

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS



Annual Report 2023

Irish
Foster Care
Association

A Message from President Michael D. Higgins

We were honoured to receive a letter from President Michael D. Higgins at the start of our conference this year.

Is mian liom mo bheannachtaí ó'm chroí a sheoladh go gach uile dhuine a bhfuil baint acu le Cumann Cúram Altrama na hÉireann agus sibh ag freastal ar bhúr gComhdháil Náisiúnta an deireadh seachtaine seo.

May I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to all involved in the Irish Foster Care Association as you host your National Conference this weekend.

The Irish Foster Care Association is playing a vital role in our society, providing as it does support, care, and guidance to some of our most vulnerable children and young adults. Your dedication to ensuring that every child has a safe and loving home is truly commendable, as an exercise in caring, compassionate citizenship. It reflects the values of kindness, compassion and community that we would all wish to define our nation.

May I express my gratitude to all the foster parents, caregivers, social workers, and volunteers who make the work of the Irish Foster Care Association possible, enabling it to be a pillar of strength for children in need. Your selflessness and commitment are an inspiration to all.

This National Conference is an occasion to celebrate your achievements, share knowledge, and forge new connections. It is a time to reflect on the challenges you have faced and the progress you have made, and to chart a course forward towards an ever brighter future for foster care in Ireland.

President Michael D. Higgins (2023)

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Chairperson's Statement



As Chairperson of the Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA), I am honoured to present our Annual Report for 2023, a year marked by advances in our advocacy; national and local, collaboration, and continued dedication to promoting, protecting and progressing foster care across Ireland.

2023 was a busy and productive year for IFCA. As a Board we continued to prioritise building a strong and sustainable future for our organisation and ensuring best practice in governance and oversight. Despite a difficult financial climate in the voluntary and community sector, we have made significant progress throughout the year to ensure that IFCA, as a cornerstone of the fostering community in Ireland, continues to meet with the needs of foster carers not only through our targeted services and supports, but representing the voice of foster care nationally, to government and decision makers, striving for progress and advocating on what matters to our members.

During the year, the extent of the challenges within the care system were highlighted in national media, drawing comment from the judiciary and awareness with the broader public. These challenges are acutely felt by the fostering community, the foundation of the care system. The extent of this was evidenced through our National Helpline and Advocacy Service, IFCA has remained committed to being there for foster carers to support, help and assist.

The Board oversaw IFCA's budget campaign in 2023 which demonstrated a significant increase in political engagement and after many years campaigning, government responded to calls for a long overdue increase to the foster care allowance. We will build on the successes of our campaign to continue to press for increased supports and resources for foster care. The value of the contribution of foster carers to the State and our society cannot be overestimated and we are committed to achieving real, impactful and tangible outcomes, where the State places, and keeps, foster care at the forefront of the political agenda.

It was wonderful to see so many foster carers at IFCA's National Conference in Mount Wolseley in September. The engagement at the in-person AGM held as part of the Conference was a true reflection of the core values of IFCA in respect and appreciation of its members. These events highlighted the strength and collective purpose of our fostering community, reaffirming our shared commitment to supporting and advocating for foster carers and the children in their care.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my fellow Board members for their voluntary dedication of time and expertise, to the members of our subcommittees for their invaluable contributions, in particular our outgoing members of the IFCA Foster Care Subgroup and newly appointed members who joined in 2023. To our dedicated staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to support our mission, thank you. Your efforts have fortified IFCA's operational capacity and ensured that we continue to stand strong in independently supporting and advocating for the fostering community. Together, we will persist in our commitment to champion the needs and rights of foster carers and the children they nurture.

Raymond Nolan

Raymond Nolan

Chief Executive Review



As CEO of the Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA), it is my distinct honour to present our 2023 Annual Report. This year was marked by significant achievements in our advocacy efforts, National Helpline, learning and development initiatives, and key projects dedicated to identifying, understanding and supporting foster care. Our successes are a testament to the collective effort and unwavering commitment of our team, funders and supporters.

Advocacy remains at the heart of IFCA's mission. In 2023, we amplified our voice, championing the rights and needs of foster carers and their families. Through strategic approach and active engagement with public representatives and policymakers, we have made substantial strides in raising awareness about the unique challenges faced by the foster care community.

As you will read in this report our independent advocacy team provided intensive support to 85 new cases in 2023. The complexities and challenges faced by foster carers and the impact on their lives continues to be of great concern

to us. Independent advocacy support is vital for foster carers, empowering them by ensuring they have access to unbiased information, helping them navigate complex systems and policies that govern our care system. It provides a platform for their voices to be heard, advocating for their rights and the needs of the children in their care. Many foster carers are facing extremely challenging situations, such as managing behavioural issues, trauma, or legal complexities, and this support becomes indispensable. It offers critical guidance and emotional backing, helping carers to cope with stress and make informed decisions. Again in 2023, IFCA's expert team has remained dedicated to being there for foster carers every step of the way, bringing a wealth of experience and specialised knowledge, and are committed to ensuring that foster carers never feel alone in their journey. Ultimately, independent advocacy support strengthens the entire foster care system.

Our National Helpline has been a critical resource for many in 2023. This year, we continued to see a significant volume of calls, with 577 new cases, underscoring the ongoing need for support, guidance and informed signposting. Our dedicated team of Helpline staff and volunteers provided invaluable assistance, addressing a wide range of issues from legal concerns to emotional support. The Helpline's impact is evident in the positive feedback from those we have assisted, reaffirming our commitment to being a reliable source of help, hope and sound guidance when needed. Learning and Development has always been a priority for IFCA. In 2023, we continued to provide impactful, relevant and topical learning opportunities through our comprehensive curriculum of learning events. We utilise the flexibility offered through online learning to facilitate greater accessibility for foster carers and continue to grow our reach nationally. Our innovative approach to learning, which includes both in-person and virtual sessions, has made our resources more accessible than ever before.

We are proud to report that participation rates have soared, reflecting the value and relevance of our educational offerings. Our training events are curated and developed to ensure that they respond to the changing needs of our fostering community, providing the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of child development, trauma-informed care, and the specific needs of children in their care as well as staying updated on best practices, legal requirements, and support systems, and practical resources and requirements. Under the auspices of IFCA's Learning and Development our Toy Show funded BUSS (Building Underdeveloped Sensory Systems) pilot project went from strength to strength with LEAPlets Groupwork underway in 4 sites around the county. In December 2023 we successfully launched our 'Responding to the Needs of Babies and Young Children in Foster Care' project, kindly funded by the 'Children's Promise Fund' with the Katharine Howard Foundation. This project is a fine example of the value of bringing together a diversity of stakeholders in shared endeavour to effect change throughout the system that will positively impact babies and young children in foster care and those who care for them by increasing awareness, building capacity and identifying and amplifying best practices and approaches.

We were delighted in 2023 to see a huge increase in engagement with our award-winning podcast series 'Stories from Foster Care' and a special thanks to all who contributed, shared their stories and shared their experiences.

IFCA were around the country in 2023 with 74 Branch & Hub events which saw over 2800 attendees coming together. Throughout the year 32 IFCA family events took place throughout the country and we were delighted to end the year on a high note with 14 Christmas events, some of which were multi-hub events with a massive 1178 attendees coming along, bringing families

together, fostering a sense of community and belonging. These events provided opportunities for children and their foster families to create lasting memories, strengthening the bonds that are so essential for a supportive and nurturing environment. Their success was a striking reflection of the vibrant and resilient community we serve.

In the latter part of 2023, Budget 2024 Campaign was a focal point of our national advocacy efforts. This robust campaign was critical to ensuring that foster care was firmly on the political agenda. While an increase to the Foster Care Allowance was at last achieved, we were disappointed to learn that its implementation would be incremental and not fully applied until November 2024. Our political engagement significantly increased as part of this campaign with numerous attendances at Leinster House, accompanied by foster carers. We will build on this in the coming years and do all we can to ensure your voices are heard.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to our Board, team, volunteers, partners, funders and you, our members, for their unwavering dedication support and passion. Together, we have made a meaningful difference to foster care in Ireland. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to advocate, support, and empower foster carers, ensuring that every child in foster care has the opportunity to thrive and the immense contribution of the fostering community is valued, recognised and protected.

Is mise le meas.

Róisín Clarke

OUR VISION

An Ireland where the importance of fostering is recognised, valued, and embedded in a society where every child in care is given the opportunity to grow and develop in a safe and nurturing family environment.

MISSION

As the leading national organisation for foster care, we are the voice for the foster care community in Ireland. We promote and strengthen foster care through the provision of supports, learning and development, and by advocating for the strategic and progressive reform of policy and practice.

VALUES

Rights-based

IFCA advocates for and adopts a rights based approach to the provision of, and access to, services and supports that are informed by national and international standards.

A nurturing, stable family environment in a diversity of forms, as a cornerstone of a child's growth and development.

We champion and support the fundamental role of a nurturing supportive family home environment in which to grow and thrive as a cornerstone in a child's life.

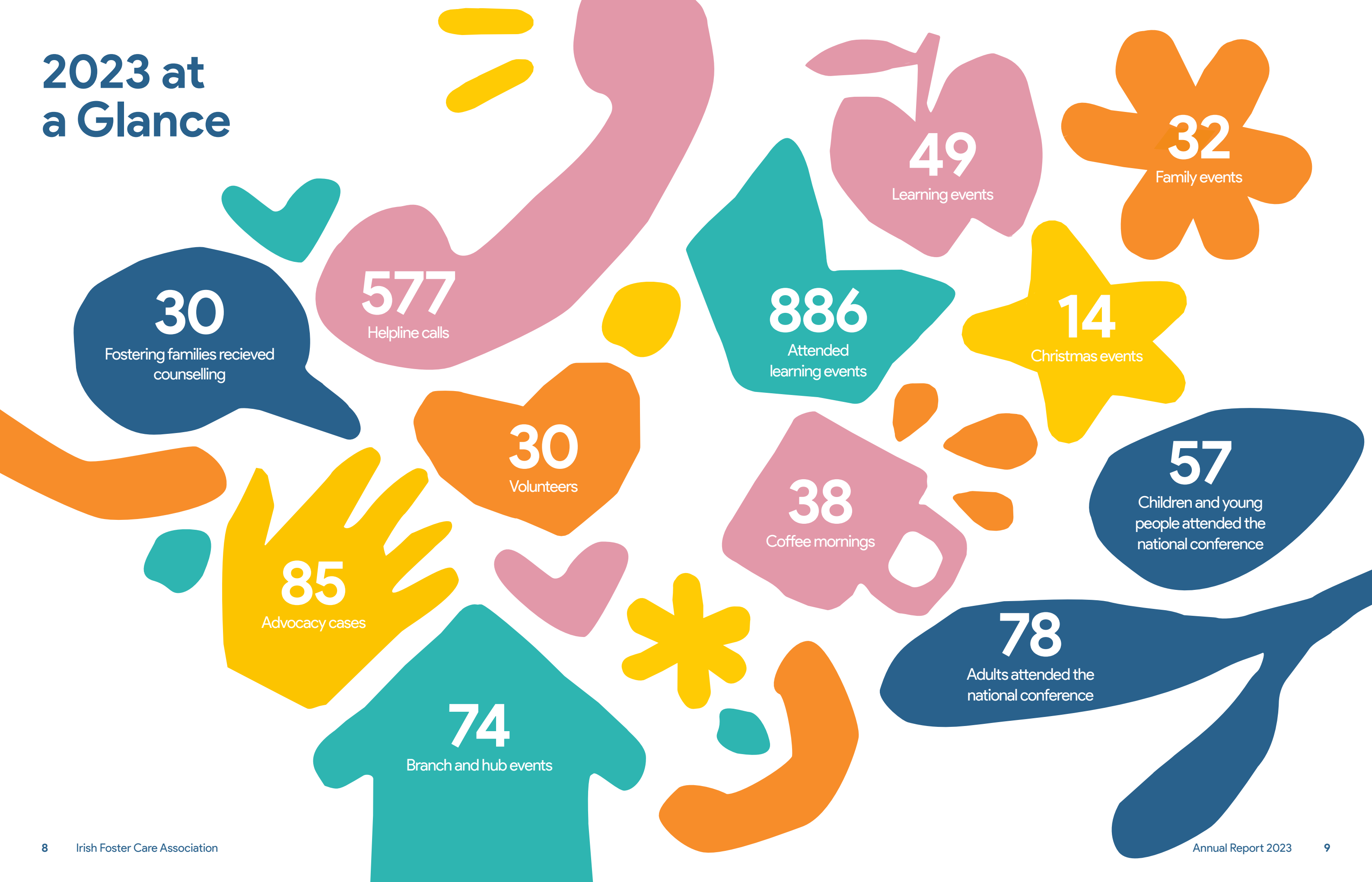
Respect and Inclusivity

Respect for and inclusion of all members of the fostering community is core to our work.

Collaboration

We work in partnership with all our stakeholders to achieve our shared goals for an Ireland that supports and values fostering.

2023 at a Glance



NATIONAL ADVOCACY



National Advocacy

Committee on Social Protection, Community, Rural Development and the Islands

IFCA provided a submission to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community, Rural Development and the Islands, specifically addressing the issues surrounding pensions and back to school allowances. This submission was requested by the committee as they began their preparations for Budget 2024.

Submission to inform the Review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004

In March 2023, IFCA completed a submission to the Department of Education as part of the review of the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. The purpose of the review was to establish if the Act is adequate to meet the needs/ requirements of children with special education needs and to determine if changes were required to the legislation. IFCA conducted an online survey and hosted a focus group to hear the experiences of foster carers caring for children with special needs.

Members Foster Care Forum

IFCA's Members Foster Care Forum took place in April. This is a chance for members to meet staff and Board members and share the experiences and issues facing them in their role as foster carers.

Members spoke about positive working relationships with social workers and how this greatly supported them in their role and the value of good communication. Members also spoke about our National Advocacy Service which was identified as an important support in helping foster carers to have a voice and to be heard and foster care training was also viewed as assisting carers to meet the needs of children.

In terms of areas for improvement, the aftercare process was marked as a stressful time for foster carers who often felt excluded from the process, with their contribution to the young persons life often underestimated. The planning process often commences at the later end of the young persons care journey and can trigger uncertainty and anxiety not only for the young person but for the foster family.

Financial provisions in aftercare are not adequate and need to be revised so that those who choose not to remain in full time education receive the same service provision as those who continue into third level education.

High staff turnover also impacts on children being able to develop relationships with their social workers. Foster carers spoke of children not being 'known' by the social worker and this coupled with the poor relay of information to children about their family circumstances can place additional pressures on the placement.

Access was also highlighted as an area that led to difficulties for foster carers and their foster child. Members spoke about the challenges of helping a child to experience family visits in a positive manner.

Poor access to services continues to be a reality for children in care, particularly therapeutic supports, mental health services and out of school supports for both the child and the foster carer when a child is without a school placement or refuses to attend/ engage with school.

The Childcare (Amendment) Bill 2023

We were delighted to be invited to take part in Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2023 (resumed) with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2023 suggests changes to some parts of the Child Care Act 1991. The Child Care Act forms the legislative basis in which Tusla can intervene and promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. The 1991 Act sets out the conditions in which children can be received into care and the procedures that need to be followed by Tusla at the point of receiving a child into care and when in placement. The government will now consider the submissions made and decide if additional inputs need to be made on the scope and detail of the suggested changes.

IFCA Budget Submission 2024

Our Budget 2024 campaign got underway over the summer and included engagement with public representatives and county councils and letters from foster carers directly to their representatives via Uplift. Our media campaign was launched outside Leinster House with foster carers and resulted in many media articles focussing on the needs of foster carers in the lead in to the budget.

Expectations of sweeping measures in Budget 2024 that would address the cost-of-living crisis in a meaningful way fell short for many. An expected focus on ‘a children’s budget’ did emerge but did not go far enough to alleviate the challenges felt by families, and showed a lack of ambition by the government to take brave steps that have longer-term impact. Foster carers have been acutely impacted by the many years of poor policy decisions. Notwithstanding the delayed increase to the Foster Care Allowance, long-standing priorities for foster carers are couched in national policy, such as pension contributions, mileage costs, eligibility for existing Department of Social Protection Back to School Allowance, and provision of placement start-up costs are all measures which can be implemented with decisive action by the government with minimal impact on the exchequer. Despite this, they still needed to be progressed in Budget 2024.



Our Asks:

1. Enhance Foster Care Allowance to a Minimum of €500 per Week.
2. Rectify Pension Contribution Discrepancies for foster carers.
3. Re-evaluate and Implement Equitable Mileage Allowances.
4. Extend Eligibility for the Back-to-School Clothing & Footwear Allowances.
5. Provide Start-up Costs for New Placements.

Outcomes:

1. From 1st January 2024, the rates of the Foster Care Allowance will increase by €25 per week, up to €350 per week for children under 12 and €377 per week for those over 12.
2. The Foster Care Allowance will be further increased in November 2024, up to €400 per week for children aged under 12 and €425 per week for those aged over 12.
3. Foster carers will receive a double payment of the Foster Care Allowance at its current rate before the end of 2023.
4. Foster carers will receive a double payment of Child Benefit for each qualifying foster child before the end of 2023.

The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has committed, post-budget, to continuing to ‘improve the suite of supports’ available to foster carers. The Irish Foster Care Association is committed to ensuring these commitments are kept.

SERVICES OVERVIEW

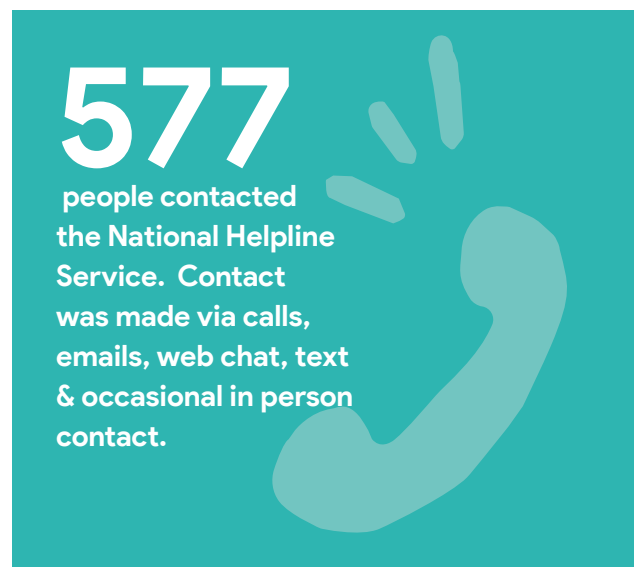


National Helpline Service

Here to Support, Here to Listen....

The Helpline team consists of two staff and five volunteers who support callers by providing a confidential and supportive listening service, with a non-judgemental, empathic and solution-focused approach. The Helpline is the first port of call for support and queries in relation to foster care and from here callers can access other member support services such as National Advocacy and Counselling Services.

Anyone can call the Helpline and in 2023 we had calls from foster carers, social workers, birth families, care leavers & other professionals in various organisations.



What people called us about

Recurring queries to the Helpline included financial queries, allegations, membership, tusla policy and procedures, general care queries and communication with social workers.

Advocacy & Counselling Referrals

The 83 referrals to Advocacy and Counselling were mainly in relation to support with allegations and working through the CASP process and placement breakdowns. A number of cases were referred to advocacy where there was a perceived lack of support from the social work team and foster carers were seeking additional support in navigating these situations.

Understanding Financial Support in Fostering

Over the course of 2023 the Helpline received a number of calls in relation to financial queries from foster carers. With this in mind, the Helpline developed, in conjunction with Learning & Development, 'Understanding Financial Supports in Foster Care' a leaflet and workshop for foster carers.

Enhanced Rights – Template for Foster Carers

Callers looking for support when applying for Enhanced Rights led to an update of the Helpline's FAQ on the process which included a template and policy that can be used by foster carers applying for Enhanced Rights.

Personal Data Access Request – Template for Foster Carers

Calls to the helpline from foster carers seeking to access their files led to a Personal Data Access Request template drafted to support people seeking their data.

National Advocacy

Throughout the year, calls to the Helpline often highlight issues that need to be brought to the attention of stakeholders at national level through IFCA's management team. Some of the issues presented to management in 2023 included:

Foster Care Reviews/Medicals and sensitive information

Foster carers seeking more information on handling of data/privacy.

Financial Support

2023 saw an increase in calls in relation to financial support for foster carers some of whom were seeking additional payments to support their foster placement. Financial support varied from additional school costs, home improvement grants and accessing financial support for therapies for children and young people.

Pensions for Foster Carers

A number of calls in relation to pensions for foster carers was highlighted with management as callers highlighted the gap in accessing the pension when reaching pension age.

You can access all templates and leaflets at www.ifca.ie

If you would like to speak to a member of the helpline please call 014585123 or email support@ifca.ie

National Advocacy Service

The advocacy team received eighty-five new cases in 2023. Of these cases twenty-six related to allegations being assessed by Tusla's Child Abuse Substantiation Policy (CASP). A further ten cases related to unplanned placement endings. Our primary focus was to offer individual support when dealing with the complex fallout of these circumstances. The remainder of our referrals related to communications with professionals and requests for support to appeal decisions made by Tusla across a broad range of issues, including approval to continue to foster, welfare concerns, financial supports, complex family access issues, respite and supports for children in care.

The foster carers who accessed our service reported substantive, unmet needs for support for themselves and the children in their care. Underpinning many of these cases was foster carers' need for support in responding to and finding ways to live with children's trauma responses, their risk-taking behaviours and mental health difficulties within a family home setting. The foster carers who accessed our service frequently reported high parenting stress, exceptional burdens of care and at times negative encounters with professionals involved in supporting the foster care placement.

Providing sensitive and structured care for children in foster care goes well beyond normative experiences of parenting, this becomes increasingly challenging when issues arise, placements are breaking down, welfare concerns emerge and when allegations are made. Our work over the past twelve months reinforces the need for independent advocacy to support foster carers interacting with the challenges involved in the childcare system. Our approach reflects the core principle of empowerment, reflecting on, and eliciting individual strengths and resilience. We ensure our services always

provide opportunities for choice and control. Safety and trustworthiness are created while keeping clear and realistic expectations of what can be achieved, in what circumstances we can offer our support and how we can offer that support with meaning and purpose.

Our aim is to offer a consistent, accessible and accountable service by providing:

- a safe space to reflect on the events that have led to the difficulty they are experiencing.
- non-judgemental response to foster carers who share their version of what has happened to them and to say what they would like to happen in the future.
- clear and accessible information to foster carers so that they can make informed decisions about the options open to them.

The benefits of engaging in our service:

- an increased sense of empowerment that comes from being listened to and seeing what one has said making a difference to what happens.
- an opportunity to hear the concern from an objective viewpoint about what has happened and what they want to change.
- understanding what is happening right now and what might happen next, and what might be needed to keep everyone safe.
- support to hear professional views about what has happened, what they are concerned about and what they feel might need to change.
- experiencing a model of communication that may improve and build relationships with other professionals.
- increasing competence - newly approved foster carers might lack experience and will often need a variety of tools/methods and space to adjust to and understand the complexity of their role.

“From the first communication with the service I felt heard for the first time in a very long time. I felt understood and believed for the first time in a very long time. The importance of that to us at that time was critical as we as a family were devastated by... We have continued to feel supported and very much appreciate the necessary support, information, advice and direction”

– Foster Carer, 2023

“I believe that it is essential to have a separate independent advocate intervene and ensure that the voice of the foster carer is heard”

– Foster Carer, 2023

A Trauma Informed Approach

Our understanding of crisis intervention and trauma has grown exponentially in recent years. With a greater awareness of its prevalence in society and deeper knowledge of its long-term effects, our commitment throughout 2023 was to ensure that our service had the capacity and resources to respond appropriately. Our service recognises the widespread impact of trauma for all of those involved in supporting children in care and promotes opportunities for resolution, reconciliation and hope for healing.

Many foster carers who reached out to our service identified themselves as having had a traumatic experience or were living in fear and anticipating a traumatic event was about to happen.

The trauma experienced by foster carers often pervaded their normal lives and ability to function. Our awareness and commitment to a trauma informed approach required increased sensitivity and additional time was given to these individuals accessing our service. We have witnessed first hand how these traumatic experiences alter the way some foster carers perceived their environment and relationships, leading them to be less trusting, to have a lack of confidence and to expect danger in the simplest of interactions or requests from professionals. Supporting individuals and couples to navigate the processes and communication demands with and from Tusla was challenging at times. Balancing our service user's emotional well-being and individual experience against the challenges of the childcare system required a high level of thoughtfulness, trust and collaboration. Our commitment to this approach allowed us to establish helpful and meaningful relationships with our service users.

Child Abuse Substantiation Policy (CASP)

Our experience of supporting foster carers who have CASP notifications in 2023 was one dominated by high levels of fear and uncertainty. We observed a marked increase in the level of distress for those who reached out for support in relation to CASP notifications. Each case required an individualised response and support strategy.

Our team provided a much-needed confidential space for foster carers to reflect on their experience of these notifications and the consequences this was having on their lives. Some shared feelings that suggested that they were experiencing a mental health crisis. Some acknowledging that they were becoming emotionally overwhelmed, and they were not able to cope or be in control of their emotions and normal daily activities. Many individuals were signposted to appropriate support services, including IFCA's Counselling Service and for those insured members the legal advice service.

Over the course of 2023, delays in the CASP assessments process emerged, the expected flow of communication and timeframes was in some cases difficult for CASP teams to achieve. Notifications to Gardai and potential contact with the criminal justice system exacerbated and amplified many foster carers fears and anxieties. Frustrations and worries about the system and how to regulate their feelings was frequently the focus of support provided. Open and consistent access to support proved to be an essential mechanism for foster carers to cope and process this experience.

Assessment of allegations and the welfare of children in care is complex, and supporting individuals who are the subject to an allegation is challenging. Our team continued to adapt and respond to unforeseen developments, and at the same time remain focused on what was in our power to deliver. By remaining focused and flexible on our task we were able to model and engender this to those who encountered our service. Focusing on the short-term, resetting achievable goals and actions, reflecting on strengths, acknowledging progress however small and providing clear and effective signposting. This enabled foster carers to respond to, and manage the current crisis, and feel better placed to manage any crises that may occur going forward.

Delivering Quality and a Rights Based Approach

Throughout 2023, the IFCA advocacy team continued to enhance its core objectives to drive standards, improve quality, and safeguard service users by working with all stakeholders. It supported the commencement of Tusla's independent review of CASP and engaged in several quality improvement initiatives including HIQA/Tusla's "Framework to support the implementation of the communication toolkit 'Fundamentals of good communication: How to have effective everyday conversations' in Tusla". We were also invited to contribute to Tusla's "Tusla Charter for staff and foster carers".

Public Law Initiative Alliance (PILA) Legal Workshops

As part of our commitment to strengthen the quality of information we provide and to support the rights of all of those involved in fostering we engaged with the Public Law Initiative Alliance (PILA) who supported us to partner with several law firms and legal experts across the country to design a series of legal workshops:

- Understanding the legal position of rights of migrant children in care
- The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015
- Mental health legislation in Ireland

Over 120 people attended the workshops. This series focused on helping those involved in fostering to understand the complexities of the legal system, who are rights holders and how those rights can be vindicated, and bring awareness to the developments in policy and legislation and how they may impact on fostering.

National Counselling Service

Our counselling service is dedicated to providing a compassionate and supportive environment for foster carers. In 2023, we successfully provided counselling services to over 30 families. This service is designed to offer foster carers a safe space to discuss their experiences, challenges, and emotions associated with their vital roles. The service is open to all members of IFCA, and we welcome more members to avail of our service.

Our counselling service aims to:

- Provide emotional support to foster carers.
- Offer a confidential space to discuss personal and professional challenges.
- Promote mental well-being among foster carers.
- Enhance the overall quality of foster care by supporting carers' mental health.

Foster carers are offered up to six free counselling sessions. These sessions are tailored to meet the individual needs of each carer, focusing on:

- Emotional support and stress management.
- Coping strategies for dealing with the unique challenges of foster care.
- Guidance on managing relationships and dynamics within the foster family.
- Support for dealing with trauma and behavioural issues in foster children.

Carers have reported:

- Improved emotional well-being.
- Greater confidence in managing their roles
- Enhanced relationships with foster children and other family members.
- A sense of relief and validation in sharing their experiences in a non-judgmental environment.

We express our deepest gratitude to Pobal for their generous funding, which enables us to continue offering this essential service. Without their support, we would not be able to provide the necessary emotional support to foster carers who play such a crucial role in the lives of vulnerable children.

IFCA's counselling service has had a profound impact on the well-being of foster carers in 2023. By providing a supportive and confidential space, we have helped over 30 families navigate the complexities of foster care with greater resilience and confidence.

Throughout 2024, we aim to expand our reach and support even more foster carers, ensuring that they have the emotional resources they need to provide the best care possible for foster children.

Learning & Development

In 2023, we continued to approach the work of Learning and Development in a collaborative way, inviting foster carers and practitioners to be part of 'a community of learning'. We strived to respond to the complex and challenging work of foster care by expanding our range of learning and events and courses. We offered a large range of both short and long courses, on issues which are identified by foster carers and practitioners as most relevant to them, always seeking to provide a supportive, safe learning environment and effective and meaningful content. In 2023, 886 people attended 49 learning events both online and in person.

Participation in Tusla's National Training Needs Analysis Working Group

IFCA was invited to take part in Tusla's Training Needs Analysis Working Group with the aim to inform Tusla's plan to develop a standardised approach to induction, training needs analysis and training delivery, to ensure that every foster carer has an annual training plan that meets their needs and the needs of the child/young person in their care. IFCA hosted discussion groups to gather views around needs and issues in 'Training in Foster Care' to feed into IFCA's own planning around provision of learning and development offerings and also into our participation in the Working Group.

Children Who Foster

The Children Who Foster Working Group was established by IFCA in 2023 to review IFCA's New Beginnings programme which was designed and developed to support the birth children of foster carers and help them to prepare for the challenges and rewards that fostering will bring.

The Working Group is made up of representatives from IFCA and from Tusla Midwest and Tusla Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary. They are foster carers, fostering practitioners, adult birth children of foster carers. The group has also engaged with children who foster to gain their views.

The aims of the Working Group are:

- Examine issues impacting upon children who foster.
- Explore and make recommendations regarding approaches to, and resources for, supporting children who foster.
- Carry out a review of the 'New Beginnings' support programme for birth children of foster carers, bring it up to date with current practice, ensure it is fit for purpose and revitalise it as a resource for children who foster, their parents and fostering practitioners.

- Draw on input and learning from children who foster, from foster parents and practitioners in fostering as well as findings from research and practice, both nationally and internationally.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including children who foster, with regard to the provision of supports to children who foster.

BUSS LEAPlets Pilot Project

BUSS stands for Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems in children who have experienced developmental trauma. After many years of working with children in care in CAMHS in the UK, the BUSS Model was developed by Sarah Lloyd, Specialist Occupational Therapist and Play Therapist, to be helpful when children have experienced developmental trauma.

In 2023, IFCA secured funding from the RTE Toy Show Appeal to run a pilot project offering BUSS LEAPlets early intervention groupwork to children in care aged 3 to 6 years and their foster carers.

With almost 70 practitioners and foster carers in Ireland already having received BUSS Foundation and Level One trainings in 2021 and 2022, a group of 12 practitioners and foster carers undertook the BUSS LEAPlets groupwork facilitation training with Sarah Lloyd in Dublin in October 2023.

The first BUSS LEAPlets group with children and their foster carers took place in Tallaght. Feedback from the foster carers who took part was very positive. They appreciated the support and the learning for themselves and observed improvements in their children's sensorimotor functioning.

Further BUSS LEAPlets groups are planned to take place in 2024 in pilot sites around the country in Dublin, Meath, Clonmel and Galway.

IFCA welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Sarah Lloyd and the BUSS Team to bring the BUSS Model to Ireland because:

- The BUSS Model is an early intervention and prevention model;
- It focusses on the needs of children who have experienced developmental trauma and so it is an excellent fit for children in care, their foster carers and the network of support professionals around the child;
- The model can be applied at any stage of development so that gaps in the child's experience and developmental progress can be revisited and attended to;
- The model can be applied in a range of key settings for the child – in the home, at school and in the context of community-based support networks with other foster carers and allied practitioners through its early intervention groupwork programme.
- The model has a parent/foster carer mentor strand as well as an early intervention groupwork strand and a schools programme. These three strands work to support children in care and their foster carers in the home, in community-based and school settings.
- The training can be undertaken by all key people in the network around the child – foster carer, Fostering Link Worker, Child in Care Social Worker, Social Care Leader, Teacher, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Occupational Therapist – thus developing a shared understanding and common language and collaborative problem-solving and strategies for meeting the child's needs.
- The BUSS Model attends to challenges in the day-to-day functioning of children who have experienced developmental trauma and so it responds to those points of stress in the day for the child and the child-foster carer, child-teacher relationships.

Participation in BUSS training has the following outcomes for foster carers and practitioners in the network around the child:

1. A better understanding of the neurosequential impact of trauma;
2. An ability to observe and interpret the physical and emotional presentation of the children, leading to more attuned caregiving;
3. Enabling foster carers as the main agents of change in the relationship with the child and in the child's regulation, development and wellbeing;
4. Strengthening the foster carer – child relationship;
5. Increasing the foster carers' feelings of competence and self-esteem;
6. Equipping practitioners with the knowledge and skills to assess and plan interventions that promote positive change in the child's day-to-day functioning and regulation.

Evaluating Outcomes of the BUSS LEAPlets Pilot Project:

In November 2023, IFCA was grateful to secure funding under the DCEDIY's What Works Building Evidence Scheme to evaluate the BUSS LEAPlets pilot project. Following a tendering process, researchers from the School of Social Work and Social Policy in Trinity College Dublin were selected for the project. Dr. Leigh-Ann Sweeney, Assistant Professor, and her Intellectual Partner at TUS Shannon, Dr. Lisa Moran, are heading up the research which will take place throughout 2024 with the final report to be available by March 2025.



Promoting Better Outcomes for Babies and Young Children in Foster Care and Their Parents and Foster Carers

In 2023, IFCA was delighted to receive three year-funding under the Children's Promise Grant Scheme through the Katharine Howard Foundation for the project 'Promoting Better Outcomes for Babies and Young Children in Foster Care and their Parents and Foster Carers'. The project is a multi-agency, collaborative project overseen by a Steering Group made up of representatives of our colleagues in: Barnardos, Childhood Matters, Clarecare, Youngballymun, Tigala Guardians ad Litem service, Nurturing Connections, Tusla National Practice Reform and Tusla Fostering Departments in Cork, Louth/Meath and Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary (the project pilot sites).

The project promotes relationships, resources, practice and decision-making that hold central the needs and wellbeing of babies and young children in foster care to ensure they have the best start possible.

The project focuses on harnessing the potential of the most vulnerable babies and young children in our society – those at increased risk of harm and who require the intervention of the child protection system and alternative care. It aims to enhance the relationships of foster carers and birth families with babies and young children in foster care from the earliest possible opportunity, to provide specific emotional and therapeutic supports and learning opportunities that promote their wellbeing and development and inform decision-making and practice responses that are most effective at this critical time in their lives.

It will focus on building shared understanding, common language, capacity and collaborative working in the fostering community to better meet the needs of infants and young children in foster care. It will consider gaps in current provision and evaluate outcomes of the various strands of the project.

Main Aims of the Project:

1. Support parents and foster carers of babies and young children in care in ways that lay the foundations for positive outcomes for those infants and young children who need alternative care by providing a range of targeted learning, support and therapeutic opportunities.
2. Promote interagency collaboration and work in partnership with birth parents, foster carers, child protection and fostering practitioners and key service providers involved with the care of babies and young children;
3. Contribute to national policy and practice around ensuring the best possible start for babies and young children in care.

The project launched with a national online panel discussion 'Responding to the Needs of Babies and Young Children, their Parents and Foster Carers' in December 2023. The Steering Group agencies representatives made up the panel and it was moderated by Dr. Carol Coulter of the Child Law Reporting Project and with contributions by Des Delaney of DCEDIY and Dr. Cliona Hannon of the Katharine Howard Foundation. There was an audio recording of foster carers and birth parents which added to the richness of the discussion.

In addition to the funding for the project, being a recipient of funding under the Children's Promise Grant Scheme has allowed IFCA to become part of a 'Community of Practice' with other organisations receiving funding under the scheme. At learning network events for this Community of Practice, which is facilitated and supported by staff of the Katharine Howard Foundation, we have been assisted in developing skills and approaches to evaluating and reporting on outcomes of our work.



Calendar of Events



January

Self-care around Loss in Fostering with Marianne Dwyer with foster carers in Limerick – Midwest Hub in Limerick

Self-care around Loss in Fostering with Marianne Dwyer with foster carers in Nenagh – Midwest Hub in North Tipperary

February

Behaviour as Communication with Christina Enright – national training

Creating Empowered Digital Citizens with Cyber Safe Kids – South Tipperary Hub

Responding to Lying and Stealing with Christina Enright – national training

Self-Care Through Self-Compassion (2-part course) with Marianne Dwyer – national training

Trauma and the Science of Sleep with Christina Enright – national training

Self-care around Loss in Fostering with Marianne Dwyer in Ennis, Co. Clare – Midwest Hub in Clare

CASP briefing with John Moore of Tusla – national training

Child and Adolescent Emotional Health in the Digital Age with Peadar Maxwell – South Tipperary Hub

Caring for the Carers: A Compassionate Space – monthly support session with Marianne Dwyer – national training

March

Relationships Matter: Building Good Communication and Teamwork in Fostering – Joan Boland and Wendy Gilsenan – national training

Caring for the Carers: A Compassionate Space – monthly support session with Marianne Dwyer – national training

Supporting the Time Children Spend with their Birth Families – with Christine Enright – national training

Supporting Sibling Relationships: The Work of the BASSICS Project – with the Edan Fostering Team – national training

Supporting Sibling Relationships – Christina Enright – national training

Relative Care and Kinship Care Arrangements – panel discussion event – national training

Understanding and Assessing the Needs of Siblings in Care – with Sheelagh Beckett – national training

Circle of Security Parenting program with Anne McCluskey and Joan Boland (8 week program) – national training

No Such Thing as Bad Behaviour – Dr. Jane Herd – with foster carers in Co. Kerry

Understanding and Supporting Yourself through Secondary Trauma with Christina Enright – national training

Supporting Children who have Experienced Bereavement and Loss with Christina Enright – national training

Supporting Children who have Emotional, Behavioural and Mental Health Problems with Christina Enright – national training

Just Right State: Sensory Attachment Course for Foster Carers with Chris West, Occupational Therapist, a five-week course – national training

Suicide and Self-Harm: Understanding and Helping Children and Adolescents who Experience Suicidal Ideation and who Use Self-harm to Cope with Difficult Feelings and Experiences with Christina Enright – national training

Practical Approaches to Help Foster Carers Build Strong Attachments with Children and Adolescents in their Care in person with Christina Enright – for foster carers in Co. Kerry

Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act: A Fostering Perspective with Brian Horkan of Mason, Hayes and Curran Solicitors, Legal Workshop

May

The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on Children and Adolescents in Foster Care: The Importance of Safe Engagement and Support to Give Children the Best Chance of Recovery with Christina Enright – national training

Help Me Reach My Teenager: Building Connections with Teenagers who Present as Resistant, Angry and Coercive with Christina Enright – national training

Supporting Children to Recover from Trauma through Therapeutic Play with Christina Enright – national training

Supporting the Development of Self-Esteem and Resilience in Traumatized Children and Adolescents with Christina Enright – national training

CASP Briefing with John Moore of Tusla CASP Team, Leinster – national offering

June

Supporting the Development of Mentalisation in Traumatized Children and Adolescents with Christina Enright – national training

Regulating Environments: One Day Just Right State Course for Foster Carers in Rockfield House, Co. Meath, with Chris West, Occupational Therapist – national training

Dealing with Complaints and Allegations of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns' with Wendy Gilson for foster carers in Co. Kerry

Blocked Care and Self-Care: Supporting Foster Carers to Stay Resilient in the Face of Challenge with Christina Enright for foster carers and practitioners in Co. Kerry

Understanding the Legal Position of Migrant Children with Patricia Brazil, Barrister, Legal Workshop

Mental Health Legislation in Ireland – with Brian Horkan of Mason Hayes and Curran, Legal Workshop

September

Understanding Financial Supports in Foster Care with Karen Cahill and Wendy Rossiter, for foster carers in South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny

Dealing with Complaints and Allegations with Wendy Gilson, for foster carers in South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny

Understanding Financial Supports in Foster Care with Karen Cahill – national training

Understanding and Supporting Children with Neurodiversity with Christina Enright – national training

November

Thinking about the Birth Children, a 2-part training with foster carers in Tralee, Co. Kerry – with Valerie Duffy

Responding to Lying and Stealing – with Christina Enright in Tralee with foster carers in Co. Kerry

October

Social Skills Development in Traumatized Children with Christina Enright, for foster carers in Co. Kerry

Understanding Financial Supports in Foster Care with Karen Cahill – national training

BUSS LEAPlets Groupwork Facilitation with Sarah Lloyd

December

Understanding and Supporting Children with Neurodiversity - with Christina Enright – national training

Promoting Better Outcomes for Babies and Young Children in Foster Care, their Parents and Foster Carers – a panel discussion

National Conference

IFCA's 2023 Annual National Conference took place in the Mount Wolseley Hotel in Carlow. It was a joy to meet old friends and new, share stories and experiences and come together to talk about the needs of foster carers and the children they care for. The 78 adults and 57 children who attended created a gathering of fun, connection and learning. We were thrilled to have author and lecturer Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan officially open the conference with a powerful invocation to foster carers to recognise their own contribution and worth, based on her personal experiences growing up. Then Dr. Danielle Douglas took us through her inspiring keynote presentation, *Protecting foster care? An insider's perspective*, which thoughtfully wove together valuable insights from the various stages of her life in the foster care system: as a child in care, a relative foster carer and researcher and lecturer in social care. Through the telling of their own stories, these two speakers challenged us to listen carefully to real-life experience when making decisions affecting children in care. To hear them speak was a privilege and an honour.

Following the keynote, a robust Q&A session brought questions from the floor to a panel which comprised of Dr. O'Sullivan and Dr. Douglas; Jacqui Smyth, National Lead for Foster Care Services, Tusla - Child and Family Agency; Dr. Naomi Feely, Senior Research and Policy Officer at Children's Rights Alliance and Colm Leonard, Investigator at the Ombudsman for Children's Office. A range of exhibitors were on hand to offer information relevant to fostering, from FASD to Aftercare. Well-attended workshops explored a variety of topics such as legal issues in foster care, horticultural therapy, Tusla-Child and Family Agency's Strategic Plan for Foster Care Services, humour as a protective factor in fostering, reflective practice, and self-compassion in the midst of uncertainty and loss. The 'I Believe' group of birth children performed 'Our World', a play based on their experiences of fostering, as part of this programme.

Children & Young People's Programme

Whilst the adults attended the presentations, workshops and Q&A sessions at this year's National Conference, a team of 20 volunteers provided a parallel programme for 57 Children and Young People aged 5 to 18. The Children and Young People's Programme offered an opportunity for children living in foster families to come together, to engage in a variety of fun activities, be creative, share experiences, be heard and have fun. The outdoor activities took place at Castlecomer Adventure Discovery Park.

The afternoon involved 3 different sessions for the children and young people dependent upon their age and preferences, including:

- Children and young people who foster took part in a creative, smaller group session. Members of the 'I Believe' support group for birth children from Co. Kildare and the 'Connections' support group in South Tipperary joined other birth children and young people for a session of discussion and creativity.
- Children and young people in foster care took part in a similar smaller group session with staff from EPIC. This was a rights informed, relaxed and fun information session.
- For the younger children, they had fun in the afternoon with 'Tony Baloney the Magician and his talking dog Leroy'.

To assist the children to manage the transition from their foster carers to the care and supervision of the team of volunteers, a family quiz was hosted on Friday evening. It was a packed room, children relaxed, joined in with other families to make new teams and already started to form new friendships that carried through over the weekend.

The photobooth was back again and in constant use by the children on Friday night, allowing them to capture special moments with their foster carers, and new and old friends.

Hearing the Voices of Children who Foster

IFCA's Children who Foster Working Group organised a workshop for children who foster at the conference. The session was facilitated by Debbie Nic Gabhann, Creative Arts Therapist, and involved children who foster from the I Believe group (Tusla Kildare areas) as well as children and young people from the Connections (support group in the Tusla South Tipperary area) and other children who foster who attended with their parents and families. The group engaged in large and small group discussion and a creative activity focused around their experiences and needs in fostering. The group produced a piece of artwork together. The learnings from the process at the conference was fed back into the work of IFCA's own Children Who Foster Working Group and was presented also to the Tusla National Working Group on Children Who Foster.

Foster 14

Drawing from presentations at the 2022 IFCA annual national conference, *Wrapped in Relationships*, is the 14th issue of 'Foster'. Katie Wrench contributes an excellent article based on her keynote, *Wrapped in relationships: how foster carers can help children in their care develop a coherent sense of self*. Additional articles come from conference presenters Christina Enright, Clarecare's Jacinta Swann and Sinéad O'Malley, Anne McCluskey and the Rupture and Repair team. Anne McCluskey has also reviewed Dr Kathleen Lynch's book *Care and Capitalism* along with a review of a research paper on open adoption from foster care in Australia. DCU student Chloe McLaughlin's article about autism in children is also included in this issue.

Branches & Hubs

January 2023 saw the commencement of revised IFCA process and structures, through which a number of former IFCA Branches transitioned to become IFCA Hubs. Mayo, Waterford and Kerry remained Branches and continued their strong work locally with their local volunteer Branch Co-ordinators. We would like to thank them for all their hard work throughout the year delivering local coffee mornings and family events.

All of IFCA's Hub and Branch events were open to foster carers, with no requirement to be an IFCA member.

IFCA hosted 74 Branch & Hub events in 2023 to which over 2,800 people attended, including:

- 38 coffee morning
- 32 family events
- 1 dinner dance
- 1 weekend away
- 2 joint self-care sessions with Tusla

Branch & Hub coffee mornings and family events took place across Ireland and included Easter, Summer and Christmas foster family events. We were delighted to meet so many foster families at these events, see the fun the children and adults had, chatting, laughing, playing, dancing and connecting with other foster families.

Events throughout the year were many and included foster family outings to the Pantomime, fairy festivals, walks & picnics, animal sanctuaries, activity centres, parks and self-care sessions. Some of the locations visited included:

- Emerald Park
- Loughcrew
- The Donkey Sanctuary
- Moore Hall in Mayo

- Rathwood
- Belvedere House
- Causey Farm
- Barnagh Greenway Hub
- Blackwater Farm
- Weekend away to Clonakilty
- Jumplanes
- Dublin Zoo

“Thanks again for a wonderful day out- the children had an absolute ball and it was lovely to talk to you and all the other carers”

“Thank you IFCA for a great day. Little one is still talking about the wild teddies living on an island”

Volunteers

IFCA continues to be grateful to have such a wonderful team of volunteers, on the helpline, in the branches, in the hubs and at the many family events that take place. During 2023, 30 volunteers supported IFCA to deliver events and services. We are always keen to hear from persons interested in volunteering in their local area. If you think that could be you or you want to find out more get in touch at volunteering@ifca.ie

Stories from Foster Care

Our Podcast Series Stories from Foster Care is going from strength to strength. We won Gold at the Craol Community Radio Forum Awards for the episode with Andrew Murphy and Harold Barber and Michael Shannon.

Podcasts this year included:

Lisa Clancy

Lisa and her family are fostering three children with disabilities. Lisa gives a powerful insight into the ups and downs of the day-to-day experiences of fostering and she shines a light on just what it takes to care for children with disabilities in Ireland. In an honest and inspiring conversation, she describes the often arduous process of advocating for the support needs of her foster children.

Dr. Danielle Douglas

Danielle is a care-experienced academic and researcher at the South East Technological University, and a former relative foster carer who reflects on a lifetime of experience of the care system in Ireland from all of these perspectives. Her story is wide-ranging and powerful.

Catherine Joyce

For over 35 years Catherine has been a member of the Irish Traveller's human rights movement. She's also a theatre-maker and collaborator. She is a strong advocate for the rights of Traveller children, including Traveller children in care, and has been a foster carer herself. She speaks about how important it is to preserve the dual identity of Traveller children in care and she calls for good quality education about Traveller cultural identities to be rolled out across the care system.

Stories from Foster Care is brought to you in association with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Fostering Fortnight

Fostering Fortnight took place from 6th – 17th March and is IFCA’s annual awareness campaign for fostering in Ireland. It shines a light on all the valuable contributions made by fostering families every day. It is a chance for all those involved in fostering, and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences.

This year’s theme was #fosteringconnections. We celebrated the gift of fostering and the connections and relationships that are so essential and central to it with a range of social, learning and fun activities both online and at local venues around the country. Events that took place around the country included:

- A series of learning events on meeting the needs of brothers and sisters in care
- A panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities of relative & kinship care
- A workshop on building good communication and teamwork in fostering
- A learning event about supporting relationships and time with birth families
- A learning event about understanding children’s sensory profiles and supporting them to regulate their emotions and feel safe
- Coffee mornings around the country with staff from IFCA’s National Helpline, Advocacy, Counselling and Learning and Development services.

Walk A Day In May

We launched ‘Walk A Day In May’ in 2023. This initiative saw the fostering community showing their support for foster care by walking in May and sharing their photos with us. We were blown away by the support for the campaign and thanks to everyone who took part, we loved receiving photos every day from different parts of the country!

Children’s Art Competition

We launched a Christmas Children’s Art Competition asking children to design IFCA’s Christmas card and we had an amazing response! The talent on display was exceptional and made the judges job really difficult. Thank you to everyone who took the time to draw, paint, sketch and colour its one of our favourite parts of the year!



Eve aged 12



Avril aged 8



Jake aged 6



Brook aged 8



Fiadh aged 10

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



Where Our Funding Comes From

Tusla

Tusla continues as our key funder and partner in 2023 providing the core funding which enables IFCA to deliver its current range of supports to our members as outlined in this report. The Tusla funding amounted to 69% of our overall income in 2023.

Pobal

We received funding from Pobal through the SSNO (Scheme to Support National Organisations) grant which was provided to enable the development of our national member support services. IFCA was successful in securing the SSNO grant for a further 3 years ending in June 2025. The Pobal funding amounted to 10% of our overall income in 2023.

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

We are delighted to receive two, one off grants from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth which enabled us to support a children and young people’s programme at our national conference and our popular podcast series. The total grant amounted to 1.7 % of our overall income in 2023.

Membership Income

Another strand of IFCA’s income is generated through its membership fees and legal insurance payments, with 15% of our overall income coming from our membership base.

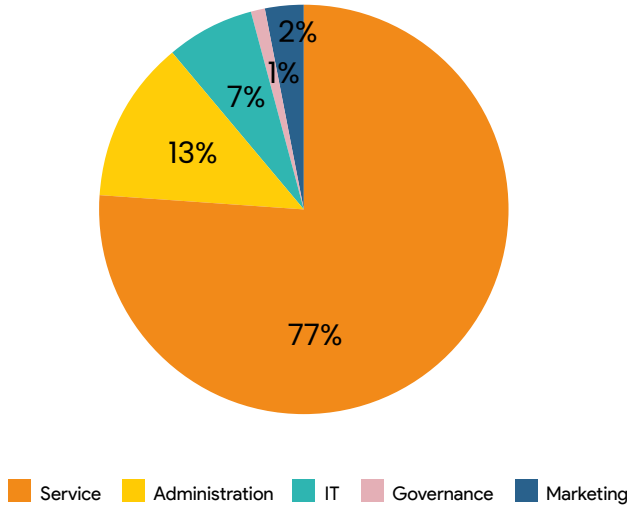
Fundraising & Donations

A welcome and very appreciated portion of our funding comes from donations and fundraising. We were delighted to be the recipients of a fundraised donation from Collen Construction in 2023 and combined with these income streams amounted to 2% of our overall income in 2023.

Grant Funding

Grants awarded are critical to the development and innovation in IFCA’s work. Funding awarded through grants such as The Toy Show Appeal and Katharine Howard Foundation allow IFCA to explore and initiate new projects that positively impact the fostering community, expand our reach and help us to contribute to the promotion and progression of foster care in Ireland. In 2023 grants awarded accounted for just over 2.3% of our funding.

How our funding is used



Income and Expenditure

Irish Foster Care Association CLG (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account Financial Year ended 31st December 2023

	2023	€	2022	€
Income				
Miscellaneous Income		168,727		139,357
Fundraising/Donations		9,050		13,614
Tusla funding		543,673		547,196
Tusla Funding for hubs/branches		47,481		36,862
An Pobal		86,036		112,074
Total Income		854,967		849,103
Expenditure				
Overheads		75,255		71,132
Payroll & Pension costs		515,649		609,110
Telephone & Postage		10,283		21,518
Conference/Seminars/Meetings		26,019		35,615
Learning & Development		34, 894		27,595
Equipment/IT/Website costs		57, 582		76, 501
General Expenses		102,246		122,288
Foster Family social events		52,154		47,991
Depreciation		6,876		9,641
Total Expenditure		880,958		1,021,391
Deficit				
(Deficit) for the financial year		(25,991)		(172,288)
Other interest receivable or similar income		45		-
(Deficit)		(25,946)		(172,288)

Balance Sheet

Irish Foster Care Association CLG (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

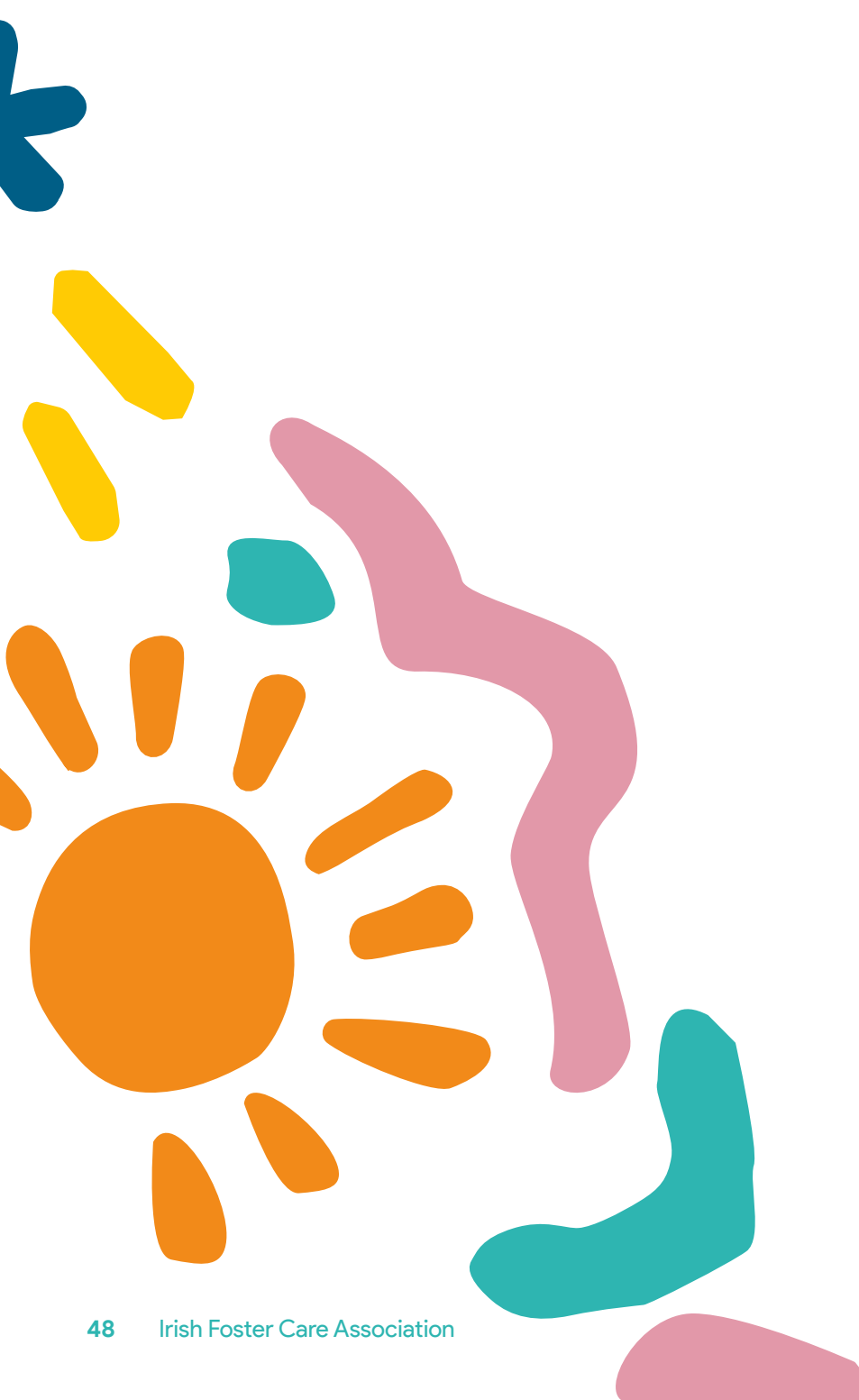
As at 31st December 2023

	2023		2022	
	€	€	€	€
Total Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	6,910	6,910	13,786	13,786
Current assets				
Debtors	17,420		38,457	
Cash at bank and in hand:	239,776	257,196	195,831	234,288
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(131,273)		(89,295)	
Net current assets				
Total assets less current liabilities		125,923		144,993
Net assets		132,833		158,779
Capital and reserves				
General Reserve		132,833		158,779
Members funds		132,833		158,779

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies’ regime and in accordance with Section 1A of FRS 102 ‘Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland’.

Board of Directors 2023 - Attendance at Board Meetings

Directors	Title	Total	Note
Róisín Clarke	CEO	2 out of 2	Started IFCA Aug 2023
Bernadette Neville	Interim CEO	4 out of 4	Resigned May 2023
Raymond Nolan	Chairperson	8 out of 8	
Sandra Duffy	Vice Chair	7 out of 8	
Davinia Conlon	Co. Secretary	2 out of 3	Resigned 2/4/23
Aaron Vickery	Co. Secretary	6 out of 8	
Brendan Gillen	Treasurer	6 out of 8	
Riccardo Panza	Trustee	6 out of 8	
Harold Barber	Trustee	6 out of 8	
Aidan Waterstone	Trustee	8 out of 8	
Mary Hickey	Trustee	1 out of 1	Resigned 7/2/23
Claire Corridan	Trustee	4 out of 6	Co-opted 1/4/23
Brian Murpy	Trustee	1 out of 6	Co-opted 1/4/23
Stiofán MacDáibhaéd	Trustee	5 out of 6	Co-opted 1/4/23
Mary Doyle	Trustee	1 out of 1	Elected @ AGM 23/9/23
Irene Browne	Trustee	1 out of 1	Elected @ AGM 23/9/23



Thank You

We would like to thank all our funders, supporters, volunteers, trustees, staff and members for their continued support of IFCA's work. It is only with all of us working together that we can continue to support the fostering community.

IFCA kindly acknowledges the funding we receive from our partners to support our services.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Oige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth





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