



**NATIONAL ADVOCACY
SERVICE**

**FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES**

Annual Report
2017

Our Vision

Our vision for society is one where people with disabilities can exercise their rights – with dignity, autonomy, equality and independence at the core. We recognise the capacity of persons with disabilities to make their own decisions equally with others, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

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1 Foreword

As Chairperson of the Board of the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS), I am delighted to present this annual report on the work of the organisation in 2017.

The mission of the National Advocacy Service is to provide an independent, free and confidential advocacy service to people with disabilities. In particular, NAS has a focus on people who have little natural or informal supports, who have communication differences, who live in residential services or attend day services, or who are isolated from their community.

The core of the work in 2017 was the provision of advocacy and information in 3,628 pieces of work with people. The purpose of this work is to improve the lives of the people with disabilities that the advocates work with. Case studies throughout the report help to bring to life the real work of the service and how it tries to impact positively on the lives of people with disabilities. The profile and work of NAS continued to grow in 2017, with continued demand for support, as many pressures persist across disability services and systems.

In 2017 NAS advocates worked with a diverse group of people who faced multiple and complex issues. Housing was the single biggest issue that NAS advocates came across in 2017, with 48% of representative advocacy cases including housing as an issue. Healthcare was the second most common issue, being present in nearly 20% of cases. These themes mirror the national pressures and crises in the Health and Housing sectors.

One highlight of the work in 2017 was a roundtable organised by NAS in October 2017 on the hidden issue of homelessness and people with an intellectual disability or autism. This event brought together experts and practitioners from across the housing, disability services and human rights sectors. The seminar demonstrated the importance of giving a voice to the people who use our service and how our frontline service can make a very valuable contribution to the national policy arena. Through identifying this issue in our advocacy work, NAS brought to light a seldom heard aspect of the homelessness crisis.

2017 also marked a year of important developments for NAS as an organisation. NAS has moved from an 'early in growth' phase into a developmental phase with a focus on advancing and improving organisational systems, which will provide improved supports for the delivery of services. It will also support improved governance and the capacity to measure impact.

This annual report is an account of the important work of NAS for people with disabilities. As Chairperson of NAS, I would like to convey the appreciation of the Board to the staff of NAS for their ongoing commitment and passion for this work, and to thank the Citizens Information Board, for their continued support and assistance, which enhances the service that we provide to people with disabilities.

Our Mission

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) provides an independent, confidential and free advocacy service that works exclusively for adults with disabilities. Our role is to work with those who may be isolated from their community of choice or mainstream society, may communicate differently and who may have limited informal or natural supports. We act as a catalyst for change through collaboration, capacity building and representation to make the rights of people with disabilities a reality.



Nuala Doherty.

Nuala Doherty, Chairperson of the Board

2 Introduction

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) is an issues based and professional representative advocacy service. The NAS service is independent, confidential and free. NAS is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board (CIB), which has a mandate under the Citizens Information Act 2007 and the Comhairle Act 2000 to provide advocacy for people with disabilities.

NAS operates on the principle that people with disabilities:

- Make decisions about their lives;
- Access the supports they need to enable them to live their lives and enjoy meaningful participation in family, work and leisure;
- Are listened to and consulted by their families and those who provide their services;
- Can enjoy the benefits of participation in and contribution to their communities if they so choose.

The NAS Service

- Is independent from service providers and funders;
- Always works from the person's point of view;
- Provides free representation;
- Is empowering;
- Is confidential;
- Works to connect the person to community, needed or preferred services.

2017 was an exciting time for NAS. As well as continuing to provide a frontline independent representative advocacy service for people with disabilities, NAS began the process of developing a strategic plan for the period 2018-2020, bedded down the corporate services function and looked ahead to grow and develop the service through improvements to systems.

The demand for the services offered by NAS continued to grow as a result of a number of developments including the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and a linked increase in Ward of Court cases.¹ Throughout 2017 NAS positioned the organisation to meet those demands effectively and efficiently.



¹ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/more-than-2-600-judged-incapable-protected-as-wards-of-court-1.3356429?mode=amp> Note that the use of the Wards of Court system will end when the relevant sections of the Assisted Decision-making (Capacity) Act is commenced.

Selina

Will and Preferences being Heard

My name is Selina and I lived in a residential service for 25 years of my life. Over time, an advocate worked with me to understand how I communicate and to identify what I wanted (my will and preference), which was to live in the community. The advocate wrote on my behalf to the people who made decisions about me; expressing to them what I wanted, and supporting me to become involved in decision-making processes about my life.

I now live at home with an individualised service. I decide on my plan each week, which can change or be adjusted based on what I want on any given day. I now have a job in a local shop two mornings per week. I have become quite involved in my local community and I enjoy attending the local gym and swimming pool.



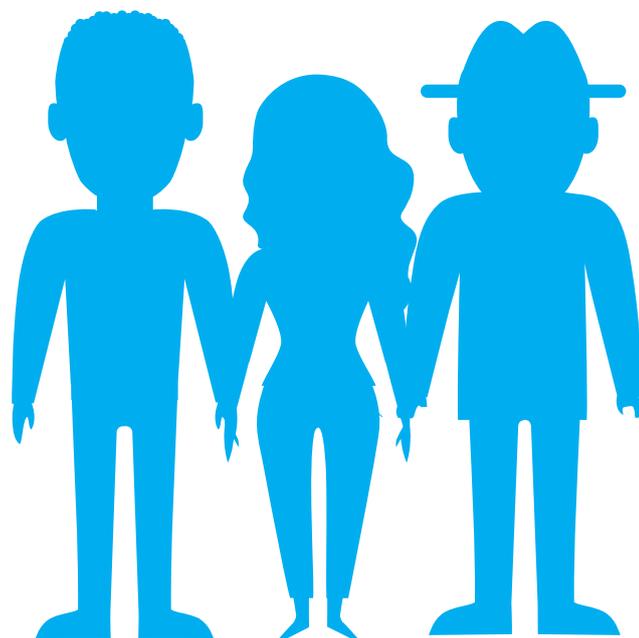
How we do our work

When the National Advocacy Service receives an enquiry (which may come from a variety of sources – directly from a person with a disability, a family member or friend, health or other professional, service provider or other organisations), the advocate meets with the person seeking support to gather information and establish the advocacy issues, and to ensure that NAS is the most appropriate support for the person. The advocate will support the person to self-advocate, or go on to advocate for them where appropriate, but at all times the advocate will be led by the person. Where the person communicates by gesture or behaviour, the advocate will work with the person to identify their will and preference in accordance with best international practice.

Advocates take affirmative action to uphold the person's rights, ensure fair and equal treatment and access to services, and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for the person's unique preferences and perspective.

The value of advocacy continued to be demonstrated through the positive outcomes for people with disabilities.

In 2017, NAS provided independent representative advocacy in 852 cases. Further, NAS provided information, advice, one-off interventions and arms-length advocacy in 2,776 instances, which included 1,263 calls to our national line.



3.1 Service activity data and updates

NAS has a particular remit to offer advocacy to people with disabilities who are isolated from or in their community and services, have communication differences, reside in inappropriate accommodation, live in residential services, attend day services and who have limited informal or natural supports.

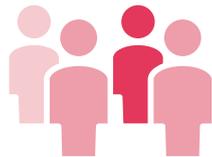
The demand for the service has increased in recent years. Advocacy and information support has doubled since 2014, from 1,812 individual pieces of advocacy and information support to 3,628 pieces in 2017. This demand increase since 2014 is partially due to the external context, the implementation of the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse policy, and the Áras Attracta Swinford Review Group (McCoy Review)². The McCoy Review identified NAS as an instrumental part of this review and recommended that enhanced funding be provided to develop the service and that statutory powers be granted to NAS. The changes in practice in the Wards of Court system, the delay in the implementation of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, the ongoing programmes of HIQA inspections, and the closure of congregated settings have all had an influence on increased demands on the service.

The level, length and complexity of each of the briefer engagements varies, from providing information and advice, arm's length support, and one-off and short term interventions. This work involves supporting individuals to self-advocate, through information and empowerment. On average, each of these briefer engagements took one hour and 10 minutes to action, with a total of 4,287 hours spent. This is in addition to our longer-term independent representative advocacy. The average number of people engaged with each of our advocates remains consistently high and the length of waiting lists has increased.

Independent representative advocacy involves speaking up on behalf of someone and includes writing letters, emails, phone calls and speaking up on behalf of the person at meetings and other fora.

² <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/media/pressrel/arasattractaindependentreview.html>

Advocacy support work 2017



3628

Total pieces of advocacy and information support work in 2017



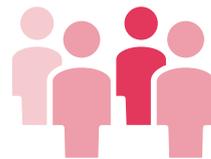
534

Number of people engaged with NAS in representative advocacy at start 2017



318

New representative advocacy cases



350

Closed representative advocacy cases



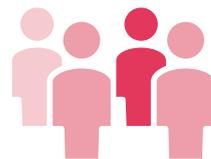
852

Total people engaged with representative advocacy in 2017



2776

Initial engagement work (information, one-off intervention, arms-length support)

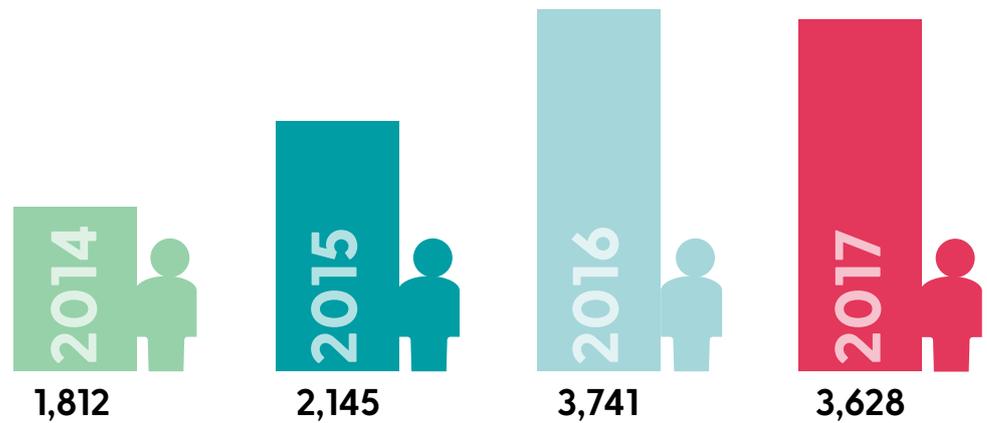


106

Number put on a waiting list or representative advocacy

In total, 852 people benefited from representative advocacy in 2017. The average time required for representative advocacy was 14 hours of advocate time, with a total time of 11,269 hours spent on representative advocacy work by advocates in 2017.

Total individual pieces of work with people by NAS in the last four years



Complexity of Representative Advocacy Work

Many individuals who use our service present with a number of distinct issues which need to be addressed. Relationships with families or with service providers may be complicated and are often problematic. At times we encounter service providers whose approach to solving problems is focused on the service's perspective rather than the individual, or we find resistance to engaging with our advocates. This constrains our capacity to take on greater numbers of advocacy cases.

Number of Issues per Case



Of the 852 people supported by NAS advocates in our in-depth casework, 343 had one key issue of concern, 469 identified between two to seven issues and 40 had in excess of eight issues. The high number of multi-issue cases illustrates the complexities of people's advocacy support needs.

Issue categories in 2017



Housing was by far the most common issue in 2017. Housing includes issues around homelessness and risk of homelessness, rent and arrears, inappropriate residential placements, lack of choice in residential placements, and moving into domestic-scale homes in the community and away from institutions or campus settings.

Healthcare issues were also common in 2017, and these included issues around access to healthcare, and choice in healthcare treatment.

Justice issues include Ward of Court cases, wills and probate, rights of residence in family homes, personal injuries claims and criminal cases.

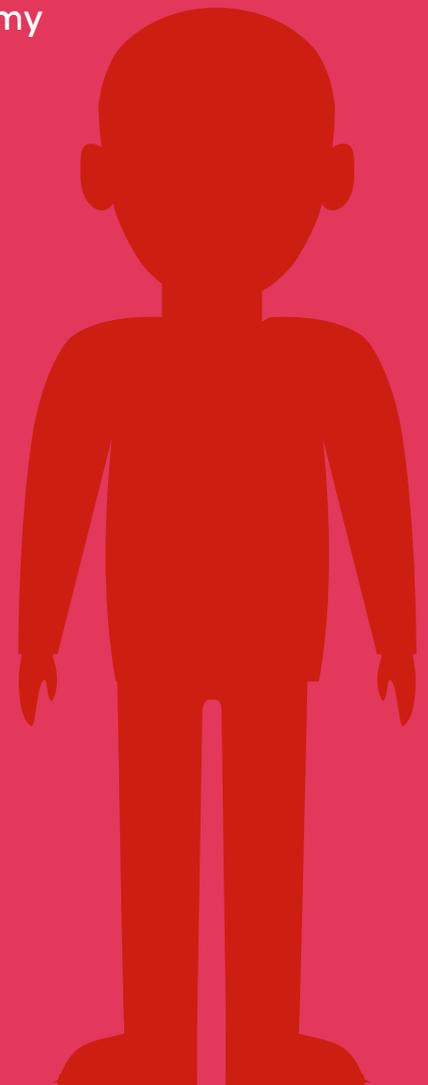
Childcare issues primarily related to cases where a parent with an intellectual disability is subject to an intervention by social services in relation to their child or children.

Simon

Right to Reside in the Family Home

My name is Simon and I'm 50 years old. At the time I first got in touch with NAS I was living at home with my father, whose health was deteriorating. Plans were being put in place for my Dad to enter a nursing home. I was being encouraged by my family to move into a nursing home as they felt that I wouldn't be capable of living on my own, and that this option would allow me to stay close to my Dad. My voice was not being heard or represented in this decision. My advocate worked with me to have my voice heard in relation to my wishes and my preferences. My wish was to remain living in my home with supports and to visit my Dad in the nursing home regularly.

The advocacy support meant my voice was heard and my wishes were taken into account, and it led to a special package of support being put in place, which involved home support workers and also support from an independent living skills team. I have regular meetings to review this plan. It is working very well. My home support package will now decrease over time as I build up my skills and confidence in my home. My Dad passed away during the advocacy process and left me the right to reside in the family home. Despite concerns from family members, I maintain that I want to live in the family home, to continue to build up my skills and live independently in accordance with my wishes.



Who is engaging with the Service?

People with intellectual disabilities continue to be the largest proportion of people engaging with NAS and they are mainly living in a residential service or attending day services. 2017 continued to demonstrate that an important element of the work of NAS is working with people who have multiple disabilities, such as an intellectual disability and a concurrent mental health issue.

People with	2016	2017
Intellectual Disability	31%	43%
Physical Disability	21%	30%
Mental Health	19%	24%
Learning Disability	17%	18%
Autistic spectrum	9%	12%
Sensory Disability	8%	7%
Acquired Brain Injury	0.22%	2%



How did the person come to use the Service?

NAS advocates come to work with people through a variety of means;



Accommodation Type in 2017

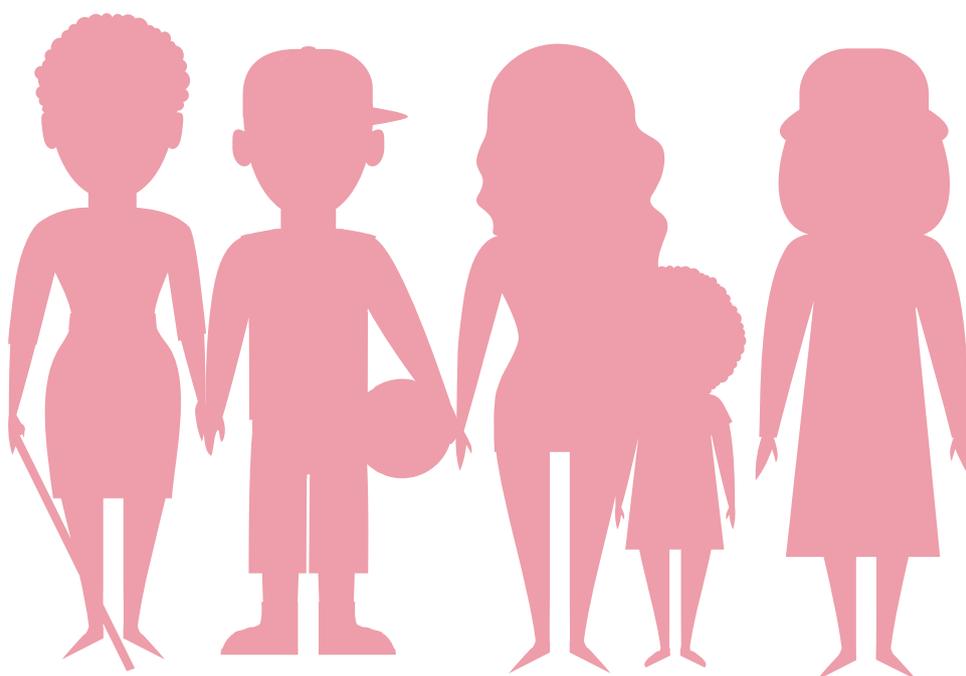
Place of Accommodation

Disability Service Provider: Community Group Home (2-9 residents)	187	22%
Living with Family	141	17%
Living Independently in the Community	129	15%
Living Independently in the Community with support	86	10%
Disability Service Provider: Congregated Setting (10+ residents)	71	8%
Nursing Home	50	6%
Hospital	35	4%
No Fixed Abode	19	2%
<i>Unknown</i>	136	16%
Total	854	100%

3.2 Improving our Service: Developing the case for statutory powers

NAS worked collaboratively with the Citizens Information Board to make a submission to the Department of Social Protection to seek statutory powers for NAS.

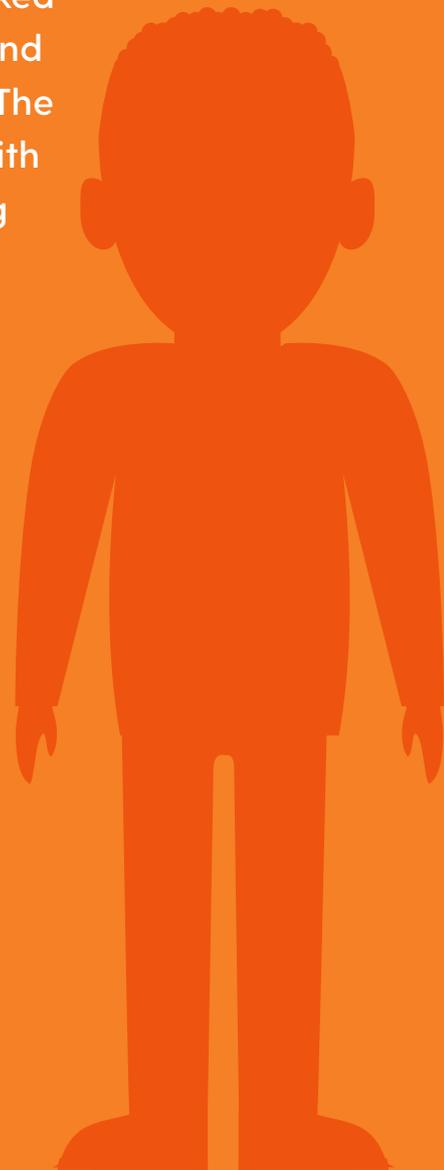
We have sought legislation to give NAS statutory powers of access to people, services, documents, meetings and decision makers. NAS is also seeking powers to review or audit decision-making processes. These powers are crucial to ensuring that NAS advocates can effectively and efficiently provide an advocacy service to people who would benefit from advocacy. Throughout 2017, advocates continued to face obstacles and difficulties in some situations in accessing the relevant records and getting access to decision makers in order to provide effective advocacy.



Tony

Safeguarding

My name is Tony, and in recent years I have faced a number of issues which I was supported to deal with by an advocate. My issues included a lack of support services and difficulties in my living arrangements. I felt I was being bullied by a younger family member who I lived with, and this caused me stress and anxiety which led to me being restricted in accessing the communal areas of the house. I also faced pressure around financial contributions in the home. Working with me, my advocate linked me in with safeguarding social workers and subsequently community social workers. The advocate supported me to link back in with my day service where I am now receiving support around stressors experienced at home. Additionally, through support from my advocate, I decided to address the issues in my home with my family and there has been a significant improvement in the dynamics at home. I also now have an understanding of my rights as a tenant, and I know what to do if they are being violated.



4.1 Developments in Advocacy

There were many developments in the disability and advocacy sectors in 2017. In anticipation of the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (ADM), the Director of the Decision Support Service was appointed, and the National Disability Authority (NDA) established an Expert Group to develop Codes of Practice under the Act. Additionally, the Department of Health launched a consultation in late 2017 on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. The work of the National Safeguarding Committee and HSE Safeguarding teams continued.

NAS saw an increase in the numbers of safeguarding issues emerging in NAS casework, and a linked increase in ward of court cases.

NAS continues to encounter examples of people with disabilities not being supported to exercise their own decision-making capacity. Many disabled people continue to live in congregated settings, or other accommodation which is not of their choosing. Parenting with a disability continues to present a challenge.

Review of HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

The HSE introduced a Safeguarding Policy in late 2015 (as part of the response to the issues arising from Áras Attracta) for all HSE social care division funded services. The policy is now being reviewed and NAS is part of the review working group as well as a sub group. This is a critical policy, as it has meant for the first time that HSE-funded services are obliged to report and respond to allegations of abuse of any kind regarding people with disabilities. This policy has led to a sea change in attitudes to safeguarding of adults who may be at risk.

National Safeguarding Committee

NAS joined the National Safeguarding Committee in early 2017. The Committee ran a publicity campaign in 2017 highlighting issues around abuse of adults who may be vulnerable.

National Disability Authority – Assisted Decision-Making Codes of Practice Expert Group

The National Disability Authority (NDA) was asked by the Department of Justice to draft the Codes of Practice for the ADM over an 18 month period. An expert group was established with membership drawn from different fields of expertise including sector regulator CEOs (HIQA, Mental Health Commission), Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Law Society, Retail Banking Payments Federation, Advocacy organisations, HSE, Courts Service and NAS. The Group has produced draft Codes in relation to-

- Advocates
- Assessment of capacity
- Decision-making assistants
- Co-decision makers
- Court appointed decision makers
- Legal professionals
- Financial provider professionals

The drafts will be submitted by the NDA to the Director of the Decision Support Service, whose duty it is to publish such Codes.

4.2 Stakeholder Engagement

At the local and national level, NAS continued to engage with relevant stakeholders with a view to enhancing the understanding of the NAS model of advocacy. This has included meetings with the HSE Social Care Division, the Ombudsman, and the Office of Wards of Court, amongst others.

Office of Wards of Court, High Court

In the absence of the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, there has been an increase in applications for Wardship. In part, this is driven by the implementation of the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. The HSE Safeguarding and Protection teams have become more aware of individual cases where the person may not have capacity to make their own decisions, and those individuals have been the subject of abuse of various types.



The HSE have resorted to Wardship applications as the only legal remedy currently available to preserve the rights of individuals and to ensure some protection from harm. This is despite the loss of rights inherent in Wardship. The President of the High Court has sought new ways of operating Wardship – including early reviews, short term Wardship for medical treatment and review of wards in nursing homes by court appointed assessors.

All of this has directly affected NAS, as NAS is often already providing an advocacy service to people who then become subject to such applications. Many of the individuals affected by this development fall within the NAS core target group.

NAS has supported people to have their will and preference placed at the centre of the Ward of Court process. NAS has been able to put forward the views of individuals subject to wardship applications through letters, affidavits and personal appearance. There does however, remain an issue about how potential and existing wards are involved in the process.

The General Solicitor had a productive meeting with NAS and protocols will be developed with the Wards of Court Office. The Ward of Court Office and the High Court will continue to be important stakeholders for NAS for the foreseeable future.

National Patient Safety Office, Department of Health

NAS made a submission in response to the public consultation on development of a Patient Advocacy Service. The Patient Safety Office issued a call to tender in late 2017 for the development of a competency framework for patient advocacy and associated training. NAS provided the National Patient Safety Office with some assistance with this process.

Decision Support Service

The Director of the Decision Support Service was appointed in October 2017. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 provides for the establishment of the Decision Support Service, within the Mental Health Commission, to support decision-making by and for adults with capacity difficulties and to regulate individuals who are providing support to people with capacity difficulties.

NAS has met with the Director and identified some areas of possible collaboration such as standards in advocacy and the development of competency frameworks in assisted decision-making.

Office of the Ombudsman

Following publication of the Ombudsman's report 'Opportunity Lost' – Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme Investigation³ in November 2017, NAS contacted the Ombudsman to offer the services of NAS to those women identified in the report as 'lacking capacity' and who may need support to access the Redress Scheme. NAS had already worked with a number of former Magdalene workers. The original Quirke Report⁴ on matters relating to women who were admitted to and worked in Magdalene laundries, recommended that the State should establish, fund, staff and accommodate a small Dedicated Unit to provide support to the women in a number of ways. This unit has not been established to date. The Scheme is an administrative scheme administered by the Department of Justice directly, as opposed to a statutory scheme. This has posed particular challenges for women who have been deemed by the Department of Justice as lacking capacity. This is because there is no device other than Wardship for redress funds to be accessed. There has been no mechanism/support service provided to the women other than through pre-existing services such as NAS or other localised responses.

HIQA

HIQA has developed a 'symposium' around restrictive practices. The group includes membership from a wide cross section of interests including NAS. The group met once in 2017 to consider a baseline survey of service providers around physical and environmental restraint (mobility devices, bed rails as well as seclusion rooms).

³ <https://www.ombudsman.ie/en/Publications/Investigation-Reports/government-departments-other-public-bodies/Magdalen-Report/Magdalen-Scheme.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/THE%20Quirke%20report.pdf/Files/THE%20Quirke%20report.pdf>

Jimmy

Empowerment

My name is Jimmy, and I used to live in a residential service. In that service, both other residents and I were considered to be engaged in 'challenging behaviour'. The service took the view that it was necessary to transfer me to a different residential service. I wasn't given the opportunity to view the service or meet the other people living in the service. I wasn't included in the decision in any way. I was very unhappy with the new residential service for a number of valid reasons. I got in touch with NAS, and an advocate started working with me. My advocate found that my wishes were not being listened to, instead the advocate found that the service was acting on a 'best interests' basis and what my family wanted.

With the help of an advocate, I was empowered, respected and my wishes were placed at the centre of the decision. It was my wish to live as independently as possible in my local community. I have moved to a new service of my choosing, and I'm focusing on building the necessary skills to live as independently as possible.



4.3 Submissions and Consultations

Over the course of 2017, NAS made submissions on the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, the Department of Health Patient Complaints and Advocacy Policy, Department of Health Personalised Budgets and attended consultations on the National Disability Inclusion Strategy.

NAS Submission on HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

NAS welcomed that the HSE Safeguarding policy has raised awareness in relation to abuse matters and has provided clarity on the correct processes for reporting abuse. NAS expressed concern that the policy does not extend to private nursing homes and mental health settings, and emphasised the need for training across many services on safeguarding matters. NAS also emphasised the need to involve the affected person in the safeguarding processes and planning.

NAS Submission on Department of Health Patient Complaints and Advocacy Policy

NAS emphasised the importance of recognising the autonomy of the complainant/individual in complaints and advocacy processes. NAS also called for a more standardised and transparent approach to complaints, ensuring complainants have a clear understanding of the process.

NAS Submission on Personalised Budgets

NAS expressed the view that personalised budgets should ensure that the individual has a voice in the process on how he/she receives support services. NAS stated that the focus should be on each person's abilities and interests, their will and preference and should promote independence and community integration to the greatest extent possible.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

NAS attended consultations on the National Disability Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy includes a commitment by the Department of Health to examine the need to establish statutory, national advocacy services for people with mental health difficulties.

5.1 NAS Events

Dublin Homelessness Event, 25th October 2017

NAS hosted a roundtable event in October 2017, focussing on the experience of people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism in homeless services. The event was supported by a social policy grant from the Citizens Information Board. The event was the result of a consultation with services supporting both homeless people and people with disabilities and a rise in the number of enquiries regarding people with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Enquiries to NAS have often highlighted the lack of appropriate services and opportunities for progression to secure long-term accommodation with supports for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism who are homeless.

An internal review of policy and data also revealed a lack of information and policy specific to people with intellectual disabilities.

Over 70 people attended the event. Those in attendance included frontline staff, researchers, service commissioners and people who had experienced homelessness themselves.

People with lived experiences of homelessness who had been supported by NAS told of their time living in hostels and difficulties in securing accommodation.

Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission also addressed the event and focussed on the public sector equality and human rights duty faced by state agencies and also those funded by the state.

What NAS can do

At a regional and national level NAS is exploring what we can do to progress social policy issues which arise from work with people experiencing homelessness. This includes linking with stakeholders and convening a working group to progress the recommendations from the roundtable. NAS staff attended a Dublin City Council training event on working with people with intellectual disabilities who apply for housing or are currently tenants.

Patrick

Homelessness

My name is Patrick and I used to live in inappropriate private rented accommodation with no housing supports from the local council. The house was not accessible with no access to toileting facilities. I have a physical disability and at the time I was also experiencing mental health issues. My advocate supported me to access housing supports which resulted in an increased rent supplement. I moved to new accessible accommodation and my situation improved. However, issues continued to present with the home care service provider and my home situation deteriorated due to the poor quality of home care supports. The service was not person-centred and the provider did not respond satisfactorily to resolve issues and support me. My advocate supported me to explore alternative options and made representations to the HSE seeking agreement to allow me to manage my own budget. Through advocacy, I now employ my own staff and I have full control over the day to day running of roster and allocation of staff. I feel a huge improvement in my overall quality of life.





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NAS staff at Homelessness Roundtable event, 25th October 2017



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L-R: Sinead Keirns, Solicitor at Mercy Law Resource Centre, Dr. Michael Byrne, National Disability Children and Families Team HSE, Paula Mayock, Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work and Social Policy TCD, Mark O'Connor, Community Engagement Lead at Inclusion Ireland and Cormac O' Donnell, Administrative Officer at the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 25th October 2017



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L-R: NAS advocate and roundtable organiser Laura Dowling, CEO of Citizens Information Board Angela Black, NAS National Manager Louise Loughlin, NAS senior advocate and roundtable organiser Suzy Byrne, 25th October 2017



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NAS Homelessness and Intellectual Disability/Autism Roundtable, 25th October 2017

5.2 NAS Speaking Engagements and Promotions

Across the country, NAS staff engaged in around 200 promotional activities. Promotions were delivered primarily to independent living units, hospitals, congregated settings, residential centres and day centres. Audiences included people with a variety of different types of disability - mental health, intellectual disability and autism spectrum. Students and doctorate students across a range of further and higher education institutions were provided with training. Staff and management in a variety of services along with HSE Safeguarding teams were also engaged with.

Emphasis was placed on creating a presentation format that was applicable for all. Imagery, interactive games, video and simple case examples were used.

These promotional events continue to be an important part of our work. The events throughout 2017 have been an opportunity to publicise the NAS service. They also serve the broader purpose of enhancing the understanding amongst service providers of a person-centred approach to making decisions, emphasising that the will and preferences of the individual should be at the core of decision-making.

The promotional events are also an important opportunity for NAS to inform people about their rights. The events enable NAS to assist people with disabilities who use services in understanding that they can and should be involved in the decisions that affect their lives, and that NAS is available to provide free support.

NAS also spoke at the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association Seminar on Vulnerable Adults and the Law which was chaired by the Honourable Miss Justice Marie Baker. Another speaking engagement was the Advocacy Gathering in Cork organised by the Cork Advocacy Service.

Here are some examples of our promotional material



6 Building Capacity

NAS Organisational Structure and Staff Resources

Information · Advice · Advocacy

NAS Board

National Manager

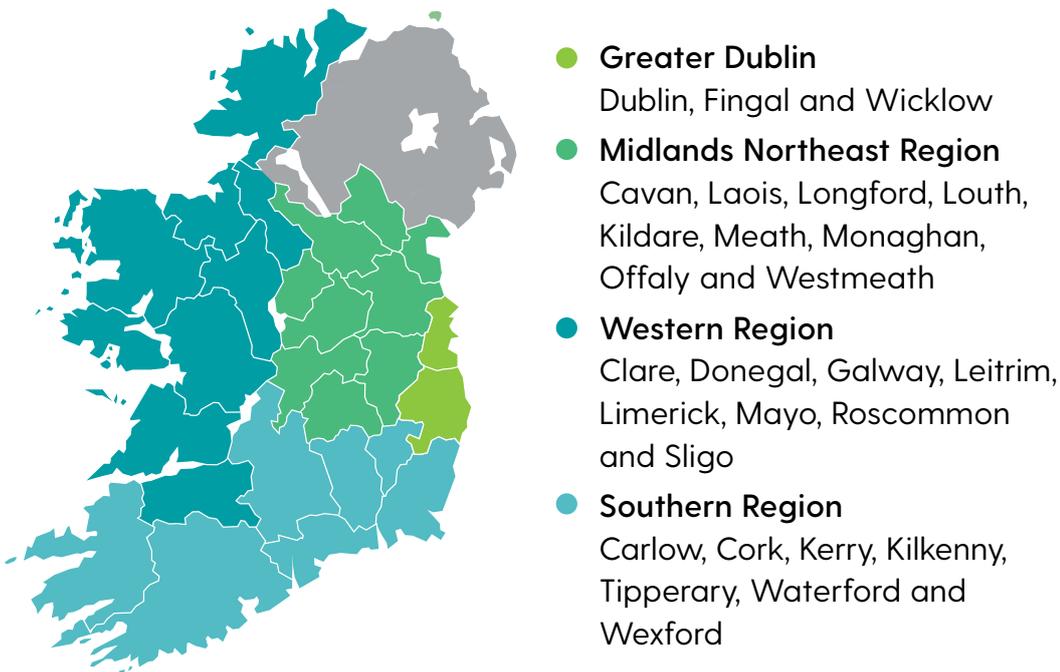
National Office	Western Region	Midlands Northeast Region	Southern Region	Greater Dublin
Corporate Services Manager	Manager	Manager	Manager	Manager
HR Executive	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate
	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate	Senior Advocate
Policy & Communications Officer	8 WTE* Advocates	5 WTE* Advocates	7 WTE* Advocates	8 WTE* Advocates
Administrator	Administrator	Administrator	Administrator	Administrator



*WTE: Whole-Time Equivalent

6.1 NAS Resources

NAS operates with four Regions and a National Office in Dublin.



NAS operates from 31 locations across the country and shares premises with Citizen Information Services (13), Money Advice and Budgeting Services (1), CIB (4) and other (13). This co-location enhances the referral of people between services.

The 2017 NAS budget allocation was €3,103,045. Approx. 80% of the budget relates to Employee costs.

Training

Opportunities for training were taken up by NAS staff throughout 2017.

Bespoke training on the NAS Disclosures, Observations and Suspicions of Abuse Policy took place.

In addition, NAS staff attended training on a wide range of topics such as:

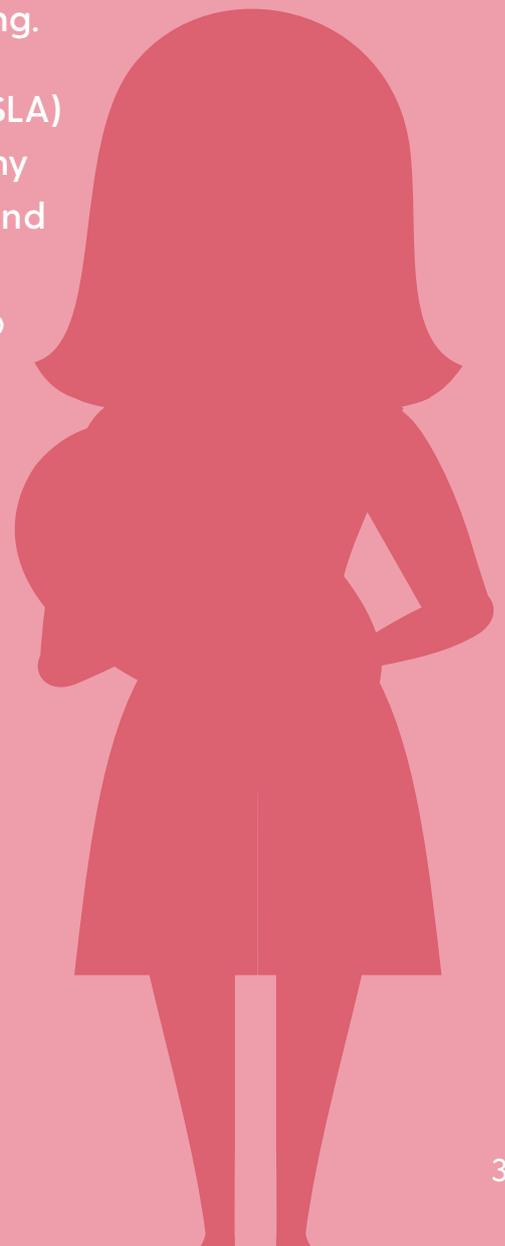
Housing Assistance Programme Training
ASIST- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
Disabilities in the workplace
Women's Aid Training
Mental Health Act Review – Updates and Review
Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015
Supported Decision-making
Functional Assessment of Capacity and Mental Health Law Reform
Consent to Sex and Relationships
Social Inclusion
Safeguarding
Mental Health and Dementia for people with Intellectual disability
Effective Business Writing
Equality and Human Rights in Action
Homelessness
Project management
Accredited Irish Sign Language
UK National Advocacy Conference 2017

Marie

Parenting with a Disability

My name is Marie and I'm a young mother. I have a learning disability and my child is in full time care under a court order. My advocate supported me through a full 'care order review' at the District Court. The advocate supported me to have my voice heard at this review by helping me to prepare for the review hearing, accompanying me to meetings with my solicitor and supporting me in court at the review hearing.

At the review, the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) requested that the court reduce my access to my child. I did not want to agree to this reduction and I was able to communicate this. I also outlined that I would welcome any supports available to improve access visits with my child. The court ordered that access should not be reduced and asked the Child and Family Agency to develop a plan with me, with a view to improving the quality of my access to my child. The matter is to be reviewed by the court again in one year's time.



6.2 NAS Operations Update

Development of NAS Strategic Plan

In late 2016, the NAS Board identified that it was moving into a developmental phase following the establishment of the company and transfer of undertakings of all staff in 2014. The organisation therefore began the process of developing a strategic plan for the period 2018-2021.

Development of Corporate Services Function

Following the appointment of a Corporate Services Manager in March 2017, many functions were transferred to the Corporate Services department including – finances, HR, Health and Safety and some governance functions.

Corporate governance: NAS applied for registration with the Charity Regulatory Authority.

CIB ECMS Upgrading Project

CIB conducted a review of the Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) in 2017. NAS took part in several focus groups as part of this review. Several changes were made to the platform by CIB that enhanced the user experience and made accessing ECMS easier for staff members.

Operational Highlights

- EFQM Gold Star in customer service excellence – successful accreditation took place on 16th May 2017;
- PMDS –all staff have now completed training and the Management team have rolled out the system;
- Management team capacity building – a facilitated day with the regional managers and senior advocates took place to consider the different roles and responsibilities.

National Advisory Group (NAG)

A decision was taken at the end of 2017 in conjunction with CIB to discontinue the NAG. This decision was taken as NAS is reviewing its partnership needs in line with its Strategic Plan.

6.3 Corporate Governance

The Board of Directors of NAS held six meetings in 2017. Ms Nuala Doherty chairs the Board. The AGM was held on May 11th 2017 at which time some Board members submitted their resignation and others were appointed and reappointed.

Retired Board Members	David Whelan Eilionoir Flynn Helen Brougham (Company Secretary)
Newly Appointed Board Members	Michele Tait Liz Chaloner Diarmaid O'Corrbhui Susan Shanahan (Company Secretary from Nov 17) Tracey Dollard (Company Secretary from May to Oct 17)
Board Members returned for next term	Bill Ebbitt Peter Kearns Brege McCarrick Sean Sheridan Eithne Fitzgerald

The Board has undertaken training with Carmichael Centre on the roles and responsibilities of Board members.

There are three sub committees of the Board:

- Audit and Finance
- Human Resources
- Policy

Audit and Finance met four times in 2017 and the HR sub-committee six times. The Policy group met once in 2017.

Breda

Housing

My name is Breda and I sought the support of a NAS advocate to assist me in having my wishes heard and options explored around living arrangements. Following a court ruling, I had been ordered to vacate my home. On contacting NAS, I was confined to one room on the ground level of my home due to the inaccessibility of the rest of the home. I was isolated from the community. I have a physical disability following a stroke, I'm reliant on a wheelchair, and I experience mental health difficulties. My advocate supported me to contact the council and explain the effect current living arrangements were having on my life and the impact homelessness would have on my mental health. The advocate then supported me to explore my options and to liaise with the council, CWO (community welfare officer) and housing associations. The advocate also supported me to liaise with the home care provider to ensure that the hours I was receiving would transfer with me should I move. Following extensive representative advocacy by NAS, I have now moved to a wheelchair accessible home. I now live in an independent bungalow on a campus where there is a communal area to meet others along with support with cooking and cleaning. The home support hours have transferred and increased to allow for community engagement/activities outside the home. My mental health has greatly improved since moving to new home and I am looking forward to my future here.



Conclusion

NAS continued to provide a high quality, professional and independent advocacy and information service in over 3,600 pieces of work in 2017, and continued to face pressures in terms of increased demand outstripping resources.

The development of NAS as an organisation will be marked in 2018 by the launch of the three year Strategic Plan 2018-2020. Over the last number of years, NAS has developed a great depth of expertise in providing independent advocacy to people with disabilities. Multi-year planning will enable NAS to strategically utilise the expertise built up over 2017 and the years previous, to help bring about more systemic and cultural change in how services are provided to people with disabilities.

2017 was a year in which NAS consolidated its policies, practices and systems. NAS continued in 2017 to improve the lives of people with disabilities, and encourage a rights-based, person-centred approach to the provision of health and social care services for people with disabilities in Ireland.

Throughout 2017 the work of NAS has pursued and promoted our vision of for a society in which people with disabilities can exercise their rights – with dignity, autonomy, equality and independence at the core.



Louise Loughlin,
NAS National Manager

Appendix: Directors' report and financial statements

for the year ended 31 December 2017

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Directors and Other Information

Directors	Brege McCarrick Michele Tait (appointed 11 May 2017) Diarmaid O’Corrbui (appointed 11 May 2017) Susan Shanahan (appointed 11 May 2017) Liz Chaloner (appointed 11 May 2017) Nuala Doherty Peter Kearns William Ebbitt Sean Sheridan Eithne Fitzgerald Eilionoir Flynn (resigned 11 May 2017) David Whelan (resigned 11 May 2017) Helen Brougham (resigned 11 May 2017) Susan Shanahan (appointed 30 November 2017) Tracey Dollard (appointed 11 May 2017 / resigned 30 November 2017)
Company secretary	Helen Brougham (resigned 11 May 2017)
Registered number	535779
Registered office	Ground Floor George’s Quay House 43 Townsend Street Dublin 2
Independent auditors	LHM Casey McGrath Limited Chartered Certified Accountants Statutory Audit Firm 6 Northbrook Road Dublin 6
Bankers	Bank of Ireland Tallaght Dublin 24
Date of incorporation	25 November 2013
Register Charity Number	CHY 21530

Directors' Report

Activity review

Both the level of activity and the year end financial position were satisfactory and the directors expect that the present level of activity will be maintained for the foreseeable future.

Results

The deficit for the year, after taxation, amounted to €83,363 (2016 : surplus: €359,091).

The main reason for the change between 2016 and 2017 was a reduction in our grant from Citizens Information Board of €200,000 in 2017. This reduction was intended to address a buildup of a cash surplus in the National Advocacy Service. It is noted that the statutory accounts are produced on an accruals basis rather than a cash basis and include items such as the value of accrued Annual Leave not yet taken.

Directors and their interests

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. Therefore the directors and secretary who served during the year did not have a beneficial interest in the company. All directors serve in a voluntary capacity.

In accordance with the Constitution, the first directors shall hold office until the third annual general meeting of the company following incorporation unless such Director or Directors are otherwise removed from their position or their position is vacated.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The directors of National Advocacy Service are aware of the statutory obligations in relation to providing a fair review of the company's development and performance. The directors are satisfied that the principal financial risk facing the company is the availability of continued funding from the Citizens Information Board. The directors have addressed this risk by competent spending of the funds received.

The principal non financial risks are:

- that we have the staff with the necessary skills and capacity.
- that we are enabled to maintain continuity of quality service.
- that we can continue to gain access to the people we were set up to serve people supported given the difficulties involved.
- that we have strong and effective relationships and collaboration with other service providers and referral sources.
- that relevant organisations and individuals are responsive to the concerns we raise on behalf of individuals with disabilities.
- that Government continues to support and fund this work.

Political contributions

The company made no political contributions during the year as defined by the Electoral Act 1997.

Directors' responsibilities statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare the financial statements for each financial year giving a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date, of the surplus or deficit of the company for that financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the company's financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors confirm they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and surplus or deficit of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors' Report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Accounting records

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records, are the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office at Ground Floor, George's Quay House, 43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2.

Statement on relevant audit information

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this Directors' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as the director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware, and
- the director has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

Post balance sheet events

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year end.

Auditors

The auditors, Duignan Carthy O'Neill resigned and LHM Casey McGrath Limited were appointed to fill the casual vacancy. They have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

This report was approved by the board on _____ and signed on its behalf.

Eithne Fitzgerald
Director

Nuala Doherty
Director

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (the 'company') for the year ended Sunday, December 31, 2017, which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Members Funds and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company's affairs as at Sunday, December 31, 2017 and of its deficit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

1. in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
2. in our opinion, the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: [https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/ISA-700-\(Ireland\)](https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/ISA-700-(Ireland)). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

The purpose of the Audit Report and to whom we owe our responsibilities

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Damien Kealy

Statutory auditor

for and on behalf of

LHM Casey McGrath Limited

Chartered Certified Accountants

Statutory Audit Firm

6 Northbrook Road

Dublin 6

Date: _____

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2017

	Note	2017 €	2016 €
Income	3	2,933,558	3,107,549
Gross surplus		2,933,558	3,107,549
Administrative expenses		(3,016,921)	(2,748,458)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	4	(83,363)	359,091
(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year		(83,363)	359,091
Other comprehensive income			
Total comprehensive income for the financial year		(83,363)	359,091

There were no recognised surpluses or deficits for 2017 or 2016 other than those included in the Statement of Comprehensive Income

Signed on behalf of the board on

Eithne Fitzgerald
Director

Nuala Doherty
Director

The notes on pages 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2017

	Note	2017 €	2016 €
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	11	11,887	13,230
		11,887	13,230
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	12	-	1,756
Cash at bank and in hand	13	629,783	698,599
		629,783	700,355
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(51,666)	(40,218)
Net current assets		578,117	660,137
Total assets less current liabilities		590,004	673,367
Net assets		590,004	673,367
Reserves			
Funds		590,004	673,367
Members funds		590,004	673,367

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board on _____.

Eithne Fitzgerald
Director

Nuala Doherty
Director

The notes on pages 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Members Funds for the year ended 31 December 2017

	Funds	Total members funds
	€	€
At 1 January 2017	673,367	673,367
Comprehensive income for the year		
Deficit for the year	(83,363)	(83,363)
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>(83,363)</u>	<u>(83,363)</u>
At 31 December 2017	<u>590,004</u>	<u>590,004</u>

Statement of Changes in Members Funds for the year ended 31 December 2016

	Funds	Total members funds
	€	€
At 1 January 2016	314,276	314,276
Comprehensive income for the year		
Surplus for the year	359,091	359,091
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>359,091</u>	<u>359,091</u>
At 31 December 2016	<u>673,367</u>	<u>673,367</u>

The notes on pages 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017	2016
	€	€
Cash flows from operating activities		
(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year	(83,363)	359,091
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	4,965	4,240
Decrease in debtors	1,756	24,927
Increase in creditors	11,448	16,958
Net cash generated from operating activities	(65,194)	405,216
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(3,622)	(10,828)
Net cash from investing activities	(3,622)	(10,828)
Movement in cash and cash equivalents	(68,816)	394,388
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	698,599	304,211
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year	629,783	698,599
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year comprise:		
Cash at bank and in hand	629,783	698,599
	629,783	698,599

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2017

1. Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

1.1 *Basis of preparation of financial statements*

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Council and Irish Statute comprising the Companies Act 2014.

1.2 *Income*

Income is included in the Statement of Comprehensive Income only when realised in the form of cash or other assets, the ultimate realisation of which can be assessed as probable. The company, in common with many similar charitable organisations, may derive a proportion of its income from voluntary donations and fund raising activities held by individuals/parties outside the control of the company. Income from fundraising, voluntary subscriptions and donations is necessarily recognised with effect from the time it is acknowledged as received by an officer of the company and received into the company's bank accounts or entered into the company's accounting records.

1.3 *Grants*

Grants are recognised using the performance model when there is reasonable assurances that the grant will be received and all attaching conditions will be complied with. Grants towards capital expenditure are released to the Statement of Comprehensive Income over the expected useful life of the assets. Grants towards revenue expenditure are released to the Statement of Comprehensive Income as the related expenditure is incurred.

1.4 *Expenditure*

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accrual basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure headings.

1.5 *Tangible fixed assets*

Tangible fixed assets under the cost model are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straightline method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Premises development	-20%
Fixtures and fittings	-20%

The assets' residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted prospectively if appropriate, or if there is an indication of a significant change since the last reporting date.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount and are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

1.6 Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Loans receivable are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the company's cash management.

1.8 Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.9 Financial instruments

The company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.10 Deferred income

Deferred income represents monies received in advance in respect of specific projects undertaken in a future period.

The income will be released to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the financial year in which the expenditure is incurred.

1.11 Provisions for liabilities

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the company a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a

transfer of economic benefit, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the year that the company becomes aware of the obligation, and measured at the best estimate at the reporting date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Statement of Financial Position.

1.12 Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Benefits received and receivable as an incentive to sign an operating lease are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term, unless another systematic basis is representative of the time pattern of the lessee's benefit from the use of the leased asset.

The company has taken advantage of the optional exemption available on transition to FRS 102 which allows lease incentives on leases entered into before the date of transition to the standard Friday, January 01, 2016 to continue to be charged over the period to the first market rent review rather than the term of the lease.

1.13 Retirement benefits

Defined contribution pension plan

The company operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the company pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the company has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Statement of Financial Position. The assets of the plan are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

1.14 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

2. Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis, which assumes that National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The validity of this assumption depends on the following:

The company is dependant on grants from Citizens Information Board (CIB) for 100% of its funding. The directors have received assurances from CIB that funding will continue to be provided for the foreseeable future to allow the company to continue.

The Board of Management is actively managing the current uncertainties in relation to current and future funding following consideration and implementation of a number of actions to stabilise the financial position of National Advocacy Services for People with Disabilities which commenced in 2013.

The Financial Statements do not include any adjustments that would result if the required funding is not achieved, whilst taking into consideration the uncertainties described above, the directors believe that it is appropriate for the Financial Statements to be prepared on a going concern basis.

3. Income

An analysis of income by class of activity is as follows:

	2017	2016
	€	€
Grant income Citizens Information Board	2,933,558	3,103,045
Grove House	-	4,504
	<u>2,933,558</u>	<u>3,107,549</u>

Analysis of income by country of destination:

	2017	2016
	€	€
Republic of Ireland	2,933,558	3,107,549
	<u>2,933,558</u>	<u>3,107,549</u>

4. (Deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities before taxation

The operating (deficit)/surplus is stated after charging:

	2017	2016
	€	€
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	4,965	4,240
Defined contribution pension cost	142,078	126,991
	<u>142,078</u>	<u>126,991</u>

5. Auditors' remuneration

	2017	2016
	€	€
Fees payable to the company's auditor and its associates for the audit of the company's annual accounts	5,658	6,150
	<u>5,658</u>	<u>6,150</u>

6. Employees

The average monthly number of employees, including the directors, during the year was as follows:

	2017	2016
	No.	No.
Total	47	45

Staff costs, including directors' remuneration, were as follows

	2017	2016
	€	€
Wages and salaries	2,086,199	1,910,623
Employers PRSI	216,201	205,357
Employers Pension Contribution	142,078	126,991
Board of Management Expenses	5,301	6,251
Recruitment Fees	32,340	17,046
	2,482,119	2,266,268

The number of employees whose total employee benefits (excluding employers pension and employer PRSI) for the reporting period fell within each band of €10,000 from €60,000 upwards, as required by the SORP (FRS 102), were as follows:

	2017	2016
	€	€
Salary band €60,000 - €70,000	1	1
	1	1

7. Key management compensation

Key management includes directors and members of the company management team. The compensation paid or payable to key management for employee services is shown below:

	2017	2016
	€	€
Salaries and other short term employee benefits	73,872	71,004
Long-term benefits	5,165	4,970
	79,037	75,974

8. Directors' remuneration

The directors did not receive any remuneration in the year as they operate on a voluntary basis.

9. Taxation

The company is exempt from taxation due to its charitable status (Charity tax number: 21530).

10. Grant Income Detail

Grantor	Grant Scheme	Purpose of Grant	Amount of Grant	Term
Citizens Information Board	Provision of Financial Assistance to support Advocacy Service for people with disabilities	Service provision	€2,933,558	1 Year
			<u>€2,933,558</u>	

Reconciliation of deferred income during the year ended 31 December 2017:

	Deferred Income at 1 Jan 2017	Amount taken to Income in 2017	Cash received in 2017	Deferred Income at 31 Dec 2017
	€	€	€	€
Citizens Information Board		2,933,558	2,933,558	
		<u>2,933,558</u>	<u>2,933,558</u>	

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Premises development	Fixtures and fittings	Total
	€	€	€
Cost or valuation			
At 1 January 2017	2,650	18,553	21,203
Additions	2,587	1,035	3,622
At 31 December 2017	<u>5,237</u>	<u>19,588</u>	<u>24,825</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 January 2017	1,446	6,527	7,973
Charge for the year	1,047	3,918	4,965
At 31 December 2017	<u>2,493</u>	<u>10,445</u>	<u>12,938</u>
Net book value			
At 31 December 2017	<u>2,744</u>	<u>9,143</u>	<u>11,887</u>
At 31 December 2016	1,204	12,026	13,230

12. Debtors

	2017	2016
	€	€
Prepayments	-	1,756
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,756</u>

13. Cash and cash equivalents

	2017	2016
	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	629,783	698,599
	<u>629,783</u>	<u>698,599</u>

14. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2017	2016
	€	€
Accruals	51,666	40,218
	<u>51,666</u>	<u>40,218</u>

15. Financial instruments

	2017	2016
	€	€
Financial assets		
Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit	629,783	698,599
	<u>629,783</u>	<u>698,599</u>

Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit comprise cash and cash equivalents.

16. Company status

The company is limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding €1 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation.

17. Commitments under operating leases

At 31 December 2017 the company had future minimum lease payments under noncancellable operating leases as follows:

	2017
	€
Not later than 1 year	30,652
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	35,010
	<u>65,662</u>

18. Controlling party

The company is controlled by its members and the Board of Directors.

However, the directors note that the company is financially and operationally dependent on the Citizens Information Board (CIB) as all the company's funding for the year was by way of a grant from the CIB. The company operates under a service agreement with CIB and CIB also provides assistance in the form of financial and operational advice. It also occupies premises provided by CIB funded entities free of rent and in Citizens Information Services at agreed rents.

19. Events after the year end

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year end.

20. Approval of financial statements

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on

_____.

Detailed income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017	2016
Note	€	€
Income	2,933,558	3,107,549
Gross surplus	2,933,558	3,107,549
Less: overheads		
Administration expenses	(3,016,921)	(2,748,458)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	(83,363)	359,091
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(83,363)	359,091
	2017	2016
	€	€
Income		
Grant Income Citizens Information Board	2,933,558	3,103,045
Grove House	-	4,504
	2,933,558	3,107,549

	2017	2016
	€	€
Administration expenses		
Staff salaries	2,113,648	1,910,623
Staff PRSI(er) contributions	216,201	205,357
Staff pension costs defined contribution schemes	142,078	126,991
Staff training	68,603	47,727
Staff welfare	550	-
Travel and subsistence	215,983	184,365
Printing and stationery	14,073	9,887
Telephone	17,209	16,911
Advertising and promotion	103	385
Legal and professional	69,850	49,055
Auditors' remuneration	5,658	6,150
Bank charges	209	268
Sundry expenses	1,197	13,270
Rent operating leases	117,138	133,505
Rates	302	132
Light and heat	5,072	6,387
Cleaning	3,224	6,396
Service charges	6,602	530
Insurances	5,102	237
Repairs and maintenance	596	573
Depreciation	4,965	4,240
Management expenses	5,301	6,251
Licence fees	415	-
Specific project expenses	2,842	19,218
	3,016,921	2,748,458



National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities
National Office | Ground Floor | George's Quay House
43 Townsend Street | Dublin 2
National Line: 0761 07 3000
E: info@advocacy.ie
W: [NAS Website](#)