

WALK

Annual Report 2021



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ABOUT US

Our Vision

Our vision is an inclusive society where communities value and treat all people as equal citizens.



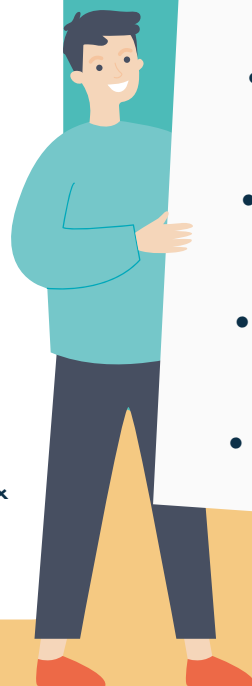
Our Mission

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 & continuous improvement



WALK are...

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

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT



I am pleased to present our annual report for 2021. This was another significant year battling and trying to figure our way through a pandemic in which we experienced a cycle of societal lockdowns, restrictions, closures and re-openings.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Joe and his team for their excellent work throughout this challenging, worrying, and stressful time. I am also aware that many of you lost family members during the last year, and I want to extend my condolences to you and your families.

One of the main roles of the board is to oversee the strategic plan and to ensure that it is developed in line with the mission, vision, and values of WALK. Despite a pandemic, 2021 saw the completion of the previous strategic plan and the introduction of our new strategic plan for 2021-2024.

This strategic plan will see WALK looking inwards to firstly, renew our mission, secondly, deepen our culture and thirdly, to strengthen our capacity for delivering person centred services.

The Board wishes to acknowledge and thank service users, families, staff, volunteers and management for their continued commitment and support, and we look forward to working with you all in the coming years to collaboratively achieve the goals of a very ambitious strategic plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John M Bourke'.

John M Bourke
Chairperson

“This strategic plan will see WALK looking inwards...”



CEO REPORT



Welcome to WALK's annual report for 2021. The start of 2021 brought to the fore many emotions, and while we got off to a very rocky start entering the month of January in a lockdown and fearing the effects of the rapidly spreading delta variant, there was still hope as January also saw the beginnings of the national vaccination rollouts.

The early stages of this process resulted in many staff members at a moment's notice, jumping into their cars and travelling halfway across the country in the hope that there would be a spare vaccine when they arrived. As we continued into late spring the vaccine supply became more plentiful and the process more streamlined and manageable.

Thank you to every staff member that took a phone call and stood in line to receive your vaccine because by doing so and by wearing masks, managing your social distancing, and following excellent hand hygiene rituals you have kept yourselves and the people that WALK support safe and secure.

I think it is important that we take this opportunity to reflect on the challenges we all faced in 2021 as well as celebrating our many achievements. COVID brought with it many casualties, we lost loved ones and due to restrictions, we lost the opportunity to mourn and grieve together as a society.

We missed out on social gatherings, family celebrations, holidays abroad and spending time with our friends and much, much more. However, many of us found pleasure in the simple things in life and began to appreciate a more simplistic lifestyle.

In WALK we took the opportunity to reflect inwards on the organisation and based on the strategic plan for 2021-2024 we began to meet formally with service users, families, and staff to illicit feedback to develop an operational plan that was inclusive of all stakeholders' viewpoints. The operational plan was then used as a blueprint to develop cohesive organisational departmental plans.

On behalf of WALK I want to take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your dedication, commitment, drive, and determination to minimise the effects of a pandemic on the lives of the people that we support.

Joe Mason
CEO



WALK's STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Planning Process

During the pandemic WALK's Strategic objectives shifted to focus on risk management, good infection control protocols and sustaining service delivery for Service Users in WALK's Day and Residential Services. As a result of this WALK's Board of Directors made the decision to extend the 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan for an additional six months.

From January to June 2021 WALK worked on the remaining actions from our 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan which were completed.

WALK started work on our new Strategic Plan in 2021, engaging with a range of stakeholders who contributed to the strategic development process. We launched our new Strategic Plan in June 2021. The Strategic Plan was disseminated and a process of understanding and embedding of the Strategic Plan into local awareness occurred.

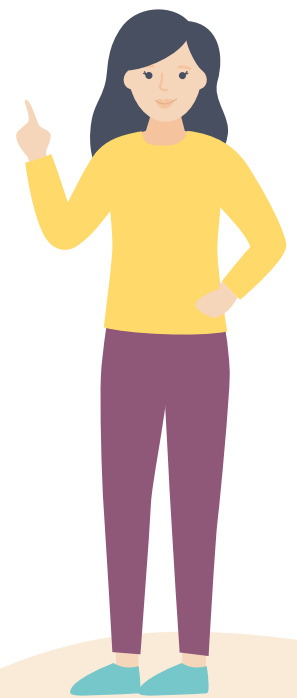
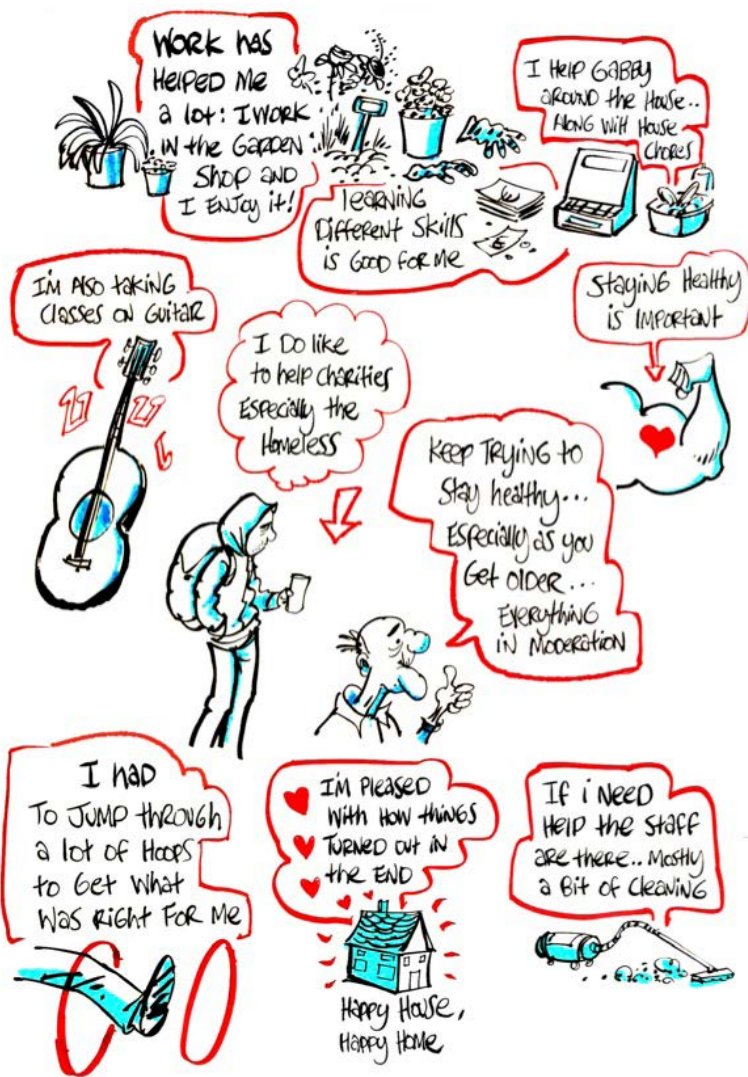
In September and October 2021, a series of workshops and focus groups were held with our four stakeholder groups: WALK Service Users, families, staff and the WALK leadership team.

The workshops and focus groups enabled WALK to listen to the input and feedback of each stakeholder group.





Following the above process strategic actions were then broken down into the organisations operational and departmental plans.



Graphic of feedback from Service User listening day

Our Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 1:
Renew our mission

Strategic Goal 2:
Deepen our culture

Strategic Goal 3:
Strengthen our capacity for person centred service

Our Strategic Actions

The achievement of our Strategic Goals is underpinned by the completion of the four Strategic Actions below:

- 1 We will conduct a root and branch examination of our organisational structures and functions** - to ensure that we have best configured our resources to support the achievement of service users' goals and face the challenges of the future.
- 2 We will carry out an in-depth review of our service quality systems and our overall approach to person centred planning** - to ensure that the systems we use promote a strong bias for action and the achievement of challenging goals.
- 3 We will progress the values based enrichment of our recruitment, induction, staff training, management and leadership functions** – to ensure that the values we espouse are situated within a unified organisational culture, are owned by all organisation members, that they enable us to promote habits of regular reflective practice, and that they enable us to guide all organisational actions.
- 4 We will enhance our communications capability both internally and externally** – to ensure that organisation members receive relevant information in a timely and efficient manner; and that key audiences in the external environment are well informed of the organisations mission, activities and need for resources and support.

Strategic Plan Review

WALK's Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024 was launched in June 2021. Reports on plan progress are presented to the board bi-monthly and are shared on WALK's website.

Progress is measured on the following scale:

OUTPUTS:

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

2021 represents Year 1 of a four-year cycle for WALK's Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024:

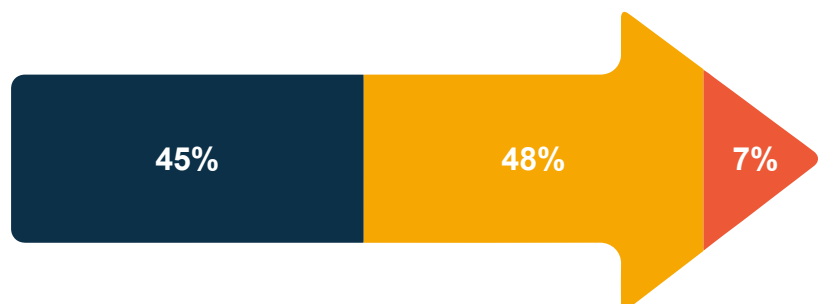


Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
2021	2022	2023	2024

The Plan is measured using a monitoring and evaluation tool. This tool breaks the plan down into:

- Not started
- Just started
- Progressing well
- Fully met

PROGRESS ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN Year 1 - 2021



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

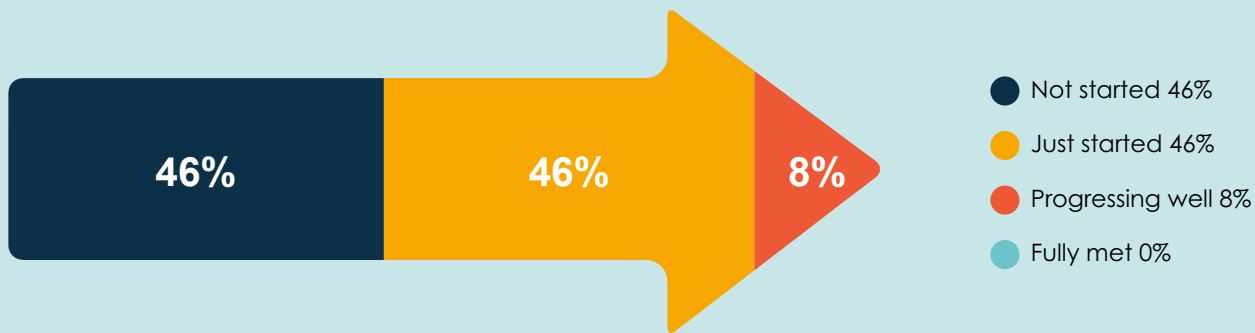


STRATEGIC ACTION

1

We will conduct a root and branch examination of our organisational structures and functions - to ensure that we have best configured our resources to support the achievement of service users' goals and face the challenges of the future.

By the end of 2021, year 1, we had achieved:



WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON SO FAR:

- Review of organisation structure and allocation of key new roles to support the achievement of service users' goals, effectively manage growth and face the challenges of the future
- Improving signposting around accessing supports including clinical, health supports, safeguarding, finance and procurement
- Working on initiatives whereby teams and teamwork is co-ordinated around the person supported and person centred goals, rather than geographical locations
- Increasing organisational and residential capacity to deliver on person centred outcomes through measures to address underfunding / vacancy / referral opportunities.

FUTURE PLANS FOR 2022:

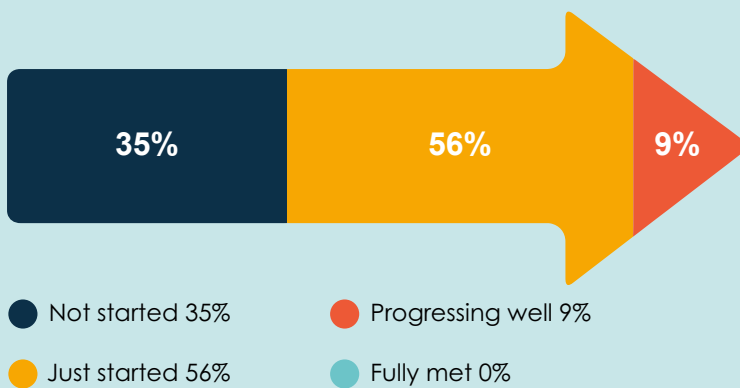
- Preparation and roll out of leadership development training
- Review of HR function and systems
- Develop a platform to ensure the voice of persons supported is heard at decision making levels
- Review methods of allocating and deploying financial and staff resources, where these are not efficient and where local autonomy can be maximised.

STRATEGIC ACTION

2

We will carry out an in-depth review of our service quality systems and our overall approach to person centred planning - to ensure that the systems we use promote a strong bias for action and the achievement of challenging goals.

By the end of 2021, year 1, we had achieved:



WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON SO FAR:

- Person Centred Thinking and Practice developer in place, and champions groups set up with representation from each of the teams across Day and Residential Services. Monthly workshops taking place and individual mentoring sessions delivered between workshops.
- Review of the current WALK approach to Person Centred Planning
- Series of participatory education and training workshops focused on rights delivered as part of Peer Rep project. Plan in place to recruit Human Rights and Participation Practice Developer
- Sharepoint sites set up to store and maintain workshop presentations and reference materials on Person Centred Practice
- Commenced work on increasing residential capacity to deliver on person centred outcomes through the provision of personalised models of support.

FUTURE PLANS FOR 2022:

- Further develop the resources, systems, training, and management and leadership practice required to implement a human rights-based approach to Person Centred Planning - that is fully accountable to the service user and their representatives
- Further develop the resources, systems, training, and management and leadership practice required to deliver quality services - within a framework where accountability for the achievement of service user goals is clearly identified and actively managed
- Review current WALK Person Centred Planning, Service Quality, and Rights documentation and training. Ensure all staff are equipped with a clear and appropriately detailed description and understanding of Person-Centred Service, Service Quality, and Human Rights based service delivery
- Develop an appropriate process for ensuring that a person-centred rights-based approach is evident in the daily practice of all roles within the organisation
- Continue to review the organisations current approach to the provision of residential services and develop a broader range of individualised living options.

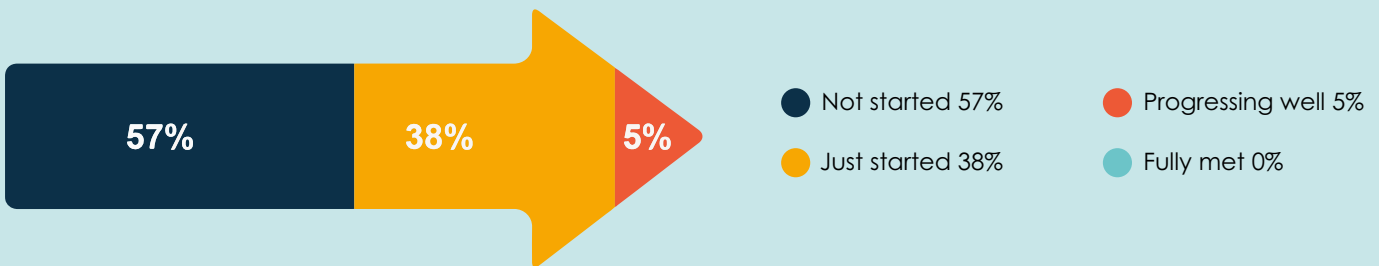
STRATEGIC ACTION

3

We will progress the values-based enrichment of our recruitment, induction, staff training, management and leadership functions – to ensure that the values we espouse are situated within a unified organisational culture, are owned by all organisation members, that they promote habits of regular reflective practice, and that they guide all organisational actions.



By the end of 2021, year 1, we had achieved:



WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON SO FAR:

- Establishment of a project group to review recruitment lifecycle
- Vision, mission and values reviewed as part of strategic planning process, and plan in place to set up a cross representative group to review the values of WALK

FUTURE PLANS FOR 2022:

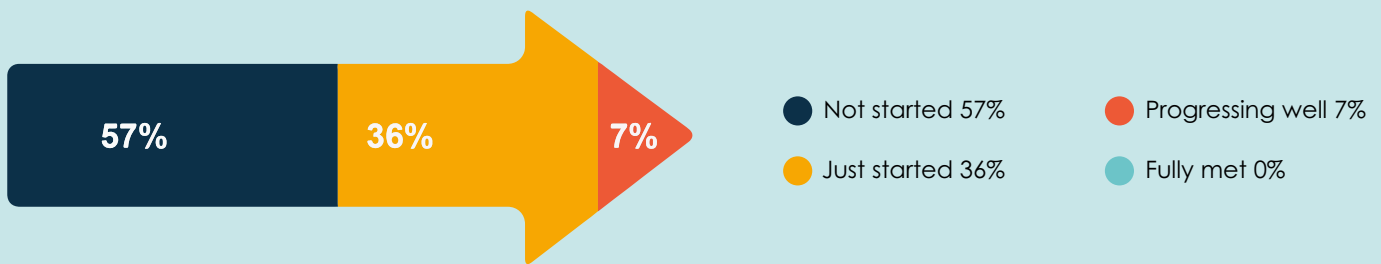
- Develop a renewed statement of organisational values that will govern decision making, guide service activities and delivery, and inform daily practice and conduct throughout WALK
- Review the current recruitment process including: role descriptions, competency frameworks, manpower planning, advertising and interview processes. Ensure that they are fit for purpose and provide a clear expression of WALK values
- Review current approaches to staff induction, training, development, and health and wellbeing. Ensure that they are fit for purpose and provide a clear expression of WALK values
- Develop and implement an organisation wide programme to embed 'Reflective Practice' as a key feature in the performance of all service activities.

STRATEGIC ACTION

4

We will enhance our communications capability both internally and externally – to ensure that organisation members receive relevant information in a timely and efficient manner; and that key audiences in the external environment are well informed of the organisations mission, activities and need for resources and support.

By the end of 2021, year 1, we had achieved:



WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON SO FAR:

- Consultation with each stakeholder group through workshops and focus groups during the Strategic Planning process
- Regular communication with each stakeholder group, to keep all stakeholders informed of key developments



FUTURE PLANS FOR 2022:

- Develop a communication strategy that covers each stakeholder group
- Conduct a review of internal communications within WALK, including current levels of staff satisfaction with communication, and develop an enhanced approach across the organisation
- Review communication with family members and natural supports and develop an enhanced approach to timely and effective two-way communication



REAL LIFE STORIES

The central driving force behind the work that WALK does is making sure the right supports are in place to ensure the individuals who use the services of WALK are able to learn, develop and achieve their self-directed goals.

As with anyone, the goals of the individuals who we work alongside are diverse and the supports individuals require to achieve them can vary. This means WALK needs to be creative and adaptable to ensure that the supports we provide are valuable and enable the individuals who use the services of WALK to have a rich and meaningful life.

As well as working directly with the individuals who use the services of WALK this involves building and sustaining strategic alliances and community connections to increase opportunities and expand WALK's reach. This includes working in partnership with individuals natural support networks including families, friends, co-workers and neighbours.

This section contains information about our services, stories from the people we support documenting their journey over the last year and some reflections from a staff member and a volunteer. These stories demonstrate how WALK's vision, mission and values are lived daily in the work that we do.



THREE NEW DAY SERVICE HUBS OPEN:

In Harold's Cross, Sundrive Road and Grangegorman

SUNDRIVE ROAD HUB:

The new hub in Sundrive Road opened in September 2021. The hub is supporting some individuals who were already using the services of WALK, who transitioned over to Sundrive, and some new Service Users.

In 2021 the hub focused on inducting new service users through induction workshops, getting to know you activities, travel training and exploring individuals' interests and goals. Supporting individuals to build positive relationships and connections in the community through accessing community resources including local gyms and classes.

Employment based training, workplace supports, a range of health and wellbeing classes and activities specific to the interests and goals of individuals supported took place. Plus, supports to build individuals independence skills, including money management, were implemented where required.



Mohammed building skills for independence

GRANGEGORMAN HUB:

The new Grangegorman team commenced in September 2021. Grangegorman is the first WALK service to open in North Dublin so a number of planning meetings took place to develop and secure the commencement of the service prior to September start. The team are currently renting a shared space in Carmichael House, with a plan in place to move to a building in Grangegorman in the forthcoming months. All individuals using the Grangegorman service are new to WALK.

Work in 2021 has focused on the initial phases of exploring employment and work experience with individuals. Engaging in one-to-one planning meetings, wellbeing and social activities to support relationship building and enable individuals to sample different activities to support informed decision making in futures planning around their goals and aspirations.



Aaron ready to attend Job Site visit



HAROLD'S CROSS HUB:

The new hub in Harold's Cross at Greenmount Office Park opened in October 2021. The hub is supporting both individuals who were already using the services of WALK, who transitioned over to Harold's Cross, and some new Service Users.

In 2021 the hub focused on supporting new Service Users to transition into the service, on reintegrating Service Users supported into activities of interest within their chosen communities (following lock down) and supporting the thirteen individuals in employment roles and work experience to complete their back to work plans and to return to work.

New Individualised Supports Programme set up

WALK's Individualised Support Programme was set up in October 2021. The Programme provides bespoke supports to individuals who have higher support needs and require a service that is built up gradually in partnership with the person at their own pace.

The Programme is predominantly community based and meets Service Users from their own homes and supports individuals to engage in a range of activities linked to their needs and goals. In 2021, the main focuses of the Individualised Support Programme were to get to know individuals through discovery work, coaching and the sampling of different activities.



Martin's journey from Student Placement to Team Leader

I started on my path in WALK six years ago as a Student on Placement when I was studying Social Care in TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus.

Most of my placement was at the College campus providing supports to two individuals who were studying Creative Digital Media in the College. This involved providing classroom supports and supports to link the individuals in with some of the College Societies, so they could pursue their interests and get to know other students in the College.

When I finished up my placement, I was doing some part time work with another organisation, and subsequently took up a full-time role there. However, during this time I continued to take an interest in the work of WALK and a couple of years later I heard, from a friend that worked at WALK, that a Community Connector role was coming up. I put my CV in, interviewed successfully for the post and took up the role of Community Connector. I was really looking forward to getting started with WALK again, as I like the way WALK do things: Supporting people to find their niche and in not being risk adverse!

I took up the Community Connector role in the Inchicore Day Service team and spent over a year and a half working there. I built a good rapport with the individuals I was working with and really got to understand the importance of recognising and supporting individuals potential. I enjoyed working with the team there and felt the team were really supportive of each other.

In 2020 I applied for a Team Leader role. I was unsuccessful the first time but I was supported through the development and implementation of a six month plan, to focus on building on my leadership skills. In 2021, Team Leader roles were advertised again and I decided to apply.

I felt much more equipped interviewing the second time around, was successful in interview and was given responsibility for working on taking the lead on a new Individualised Support Programme.

I worked, in consultation with my Line Manager, to get it set up from scratch. To begin with this involved getting things moving, identifying goals for the programme and meeting with families and Service Users to get to know them and develop plans.

My hopes for moving into 2022 are to continue to develop the individualised support model of working (this doesn't necessarily mean one to one supports but ensuring supports are bespoke to fulfil the needs and goals of each individual). Plus, continuing to build a natural support network for one individual who doesn't currently have a strong natural support network and to strengthen the natural support networks of other individuals involved in the Programme.



Susan Murray

A WORLD RIGHT ON MY DOORSTEP

Susan started in WALK in September 2021 and has spent the initial period trying out new things in her local area. Before coming to WALK Susan attended a service in Dun Laoghaire. Susan is already working and is happy in her role, so her initial focuses have very much been about supporting her to get to know her local area better, pursuing her interests and building connections.

Susan said: "It's a wonder to me to have the Village Square hub right across from my apartment. When I discovered where the hub was, I thought it was too good to be true! I love being able to pop in for a cup of tea and catch up with everyone when I'm not busy in work.

Since joining WALK I have started a cookery class in Clonmacnoise. I love the cookery because you keep learning new skills all the time. I like to bake in Clonmacnoise because I don't get a chance at home, I just cook at home so it's a lovely change and I'm learning more each week.

On Fridays I meet up with my friend to catch up and practice our bowling in the LeisurePlex beside my apartment, something I wouldn't have done before coming to WALK. It's great you have your things in the hub and you have your community as well.

I also do some other activities around the area. I do art class on a Monday morning in the Rua Red and on a Friday morning I do drama there as well. I love being able to do everything so close to home. Even if the weather is bad it wouldn't stop me going around my community.

I have started writing a book about my life. One of the chapters is called 'My Journey to WALK'. I talk about how I got to know people from different WALK teams. I have a chapter for my late dad called 'A very special man' all dedicated to him. Of course, I have all my school days in there, my playschool days, I remember bits and pieces about them.

My life in general has been fantastic but WALK has made it just that bit extra fantastic!



Kevin finally moves into his own home

2020 was the year Kevin was due to move into his new house, which he had purchased in 2019. As was the way with many people across the country, the pandemic delayed the planned renovation work. So, it was not until late 2020 that Kevin's house was finally finished. Then in January 2021, 13 months after initially purchasing the house, Kevin finally moved into his own home.

Kevin wasn't alone. He had always said that when he got his own house he wanted to have a housemate. To support this, in 2020, WALK collaborated with Lucie Cunningham of The HomeShare. They help older people to find housemates to live with them and through the relationship, empower independent living. With Kevin's list in hand describing his ideal housemate, Lucie set about finding the right match for Kevin.

Kevin was given profiles of potential housemates to go through and chose to meet Gabby. They hit it off straight away and Kevin chose Gabby to be his housemate and tenant. Kevin and Gabby have created a lovely home environment. Kevin is happy to be living with someone who enjoys cooking as much as he does and they have created a number of dishes together. As restrictions have lifted they have gone to see some shows and gigs together and Kevin went to see Gabby perform in a Christmas musical in December.

Kevin has settled in to his new house and knows a number of his neighbours who are always happy to stop for a chat with Kevin and make sure he is getting on alright. Kevin used his back garden to grow his own veg in the summer and plans on getting a greenhouse for a much larger Grow Your Own project in 2022.

One thing Kevin is looking forward to in 2022 is finally having his house warming party – something which he hasn't been able to have due to the pandemic. He is looking forward to having WALK staff, his friends and his new neighbours in, to celebrate and to party.



Kevin & Gabby

FASSEL'S JOURNEY SO FAR

Fassel started in WALK's Galtymore Road service in September 2020. Fassel is a 19-year-old man who was born and raised in Kuwait with his family. Fassel's mum and siblings moved to Ireland when Fassel was in primary school.

When Fassel first came to WALK he had expressed to staff that he did not like Ireland. However, when staff began to get to know Fassel they realised it wasn't that he disliked Ireland, but that he had never travelled outside of Dublin! Fassel said that he wanted to see more of Ireland so in 2021 WALK worked with Fassel to support him to see other areas in Ireland.

In June 2021 Fassel and other individuals who use the service of Galtymore Road interested in travel were supported to plan a day trip to Galway. This included looking up train times and planning ideas for the itinerary for the day together. Staff and service users got the 8am train from Heuston station to Galway and so the journey began! Throughout the day, Fassel explored the shops, stalls and sights of Galway.

Following the visit to Galway Fassel expressed an interest seeing more places in Ireland. In September 2021, Fassel attended a weekend away in Curraclloe and was able to enjoy a range of activities from WALK's on the beach to air hockey.

Travelling to new places and experiencing more of what Ireland has to offer supported Fassel to feel more connected to Ireland and to feel more independent and confident. Fassel began to use the Luas independently, more often, to travel to WALK.

As well as wishing to visit more places in the future, Fassel has a keen interest in classic cars and is keen to work with classic cars.



VOLUNTEER STORY

Brian Murray

Brian started volunteering with WALK in 2021. Using his Drama Facilitation Skills to run drama workshops that support individuals who use the services of WALK to increase their confidence, build up their acting skills and to work together.

Brian said that he got involved with WALK as he saw it as an opportunity to use the skills that he has as a Drama Facilitator, Actor, Director and Writer to support Service Users to participate in drama. He said that he thinks it is an opportunity participants might not get otherwise, because it can be quite competitive and challenging to get involved in drama without prior experience, and that he wanted to provide a safe environment where Service Users could get an opportunity to take part in something that is a great life skill to have.

Brian said that he spends time each week preparing a class for the participants and that it allows him to build on his own skills as a Drama Facilitator and to deliver drama-based games, exercises and role plays that build up participants skills and experience in drama.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE: Brian said, *“In the future I’d like to extend the drama classes to work on putting on a short play.*

I’d also like to support participants to develop further connections outside of WALK in the community, within Dublin, to provide opportunities for individuals to participate in plays and potentially perform in different venues around the City.

To make friends, and to practice a skill and a craft, that gives as much as it takes – and is a great life skill to have.”



Scott Mates

WORKING TOWARDS MY DREAM JOB



Scott Mates started using the services of WALK in September 2017, and from the time he started in WALK his interest and goal was to work in the area of sports coaching. Before starting in WALK Scott had already completed a Kick Start, induction to football coaching, Certificate and played for Lourdes Celtic football club.

After sampling different activities, making new friends and settling in, in his first year Scott was supported to access education in his chosen area. Scott said:

“My career goal is to complete all the modules in FETAC level 6 and get a good job. I chose the Gym Instruction and Soccer Coaching Course at Pearse College because I am very interested in Soccer and Soccer Coaching. I did my level 4 in Dublin South East Community Centre in 2018 and I wanted go onto further education Level 5 in Pearse College and I completed this in 2021. I then started level 6 in Pearse college in September 2021.

The most difficult thing about doing the level 5 was the online classes and not seeing the new students and the tutors in person. The pandemic made college difficult for lots of learners. WALK has helped me with my assignments and the classes I was struggling in and to also get a part time job in Regatta Great Outdoors in the Ilac Centre. My job has a link to my interest in sport and exercise. I have made a lot of friends playing football for Pearse college and college life is enjoyable.”

As for his hopes for his next steps, Scott said:

“I see my future as getting a good job and completing all my College modules.”





LAURA'S JOURNEY...

“I’m Laura, I’ve been supported by WALK since I was 18.

I lived in care since I was 6 and stayed until I was 22. Even when I was an adult I was still living in a house for children. They were going to put me into a hostel, but then WALK got involved in my housing.

I wanted to get out. I knew I didn't want to live in a group house, but I also wasn't sure if being alone was a good thing for me, because I never lived on my own before.

Kevin Barnes worked with me to help everybody to understand and work out what I wanted and how it might work.

At first, I moved into a rented house in Kingswood. It was to be my first time not living in a service and I was also excited about it, but we all weren't too sure about how I would get on. So to help with that we started with me having a housemate.

The idea behind that was to have someone live there with me who wasn't staff and who was independent. Living together we could support each other and keep each other company. I had two housemates over a few years, but it didn't really workout for me. It proved that sharing wasn't what I wanted or needed. It also proved that I could manage on my own better than I originally thought.

When the arrangement with the second housemate ended we agreed not to replace her, for the moment. First, staff were sleeping over a couple of nights a week and now staff only stay over on Saturday night, the rest of the time they finish supporting me in the evening.

I ran into a problem last year with the landlady. I had been in that house for 6 years. She gave me permission to get a dog, then wasn't happy about my pets and wanted me to get rid of them. A couple of months later she gave me notice that she

wasn't going to renew the lease. It wasn't a good experience, and she didn't approach it well with me either. It was a real shock seeing how easily anyone could lose their home. Even if it was one where she nailed the mats to the floor.

Luckily WALK had been working with Circle Housing and when we told them what was happening, they offered to help find me my forever home. We gave them an idea of the type of house I wanted and the area I wanted to live in and they found a place just a couple of streets away.

I moved into my new home in summer 2021 and it's been a lot of change getting used to a smaller house. I know now because it's with Circle that I don't have to worry about a lease ending and having to look for a new home.

I've got furniture that I like, I pay my rent on time and I'm getting to know my neighbours. I do other things too. I'm a gym member and go to classes a few times a week. Which I love. I love horses and until recently I was very involved in a program working with horses run by WALK. I hope to return to that one day.

One of my most favourite roles in life is being a pet owner. I have three pets, two rabbits and a dog. The rabbits are called Oreo and Tinkerbelle and the dog is called Marley. Marley can be a handful, but I love looking after him and taking him for WALK's everyday, especially to the forest. We are working on training at the moment. He's a lovely dog and he's great company. The rabbits are full of personality and Tinkerbelle must think she's a cat, always jumping on tables and sofas.

In the meantime I've started my own business idea. At Christmas and Easter I made up pet hampers and cards with images of my pets on them and sold them. Some went on sale in the Green Kitchen Garden Shop.

Laura Delaney

GOODBYE ZOOM, HELLO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Looking back on 2021, COVID 19 was still hanging around and affecting so many things in my life, but I still had goals I wanted to work towards like making new friends, earning my own money and becoming more independent. I had been taking part in the Oireachtas Work Learning programme, and enjoying it so much.

My favourite department in Leinster House was Catering, as I really enjoyed the tasks such as maintaining stock levels and clearing tables. I also enjoyed working on the reception in Leinster House where I got the chance to talk to visitors, print passes for the visitors and booking meeting rooms. I am a very social person and the program in Leinster House gave me the chance to work with different people, build new relationships and to learn new skills. I liked working as part of a team and being able to spend my lunch and tea breaks with my colleagues.

Unfortunately, due to Covid19 my work experience in Leinster House finished earlier than expected. I was given the chance to apply for a paid position in my favourite department. While still working in my family's local shop and helping deliver shopping to the elderly, I spent a lot of time completing my application and practicing for my interview. I did lots of prep work in WALK's new office. I like it there as I can meet up with my friends and it's easy for me to get to. I recently found out that I passed my interview and have been put onto the job panel for a catering position. I was also happy to get back into the classroom to finish my QQI Level 3 Health and Safety course. This will be useful to me in my new job and I am looking forward to receiving my qualification. I am very excited about my new job and I hope to get started soon.

This year I loved being able to see people in

person again rather than only talking to everyone through zoom. I did lots of fun things and have really enjoyed being able to meet up with my friends and my Line dancing group as I love being with other people having fun.

I hope that life can start returning to normal next year and that we will eventually be able to stop wearing masks and finally say goodbye to Zoom!



LUIS' ANIMATION AMBITIONS

Luis is an attendee of Galtymore Day Service. From when Luis started in WALK, his dream was to work in animation. Luis has a deep interest and knowledge of all things transformers and the cinematics of making such movies. Luis also enjoys making his own fan art and combining different characters together through an app called Blender.

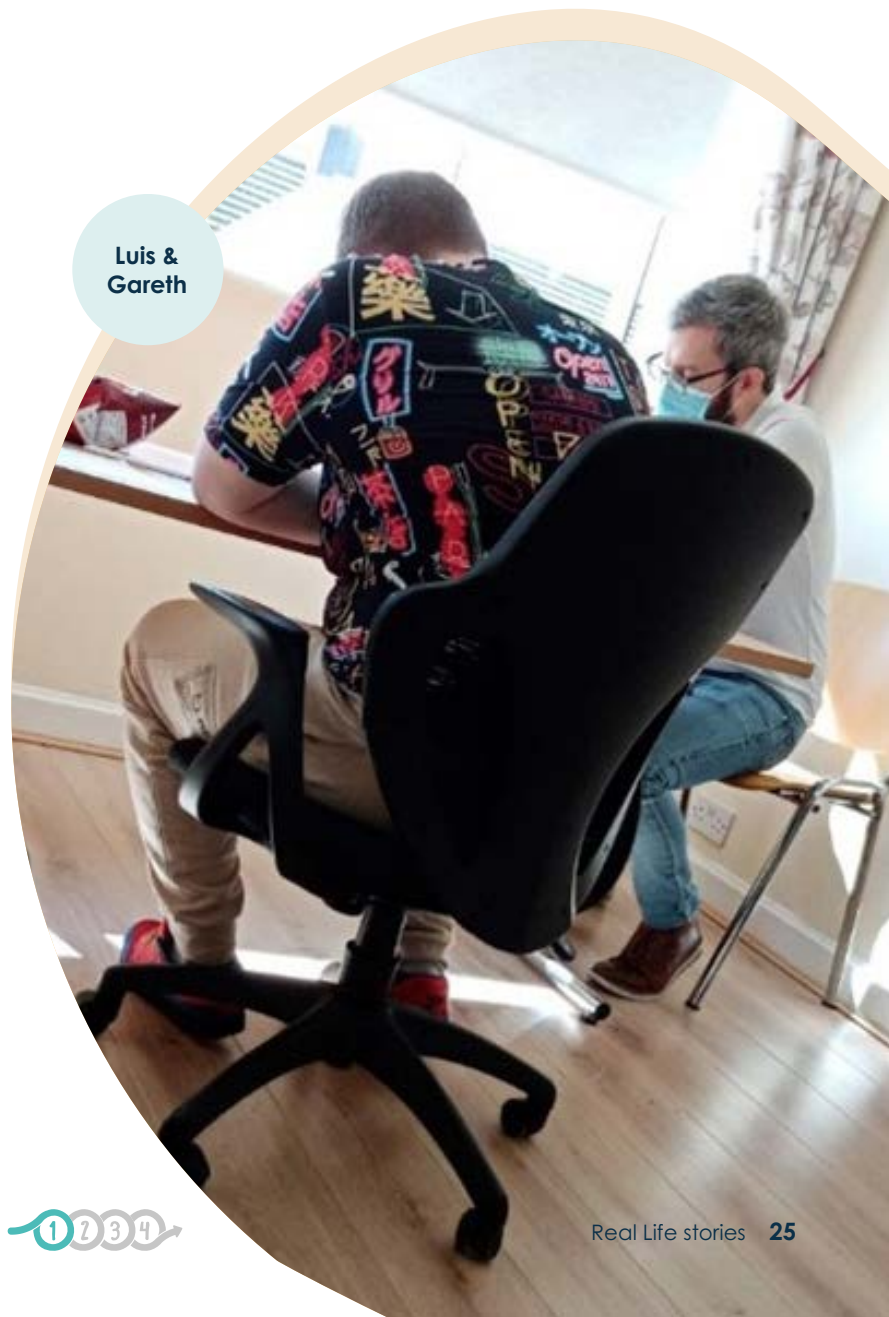
Luis researched animation courses with his keyworker and Ballyfermot college were offering an animation course. As a result of this Luis' goal is now to attend his dream college in Ballyfermot, to do a course in animation. Ballyfermot college is in Luis local area, so is very accessible for him. He will be able to walk there from his house.

In a bid to prepare for this, Luis keyworker searched online for local animation tutors in Dublin, and contacted the Vice Principle of Ballyfermot College to ask about Tutors. Following this Luis started to do one to one animation sessions with an animation tutor – Gareth.

Gareth's work with Luis has been ongoing since May 2021. Luis and Gareth meet every Thursday. Gareth has been helping Luis to work on his techniques and give him good knowledge of the animation field. Doing the weekly animation sessions with Gareth is building up Luis's skills and confidence so that he will be ready for college, including working on pieces of animation and progressing with his animation ideas. Luis always looks forward to his Thursday morning sessions with his animation teacher.

The next steps planned for Luis animation sessions are to relocate the sessions to a rented room in Ballyfermot College, to familiarise Luis more with the College environment and for him to meet other students studying there.

Eventually Luis' ambition is to work in the field of animation.



Luis & Gareth



Joseph Lynch ON MY PATH TO WORKING WITH ANIMALS:



Joseph started at WALK's Inchicore Day Service Hub in September 2019. During his first year he tried out different things to help him to make choices about what he'd like to focus on in the future and to support him to build up his independence and confidence.

During conversation, Joseph's dad mentioned to the Inchicore Hub Team Lead about Joseph's passion for animals. This led the team to explore different opportunities with Joseph linked to his interest in animals, to connect him too. Joseph took horse-riding lessons at Fettercairn Youth Horse Project and visited a local farm whilst on a respite weekend away in Curraclloe.

Whilst engaging in these activities with Joseph staff observed his passion for animals first-hand, which led them to explore further opportunities. As a result of this, they linked in with Airfield Estate around voluntary opportunities with animals.

In 2021 when Joseph first visited Airfield Estate - he loved it from the first day he went there. Walking around the grounds and looking at the plants and trees in the garden area. He especially loves spending time with the animals. So, following this, Joseph started volunteering at Airfield one day a week. Airfield has goats, pigs, hens, donkeys and calves. Joseph spends most of his time with the calves. He has named one 'Annabelle'. As he attends Airfield weekly, he has watched Annabelle grow up and loves seeing how much she has grown week to week. Joseph has got involved in a mixture of tasks at Airfield and wasn't worried about getting his hands dirty!

Last Summer, Joseph also took part in a Horticulture Project at Airfield Estate. This project taught him about the various plants and berries at Airfield, and how to use them in art and in tea making. Joseph created a Mandala as part of this project. The centre of the art piece represents happiness, and the twigs lead out to various petals which represent what brings Joseph happiness. Joseph really enjoyed taking part in the project.

Airfield Estate runs a work experience programme, in partnership with WALK where Service Users can build their vocational skills through work rotations. Staff spoke to Joseph about the work experience programme and Joseph said it is definitely something that he'd like to try. Joseph is planning to apply for the work experience programme at Airfield in 2022 – to get one step closer to his future goal of working with animals.

Joseph said: "The animals make me feel happy. I am excited to work with the animals more and to help look after them."

WALK Peer Rep Project

OUR RIGHTS, OUR LIVES PROJECT

A grant from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Grant Scheme enabled WALK to deliver a Peer Rep project. The project involved recruiting Peer Reps from WALK's different Service locations. Delivering an induction day and a series of participatory education and training workshops focused on increasing Peer Reps knowledge of their rights and building on their skills to advocate on the issues that matter most to themselves and their peers.



Thank you to Mary Seery Kearny for launching WALK's Peer Rep event

The production of a documentary video, highlighting the experiences of Peer Reps and some of the rights challenges to persons with a disability in Ireland:

CLICK HERE TO VIEW



Plus, the delivery of a final project event which brought together Peer Reps, family members, community members and representatives from other disability organisations to celebrate the project and explore the changes they would like to see happen in Ireland for persons with a disability.

The ongoing vision for the project in 2022 is that, supported by mentors from their service locations, Peers Reps will continue to meet with their Peers to gain feedback on what is going well and any areas that they would like to see change.



PANDEMIC OUTCOMES & INNOVATION

Learning & Development

2021 presented unique challenges for WALK's commitment to continuous learning and high quality staff training. We responded to the ever-changing health crisis by utilising virtual learning and training environments. This response was possible because our staff showed incredible willingness to adapt.

Virtual learning placed significant demands on staff such as: getting to grips with new technologies, becoming comfortable communicating with others via video and utilising their home spaces to upskill in an artificial environment.

For new members of the WALK team, on-boarding was conducted virtually. In an unusual twist of events, this new way of doing things meant we placed significant emphasis on keeping in contact with new team members. The Learning and Development team played a more prominent role in on-boarding in 2021 and proved to be invaluable in building relationships with our new employees.



VACCINATIONS AT MUIRÍOSA HUB AND CHEEVERSTOWN

The start of 2021 saw vaccinations become available for WALK staff and for the individuals who use the services of WALK. WALK worked with both the Muiríosa Hub and Cheeverstown, who facilitated Service User vaccinations. WALK's Deputy CEO, Catherine Kelly, and Healthcare Coordinator, Wendy Farmer, were involved in the delivery of the vaccinations in Cheeverstown.

Staff teams throughout WALK worked tirelessly, to ensure all individuals who use the services of WALK were provided with information in a way that was accessible to them regarding the COVID 19 vaccination and the vaccination process. To support individuals to make an informed decision around if they wished to receive the vaccine and to support individuals to understand the vaccine process. Many of the individuals who use WALK's services were also supported to attend their vaccine appointments by WALK staff.

Throughout 2021, WALK liaised with the HSE's COVID Vaccination Programme in Disability Services, to ensure individuals were able to receive their primary vaccinations and their booster vaccines successfully.





Anne Tuohy CELEBRATING 60 IN LOCKDOWN!

In March 2021 Anne Tuohy celebrated her 60th birthday in lockdown. This was a huge milestone for Anne and one she was looking forward to for years. With all the restrictions Anne was unable to have the massive party in the Red Cow with her family and friends as she had hoped. In true Anne style she wasn't going to let lockdown stop her celebrating her 60th birthday.

Anne instead worked on organising her party with staff developing a guest list for the party and sending out invitations. Anne and staff organised that her friends would come to the garden at allocated times so the party would be going on all day. Anne was delighted with how it went – as she had a new person to celebrate with every hour!

The Celebrations continued into the weekend, when others called in to see Anne and celebrate her birthday with her.

Old and new friends and family that were unable to attend the garden party sent messages of congratulations and birthday wishes, that Anne got to watch and enjoy over and over.

When restrictions were lifted Annes first trip was to her daughter Grace to continue the celebrations in her garden!

Next year Anne hopes to finally have her party in the Red Cow!

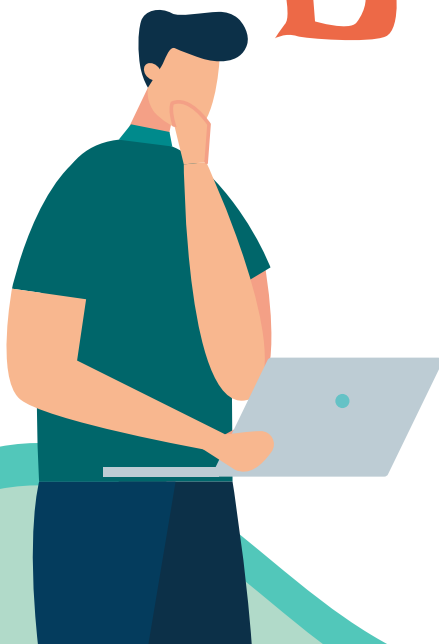


CAREER MENTORSHIPS



Pandemic conditions presented many challenges for those keen to make progress in employment so as a Team Goal the Walkinstown Green team decided to launch a mentorship programme with support from industry professionals to help individuals work on their career goals.

A total of 19 mentorships were completed in 2021 drawing from local business owners to Managers and Directors made accessible through the open doors initiative and staff also attended these meetings (predominantly online) supporting not only the Mentee but the Mentor too. Billy Ryan, a Mentor from The Kerry Group to WALK participant Grace Gallagher says this of his experience:



“The experience was far more rewarding than I expected. I had concerns about what kind of advice or support the mentee would need and whether my experience would translate to them. I need not have been concerned, the mentee had all the answers, she just needed a bit of confidence built up and a little bit of encouragement and you could see the progression! WALK allowed this to be flexible and that really worked. At the start we tried to have a monthly call, but we found bi-weekly, 30min calls worked a lot more effectively and kept the momentum. WALK were really supportive. Having staff on the calls to support the discussion was great and it provided a link back to WALK centrally to enable more effective follow up. The team back in the office also helped support with things like CV's and offline conversations so everyone rowed in to support Grace. I enjoyed the experience immensely. Going into it I didn't know what to expect but it really

helped me learn more about how we can help people by just simply giving them our time to have open conversations and give them feedback. I feel that we built Grace's confidence throughout the process and helped her to understand that careers aren't linear tracks, there are multiple paths to your goals in life.”

Billy's Mentee Grace said this of her experience, “I got a lot out of it. Working with and planning out what I want to do with the rest of my life is a good thing, he's helping me through it. Getting the experience from Billy was a positive. He was saying the first time we met that it would be great working together. I really enjoyed it and was sad it came to an end. It all worked well and I enjoyed the experience 100 percent.”

The Walkinstown Green team consider the initiative a huge success as it played a vital role in keeping momentum around employment at a time when it was difficult to find that. It has increased WALK's access to a network of employers and led to successful transitions into employment too!



WORKING WITH OTHERS

WALK continuously work to build connections, Strategic Alliances and Partnerships with community organisations, businesses, educators and national organisations to increase the opportunities available to the people we support and to progress our Strategic plan, in line with our vision and mission.

Below is a snapshot of some the projects and programmes WALK are currently engaged in and some stories of how working alongside others to build capacity and create new opportunities, has made a difference to individuals' lives.



OWL Trainee, Sarah Carroll, working remotely in 2021

OIREACHTAS WORK LEARNING PROGRAMME (OWL):

The Oireachtas Work Learning Programme is facilitated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in collaboration with WALK and KARE. The programme is also supported by the Adult Education Service run by the City of Dublin Education and Training Board and by the Health Service Executive. The Programme is an applied workplace learning, development and socialisation programme for adults with an intellectual disability.

In 2021, due to COVID restrictions in place, it wasn't possible for participants to work in Leinster House. However, Roisin Deery (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer) secured remote working opportunities with the different Departments starting in the Summer of 2021. A series of online social catch ups were also facilitated where OWL trainees and staff from the different Departments had the opportunity to meet up online which was really important to trainees in keeping them connected.

Head of HR Margaret Crawley set up a series of meetings with the different Departments between Summer and Christmas of 2021 to identify potential employment openings for

graduates. Following this, WALK graduates were supported to prepare for interview and all five successfully secured a place on a panel for employment roles in the civil service. All the graduates will be supported to prepare for commencing their employment roles in 2022.

WALK are hugely grateful to Ceann Comhairle, Sean O Fearghail who has been a huge supporter of the OWL Programme; staff members Margaret Crawley, Roisin Deery, Aoife Branigan and Peter Furlong (KARE) for their commitment and work to ensure participants were able to continue to access and succeed in the OWL Programme in 2021, despite the challenges presented by COVID.





Eimear's story WALKways TALLAGHT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

The WALKways Tallaght University Hospital Programme is a year long transition programme for adults with intellectual disabilities which commenced, as a partnership between Tallaght University Hospital, WALK and KARE in 2017.

The programme enables participants to engage in a series of work rotations in order to make informed decisions around their future career choices and build their vocational skills to access employment opportunities in the open labour market following completion of the programme.

The WALKways Tallaght Hospital Programme developed partnerships with 4 new Departments in the Hospital in 2021, which provided new opportunities for trainees engaging in the programme.

Eimear Gannon was one of the first WALKways trainees to begin working in the Phlebotomy department as part of the WALKways Programme in Tallaght University Hospital in March 2021. Eimear said: "I enjoyed working in the department and I enjoyed getting to know all the staff."

In the Phlebotomy department as a trainee, Eimear worked very hard and was kept busy all the time, due to the active environment. Eimear said:

"I was responsible for collecting the urgent samples, GP blood samples and blood samples in the green and purple trays and I put them onto my trolley. I signed a form, which is like a checklist for going down to the labs and back. I signed my name, the date, the day and the time I went to the labs. For good hygiene, I used hand sanitiser and wore gloves and then I delivered the blood samples to the different labs."

While Eimear was a trainee in the Phlebotomy department, the team won an award for Good Hand Hygiene. "I worked during the COVID-19 Pandemic. When coming in and exiting the hospital, I use hand gel. I also keep 2 metres away from others and wear a face covering."



“I love working in phlebotomy and having conversations with the staff.”

“I enjoyed delivering the blood samples to the labs because it kept me busy. I enjoyed getting to know all staff names.” Eimear says she found nothing hard or difficult when learning the task at the beginning, despite all the steps required for the task.

In July 2021, The Phlebotomy department advertised a position for a Laboratory Attendant role and the WALKways trainees working in the Phlebotomy department were informed of the new position.

Eimear said: “WALKways staff helped me to prepare for the interview. I had an interview and I got good news from the Phlebotomy Manager and Nicole that I got the job as a Laboratory Attendant in the

Phlebotomy department,” Eimear said. “I enjoyed the interview. I did interviews before in town for the WALKways Programme. I felt happy that I got the job! And one of the staff told me ‘Welcome to our team!’ – Now I know everyone’s names!”

“I wear a blue Phlebotomy uniform and my hospital ID badge. Each morning I wash my hands after I get ready for work. I change the big and small sharp containers. I am responsible for the stock on the Phlebotomist trollies, and they take them to the wards.”

Eimear was required to complete online HSEland training as part of her induction in the Phlebotomy department, as well induction training conducted by hospital staff.

In conversations with Eimear while she was a trainee, Eimear spoke about her goal to be busy at work and to earn her own money. Eimear had a preference to work Monday to Friday, to allow time to spend on the weekends socialising with her Basketball team.

Eimear’s new position in the Phlebotomy Department in TUH ticks all the boxes for Eimear and still allows her to enjoy her free time.

Eimear said: “I love working in phlebotomy and having conversations with the staff.” Eimear has developed many relationships with the staff in the department and this has reflected on Eimear’s confidence in her new role.

A photograph of Amy Landers, a woman with glasses and a blue surgical mask, wearing a light blue polo shirt with a 'WALK' logo. She is standing in a hospital room with medical supplies and a '2' sign on the wall.

Amy Landers – STARTING OUT IN TALLAGHT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Phlebotomy Alphabet Story

by Amy Landers

A day in the life of Phlebotomy department
Busy doing blood tests all day long
Clients fainting
Doctors forms
Everyone waiting
Filling up racks with blood samples
Getting patients names and addresses
Haematology deliveries
Immunology blood samples
Just take a seat the phlebotomist said
Kind and caring healthcare workers
Laboratories
Microbiology lab
Nurses taking blood samples
Outpatient appointments
Phlebotomists
Queuing up for ages
Repeating patients bloods
So many patients coming in
Transfusions
Under pressure
Very busy department
Wondering when they will be called for
their appointment
Xmas time a busy time in this department
Yes please hurry up and let my shift be
finished the nurse said
Zzzzzzzz time to sleep at last!

My thoughts about starting my placement in Tallaght University Hospital: “I was very nervous before I started, however it didn’t take me long to settle in.

I really enjoyed working in the phlebotomy department in my first rotation. I really enjoyed the role and working with all the staff in the department.

When not at work, I was in isolation at home so I decided to get creative. I wrote a poem on my experience in phlebotomy.

When the poem was complete, I gave it to the Phlebotomy manager. The manager was delighted to receive my poem. Later that week, the manager put my poem into a frame and hung it in the Phlebotomy department. The poem was also uploaded on to ‘tuhsocialsociety’ Instagram page. I felt very proud”.

In the future my hope is to work in Tallaght University Hospital. I really enjoyed delivering the blood samples to the Labs and interacting with staff in the department

“I was very nervous before I started, however it didn’t take me long to settle in”

DPL
BATHROOM WORLD

Leonard's story

WALK PEER ABILITY SUPPORTED TRANSITION PROGRAMME



WALK PEER Ability is a Supported Transition Programme, working in collaboration with special schools to guide and support students in their career discovery and to access and transition to mainstream opportunities in Further Education, Training, and Employment.

Leonard Kavanagh finished school with St. Ita's, Drogheda in June 2021. He dreamed of having a job and his own home but living in foster homes and attending a special school meant that a transition to disability services was his most likely path.

However, engaging with the WALK PEER supported transition project in September 2019, Leonard found the confidence to map out his own path. Not letting the COVID pandemic get in his way he completed a successful work experience placement with DPL while in school, accepted a paid work trial over the summer after leaving school and earned a permanent job in September 2021.

Leonard is now saving for his own apartment and says that the help and support of his WALK Careers and Employment Facilitator, the school staff and his DPL Manager have made his dreams come true. Since starting work with DPL, Leonard has completed his driver theory test and has gained his forklift licence.

Next step Leonard is working on is, eventually, securing his own apartment.

Saoirse's story

WALK REAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The WALK REAL Supported Employment Programme, is working in collaboration with Social Enterprises and employers to guide and support participants to access Training and Employment in the open labour market.

Saoirse Curtis was looking to get her foot onto the employment ladder and joined the WALK REAL Ability programme in Airfield Estate, Dundrum. Not knowing what she wanted to work at or where she might fit into the world of work was proving challenging for Saoirse. So, an opportunity to try a variety of jobs across a range of working environments in a safe way was needed and Airfield Estate proved to be the perfect place.

Airfield Estate is a 38-acre working farm, with gardens, café, restaurant, and museum filled with people who have a passion for food and nature. Even though the COVID pandemic was in full swing at the beginning of 2021 with most businesses closed, Saoirse wanted to try to get her career started.

Travelling from Tallaght to Dundrum on public transport twice per week and sampling different roles across the Airfield estate, Saoirse found her place with the facilities team. Her passion for having things in order and her work ethic soon earned her a job in Airfield. So, she quickly progressed from REAL Ability trainee to Airfield Estate employee, proving that ability to work just needs opportunity to work, gain experience and build confidence.

WALK REAL
ABILITY PROJECT AT AIRFIELD ESTATE



Stephen's story FROM SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Stephen Lyons has had a long and winding journey to work, but it is all working out now.

From an interest in film making to studying at TUD (Tallaght) Stephen decided he wanted to keep film as a hobby and progress into employment - but COVID 19 got in the way. As with a lot of things during the COVID pandemic, Stephen found opportunities to progress his career ambitions few and far between.

A brief chat with a new Job Coach opened a small window of opportunity in the Green Kitchen café, Walkinstown, which Stephen grabbed with both hands, literally. With the economy beginning to reopen, the Green Kitchen Café, part of Walkinstown Green Social Enterprises, began to get very busy again and needed new kitchen staff. Stephen decided that this was just the start he needed to get his career going again. Taking on the role of Kitchen Porter trainee, supported by Lysa, he quickly demonstrated his value to the team.

Over the summer months Stephen took on the busy weekend shifts and made himself available whenever needed and continued to work with his Job Coach on what the future might bring. By the end of 2021 a new opportunity opened up for Stephen with Lidl in Ballyfermot. Taking on a 10-week training and induction challenge, Stephen is now a permanent employee of Lidl. On signing his contract with Lidl, Stephen said he was over the moon to join a company that was prepared to give him a chance to prove himself, but sad to leave the guys in the Green Kitchen Café who gave him a start.



**Walkinstown
Green Social
Enterprises**

Part of the **WALK** family





Gavin's story: **RETHINK IRELAND, ABILITY TO WORK**

In 2020 WALK was awarded funding from Rethink Ireland as part of their Ability to Work Fund 2020-2023. The Ability to Work Fund supports not for profit organisations to empower more people with disabilities to gain employment.

The Ability to Work Fund supported WALK's Careers and Employment Services, in 2021, to engage with Lidl to source employment pathways for people supported by WALK. Through advocacy from his local team of day and residential supports, Gavin was identified as someone who was likely suitable for such an employment programme.

At this point Team Gavin sprung into action. Team Gavin involves supports from day, residential and employment services. Gavin was supported to prepare for and attend an interview with Lidl in August. Gavin was successful at this interview and began a 10-week probation period of employment with Lidl in September.

Gavin would work 2 days a week and 5 hours per day. Gavin's team (which now includes Lidl) helped him prepare for the start of employment by making sure he had the correct clothes, making a plan for what would happen on the mornings of work, who would be on site during work, what would happen after work,

RETHINK IRELAND Our Social Innovation Fund

how we were going to know what was going well and not going well. Gavin got on great during probation and even surprised his support team by excelling at till training – something his team thought he may struggle with. Gavin's probation ended in November, and he was rewarded with an initial 3 day / 12-hour week contract. Gavin and Lidl are delighted.

This would not have happened without the collaborative efforts of Gavin's team from various areas of the organisation and the relationship developed with Lidl. Of course, none of this would have happened without Gavin's determination.



BULBS FOR BEES

WALK renewed its partnership with An Gaisce this year. Marion, Project Manager, from An Gaisce visited WALK to talk about the Gaisce President Award and the benefits of getting involved including confidence building, meeting new people, developing your interests and discovering new opportunities. A number of individuals who use the services of WALK signed up for the Gaisce award and will complete the award in 2022.

Following the talk, WALK took on the An Gaisce Bulbs for Bee's challenge. Gaisce had asked everyone in Ireland to plant pollinator-friendly bulbs to help safeguard the future of our vital bee population. As, one third of our 98 wild bee species are threatened with extinction in Ireland, and due to our modern landscape no longer having many early flowering plants this makes it a very difficult for them to find enough food.

Prospective Gaisce participants were happy to take up the challenge and got involved in planting the bulbs in the grounds of WALK's Clonmacnoise site to provide nourishment for the bees. Local community group Blooming Crumlin

also teamed up with WALK to mark the occasion.

Andy Johnson, one of the individuals who uses the services of WALK who got involved in Bulbs for Bees challenge said, "It was cold day in November but there was still a lot of us helping out. We dug up the ground and planted the bulbs that will help the first bees and butterflies that come out.

I hope to be doing the An Gaisce Presidents award in 2022 so this was a good way to start doing things with them and I'm happy I helped the bees."

Luke, who uses the services of WALK and has an interest, and a talent, for cookery volunteered to bake scones for the volunteers.

EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

Walk for WALK 2021

WALK for WALK went ahead again in 2021, after an alternative 60-minute local area walk having taken place in 2020 – due to COVID restrictions in place at the time. Participants were happy to get back to the traditional walk in the Wicklow Mountains.

A huge thanks to the WALK for WALK event organisers and all those who got involved in the walk. A fantastic €1,480.00 was raised.



Thank you so much to the Walk for WALK team and especially the ladies who completed the ENTIRE 140km of the WICKLOW WAY as part of this year's Walk for WALK
#WALKers #Champions



Andrew Johnson (top) Paul Valentine (right) involved as artists in the calendar project



WALK calendar produced

A project planning group, made up of staff and individuals who use the services of WALK was set up again in 2021 to produce a WALK Calendar (for 2022). The images for the calendar are produced by individuals who use the services of WALK who have a passion for art. The theme of this years calendar this year was: 'People and Things that I love'.

Olwyn Butler – RAISING MONEY FOR THE PETER MCVERRY TRUST

Olwyn receives supports from WALK's day and residential services. Something which Olwyn is passionate about is social justice. One area of social justice Olwyn is particularly interested in is homelessness. Opportunities for Olwyn to become involved in supporting homeless services were curtailed during the pandemic.

In October, Olwyn decided she wanted to give back to the community and explore her keen interest in the homelessness sector in Ireland. While she was waiting to acquire a volunteer role with a homelessness service, she decided to create a fundraiser for the 2021 Peter McVerry's Christmas 'Secret Santa' appeal. Olwyn organised and hosted a takeaway coffee morning in Longmile Road where she raised over €160. This enabled her to choose and purchase a number of items for shoeboxes. The items were then packed into Christmas shoeboxes, for various ages, that she wrapped in Christmas paper. Olwyn then presented the shoeboxes to staff at Peter McVerry Trust to be distributed amongst their service users.

This was a huge personal achievement for Olwyn which she has taken great pride and satisfaction from. It is now a tradition that she hopes to continue every Christmas



COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND

On occasion, WALK hosts events and events are also organised by some of WALK's local Community Connections. Fundraising is never the main aim of WALK events. The aim is for WALK to link in with the local community and create stronger bonds and ties locally.

However, where funds are raised they go straight into WALK's Community Project Fund. The Community Project Fund can be applied for by both staff and the people we support. Requests for funding need to link directly to one of the Community Project Funds funding categories. These are:

COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

To develop local events or projects that are inclusive and benefit people we support and the local community.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT:

To buy equipment small or large that would benefit the people we support 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.

IN 2021, 12 PROJECTS WERE FUNDED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND, WITH A JOINT SPEND OF €4613.13

Here are some of the areas that the Community Project Fund supported in 2021:

- Supporting individuals with an interest in live music, to put on a music event
- Supporting an individual with a passion for art to prepare for and deliver an art exhibition
- Holistic therapies, to support Service User health and wellbeing
- Support to buy flower beds for a gardening project so one of the individuals who uses the services of WALK could brighten up his garden
- To purchase a covering for outdoor classroom in Walkinstown Green



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 and strategic oversight. According to our Governing document the board is made up of non-executive Directors.

The Board of Directors have a range of unique skills that support them to Govern WALK effectively. Their skills include, but are not limited to: Legal expertise, business management, the community and voluntary sector and expert by experience (family member).

The Board oversees that WALK is Compliant with the Charities Governance Code.

WALK is compliant with the Charities Governance Code

100% of Board Departmental Plan targets for 2021 met



- Governance code self-assessment from the charities regulator completed for 2021 and actions implemented accordingly.
- WALK AGM hosted in March 2021, and one new board member appointed.
- 2020 Annual report developed, with board involvement in line with good- governance. Report is available on the WALK website.
- Board consistently worked towards the promotion of WALK in their own communities.
- Annual performance appraisal held with the CEO, and bi-monthly informal supervision held with Chairperson prior to board meeting.
- Sub-committee appointed to complete an annual review of board performance and report findings back to board.
- Annual return to the charities regulator completed on time.
- All relevant information submitted to the lobbying register on time.
- Annual Financial Statements approved for 2020, published and available on website.
- Operational plan in place, in line with 2021 – 2024 strategic plan.

WALK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting attendance 2021

First name	Surname	February	March	May	July	September	November
John	Bourke						
Peter	Byrne						
Gavin	Murphy						
Gerry	Donohoe						
Betty	Brophy						
Pat	McCarthy						
Gerry	Moran						
Michael	Hussey						
Kay	Broderick						
*Bernie	Dunne						
*Gerry	Hughes						

NON-BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE:

First name	Surname	February	March	May	July	September	November
Joe	Mason						
Catherine	Kelly						

- Attended meeting
- Absent from meeting
- No longer sitting on board or Directors
- Had not commenced on the Board of Directors yet

*Bernie Dunne commenced on WALK's Board of Directors in March 2021.

*Gerry Hughes resigned from WALK's Board of Directors in September 2021.

*Gerry Moran resigned from WALK's Board in March 2021.

*Michael Hussey resigned from WALK's Board in March 2021.

*Kay Broderick resigned from WALK's Board of Directors in November 2021.

Eamonn Teague attended all board meetings during the year, apart from the March board meeting, to provide information to the board relevant to his areas of expertise.

Brid Corr Nolan attended the September, November and December board meetings to provide information

to the board relevant to her areas of expertise.

Presentations were delivered by key staff members and individuals who use the Services of WALK to provide an update to the board on the different focuses of WALK's Service locations.

SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

RISK, QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

The objective of the Risk, Quality and Governance Subcommittee is to oversee and evaluate the Risk Management systems in place in WALK. To be the Board Champions and leaders on Quality and encourage involvement by the Board thus embedding best quality practice at Board level.

To ensure the Board continues to meet all of its legal obligations and to ensure that action plans from any Board Governance system are completed. There are two executive Directors on this subcommittee. Gerry Donohoe and Peter Byrne attend bimonthly meetings.

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

The objective of the Finance Subcommittee is to review 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 External Audits.

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

There are three executive Directors on this subcommittee Gerry Donohoe, Patrick McCarthy and Bernie Dunne.

RENUMERATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Pat McCarthy and John Bourke sit on the Remuneration Subcommittee and liaise with the CEO.



TRIPLE LOCK SYSTEM:

- 1** WALK are fully compliant with the Governance Code.
- 2** We are signed up to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising
- 3** Accounts are prepared using the Statement of Recommended Practice

As well as completing the triple lock system, we undertake the following internal measures to ensure accountability and governance are strong within WALK:

- Regular internal audits in each location including audits on health and safety, finances of the people we support, person centred planning and clinical systems
- Annual external accounts audit
- Audited accounts and Annual Reports available on our website
- HIQA inspection reports available on our website
- Fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority requirements
- Fully compliant with the Companies Registration Office requirements Protected disclosures policy.

INCOME STATEMENT:

	2021	2020
	€	€
Income	9,344,842	7,906,320
Expenditure	9,345,680	7,840,962
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	(838)	65,358

Balance Sheet

Fixed Assets	6,189,157	4,770,887
Current Assets	1,347,720	1,259,091
Current Liabilities	1,017,614	912,298
Net Current Assets	330,106	346,793
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	6,519,263	5,117,680
Creditors > 1 Year	571,569	642,635
Total Net Assets	5,947,694	4,475,045

Charity Funds

Restricted Funds	5,523,915	4,053,960
Unrestricted Funds	423,779	421,085
	5,947,694	4,475,045

You can read WALK's
Financial Statement for
2021 here



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 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

WALK have a NO TOLERANCE approach to any form of abuse.

Through education, training, awareness, policy, procedure, gate keeping, leadership and partnership we promote a culture which supports this ethos. 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. WALK's Designated Officers are Catherine Kelly, Deputy CEO and Eamonn Teague, Director of Residential Services.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

WALK welcomes feedback from all stakeholders and seeks to receive this feedback in many different ways. WALK uses this information to plan for good quality services.

It is the policy of WALK to provide a transparent process for complaints made against the organisation and to record 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 Feedback and Complaints Policy on our website or you can contact the Head Office for a copy to be sent out to you.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY AND STATEMENT

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. You can find WALK's Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement on our website or you can contact the Head Office for a copy to be sent out to you.

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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Health and Safety Committee is an internal group represented by the Health and Safety Officer for WALK and a cross section of WALK staff, from across WALK's Service locations. The purpose of this Committee is to review and feedback on all health and safety systems and to ensure health and safety systems are implemented.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Learning and Development Committee reviews the learning and development requirements and opportunities for staff across WALK.

CLINICAL RISK AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Clinical Risk and Oversight Committee meetings ensure that WALK is meeting all legal and best practice clinical requirements. Ensures that all WALK practices are following a human right based approach. Plus, ensures that all WALK's work is conducted in line with the low arousal philosophy. There is internal and external representation on the Oversight Committee.

NEXT STEPS

WALK will focus on progressing the three Strategic Goals and four Strategic Actions contained in its Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.

Strategic Plan progress will be reviewed regularly, against WALK's Operational and Departmental Plans, via bi-monthly Departmental Planning meetings and as part of the agenda for Board meetings.

Regular updates will be provided to all Stakeholders via WALK's website.


The challenges WALK faces as we work on our 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan are:


Ensuring that WALK remains a sustainable and independent organisation and being able to continue to provide a quality person centred service, in the face of cutbacks.



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