



IMPACT STATEMENT 2023











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2023

A year in review

Ann Marie O'Grady, CEO

Throughout 2023, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) remained committed to advancing our vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities enjoy equal rights, choices, and opportunities in how they live their lives. By working with, and on behalf of, those with the lived experience our goal is to drive positive change by influencing public policy, providing a quality service, which supports people to live independent lives, and advocating on key issues important to IWA's membership.

Our values of courage, equality, integrity, excellence, fun, openness, and visionary were wholly on display throughout the year in our vibrant and engaged community. IWA-Sport strengthened its impact across

its Women in Sport Strategy with the first HerMoves event held in Clontarf. This event celebrated females in sport, offered come-and-try sessions for different sports and held a series of female-led talks. IWA-Sport continued to host and participate in several national and international competitions. Advocacy continued to be key to strategic campaigns across the organisation and we were delighted to launch a new Housing Campaign entitled “Home Truths: Because everyone deserves a place to call home”. This campaign was fronted by members, bringing their stories to the public and gaining national and local media coverage. We are looking forward towards building on this campaign into 2024. The second hybrid AGM, held in Croke Park in Dublin in May, proved successful and allowed members to contribute in person and online.

IWA’s commitment to a person-centred approach remains unwavering and we were honoured to retain our position within the top ten of the Sunday Independent’s ranking of Ireland’s best employers, securing seventh place. Additionally, our dedication to delivering a quality service for people in their community was recognised with the prestigious Homecare Provider of the Year award at the 2023 Irish Healthcare Awards.

The year continued to present significant challenges, particularly regarding pay parity. Section 39 agencies like IWA, have been excluded from public sector pay awards since 2008 leading to disparity in pay rates. This is hugely impacting on our recruitment and retention efforts and this issue came to a head in October of this year with a balloting of union members resulting in the threat of strike action. Whilst this was an extremely challenging time for everyone, IWA was sustained by the unwavering support of our members, volunteers, employees, and those who use our services. We continue to support our employees in their call for equal pay.

I would like to thank you for your continued support as together, as ONE IWA, we drive positive change with and for people with disabilities in communities across Ireland.



Ann Marie O’Grady
Irish Wheelchair Association, CEO

Our Work at a Glance



Approved Housing Body
managing
51 wheelchair-liveable,
affordable homes



Daily Transport Services
for our centres using
128 accessible buses



Community Centre Services
provided **99,051 days** of
community services through
our **59 centres**



Assisted Living Service
across Ireland
for **2,231 people**



1,793
Driving Lessons
for people with
disabilities

Quality Accreditation of
Irish Wheelchair Association services
is assessed by the **Excellence Ireland Quality**
Association using the **Q Mark Quality**
Assurance principles.

In 2023, we were awarded the **Level 3**
Certification. This is the highest award level.



IWA-Sport supported
19 sports clubs
and supported athletes
to compete at
3 international events

Photo caption: IWA's DAISY Project challenges the perceptions and stereotypes of people with disabilities by demonstrating understanding, awareness and inclusivity through a curriculum-based Schools Education and Outreach Programme. Over 3% of National Primary Schools are now registered with Daisy. Find our more at www.iwa.ie/daisy

The Self-Advocacy Training programme continues to empower those who take part



Advocacy

IWA's Advocacy team continued to work on making progress towards the full implementation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in line with our 2022 to 2025 Strategic Plan.

Our goal is to do this by working with and on behalf of people with disabilities, campaigning on key issues by bringing the voice of those with the lived experience to the forefront.

Campaigning for pay parity for IWA employees became the key issue in 2023 as personal assistants continued to receive a lower rate of pay than those doing similar work within the HSE. Many people who use our services joined the public campaign by sharing their stories in support of their personal assistants. The resilience and courage of our community was inspiring. Thank you.

The Self-Advocacy Training programme continues to empower those who take part and make a meaningful positive impact on their daily life and beyond.

Membership engagement is vital to us. The Community and Engagement weeks continue to be a key part of our listening and reviewing process and were held regularly throughout the year forming the basis of our work.

At a European level, IWA continued to work with Associacao Salvador based in Portugal in a shared learning programme which encompassed many advocacy campaigning strategies and themes including the success of the Disability Awareness Inclusion in Youth Programme (also known as DAISY) within primary schools across Ireland.

Assisted Living Services



Photo Caption: IWA's person-centred approach enables people with disabilities to live an independent life full of choice in their own community.

Personal assistant services continue to be the heartbeat of the organisation as this supports people with physical disabilities to live independent lives, with choice, in their own homes. They also support with access to education, sport, employment and beyond.

IWA personal assistants are vetted, trained, and upskilled to support the needs of people. Wrap around services like a medical support team along with a person-centred approach means that we are offering a world-class service caring for those who need us.

In 2023, we delivered 1.3 million hours of Assisted Living Services for 2,231 people across Ireland.



Photo Caption: IWA awarded **Homecare Provider of the Year** at the Irish Healthcare Awards for our Assisted Living Service.

Community Supports

Irish Wheelchair Association is very proud of our network of 59 community centres based across Ireland. A huge focus on the activities and programmes provided in our community centres is based on community links supporting members to thrive within their locality.

As a person-centred organisation, no one community centre is exactly the same but what is consistent is the warm IWA family welcome each person receives. Some of the programmes provided are education, recreation, outreach, sport or social activities. New initiatives continue to be born at local level and out of members' needs and interests. This year, the Inclusive Fitness Programme began as a pilot programme in Drogheda and Dundalk. It supports members to focus on their health by introducing them to local gym sessions focusing on their ability. The Strengthening Disability Programme also provided individual support to 200 members helping them to fulfil personal goals and the Ability Programme continues to support those wishing to become independent job seekers.

The National School Leavers Service, an education programme for young adults from 18 years old upwards is growing from strength to strength. In 2023, 47 new school students entered this service which is offered in our centres in Balbriggan, Drogheda, Dundalk, Galway, Kilkenny, Longford, Mayo and Portlaoise.



Photo Caption: The Inclusive Fitness Programme supports members to focus on their health by introducing them to a local gym and focusing on their ability.

In 2023, we provided 99,051 days of Community Services for 2,671 people across the country.

Holidays and Respite



Holiday and respite promotes independence, develops inclusion for people with disabilities in communities and has a hugely positive effect on the mental health of the person and their families.

Irish Wheelchair Association offer this service in three locations: The Shearwater Hotel and Spa in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Hoban Hotel in Co. Kilkenny, and the Carmel Fallon Centre in Clontarf, Co. Dublin which are supported by trained staff. In consultation with the member, they plan outings and activities to suit the individual.

Photo Caption: IWA Members Paula and Noleen enjoying afternoon tea as part of their holiday at the Shearwater Hotel and Spa in Galway.

In 2023, we supported 886 members to get a well-deserved break with lots of fun and relaxation. 55 members were also supported with ‘respite at home’ breaks.



Photo Caption: Our fleet of 128 accessible buses work across our 59 community centres providing members with the freedom of access to their local community and fun outings.

On the Move

Bus Network and Motoring Service

Our accessible buses are critical to many of our members who do not drive or don't have access to an accessible vehicle. Linked with our community centres they act as a transport service for members attending activities or programmes with IWA. They also provide essential transport for a wide range of social outings, appointments and sports activities. Often, many of our members would be confined to their homes if they didn't have access to our bus network enabling them to gain access to their local community or occasionally, our holiday service.

Our motoring advice, assessment and tuition service (also known as MAATS) plays a critical role in providing motorists with disabilities the opportunity to gain back some independence and freedom by learning or returning to driving.

Irish Wheelchair Association is a Department of Transport approved agency for the issue of Disabled Drivers' Parking Permits which is also handled by this division.

In 2023, we provided **1,793 lessons** to students nationwide and assessed **324 clients** in our driving centres with **33 students passing their driving test** in our driving centres.

IWA-Sport



IWA-Sport is the National Governing Body for sport for people with physical disabilities in Ireland. We provide a pathway for athletes to thrive from grassroots level up to Paralympic level.

Our 19 clubs offer a range of sports including Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby, Para Powerlifting and Para Athletics. Junior clubs offer multi-sports which include soccer, boccia, swimming and table tennis in addition to the above sports, giving children from as young as 5 up to 15 years old the opportunity to learn and grow in a fun environment. Our goal is to encourage and support participation in sports for children and adults across all age groups and activity levels, whilst also supporting high-performance athletes nationally and internationally.



Photo Caption: In 2023, IWA-Sport was proud to establish our first-ever female Wheelchair Basketball Team, Emerald Rollers.

Some highlights from a very busy year which saw participation levels return to pre-pandemic levels are:

Wheelchair Basketball

- 9 teams competed in 6 competitions with Rebel Wheelers winning the National Cup and League. Limerick Celtics won the Paddy Byrne Cup.
- Establishment of the first-ever female IWA-Sport Wheelchair Basketball team, that subsequently entered into the GB League.
- The Men's Wheelchair Basketball European C Championships took place in Sarajevo securing 3rd place.

Wheelchair Rugby

- The Wheelchair Rugby League was won by Rebel Wheelers.
- Wheelchair Rugby European C Championships – 3rd place.

Para Powerlifting

- IWA-Sport held the World sanctioned National Championships in November in our headquarters in Clontarf.
- 7 IWA-Sport athletes competed at the World Para Powerlifting Championships in Dubai resulting in 5 podium medals.
- Para Athletics – hosted 6 competitions catering for first-time athletes and Paralympic stars.

IWA-Sport at European Level: A delegation of 13 people from IWA-Sport members, employees, school leaver students and IWA members not actively involved in organised sport travelled to Athens, Greece to participate in Par-Olympia, an Erasmus + Sport Programme for youths with disabilities. Participants had the opportunity to try out various para sports including swimming, fencing, badminton, seated volleyball, goalball and many more all of which were held in the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens.



5 Coach Education Courses

35 trainees



6 Safeguarding 1 training courses

56 trainees



Anti-doping workshop

12 trainees + 37 e-learning trainees



Wheelchair Basketball Officials Training Course

7 trainees

WOMEN IN SPORT

Women in Sport Leadership Training

6 participants



Dr Oliver Murphy Youth Leadership Training

6 participants

IWA-Sport has a network of 19 clubs.

IWA-Sport could not exist without a dedicated network of volunteers and we would like to acknowledge the positive contribution they make week in and week out in clubs and at competition events across the country.

IWA-Sport would like to acknowledge and thank Sport Ireland for their continued support for new and existing initiatives through core funding, recovery funding and dormant account funding. Full information are outlined in Note 21 of IWA's Annual Report & Financial Statements documents published on www.iwa.ie

Housing

Irish Wheelchair Association is an approved housing body supporting 51 wheelchair-liveable, affordable homes and tenancy support to people with limited mobility in Dublin, Kilkenny, Carlow, Tipperary, Mayo, Roscommon and Galway.

The housing team works in tandem with our Advocacy team to support the call for more wheelchair-liveable housing and highlight the inequalities our members experience. We have campaigned on two key issues, a review of the current design guidelines (Part M), which currently states that housing must be wheelchair-visitible and not wheelchair-liveable, and the lack of wheelchair-liveable housing being built.

This year we were proud to launch our 'Home Truths' Campaign which gained national awareness, support, and engagement from the public, media, and Government as well as key alliance partners. Supported under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Grant Scheme, the 'Home Truths' project was officially launched by Minister Anne Rabbitte, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, at IHREC's premises in Dublin.

We continue to support people with disabilities to apply to local authorities so that they can be included in social housing planning and delivery. This year we developed a how to video guide to support the current complicated social housing application process.

Photo Caption: IWA Members Katie Kelly and Elitsa Borisova shared their stories as part of the 'Home Truths' Campaign, pictured at the launch with Tony Cunningham, National Director of IWA Services, Minister Anne Rabbitte and Jean Coleman, National Housing Programme Manager, IWA.





HOME TRUTHS
Because everyone deserves a home.

HOME TRUTHS
Because everyone deserves a home.

Our Committed Fundraisers

Fundraising is critical and allows us to fund additional programmes, services and supports for our members as well as advocating for meaningful change in society for people with disabilities.





Photo Caption: The annual Liberty Insurance Run 'n' Roll fundraising event in St. Anne's Park, Clontarf is growing from strength to strength.

Photo Caption: (left) Lucan Staff Take part in Abseil. 16 brave individuals took part in the IWA inclusive abseil challenge at Dalkey Quarry in Dublin.

2023 was a challenging year for our fundraising department with a number of key personnel changes. Despite this, our successful collaboration continued with Chadwicks Group who raised an amazing €30,000 for Irish Wheelchair Association through their Four Peaks Challenge as well as supporting us throughout the year with direct and in-kind donations towards the maintenance and facilities upgrades of our Community Centres. IWA and Chadwicks' partnership was nominated for a Charities Institute Ireland award.

Corporate support for IWA is a key facilitator of innovation and we were delighted to welcome PepsiCo Ireland and as a partner in 2023. We organised an incredible wheelchair basketball tournament for pharmaceutical company Viatrix employees raising vital funds for IWA's work. Significant donations were also received from Smurfit Kappa, Musgrave, Janet Nash Foundation, Bewley's Foundation and Liberty Insurance. We are grateful to the global law firm, Dentons, for their partnership over the last two years which has raised significant funds as well as providing pro bono support.

Our Annual Fundraising Day is a key event and saw over 300 employees, volunteers and TY students generously giving up their time to collect donations in their local community or host coffee mornings raising over €25,000. Over 16 individuals, consisting of IWA members, employees and corporate partners took on the very brave challenge of abseiling in Dalkey Quarry in Dublin. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who took part.

Our Summer and Christmas appeals allowed us to tell the stories of some of our members across the country raising almost €60,000.

We are grateful to **everyone** who organised or took part in a fundraising event throughout the year and to everyone who continues to generously support our work by donating and taking part in challenge events. Thanks also to the many schools, clubs and community groups that continue to fundraise for IWA.

Our Fundraising Partners

We are continually grateful for the support of organisations, businesses, foundations, and trusts who share our vision for a truly inclusive Ireland.



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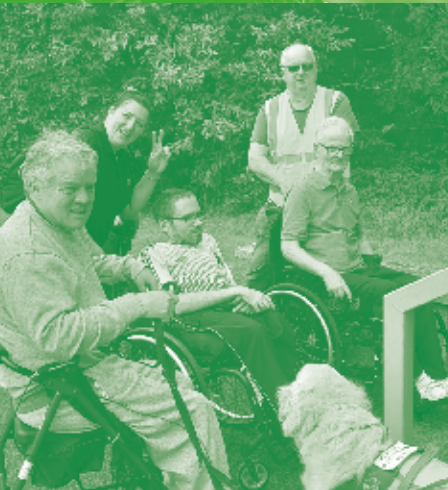
An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



And the following:

- State Street
- Medisan
- Smurfit Kappa
- Brownlee Charitable Trust
- OOSCH
- DPD Ireland
- Aldi







Irish Wheelchair Association
is grateful to our community for their ongoing support. They include over 2,500 employees, most of whom are working on the front-line, volunteers supporting our sports clubs, charity shops, community services, volunteer branches and board members.

Together we are working to build a more inclusive society for people with disabilities across Ireland.

Together we are One IWA.

Our Values:

Courage

Equality

Integrity

Excellence

Fun

Openness

Visionary



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