



**Irish
Wheelchair
Association™**



Impact Statement 2021





Year in Review

Rosemary Keogh, CEO



Looking back at 2021, we thought that 2020 had been a year like no other, but January 2021 brought a new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the longest lockdown society had experienced. Throughout this period, Irish Wheelchair Association frontline staff continued to demonstrate their commitment and resilience, delivering new and existing services in full compliance with public health advice and government regulations, in order to ensure that those most in need of our services could avail of them.

During this time, we sadly lost some members of our IWA family to Covid-19. Their memory continues to inspire us, and their loss is greatly felt. Throughout the year, we enhanced our wellbeing supports and resources, and bereavement services were offered to those most impacted during this difficult period.

During the summer, the re-opening of our community centres, the Paralympics and the re-start of trips and activities gave us hope for the future. Our staff and volunteers have worked incredibly hard to create safe and meaningful experiences for our members on a daily basis. It has not been easy, but it has been important work that matters to so many people.

We have also continued to advocate for people with disabilities particularly on critical issues like housing and accessibility. People with disabilities have a right to live independently in their communities and we are working hard to lobby at local level and national level to fulfil these rights.

The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us all much about ourselves. At Irish Wheelchair Association, we have become stronger, braver and more agile than we were before, and this is being reflected in our plans for the future.

Most importantly, we have learned that even when we are apart, we are always together. We are One IWA, a community to which people want to belong, continuously motivated by our passionate purpose to drive positive change for people with disabilities in Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Rosemary Keogh
Irish Wheelchair Association, CEO

Our Work At A Glance



Assisted Living Service across Ireland for **2,099** adults and children.



Driving lessons for **257** people.



Community Centre Services provided weekly services to **2,512** people through our **58** centres.



Approved Housing Body managing **51** wheelchair accessible, affordable homes.



Daily transport services for our centres nationwide using **123** accessible buses.



IWA Sport supported **24** sports clubs across **31** activity programs.



Quality accreditation of Irish Wheelchair Association services is undertaken by EIQA the Excellence Ireland Quality Association using the Q Mark Quality Assurance principles. In 2021 we were awarded a Level 3 Certification, which is the highest award level available.

Assisted Living

Irish Wheelchair Association's skilled personal assistants support people with physical disabilities their homes and throughout their day.

This service helps people to carry out day to day tasks around the home. They also support disabled people every day so they can get an education, employment and live the life they choose.



In 2021 we delivered
1.25 million hours of
Assisted Living Service
for **2,099** adults and
children across Ireland.

Community Supports



Through our network of 58 community centres around Ireland, we provide education, social, recreation and outreach support as well as essential personal supports to individuals of all age groups in their community. In 2021 we opened three new locations in Navan, Dundalk and Roscommon.

Our 'school leavers service' also began in 2021 in several locations across the country, including Longford, Dundalk, Drogheda, Navan, Kilkenny, Mayo, Galway and Portlaoise.



In 2021 we provided **83,324** days of community services for **2,587** people across the country.

Holidays

We offer accessible and supported holidays, short breaks and hotel getaways through our dedicated holiday services in The Shearwater Hotel & Spa, Ballinasloe, Hoban Hotel, Kilkenny, Carmel Fallon Centre, Dublin and a new pilot location in Tralee, Kerry.



In 2021 Irish Wheelchair Association Holidays supported **379** members to get a well-deserved break with lots of fun and relaxation.

80 members were also supported with 'respite at home' breaks for those with higher vulnerabilities and sensitivities to Covid-19.

On the Move

Our fleet of buses is a national transport service for our members attending Irish Wheelchair Association community centres across Ireland. It also provides essential transport for a wide range of voluntary social and sports activities.

MAATS, our motoring advice, assessment, and tuition service provides motorists with disabilities the opportunity to learn or to return to driving.



Irish Wheelchair Association has a fleet of **123** buses working across our **58** centres nationwide.



In 2021 we provided lessons to **257** students nationwide and assessed **334** clients in our driving centres.

Staying Active through Sport

For the second consecutive year, our traditional programme of activities was significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 global pandemic. We began the year delivering sports and physical activity programmes virtually in the form of our Staying Active initiatives where there were activities for everyone to participate in. As the restrictions gradually eased, we saw the welcome return of outdoor sport including Wheelchair Basketball, Para Powerlifting and Wheelchair Rugby.

An estimated 4.25 billion viewers tuned into the 2020 Paralympic Games that took place a year later than planned in Tokyo. Once again IWA-Sport was well represented with 11 IWA-Sport members competing among the Irish team of 29, lifting the whole organisation and making us so proud.



Irish Wheelchair Association - Sport has approximately **3,000** members nationwide with membership ranging from Paralympians to junior members aged 5 years.



11 IWA-Sport members competed for Team Ireland at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.





Housing & Advocacy

In 2021 Irish Wheelchair Association increased our representation to 29 of the 30 local authority Housing & Disability Steering Groups. This allows us to continuously advocate for people with disabilities who need wheelchair liveable social housing across Ireland.

Irish Wheelchair Association ran two high profile national awareness campaigns on housing in 2021.

Think Ahead Think Housing highlighted the lack of wheelchair liveable social housing cross Ireland.

The campaign highlighted the need for our members, to start thinking ahead and make plans about their housing needs in the future.



Think Ahead Build Accessible

focused on the need to update Ireland's inaccessible building regulations, Part M to include wheelchair liveable design regulations.

Our members were the face and the motivation behind these campaigns, which were supported by the alliance of disability sector organisations.



Irish Wheelchair Association is an approved housing body (AHB) and in 2021 we provided **51** wheelchair-accessible and affordable homes, and tenancy support, to people with limited mobility in Dublin, Kilkenny, Carlow, Tipperary, Mayo, Roscommon and Galway.

Our Committed Fundraisers

Donations and fundraisers are critical to allow Irish Wheelchair Association to fund additional services and supports for our members. Since Covid, our fundraising has been reduced but we remain grateful as ever for loyal support.

While Covid-19 still had an impact on community fundraising a highlight in 2021 was a wheelchair boxing challenge organised by comedian Sir Stevo Timothy against Olympic boxer Paddy Barnes. The event was a unique, fun exciting challenge and raised €41,181 in memory of Stevo Timothy's mother Evelyn who was an Irish Wheelchair Association member.

We are grateful to our supporters who left us donations in their wills in 2021. Last year we received €170,000 in donations from supporters who had passed. Their legacy will live on in Irish Wheelchair Association through the support they have given our members around the country.



In 2021 we raised
€541,853 thanks to the
generosity and support of
families and communities
across Ireland.

Our Corporate Supporters

We are grateful for the support of organisations and businesses across Ireland who support our work and allow us to develop and improve our services for our members. To discuss how your organisation can partner with IWA, contact the fundraising team at fund@iwa.ie



Chadwicks Group

Chadwicks has supported projects in our Clane, Galway, Belmullet, and Cork Community Centres raising funds for our Croke Park Abseil Challenge and through their "Builder's Holiday" Christmas jingle.



Free Now

Free Now invested significantly in our organisation in 2021 particularly focusing on training for drivers.



RTE Toy Show / The Community Foundation

Our new Disability Awareness in Schools & Youth (DAISY) project was successful in the 2021 round of this fund, allowing us to begin to develop this programme for pilot in 2022.



Aura Holohan Group

Team Aura took part in the Croke Park Abseil, as well as supporting our members and community through online fitness videos.



John Paul Construction

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John Paul Construction completed a significant refurbishment of our sports centre in Clontarf, which benefits many of our members on a daily basis.



Liberty Insurance

Liberty Insurance supported Irish Wheelchair Association on the virtual Liberty Run in Dec 2021 which raised significant funds for our services.



Musgraves

Continued support from Musgraves in 2021 supported us as we moved through the pandemic and their loyalty continues to be a critical support.



Hospital Saturday Fund

This fund supported the upgrading of our clinical training mannequins and materials, which will allow us to train more staff than ever.



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