



WALK ANNUAL REPORT



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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:



WALK ARE...

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



our services

WALK SUPPORTS ADULTS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SERVICE AREAS:



WALK's Supported Living Services span across 18 different community settings and consist of a range of individualised and shared living arrangements. Supports are focused on the needs of the individual and are based on the principles of choice, rights and opportunity.

SUPPORTED LIVING LOCATIONS

Knocklyon Dublin 16	Templeogue Dublin 6W	Kingswood Dublin 24
Kilmeague Co Kildare	Firhouse Dublin 24	Drimnagh Dublin 12
Inchicore Dublin 8	Kingswood Dublin 24	Kingswood Dublin 24
Knocklyon Dublin 16	Drimnagh Dublin 12	Drimnagh Dublin 12
Clondalkin Dublin 22	Walkinstown Dublin 12	Inchicore Dublin 8
Kingswood Dublin 24	Walkinstown Dublin 12	Drimnagh Dublin 12

WALK's Day Support Services consist of 12 Day Support Hubs and three Project sites. Two new Day Support hubs opened in 2022. WALK Day Support teams work to identify and support opportunities for individuals to participate in training, education, employment and any other areas linked to their goals and interests within their local communities.

DAY SUPPORT LOCATIONS

Crown Centre: Unit 8, Westpark, Tallaght, D24	Village Square: Unit 6, The Village Square, Tallaght, D24	Bridgecourt: Unit 1, Bridgecourt Office Park, Walkinstown Avenue, Walkinstown, D12
Sundrive Road: 52 Sundrive Road, Crumlin, D12	Galtymore Road: 135 Galtymore Road, Drimnagh, D12	Harold's Cross: 1&2 Greenmount House, Greenmount Office Park, Harold's Cross Road, D12
Walkinstown: 1 Longmile Road, Walkinstown, D12	Waverley: Waverley Academy, Waverley Business Park, Old Naas Road, D12	Nutgrove: Block B3, Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, D14
Crumlin: Clonmacnoise Grove, Kimmage, D12	Grangegorman: 7 Marne Villas, Phibsborough, D7	Swords: 2nd Floor Chamber Building, North Street, Swords

our services

WALKWAYS PROJECT SITES

Tallaght University Hospital,
Centre for Learning and
Development, Tallaght University
Hospital, Tallaght, D24

OWL, Houses of the Oireachtas,
4 Kildare Street, D2

Pfizer, Grange Castle,
Clondalkin, Co. Dublin

WALK provides a Community Inclusion service that focuses on building the capacity of the people we support to become actively involved in their communities.

WALK Respite service delivers community-based weekends away that provide a break to families.

Walkinstown Green Social Enterprise Ltd offers vocational work experience placements and supported employment opportunities to WALK service users.

WALK's PEER Ability Programme provides equal employment routes for students from three special schools, to bridge the gap to further education, training, and employment.

WALK's Clinical Support Services provide a range of health, psychological and safeguarding supports to the people who use WALK's services and provide support to staff teams in these areas.

WALK's Finance and Administration Team incorporates Finance and accounts, Information Technology, Human Resources, Facilities and Procurement and Administration and provide support to WALK teams in these areas.

WALK's Learning and Development Coordinator has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of WALK's Learning and Development Policy.

OUR FUNDING:

WALK's principal funder is the HSE. 96% of WALK's funding comes from the HSE. WALK's other sources of income are from donations and grants. Through an NDA & Comic Relief Grant, National Lottery Grant and Pobal Grant, through residential Housing and Day Services income; and through income from Fundraising.



chairperson's statement

I am delighted to present our Annual Report for 2022. 2022 was the second year of WALK's four-year Strategic Plan, which focuses on looking inwards to: **Renew Our Mission, deepen our culture and strengthen our capacity for person centred service.**



One of the roles of the Board is to monitor progress on the Strategic Plan and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Joe and the Departments in WALK for their steadfast work in progressing the Strategic Plan goals over the past year.

2022 has been a challenging year for reasons including: Financial constraints and years of underfunding continuing to present obstacles. WALK's Residential Services remain underfunded and changing and increasing need amongst service users is putting additional pressure on already overstretched staff teams. A continued lack of new referrals from the HSE to our Residential Services also means the future of our Residential Services is at risk. We have seen an unprecedented level of staff turnover in 2022, with WALK losing 30% of its staff putting considerable pressure on WALK leaders and staff teams who have worked tirelessly to address recruitment issues and maintain service quality. The challenge of pay parity in Section 39 agencies is ongoing and the WALK leadership team have continued to campaign for change in this area.

What remains constant is the ability of the organisation and its staff teams to achieve ambitious goals, pull together, adapt and to work through the challenges whilst remaining true to WALK's vision, mission and values.

The board are grateful to our funders for continuing to support the vital work of the organisation, we welcome new staff who have joined the organisation in 2022 and extend our thanks and a fond goodbye to those who departed for their contribution to WALK.

The board wishes to thank the people we support, their families, staff, volunteers and management for their continued commitment and support over the past year. We really look forward to working in partnership with you all again in the coming year to continue to make a difference to the lives of individuals who use the services of WALK and in influencing wider change for people with a disability in Ireland and beyond.

John M Bourke
Chairperson

CEO report

Welcome to WALK's 2022 Annual Report. The Report marks the completion of the second year of our Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024. I am pleased to say that we have made good progress in meeting our Strategic Objectives for the year.



We have progressed well in reconfiguring our resources to best meet the needs of service users. Including the setup of a Practice Development Team to strengthen our capacity for Person Centred Service and maximise the achievement of the goals of the people we support and the expansion of our Clinical Support Services. We have taken key steps in Residential Reform through the set up and implementation of additional Supported Living arrangements where supports are built around the needs of the person in order to offer better quality of life outcomes.

We have developed and rolled out online career based training courses through the TOVUTI Leaning Management System to work towards bridging the gap in Career Guidance in Special Schools in Ireland. It is the first online programme of its kind in Ireland and has received recognition from the Department of Education. We have partnered with Pfizer to pilot a paid internship programme to expand employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability and have expanded our Day Service provision with Day Support teams effectively managing the referrals process, school leaver transitions into WALK Day Support Services and the opening two new locations.

In 2022 on hearing the plight of people with disabilities and their families arising from the war in Ukraine WALK sprang into action to voluntarily offer our support. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks

to all of those who got involved in the fundraising efforts. To all of those who made donations, and to all of those who used their annual leave to travel to the Ukraine border to deliver essential supplies. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Ukrainian families who returned to Dublin with us.

It is also important that we take this opportunity to reflect on the challenges WALK faced in 2022 as well as celebrating our successes. In early 2022 WALK received notification regarding the discontinuation of funding for eight COVID surge posts putting considerable ongoing financial pressure on WALK's Services. Also, the high level of staff turnover in 2022 placed additional pressure on already overstretched teams. Despite these challenges the work of teams has been exemplary in achieving quality outcomes for the people we support and in continuing to lead a movement for change for people with disabilities in Ireland.

On behalf of WALK I would like to thank all our staff and stakeholders for the support, dedication, diligence, and passion they have demonstrated in 2022.

Joe Mason, CEO

WALK's strategic plan

OUR
STRATEGIC
GOALS

1

RENEW

Our Mission

2

DEEPEN

Our Culture

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 promote habits of regular reflective practice, and that they 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

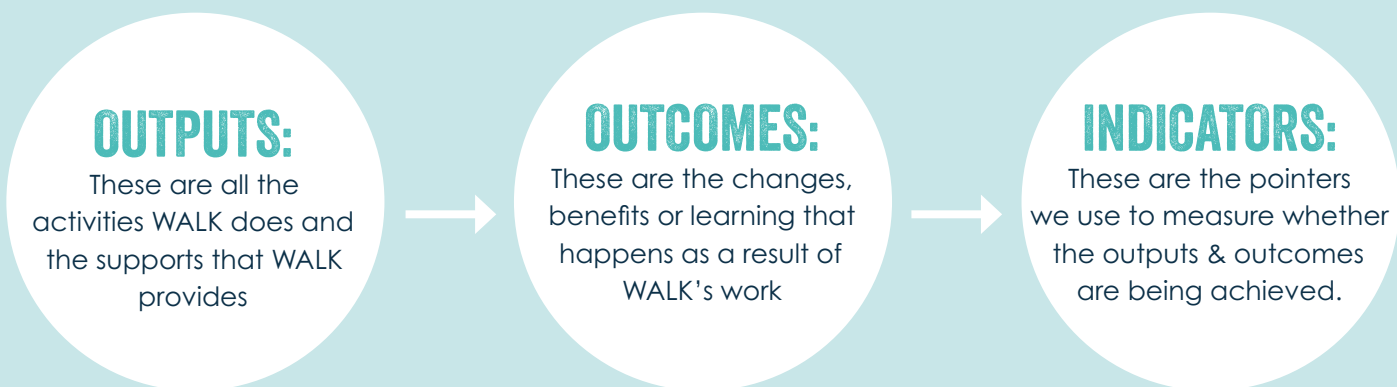
WALK's Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024 was launched in June 2021.

The decision was taken to focus on the Strategic Goals and Actions outlined above for 2021 – 2024 due to the challenges, areas for improvement and opportunities and threats identified during the Strategic Planning process. These included the need to reorganize the organisation to better fit with our recent growth and to prepare for future challenges including changing and increasing need amongst service users. The need, due to financial constraints and years of underfunding, for us to become more precise in monitoring and evaluating the deployment of resources - from a budgetary, quality, and supports delivered perspective; and the need to create a broader range of support options to assist people to have lives of their choosing.

Reports outlining progress on the Strategic Plan are presented to the board every two months and are published on our website, following the Board meeting.



Progress is measured on the following scale:



2022 represents year 2 of a four-year cycle for WALK's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.

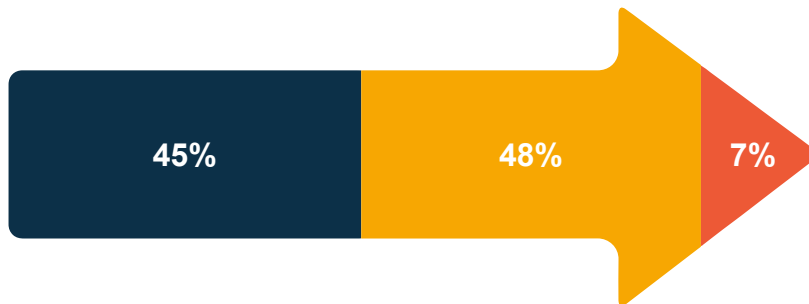


Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
2021	2022	2023	2024

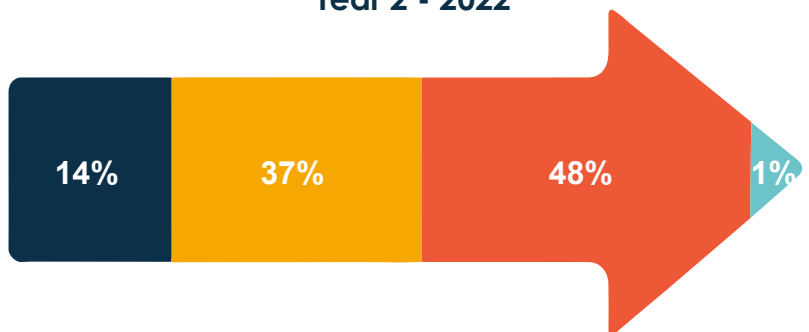
The Plan is measured using a monitoring and evaluation tool. This tool breaks the plan down into:

- Not started
- Started
- Progressing well
- Fully met

PROGRESS ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN Year 1 - 2021



PROGRESS ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN Year 2 - 2022



Challenges in 2022:

Below are the challenges that WALK faced in 2022 in relation to the implementation of our Strategic Objectives for the year:

- HSE/WALK review dates were rescheduled from 2022 to 2023 by the HSE. This has meant financial constraints have been ongoing.
- In early 2022 WALK received notification regarding the discontinuation of funding for eight COVID surge posts also putting considerable ongoing financial pressure on WALK's Services.
- The challenge of pay parity in Section 39 agencies is ongoing and WALK experienced challenges in staff recruitment and retention in 2022, putting additional pressure on already overstretched teams.

The above challenges have delayed progress in fully meeting some of our Strategic Objectives in 2022.

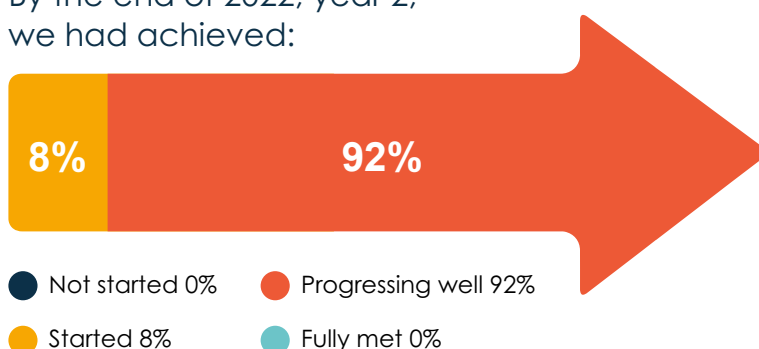
strategic action

Looking back on 2022 and plans for 2023:

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 2022, year 2, we had achieved:



Plans for 2023

- WALK/HSE service review of Supported living services to be completed and action plan based on review findings to be developed and implemented.
- Transition plan for implementation of Supported Living service redesign to be developed and implemented.
- Continue to develop and grow the Peer Representative structure.
- Evaluate Leadership Development training pilot, make any necessary adjustments and plan roll out of subsequent training.
- Administration Project Group to be set up, with cross organisation representation, to progress key project areas.
- Revision of organisational chart to be completed.

What we achieved in 2022

- Restructuring of Clinical Team to better support the needs of the people we support and staff teams.
- Relief system review completed and areas for improvement identified. On call system strengthened through improvements in the electronic system of rostering and shift allocation.
- Safeguarding structure review completed. Safeguarding Coordinator and reporting structure implemented.
- Health and Safety structure amended in line with organisational growth, steering group established and health and safety champions meeting quarterly.
- Healthcare staff shared information to upskill individuals supported and staff teams, and health review meetings commenced.
- Pilot of leadership development training, and mentoring has commenced.
- Workshops focused on enhancing teams understanding of service user funding, service user costs and procurement delivered.
- Completed review of funding deficits and dependencies and drafted action plan for initiatives to address identified opportunities and challenges in advance of WALK/HSE Service Review.
- Human Rights Champion and Peer Representative system set up to strengthen mechanisms for service user involvement at decision making levels.
- Review of HR Function completed, and report produced re. Same.
- Review of recruitment lifecycle completed. Recruitment lifecycle revisions in pilot phase with Day Services.
- Turnover levels reviewed, with ongoing recruitment and retention challenges identified. Swot analysis completed and plan to address in place.
- Process maps for recruitment and onboarding in place.
- Student placements active across WALK's Day and Supported Living Services and comprehensive student induction programme developed.

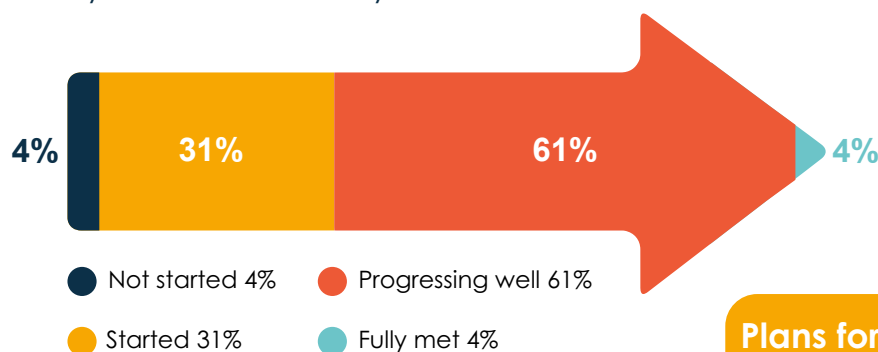
strategic action

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 2022, year 2, we had achieved:



What we achieved in 2022

- WALK are aligned with National Person Centred Planning Framework. National Audit template completed and reported regarding PCP framework.
- Practice Development team now in place developed in line with positively impacting on people's lives and goals.
- Learning and feedback review completed around the Person-Centred Champions groups.
- Champions groups and mentoring in areas of Human Rights, Person Centred Practice and Careers and Employment ongoing. Champions supported to share learning through their teams.
- Person Centred Practice workshops delivered to support staff members learning and development around Person Centred Practice and thinking. An accelerator programme also developed and delivered.
- Local quality audits and corresponding action plans completed in Supported Living and Day Support Services.
- Strategic Alliance in place with Circle Voluntary Housing Association including regular meetings on housing, and scoping report around future housing needs provided to Circle Housing.

Plans for 2023

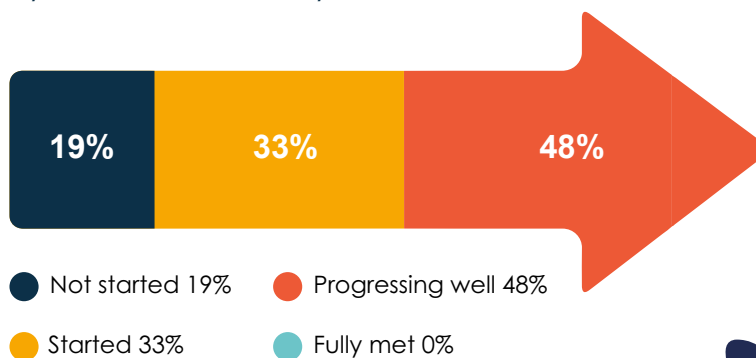
- Support the ongoing development of Person-Centred Practice and Planning in accordance with National Person-Centred Planning Framework.
- Working group to be formed to identify the quality assurances audit process for 2023 and service audits completed accordingly.
- Capacity of Careers and Employment Champions to be developed to lead their locations in delivering quality 'journey-to-work' supports for service users.
- Assisted Decision-Making Steering Group to include people with lived experience of WALK services, and through this a model for participation to be developed.
- Review of systems, processes and policies to ensure all are in line with positively impacting on people's lives and goals.
- Housing alternatives to be secured through collaboration with Circle Voluntary Housing Association as part of development pipeline.

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 2022, year 2, we had achieved:



What we achieved in 2022

- Initial review of staff induction programme completed.
- Induction welcome pack prepared.
- Mentoring programme currently being piloted as part of leadership development training.
- Range of new staff opportunities and roles in WALK in 2022 in line with WALK's objectives.
- Action Learning Facilitator recruited.
- 2022 Operational Plan Reflection Day held.



Plans for 2023

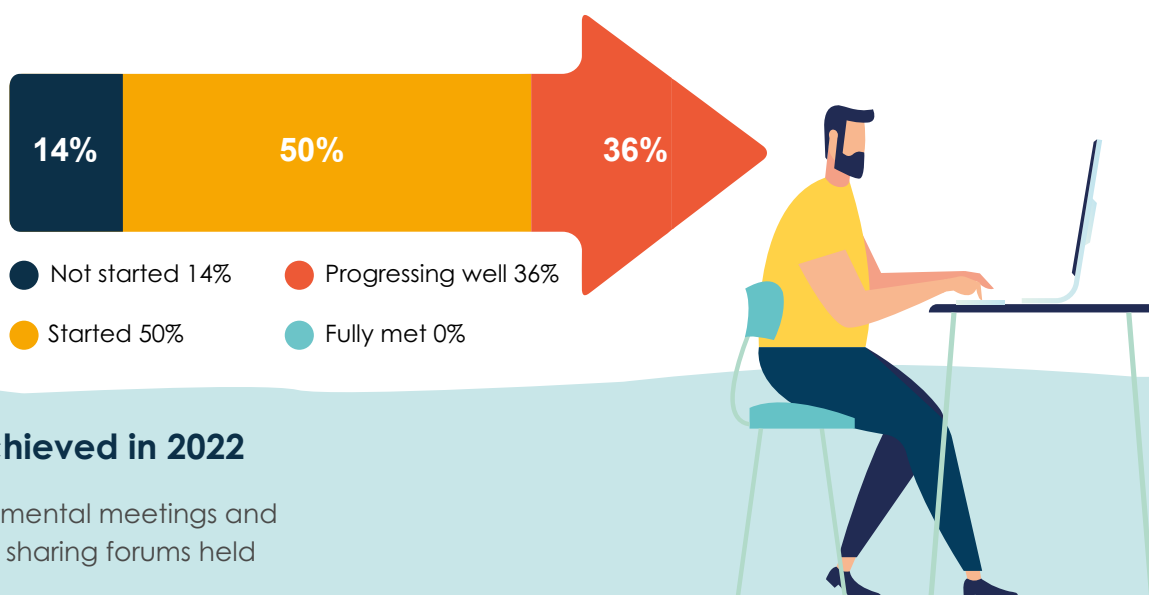
- Staff induction programme to be enhanced to better reflect WALK's values.
- Training to be delivered to Team Leaders in areas including interview skills, supervision and performance management.
- Review Performance Development System across WALK and identify and implement areas for improvement.
- 2023 Operational Plan Reflection Day to be held.

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 2, we had achieved:



What we achieved in 2022

- Two Departmental meetings and information sharing forums held in 2022.
- Assisted Decision-Making Workshop delivered for staff by the Practice Development Team.
- Open evenings delivered for potential new referrals and their families.
- Family and natural support training developed and initial programme has commenced as pilot with a small group of families.
- Funding secured from Rethink Ireland for the development of a suite of promotional material on the work of Day Supports, with a committee established to generate content.
- Careers and employment newsletter piloted.

Plans for 2023

- Communication Strategy to be developed.
- Organisation briefing events to recommence.
- Ongoing schedule of Departmental meetings and information sharing forum's to be implemented.
- Work to continue with families to support a vision of a good life for their loved one's future.
- A series of information sessions to be delivered to families.
- Family forum meetings to recommence.
- Assisted Decision Making Steering Group to disseminate information to WALK's Key Stakeholder groups and keep them updated regarding key developments, timelines, and news in relation to the Assisted Decision-Making Act.
- Series of promotional materials to be developed that support stakeholders to understand WALK's role and functions, and act as an information point for contacts.
- Padlet with resources on Health and Safeguarding to be set up for information sharing amongst staff.

real life stories & innovation

WALK endeavours to ensure that the right supports are in place at the right time to facilitate individuals who use the services of WALK to learn, grow and achieve their self-directed goals. As with anyone, the goals of the individuals who we support are diverse and the supports individuals require to achieve them can vary.

This means WALK needs to be creative and adaptable to ensure the supports we provide are timely and effective in enabling the individuals we support to have a rich and meaningful life.



This section contains information about our services, stories from the people we support documenting their journey over the last year and examples of some of the innovative projects that took place in 2022.

These stories demonstrate how WALK's vision, mission and values are lived daily in the work that we do.

TWO NEW DAY SUPPORT HUBS OPEN

WALK Nutgrove

A new WALK Day Supports Hub officially opened in Nutgrove Office Park in October 2022. However, in preparation for opening the new location the team was developed over the course of August/September 2022. The Nutgrove team consists of three staff and a team leader. Initially, before securing the new location the team had accessed a room in a local community centre to begin engagement and relationship building between service users and staff. The team is now supporting nine individuals who transitioned over from some of WALK's other Day Support locations, alongside six new referrals. The initial focus has been on developing positive relationships with individuals and working closely to establish the individual vision and goals of persons supported. The Nutgrove team has successfully supported three individuals to secure employment, whilst three individuals have continued to be supported in their ongoing employment roles. The team are identifying opportunities for individuals within their local communities and working hard to network and support people to live a happy life of their choosing.

WALK Swords

WALK opened a new location in Swords in 2022. The location was secured prior to the hub opening in September 2022. It's located in the Chamber Building and easily accessible to service users from Swords Village. The hub is supporting five individuals who have transferred from other teams across WALK, as well as seven individuals who joined WALK's services in September 2022. Since opening, the hub has focused on supporting new service users to transition into the service, reintegrating persons already supported into activities of interest within their chosen communities and supporting individuals to explore their educational and vocational aspirations. Currently, two individuals are employed, three individuals are attending college or local courses, and two individuals will be engaging in work experiences.





GRAHAM'S STORY

My move to Freeman's Farm

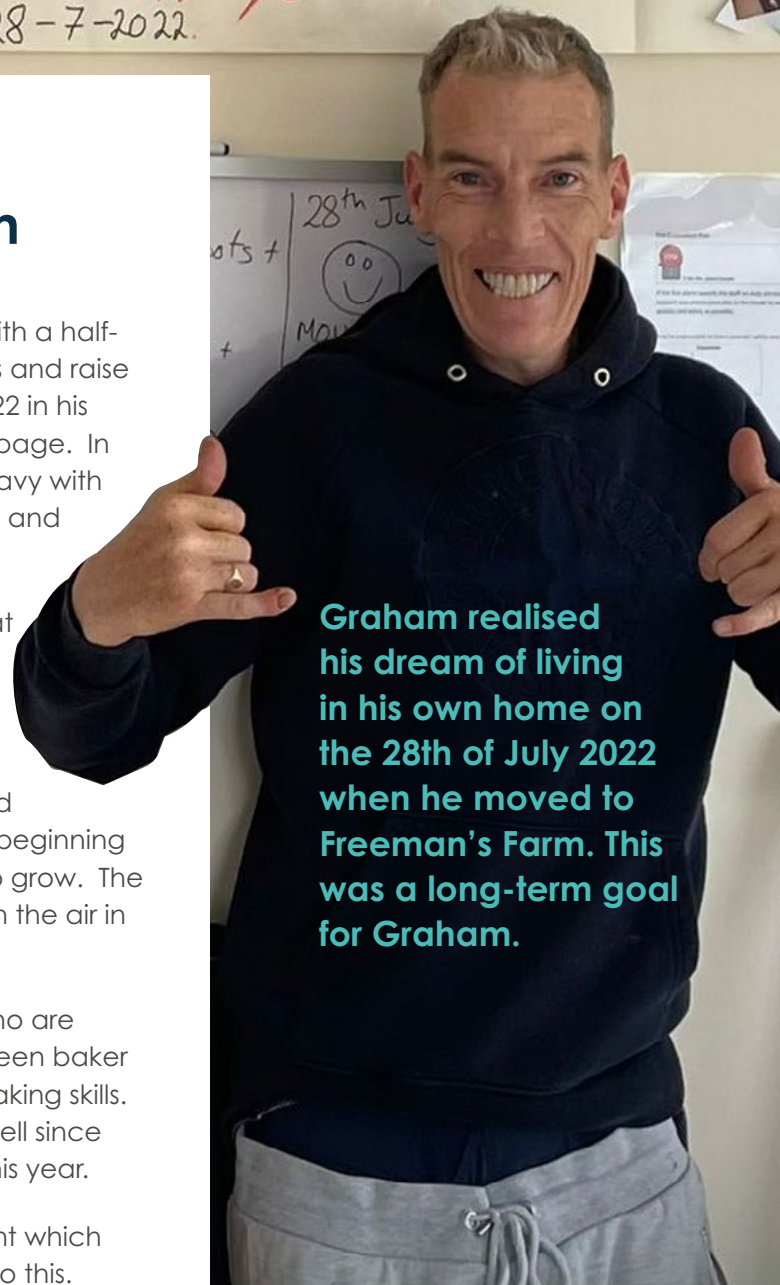
Freeman's Farm is a bungalow on two acres of land, with a half-acre allotment for Graham to grow vegetables, flowers and raise chickens. Farmer Morgan enjoyed some success in 2022 in his garden growing sunflowers, beetroot, lettuce and cabbage. In Autumn 2022 the hedgerows around the farm were heavy with blackberries. Graham spent many happy hours picking and baking with them.

Graham celebrated his move and birthday with a great party in the green kitchen surrounded by family and friends.

This year he has a clear plan for the development of his dream allotment. Spring 2022 has seen Graham and his team work hard on the garden plan, the orchard is beginning to bloom, seeds have been planted and are starting to grow. The excitement for the gardening year ahead is definitely in the air in Freeman's farm.

Graham has become the proud owner of two hens, who are settling in and have begun laying eggs. Graham is a keen baker so the eggs and produce will help him to expand his baking skills. Graham has also got a new puppy, Jack the Jack Russell since moving to Freeman's farm. He may expand his flock this year.

The farm provides Graham with the type of environment which allows him to thrive. We look forward to being witness to this.



Graham realised his dream of living in his own home on the 28th of July 2022 when he moved to Freeman's Farm. This was a long-term goal for Graham.

GAVIN'S STORY

My travel adventures to New York



Whilst in New York, Gavin captured his experience and the sights through filming

#empirestatebuilding

Gavin is supported by WALK's Supported Living Services and lives in the Knocklyon area of Dublin. He loves to travel and has been on a number of European trips over previous years including visits to: Berlin, Poland, Amsterdam and London.

Knowing how Gavin loves travel with his 40th birthday coming up, Gavin's Sister decided a present of a trip to New York was the ideal gift. Needless to say – Gavin was delighted. As this not only fitted in with his love for travel but also his passion for filming, movies and film sets.

The five-day trip was planned for September 2022, but there was a lot of preparation required beforehand. Gavin got to work visiting travel agents to collect brochures and he watched YouTube Clips in order to find out more about the sights and opportunities, prioritise the itinerary and ensure he got the most out of the trip to New York.

When the date of departure arrived, Gavin had a full itinerary planned for each day from morning through to night. This included visiting the Empire state building, the Statue of Liberty and Madame Tussauds, engaging in a movie tour and going to see the shows 'Wicked' and 'The Lion King' at Broadway. Gavin was accompanied by his housemate Sean and they both thoroughly enjoyed touring and using the Subway to travel around the City.



Whilst in New York, Gavin captured his experience and the sights through filming. He then shared his trip with others on his return through connecting his camera to the television so they could watch and share his experience.

Alongside his trip to New York in 2022 Gavin completed a course in animation and drone flying workshops – in line with his interests. In terms of next steps, Gavin is currently exploring his career options with a view to accessing employment in the future and also hopes to travel again in 2023.



OLLIES STORY

My move to Orwell

Ollie had been living in Durney House for a number of years but had wanted to move house for a long time for reasons including: Having a housemate with shared interests and to live closer to her brother. Therefore, when an opportunity to move to Orwell came up Ollie was delighted to hear about it. Ollie had mixed emotions to begin with as there was a lot of change coming up. To support her to prepare for and make the move – Ollie picked the staff members that she wanted in her team to help with the transition.

Following this, Ollie spent time in Orwell to get to know the area, the house and her new housemate Davie. After a number of visits and spending time with Davie Ollie felt more confident and ready to make the move. So, in August 2022

Ollie moved into her new home. Staff supported Ollie to begin with, with the things that she felt that she needed support with but by October 2022 she communicated to staff that they could fade their support.

Ollie is settling into her new area well. Getting to know the neighbours, using the local supermarket, transferring her services to a local chemist and is also currently in the process of transferring her GP. Ollie is an active person and enjoys exercise so regularly goes for walks in the local parks, has joined a local gym - One Life Fitness in Tallaght and is exploring the option of participating in ladies football training through Rovers! Ollie also pops over to her brother for dinner on a regular basis, as he lives close by.

Ollie said:

“It had been a long-term goal of mine to move out of Durney house. In 2022 that dream became a reality when I moved to Orwell. I am now closer to my brother, we are practically neighbours, I can call over any time I want. I have a new housemate Davie who I am enjoying getting to know. We both have a passion for football and enjoy going to Shamrock Rovers matches together. I am looking forward to the summer months in Orwell to get out and about and explore my new area.”

MICHAEL'S STORY

Michael is supported by WALK's Supported Living Services and lives in the Knocklyon area of Dublin. He loves swimming and has been a long-term member of the Swan Leisure Centre in Rathmines, where he regularly goes swimming.



During the pandemic Michael was unable to go to the Swan Leisure Centre due to restrictions in place at the time. However, as things opened back up Michael began re-engaging with the Swan Leisure Centre and went swimming there on a regular basis. Following this, Michael expressed an interest in progressing his swimming and in meeting new people through joining a local swimming club. With this in mind, around a year ago, Michael joined a swimming club in Terenure College.

To begin with staff supported Michael to attend the club so he could get to know the place and the people, and to familiarise him with the journey to get there. However, he now attends the club independently on a weekly basis. He enjoys practicing with his club every Sunday. Everybody knows Michael there now and he plays an active part in the swimming club.

One of Michael's other motivations in becoming a club member was to start entering competitions. His first competition was the Eastern Special Olympics Games in 2022. The games were held in Newpark Sports Centre. Michael visited the competition site in advance, to familiarise him with the setting. Then, on competition day he was successful in receiving two medals for his races.

Michael was delighted. He plans to continue training with his club on a weekly basis and to enter more competitions as and when the opportunity arises.



JULIEANNE'S STORY



Julianne is supported by WALK's Day Support Services. She started in WALK in 2009 after finishing School. To begin with Julianne engaged in a range of training, education and health and wellbeing classes and activities. She also completed work placements through the WALKways Tallaght University Hospital Programme working in the postal sorting office, in the Café and in the Speech and Language Department. This supported Julianne to try out different things and identify what she wanted to do in the future.

In 2022 Julianne completed a Level 4 Office Skills course in Rathmines College which she passed with flying colours. This included modules in customer service, word processing, business English, art, reception and office skills. Staff provided support and encouragement to Julianne during her time in College.

Since then, Julianne has completed a short care skills course and is currently awaiting her results. In the future Julianne hopes to access and work towards a course in the area of Social Care in line with her passion for helping people.



SET UP OF PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The role of Person-Centred Practice Developer in WALK commenced in June 2021, with 2022 being the first full year in operation. The Person-Centred Practice Champions Programme was set up in 2021 and continued into 2022. The Champion's Programme is ongoing and its purpose is to support positive change. To help building awareness and skills in Person Centred practice and thinking. To assist learning and action in local services. To contribute to ongoing organisational learning and help grow our person-centred culture. The Person-Centred Practice Champions provided feedback in June 2022 on how the programme had impacted on their work and on the people they support.

FEEDBACK INCLUDED:

- **The Programme has helped take a deeper dive into the various attributes of Person Centredness including active support, decision making and the impact of disability.**
- **The Programme is helping to build relationships with the people we support, and the development of valued social roles for persons supported to build connections and friendships in diverse areas. Including: Walking football, cinema clubs, education, community art classes and community award programmes.**
- **The programme is helping to raise people's expectations and increase their own agency, and it is helping to increase the use of natural supports rather than relying on staff support and to strengthen existing family bonds.**

Eleven new Person-Centred Practice Champions joined the twelve remaining Champions for the 2022-23 cycle that commenced in September. The increase is both a reflection of the growth in service locations and the value of the programme. To support the new Champions participation, an intensive acceleration programme was run for 5 days over 5 weeks during the summer.

January 2022 saw the first two-day Person-Centred Practice Workshop supporting staff across the organisation. Rather than focusing specifically on planning, the workshop takes a broader perspective and seeks initially to understand the reasons how and why people with disabilities are excluded from society. Then through the real stories of six people supported by WALK we demonstrate how inclusion can and does take place before supporting participants to develop a pathway for an individual that they work with. The Workshop is both designed and delivered through collaboration between the Person-Centred Practice Developer, the Day Supports Operations Lead and a Supported Living Team Coordinator. Learning is reinforced through reflection on what has happened and what has been learnt since the initial workshop.



In 2022 a total of eighty-six staff attended the two-day Person-Centred Practice Workshop, with a further ten members of the Finance and Administration Team attending a bespoke session.

In 2022, in line with our vision, mission and values and the three Strategic goals set out in our 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan WALK set up a practice development team. This includes a Human Rights and Participation Practice Developer, a Well Being Practice Developer and an Action Learning Practice Developer. The teams work focuses on active, participatory and in-situation learning and directly links to other organisational areas including leadership, culture and approaches to learning. Plus, the Human Rights and Participation Practice Developer has oversight over WALK's service user Peer Representative system including training delivery and support.

A further initiative in the summer of 2022 saw Practice Development link with families to help support the longer-term planning for their loved one. We initially approached five families with a view to working together as a group. It became apparent that with the unique situation of each a more individual approach would be desirable as well as the mutual support that groups can offer. Geraldine Graydon co-facilitates the initiative. Geraldine is a parent of a person who uses WALK's services and founder of ASFAN (Autism Support & Family

Advocacy Network). This work will continue into 2023 with the hope that the learning will assist other families in similar situations.

At present, the team are still in the infancy of their development but in 2022 the Practice Development team collaborated with colleagues from the Clinical department and other Departments to run an introductory workshop for staff on Decision Making and the Assisted Decision-Making Act 2015 in November 2022.



staff story

KEVIN BARNES



“As Person Centred Practice Developer and lead of the Practice Development team the past 12 months has been one of the highlights of my career in disability services. I have had the opportunity to work with so many talented and committed people. Many who bring years of experience and wisdom to their practice, others who may be just starting out in their careers but have an inherent sense of what ‘feels right.’

As well as supporting the practice development of my colleagues I too have developed in the role. Primarily the role is about promoting and facilitating change. It is essential that you have the right set of values and beliefs, the commitment to inclusion, experience, and knowledge. But over the past 12 months I have also become skilled at facilitating people’s own reflection and learning.

Practice development takes place during the reflective moments. There have been times in 2022 when, due to the pressure on teams resulting from high staff turnover, it has been challenging to maintain practice that aligns with our values and mission. We know we can achieve wonderful things when we have our undivided attention on the people we support.

Being sensitive to the significant challenges that teams faced in supporting people over the last year whilst still trying to respectfully challenge practice has been vital. The requirement to be flexible in approaching staff learning and development, adapting our own delivery and creativity were the challenges for the later part of 2022. Our challenges for the new year are to continue to learn, develop and become more attuned to the needs of the people we support through their own lived experience of disability.

As we commence 2023, I reflect upon the fact that Person Centred Practice Development is not a one-person role but a role that each member of staff has within WALK. It is a role learnt from and taught by the people with lived experience of disability but underwritten by the enormous commitment from enthusiastic and determined individuals throughout the organisation.”



PREPARATION FOR THE ASSISTED DECISION-MAKING ACT



In 2022, WALK worked on initial preparations for the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making Act.

An introductory workshop for staff was developed on Decision Making and the Assisted Decision-Making Act 2015 and was delivered in November 2022.

In December 2022, Patricia Rickard Clarke Chair of Safeguarding Ireland met with WALK staff to discuss Safeguarding, Human Rights and Assisted Decision Making.

Following this, the Assisted Decision-Making Steering Group held it's first meeting to plan around group membership and agree initial priorities. An application process and criteria for persons supported to become active members of the Assisted Decision-Making Steering Group was developed. This is in line with the groups plans to recruit a working group of 4 people who receive support from WALK who want to speak up about the importance of making their own decisions, to join the Assisted Decision-Making Steering Group.

Initial plans for 2023 include meeting with the Decision Support Service. The set up of introductory information sessions on the Assisted Decision-Making Act for person's supported and families; and the development of a capacity building project around the Assisted Decision-Making Act involving WALK's key stakeholder groups and local community service providers.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOPS AND PICNIC AGAINST APARTHEID

The Walkinstown Hub team, knowing that individuals supported through the team had an interest in Human Rights and that learning more about Human Rights would be of interest and benefit, explored the option of linking with external organisations to organize a series of rights-based workshops. With this in mind WALK contacted Amnesty International to explore the option of working with them to organize Human Rights workshops. Amnesty were eager to get involved and staff liaised with Talha Alali from Amnesty to set about organizing the workshops.

The workshops were held in the Nest in Walkinstown Green, over four weeks and covered a variety of topics each week from Global Human Rights issues, disability rights, the UNCRPD and the Anti-Apartheid campaign in Israel

and the occupied Palestinian territories. The last workshop focused on how to get involved in campaigns as activists and take-action. Having learned about the struggles people in Palestine are facing, the group decided to dedicate their time to organizing a Picnic Against Apartheid event.

The Picnic Against Apartheid was organized to share the information that the workshop participants had learnt in the workshops. The group met with Talha to plan for the event. Everyone took on a task from baking for the picnic, handing out stickers, making posters and raising awareness about the event. Talha informed the group about the Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC). The group reached out through email to invite them to the event, with three representatives attending

on the day to explain more about the situation in Palestine. The event was a huge success and the team hope to run another Picnic Against Apartheid event next year.

Following on from the Picnic Against Apartheid service users involved in the project decided to attend an Amnesty International Write 4 Rights event in the Project Arts Centre, Temple Bar. The event focused on writing messages of support to people around the world who have suffered injustice, writing to authorities to highlight their cases, and supporting participants to find out how they can get more involved in different Human Rights campaigns. The team are now planning to host a Write 4 Rights event in the Walkinstown Hub for individuals who were unable to attend on the day.

WALK CALENDAR PRODUCED

In 2022, the National Gallery of Ireland facilitated a Calendar workshop led by artists Eileen O'Sullivan, Karen Peakin and Sarah Ward, taking inspiration from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Participants created personal and thoughtful responses, using a variety of mixed media.

Following the workshop, Walkinstown Hub's Peer Reps, Fiadhnaí Canning and Sophie Dowling, assisted in selecting the artwork to match the months in the WALK 2023 calendar. The artwork for the calendar came from a combination of the work created at the workshop and from service users in the different service locations across WALK.

Calendars went on sale in the Green Kitchen Café, at small cost of €7.00 to cover the cost of production.



working with others

WALK continuously works to build connections and partnerships with community organisations, businesses, educators and national organisations to increase the opportunities available to the people we support and to progress in line with our vision and mission.

WALK's Careers and Employment team support participants to recognise where their interests, skills and talents lie, realise where they might best fit in the labour market and learn the skills associated with successfully finding and keeping a job. Participants grow in self-confidence and have greater expectations of and for themselves and greater prospects for a future career.

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.



OIREACHTAS WORK LEARNING PROGRAMME (OWL)

The Oireachtas Work Learning Programme (OWL) is an applied learning, development and socialisation programme for adults with an intellectual disability which was launched as a pilot programme by Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD in September 2018. The programme is facilitated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in collaboration with WALK and KARE and is also supported by the Adult Education Service run by the City of Dublin Education and Training Board and by the Health Service Executive.

WALK are hugely grateful to Margaret Crawley who was an amazing ambassador and champion of the OWL Programme and congratulate Margaret on her retirement. We also extend our thanks to Ceann Comhairle, Sean O Fearghail who has been a great supporter of the OWL Programme; and staff members Breda Burke, Roisin Deery, Aoife Branigan and Peter Furlong (KARE) for their commitment and work to ensure participants were able to access and succeed in the OWL Programme in 2022.

Oireachtas Work Learning Programme Graduation took place in 2022. Here are some of the photos of the event:



Tithe an Oireachtas
Houses of the Oireachtas



Oireachtas
Work
Learning



EMMA'S STORY

“I started the OWL Programme in September 2019, and then unfortunately due to COVID in March 2020 we weren't able to go back into Leinster House. It was a hard couple of years but I was still practicing office and administration skills by doing remote working tasks at home and in the WALK offices.

When I finished the OWL Programme I did an interview with the Public Appointments Service in December 2021. In June 2022 I got a job in the Department of Social Protection, working with the HR team.

I work 3 days a week and am getting back to working at least 1 day in the office a week. I love working in the office and seeing my colleagues. I get the train from Greystones to Connolly to get into work. The best thing about working is the people I have met, working with my team, and also earning my own money!”



Emma at OWL Graduation 2022



WALKWAYS TALLAGHT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL PROGRAMME

The WALKways Tallaght University Hospital Programme is a year-long transition programme for adults with intellectual disabilities to gain employability experience. The Programme commenced as a partnership between WALK and Tallaght University Hospital in 2017.

On Thursday 14th of July 2022, Tallaght University Hospital (TUH) and WALK celebrated the WALKways TUH Graduation Ceremony. The ceremony recognised the hard work and commitment of 18 WALKways Tallaght University Hospital Graduates from 2019 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022. This was the first graduation celebration since 2019, before the COVID-19 Pandemic. The WALKways Programme was paused in March 2020 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. The programme resumed in August 2020, where the work of the trainees was greatly appreciated across the hospital.

The ceremony recognised the achievements and experience that the trainees developed over the past two years. Each graduate celebrated the growth in their own confidence and resilience.

Trainees were joined by their friends, family and work colleagues from the hospital departments involved in the programme. Also in attendance were CEO, Lucy Nugent and Director of Human Resources, Sharon Larkin.



The WALKways TUH Programme would not be successful without the strong partnership of all the hospital departments involved in the programme. Their ongoing passion, commitment, and dedication to the support of each of the WALKways trainees is invaluable.



WALKways Tallaght University Hospital Graduation 2022

WALK PFIZER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

The WALK Pfizer Internship Programme was developed as a partnership between Pfizer Grange Castle and WALK and commenced as a pilot programme in September 2022. The programme focuses on employability and socialisation.



Attending the Pfizer Christmas Party 2022



Six WALK service users are engaged in the paid internship programme at Pfizer. Interns have been supported to complete a range of in-house training including disposal of chemicals and substances, manual handling and achieving logbooks. A buddy system is in place to support interns in the learning phase of their new tasks.

WALK is grateful to the staff team in Pfizer for their support in the set up and implementation of the pilot programme this year and we thoroughly look forward to continuing our work with the team in Pfizer in 2023.



In addition, service users engaged in the Pfizer Programme are able to join the Pfizer gym and have other opportunities to meet up with their colleagues outside of work including a weekly football group.

GERARD'S STORY

"I have been in WALK for the past 15 years. During this time, I have enjoyed meeting new people and learning new skills but this year I have really focused on progressing my career.

I completed the Tallaght University Hospital Programme in 2021; unfortunately, due to Covid my graduation was delayed but in July I finally got to celebrate with the other trainees. It was great to see the hospital and all the staff again!



Since finishing the programme, I have spent a lot of time preparing myself for the world of work and further developing my skills. I am currently working towards a Level 3 Major Award in a General Learning; I have successfully passed my Communications module which involved three practical tasks including a phone conversation with a tutor. I have attended employment workshops and completed employment workbooks which helped me to explore my employment goals and the steps I need to take to reach them.

I have a big interest in history and my longer-term goal is to share my knowledge with others while in paid employment in the tourism industry.

I have been very active in researching and applying for job opportunities both online and within the community. I attended a job fair in The Square shopping centre where I talked to many potential employers, asked lots of questions and gave out my CV. I independently sourced, applied and attended a 3-week Job Club course where I completed manual handling training, learned how to prepare cover letters, and practiced my skills during a mock interview.

I received an opportunity to apply for a paid internship with Pfizer and I was successful in my interview. My first couple of weeks with Pfizer were filled with a lot of training but I couldn't wait to get started! I found out the Department I will be working in is called Vaccines and it is in the manufacturing suites."

WALK ONLINE LEARNING



The outbreak of Covid19 presented many unique challenges for WALK. It impacted the people we support who were keen to sustain employment and continue to make progress on their career journey.

In response to these challenges, the WALK Careers and Employment team decided to dedicate its time to creating an online space for learning and development. This would help create safe working conditions while maintaining our commitment to continuous learning and high-quality training.

The need for a virtual learning environment was crucial so a Careers & Employment resource Padlet was developed to host all of our 'employability skills' and 'Return to Work Safety – Covid19' training resources. Staff throughout WALK showed incredible willingness to adapt and proved to be invaluable in supporting the process.

In 2021, the Careers & Employment team won the Aontas European Social Fund Special Recognition Award for how work was adapted throughout Covid19. This prompted us to look more closely at the benefits of online learning. Moreover, the importance of developing digital skills for life and the workplace for the people we support. This prompted four months of research regarding Learning Management Systems, course content and instructional design. The team began the curriculum design and structure for the online training. A Journey to Work graphic was also developed to map the new career training courses.





Funding was secured from the Community Foundation for Ireland with the RTE does Comic Relief Fund - Demand for Digital Strand to develop an accessible Learning Management System (LMS). This, in addition to funding from Rethink Ireland, which provided consultation support from industry professionals allowed the team to work with e-learning expert Maebh Coleman in DoCént training. With the help of Maebh, the Tovuti LMS was chosen as the most appropriate in terms of accessibility, flexibility and being user friendly.

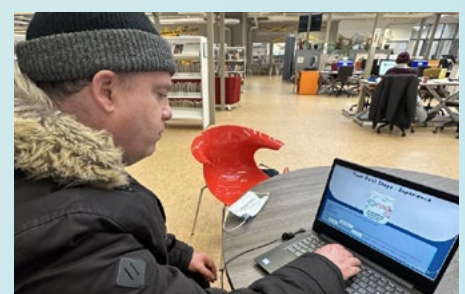
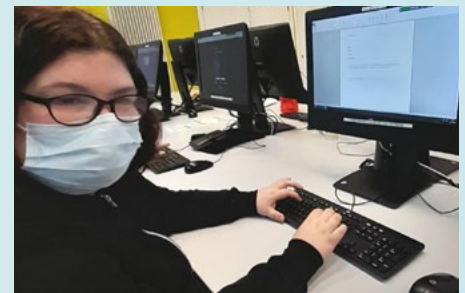
Tovuti means 'site' and it is represented by a 'moyo'. 'Moyo' is used to describe the heart of one's character. This represents motivation, working as a team, overcoming challenges, being curious and exploring. This platform has become essential in our work supporting individuals to progress their career goals. WALK's staff have been innovative in the way in which they have embraced Tovuti and helped to support people in education, training and personal development.

Career Discovery and Career Exploration courses were designed, developed and piloted in both our WALK PEER and WALK REAL Projects from November 2021 to May 2022.

In June 2022, feedback was sought from staff and improvements to these courses were made. In December 2022, Learner Induction, Career Preparation and Career Experience modules went live on the platform along with new staff resources and the Employability Rickter Scale Assessment. The career training courses are grounded in the reality of the journey to work for the participant target group, meaning that all the key conversations, tools and experiences are covered online as well as offline. The platform includes accessible and appropriate content for the participants including an accessibility statement and 'widget' which allows participants to adapt the content to meet their needs.

It also allows connection with participants who may not have performed well in the school or service environment or who may have stronger digital skills than academic skills. **By the end of 2022 there were 200 participants learning on the career training platform.**

In the future, there is huge potential in the project with the capability of reaching and meeting participants in the PEER programme nationwide through a virtual space. This space, due its versatility and design, could be developed to facilitate Career Guidance teachers in mainstream schools to allow students to discover their career and employment ambitions in life, experience work in the real world and develop their own individual transition plans.



Service users participating in TOVUTI training

WALK PEER ABILITY SUPPORTED TRANSITION PROGRAMME

The WALK PEER Ability Supported

Transition Programme works 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. The programme currently operates in Louth and Dublin.

Lee's story -

Lee Kerr finished St. Brigid's School, Dundalk in June 2022. He started working with his Career and Employment Facilitator back in 2019 he was extremely shy and had no real idea of what he wanted to achieve but knew he did not want to transition to a disability service. Through engaging with the WALK PEER Programme Lee went out on job site visits and by doing the WALK online training to map out his own career path he quickly gained confidence. Not letting the COVID pandemic get in his way he later completed a successful work experience placement which materialised into a part time job interview for a role in Mr Price, whilst still in school.

Lee completed a manual handling course to prepare him for work and started his new job in April 2022. Lee also passed his driving theory test in June 2022. Lee has not looked back since, he worked full time over the summer, he saved money to go on holiday and is now saving to buy a car.



MR. Price
Branded Bargains

LEE TALKED ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE STATING:

“I was a bit nervous at first but then when I got to know staff, I gained more confidence in myself and succeeded in doing all the tasks assigned to me.”

“When I got the job, I was operating the cash register again I was a bit nervous but now I feel more confident after gaining more experience.”

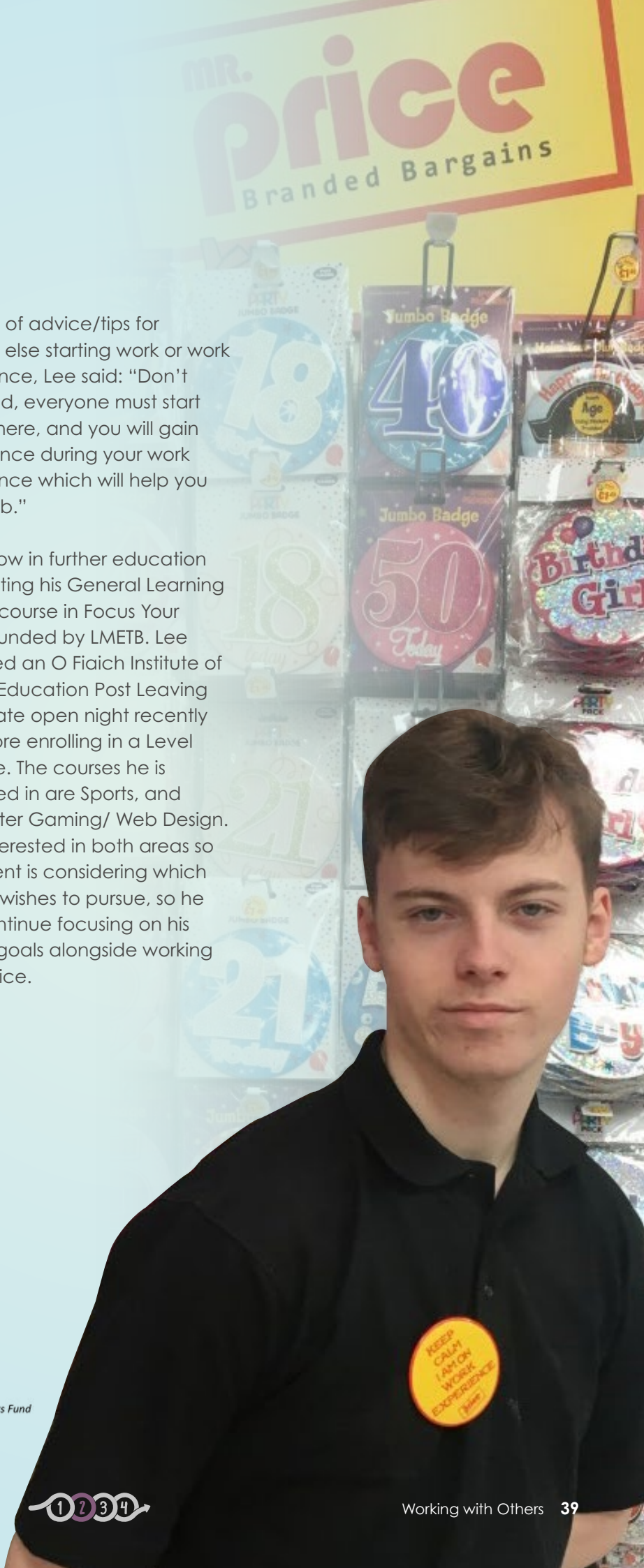
Lee is much more independent now and is very much part of his local working community. He has excellent digital skills and alongside work is a keen kick boxer having won plenty of awards.

In terms of advice/tips for anyone else starting work or work experience, Lee said: “Don't be afraid, everyone must start somewhere, and you will gain confidence during your work experience which will help you get a job.”

Lee is now in further education completing his General Learning Level 4 course in Focus Your Future funded by LMETB. Lee attended an O Fiaich Institute of Further Education Post Leaving Certificate open night recently to explore enrolling in a Level 5 course. The courses he is interested in are Sports, and Computer Gaming/ Web Design. He is interested in both areas so at present is considering which one he wishes to pursue, so he can continue focusing on his career goals alongside working at Mr Price.



This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund



WALKINSTOWN GREEN SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Walkinstown Green Social Enterprise Ltd (WGSEL) is a self sustaining social enterprise that fulfills a need within the local community whilst also creating education, training and employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability through the Green Kitchen Café and Green Garden Centre.

Justin's Story –

Justin Maher started in WALK in 2020 and in July 2021, in line with his interest in gaining employment, commenced two work experience placements as a Kitchen Porter for two, two hour shifts per week in the Green Kitchen Cafe and a placement in the Green Garden Centre for three hours per week. During this time Justin interviewed for a position in Lidl and although feedback was positive in that Justin stood out to the Area Manager it was recognised that he needed to work on building up his confidence more, so he wasn't successful on this occasion.

In the meantime, Justin continued his two 12-week placements. Siobhan, who works as Development Chef in the Green Kitchen Café, her colleague Colm and Brian the Manager of the Social Enterprise had observed that Justin was reliable, a hard worker, takes initiative and was an asset to the Green Kitchen Café team – so together they agreed to offer Justin an employment contract as Lead Kitchen Porter when he was reaching the end of his placement.

In January 2022 Justin's hours working in the Café were extended from two to four days per week. Initially Justin's task was pot washing, however over time Justin has taken on additional tasks as a food runner - including delivering food to the tables from the kitchen and traying up the rashers in preparation for breakfasts at the weekend.

Feedback on Justin's performance has been incredibly positive:

“Justin is flexible, consistent and enjoys being part of the team. He is our right-hand man. If I could have two more Justin's, it would be perfect.”

Siobhan Behan, Development Chef, Green Kitchen Café

To begin with when Justin started in the role, he was interested in becoming a Chef. However, on observing the tasks whilst working in the Green Kitchen Café and being provided with the opportunity to try some of them he has decided it is not a route he wishes to pursue for now and that he is happy earning money and following his interests outside of work.

Alongside his work in the Café, in March 2022 Justin engaged in a Job Site visit in relation to a p/t role as Car Park Attendant at the Houses of the Oireachtas. Following the Job Site visit, he was successful in securing the role. Having two employment roles as a Kitchen Porter and Car Park Attendant meant Justin had to prioritise his work over other activities. He was keen to work and explore different employment opportunities so was happy to do this.

In the Summer of 2022 Justin also took up seasonal work with WALK's Gardening Team at DCU. However, after trying this for a while Justin and his team decided to take a step back – as Justin felt he didn't have enough time to pursue his other interests and whereas he enjoys working he also wanted a bit of time to focus on other things. So, he finished working in DCU and continued his employment roles in the Green Kitchen Café and as a Car Park Attendant at the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Justin has since used his training as an opportunity to fundraise for Charities that he has an interest in including the Irish Heart Foundation and Irish Guide Dogs for the blind. As Justin has a passion for running, for 2023 he has set himself the goal of running two marathons. Alongside this, Justin also designs his own tattoos!



RETHINK IRELAND

Andy with his colleague in St Pat's Stadium

Andy's Story - My journey with St. Pats

Andy has been supported by WALK through Supported Living and Day Supports for over 20 years. Andy has been a fan of St. Patrick's Athletic Football Club (St. Pats) since moving to the Inchicore area when he started with WALK and frequently attends St. Pats matches.

Through career conversations and journey to work training, it was identified that one of Andy's goals was to explore different employment opportunities in order to work towards paid employment. Andy and his Employability Skills trainer Donna talked about the type of roles that Andy was interested in and explored different opportunities. Following this they decided to look into opportunities at St. Pats linked to Andy's employment interests and his passion for his local football club.

Andy talked about his journey so far, saying:

"I started in St. Pats about a year ago. The Stadium is local, just around the corner from my house. My job is cleaning the Stadium and I work there every Monday. I enjoy the work and completing my tasks there. My boss is called Niall, and my colleagues are Dave and Daniel. I get on really well with them and they are easy to chat too. I meet them outside of work sometimes too, at Pats games."

In terms of next steps, Andy is now exploring further paid work opportunities with his Job Coach Sheryl.

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 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.

Matthew's Story -

Matthew started in WALK in September 2018. In his first meeting with WALK we explored Matthew's interests and passions – and right from the get-go his interest in Technology and Gaming shone through!

In his first couple of years at WALK Matthew completed Journey to Work classes to learn more about the world of work, to prepare his CV and work on his interview skills. He engaged in courses of interest including Digital Media and Word Processing at Dublin Community Education Centre and a Robotics beginners' course at Crumlin College. He also worked on his YouTube Channel 'JustMattika' on an ongoing basis in his spare time.

Following this Matthew had a short-term contract working in Liam's Hardware and completed a placement with Aspire Media Productions as a Media Assistant. Matthew gained transferable skills

from these jobs – but decided they weren't quite what he wanted to do in the longer term.

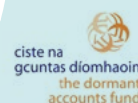
In the meantime, Siobhan Sweeney from the Open Doors Initiative Mentorship Programme had recommended SIRO and sent over a Job Specification. As Matthew's Career interests were Technology focused, his Job Coach and Keyworker held initial meetings with SIRO to carve out a role for Matthew there based on business needs and Matthew's strengths and career goals.

Matthew was supported to prepare for and interview for the position of Commercial Administrator and was successful. Matthew commenced work in SIRO in October 2022.

Matthew's keyworker ensured he had support to learn his tasks and settle into the workplace. By December 2022 when Matthew had familiarised himself with his tasks, got to know the workplace and built up his confidence – he started to attend work independently.

Feedback from Daniel, Matthew's Manager, is that Matthew is a quick learner, that his work is of a high standard and that in the future SIRO would be happy to employ Matthew full-time.

In terms of next steps, there is a new process being introduced by SIRO that will result in Matthew's tasks changing so Matthew will need to learn the new tasks. Following this, the opportunity for Matthew to increase his hours is open. In his spare time Matthew continues to work on his YouTube Channel 'JustMattika'. His channel has had over 533,000 views to date.



This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund

events and fundraising



WALK WITH UKRAINE

WALK support for people with disabilities in the Ukraine



In 2022 WALK worked with the VGO Coalition in the Ukraine and its member organisations to assist Ukrainian citizens with Intellectual Disabilities and their families impacted by the war. Initially WALK set up a fundraising page with 100% of the money collected used directly to assist Ukrainian citizens with Intellectual Disabilities and their families impacted by war.

In March 2022, WALK worked with the local community, businesses, and community organisations to fundraise and collect essential supplies to be transported to the Ukraine and partnered with the Irish Refugee Centre.





WALK's CEO Joe Mason, and Director of Services (Day Supports) Kevin Power, travelled to Lublin in Poland on the border of the Ukraine to deliver essential supplies and to support four families with children with Intellectual Disabilities to travel to Ireland to seek safe refuge. WALK worked with local Ukrainian organisations to establish reliable ways to bring the families back safely.

On 5th May 2022, WALK and Olena Dmytriieva, a lady with lived experience of disability and the complexities of trying to survive in Kyiv during the war presented to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters. They spoke about the impacts of war and humanitarian emergencies on people with a disability, WALK's Humanitarian journey and the practical measures that could be taken to save lives in the Ukraine. Olena Dmytriieva was the first Ukrainian woman to speak in the

Houses of the Oireachtas. WALK voluntarily coordinated the collection and delivery of further aid packages to the Ukraine border in June and October 2022. WALK staff members, individual supporters, community organisations and businesses volunteered a significant amount of their time to support fundraising efforts and to help with donations. All WALK staff who participated in trips to deliver humanitarian aid to the Ukraine used their annual leave to do so. WALK is grateful to all the staff, individuals, and organisations who got involved and supported us at this time we really appreciate it.

WALK's CEO Joe Mason received a medal for his voluntary humanitarian work on behalf of families and people with disabilities in the Ukraine in October 2022.



- Hygiene:** Children Diapers, Adult Diapers, Wet wipes for the children with disabilities and frontline staff who have no access to water, Roll on deodorant, Sanitary products, Tooth brushes and tooth paste, Shampoo and shower gel, Toilet paper, Towels and face cloths.
- First aid supplies:** bandages, tapes, anti-septics, bug repellent, gloves and liquids (cleaning products).
- Electricals:** Flashlights, batteries, and power banks. Candles, Matches/lighters.
- Camping equipment:** Gloves, Sleepingbags, blankets, pillows and camping mats.
- Umbrellas, rain jackets, sunglasses, Suncream.**
- Clothing:** only new Socks, only new underwear men/women, womens clothing, childrens clothing, mens clothing.
- Childrens** toys, colouring books, crayons, pencils, children story books, stuffed toys and earplugs.
- Ear defenders for the men and women hearing the explosions and ruffle of the open combat.
- Food products:** Baby food dry and Jar, dry foods such as pasta, rice, porridge (oats), tinned foods. Fruit and Veg (tinned), biscuits, rice cakes, sweets, soft drinks, potatoes, chocolate spread, peanut butter, jam, sugar, tea, coffee, sauces and waters.





WALK FOR UKRAINE 2022

Councillor Dáithí Doolan, deputising for Dublin City's Mayor, giving the send-off speech to those assembled for the 2022 sponsored Walk for Ukraine. Prior to leaving the Eleanora.

A sponsored 10-mile mountain trek called Walk for WALK has been organised on an annual basis over a number of years.

The trek is organised to bring the Dublin 12 Community together and raise money through sponsorship. This year the organisers agreed that any money raised through the walk would be used to support WALK's voluntary humanitarian efforts with the VGO Coalition in the Ukraine and its member organisations in assisting Ukrainian citizens with Intellectual Disabilities and their families impacted by war. In 2022 the walk was therefore renamed Walk for Ukraine.

After consultation with St Johns Ambulance and Mountaineering Ireland the 2022 route was altered due to a yellow weather warning and advice to follow a largely shaded trail. WALK is extremely grateful to all those who braved the heat and got involved in the walk and to all the organisations and individuals who supported it. Including the Eleanora Pub for providing buses, refreshments and a donation, St Johns Ambulance for providing medical advice, ABS Building Supplies for arranging refreshments at the finish line and to Building Profiles, Handleit.ie and Gifts.ie for their contributions.

**Altogether
€3.938.48
was raised.**

BRENDAN'S QUIZ FOR UKRAINE

Brendan embarked on organising a fundraiser for Ukraine, which took place on 30th November 2022 upstairs at the Button Factory, Dublin.

Brendan and Zoe Dunne, his co-presenting quiz partner on the night, were able to offer excellent prizes courtesy of WALK's generous community partners. Thanks to the IFI, the Stella Cinema, A&L Goodbody, the Eleanora Pub, the Halfway House, the Third Space, Smithfield and The Coffee House for donating prizes.



BRENDAN TALKS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE BELOW:

"I am really rather happy that I used my movie knowledge to do a movie quiz fundraiser at the Button Factory. It was a little bit terrifying at the beginning with everything to do and there really was a lot to think about.

We did a spider diagram and made it happen a little bit at a time week by week. Doing the quiz has made me a changed man, I am feeling confident.

It was a great night and what's more we raised €908.32 which will be put to good use in helping people in the Ukraine whose lives have been turned upside down through war."





MARGARET'S FUNDRAISER

In support of Our Lady's Hospice

Margaret is a member of Greenhills Over 55's Social & Fitness Club. She is passionate about social issues and wanted to raise money to support our Lady's Hospice and their important work. With this in mind, she got to work organising a fundraising event. Many of the ladies from her club were very willing to support the initiative and help out by making food and donating prizes.



The fundraising event was a huge success and raised €477.45 for Our Ladies Hospice. It was a great opportunity for everybody to come together to raise money for a good cause.



community projects fund

WALK's Community Project Fund can be applied for by both staff and the people we support to help with funding projects that are inclusive and benefit service users and the local community. 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 THE 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.

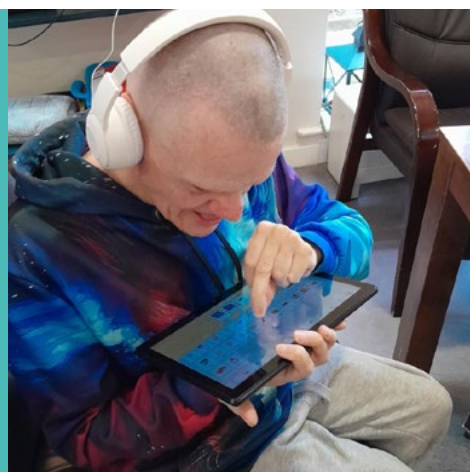


IN 2022, SIX PROJECTS WERE DELIVERED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND WITH A JOINT SPEND OF €6,495.91.

Below are the areas that the Community Project Fund supported in 2022:

The Community Project Fund provided financial support for personal training sessions and gym group classes for one individual in line with their fitness goals.

The Community Project Fund supported the purchase of a tablet for one individual, Robbie, who uses the tablet as a communication tool.



The Community Project Fund supported costs for seven individuals with an interest in drama to complete a 12-week drama programme in Blue Diamond Academy focusing on developing skills in voice, improvisation and movement.

The Community Project Fund contributed to a year's membership of Tallaght Gym and Swimming Pool to support one individual in their health and fitness goals.

The Community Project Fund contributed to the cost of garden tools, soil, wood, plant pots, seeds, fruit & veg plant food and polytunnel tape for a Community Allotment Project.

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The Community Project Fund supported one individual, Niamh, to buy supplies to set up her own small tie dye business.



Niamh producing her tie dye designs to sell at the market



THE BRIDGECOURT COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT PROJECT

In 2022, the Day Support team in Bridgecourt were informed of an untended allotment in Bluebell. Many of the people supported by the team have an interest and background in horticulture as well as in outdoor activities in general, so the team agreed it would be a great project to pursue. The allotment was also just a 15-minute walk away, so within the local community.



One of the objectives of the project was to give back to the local community by increasing the availability of nutritious foods, through growing our own fruit and vegetables and donating it to local homeless charities. We had also set the aim of encouraging the people we support to further develop their skills in horticulture.

Many people got involved in the project. Some on a weekly basis, and some on a more occasional basis when they had a break from college or a day off work. A group of gentlemen from Direct Provision Services also got involved. Many people joined simply for the social aspect. This quickly began a tradition of meeting up for coffee after gardening.

Craig, Jordie and Jordie's father John were the most regular attendees. John supported the project with his extensive gardening experience, as well as to encourage his son.

When we secured the allotment, it was in an overgrown, dilapidated state. But as the weeks progressed, the team eventually returned the site to its former glory. We had originally intended to keep the cover of the polytunnel. However, it was beyond repair and a new cover was required to protect any crops we planned to grow as winter began to approach.

The project was a success. However, with September approaching many of the participants had begun work experience placements and / or college. It was therefore decided that the project had run its course. Ultimately, we were never able to produce food for local charities. However, the involvement of the individuals supported by WALK, families and community groups was a big success. Plus, the experience motivated some of the service users who were involved in the project to pursue work experience in the area of Horticulture. Craig (pictured below) went on to engage in work experience in Airfield





Jordie clearing a bed of Sorghum plant



Jordie was one of the most enthusiastic gardeners involved in the project, and since participating in the Bluebell allotment project he has also gone on to engage in Airfield. Where he has worked hard at the Airfield farmer's market.

WALK works in partnership with Airfield Estate as part of our WALK REAL Supported Employment Programme



This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund

Since commencing work experience at Airfield, Jordie has engaged in maintenance work and has now transitioned to gardening work. Through the support of the staff at Airfield Jordie has gained enough confidence to work independently.

This year, Jordie has continued to pursue his passion by going on to study a part-time Horticulture course in Inchicore.

Collectively, the allotment project was a huge success working as a catalyst in generating a greater interest in the area of Horticulture as well as supporting a sense of pride, purpose and belonging.



governance & compliance

OVERVIEW OF WALKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 on non-executive Directors.

WALK's Board is made up of nine Directors.

John Bourke is the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Pat McCarthy is the Vice Chairperson and Gerry Donoghue is the Company Secretary.

Two Directors were recruited to the Board in 2022. Teresa Whelan is a new Director and Anita Lernihan was a previous Director and successfully applied to return to WALK's Board. Each new Director receives a comprehensive induction on commencement of their role.

WALK conducts a Governance Skills Audit bi-annually to review the skills breakdown of the Board of Directors and to identify any gaps. A Governance Skills Audit and corresponding report was completed in 2022.

The report found that WALK's Board of Directors has a broad range of expertise including Expert by Experience – family members, Clinical Services, IT, Banking Sector Management, Human Resources and Law. Board members have skills in the areas of: General Management, Financial Management, Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation; and in chairing, consensus building, strategic thinking, and Governance.

Feedback through the Governance Skills Audit included the following:

“In general, I find that the Board is well balanced and committed to the overall objectives of WALK. The variety of experiences of the Board members is reflected in constructive discussion on key issues. The Board is greatly assisted by the quality of reports and supporting documentation that it receives.”

Pat McCarthy, Board member

WALK is committed to the ongoing training of Board members and notifies Directors of upcoming Governance based training, and any other relevant training that arises.

WALK is compliant with the Charities Governance Code 

100% of Board Departmental Plan targets met for 2022 

- Complete Governance Skills Audit and Report.
 - Board to consider any areas of training or skills development required and attend as such.
 - Host an Annual WALK AGM.
 - To be involved in WALK Annual Report, in line with good Governance.
 - Review Charities Governance Code Compliance Calendar and agree action plan for the year.
 - To complete annual review of board performance, and report findings back to the board.
 - Ensure all relevant information is submitted to Charities Regulator to deadline.
 - Ensure all relevant information has been submitted to the lobbying register to deadline.
 - Oversee implementation of Strategic plan for the year.
- WALK has a Conflict-of-Interest Policy in place which was reviewed by the Board in March 2022.**
- Terms of reference are in place for the Board and for each of the Board Subcommittees to make it explicit where monitoring lies within the organisation.**




BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE 2022

First name	Surname	January	March	May	July	September	November
John	Bourke						
Gerry	Donohoe						
Peter	Byrne						
Gavin	Murphy						
Betty	Brophy						
Bernie	Dunne						
Pat	McCarthy						
Teresa	Whelan						
Anita	Lernihan						

NON-BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE:

First name	Surname	February	March	May	July	September	November
Joe	Mason						

* Teresa Whelan was appointed to WALK's Board of Directors 19th September 2022.
 * Anita Lernihan was appointed to WALK's Board of Directors 14th November 2022.

 Present
  Absent
  Hadn't yet commenced on WALK's Board of Directors

The following members of the organisation attended meetings throughout the year to provide information to the Board on their areas of expertise, when required: Catherine Kelly, Eamonn Teague, Brid Corr Nolan, Kevin Power and Ross Hughes.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISKS

The Finance / Audit Subcommittee has oversight over Financial Risks.

The Risk and Safeguarding Oversight Group has oversight over Clinical Risks.

WALK has a Risk Process Policy in place which is reviewed and approved by the board every three years.

All risks are recorded on WALK's Risk Register which is regularly reviewed.

THE RISK, QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS OVERSIGHT OVER RISK MANAGEMENT IN WALK.

Risk is a standing order on the Subcommittee agenda and key risks are addressed and risk ratings agreed at Subcommittee meetings. The Subcommittee provide an update to the board at each Board meeting.

Discussion and agreed actions regarding major risks occurs at the above meetings and are tabled for discussion at Board of Director meetings. WALK's Board of Directors have reviewed all major risks and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate major risks.

The key risks WALK currently faces, and the measure identified and taken to mitigate these risks are as follows:

- 1. Lack of Pay Parity with S.38 organisations.** To mitigate this risk WALK is campaigning on an ongoing basis around pay parity, is investing in opportunities to support staff development and progression within the organisation and endeavours to provide a comfortable and supportive work environment.
- 2. Regulatory compliance risk.** To mitigate this risk WALK employs suitably qualified professionals, has appointed a competent Board of Directors and takes advice from experts in the Charity sector.

- 3. HSE & HIQA compliance risk.** To mitigate this risk WALK employs suitably qualified healthcare professionals and managers.

- 4. Data protection risk.** To mitigate this risk WALK has retained external consultants to assist with its ongoing compliance with GDPR. The organisation makes ongoing strategic and tactical efforts to address the evolving nature of cyber threats and the challenges posed, including the revision of internal practices and controls in this area.

- 5. Loss of key personnel risk.** To mitigate this risk, WALK endeavours to provide a comfortable and supportive work environment with the aim of retaining key management personnel.

In addition to the above, an ongoing concern for WALK is the underfunding of our Supported Living Services and a lack of new referrals from the HSE to our Supported Living Services. To address this WALK have been working with the HSE to schedule an HSE funding review of our Supported Living Services which is now due to take place early in 2023.

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 practice in quality at a Board level. To ensure the Board continues to meet all its legal obligations and that action plans from any Board Governance system are completed.

There are three executive Directors on the Risk, Quality and Governance subcommittee. Gerry Donohoe, Peter Byrne and Betty Brophy. Meetings are held bimonthly.

FINANCE / AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE:

The objective of the Finance / Audit Subcommittee is to provide 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, and WALKs internal financial controls, budgeting, budgetary control systems and financial risk management systems.

There are three executive Directors on the Finance / Audit Subcommittee Gerry Donohoe, Bernie Dunne and Patrick McCarthy.

RENUMERATION SUBCOMMITTEE




WALK is committed to rewarding and motivating staff and recognises remuneration as one method for achieving this.

WALK has a Financial Policy in place which is approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis and remuneration is addressed as part of this Policy. WALK set pay levels at the appropriate levels for the competencies, skills, experience, and behaviour required from its employees. WALK will continue to advocate for funding for increments from the HSE for all staff and work with our colleagues in the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers on 'Pay Parity' for staff with the HSE and will continue to strive to have pensions reintroduced.

The Remuneration Subcommittee is comprised of the Chairperson of the Board, The Chairperson of the Finance / Audit Sub-Committee and one other board member appointed by the Chairperson. The CEO joins the subcommittee as a member to set remuneration for other members of the Senior Management Team. All other staff remuneration is set in accordance with WALKs Remuneration Policy.

The Remuneration Subcommittee holds meetings as and when required.

TRIPLE LOCK SYSTEM:

-  WALK are fully compliant with the Governance Code.
-  We are signed up to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising
-  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, the finances of the people we support 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.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) 2022

		Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
	Note	€	€	€	€
Income from:					
Donations and grants	2	-	23,781	23,781	37,083
Charitable activities	3	24,848	9,801,697	9,826,545	9,303,395
Other trading activities	4	-	50,645	50,645	4,349
Investments	5	-	-	-	15
Total Income		24,848	9,876,123	9,900,971	9,344,842
Expenditure on:		-	10,035,204	10,035,204	9,345,680
Charitable activities					
Total expenditure		-	10,035,204	10,035,204	9,345,680
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains		24,848	(159,081)	(134,233)	(838)
Other recognised gains:					
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	1,473,487
Other gains	7	-	145,125	145,125	-
Net movement in funds		24,848	(13,956)	10,892	1,472,649
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		423,779	5,523,915	5,947,694	4,475,045
Net movement in funds		24,848	(13,956)	10,892	1,472,649
Total funds carried forward		448,627	5,509,959	5,958,586	5,947,694

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

WALK's financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP Financial Reporting Standards 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland ("FRS 102").

You can read
WALK's Financial
Statement for
2022 here:



POLICY STATEMENTS

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE

WALK's safeguarding policy and procedure is in line with national policy. In recognising that all adults have the right to be safe and to live a life free from abuse. All persons are entitled to this right, regardless of their circumstances. That it is the responsibility of WALK to ensure that service users are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and to prevent abuse.

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 WALK's Designated Officer. WALK's Designated Officer is Fran Bissett.



FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

WALK welcomes all 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 (Complaints) Regulations 2006. The organisation encourages staff to aim to resolve and effectively deal with feedback and complaints at the first point of contact with the individual making the complaint.

The policy provides information for all parties in relation to how feedback and complaints are received and handled in WALK. It provides information to staff on the procedure for dealing with complaints including guidelines for staff to deal with a verbal complaint that is made to them.

An 'easy to read' version of the Feedback and Complaints policy is available. WALK's Feedback and Complaints Policy is available on our website. WALK has a Complaints Officer assigned.

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.

WALK's Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement is available on our website.

WALK COMMITTEES

Below are the following committees operating in WALK. These committees are made up of membership that allows expertise to be drawn on and to ensure that all stakeholders are represented.

WALK HEALTH AND SAFETY STEERING GROUP:

Health and Safety in WALK is managed and overseen by the Health and Safety Steering Group which consists of the Health and Safety Officer, Buildings and Procurement Manager and representation from WALK's Day and Supported Living Services. There are nominated Health and Safety Champions in each service location, plus there is one employee representative who is also the Health and Safety Representative. The Health and Safety Steering Group monitors health and safety performance by reviewing all health and safety measures at its meetings and liaises with relevant managers/ process owners to resolve any shortfalls.

RISK AND SAFEGUARDING OVERSIGHT GROUP (RASOG):

The Risk and Safeguarding Oversight Group oversees Clinical Risk and ensures that WALK is meeting all legal and best practice clinical requirements. Ensures that all WALK practices are following a human rights-based approach. Plus, ensures that all WALKs work is conducted in line with the low arousal philosophy. There is internal and external representation on the Risk and Safeguarding Oversight Group, this includes a representative from WALK's Board of Directors.



ASSISTED DECISION MAKING STEERING GROUP:

WALK's Assisted Decision-Making Steering Group commenced in December 2022. The group has been set up in order to prepare for and support the implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making Act in WALK. The group currently consists of staff representatives from across WALK Departments. There are also plans in place to recruit four individuals supported by WALK with lived experience as group members in the coming months.



next steps

WALK will continue to implement its operational plan in line with the three Strategic Goals and four Strategic Actions identified in our Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.

Strategic Plan progress will continue to be reviewed regularly against WALKs Operational and Departmental Plans through Departmental Planning meetings, Departmental Reports and as part of the agenda for Board meetings.

Regular updates will be provided to all Stakeholders via WALKs website.

THE CHALLENGES WALK FACES AS WE WORK ON IMPLEMENTING OUR 2021 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN IN THE NEXT YEAR, ARE:


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




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 WALK_IRL

WALK is the trading name for Walkinstown Association for People with an Intellectual Disability.
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Charity Registration Number: 20028008 Registered Charity Number: 32240