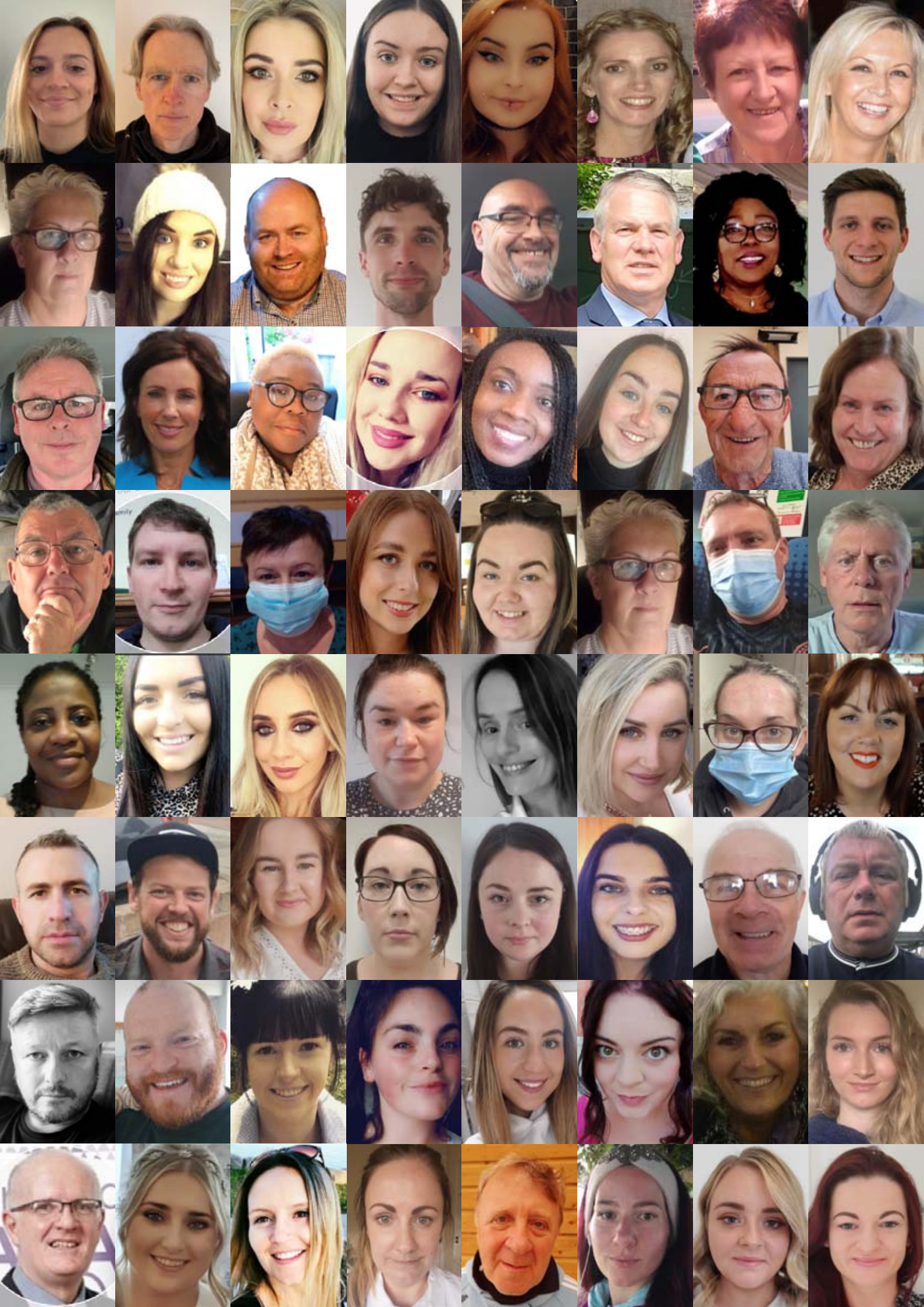




ANNUAL REPORT 2020

WALK

Dedicated to our staff
for their resilience, dedication
and flexibility in 2020.



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Chairperson's Statement

I am pleased to present our annual report for 2020. The world as we know it changed very significantly as COVID-19 spread rapidly with devastating consequences for families, communities and the global economy.

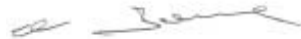
I want to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to anybody who lost loved ones during this extremely difficult time in the history of our lives.

I also want to acknowledge the exceptional work of Joe and his team who pulled out all of the stops to find new and innovative ways of delivering supports under trying circumstances.

As chairperson of the board I am always amazed at the personal outcomes and achievements of the people that WALK support and this year was no exception. Huge congratulations to all concerned on your flexibility, reliability and resilience during such an unprecedented chapter in all of our lives.

2020, was to be the final year of the implementation of our strategic plan. Our three strategic goals being internal communication, residential reform and sustainability. A good strategic plan never just ends because during the course of its implementation, new ways of doing things emerge and this current plan was no exception. As a result, in order to bring all the threads of this plan together we will continue it into the first part of 2021.

On behalf of the board of WALK I want to thank each and every one of you for your hard work and commitment.



John Bourke
Chairperson
WALK



Our Vision

An inclusive society where communities value and treat all people as equal citizens.

Our Mission

We are leaders in a movement for change, empowering people with disabilities to live self-determined lives in an equal and inclusive society.

Our Values

SUPPORTS ARE

- Rights based
- Capacity building
- Relationship oriented
- Socially inclusive
- Person centred
- Respectful of the right to self-determination
- Delivered locally
- Proven value for money
- Oriented towards learning and continuous improvement.

WALK ARE

- Flexible, resourceful and creative
- Contributors to the community
- Accountable to stakeholders
- Inclusive

Strategic Plan Review

WALK's Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2020 was officially launched in January 2018. Reports on the plan progress are published on our website every two months, following the Board meeting.

Progress is measured on the following scale:

OUTPUTS

These are all the activities WALK does and the supports WALK provides.

OUTCOMES

These are the changes, benefits or learning that happens as a result of WALK's work.

INDICATORS

These are the pointers we use to measure whether the outputs and outcomes are being achieved.

YEAR 1 - 2018



Fully met **24%** Progressing well **33%**
Just started **34%** Not started **9%**

YEAR 2 - 2019



Fully met **45%** Progressing well **48%**
Just started **7%** Not started **0%**

YEAR 3 - 2020



Fully met **81%** Progressing well **17%**
Just started **2%** Not started **0%**

Three Year Cycle 2018-2020



Good progress has been made towards many of the goals to fulfil the goals outlined in Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020 over the last three years.

During the pandemic, WALK's strategic objectives centered around good infection control protocols, in order to keep people safe. Therefore, our board of directors decided to extend this strategic plan for an additional six months.



THEME 1

Sustainability

The overall aim is for WALK to have sufficient resources to continue offering high quality person-centred supports
- WALK's Strategic Plan, 2018-2020



Fully met **85%** Progressing well **8%**
Just started **7%** Not started **0%**

FUTURE PLANS FROM 2019

WALK will continue to implement its operational plans, developed in line with this strategic priority, in our efforts to ensure we continue to work with sufficient resources so we can continue to offer high quality person-centred supports.

ACTIONS 2020

Senior Management Team
WALK developed a crisis management team led by the C.E.O which initially met three times weekly to ensure the sustainability of supports to people throughout the pandemic.

OVERVIEW OF GOAL PROGRESS

ONLINE AND REALTIME SYSTEMS

Information systems can have a hugely positive effect on accuracy, speed and flow of communications. WALK's suite of bespoke information systems was expanded upon in 2020.

At WALK we promote creativity and innovation at all times so it was no surprise then than when we had to suddenly change our way of working that we adapted very quickly. We have used videoconferencing before but never at the level that it is now used.

Our IT champion had the facilities up and ready to go immediately when we were requested to restrict our movements.

One example of this also included moving all our internal meetings, board meetings, including all our board packs, online in 2020.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Residential services were identified as priority services and all efforts were directed to keeping these open and providing safe care to the individuals residing there.

In order to continue to operate residential services on a 24 hour basis during the initial stages of the pandemic staff members from day and clinical services were redeployed to residential services.

Contingency plans were put in place in each location in the event of staff shortages as a result of a COVID-19 outbreak.

WALK recruited additional staff to meet the demands of the pandemic and they were allocated to a specific location.

Staff members worked longer shifts in order to reduce the footfall in each location.

Managers identified and prepared isolation areas that could be used in the event that individuals needed to be completely separated from others.

DAY SERVICES

Day Services operated through outreach and online supports initially.

Outreach supports were delivered as an alternative to centre based supports where appropriate and essential.

Decisions were made locally by management to support vulnerable individuals and their families, operating in a safe way while following HSE guidelines.

The framework for the resumption of day services was adopted and this provided people with a blend between physical and online supports.

CLINICAL SUPPORT

Clinical supports continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Assistant psychologists were redeployed to residential services Health care coordinator developed competencies in COVID swapping.

Clinical services managed the complete personal protective equipment supplies, storage and distribution



RESPIRE SERVICES

WALK quickly identified that some people and their families required enhanced supports and so respite accommodation was rented in Wexford and a respite plan was developed to ensure a safe system of work.

Staff from day and residential services worked additional hours in order to support these breaks.

ADMINISTRATION

Administration staff worked from home only attending work for essential duties that could not be completed remotely.

INCREASING PHYSICAL CAPACITY IN DAY SERVICES

Three new day service locations were sourced in 2020, in Drimnagh, Crumlin and Tallaght. This enabled WALK to safely resume operating day supports and increase the level of supports required.

STAFF TRAINING

In order to develop a staff competence around good infection control protocols all staff members completed training in:

- Hand Hygiene for Non-Clinical Staff
- Breaking the Chain of Infection
- Demonstration of the correct use of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



CIPD AWARD

We were delighted to have received a Highly Commended for CIPD Award in 2020 for our Learning and Development programme – Delivering localised Peer to Peer Onboarding.



GENERAL ELECTION 2020 TOWN HALL EVENT

WALK hosted a Town Hall meeting in the runup to the General Election. People we support, their family members and staff gathered to highlight issues concerning disability funding cuts, in particular the recent respite funding cuts to WALK. Local representatives and candidates were invited to attend.



LOBBYING

Four issues raised in 2020:

- Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities
- Transition Planning for school leavers with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism
- HSE funding in CH07
- Traffic Management on Long Mile Road





THEME 2

Residential Reform

The overall aim is that people choose where and with whom they live.

- WALK's Strategic Plan, 2018-2020

RESIDENTIAL REFORM



Fully met **60%** Progressing well **33%**
Just started **7%** Not started **0%**

OVERVIEW OF GOAL PROGRESS

In the last year of the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan it is important to reflect on why the theme of reform was a core element in that time and why it continues to remain so.

There is national recognition in key reports and policy documents, including the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, the Transforming Lives Programme, Time to Move On and the Report from the Personalised Budget Task Group, that people with disabilities must be supported to live ordinary lives in ordinary places, as independently as possible while ensuring that the voices of those people are heard and that they are fully involved in planning and improving services to meet their needs and that they have real choice and control in decision making.

The people supported in WALK residential services also communicated that message clearly to us in the period leading to that Strategic Plan. Their voice called for better options, greater creativity and more individualisation in the models of support that were available.

Whilst WALK never had to dismantle the large institutional frameworks associated with the congregate settings of ten or more people living together and associated with the Time to Move on Report, the people we supported were telling us that the challenges of congregation and shared living arrangements did not magically dissipate in shared living arrangements where the numbers of people housed together were smaller, especially if those people did not have choice in those arrangements.

Over the lifetime of that Strategic Plan some welcomed change has come. Greater options have been created. More individualised support approaches have been realised.

In 2020, despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic, the person who had taken up tenancy in a single bedroomed apartment in Rafters Lane in the last months of 2019, thrived living alone for the first time in seventy one years.

In the same year a second person took up tenancy in another apartment in Rafters Lane after many years in search of such an opportunity and is now no longer dependent on permanent staff presence.

A third person who had purchased their own home in 2019 in a community of their choosing was eventually able to move in during 2020. Again, this person does not require the presence of paid staff support on a 24/7 basis. Instead, they have a housemate who is not paid to be there and are they are both developing their relationship based on a range of shared interests. 2020 was the year when the scales tipped. WALK now provide more supports to people in locations where they live alone by choice than in locations where there are shared living arrangements.

Whilst who we live with is important it isn't the only element of having the best life possible and that is why supports extend beyond the bricks and mortar of houses and into the opportunities that become socially important roles for us all.

2020 was challenging in that regard. For many people the roles they held in employment, education, club memberships and even within their own families had to shift and evolve because of the restrictions associated with the pandemic. Well done to everyone who had to make those adjustments.

We know there are people in the existing shared living arrangements who have a will and preference for more individualised supports. Whether that is because the dynamics and compatibility between the people sharing have changed, or because the awareness created by the growing amount of individualised supports has inspired them to imagine, we tirelessly advocated with and for them in 2020 so that their ambitions could be realised.

We also know people continue to aspire to get into the world of work, to be engaged in their communities and to make more contributions that add value and purpose to their lives. That work is unfinished and will inform the next phase of our strategic approach to reform.





THEME 3

Communications

The overall aim is to improve internal communication by promoting clear, informative and engaging two-way communications which are planned and effectively linked to WALK's organisational objectives
- *WALK's Strategic Plan, 2018-2020*



Fully met **100%** Progressing well **0%**
Just started **0%** Not started **0%**

FUTURE PLANS FROM 2019

In 2020 WALK developed a COVID 19 effective and responsive communication plan in line with this strategic priority, in order to deliver clear, informative and engaging two-way communications between management, staff, the people we support and families.

ACTIONS

Crisis Management Team led by the C.E.O. was established and met three times a week initially to ensure an effective, coordinated communication response to all stakeholders throughout the pandemic in line with Government, HSE (Health Service Executive) and WHO (World Health Organization) recommendations.

The Director of Services was appointed as the designated clinical lead responsible for leading WALK's response to Covid-19.

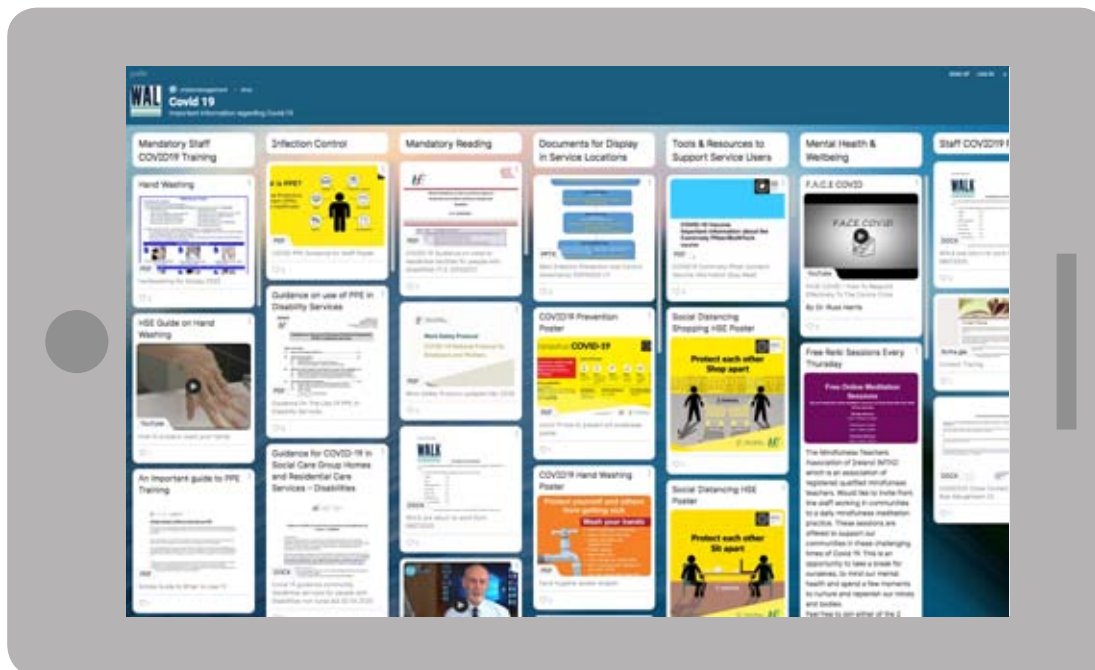
WALK developed separate communication plans for staff, people we support and families.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

An infection control padlet was developed by the clinical team and all relevant and up to date information was provided to staff through this medium.

This included short training modules and guidance documents around infection control issues such as hand hygiene and the appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment.

- Front line staff were given the necessary information and tools to be and feel safe while they work tirelessly and selflessly to support individuals.
- A schedule for online meetings at senior, middle and frontline management was agreed and the co-ordination of this was decentralised.
- A safe return to work committee was established.
- Champions of infection control were identified in each location.
- Contingency plans in the event of absence of senior, middle and frontline managers were put in place.
- Risk assessments were carried out in each location in line with HSE guidance and as events unfolded.
- Our risk register was updated regularly, and the board of directors were given briefings and updates through the board of management governance and risk committee.



COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

A training and information padlet were set up for the people we support, and they were provided with appropriate training on how to access this.

In addition, social stories, posters, and videos were developed/displayed to provide the people we support with appropriate communication about COVID-19.

Topics included:

- What is Covid19?
- What are the symptoms?
- What happens if I have to go for testing?
- What do I do if I have COVID 19?
- What is social isolating?
- What is social distancing?

Safe visitation in residential settings, information on practicing hand hygiene routines, cough etiquette and mask wearing.

Staff developed online platforms to continue to deliver education, employment modules, training, and personal development to the people we support.

Staff supported people that had employment to work remotely.

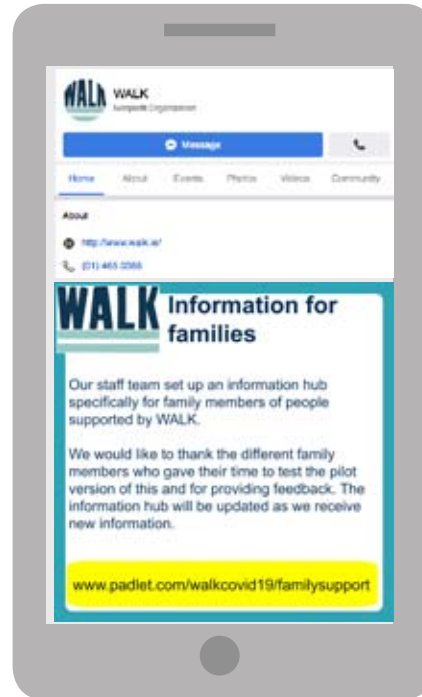
Staff supported people's mental and emotional well-being.



COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

We recognised the importance of supporting family members during this time. Family communication on COVID-19 was delivered by email through the C.E.O.'s office.

An online resource for families was developed to provide a range of information, visuals, posters, and links to useful websites on topics such as COVID 19, mental and emotional resilience, employment, fitness, literacy and music sessions.



IT SUPPORT

The IT department secured additional laptops and other technological devices and provided support to staff and service users to develop competencies around online meetings and online training and development sessions.



PUBLIC HEALTH

Our director of services was appointed as liaison person with public health to ensure the safe delivery of supports and to deal with any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19.

HSE

Our CEO and Director of Services attended Health Service Executive (HSE), Community Health Organisation CHO7 meetings when scheduled on COVID-19 topics.

Ongoing correspondence and online meetings took place between the HSE section of new directions and WALK day services to ensure a responsive referral pathway to day supports for school leavers.

WALK worked with their local safeguarding team to highlight any safeguarding concerns or issues.

WALK attended regular infection control webinars, briefings and updates in relation to COVID-19 protocols.

Real Life Stories

The true reflection on the work that WALK undertakes can be found in the stories of the people we support. We support many different people, all of whom work hard every day to achieve their self-set goals.

This section also introduces you to one of our volunteers and we also share some reflections of one of our staff members. Hopefully the true essence of how WALK fulfils its mission while working towards its vision can be realised from these inspiring stories.

DELIVERING TALLAGHT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL PATIENT CARE PACKAGES

Graham O'Mally was one of the WALKways Tallaght University Hospital trainees in 2019-2021. While Graham was in his second rotation in one department in Tallaght University Hospital, COVID-19 hit Ireland and put a pause to the WALKways Programme.

From that day, life was different for everyone, as was for Graham. There was a lot of worry, but Graham tried to stay positive.

In September 2020, returning to Tallaght University Hospital was finally possible, Graham decided to return to gaining his experience in Tallaght University Hospital.



Graham was unable to return to his previous department because it was not possible due to the COVID-19 guidelines.

A volunteering opportunity opened in Tallaght University Hospital, called Patient Care Package. A position was offered to Graham.

Even though Graham was very nervous about returning to work in TUH, he agreed to trial the position anyway. Graham has not only returned to the Hospital, but also started a completely new role with completely new conditions, which he needed to learn and adapt too. Graham felt a mix of emotions: happy, excitement, but also felt nervous.

The next challenge for Graham was the trip to work. Graham didn't use public transport for several months. However, that did not stop him! Graham also had to study all COVID-19 guidelines and the use of PPE equipment as safely as possible. As for everyone, it was something new.

When attending the hospital, Graham was required to wear a mask, use hand gel, and wear an apron and gloves. Graham started working with another three new volunteers in the service.

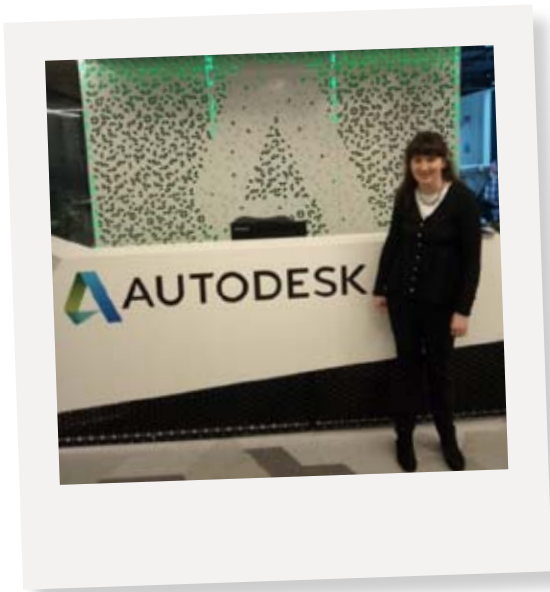


The first day was difficult, but successful. Over time, Graham settled in his new workplace and was happy when he went to work.

Despite COVID-19 Guidelines and difficult challenges, Graham continued to work, and thanks to this experience, Graham has built self-confidence, and believes in himself more and has built new relationships with the other volunteers and staff. Graham worked at PCP all year long!

All volunteers also received a certificate of appreciation for Tallaght Person of The Year, Unsung Hero for 2020. GO GRAHAM!

CLARE'S BUSY YEAR



Clare says the hardest part about this past year was 'not being able to see my friends'.

However, Clare has been able to keep in touch with her friends through their WhatsApp group, where Clare and her friends have regular video calls and catch ups together.

Clare's job at Autodesk was put on hold at the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Clare's role included maintaining and helping around the offices, even working two weeks after everyone left the office due to COVID-19.

Clare said she loved it there and met new friends. After Clare's offices closed, Clare remained in contact with the staff in Autodesk. When Clare's contract came to an end, 'I had a zoom party with everyone I worked with' 'we had tea and cake' a nice way to finish up her lovely experience at Autodesk.

Clare loved working in Autodesk. 'I loved being independent'. However, she decided to use her time for good, by volunteering in Tallaght University Hospital.

'Because of COVID-19 families weren't allowed to visit people in the hospital' so Clare volunteered to help friends and family members give their loved ones their belongings up to the wards as part of the patient care package service.

Clare was volunteering on the front line up until Christmas of 2020. During the pandemic, Clare was a vital member of society helping families who are in a stressful situation not being able to see their loved ones by assisting with their belongings. Clare also met new people and gained confidence by volunteering there.

Amazingly, Clare's hard work during this difficult year did not stop there. She started her new job in 'The Green Kitchen' in Walkinstown. Her main role is helping the chefs and cleaning up cutlery and around the kitchen. 'I like meeting new people' so this was a perfect fit for Clare.

Meeting members of the public, the community and her work colleagues Clare has met new friends from her work in The Green Kitchen. Working two days a week Clare is 'happy with what she does'. Clare is proud of herself for being a frontline worker during these times, providing a service for people. 'I don't mind it' says Clare, not finding it hard working through COVID-19 as she loves working.

Clare has taken on many online courses that she has been working on through the year remotely through zoom. Using NALA, Clare has done courses to help develop her numeracy and literacy skills. Clare has made a smooth transition to online learning and has thrived. These transferable real life skills have helped Clare with day to day life. 'It has helped me using coins in the shop' This has helped Clare shop independently and with confidence.

Clare has Earned a QQI Level 2 certificate in literacy and reading through National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) online courses. Clare said 'It gave me something to do.' If she didn't have the courses she said 'I would have been bored'.

Having had a stressful, hardworking year, Clare and two friends went to Wexford for a get away from the hustle and bustle. 'We watched movies and ordered takeout'. Eating good food and having a peaceful trip helped Clare relax and unwind from being such a vital part of society for the past year with all the volunteering and work she has done. Making new memories with popcorn and goodies Clare loved the trip.

Finishing my NALA course and getting my certificate' is the best thing that has happened this year, according to Clare. She is very proud of herself for what she has achieved, 'my certificate is hanging in my room, framed'.

Walk has helped Clare with many things through the year. 'Helping me get a job' is one thing Clare is happy that Walk has aided her in getting. Clare said 'My job' has gotten her through this last year. 'Keeping me motivated'.



Like most, Clare has taken up going on walks to help her get out of the house and get fresh air.

Clare is interested in constantly learning and developing, even wanting to try out new jobs and new things in the future, to get her out of her comfort zone. With the hope of being able to see her friends more and thankfully being able to actually attend workshops, which Clare enjoys. 'The staff are really nice,' Clare said. 'The weeks are always different' so she gets to do new things each week.



REFLECTIONS OF ZIAD

2020 would be considered as one of the years that shook the world forever. As the news of a virus started spreading, little did we know that most of our lives were about to change forever.



To be honest it felt like one of those things that would come and go pretty soon but before we knew it the days became weeks and the weeks soon turned into months.

Governments began to contemplate lockdown and soon enough Ireland was one of many European countries to go on a lockdown. As a service user that was used to engaging in activities outside, it was a bit strange to me but I thrive off challenges and with things going virtual I started looking for ways to bring some form of light in the midst of all the gloom.

I used to be a Resident DJ at the Metro bar Tallaght and if there's one thing I know it's definitely music. Music has a way of bringing people together regardless of the age group.

Life is all about innovation and ever evolving so if I couldn't bring the vibes to the dance floor I decided to bring the vibes into people's homes and that's how EZ Vibes with Ziad began.

It was an innovative way to keep service users entertained with music. The genres were not limited and service users were given the chance to drop their song requests in the chat. Regardless of the time range whether it was a classic Elvis Presley tune or a recent Justin Bieber hit, the EZ vibes session had the service users locked in. It was like a two hour flight taking service users through different tunes and after two hours people got off the call with a smile on their face and thankful for technology.

I feel honoured I get to play my part in bringing smiles to people's faces in my own little way and I hope I continue to get the chance to bring the vibes.

In the words of the renowned economist Theodore Levitt, 'Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things', I would like to believe that in a time where the world needed not just thinkers but innovators, I stood up to the challenge.

ROSS STARTS COLLEGE



After graduating from the WALKways Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) Programme in 2019, Ross started 2020 working part time in the Medical Records Department in TUH as an administrative assistant.

Ross had completed two rotations in Medical Records as part of the WALKways TUH Programme. Here he developed his skills in term & digit filing, pulling and scanning patient charts, and organising large volumes of the charts in preparation for clinics throughout the hospital.

Ross enjoyed the social aspect of working as part of a large team too, and would often join his colleagues for a game of five a side football after work. Thankfully, football rivalries were left on the pitch and Ross was enjoying the full experience of working with a helpful and friendly team.

In March, when Ireland first went into lockdown due to COVID-19, this impacted on Ross' ability to travel to work and Ross made the decision to take a break from working in TUH.

Missing the purpose and busyness in his week, Ross decided to look forward to the future and explore opportunities for further education. Ross says, "use your time wisely, with a lot of time on our hands in lockdown you might not get that opportunity for time again".

Having a keen interest in fitness and sports, and a dream job to travel the world as a personal trainer, Ross had researched and applied to different college courses.

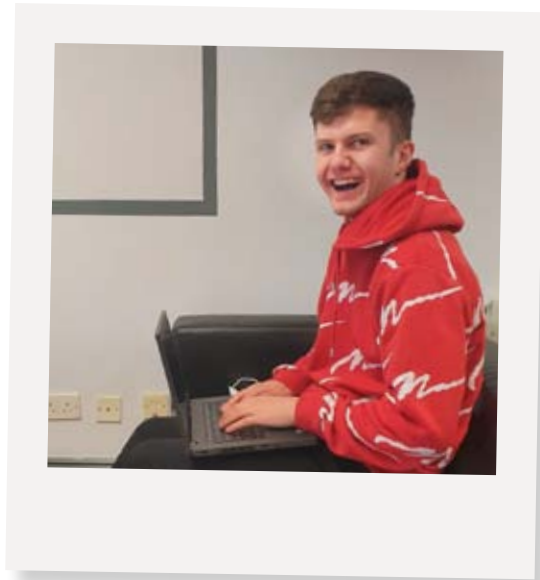
Feeling curious about how he might interview for college and attend lectures in a COVID-19 world, Ross was thrilled when he was offered a place in Pearse College on their Sports and Fitness course. Like all other third level students, Ross started his first year of college on Zoom.

While online classes added an extra layer of challenges for students and lecturers, Ross quickly adjusted to the demands of student life. It was tough not meeting new classmates and lecturers.

“I was really looking forward to interacting and connecting with new people, but sadly that couldn’t happen. I really missed the chance to go out for lunch or a cup of team with my classmates. I felt it was quite difficult to get into the rhythm of college work online at the beginning, but eventually I got into it.”

Another big accomplishment for Ross was passing his driver theory test. Looking back now, Ross says it felt amazing to achieve something that felt impossible. “I thought it was so hard but eventually I got there. And if there are people out there who think they can’t do it, if I can do it, you can do it too!”

To top it all off, Ross and his job coach had kept in contact with TUH and Ross was able to return to work in the second half of 2020.



Reflecting back on a challenging year, Ross feels like he has learned a lot and was able to find the positives in 2020.

‘Keep doing what you love doing and never give up. Keep going, keep setting goals for yourself – it’s never too late to do what you want to do. No one is ever alone in this world; we are all in it together.’

TIM'S FIRST YEAR LIVING ON HIS OWN

You may recall that in late 2019, after years in models of shared living supports, I moved to my own accommodation in Rafter's Lane, Drimnagh.

Finally, I had my own home without the need for staff or others to be unnecessarily present. I was thrilled and really motivated by the prospect of the next exciting chapter in my life's story.

One year on I had hoped to be reporting back to you on the milestones of progress and a myriad of valued roles which I had shaped for myself in my new home and surrounding community.

Little did I, or any of us, expect a global pandemic, the closure of many areas of society and months of isolation and yet despite being a little behind the schedule of my plans I believe I've come through it all with flying colours.

Importantly, I took my responsibilities in keeping myself and others safe. I followed all the infection controls guidelines seriously and made sure I wore my mask and that anyone who came into my home was checked for symptoms, wore their mask and had opportunity to sanitise their hands. I even travelled to Kildare to make sure I got my vaccinations.



I have really settled into the groove of being a reliable tenant and better still I am excelling at being a home maker.

The pandemic gave me lots of time to learn new recipes and I've become not only quite the cook but I've also unleashed the inner baker in me. Look out Paul Hollywood, I might just take your job on Bake Off.

A good cook knows when to put some things on the back burner and that's what I had to do with my plans to be the best host in Dublin 12 or the most valued Arch Club member. Yes I missed seeing my friends at the Club and I was disappointed at not being able to be host at a house party or a barbeque but other doors opened in their place.

I found Zoom and kept in touch with people that way. I've also become a keen gardener and have grown my own flowers to decorate my front and back gardens with and grown my own vegetables which I've used in my meal preparation. It also means when I go shopping, I have less vegetables to carry home with me.

Even though I've been limited in where I can go and the numbers of people, I can be with I haven't let it stop me in my plan to be a great neighbour.

I bought a garden bench and placed it in my front garden where I often sit and talk to the people in my neighbourhood. It came in handy for the times when I had window visits from my friends. When the time is right some of them will get the invite to that long-awaited barbeque. You never know - I might see you there.



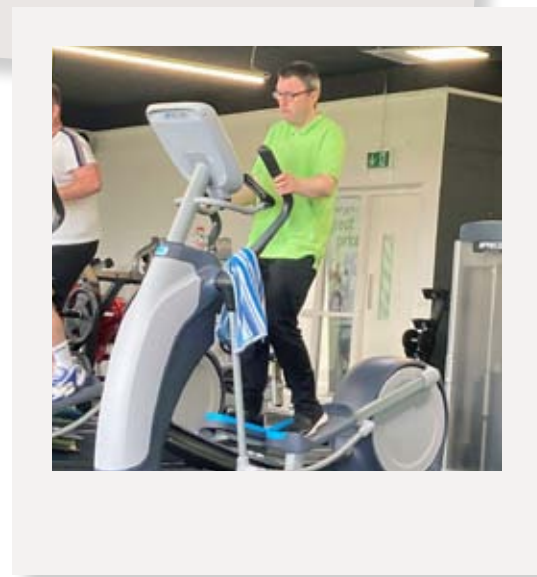
GAVIN JOINS DAY SERVICES

I have been part of WALK's residential services since 2003. For the last few years I had been asking my staff team if I could change my day service so that I could be with WALK's day service.

I kept being told that there was no funding for me to change who my day service was with. I'm not someone who takes no for an answer and I kept asking again and again.

In October 2020 I was told that, finally, I would be able to go to WALK's day service because they got the money they needed. I met Vicki and Christine and they asked me about what kind of things I like to do. After that I met my new keyworker Martin and we sat down together to make a plan. Because of COVID-19 a lot of stuff wasn't open and I was told that for now, I was only able to have two days a week.

Martin and I were still able to pack lots into the two days and I was doing lot of online activities like mindfulness, dancing and fitness classes. In 2021 I plan on being even busier and as well as my new day service, I plan on getting a job.



MARTY CO-HOSTS PLANET STAR MORNING SHOW

It was a quiet Monday morning in Forest Close. Staff were going about their usual routine of washing floors and cleaning counter tops. Radio playing in the background, as per usual, tuned into Planetradio.ie, Marty Whelan's favourite radio station.

Staff were in the laundry room putting clothes in the dryer when they heard a familiar voice behind them. Their first reaction was to wonder 'Why is Marty up this early? He is never up at this time.' Only then did they realise Marty was not in the kitchen, but his voice was coming from the radio!

Marty was talking to the DJ from Planetradio about a song that had just been playing, 'that was from 1974...' and then went on to introduce the next song.

Staff knocked on Marty's door whilst the music was on and quizzically asked 'Are you on the radio?' Marty laughed and with a broad smile said 'Yeah, I'm doing the breakfast show this morning on Planetradio till 10'.



Planetradio.ie is a web based radio station based in Galway and Marty had contacted the stations owner himself and explained that he was a DJ and would love to host a show sometime.

Marty said later that conversations were had on the phone and that the owner had offered him a chance to co-host the morning show with the regular DJ.

Marty had a show on Dublin South FM previous but unfortunately due to COVID-19 this had been cancelled and Marty sought other avenues to display his talents and music knowledge. Marty is currently looking for a regular slot on other stations, so stay tuned...

CILLIAN WORKING FOR FACEBOOK



Following a dream to work in the world of Tech, RLT trainee Cillian Keating achieved employment with Facebook in August 2020 joining their Helpdesk Team.

In offering this role it is a first for Facebook Dublin to work in partnership with an organisation such as WALK to create a supported employment opportunity and a first in facebook history for a contract to be created allowing a ramp up of hours.

Cillian's journey to reach this point tells a story of determination which has involved numerous stepping stones including part time employment, unpaid work experiences and considerable interview prep with his RLT and Ability team staff supports.

Whilst Cillian has been inside the Grand Canal Docks Facebook offices on a number of jobsite visits in the run up to his employment he is yet to spend a working day in the Facebook office instead working remotely from the WALK's 12 Walkinstown Green site and home.

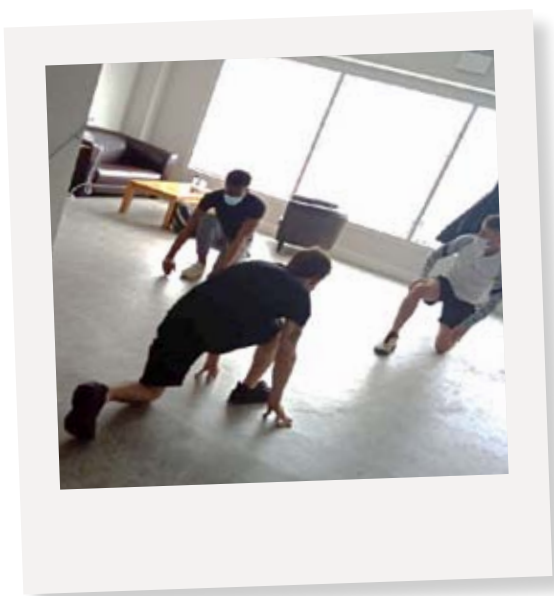
He hopes the future will bring him the opportunity to travel to work and enjoy being in the presence of his colleagues.



NEW GALTYSMORE ROAD HUB OPENS

The new service location on Galtysmore Road in Drimnagh, has been up and running since September 2020. At the moment, we have a number of group workshops running each week based on the interests of the people we support.

Most recently, a small group of our service users with an interest in fitness, have a fitness training and planning session each week with a personal trainer. The group are learning the benefits of different exercises, trying out new exercise routines, but also learning about the importance of food and nutrition in keeping fit and healthy. The group are involved in the planning of exercise sessions and map out what areas each week they would like to focus on.



We have also recently started career preparation workshops, as employment was a goal identified by some of the people we support. A couple of other core workshops are money management and cooking skills.

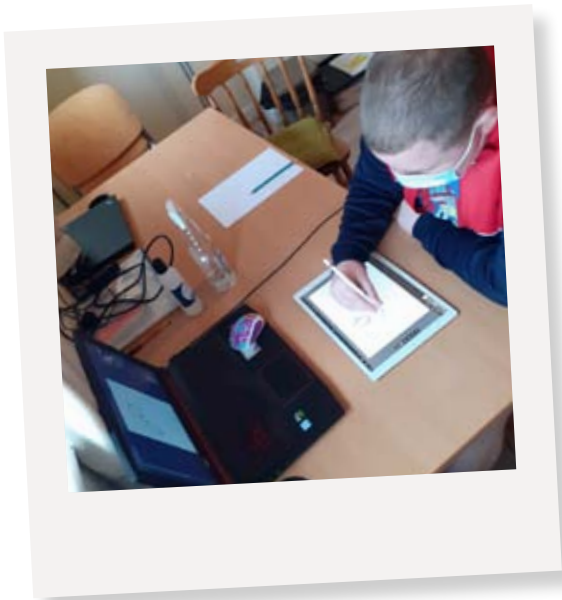
Cooking skills have been the focus for several of our service users. Some enjoy it as a hobby, while others want to learn with a view to being living independently in the not too distant future.

Now that the weather is starting to get warmer and (sometimes) sunnier, we have two group trips scheduled each week. Pictured below is a visit to the nearby Phoenix Park.

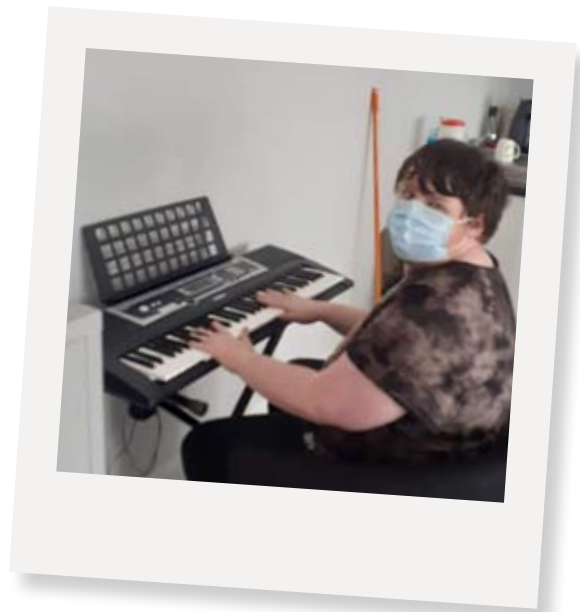


Five of our service users also have plans to continue with their education. Luis Halpin plans to study Animation at Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE).

Currently, he is working on his literacy skills in preparation for his course and is meeting every 2 weeks online with an animator who is giving him top tips. Luis uses his iPad as his animating tool, and has many original characters that he has created and drawn.



Another of our trainees, Nathan McKiernan, is a skilled ukelele player, but wanted to learn how to play the piano. Last week, he took the first steps!



Pandemic Innovation Stories

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was an unprecedented event. Huge pressure was placed on staff to deliver supports right across the organisation.

What we learned is that our staff are resilient, brave, loyal, committed and caring and that without each and everyone of them we would not have got through 2020. For many of our staff, it has been one the toughest years of their careers.

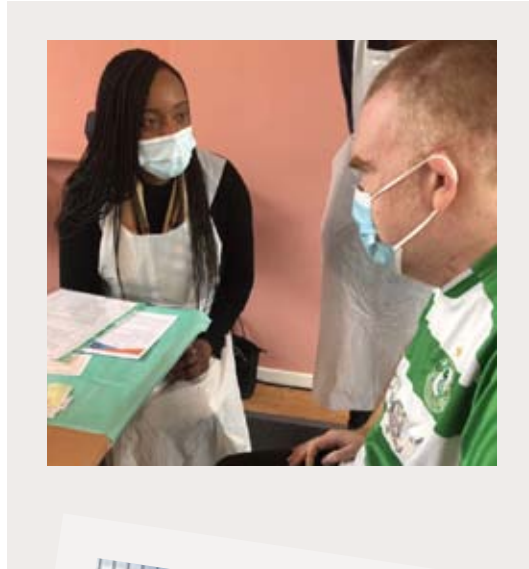


IN-HOUSE SWABBING

At the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, Catherine Kelly, Emma Coghlan and myself, Wendy Farmer, got armed with the expertise to become testers.

We were so grateful to avail of the training. The aim was to lower the risk of transmission within WALK and help staff stay safe in work.

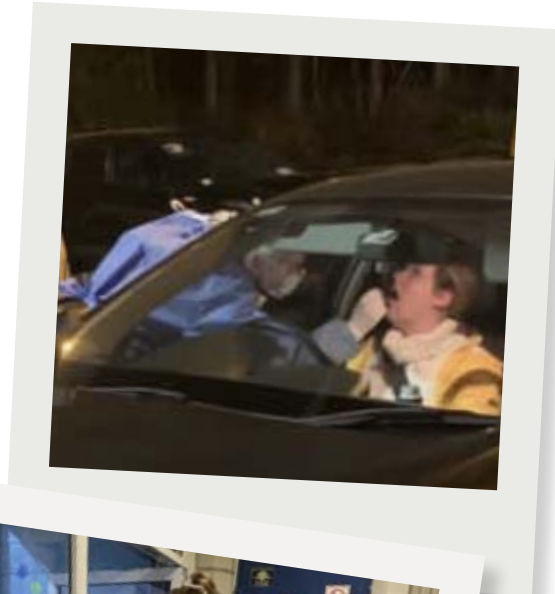
The testing happened in three testing sites each led by one of us in the Head Office building. The appointment slots for testing were allocated and all Infection Control and Prevention measures were put in place.



We had a good system going both outside and inside the building, the test centre worked to be strategic and effective. We were so grateful the weather was beautiful on the two days we were testing.

Wearing full PPE had its challenges, apart from the discomfort and the heat, it took a little while to get used to looking through the goggles and visor whilst taking care that the procedures were done safely.

We completed all staff swabbing in the 2 days and the samples were sent to the lab. As staff waited anxiously for the results, they were thanked for their corporation, reassured and support was given when they got their results. It was a great experience and a privilege to be part of this work.



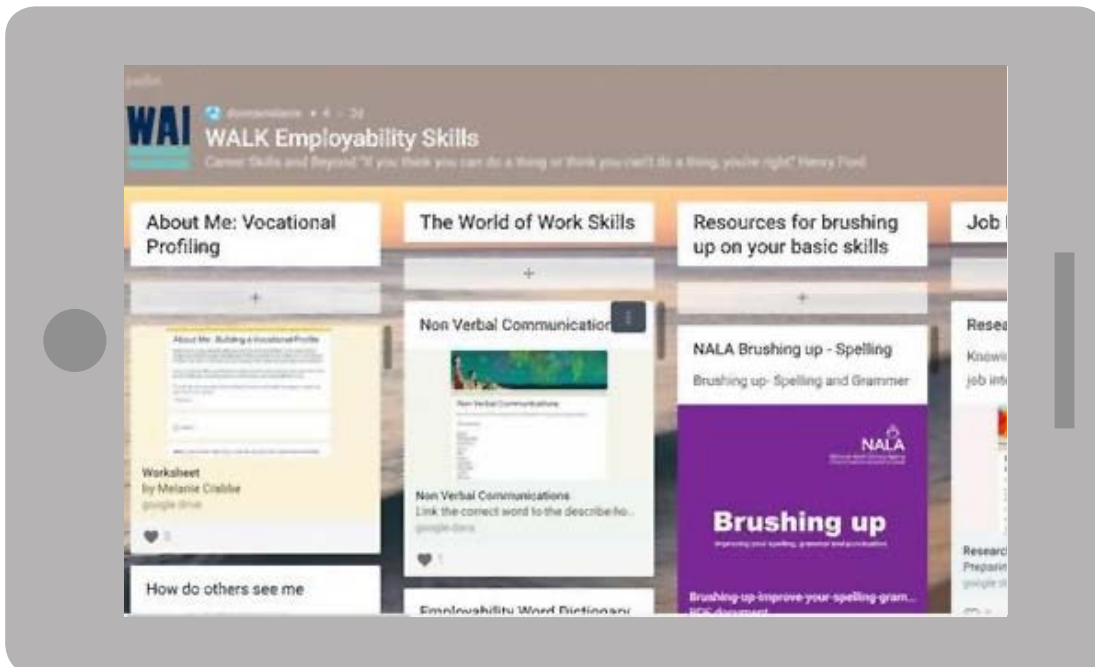
MOVING TO ONLINE SUPPORTS

As lockdown restrictions were introduced, our training and employment teams moved quickly to establish alternate ways to deliver supports to participants of both the REAL and PEER programmes.

A number of platforms were adopted including Padlet, NALA and Badgr, and access to suitable devices was arranged. In a short space of time students and trainees were able to access over seventy learning activities across twenty categories.

'WALK intends to follow through on the aim of our Ability projects - to support participants to develop their employability through a range of interventions. With our usual interventions very restricted - i.e. no in-person contact, work experience placements, college classes, or jobs (for the most part) - we put all our employability development resources onto an online platform so we can share and use each other's resources and gain feedback on individual participant's progress.'

- Project Leader





PADLET

- Collated, structured and made WALK's employability and vocational skills training available online in an accessible way for learners who were staying at home due to COVID-19.
- Developed and delivered training for WALK staff to support learners to engage with the Padlet content, gather feedback and support progression on their journey to work.
- Supported others to develop Padlets of their own so they too could support people remotely during COVID-19.



NALA

- Supported learners to access accredited courses and gain QQI qualifications.
- Accessible and appropriate content supported by inclusive NALA staff.
- WALK staff trained to support learners to engage with content and participate in assignments and assessments.



BADGR

- Supported the development of COVID-return-to-work-safely content and validation for Service Users returning to the workplace as COVID restrictions were eased.
- WALK staff trained to support Service Users to return to work in line with the Government's COVID restrictions.
- Individual assessment of Service User's readiness to return to the workplace

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This year, we adapted to different ways in which we could provide supports to people while observing government guidelines on social distancing to #stayhome #staysafe and #flattenthecurve.

WELLNESS WORKSHOPS ON ZOOM

Topics included

- Body Image
- COVID-19 Stress
- Communication
- Music
- Mental Health and Diet
- Social Media
- Staying Safe Online

TEA AND CHATS

Topics included

- Friendships
- Social Justice
- Bullying
- Healthy Friendships
- Healthy Relationships

SKYPING AND STRETCHING AWAY STRESSES

The Real Life Training Programme's regular yoga classes were adapted to 'chair yoga' so they could be done safely online, at home.

Stretch away stress and anxiety with chair yoga.

Try these three easy exercises.



#MoveItMonday

MoveItMonday.org

MOVE IT MONDAY!

'I love practicing with everyone, because we really miss each other. Being able to see each other's faces is really important. We move on to mindfulness breathing and it's lovely for everyone to become centred and grounded together.'
- Chair yoga participant



MEDITATION THROUGH WHATSAPP

Where possible, WALK has continued to support people to engage safely with complimentary therapies and with their own therapist. One of the ways in which this was done during lockdown was by delivering guided meditation by WhatsApp video call.

'It is enjoyable and relaxing as she has background music on. She is using a forest theme and getting me to close my eyes and imagine I'm in a forest and she describes what the forest is like for me to imagine.'

- Meditation participant

BAKING TOGETHER BY VIDEO CALL

A woman living independently, supported by WALK, continued to enjoy baking with her staff team, even though they could not be in the same kitchen. She and her baking partner would choose what to bake and prepare the ingredients. The next day, they would set up a video conference so they could both bake the same recipe, then enjoy eating what they'd made together.

Sharing the same meal and eating together, although apart, enables two people to connect and chat freely and openly, and keep social connections going during lockdown.



JOYFUL NOISE REHEARSE ONLINE



The band Joyful Noise formed in 2016 as an inclusive, community music project for young adults with intellectual disabilities and autism.

With a passion for singing and performing, the band was determined to keep going throughout lockdowns and so they arranged an online group rehearsal.

There were eleven participants at the online rehearsal that was coordinated by one of our day support staff. The first online rehearsal was very successful so plans were made for additional sessions with music facilitator, Enda, from Kylemore Music College, joining them.



RUB OF THE GREEN FITNESS SESSIONS

With the closure of gyms WALK enlisted the help of a number of local fitness instructors to deliver 'The Rub of the Green' outdoor fitness sessions which proved to be a popular staple in the week for many of WALK's day service participants.

Up to three fitness sessions a week were delivered either on the green or within 'The Nest' Outdoor classroom space in the 12 Walkinstown Green site.

Many of the sessions were co-delivered with the support of RLT trainee participant Adam Lawlor who is working towards achieving employment in the health and fitness industry.

Rounding off 2020 Fitness Instructor Mick Byrne issued certificates to individuals for their participation over the course of the year.

FITNESS SESSION BENEFITS

- During exercise, the brain releases endorphins that delivers a feel-good high. This can have positive impact on anxiety and depression and lift your mood.
- Exercising in a group is a great way to meet new people and become part of the community.
- Gain a level of independence, choice and sense of freedom.
- Promote physical and mental wellbeing.



MEALS FOR COCOONERS

WALK's social enterprise The Green Kitchen & Garden Shop, remained open for takeaway only, according to government guidelines.

Aware that many vulnerable people within the surrounding community were restricting their movements for safety, or 'cocooning' as it became known, the cafe set about providing hot meals delivered to their doors.



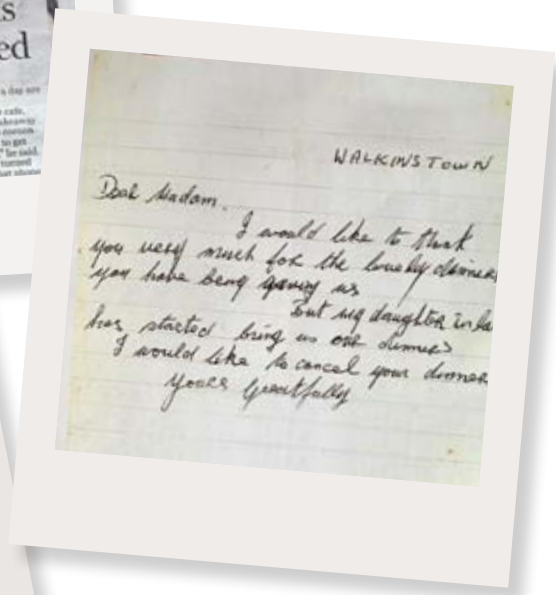
The Meals for Cocooners programme was launched initially on social media, then by word of mouth. Local individuals, groups and networks contacted us to provide meals for anyone in need of assistance.

For the first weeks of the programme, meals were delivered completely free of charge. As the lockdown lengthened we introduced a €3 charge to help cover costs. While we received generous donations from members of the public, along with food donations from our suppliers, the Meals for Cocooners programme was predominantly self funded.

With the help of three delivery volunteers we reached a peak of delivering seventy meals daily, six days a week. In total we delivered well in excess of 10,000 meals.

The volunteers were amazing, helping out not only every day but for the three lockdowns.

We also engaged some of the people supported by WALK to help deliver the meals which was a great success.



VOLUNTEER STORIES

JOAN FLOOD

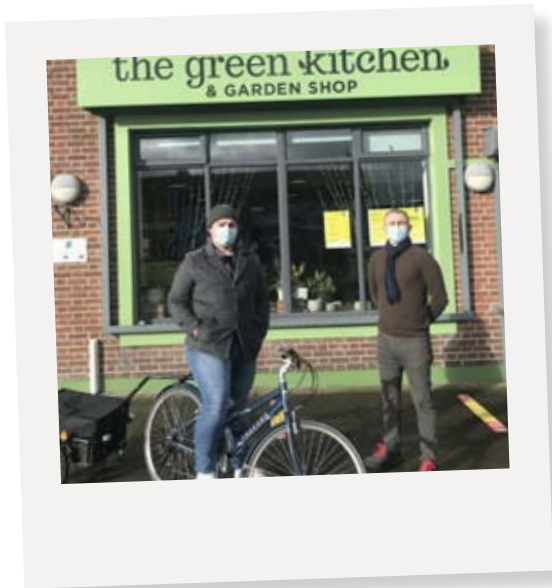
I enjoy volunteering with WALK, and have been a volunteer since 2016. Before COVID I supported two ladies, Mary Naylor and Margaret Blake, to meet up with a women's group in Rialto every Wednesday.

The two ladies and I are very much part of the group and often go on day trips, coffee mornings and nights out together around Christmas time. We are also involved in Age and Opportunity and joined in with other local groups doing physical and wellbeing activities within the community.

When COVID hit, I could not support the ladies physically but kept in touch through phone calls each week.

This was hard for me and the ladies, as we have all become good friends and I missed meeting up with them. When it was safe to meet up again, I organised a socially distanced coffee morning for the ladies and the group in the outside area of The Green Kitchen. It was great for everyone to meet up and to get involved in volunteering again.





LUKE BARRY

Helping out with the Meals for Cocooners service got me up and out in the morning and made me feel good. There were lots of people cocooning in Walkinstown, Drimnagh and Crumlin who couldn't get out to do their shopping, meet with family or friends or just go out.

With the help of my keyworker, I got access to a bike and also a cart that was bought especially for this that allowed me to deliver the meals. I took part in Meals for Cocooners three days a week. I did Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

I got to meet some lovely people along the way who'd remember me from delivering them their meals for the week. It was nice to see the familiar faces and know that I was helping during the rough part of Covid.

This experience was my first time ever doing volunteering and I'm glad I got to do it because it made me feel like I was helping out in a good way for people that needed help.

GOBNAIT NÍ NÉILL

Everyone told me about The Green Kitchen when I moved to the area last year. When there was a call for volunteers to help in garden centre I jumped at the chance.

As well as looking after plants, I offered my design skills to show the café and shop were connected, and how to find your way around once inside. Working with local printers, signwriters and our own team, we transformed the exterior and interior, giving it a bright new look.

I'm delighted to have been able to contribute to my new area, and it makes me smile every time I turn the corner and see the bright green sign.



Working with Others

WALK continuously develop and maintain partnerships with others to progress our Strategic Plan, our mission and our vision. All partners have shared values with WALK. Here is a snapshot of some of the partnerships initiated or progressed in 2020.

PLANTING SPRING BULBS WITH DCC

Dublin City Council kindly supplied us with bulbs to help us brighten up our local community and to spread some warmth and happiness!

The teams from Longmile Road and WALKways worked together to plant the daffodil bulbs around the local Drimnagh/Walkinstown area.

Our social enterprise, The Green Kitchen & Garden Shop, loaned us some gardening tools to help with the process. The group met every Thursday for a few weeks to get stuck in to sowing.



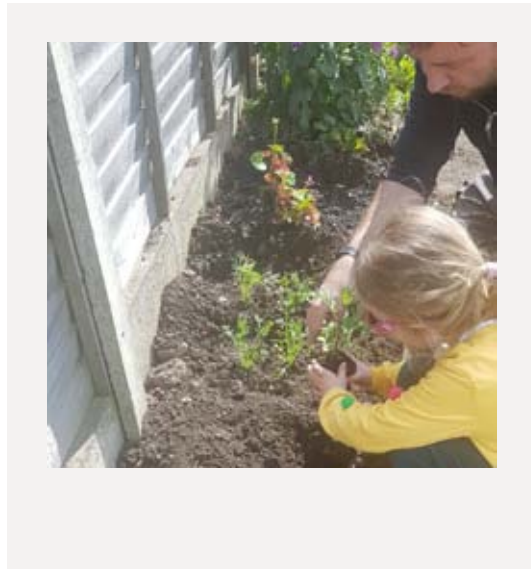
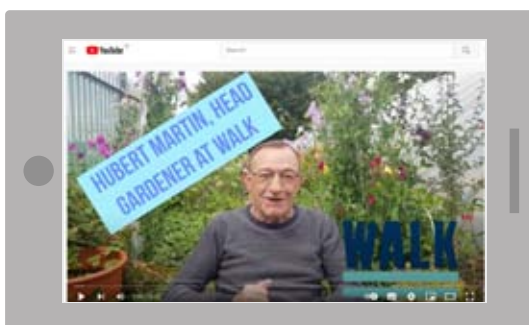
COMMUNITY GARDENING

From the very beginning of the pandemic, gardens and green spaces became vital for managing stress, getting fresh air and exercise.

WALK responded to this by providing tools, compost and plants not only to people in our residential services, but also to the wider community in Dublin 12 and beyond.

With many planting projects cancelled or postponed due to lockdown, unused plants from our two teaching gardens in Crumlin were distributed to local horticulture groups including D12 Incredible Edibles, HXGrow Project and Cherry Orchard Community Gardens.

Head Gardener Hubert Martin was on hand answering questions and offering advice, both on site and online.



'The HXGrow Project, as a growing community, wish to acknowledge the support and inspiration given by Hubert to this start up project. Hubert's selfless giving has contributed hugely to the project's success to date. The HXGrow Project looks forward to deepening our relationship with the WALK community to build social capital through community gardening.'
- Dónal, HXGrow Project



ABILITY PROGRAMME PROJECTS

Both of our Ability* funded projects, REAL and PEER adapted to Covid restrictions to continue to deliver services this year by developing accessible online training tools and remote delivery channels.

REAL ABILITY

Reaching Employment Ambitions in Life

This programme provides Supported Employment for young adults with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism aged 18-29.

Supported Employment is the provision of support to people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market. The model uses a partnership strategy to enable people with disabilities to achieve sustainable long-term employment and businesses to employ valuable workers.

WALK REAL Ability project partners, including Walkinstown Green Social Enterprises Ltd / The Green Kitchen & Garden Shop, facilitate participants to gain meaningful vocational training and work experience in a supportive environment.

WALK REAL Trainers and Job Coaches support participants to realise their employment ambitions, plan their individual pathway, and access appropriate local opportunities.



WALK PEER ABILITY

Providing Equal Employment Routes

PEER provides Supported Transition for students in three partner special schools aged 15-21. Supported Transition is an educational model that places the young person at the centre of the process by assisting them to explore their aspirations, and brings them to a point in their lives where they are able to make an informed choice about their future after school.



**Ability is co-financed by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.*

RETHINK IRELAND

ABILITY TO WORK PROJECT

Creating Employment Pathways Through Technology for adults aged 29+.

This project piloted online tools and remote delivery during COVID-19 in 2020.



NDA DISABILITY AWARENESS RAISING GRANT SCHEME

WALK partnered with AslAm, Rehab and Not-So-Different to developed an online module for the training programme: Inclusive Recruitment and Retention Practices Training for Employers.



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF IRELAND

RTÉ DOES COMIG RELIEF - DEMAND FOR DIGITAL

Funding to develop an accessible Learning Management System to support young people with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism to develop their digital, employability and vocational skills.

OIREACHTAS WORK LEARNING PROGRAMME

In March 2020, the OWL Programme had to temporarily cease operations in Leinster House due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Over the last few months, OWL Programme trainees have been working remotely.

These tasks have been given to the trainees by different sections in Leinster House that they would have worked in from September 2019 to March 2020.

The Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht also provided some work tasks for the trainees. The tasks have been a mix of data entry using Excel spreadsheets, emailing, using Microsoft Word to type and edit documents, and researching and putting together information for the Oireachtas newsletter.



The trainees have been coming into our Galtymore Road office to work on these tasks during the week, and also worked on some of the tasks in their own homes. It has been a fantastic link to Leinster House without being able to be physically present there.

It has also meant that the trainees have been able to continuously develop their employment skills, and experience remote working like much of the country.



EDUCATION

Many continued with the goal of education in 2020 despite the difficulties that arose with this due to the pandemic.

For some, this was their first year of college, while for others it was a continuation of their courses. Classes moved online and all students managed this excellently.

Despite adjusting to this new style of learning, everyone worked hard and saw great results.

Making friends in this format was hard but not impossible, and some have plans to meet with classmates when restrictions lift.



DAVID KERR

My name is David Kerr and I attended Rathmines College online during the COVID-19 pandemic. College online has been alright this year, but some of the work has been exceptionally difficult but I always managed to get it done.

The subjects I did this year were Office Skills, Reception Skills, Business English and Customer Service with Geraldine McNamara and Kate Mooney.

I feel like there are pros and cons to online college but overall it was okay. I did very well in my end of year exams and I got distinctions.

JULIEANNE

My name is Julieanne and the last two years I have been online with my college. I have been on Zoom for the last two years.

I am in Rathmines college doing office skills. I found this year hard to be online with my college, but I found the staff helpful. The staff help me look over my college work and help me if find my college assignments difficult.

In my college results I got four distinctions and a merit. My graduation was online this year. We had our own party in the centre. I really enjoy the graduation in my centre.



Events and Fundraising

WALK generally hosts many events annually. The main focus of the events is to build and strengthen our community ties. The events we host offer an opportunity for us to 'give back' to the local communities who work so tirelessly to support us.

These events provide invaluable opportunities for us in terms of both building community connections and also to provide a safe space for the people we support to experience different areas of work and volunteerism.

We are also supported by community groups that host events on our behalf. We are beyond grateful for the additional opportunities and networking that these hosted events provide.

Here is a snapshot of some of the events that raised funds for WALK's Community Project Fund.



SUPERVALU CHRISTMAS BAG PACKING EVENT

In addition Shannon and Thomas from the WALKways Programme took part in a Christmas Bag packing event in Supervalu Walkinstown and raised additional funds for WALK's Community Project Fund.

WALK FOR WALK

This year the annual Walk for WALK could not happen but that did not stop the team from throwing down the gauntlet and challenging us all to a 60 minute walking challenge in our local areas.

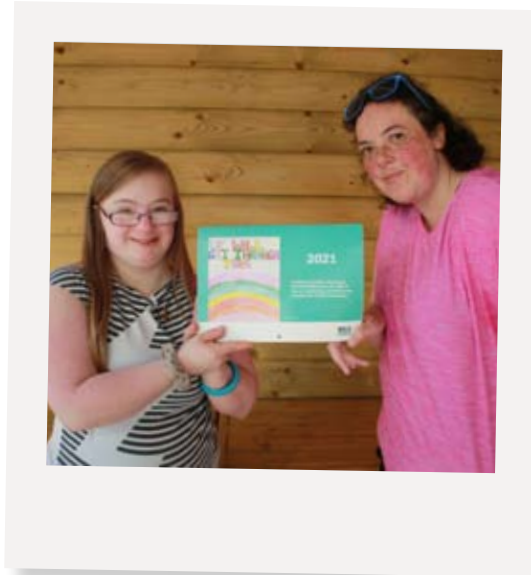


2021 CALENDAR

In 2020 Kathryn Griffin and Fiadhnaid Canning designed and delivered a WALK calendar featuring the artwork of the talented people WALK supports from across the organisation.

Made possible by WALK's Community Projects Fund it took on the themes of hope and resilience for the coming year and raised €846.00 going straight back into the fund to help others achieve their goals.

Calendar orders saw it reach not only the local community but also international destinations. The project imbued a huge sense of pride and achievement for all involved and will be revisited to create another offering for 2022.



FUNDRAISING DAYS AT OUR BRIDGECOURT HUB

The team in Bridgecourt Hub engaged in fundraising for Inner City Helping Homeless and Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin.

Staff and service users engaged in the shoebox appeal, hosted coffee mornings and engaged in a Christmas jumper day to raise funds. Coffee mornings included parcels with cards made by service users.



MUSIC IN THE GARDEN

WALK hosted many socially distanced live music therapy events 'Music in the Garden' once a week in The Nest outdoor classroom in Walkinstown Green.

Local Irish musicians had been directly impacted by COVID 19, these events helped support their music while also providing a safe, socially distanced activity for the people we support.

This helped alleviate the experiences of isolation and lack of social connection during the lockdown/Covid 19. These events helped the local Dublin music scene as well as the people we support.

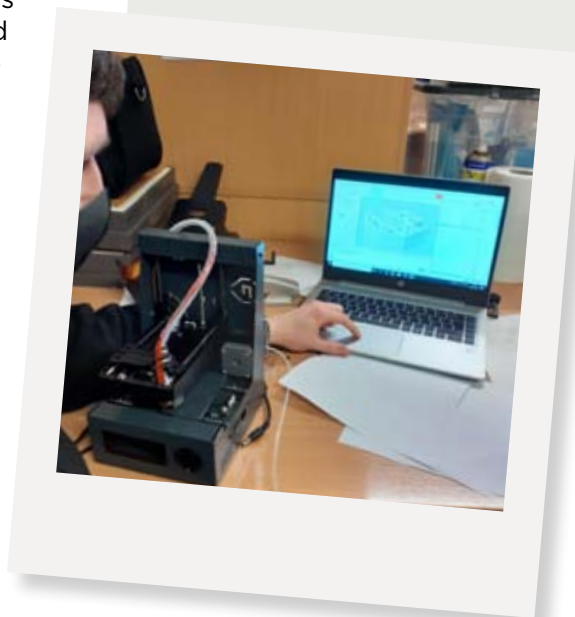
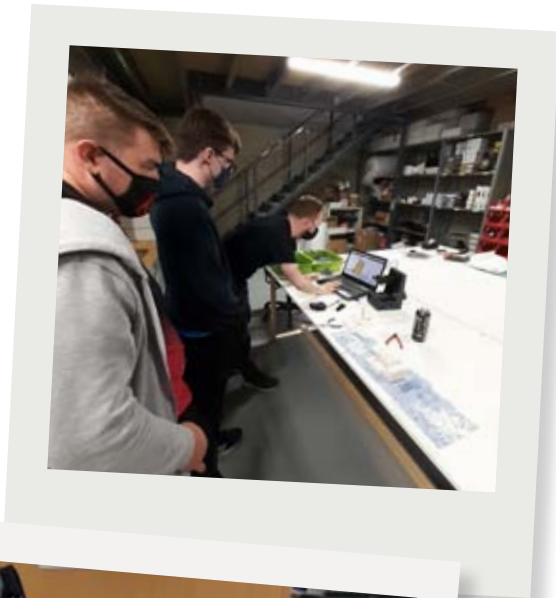


3D PRINTING WORKSHOPS

Some of the people supported by WALK expressed an interest in learning about 3D printers and 3D printing.

We hosted a 3D printing workshops to encourage social interaction, creativity and collaboration with others. This in turn encouraged the development of new skills, new technology experiences, collaboration, social interaction and friendship.

The interest in 3D printing was well and truly sparked and so when restrictions were sufficiently eased we completed a site visit to 3D Printing Ireland, who also very kindly gave us materials to use for our very own 3D Printer.



WALK Community Project Fund

WALK hosts events and is also supported by local community connections to host different events. Fundraising is not the main aim of these but rather the introduction of WALK to the local community and to create stronger bonds and ties.

However, where funds are raised they go straight in to WALK's Community Project Fund. Both staff and the people we support can apply to request funding for one of the following:

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

To develop local events or projects that are inclusive and benefit service users and the local community.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

To buy equipment small or large that would benefit service users and potentially the local community.

INDIVIDUAL'S GOALS

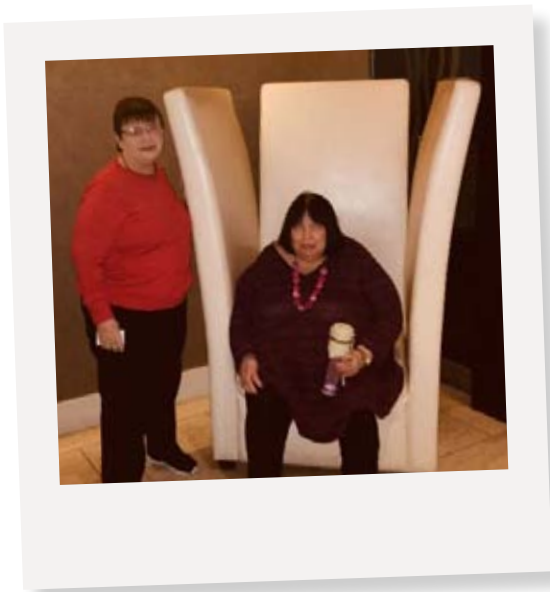
To assist a person to achieve their goals. This can be through accessing training, education or recreation.

The following are some of the goals that the Community Project Fund supported in 2020.



LADIES' NIGHT AWAY

Mary and Margaret are good friends. They enjoyed a ladies' night at the Sheraton Athlone in early March 2020. We had afternoon tea booked in the hotel, this was a lovely treat and a nice indulgence.



The ladies relaxed in the comforts of their beautiful hotel room before enjoying a 3 course meal. The meal was excellent, we dined and chatted over the gorgeous food that was served.

After the meal we sat in the Hotel bar, chatting, joking and laughing. The ladies said they had the 'best time'.



Mary and Margaret got to spend some quality time together which helped to maintain their friendship and boost their happiness.

The whole experience was very special and enjoyable, the ladies have already planning their next trip. This little trip away meant so much to both ladies and it would not have been possible without the community funding. Christmas party.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD PLANTING

A community group gathered to plant an apple orchard in the grounds of Walkinstown Library in early 2020.

This was an initiative of a local community group who are interested in gardening, sustainability and the environment. The group crowd funded to get the campaign started.

WALK's community project fund supported the final financial stretch of the campaign to ensure proper stakes and soil were purchased to protect the infant apple trees.



Governance & Compliance

All governing decisions are made in line with WALK's vision, mission and strategic plan. WALK's Board of Directors is made up of volunteers with responsibility for governance including financial oversight, setting the strategic direction and monitoring progress against it.

According to our governing document, the Board is made up of non-executive directors. All of WALK's directors bring unique skills to the Board including expertise in areas including but not limited to legal, medicine, family involvement, human resources, financial management, business management, and the community and voluntary sector.

100% of board targets for 2020 met

- Charities regulator annual returns completed in advance of deadlines
- Update constitution and have approval by relevant parties
- Performance Development Review meeting with CEO
- Annual General Meeting held
- Annual report approved for 2019, published and available on website
- Annual Financial Statements approved for 2019, published and available on website
- Charities Regulator Governance Code self-assessment and action plan underway.
- Maintained Compliance with all Trusted Charity indicators related to 'Governance'
- Updates made to electronic risk register system to allow PDF reports for board usage.

WALK Board of Directors Attendance Records 2019/2020

First Name	Surname	January	July	September	December
John	Bourke	Green	Green	Green	Green
Pat	McCarthy	Green	Green	Green	Green
Betty	Brophy	Red	Green	Green	Green
Peter	Byrne	Green	Green	Green	Red
Kay	Broderick	Red	Green	Green	Red
Gavin	Murphy	Green	Red	Red	Green
Gerry	Donohoe	Green	Green	Red	Green
Michael	Hussey	Red	Red	Red	Red
Dr. Gerry	Moran	Green	Red	Red	Red

Non Board Members

Joe	Mason	Green	Green	Green	Green
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The following members of the organisation attended meetings throughout the year to provide information to the board on areas relevant to their expertise:

Catherine Kelly
Eamonn Teague

Subcommittees of the Board

RISK REVIEW COMMITTEE The objective is to oversee and evaluate the Risk Management systems in place in WALK.

FINANCE/AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

In brief, provides an objective review of the accuracy of financial data, and the financial reporting process; the integrity of the financial statements and significant financial reporting judgements contained in them; WALK's internal financial controls, budgeting and budgetary control systems; and financial risk management systems.

They make recommendations to the Board in relation to the External Auditors. They review procedures to enable whistleblowing by staff in relation to any concerns about improper use of the organisation's finances.

There are two executive Directors on this subcommittee, Gerry Donohoe and Patrick McCarthy. WALK's Financial Controller, Director of Resources and CEO attend the bimonthly meetings.

REMUNERATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Pat McCarthy and John Bourke who liaise with the CEO.

Income Statement

	€000	€000
	2020	2019
Income	7,906	7,155
Expenditure	7,841	7,168
Net Surplus / Deficit	65	-13
Balance Sheet		
Fixed Assets	4,771	4,668
Current Assets	1,259	1,093
Current Liabilities	-912	-735
Net Current Assets	347	358
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	5,118	5,026
Creditors > 1 Year	-643	-616
Total Net Assets	4,475	4,410
Charity Funds		
Restricted Funds	4,054	3,977
Unrestricted Funds	421	433
	4,475	4,410

You can read WALK's Financial Statement for 2020 here:
<https://walk.ie/perch/resources/financial-statement-2020.pdf>

Accreditation

Trusted Charity, formerly known as PQASSO, is a quality system designed specifically for the voluntary sector, including charities, social enterprises, community interest companies and community groups. (www.ncvo.org.uk)

Trusted Charity has been used to guide WALK's quality development as its overarching quality system for many years. We were the first organisation in Ireland to be accredited at PQASSO Level 2 in 2011 and we were successfully re-accredited at this level at the end of 2015 and again at the start of 2019.

The organisation continues to learn and develop while being guided by the quality areas that include: Governance, Planning, Leadership & Management, User-Centred Services, Managing People, Learning & Development, Managing Money, Managing Resources, External Communications, Working with Others, Assessing Outcomes and Impact.

Throughout 2020, WALK continued to work on strengthening its systems using the Trusted Charity indicators as a guide. The organisation intends to reapply for 'Trusted Charity' at level 2 towards the end of 2021.

Nadeem Razvi, Trusted Charity Programme Manager, NCVO, said "We are delighted for the trustees, staff and volunteers of WALK that they have achieved the Trusted Charity Mark. We know that organisations using this standard benefit by having better governance, better systems and procedures and better quality of services for their users".

Policy Statements

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE

WALK's safeguarding policy and procedure mirror the standards established in the national policy, Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures.

This Policy reinforces internationally recognised key critical building blocks for prevention and early intervention in relation to adult safeguarding. This approach promotes:

- People being informed of their rights to be free from abuse and supported to exercise these rights, including access to advocacy
- A well-trained workforce operating in a culture of zero tolerance to abuse
- A sound framework for confidentiality and data information sharing across service providers
- Needs and risk assessments to inform people's choices

- A range of options for support to keep people safe from abuse tailored to people's individual needs
- Approaches and supports that prioritise both safeguarding and independence
- Multi-disciplinary teamwork, interagency cooperation and information sharing
- Practice guidance material to promote best practice and a positive working culture

A key to successful safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse is an open culture with a genuinely person-centred approach to care/support, underpinned by a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse and neglect. It is important that we continue to create and nurture an open culture where people can feel safe to raise concerns.

The importance of good leadership and modelling of good practice is essential in determining the culture of services.

"Culture manifests what is important, valued and accepted in an organisation. It is not easily changed nor is it susceptible to change merely by a pronouncement, command or the declaration of a new vision. At its most basic it can be reduced to the observation.... the way things are done around here."

- O'Riordan, 2015

WALK is committed to policy and practices which promote the welfare of all persons and safeguard those persons at risk from abuse. In keeping with the Assisted Decision Making Act, WALK presume decision making capacity exists for people we support unless proven otherwise. In so doing we respect the autonomy of the individual and we endeavour to uphold the rights of people to full and meaningful lives in safe and supportive environments. We are committed to the safeguarding of all persons from abuse and we acknowledge that all adults have the right to be safe and live a life free from abuse regardless of circumstance.

Concerns relating to suspected or known incidents of abuse can be reported by any person to WALK staff, line management or to any of WALK's Designated Officers; Catherine Kelly or Eamonn Teague.

COMPLAINTS

WALK is committed to ensuring that all dealings people have with our organisation are done so with utmost respect and dignity. WALK provides a transparent process for complaints made against the organisation and records all complaints made in line with legislative provision provided in the Health Act 2004.

WALK has a Complaints Officer. If you, or your advocate, have tried to address your complaint with a staff member and they cannot help you resolve it then you can make your complaint directly to WALK's Complaints Officer.

You can find WALK's Complaints Policy for Service Users and Third Parties on our website or you can contact the Head Office for a copy to be sent out to you.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

WALK complies with equality legislation when dealing with employees, potential employees, people we support, persons who may be supported in the future, and all other third parties.

WALK promotes equality and diversity and prohibits discrimination in the workplace across the nine grounds of Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, and Membership of the Traveller Community.

WALK has an Equality & Rights' Officer. You can find our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement on our website or you can contact the Head Office for a copy to be sent out to you.

CEO Report

Welcome to WALK's annual report for 2020 and what a rollercoaster year it has been.

In the new age of Covid-19, WALK had to completely revolutionise how we supported people. In March 2020, WALK like all disability organisations had to close all day service locations. Staff from day, clinical and quality services were redeployed to support our residential services with many staff providing dual roles by also continuing to provide home based supports to day attenders. Staff developed new and innovative ways of delivering supports and training online.

In 2020, WALK became experts in infection control and on a few occasions the building on the Long Mile Road and a few other premises became pop up COVID swabbing hubs.

I want to acknowledge the huge work and commitment of the staff right across the organisation in developing and maintaining exceptional infection control protocols, by finding creative solutions to complex problems, by always finding ways of doing things rather than barriers to why we can't.

I know from the many conversations that I have had with staff, that many people have suffered their own bereavements and made many sacrifices in their personal lives in order to ensure that our services remained responsive to the needs of the people that we support.

I also know that the national restrictions in regard to visiting people in our residential services was immensely challenging and an

extremely difficult ask of service users and their families. These sacrifices as well as excellent crisis management planning has in the overall scheme of things helped us to keep the ship steady during extremely turbulent times.

I want to acknowledge the effects that the pandemic had on many families and thank them for their patience and understanding and their kind words. I also want to extend a special thank you to the many people in the HSE who worked in partnership with us throughout the pandemic.

Finally, I don't want to gloss over the loss that we have all suffered throughout this pandemic, the loss of life, the loss of freedom and loss of human contact and the loss of a way of being that we had once taken for granted.

I look forward to 2021, where we can all build back better and in taking stock of the many lessons this year has taught us, create a stronger more inclusive future.



Joe Mason
CEO
WALK



WALK Committees and Meetings

There are a number of committees operating within WALK. These committees are made up of membership that allows expertise to be drawn on and to ensure that all stakeholders are represented.

QUALITY MEASURES IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

This is an internal group sub divided into projects representing a cross section of the organisation. Its purpose is to support the Quality Department and WALK as an organisation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of continuous improvement initiatives. The projects are: Person Centred Practices and PQASSO.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

An internal group that is represented by the Health and Safety Officer for WALK and a cross section of staff. The purpose of this committee is to review all health and safety systems and implementation of those systems.

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reviews internal policies ensuring they meet all legal and best practice requirements.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Looks at learning and development requirements and opportunities for staff across the organisation.

WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Promotes workplace wellbeing by reviewing data gathered from staff satisfaction surveys and plans events for the year to further promote wellbeing for all in WALK.

CLINICAL RISK AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Governance meetings to ensure WALK meets all legal and best practice clinical requirements and that all WALK practices follow a human rights based approach and are according to WALK's low arousal philosophy. There is internal and external representation.

EQUALITY AND RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Reviews practices within the organisation in relation to equality and diversity and ensures they are meeting all legal and best practice requirements.

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Planning and organising community events as well as authorising and organising the distribution of funds in the Community Projects Fund.

Next Steps INCLUDING CHALLENGES FOR 2021

WALK will continue to implement its operational plans in line with the three Strategic Priorities identified for 2018–2020.

Bimonthly updates will be provided to all stakeholders via WALK’s website.

WALK’s strategic planning subcommittee reviews progress against the operational plans. They anticipate challenges to implementation based on internal or external factors. Using this information, they modify the flow of the implementation of the strategic plan.

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WALK is the trading name for Walkinstown Association for People with an Intellectual Disability.
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