Clay and KEEP Project's Unforgettable Achill Island Adventure Journey



Keith O'Driscoll, Project Leader, KEEP Project

"When I first took on the Gaisce Programme to Kilmore I was expecting fixed programmes expectations, additional administrative tasks and high levels of accountability. However, it was the complete opposite - Gaisce staff are approachable & friendly. They were completely flexible, 0% additional administration tasks, fluid in approaches and very easy to implement. The outcomes for young people were remarkable. It promoted participation, gave positive reinforcement to young people who never received validation, increased voluntary participation, inner confidence, self-esteem and presented opportunities to marginalised young people who may never have had opportunities.



However, Gaisce has made young people addicted to positive reinforcement due to the progressive bronze, silver and gold pathways. Previously I needed to sell Gaisce to young people, now we have justice young people wanting to do Gaisce with the project. 2 weeks ago, we had 15 young people knocking on the door looking to join the project to do their Gaisce Bronze Award. Gaisce is that inbedded in my practice that now I couldn't imagine my youth justice practice without Gaisce."

Enhancing Access Through Gaeilge and New Supports and Resources at Gaisce

Gaisce continues to strengthen its commitment to the Irish language through the development of inclusive and accessible resources for participants and PALs (President's Award Leaders). In 2024, several key initiatives were undertaken to enhance Irish language provision across the organisation:

Launch of a Fully Integrated Irish Language Website

A dedicated Irish language version of the Gaisce website was developed, ensuring that Irish-speaking participants and stakeholders can access information and resources in their preferred language.

Expansion of Irish Language Communications Supports

A range of communications access supports were introduced to facilitate greater engagement with Irish-speaking communities and to promote bilingualism across Gaisce's platforms.

Online Learning and Upskilling for PALs

As part of Gaisce's Learning Development strategy, an online learning space was established to support PALs in deepening their understanding of the Gaisce Award. Completion of a brief online introduction course is now a requirement for all new PALs, with additional supporting modules available on the platform.

Dedicated Irish Language Resource Library

A new Irish language section has been added to the PALs' resource hub, providing access to Irish versions of all key Gaisce materials. This ensures that PALs working in Irish- medium or bilingual settings are fully supported in delivering the programme.



Mica O'Dwyer, Global Citizenship Education Worker, LYCS

"I used the online hub before the training and found the videos and the quizzes quite a useful base going into the session, as I had no real experience with the Gaisce Award or the process before. I thought the resources were also a great insight into how accessible Gaisce can be and what an impact it can have on young people - it was a really nice introduction to the award as a whole!"



Tamara Roche, Young Person Case Worker, Merchants Quay Ireland

"I did the online training before the one scheduled on zoom. Really easy to follow and great prep for the zoom training afterwards."

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP



This project was supported by funding from Irish Aid.

Think Global, Act Local: Advancing Global Citizenship through the Gaisce Award

As part of Gaisce's ongoing commitment to promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCE), the standalone event

Think Global, Act Local: Global Citizenship

through the Gaisce Award was held with the support of Irish Aid. This initiative aimed to deepen the understanding and engagement of President's Award Leaders (PALs) in global citizenship themes, while showcasing Gaisce's efforts to embed GCE within its programme.

Think Global, Act Local

The event brought together PALs, international collaborators, and Gaisce partners to explore the opportunities, challenges, and benefits of **global citizenship education**. Attendees engaged in dynamic discussions and heard from leading voices in the field, including keynote speaker Oisín Coghlan, CEO of Friends of the Earth. Oisín shared insights from his work in climate and environmental justice, emphasizing **the critical role of youth empowerment in addressing global challenges**.

The event welcomed

32 participants from
Seven countries

and received overwhelmingly positive feedback, reinforcing the value of fostering global awareness and action through the Gaisce Award framework.

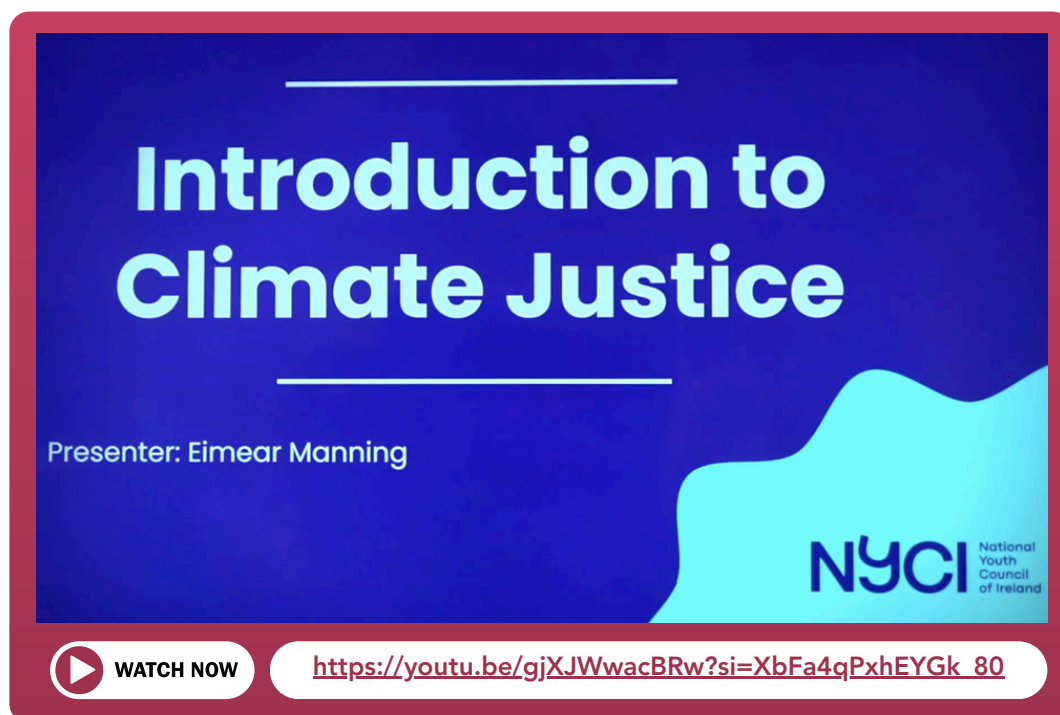
Participants also learned from impactful case studies presented by Lourdes Youth & Community Services (LYCS) and the Global Youth Mobilisation Project, which illustrated how young people and PALs have meaningfully engaged with global citizenship through their Gaisce or International Award journeys.



Gold Residential: Exploring Global Citizenship in Action

Gaisce hosted a **Global Citizenship-themed Gold Residential event**, spanning five days and four nights, in collaboration with the University of Galway and Gaisce's headquarters at Ratra House. Seventeen Gold Award participants took part in this immersive experience, designed to **deepen their understanding of global citizenship** while fostering meaningful peer connections.

Over two weekends, participants engaged in a rich programme of activities, including **expert-led talks, interactive workshops**, and a spirited Global Citizenship debate. These sessions provided **a platform for critical thinking, collaboration, and reflection** on global issues. A core aim of the Residential was to build community among Gold Participants from across Ireland, and this event successfully created space for those connections to flourish.



**Introduction to
Climate Justice**

Presenter: Eimear Manning

NYCI National Youth Council of Ireland

WATCH NOW https://youtu.be/gjXJWwacBRw?si=XbFa4qPxxhEYGk_80

This project was supported by funding from the DCEDIY Climate Justice Fund and Irish Aid.

Guest speakers included Stephen Ucembe of Tearfund, a community advocate from Kenya, and Chris Nolan, an Environmental Youth Worker based in Galway. Participants also took part in a workshop facilitated by Eimear Manning from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), which focused on youth engagement in global issues.

In Dublin, the group was joined by four young people from KARE, an organisation supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities. They presented projects to the group they had worked on which covered a number of the SDGs. These participants were fully integrated into the programme and proudly received certificates of completion for their Gold Residential, highlighting Gaisce's commitment to inclusion and accessibility.



Matas Martinaitis, Gold participant from Dublin

"No where else would you get the opportunity to surround yourself with so many other prospective Gold awardees. These lovely people, now good friends, inspired me to push further beyond my comfort zone and keep going when I would get tired."

"The programme was very well structured, presenting a diverse range of global citizenship topics from climate justice to considerations in the contemporary orphanage system. I became more informed and empowered, and the group of us left better equipped to tackle related local and regional issues, as well as inspire others to do the same."



Championing Global Citizenship through Action and Engagement

As part of Gaisce's commitment to embedding Global Citizenship Education (GCE) across its programme, participants engaged in a wide range of themed activities aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These activities were structured around the five key pillars of sustainable development:



This framework helped participants explore global issues through a local lens, fostering a deeper understanding of interconnected global challenges.

In addition to these thematic activities, Gaisce participants made a remarkable contribution to their communities through the Community Involvement challenge area of the Award, collectively dedicating **over 347,000 hours to volunteering.**

These efforts reflect the core values of active citizenship, empathy, and leadership that underpin the Gaisce Award, and demonstrate the powerful impact of youth-led community involvement across Ireland.



Young people from Youthreach, Bettystown taking part in celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the Joint Award Initiative

Working in Partnership: Strengthening Collaboration and Shared Learning



Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Joint Award Initiative, October 2024

This partnership is supported by Erasmus + Funding to The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Finland.

Celebrating 25 years of the Joint Award Initiative

Gaisce proudly marked the 25th anniversary of the Joint Award Initiative in collaboration with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Northern Ireland. Highlights included a special reception at Hillsborough Castle hosted by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, as well as joint award ceremonies and shared learning sessions. These events celebrated the enduring partnership and the shared commitment to youth development across the island of Ireland.



Gaisce staff visiting a local group during learning exchange with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Finland

International Learning Exchange with Finland

As part of a continued focus on international collaboration, Gaisce engaged in a learning exchange with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Finland. Through Erasmus + funding, Gaisce staff and President's Award Leaders (PALs) visited Helsinki to share best practices and explore innovative approaches to Award delivery. In return, the Finnish team visited Dublin, further strengthening cross-cultural learning and cooperation.



Gaisce PALs attending learning exchange with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Finland September 2024



Irish Girl Guides award ceremony

Strategic and Community Partnerships

Gaisce's work is made possible through a wide network of valued partners who support participants and PALs across the country. These include:

- Approved Adventure Journey Providers, and Gaisce Award Partners (GAPs) who play a vital role in delivering high-quality experiences.
- A continued partnership with the Irish Prison Service, coordinated through the National Steering Committee for the Award in Custody, supporting participants in custodial settings.
- Strategic collaborations to enhance Award delivery and visibility, including:
 - Dual Awards with Scouting Ireland, Irish Girl Guides, and Catholic Guides of Ireland
 - Tusla Child and Youth Participation Awards
 - National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) on Climate Justice initiatives
- A campaign partnership with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation for the annual Flag Day, promoting civic pride and active citizenship.



Gaisce feature in Thomas F Meagher Foundation Flag Day supplement in the Irish Independent March 2024



Ellen Corby, PAL and Global Citizenship Education Coordinator at LYCS

"I attended the trip to Finland with the Gaisce group in September for the Erasmus+ project & Empowering Youth Through Adventurous Journeys & hosted by The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, Finland. This exchange was eye-opening, and a wonderful opportunity to learn from fellow youth workers about their different approaches and perspectives on the award in their own countries and contexts. I also relished the opportunity to share our own experiences of supporting Gaisce participants outside of a school context. This learning that I gained was so valuable to LYCS & Gaisce programme, and has informed our approach to Adventure Journeys with our Gaisce groups moving forward. After the trip, we have moved to allow our learners more independence and responsibility in the planning and preparation for their Adventure Journeys - can have on young people - it was a really nice introduction to the award as a whole!"



Eve O'Brien, Learning Manager, Gaisce – The President's Award

The staff exchange was a unique opportunity to learn about the Award programme in Finland as well as gain a broader awareness of the non-formal education system and culture. We had a very positive experience and brought back lots of insights from the other groups that we met on the visit.

PILLAR 2:

**TELL OUR
STORY**



Breath of Fresh Éire launch at Balbriggan Garda Station March 2024

Breath of Fresh Éire: Creativity, Connection, and Community

Breath of Fresh Éire was a powerful and creative collaboration between Gaisce – The President’s Award, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, and An Garda Síochána Balbriggan. The initiative brought together young people from Oberstown and community Gardaí through a series of three interconnected art projects:

Life’s Patterns, Breath of Fresh Éire, and Outreach

BREATH OF FRESH ÉIRE

A Collaboration Between

GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD

Oberstown
Children Detention Campus

An Garda Síochána
Ireland's National Police & Security Service

WATCH NOW

<https://youtu.be/DHzOLyK8xXk?si=Yd06zQhWr6XGCff9>

Led by renowned artist Joe Caslin, the project used art as a medium to foster empathy, build mutual understanding, and promote meaningful collaboration. Through a series of workshops, participants worked side by side to co-create impactful visual pieces as part of their Gaisce Award journey.

A key element of the project's success was the creation of a shared space for dialogue and connection. Using the **Narrative 4 Story Exchange methodology**, a Gaisce team member facilitated storytelling sessions that encouraged participants to listen deeply and see the world through each other's eyes—laying the foundation for trust and empathy between the young people and the Gardaí.

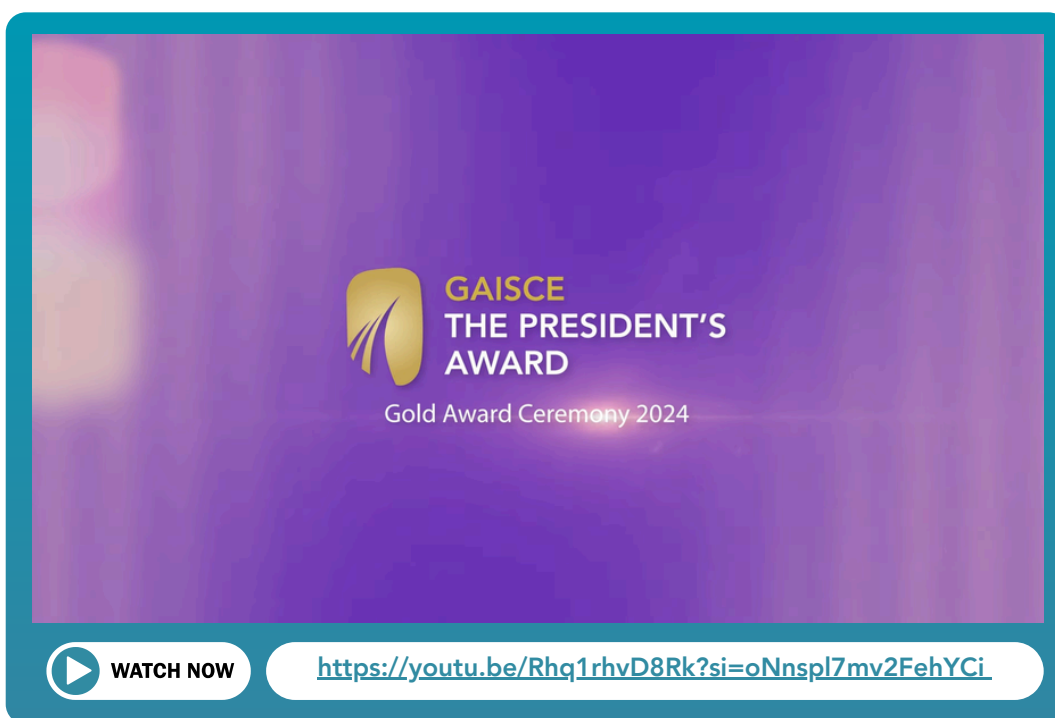
To capture and share the impact of the initiative, Gaisce produced a compelling impact video, which premiered at the project's launch event and was widely shared across partner platforms. Shorter versions were also created for social media, amplifying the project's reach and resonance. The initiative received national attention, with coverage on RTÉ's One O'Clock and Six One News bulletins, as well as RTÉ Online.



Artist Joe Caslin at Breath of Fresh Eire launch March 2024

Celebrating Achievement: The 2024 Gaisce Gold Award Ceremony

In November, President Michael D. Higgins welcomed 74 exceptional young people to Áras an Uachtaráin to receive the prestigious Gaisce Gold Award. The ceremony honoured their outstanding commitment to personal growth, community involvement, and active citizenship through the Gaisce Award programme.



This year's Gold Awardees undertook a diverse range of projects and activities, reflecting the breadth of talent, resilience, and dedication among young people across Ireland. Their achievements are a powerful testament to Gaisce's mission to ensure that every young person—regardless of background—has the opportunity to participate and thrive. The event was hosted by acclaimed Irish actress and writer Tara Flynn, with an inspiring keynote address delivered by Gaisce Gold Award alumna Miriam Keegan. Now a successful fashion designer with a strong focus on sustainability, Miriam shared her journey and the lasting impact of her Gaisce experience.

The ceremony received widespread national and regional media coverage, including multiple radio interviews—an impressive outcome given the timing in the lead-up to the General Election. To ensure accessibility, the event was live-streamed, allowing families and President's Award Leaders (PALs) who couldn't attend in person to join the celebration. The accompanying impact video resonated strongly online, generating over 3,600 views across Gaisce's social media platforms.

Young people receiving their Gaisce Gold Awards at Áras an Úachtaráin in November 2024



Ava Hagan, Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow

When I started my Bronze award in Transition Year, I set myself the goal of achieving Gold as I was determined to meet Michael D. Higgins! I was delighted to finally shake the President's hand at the 2024 Gold Award Ceremony, it was a surreal experience.

Through my Gaisce award, I have been exposed to incredible opportunities and discovered new interests and hobbies that are now an integral part of my life. I would highly recommend the experience to all young people, it teaches you so much about self-motivation and dedication!



2024 Gaisce Gold Awards Ceremony Highlights





Gaisce Gatecrash at St. Decland's College, Cabra on Lá Gaisce

Lá Gaisce: A National Celebration of Achievement and Pride

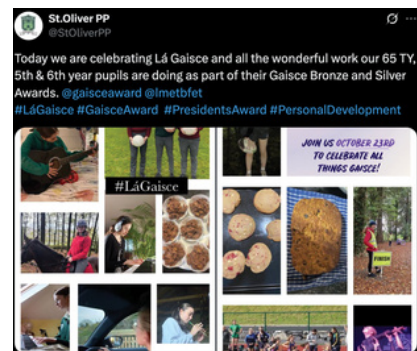


Katie-Cronin

Every October, Lá Gaisce brings the Gaisce community together in a vibrant celebration of youth achievement, leadership, and community spirit. Participants, President's Award Leaders (PALs), and Gaisce Award Partners (GAPs) are encouraged to mark the day by hosting award ceremonies, completing Gaisce challenges, and proudly wearing their Gaisce pins.



GambtaGWoAAJkbn



St. Olivers Post Primary School in Oldcastle celebrating Lá Gaisce

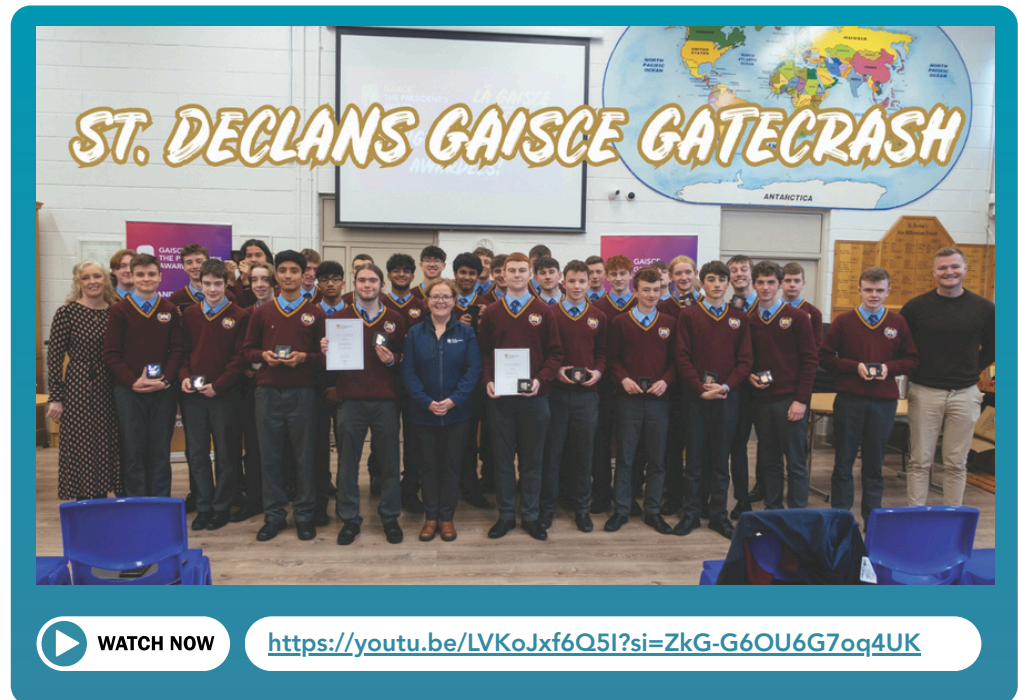


In 2024, Lá Gaisce once again made a powerful impact — dominating the social media landscape and trending at #1 on Twitter (X). The day saw an outpouring of support from across the country, with numerous TDs and Senators sharing messages of encouragement. PALs and participants nationwide posted photos, videos, and reflections, creating a wave of positivity and pride across digital platforms.

Gaisce Gatecrash

– a surprise visit by the Gaisce team

A standout feature introduced this year was the Gaisce Gatecrash—a surprise visit by the Gaisce team to a school-based award ceremony. The unsuspecting awardees were treated to Gaisce goodies and an inspiring speech from Gaisce Avril Ryan, adding a memorable and motivational twist to their celebration.



CBS High School Clonmel SS

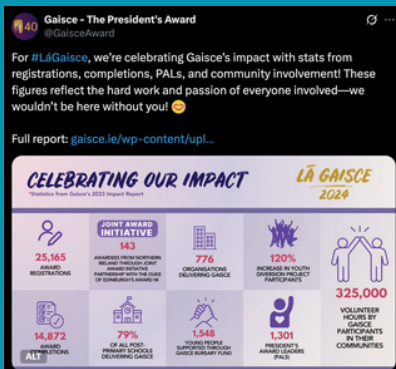
Another highlight of the day was Avril Ryan's primetime interview on RTÉ Radio 1's Drivetime Show, where she shared her Gaisce journey, normally used for participants, and the transformative power of the Award. The interview brought national attention to the impact of Gaisce and the importance of recognising young people's achievements.

“

**Katie Cronin, Irish Girl Guides
(MacEgan Senior Branch, Co. Cork)**



“Lá Gaisce was an excellent opportunity to showcase the benefits and opportunities that come with undertaking the President’s Award. I was lucky enough to deliver presentations in my secondary school and Irish Girl Guide unit to display and discuss my Gaisce journey so far such as being a Gaisce representative at Seanad the n-Óg and the 2024 Gaisce Defence Forces Challenge. It was also a great excuse to wear my Gaisce pins loud and proud on the day!”



Impact Stats SS



Mungret Community College SS



An Taoiseach supporting Lá Gaisce



Cobh Tidy Towns



Department of Culture, Communications and Sport

Gaisce in Schools: Empowering Young People Through Education

Post-primary schools continue to be the foundation of the Gaisce – The President’s Award journey, with an outstanding 94% of all Awards completed within the school environment. These institutions serve as the first point of contact for most participants, igniting a lifelong commitment to personal growth and active citizenship.



Students from Mount Sackville
enjoying their Gaisce Adventure Journey

Central to this success is the work of Gaisce’s Development Officers, who cultivate strong partnerships with schools and President’s Award Leaders (PALs) nationwide. Their dedication has firmly embedded Gaisce within the senior cycle curriculum, making it a recognised and valued element of student development.

While Transition Year (TY) remains a popular entry point, a growing number of schools are introducing Gaisce earlier. At Mount Sackville Secondary School, PAL Vivienne Meade launched the programme with second-year students, recognising the unique opportunity for early engagement.

“Second year is a pivotal time for personal growth,” Vivienne explains. “Students are developing independence and have the energy to embrace new challenges before exam pressures begin. Gaisce builds confidence, commitment, and citizenship from the outset.”

The initiative was met with enthusiasm. Students quickly embraced the programme’s diversity, participating in activities such as a school sleepover and orienteering in Phoenix Park—experiences that fostered teamwork, joy, and lasting memories.

“Completing the Award gave students a real sense of pride,” Vivienne reflects. “They became more confident, responsible, and community-minded. Many discovered new interests and developed essential life skills. A significant number are now pursuing the Silver Award.”



Pipers Hill College in Naas, Co. Kildare has also successfully introduced Gaisce to second-year students. PAL Theresa Collins shares: “We saw interest from second years, especially those with siblings in TY. The timing aligned with the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement, which recognises broader learning. Gaisce was a natural fit.”

The results have been impressive. The school celebrated five Gold Award recipients last year, with seven more students currently progressing toward Gold. Silver Award participation has also grown, with 12 students awarded Silver last year and four more in May.



A Gaisce Development Officer giving a presentation in Scoil Chiarain, Glasnevine

Impressive Results

This early engagement model supports a natural progression through the Award levels, allowing students to build on their achievements throughout TY and senior cycle. Many continue their journey into fifth and sixth year, balancing personal development with academic demands.

Eoin Moylan, a Gaisce Youth Ambassador preparing for his Leaving Certificate, began his journey in TY and is now completing his Silver Award. "It's more challenging with exams, but Gaisce gives me a break from study and a chance to focus on myself and my community," Eoin shares. "As the saying goes, 'If you want something done, ask a busy person.'"

Eoin champions the programme's value: "Gaisce is a challenge worth taking on. Every young person should have the chance to participate. I believe in the power of youth voices to shape the future. As the Irish seanfhocail says, Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí — praise the youth, and they will flourish."



The stories of Vivienne, Theresa, and Eoin highlight the transformative impact of Gaisce across the school journey. Whether introduced in second year, TY, or senior cycle, Gaisce continues to empower young people to grow, lead, and thrive—building a generation of confident, committed, and community-minded citizens.

Paddy O'Reilly, PAL in Trinity Comprehensive School in Ballymun

Gaisce is now firmly established in our school, as all staff and management recognise its transformative nature. The various strands of the programme resonate with our young people, and they view it as a worthwhile achievement. Gaisce complements many of activities that take place in the school and the students are proud that their various deeds are recognised formally. It has been a wonderful addition to our school, and we are very grateful for the personal touch and support that Joy, our Gaisce development officer offers.



PILLAR 3:
EXCELLENCE IN
WHAT WE DO

Empowering Youth Voices: The Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel

In 2024, Gaisce proudly launched its first-ever Youth Ambassador Panel, a long-term strategic goal brought to life through a nationwide recruitment campaign. This landmark initiative reflects Gaisce's commitment to youth leadership, inclusion, and co-creation.



The panel comprises 12 young people from across Ireland, each bringing unique perspectives, lived experiences, and a shared passion for the Gaisce Award. Representing a diverse cross-section of participants and awardees, the panel embodies the spirit of youth empowerment and the richness of Ireland's communities.

Running from 2024 through 2025, the Youth Ambassador Panel will engage in a wide range of learning and leadership opportunities facilitated by Gaisce. In return, the organisation benefits from the panel's insights, advocacy, and lived experience—helping to shape and strengthen Gaisce's programmes and outreach.

Since its formation, the panel has participated in workshops and seminars on key themes such as Global Citizenship, Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion, and Personal Development. Panel members also represent Gaisce at public events and actively share their journeys on social media, amplifying the voice of young people and inspiring others to take part.



Caoilfhinn Young, Gaisce Youth Ambassador

I am delighted that I have the opportunity to be a part of the Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel. This opportunity has meant a lot to me, and being selected showed me that I was recognised for my passion and enthusiasm. I have loved meeting and working with my fellow ambassadors, and I'm glad to now call them good friends. We share similar experiences and interests even though we all come from different backgrounds. That is the beauty of the Gaisce Awards: celebrating different journeys. It has been incredible to witness the value and power that young people possess, and hopefully, more young people will come to understand this.



Conor Dillon, Gaisce Youth Ambassador



I've been honoured to be the first Gaisce Youth Ambassador with a disability. I've been enjoying encouraging others in the disability sector to dream big and realise their potential. I've learnt how to work well in a group, and we've all been very supportive of each other. So far, it's given me many new experiences, and hopefully, we have a few more fantastic opportunities still to come.



Sonya Naumova, Gaisce Youth Ambassador

Being part of the Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel has been one of the highlights of my year! I feel so proud to represent Galway's young people at national level and to help promote the value of this incredible award!





Killian Burke, Gaisce Youth Ambassador

Being a Gaisce Youth Ambassador has been one of the most impactful and eye-opening experiences of my life. This role has not only helped me grow in confidence, leadership, and communication, but has also deepened my understanding of the power of youth voice and the importance of active citizenship. Gaisce is more than just an award; it's a movement that champions growth, connection, and courage. Through it, I've had the chance to represent young people, speak at events, and contribute to meaningful conversations on local, national, and European levels.



Through all of this, the biggest lesson I've learned is that leadership doesn't always mean standing at the front; sometimes it's about lifting others up, creating space, and showing that growth is possible for everyone. I'm endlessly grateful to be part of a community that not only supports young people in dreaming big but also gives us the tools and opportunities to turn those dreams into action. Gaisce has shaped who I am, and I know the lessons I've learned will stay with me for the rest of my life.



Pobalscoil Neasáin, Baldoye

Honouring Young People: Gaisce Bronze and Silver Celebrations

Celebrating the achievements of young people is a special and meaningful part of Gaisce's work.

Throughout the year, members of the Gaisce team and Gaisce Council attend Bronze and Silver Award ceremonies across the country, recognising the dedication, resilience, and personal growth of participants.

These ceremonies take place in a wide variety of settings, including schools, youth clubs, sports clubs, disability organisations, migrant support groups, youth diversion projects, probation services, prisons, and other partner organisations. Each event offers a unique opportunity to hear the inspiring stories behind the Awards—stories of challenges overcome, goals achieved, and journeys of self-discovery.

In addition to attending community-based ceremonies, Gaisce also occasionally welcomes participants to our headquarters at Ratra House in Dublin's Phoenix Park, where they are personally presented with their medals and certificates in a more intimate setting.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to everyone who achieved their Bronze and Silver Awards in 2024. We hope many of you will continue your Gaisce journey and take the next step toward your Silver or Gold Award!



Terence MacSwiney Community College,
Hollyhill, Cork



St. Mary's, Secondary School,
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary



Mount Temple School, Clontarf



Santa Sabina Dominican College, Sutton



Ardscoil Mhuire Limerick



Waterpark College, Waterford



Lucan Community College



Breifne College, Cavan

Gaisce Defence Forces Challenge: Adventure, Teamwork, and Resilience

In June 2024, the annual **Gaisce Defence Forces Challenge** marked its 36th year, offering a unique and transformative experience for 29 Bronze and Silver Award participants aged 15 to 17. Hosted by the Defence Forces, the four-day challenge combined adventure, discipline, and teamwork in a dynamic and immersive setting.

Participants engaged in a series of physically and mentally demanding activities across three key locations: **Custume Barracks in Athlone, Carnagh Range in Roscommon, and The Curragh training camp**. The programme included obstacle courses, rib boat travel, fieldcraft and survival workshops, and a 10km hike through the Slieve Bán Mountains—all designed to simulate aspects of life in the Defence Forces and push participants beyond their comfort zones.

This experience fulfilled the **Adventure Journey requirement** for the Bronze and Silver Gaisce Awards, while also fostering resilience, leadership, and camaraderie among the young people involved.

The event received significant national attention, **with a double-page centre spread in *The Irish Times*** on Saturday, 15th June, highlighting the impact and excitement of the challenge.

Young people taking part in the 2024 Gaisce Defence Forces Challenge



Strengthening Partnerships Through the Approved Adventure Journey Providers Initiative

Launched in 2023, Gaisce's Approved Adventure Journey Providers initiative continued to thrive throughout 2024, expanding its reach and deepening its impact. In collaboration with dedicated partners such as Ballyhass, we co-developed tailored Gaisce programme experiences that enriched the Adventure Journey component for participants nationwide.

A highlight of the year was our **Showcase event** in October, which brought together a diverse range of Approved Adventure Journey Providers. Delivered online to Gaisce PALs across the country, the event spotlighted the unique offerings available through our partners and inspired PALs to explore new opportunities for their participants.



Eoghan McCarthy, Ballyhass

"At our core, we're dedicated to inspiring an outdoor generation through land, water, and height activities, investing heavily in creating safe, engaging experiences at every location. Our partnership with Gaisce has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this mission, providing participants with a clearly defined pathway to progression that's fundamental to fostering lifelong healthy outdoor lifestyles. Together, we empower young people to challenge themselves, build confidence, and embrace the great outdoors."

Expanding Opportunities Through Challenge Partners

In 2024, Gaisce – The President’s Award – placed a strong emphasis on expanding our network of Challenge Partners. These valued organisations play a vital role in supporting young people as they pursue their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards by offering meaningful opportunities across the four Gaisce Challenge Areas: Personal Skill, Physical Recreation, Community Involvement, and the Residential Project.

By growing our roster of Challenge Partners, we aimed to inspire participants with a broader range of ideas and accessible pathways to complete their Award journey.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Official Challenge Partners for their continued commitment. Their support not only enriches the Gaisce experience but also empowers young people to realise their potential through purposeful and rewarding activities.



Siobhán McGrory, Director of Mental Health Promotion, Jigsaw

Jigsaw is delighted to be collaborating with Gaisce as a Challenge Partner as part of our Neart programme of supports and resources for post-primary schools. As part of Neart we offer a 13 week programme for students called Take Action! which enables schools to fulfil the criteria for the Bronze Gaisce Award. So far, we have 347 schools enrolled in the Take Action! Programme.

As a result of this programme, 97% of participants undertaking the eLearning teacher training indicate that they have a greater understanding of mental health and 96% indicate that they have learned strategies to support their facilitation of mental health and wellbeing lessons for students in their school.

This partnership with Gaisce is a great addition to our Neart national programme of supports and enables us to offer a very comprehensive Gaisce-recognised programme which actively encourages student voice in action on mental health in schools.





Careers Portal



CareersPortal is delighted to celebrate the first year as a Gaisce Challenge Partner, through the National Career Skills Competition.

This exciting competition shines a spotlight on the importance of career skills and encourages students to explore their future through meaningful career research in the form of a Career Investigation. Participants reflect on the skills they developed during their work experience and demonstrate how these skills will serve them in their chosen career path.

Whether through a written entry or a creative vlog, students get the opportunity to showcase their learning, build digital literacy, develop strong communication and reflective thinking skills and demonstrate their career management skills.

Our partnership with Gaisce has helped develop enhanced awareness and participation in the competition across 2nd level schools, deepened engagement with employers offering work experience placements and increased the number of students using the competition as part of their Gaisce Award.

This collaboration not only strengthens young people's readiness for the world of work but also supports guidance counsellors and schools in delivering high-impact, evidence-based careers education. Feedback from the guidance community has been overwhelmingly positive, affirming the value of this initiative.

Together with Gaisce, CareersPortal is proud to be shaping a more skilled, informed, and career-ready generation of young people across Ireland.



2024 PAL Appreciation Awards

Honouring Dedication: 2024 Gaisce PAL Appreciation Awards

In January, Gaisce proudly hosted the **2024 PAL Appreciation Awards** at the historic Farmleigh House, celebrating the unwavering **commitment of President's Award Leaders (PALs) across Ireland**. The event recognised 24 PALs who have supported young people in achieving their Gaisce Awards for over five years, as well as retiring PALs and those who mentored Gold Awardees in 2023.



PAL Appreciation Awards Ceremony



<https://youtu.be/HYGgSGil3eQ?si=byXc6zDah7Tz41yW>

The PALs honoured on the day represented a wide range of organisations, including post-primary schools, youth services, prisons, and prison education centres—highlighting the diverse and inclusive reach of the Gaisce programme.

The ceremony featured two inspiring guest speakers: **Dr Tony Holohan, former Chief Medical Officer of Ireland**, and **Adam Donovan of Citywise Education**, who brought the youth perspective to the fore by speaking about the vital role PALs play in the lives of young people undertaking the Gaisce journey.

The event was hosted by actor and writer **Tara Flynn**, who brought warmth and energy to the celebration. The PAL Appreciation Awards are Gaisce’s way of formally acknowledging the **dedication, mentorship, and passion that PALs** bring to the programme—ensuring that young people across Ireland are supported, encouraged, and empowered to reach their potential.

PAL Power: Training, Resources and Recognition in 2024

Gaisce is proud to support a vibrant and growing network of President's Award Leaders (PALs), who play a vital role in guiding and mentoring young people on their Gaisce journey.

In 2024, we continued to invest in training, resources, and engagement opportunities to ensure PALs feel equipped, connected, and valued.

Training and onboarding

A total of 16 PAL training sessions were delivered throughout the year, welcoming 386 new PALs into the network. In total, Gaisce staff supported over 1,300 PALs across the country, providing guidance and encouragement as they facilitated the Award.

Listening and Learning

To better understand the needs and experiences of our PALs, we launched a new annual PAL Survey. With 153 responses, the feedback gathered is helping shape future supports and improvements in Award delivery.

Learning and Development

We enhanced our Learning Hub with new resources and online courses tailored to PALs. A dedicated **Adventure Journey Workshop** attracted 63 PALs, offering practical insights and peer learning opportunities.

Showcasing Opportunities

The newly introduced **Challenge Partner Showcase** brought together 111 PALs and participants to explore exciting ways to complete Award challenges through external partnerships.

Staying Connected

Our quarterly PAL Ezines kept the network informed and inspired, sharing updates on Gaisce news, events, and opportunities. These newsletters reached all active PALs, with a combined circulation of 14,882.

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

▶ **Dr. Shane Bergin**

▶ **Lydia Mendes**
(Gratis)

▶ **Samantha Briody**
(Term Completed 28 February 2024)

▶ **Áine Kerr**
(Appointed Chairperson 28 May 2024)

▶ **Dr. Norah Burns**

▶ **Dr. Ali Khan**

▶ **John Cunningham**
(Term Completed 15 May 2024)

▶ **Adam Peerbux**

▶ **Pauric Dempsey**
(Term Completed 28 February 2024)

▶ **Aoife Prendergast**

▶ **Eugene Farrelly**
(Appointed 8 November 2024)

▶ **Vincent Teo**

▶ **Jennifer Gannon**

▶ **Anna-Marie Turley**

▶ **Orla Leahy**
(Appointed 29 February 2024)

▶ **Emily Ann Whelton**
(Resigned on 7 November 2024)

Chief Executive Officer

Avril Ryan

Leadership Team

- Sarah Gallagher, Head of Communications and Engagement
- Louise Place, Head of Operational Support
- Karol Quinn, Head of Programme and Strategic Development

Business Support Team

- Alex Davis, Governance and Business Support Officer
- Christopher Moloney, Business Support Administrator (from April 2024)
- Deirdre Phelan, Business Support Administrator

Communications Team

- Shane Barr, Digital Media & Social Content Officer
- Hannah Dempsey, Communications Officer

Operations Team

- Paul Darby, National Development Manager
- Marion Irwin Gowran, Project Manager
- Eve O'Brien, Learning Manager
- Ger Brady, Development Officer
- Jennifer Gallagher, Project Officer (from May 2024)
- Kate Kelly, Project Officer (until September 2024)
- Emma McLaughlin, Project Officer (until February 2024)
- Siobhan Noctor, Development Officer
- Stephen Peers, Development Officer
- Joy Winston, Development Officer
- Mary Yore, Development Officer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PRIMARY SUPPORTER



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige**
Department of Education
and Youth

Thank you to Minister Helen McEntee
and the officials in the Department
Education and Youth

PROGRAMME SUPPORTERS



**Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann**
Irish Prison Service



Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

THANK YOU

Go Raith Maith Agat

Our special thanks to President Michael D. Higgins
and the staff of the Office of the President.

Thank you to all our brilliant President's Award Leaders, Gaisce Award Partners and all the young people who register for and complete their Gaisce Awards, and all those who support us throughout the year, including our philanthropic and grant supporters and their key support staff.

Thank you to the Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel: Aoibhinn Coffey, Caitlin Curley, Caoilfhinn Young, Conor Dillon, Divine Eugene, Ebunoluwa Jamgbadi, Eimear O'Daly, Eoin Moylan, Killian Burke, Laura Barry, Lucy Mullin and Sonya Naumova.

Thank you to Kate Thompson, Director in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award/Joint Award Initiative in Northern Ireland and her Team.

Many thanks to all our many programme partners and collaborators in 2024 including:

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Northern Ireland; The International Duke of Edinburgh's Award; Caron McCaffrey and the Irish Prison Service team; Minister of State at the Department of Justice James Browne and Department of Justice officials; The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Aid staff; the Probation Service; Suvi Viljanen and Mikko Varesmaa from The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Finland; Georgina Davis and the staff at Farmleigh House and Estate; Senator Mark Daly and the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation; Damien Hernon, John Smith and the team at Oberstown Children Detention Campus; Superintendent Paul Franey and the team at An Garda Síochána Balbriggan; Donnacha Walsh; Narrative 4; Mountjoy Progression Unit; Wheatfield Prison; Shelton Abbey; Dóchas Centre; Maynooth Access Programme; The Defence Forces and Staff in Custume Barracks Athlone; Mary Cunningham and Team at NYCI; Student Volunteer Ireland and Lorraine Tansey; Tusla Participation Awards; Poetry Ireland; Ulster GAA; our Dual Award Partners in Scouting Ireland, and Irish Girl Guides and the Catholic Guides; Suzanne Kavanagh; Leargas; Charities Institute Ireland; IDEA; Drury PR and the staff of Áras an Uachtaráin.

We also wish to thank: Aonghus Sammin and Seamus Wall of Bradán Accountants who provide bookkeeping services under the shared services programme; Beacon company secretaries for providing annual CRO filing services; Mark Geoghegan and his team at OPW Maintenance Department; Dermot Hally, Dublin North Architect, OPW; Paul O’Sullivan, Parks Superintendent of Phoenix Park; Ciaran Bayly, Richard Norris, and Noel McManus of Civil Defence Training Centre – all of whom provide facilities and grounds support here at Ratra House, Phoenix Park; The Wheel for providing us with Governance support, to our team and Council under the shared services programme.

Thank you to all our Approved Adventure Journey Providers for hosting so many Adventure Journeys for Gaisce participants in 2024:

Achill OETC, Ballyhass Adventure Group, Baltinglas OETC, Birr OETC, Burren OETC, Delphi Outdoors Limited, East Coast Adventure, Fastnet Marina (Schull) OETC, Funkytown Adventure Centre, Galway Outdoor Education / Achill Surf, Gartan OETC, Kilfinane OETC, Killary Adventure Co., Kinsale OETC, Petersburg OETC, Shannon River Adventure Ltd., Shielbaggan OEC, Tanagh OETC, The Cavan Centre and West Cork Secret Adventures Ltd.

And finally, thanks to all our Official Challenge Partners for providing inspiration to our participants on the activities they can do when undertaking their Gaisce Awards.



GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
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GRADAIM AN
UACHTARÁIN

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