



**NATIONAL ADVOCACY  
SERVICE**

**FOR PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**



# Annual Report **2018**



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# 1.1 Easy to read

## Summary of NAS Annual Report 2018



### What is NAS?

NAS is the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities. It is called NAS for short.

NAS works to protect the rights and choices of people with disabilities.

NAS supports people who communicate in different ways like Lámh. NAS also supports people who find it hard to be part of their community.

The people who work for NAS are called Advocates. Advocates work with people who do not have a lot of other support.



### 2018 for Disability Policy

2018 was an important year for disability in Ireland. Ireland signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

The UN CRPD is an international law.

It means that Ireland has to do more to protect the human rights of people with disabilities.

NAS will do what it can to make sure that Ireland follows the UN CRPD.



## What Advocates do

Advocates work with people with disabilities to make their own decisions.

People with disabilities might need supports and services. Advocates try to help people to get them.

Advocates help people with disabilities to tell other people what they want.

Advocates make sure other people like family and staff listen.



## How Advocates work




Advocates work alongside people with disabilities. They work out together what the person wants.

We all have different ways of showing what we want. Sometimes we use words and sometimes we do not. Advocates watch and learn the ways people communicate.

Advocates also talk to friends, family and staff to find out more about what the person wants.



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|    | <p><b>Who Supports NAS?</b></p> <p>The government gives money to the Citizens Information Board and then the Citizens Information Board gives this money to NAS.</p> <p>NAS uses this money for its work and to pay the Advocates.</p>           |
|   | <p><b>NAS Work in 2018</b></p> <p>Advocates helped people speak up, write letters, make phone calls, attend meetings and think about important decisions.</p> <p>Advocates helped 916 people with disabilities in 2018 with advocacy.</p>        |
|  | <p>NAS gave information to 3,025 people in 2018.</p> <p>NAS has a telephone number people can call. Many people called this telephone number for help.</p>   |
|  | <p>NAS dealt with a lot of important issues for people with disabilities in 2018. These included housing, health, family and legal issues.</p> <p>NAS helped people with disabilities to work on these issues to try and make things better.</p> |

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|    | <p>NAS wrote papers to the government and other groups like the HSE. NAS told them about the problems Advocates worked on with people with disabilities. These papers are called Policy Submissions.</p> <p>NAS wrote 14 Policy Submissions in 2018 on things like on PA Services.</p> |
|   | <p>NAS also took part in a lot of meetings to discuss disability issues.</p> <p>NAS met with groups like the HSE, HIQA and the Department of Health.</p> <p>NAS also met Minister for Disability, Finian McGrath to tell him how advocacy can help people with disabilities.</p>       |
|  | <p>In 2018 NAS held over 200 events to talk about the work of their Advocates.</p> <p>Some of these events were in disability services and others were public events, like the Ploughing Championships.</p>  |





Advocates attended courses to learn more about disability issues.

This helps NAS provide a better service to people with disabilities.



### **A New Plan for NAS**

In 2018 NAS made a new plan for its work. This new plan is called the NAS Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021.

NAS will follow this plan for the next three years.

The plan is about making sure that all the work of NAS meets 5 values. The 5 values of NAS are independence, autonomy, respect, equality/ citizenship and empowerment.

In December 2018 NAS celebrated the new plan at an event in Croke Park.

Regina Doherty, who is the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, talked at the event.







### **New Patient Advocacy Service**

NAS will provide a new service in 2019 for patients in Irish hospitals.

The new service will be called the Patient Advocacy Service.



NAS thanks all of its staff for all their hard work in 2018.

NAS also thanks the Citizens Information Board for their support in 2018.

## Case Example 1: Paul

My name is Paul and I am in my 20s. I live in a residential service. It is a group home. I have an intellectual disability and problems with my eyesight. I also communicate in a different way. There were no activities that I could enjoy in my home. A person I know told NAS about me. An Advocate came to see me. The Advocate spent time with me and talked to people who knew me to learn about my life. The Advocate saw that I had to do things I did not like and talked to the manager of my house about this. The manager agreed to plan new things that I would enjoy. I am happier now.

## Case Example 2: Yvonne

My name is Yvonne and I am in my 50s. I used to live in a large residential centre until I moved into a house in the community. I had a stroke and had to go to the hospital. When I was ready to go home, the manager of my house said that they could not support me there and I would have to go to a nursing home. My family told NAS about my problem. I met my Advocate and we went to meetings together. There were meetings with the hospital, my family and the house manager. My Advocate supported me to tell everyone what my wishes were. I did not want to live in a nursing home. I wanted to move to a new house in the community. I am now living in my new home and I am very happy.

## Case Example 3: Jane

My name is Jane and I lived in a home supported by staff. I contacted NAS because I was unhappy where I lived. I shared a small house with one other person who was much younger than me. I did not get along with the person I lived with. This person sometimes shouted at me and even pushed me. I wanted to move and the staff tried to help me. The manager told them that there were no other places I could live. I started working with my Advocate who spent time getting to know me and my wishes. My Advocate supported me to tell the manager how I felt. The manager still told us that there was no other house for me. We wrote to the HSE disability manager and other people to tell them what I wanted. My Advocate supported me to be part of the decisions about my life. I now live in a house with another person who is around the same age as me. We have things in common. I still have the same support staff and this is important to me. I am very happy in my new home.

## 1.2 Foreword by Chairperson

As chairperson of the Board of Directors 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 2018.

2018 marked a historic moment for disability rights in Ireland, with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Irish State in March. This landmark convention commits Ireland to respect and promote the rights of people with disabilities as equal citizens, and put in place the structures, services and resources to ensure equal participation by people with disabilities in society is achieved. The National Advocacy Service will play its part in delivering on the State's obligation, and ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are at the very centre of all the work we do.

In addition to being a landmark year for people with disabilities in Ireland, 2018 also marked a significant year for NAS. In December 2018, NAS launched its first Strategic Plan, to cover the period 2018-2021. This ambitious plan shows that NAS has moved from a developmental phase, and is now strategically positioned to participate in the development of standards for advocacy in Ireland and disability social policy more broadly. The Strategic Plan was launched publicly in December 2018 by Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty in Croke Park. The NAS Board were very pleased to hear the support of the Minister for the NAS request for statutory powers of access for our advocates.

2018 marked a year of growth for the organisation from a service point of view with a continued increase in the demand for NAS services, in particular for the provision of core advocacy and information support services. NAS advocates assist people with disabilities to ensure that their voices are being heard in decisions that affect their lives. Advocates work to put the person and the person's views and opinions at the heart of any decision-making process about them. This annual report provides a detailed breakdown of the data on NAS' work, and explains the story behind the numbers through a series of case studies of real cases from 2018. Demand for the NAS service remains high and growing.

**“2018 marked a historic moment for disability rights in Ireland, with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Irish State in March.”**



The report describes some of the complex issues that NAS advocates encounter. These reflect some of the serious challenges faced by people with disabilities in Ireland. In the Citizens Information Board pre-budget submission, NAS highlighted the impact that shortages in personal assistance hours were having on the lives of people with disabilities. The issue of housing and accommodation remained the most common issue where people sought the assistance of NAS in 2018, with half of all cases relating to accommodation. This reflects the ongoing crisis in the housing sector in Ireland, which disproportionately impacts people with disabilities through a lack of appropriate accommodation in the community, lack of accessible social housing, lack of personal assistance hours and lack of homecare packages.

Developing into a new area, NAS was delighted in late 2018 to be awarded a tender by the Department of Health to provide a new, independent Patient Advocacy Service, as an additional stream of advocacy work alongside our work for people with disabilities. The new service will benefit from the experience and expertise that NAS has gained over the years, and in turn the Patient Advocacy Service will inform and support the work of NAS. It is a great opportunity to strengthen and integrate the rather fragmented field of advocacy in Ireland.

Finally, as Chair of the Board I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Citizens Information Board, for all their support and assistance of our important work in 2018. I also would like to express the Board's gratitude to all the staff of NAS for their dedication, professionalism and commitment in providing an excellent and much-needed advocacy service for people with disabilities in Ireland.



**Nuala Doherty**

Chairperson of NAS Board

## 1.3 Highlights 2018

NAS provided full representative advocacy support in **916** cases in 2018

**7%**  
increase  
on 2017

NAS closed **461** cases, having achieved positive outcomes for clients

NAS provided information, advice, one-off interventions and short-term advocacy in **3,025** initial enquiries in 2018

**8%**  
increase  
on 2017

The NAS national phone line received **1,953** calls, up from 1,263 in 2017



Representative advocacy issues included:



housing and accommodation  
**50%**



health  
**22%**



justice issues  
**12%**



parenting with a disability  
**8%**



NAS staff engaged in **201** promotional events and presentations in disability services and other services throughout Ireland



NAS presented to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group at the Department of Justice on the role of advocacy

Minister Regina Doherty publicly launched the NAS Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 in Croke Park, and endorsed providing statutory powers to NAS advocates



NAS made **14** public consultation policy submissions

to organisations such as the Department of Health, the HSE, HIQA and the Mental Health Commission.

NAS was awarded a tender to establish a new and independent Patient Advocacy Service by the Department of Health in 2019



NAS engaged with social policy events including at the UCD Law School, the Law Society, the National Patient Safety Conference and Social Care Ireland





## 2. Vision, Mission and Values



### Vision statement

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 people 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).

### Mission statement

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 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.

## Core Values

The NAS Strategic Plan 2018-2021 establishes the following five Core Values that underpin the work of NAS.

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|    | <p><b>1. Independence</b></p> <p>NAS works with the person independently of others and free from all conflicts of interest. The advocacy process is led and guided by the person.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>2. Autonomy</b></p> <p>NAS supports the right of the person to self-direction/determination (i.e. to be in control of their own life) and to make informed decisions based on their will and preferences.</p>   |
|  | <p><b>3. Equality/Citizenship</b></p> <p>NAS supports the right of every person to assert and enjoy their human rights, to participate in society as an equal citizen and to fulfil their full potential within a life of their own choosing.</p>   |
|  | <p><b>4. Respect</b></p> <p>NAS works with the person in a way which demonstrates respect for the person as an individual and for their privacy, dignity and autonomy. All NAS staff, partners and directors will act in a way that demonstrates respect for the people who use NAS and each other.</p> |
|  | <p><b>5. Empowerment</b></p> <p>NAS aims to facilitate the person to be an active participant in decisions which affect their life, through the way in which the advocacy process is carried out as well as the outcomes it seeks to achieve.</p>   |

# 3. Introduction

## 3.1 NAS Remit

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

NAS operates on the principles 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.

NAS has a particular remit to work with those who may be isolated from their community of choice or mainstream society, may communicate differently and those who have limited informal or natural supports.

**“I felt the advocate always told me what was ahead of me and that made my day I got answers I never got before.”**  
Richard, who used the NAS service in 2018

## 3.2 Statutory Basis of NAS

NAS is part of the framework of services funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. CIB has, under the Comhairle Act 2000 section 7 as amended by Section 4 of the Citizens Information Act 2007, among its functions the following:

- to support the provision of or, where the Board of CIB considers it appropriate, to provide directly, independent information, advice and advocacy services so as to ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services and are referred to the relevant services;
- to assist and support individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options and in accessing their entitlements to social services;
- to promote greater accessibility, co-ordination and public awareness of social services and of information, advice and advocacy services provided in relation to such services whether by a statutory body or a voluntary body;
- to support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services.



### 3.3 What NAS Does

- ✓ NAS 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 their unique preferences and perspective. The work of advocates ranges from information provision and advice, to longer term full representative advocacy.
- ✓ Independent, representative advocacy is directed by the people who use it. It is person centred, accountable, accessible, impartial and independent of service providers, families and other supports.
- ✓ NAS representative advocacy involves professional, trained experts in advocacy dealing with specific issues and working with an individual until that issue reaches conclusion. Issues can be about any aspect of a person's life and the advocacy plan is directed by the person. Where the person communicates differently (through behaviour and gestures or assistive technology as opposed to verbal or written communication) the advocacy plan is still directed by the person. Where the person's will and preference cannot be ascertained, the advocate approaches the matter using the four internationally recognised methods:
  - **witness observer;**  
With this approach the advocate acts as an observer or witness to the ways in which the person lives their life, to get a better understanding of the person's will and preference which can then be used to represent the person.
  - **person centeredness;**  
This means a process of continual listening and learning, focussing on what is important to someone now and in the future, and acting upon this, being led by the client and where required in alliance with the circle of support.
  - **a rights based approach;**  
This approach begins with the premise that we all have certain fundamental rights that can be clearly defined and explicitly measured.
  - **and 'ordinary life' principles.**  
This approach centres around eight quality of life domains which are used as the basis for a series of questions that the advocate may put to the decision maker or on behalf of the person.

# Paul

## Quality of Life - A Meaningful day

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“My name is Paul, and I am in my twenties. I live in a residential service. I have a moderate intellectual disability. I am also visually impaired, and have communication differences. I was referred to NAS as there weren’t any activities arranged individually for me, that I could participate in and enjoy.

The advocate spent time with me, engaging in witness observer activities and gathering information like making a daily activity log etc. My advocate contacted the Service manager where I lived to get a review of my case from a quality of life perspective.

The manager completed an audit of the community residence that I lived in. Following this audit, a new post, specific for coordinating and supporting meaningful activities and social opportunities was allocated to my residence. Intervention and representations by my advocate ensured that my case was prioritised by the service and appropriate actions to address the gaps in provision were addressed. I now participate in activities that I enjoy and suit me, like music.”

This case study shows that an intervention by an advocate can create new possibilities in a service, to ensure that a person like Paul has meaningful activities in their day-to-day lives. The external eye of the advocate led to a new role in the service to the benefit of all residents.

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# 4. Strategic Plan 2018-2021

## 4.1 Strategic Priorities and Enablers

In 2018, NAS launched its first strategic plan as a national service. The plan brings together our leadership role and experience in providing professional, independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities. The plan highlights our role as a collaborative champion in developing and driving standards of practice in advocacy for people with disabilities across Ireland. The Strategic Plan is based around three strategic priorities; service, standards and policy.





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|    | <p><b>Strategic Priority 1 - Services:</b></p> <p>There is an emphasis on continuous, measurable improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the service over this period.</p>  |
|    | <p><b>Strategic Priority 2 - Standards:</b></p> <p>NAS is committed to developing a suite of standards for advocacy for people with disabilities. Whilst the standards will be primarily for NAS, NAS will work collaboratively with other advocacy providers and commissioners to share the standards.</p>  |
|   | <p><b>Strategic Priority 3 - Policy:</b></p> <p>As a frontline service, NAS advocates encounter many systemic issues in our social and health care system which adversely affect the lives of people with disabilities. This Strategic Plan creates a framework for NAS to identify the social policy issues that its advocates are encountering in providing the service, and to bring these issues to the relevant stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>The strategic plan also identifies two key enablers to allow for improvements in the priority areas of services, standards and policy.</p> |  |
|    | <p><b>Enabler 1 - Awareness:</b></p> <p>Awareness as an enabler will allow for greater access to the service for people with disabilities, and enhance the ability of NAS to contribute to social policy with important issues that our advocates identify in their work</p>   |
|    | <p><b>Enabler 2 - Building Capacity and Enhancing Effectiveness:</b></p> <p>This important enabler focuses on organisational and systems development, in the areas of human resources, training, IT systems, corporate services, and accessibility.</p>  |
| <p>This Annual Report is structured to reflect the priorities and key enablers in the Strategic Plan.</p>                                     |  |

# Maja

## Lack of access to a disability day service

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“My name is Maja, I am a woman in my thirties, I am active and have a good network of friends.

A few years ago I was living in an acute psychiatric unit for about 12 months, and when I was discharged I went back to live with my family at home. I didn't have any access to day services for nearly two years, and I was unable to participate in my local community due to a lack of supports.



I was referred to NAS, and an advocate started to work with me and liaise with my family. My advocate discovered there was a day service available for me, but that the service provider was having difficulties providing an appropriate service for me and my needs due to lack of resources. I had discussions with my advocate, the service and the HSE about what we could do so I could get the supports I needed. Additional funding was secured, which meant I could attend a good quality service that would meet my needs. A plan was agreed, with a weekly planner and additional outreach hours. My advocate supported me to be involved in these decisions by providing information, looking at options, understanding my wishes, and empowering and increasing my confidence to make choices and direct my own day to day activities.

I am very happy with the outcome of work with the advocate, and my overall quality of life has improved dramatically. I am more integrated in my community, I've developed friendships and I spend my time doing activities that I enjoy like painting and bowling.”

This case study shows the importance of ascertaining the needs and supports required by a person with a disability when they are discharged from acute settings, so that they can participate meaningfully in their communities and society outside of the acute environment.

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## 5. Strategic Priority Services

“Would you use us again if needed?  
- If I had to but I feel now that I can  
do it myself if in a similar situation”  
Zola, who used the NAS service in 2018

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## 5.1 Advocates' Work in 2018

NAS advocates help people in two ways, with full representative advocacy, and also with short-term advocacy and information support.

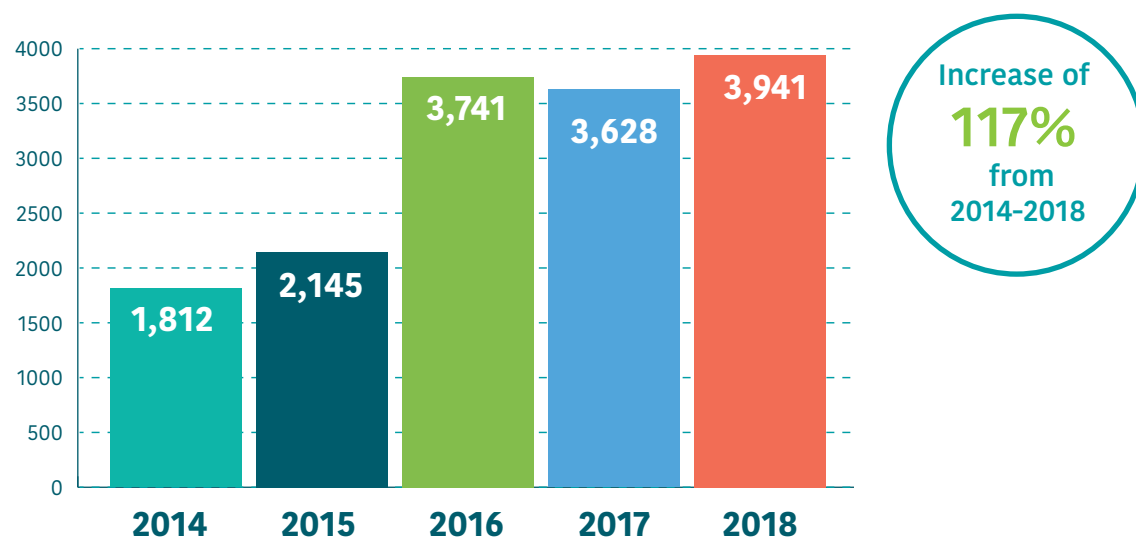
- NAS provided full representative advocacy to 916 people in 2018, a 7% increase from the 852 people receiving advocacy support on 2017. This work involves extended engagement with individuals, ensuring that their will and preferences are heard, understood and taken into account in decisions for each person. It also means writing correspondence, attending meetings with the person in a variety of settings, speaking up for the person and supporting them to speak up for themselves. This casework can often be complex as it can involve multiple issues and may extend over a period of months.
- In total 12,881 hours of full representative advocacy case work was undertaken, with an average of 14 hours per case.
- In addition, NAS also provides short-term advocacy support and information support to people with disabilities. This involves supporting individuals to self-advocate, through information provision and empowerment. It includes one-off representations, such as writing a letter, information provision by phone, and short-term support. It also includes signposting and referrals to other services. NAS engaged in 3,025 instances of such support, an 8% increase from the 2,776 instances of short-term advocacy support work in 2017. The level, length and complexity of type of advocacy support work varies, with an average time spent being 1.03 hours. In total, 4,106 hours were spent on this type of work in 2018.
- Of the 916 full representative advocacy cases in 2018, 510 cases had been open from 2017, while 406 new cases were opened in 2018. These 406 cases emerged from the 3,025 instances of short-term advocacy and information support.

Combining both ways that NAS advocates help people, NAS provided advocacy support in 3,941 pieces of work in 2018, a marked 117% increase from 1,812 pieces of work in 2014.

The sustained and increasing demand for the service is borne out of a number of factors;

- NAS continues to engage in significant, promotional work in disability services around the country, with 201 face-to-face presentations and meetings held to promote the service across the country in 2018;
- External societal factors also impact on demand for the service. For example, the continuing national housing crisis is borne out in the statistics showing that 50% of all representative advocacy cases involved a housing or accommodation issue;
- The delayed enactment of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 has meant that Ward of Court cases continue to consistently feature as a complex element of NAS work; and
- The ongoing development in adult safeguarding policies and standards in Ireland, to which NAS actively contributed in 2018 (see social policy section) has meant that safeguarding referrals to NAS have become a consistent part of our work.

#### Total Combined Advocacy Information Support and Representation Case-Work by NAS over past Five Years



## Access and Eligibility Criteria

Given the sizeable demand for the NAS, and complex needs of people who use our service, NAS operates an Access and Eligibility Policy. In recognition of the fact that NAS does not have the remit or resources to provide an advocacy service to everyone who seeks one, it aims to ensure that NAS avoids direct or indirect discrimination and reaches the people most in need of advocacy while maintaining high standards and running the service efficiently.

In order to apply for an advocacy service from NAS, a person must have a disability and be aged 18 or over. NAS is committed to equal opportunities both as a core value and in accordance with Equality legislation (Equality Acts, consolidated 2004). This means that no group of people with disabilities will be directly or indirectly excluded from service.

NAS has a particular remit to reach those who may be most in need of the service, e.g. people who have no natural supports, people in residential services not linked to an active circle of support outside of the residential setting, and other people whose opportunity to seek support independently is extremely limited due to their disability, their circumstances or a combination of both.

The criteria for assessing eligibility for NAS are adapted from the criteria for the Personal Advocacy Service (non-commenced Section 5 of Citizens Information Act 2007), combined with NAS' practice experience:

1. Without advocacy, a person with a disability is unable to obtain/ has difficulty obtaining access to services, facilities or rights on an equal basis with a person without a disability;
2. The risk to the person's quality of life;
3. The risk of harm to the person's health/ welfare/ safety/ wellbeing if they are not provided with the services they are seeking to obtain, and the degree of risk;
4. The need of the person to have an independent advocate;
5. The availability or absence of natural supports, e.g. family members willing and able to advocate on behalf of the person or other supports;
6. The availability of other services already linked to the person (e.g. disability specific organisations) and avoidance of duplication of service;
7. The benefits likely to accrue;
8. If it is apparent that due process has already been exhausted and/or no possible avenues for redress exist;
9. Any other relevant matters in the view of the NAS Regional Manager.

## Representative Advocacy and Information Support Work 2018



**3,941**  
total advocacy  
and information  
support work in  
2018



**916**  
total people  
supported by full  
representative  
advocacy in 2018



**3,025**  
total short-term  
advocacy  
support work  
(information provision,  
one-off intervention and  
arms-length advocacy)



**510**  
Number of  
people engaged  
in representative  
advocacy at start  
of 2018



**406**  
new cases  
in 2018



**463**  
cases closed  
in 2018



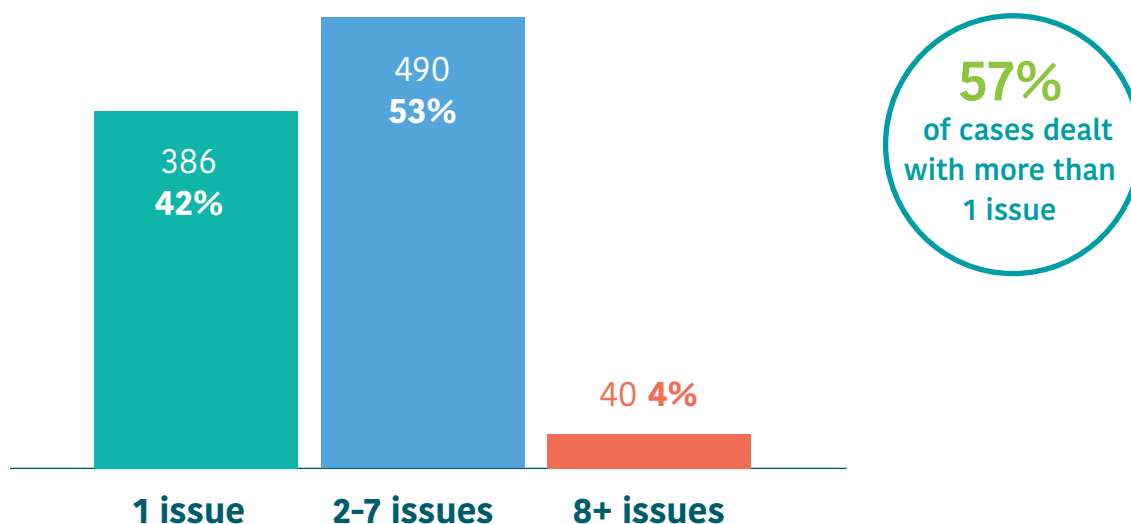
## 5.2 Complexity of Representative Advocacy Work

The majority of full, representative advocacy cases in 2018 involved more than one issue, underscoring the complex nature of the casework.

Cases with more than one issue can be particularly complex as NAS advocates may have to work and coordinate communication with a large number of stakeholders and agencies that have become involved a person's life. For example, with a housing issue that also involves a mental health issue, an advocate may be liaising with the local authority, HSE disability services and mental health or addiction services at once. The advocate may also be involved in communication with a person's family members and other organisations in their life, such as their local Intreo office, bank or credit union. Complex issues can be interdependent – resolution of a housing issue may depend on progress in relation to a mental health issue, for example.

In order to define and set the scope of this complex work and create a defined strategy for the case, our advocates draw up advocacy plans with the person they are working with. The issues are defined in these plans, and goals are set. Through advocacy plans, the complex work of our advocates can be managed and focussed. Casework with individuals are closed when the issues in the advocacy plan are resolved.

Of the 916 representative advocacy cases in 2018, 386 (42%) had one issue, 490 (53%) had two to seven issues and 40 cases (4%) had eight issues or more.



# Lorcan

## Justice Issue and Housing Issue - Criminal case leading to social housing review

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My name is Lorcan, and I am in my thirties. I have a physical and an intellectual disability. I was referred to NAS after I was charged with a serious crime. I needed support to attend meetings with my legal team as I found the process complicated and difficult to understand. I had no family support and I felt socially isolated. NAS supported me to prepare for meetings, to attend meetings and assessments and to reflect and summarise the outcomes of discussions with my legal team.



I live in social housing, and when I was charged with a criminal offence I was informed by my housing provider that my tenancy was under review. NAS supported me through this process and worked with my housing provider to ensure that I was not evicted from my home.

NAS also supported me through my trial. NAS were asked to link with probation services as part of the pre-sentencing process. Probation services helped develop a plan to link me with support services in the community. This plan was accepted by the court and I avoided a custodial sentence. I'm now linked with appropriate disability supports, I still live in my own home and I continue to successfully link in with me probation officer.

This case study shows that complex justice matters can have serious knock on effects on a person's life, for example in the area of access to social housing. Having an advocate can help to ensure a person can navigate the complex systems that are engaged by justice matters.

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## 5.3 Key Issues in 2018

As has been the trend in recent years, housing and accommodation represented the single biggest issue area worked on by our advocates in 2018, 50% of representative advocacy cases involved an issues relating to housing or accommodation. This category is a broad one, and involves a diverse array of issues. This complex area includes people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness, inappropriate residential placements, lack of choice in terms of residential placements, people in the process of moving out from large residential centres to live in the community, rent and arrears and social housing list issues. Inappropriate residential placements refer to situations where a person is living in a type of accommodation that is not suitable for their needs or wishes, and does not allow them to participate in their communities. For example, NAS worked in 2018 with a number of people who are aged under 65, including people in their thirties and forties, who are living in nursing homes. People are often placed in inappropriate accommodation because there is a lack of home care support packages or personal assistance hours to allow the person to live independently in their community.

The second most common issue area in 2018 was healthcare issues, at 23% of representative advocacy cases. Health issues include access to healthcare services, treatment choice and meaningful engagement in defining treatment plans.

13% of representative advocacy cases related to justice issues include Ward of Court cases, wills and probate, personal injuries claims, rights of residence and criminal cases. Ward of Court cases continue to represent a significant element of NAS work, as the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 awaits commencement.

8% of representative advocacy cases related to parenting with a disability, which typically refers to cases where a parent with an intellectual disability is subject to an intervention by social services in relation to their child/children.

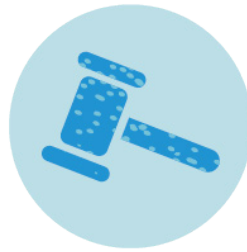
## Issue Categories in 2018



housing  
**50%**



health  
**22%**



justice  
**12%**



parenting with  
a disability  
**8%**



Birth, family and  
relationships  
**7%**



Social Welfare  
**6%**



Money and Tax  
**4%**



Education, social  
life, employment  
**7%**

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# Yvonne

## Housing Issue: Delayed discharge from a hospital setting

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My name is Yvonne, I am in my fifties. I used to live in a large residential centre, where 30 other people also lived. I had spent most of my life living in residential centres. In recent years however I had moved to live in a community house within the service I had been living in.

I had a stroke and was admitted to hospital due to deterioration in my physical condition, including my mobility. I remained in the hospital under a delayed discharge as my service provider stated they could no longer meet my needs. My advocate became involved with me after my family referred me to NAS.

Multiple meetings took place between me, my advocate, the HSE, the hospital, my service provider, and my family. Pressure was mounting to have me admitted to a nursing home under Fair Deal. The advocate continued to make representations to all parties emphasising what my wishes were and challenging the suggestion that I required nursing care. Despite suggestions that I lacked capacity to make decisions regarding my own well-being, I was in a position to instruct the advocate that I did not want to be admitted to a nursing home but also that I no longer wished to return to my previous service.

The advocate escalated the case within the HSE and was assured that if a suitable alternative residential placement was found, the HSE would fund it. Nearly one year later, a suitable service was sourced and I was finally moved into a new bungalow which I share with one other person. The advocate supported me throughout the transition, and so far the new placement has been really positive, and has improved my quality of life.

This case study shows the benefits of having an independent advocate on the side of a person to firmly ensure that their will and preferences are recognised and respected, particularly where a person with a disability might be pressured into making a decision for resources reasons, such as using Fair Deal to enter a nursing home.

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## 5.4 Who is Engaging with the Service?

While NAS has its particular remit to provide advocacy services to people in particularly vulnerable situations, we worked with a diverse range of people in 2018 in terms of types of disabilities. As in 2016 and 2017, intellectual disability continued to be present in the largest number of cases, at 46% of cases. People with intellectual disabilities who engage with the NAS service are mainly living in residential services or attending day services. People with acquired brain injuries increased as an element of NAS work in 2018.

Strikingly, 2018 continued to demonstrate that a significant element of NAS work is with people who have multiple disabilities. For example, a person may have an intellectual disability and also a physical disability, or mental health issue. The following table outlines the percentage of advocacy cases where a type of disability was present.

| People with...          | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| Intellectual Disability | 43%  | 45%  |
| Physical Disability     | 30%  | 31%  |
| Mental Health           | 24%  | 24%  |
| Learning Disability     | 18%  | 17%  |
| Autistic Spectrum       | 12%  | 12%  |
| Sensory Disability      | 7%   | 8%   |
| Acquired Brain Injury   | 2%   | 8%   |

### How did the person come to Use the Service?

People can apply to use the NAS service by contacting the NAS national line, filling out a form, or emailing. Other people, such as family, friends or service providers, can also refer individuals to the NAS service.

People accessed the NAS representative advocacy service in 2018 in the following ways;

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Supported by a Service Provider                | 28% |
| Health Professionals                           | 23% |
| Supported by a family member                   | 14% |
| Supported by their Disability Service provider | 12% |
| Initial contact made by the person             | 11% |
| Other  | 9%  |
| Citizens Information                           | 3%  |



# Jessica

## Autonomy and Choice: Quality of Life in a large Residential Setting

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My name is Jessica, and I live in a big residential centre, (called a congregated setting.) I have a serious physical disability, and so I require assistance with many day-to-day activities like eating my meals. Staff place food in my mouth when I am eating.

I contacted NAS because I had been placed on a restrictive, soft foods only diet, against my express wishes. This was because a speech and language therapist had a concern that I may choke, and that I didn't understand this risk.

I agreed to a capacity assessment and was found to have capacity to understand the risks associated with choking and to be in a position to make my own choices. The advocate assisted me in expressing my understanding of these risks, and confirming my will and preference in the matter.

The service then cited risk and the concerns of support staff as a justification for continuing to ignore my stated wishes regarding my diet. With the support of my advocate, I engaged the services of a solicitor, and was supported to seek a complete independent review of the service's decisions around my diet. I also agreed to a medical examination and analysis of my swallow reflex, as I wanted as much information as possible about the risk of choking etc.

Following this review, my service and I agreed that a chopped diet rather than a soft diet would be appropriate, and I was once again supported by my service to access my community and eat out at restaurants when I wished.

This case study shows a person with a disability can face a broad consensus on an issue amongst the health care professionals that work with them that is contrary to their will and preference. The role of the advocate is to ensure that the person's will and preference cannot be ignored, and to assist a person through processes of review.

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## 6. Strategic Priority Standards

“From the long period of time that I had been working with my advocate, I have just gained more confidence and make sure that I have my say.”  
Mark, who used the NAS service in 2018

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Developing national standards in advocacy is a priority in the NAS Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2021. NAS engaged with stakeholders across the disability, health and social care sector in 2018, promoting advocacy as a core response to ensuring efficacy in the delivery of public social services.

Of particular note in 2018 in relation to standards was;

- The establishment of a Feedback Focus Groups process with people who have used our service to provide recommendations on how to continually improve the NAS service;
- The progress made in relation to the NAS request for statutory powers, with Minister Regina Doherty endorsing statutory powers for NAS at the NAS Strategic Plan launch; and
- The awarding of a new Patient Advocacy Service contract to NAS by the Department of Health.

## 6.1 Feedback Focus Groups

The NAS Feedback and Complaints Policy recognises the importance of feedback in developing and maintaining quality standards for the NAS service. On that basis, in 2018 NAS initiated the process of establishing focus groups with people who have used the NAS service. The initial focus group held in January 2018 was around improving NAS methods of obtaining feedback, by looking at the questions we ask on NAS feedback forms. Recommendations for improving the user-friendliness and enhancing the capacity of these forms to capture user perspectives came out of this focus group process and form part of the NAS work-plan for 2019.

Feedback Focus Groups will continue in 2019 nationwide as part of the process of ensuring that NAS develops and maintains high standards in advocacy for people with disabilities in Ireland.

## 6.2 Case for Statutory Powers for Advocates

In recent years NAS has identified that our advocates face significant difficulties in the course of undertaking their work in terms of accessing people, premises, documents and decision-makers. NAS advocates report that a significant proportion of their time is spent seeking access to meet with clients, view documents and attend meetings at which decisions are made. For this reason, NAS sought statutory powers of access for our advocates in 2016, and the application to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) to have these statutory powers granted continued in 2018.

In 2018, NAS worked collaboratively with the Citizens Information Board to progress the case for statutory powers for NAS. The Citizens Information Board made a legislative change request to the DEASP legislative committee in 2018.

At the launch of the NAS Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and Annual Report 2017, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, expressed her support for the legislative change to grant NAS advocates statutory powers of access.

## 6.3 Delivering a new Patient Advocacy Service

In the last quarter of 2018, NAS successfully tendered to provide a new, independent patient advocacy service, on behalf of the Department of Health. The new service has been commissioned by the National Patient Safety Office in the Department of Health.

The establishment of an independent patient advocacy service was recommended by HIQA in its 2015 Report into safety, quality and standards of care at Portlaoise Midlands Hospital<sup>1</sup>, which had been prompted by a January 2014 Prime Time Investigates programme into maternity and natal care at the hospital. The Ombudsman also recommended the establishment of a patient advocacy service in a 2015 investigation into how the health service handles complaints, and cited NAS as an example of independent advocacy in his Report.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of a patient advocacy service is a commitment in the Programme for Partnership Government 2016,<sup>3</sup> and in 2017 HIQA and the Mental Health Commission developed national standards on the conduct of reviews of patient safety incidences in advance of the establishment of the service.<sup>4</sup>

NAS was delighted to receive the endorsement and confidence of the Department of Health in winning this tender in 2018. Providing this crucial new service is recognition of the strong reputation built up by NAS over the course of 2018 and in the preceding years.

Providing patient advocacy expands the role of NAS to include a second type of advocacy, in addition to our ongoing advocacy for people with disabilities. The new service will place NAS as a leader and standard setter in the field of advocacy in Ireland. Providing this new service therefore closely aligns with the second strategic priority of the NAS Strategic Plan 2018-2021; Development of Standards.

The Patient Advocacy Service has the potential to bring about transformative change in the treatment of patients who have had negative experiences while accessing public health services in Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2017-01/Portlaoise-Investigation-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ombudsman.ie/publications/reports/learning-to-get-better/Learning-to-Get-Better-Summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme\\_for\\_Partnership\\_Government.pdf](https://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme_for_Partnership_Government.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hiqa.ie/reports-and-publications/standard/national-standards-conduct-reviews-patient-safety-incidents-0>

# Jane

## Housing Issue: Living arrangement at a residential service

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My name is Jane, and I contacted NAS as I was very unhappy with my living arrangement. I lived in a residential service. My home was a small bungalow, which I shared with one other person, who was much younger than I was. I did not get along with my housemate who sometimes shouted at me and even pushed me. I was very unhappy living with her and wanted to move but every time the staff tried to help me, management told them that there were no other homes.



I started working with my advocate and my advocate spent time getting to know me and my wishes. My advocate supported me to write to my service provider to explain how I felt. Again, the response was that there was no alternative residential services available. My advocate wrote to HIQA, the safeguarding team and the HSE disability manager expressing to them what I wanted, and supporting me to become involved in decision-making processes about my life.

I now live in a house with another person who is close in age to me and shares similar interests. My service provider has not changed and I am familiar with the staff. This was important to me when moving. I am very happy in my new home.

This case study shows an advocacy intervention can empower a person to have their voice heard about important issues such as the place they live.

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## 7. Strategic Priority Policy

“They were brilliant, I trusted them, they helped and supported me throughout a very difficult time and protected me. They pointed me in the right direction.”

Aoife, who used the NAS service in 2018

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NAS continued to contribute to disability social policy in 2018 through stakeholder engagements and policy submissions. 2018 marked an important year for disability policy with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). In our policy work NAS sought in 2018 to ensure that advocacy is recognised as playing an important role in ensuring that the equal legal capacity of people with disabilities is recognised and respected under the UN CRPD.

## 7.1 NAS contribution to CIB Pre-Budget Submission, September 2018

In the CIB pre-budget submission, published September 2018, NAS highlighted the particular issue of the lack of personal assistance hours leading to people with disabilities being accommodated inappropriately, such as young people living in nursing homes. This was an issue which our advocates experienced regularly in 2018, and highlighted as a cause of real and serious concern.

## 7.2 Stakeholder Engagement

NAS engages extensively with public bodies, state agencies, service providers, representative groups and civil society organisations in the disability sector.

### **National Disability Inclusion Strategy Steering Group Presentation, September 2018**

A highlight of 2018 was the presentation by NAS to the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) Steering Group, chaired by Minister Finian McGrath, on the importance of independent advocacy for the success of the NDIS, in September 2018. This presentation was a high-level opportunity to place the work of NAS as central to promoting the rights of people with disabilities in Ireland.

NAS welcomed the announcement in 2018 by Minister McGrath that pilot projects for personalised budgets for people with disabilities would be established, having previously contributed to a Department of Health public consultation on the area and benefits of personalised budgets.

### **Government Departmental and Inter-Agency Groups**

Throughout 2018 NAS was an active participating member of

- Department of Employment and Social Protection (DEASP) Disability Stakeholder Group, alongside our colleagues in the CIB social policy team;
- HSE National Disability Consultative Forum; and
- Safeguarding Ireland, formerly known as the National Safeguarding Committee.

### **Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act Expert Group**

NAS continued to serve as a member of the National Disability Authority's expert group developing Codes of Practice for the various roles under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015. NAS contributed to the development of these Codes, particularly around the role of advocacy and how advocates will interact with the Act.

The NAS National Manager was also appointed to an Oversight and Quality Assurance Group for the new Decision Support Service under the Mental Health Commission.

### **National Patient Safety Office Conference NAS Poster, October 2018**

In October 2018, NAS presented a well-received poster on the role of independent advocacy in patient safety, at the National Patient Safety Conference in Dublin Castle, organised by the Department of Health. This poster and participation demonstrated the track record of NAS of working in health care settings, linking in with our expansion to providing a new Patient Advocacy Service in 2019.

## 7.3 Public Consultations and Submissions

NAS regularly responds to public consultations and policy submissions in areas related to our remit, particularly around adult safeguarding, capacity and independent living. NAS social policy submissions are developed with the support of the social policy team of the Citizens Information Board.

### Capacity and Decision-Making

- **HSE Consultation on Code of Practice for Designated Healthcare Representatives under the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (ADM Act), HSE Consultation on Code for Health and Social Care Professionals and HSE Code for how to make an Advance Health Directive, May 2018**

NAS made three detailed submissions to the HSE consultations on codes of practice it had developed relating to advance healthcare directives under the ADM Act 2015. In each, NAS emphasised the importance of independent advocacy in ensuring that the advance healthcare directive process ensures that the will and preferences of people with disabilities are respected.

- **Department of Health Consultation on Deprivation of Liberty heads of bill, March 2018**

In this important consultation, NAS emphasised that the definitions in the draft heads of bill, such as the definition of restraint, were narrowly defined, and should be broadened to ensure that cases of effective deprivation of liberty and are considered as such under the law. The need for alignment with the guiding principles of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act was also highlighted. NAS met with Department of Health officials to further discuss the contents of the NAS submission.



## Adult Safeguarding

NAS made three submissions to public consultations in 2018 in the area of adult safeguarding.

- **HSE Safeguarding Policy Public Consultation, August 2018**

NAS again highlighted the importance of advocacy in response to the August public consultation by the HSE on its updated safeguarding policy, having previously made a submission in 2017. NAS expressed concern around the lack of application of the policy to private nursing homes and mental health care settings, and at the lack of mandatory reporting in the policy.

- **HIQA/MHC Draft National Standards on Adult Safeguarding Public Consultation, September 2018**

NAS welcomed the very positive emphasis on a rights-based and person-centred approach to adult safeguarding in its submission to HIQA and the Mental Health Commission on their draft standards. NAS expressed concern that the latter part of the draft standards was somewhat cautious and risk-adverse, and could be rebalanced to reflect the role positive risk-taking can have in people's ordinary lives.

- **Department of Health Themes and Areas to Address in National Adult Safeguarding Policy Development consultation, October 2018**

NAS welcomed the Department of Health initiative to begin the consultation process of developing a national adult safeguarding policy.

## Mental Health

- **Mental Health Commission Strategic Plan Public Consultation, September 2018**

In conjunction with the CIB social policy team, NAS emphasised the need to use person-centred language in the mission statement, that the diversity of people with mental health issues be recognised to include people with disabilities and mental health issues, and that the Decision Support Service be adequately resourced and awareness raised around its establishment.

- **'Vision for Change' National Mental Health policy review by Department of Health**

NAS participated in a Department of Health Clinical Advisory representatives group meeting in June 2018, to contribute the NAS disability perspective to the Department of Health review of and update for the national mental health policy "A Vision for Change."

## Other Priority Areas

### **Department of Health Taskforce on Personalised Budgets, March 2018**

NAS welcomed the announcement of pilot projects on personalised budgets for people with disabilities in 2018, having made a submission to the taskforce on personalised budgets in March of the year. NAS emphasised the need for personalised budgets to be specific to the individual, and highlighted the role independent advocacy can play in ensuring that personalised budgets be a success.

### **Department of Health Public Consultation on the Role of Voluntary Organisations in Healthcare, May 2018**

NAS made a submission to the Department of Health consultation in May on the role of Section 38 and Section 39 services in providing health and social care in Ireland. NAS highlighted the need for Section 38 and Section 39 organisations to recognise and facilitate the role of independent advocates working with people with disabilities that they serve.

### **HIQA Rights-Based Approach to Health and Social Care policy, October 2018**

NAS welcomed the development by HIQA of a policy on a rights-based approach to health and social care. NAS emphasised that the policy should incorporate the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The submission also drew attention to the guiding principles of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (ADM) Act 2015, and the need to express these principles in the delivery of health and social care services.

A rights-based approach means moving away from a ‘best interests’ model of providing care, and moving to a model which recognises the autonomy and dignity of each individual to make their own decisions about their own health and social care.

### **Department of Children Submission by NAS on issues for parents with disabilities, in context of review of Child Care Act 1991, November 2018**

NAS made a submission to the Department of Children in relation to issues our advocates experience when working with parents with disabilities who are subject to child care proceedings with Tusla- the Child and Family Agency. NAS experiences extensive difficulties in such cases, around the complexity of the cases and lack of supports for parents with disabilities.

### **National LGBTI Strategy Consultation Meeting, Department of Justice, November 2018**

NAS participated in the Department of Justice public consultation meeting on the development of a National LGBTI Strategy, to bring a particular focus to issues faced by people with disabilities who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

# Dee

## Complexity of Case Issues: Parenting with a Disability and Ward of Court

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My name is Dee, I am a woman in my forties, and I am also a mother. I was supported by a NAS advocate in proceedings taken by TUSLA regarding care arrangements for my daughter, who has a moderate intellectual disability.



I myself have a mild learning disability and there were concerns that I had difficulties in meeting my daughter's needs. However, I felt that I was not receiving appropriate supports and respite and I found the Child Protection and Child Welfare meetings very stressful to take part in.

Throughout the case, there were monthly court hearings which involved my advocate and I attended meetings with my solicitor and barrister. My advocate also reviewed with me all the updated Social Work and 'Guardian Ad Litem' reports. Having an advocate meant that I was afforded the opportunity to ensure my voice was heard and to query the content of some of the reports.

My wishes to be actively involved in my daughter's life were heard and a care order was made which meant my daughter would stay overnight with me 3 nights a week.

My daughter was made a Ward of Court at the end of 2018 when she reached 18 years of age and the committee have been made aware of my strong relationship with my daughter and my active involvement in her life continues. I have informed the committee that I am available to meet with them to discuss any issues when required. My daughter continues to visit me weekly.

Throughout the case, my self-advocacy skills improved and I more readily voiced my own opinion at meetings and now I regularly engage with my daughter's day and residential placements. I have also secured local part time work and I work hours to ensure I am available for access with my daughter.

This case study shows that advocates play an important role in assisting people with complex legal matters, and ensuring that they have their voices heard in court.

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## 8. Key Enabler Awareness



The NAS Strategic Plan has identified two key enablers; awareness and capacity building, to help achieve the goals set in relation to strategic priorities around services, standards and policy. This section outlines work in 2018 in relation to the first key enabler; awareness.

## 8.1 Outreach and Promotional Work

### Public Outreach

In 2018, NAS advocates, senior advocates and regional managers engaged in 201 outreach events around the country. This important promotional work is delivered through face-to-face presentations and meetings with groups in disability services, hospitals, residential centres and day centres.

Our staff present to people with disabilities who could potentially use the NAS service, and to staff and other stakeholders amongst whom an increased awareness and understanding of the service leads to increased referrals.

In addition to promoting access to the service, these meetings and presentations help to increase understanding of NAS amongst staff, and therefore can facilitate better cooperation by staff with advocates in terms of allowing access to people, documents and decision-makers.

Presentations to people with disabilities are delivered in a way that is appropriate to the communication styles of individuals, and can involve imagery, videos, simple case examples and games.

These presentations not only promote access to and effectiveness of the NAS service, but also promote a greater appreciation of what a rights-based and person centred approach to care is, and highlights the need to put the will and preferences of people with disabilities at the heart of decisions that affect their lives.

NAS public outreach in 2018 also involved having a presence in the Citizens Information tent at the National Ploughing Championships, and a consistent presence online through our twitter and facebook pages.

## Social Policy Events

In addition to public outreach, NAS participated in a series of social policy events in 2018, delivering lectures, speeches and participating as panel members in the following;

- UCD School of Law Seminar on Capacity, August 2018
- Social care Ireland Conference on Capacity and Decision-Making, October 2018
- Nursing Conference Lecture, November 2018
- Law Society Symposium on Assisted Decision-Making, November 2018



Mandy Price from the Midlands/North East team at the Ploughing Championships



Wicklow Advocate Patty O'Malley presenting at the UCD School of Law Seminar on Capacity with Pete Jones who used the NAS service



NAS National Manager Louise Loughlin chairing Social Care Ireland's conference on Capacity

## 8.2 NAS Strategic Plan Launch Event

In December 2018, NAS launched its Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2021, alongside its Annual Report for the previous year.

The launch was performed by Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty, who expressed her strong support and appreciation for the service that NAS provides. Speaking at the launch, Minister Doherty said that “It is important that we hear the true stories of those who feel voiceless in our society. We need to shine a light on their frustrations and give a commitment to improve the supports available.” Importantly, the Minister made a commitment to support NAS and CIB in the application for the granting of statutory powers of access to NAS advocates for their work.

NAS National Manager Louise Loughlin highlighted that the Strategic Plan was being launched in the year that the UN CRPD was finally ratified by Ireland and said that “supporting and funding advocacy, such as the advocacy that NAS provides, is a really important step the State can take to ensure that Ireland meets its obligations to people with disabilities under Article 12 of the CRPD.”

The launch also heard the kind support of the CEO of the Citizens Information Board, Angela Black who also stressed the need for NAS to receive statutory powers to do its work effectively. She added: “Advocacy is not always a welcome visitor to the services and organisations that NAS clients reside in and engage with.”

PJ Harrington, a person who has used the NAS service, addressed the launch, and described his experience of homelessness, and how working with a NAS advocate changed his life by helping him to find an apartment, and fulfil his potential in the workplace. Finally, disability rights activist Joanne O’Riordan spoke on the theme of ‘empowerment,’ a NAS value in our Strategic Plan.

NAS held an internal staff event in the afternoon after the public launch event, which was attended by the NAS Board, and heard presentations from the different regional teams on successes in their region over the course of 2018.





Members of the NAS Board at the Strategic Plan Launch



Minister Regina Doherty launches the NAS Strategic Plan 2018-2021



NAS Strategic Plan launch with PJ Harrington, who used the NAS service, NAS National Manager Louise Loughlin, journalist Joanne O'Riordan, Minister Regina Doherty and CIB CEO Angela Black



# Seán

## Autonomy and Choice in daily routine/day activation

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My name is Seán and I am in my seventies, I live in my own home. I was referred to NAS by support staff who visit me in my home, and I am non-verbal. Due to a lack of funding, I was unable to remain in my home during the day, so I would leave my home every morning to attend a day service. The staff that visit me contacted NAS because they felt that my will and preference was being ignored. I found it difficult to wake up in the morning, and would be very tired after attending the day service in the evenings. I was much happier at the weekends, and I enjoyed going down to the pub and into town. At weekends my support staff could work around my sleep pattern, rather than the times of the day service.



My advocate spent time with me at my day service, using witness observer techniques and applying quality of life principles. Following hours of observation, my advocate realised that I was sleeping for hours at the day service, and not participating in the activities. Staff in the day service confirmed this and said that in the past few years they had noticed a decline in my level of activity and felt I did not benefit from attending the day service. So the advocate made representations on my behalf to the HSE. Following weeks of negotiations, funding was provided to enable me to retire and remain at home. Plans were also made to ensure that I can visit the day service twice a week if I want to, to keep up with the people I knew at the service. People around me comment that I seem much happier and content now that my retirement has been facilitated.

This case study shows the importance of identifying and following the will and preferences of individuals not just in relation to a big decision, but also in relation to their day-to-day lives, and to regularly check-in to ensure that current arrangements are still the preference of the person.

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# 9. Key Enabler Building Capacity and Effectiveness



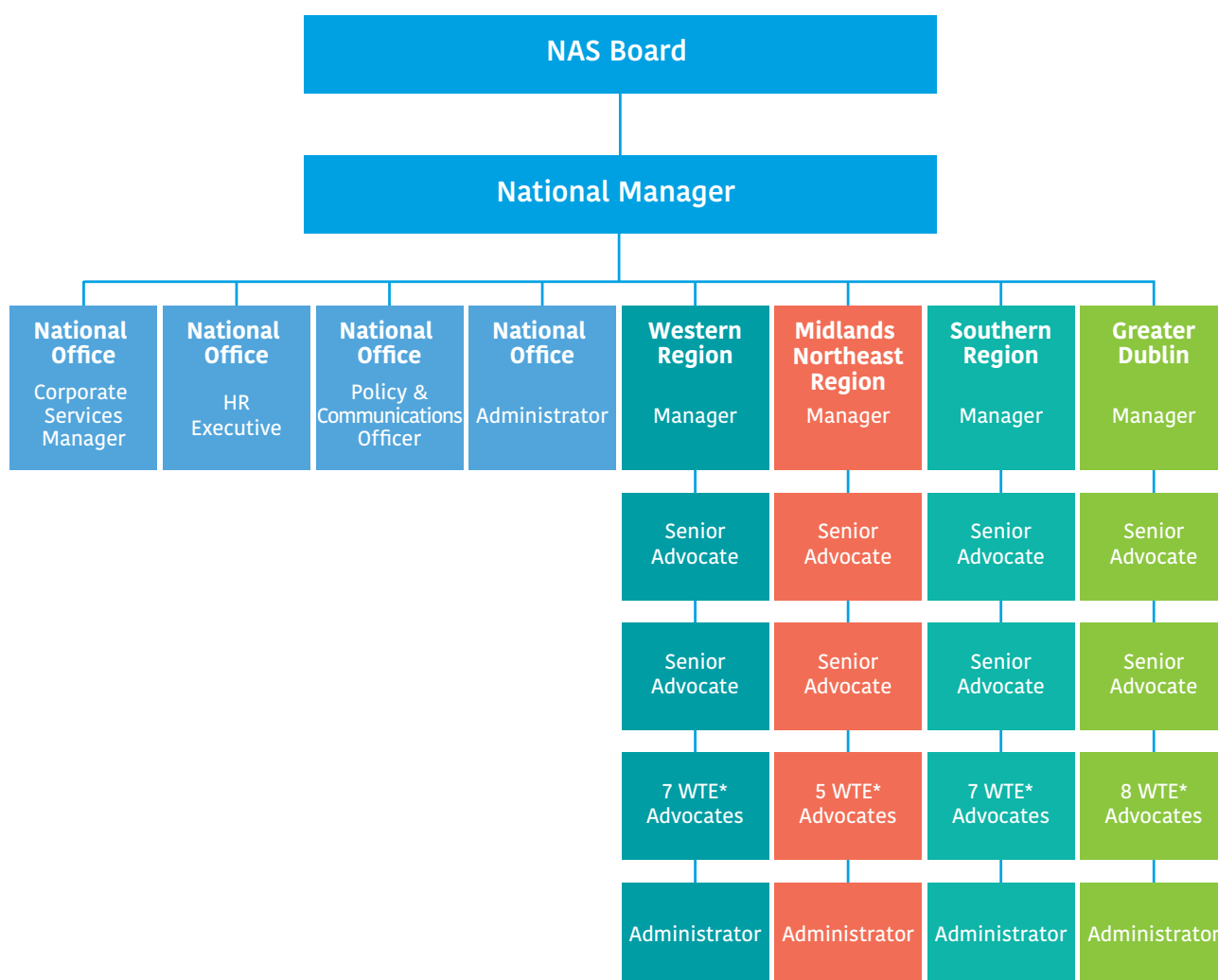
This section outlines work in 2018 in relation to the second key enabler in the NAS Strategic Plan; building capacity and effectiveness.

## 9.1 Resources



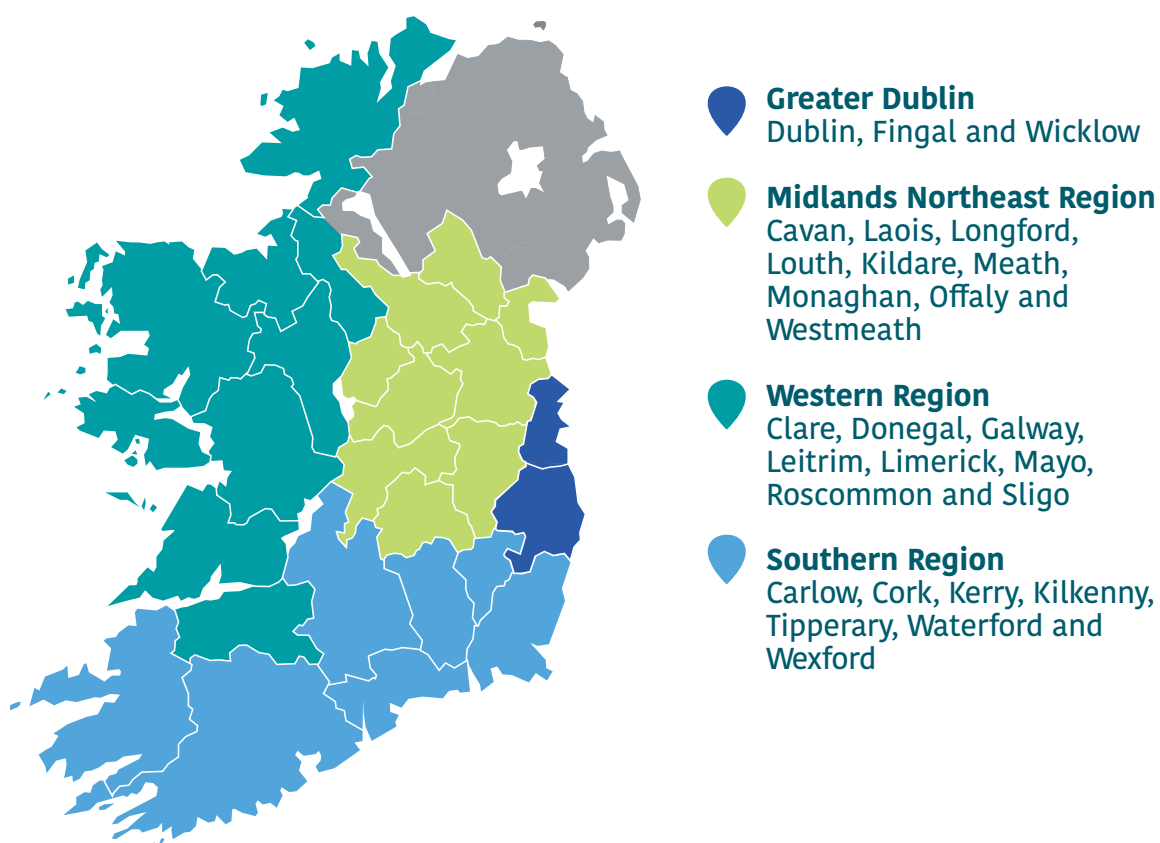
### NAS Organisational Structure and Staff Resources

Information • Advice • Advocacy



## NAS operates with four regions and a National Office in Dublin.

NAS operates across 31 locations throughout Ireland and share premises with Citizens Information Services (13), Money Advice and Budgeting Service (1), Citizens Information Board (4) and others (13). This co-location enhances the referral of people between services.



## Human Resources

2018 was a very busy year for recruitment with 17 hires, for both permanent and temporary roles.

A number of improvements were made to the efficiency of the HR function through the development of online forms such as new staff induction forms.

The Human Resources Executive provides various services which are available to all employees as well as advice and guidance on a multitude of staff employment situations. This support starts at the hiring process, continues throughout employment and goes into retirement with the running of pensioner payroll and the administration of benefits.

In 2018 the number of job advertisements increased and the number of positions filled increased while the amount of time required to post and recruit a position improved.

## 9.2 Training and Development

Each regional team in NAS undertakes a practice development session every six weeks, sometimes joining with another regional team. These sessions demonstrate the ongoing commitment to meaningful training and development for advocates at NAS, to ensure that advocates are equipped to work at a high standards and address new and emerging needs as they arise.

In addition to the ongoing practice development sessions, NAS staff attended training and events on a wide range of topics in 2018, including;

- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- ASIST Suicide Prevention Policy
- GDPR Training
- Responding to Domestic Violence
- Conflict Resolution
- Children First E-Learning
- Bereavement for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Negotiation Skills Training
- Challenging Calls Training
- Disclosures, Observations and Suspicions of Abuse Policy Training
- Irish Sign Language

- Managing Professional Boundaries
- Written Communications
- Safeguarding for Vulnerable Adults
- Influencing Decision Makers training
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Facilitation Skills
- Disclosures, Observations and Suspicions of Abuse training
- UK Advocacy Conference
- Trauma- Perspectives in Disability Psychotherapy
- Autism Conference
- Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

## 9.3 Operational Highlights

- Management Team capacity building- a facilitated day with regional managers and national office staff took place in June 2018 to take time to reflect on working as a team and develop systems for working with an expanded national office team;
- The Corporate Services department continued its work in 2018 with finances, health and safety audits and IT systems projects progressed; and
- NAS policies and forms for users were updated in 2018 in accordance with GDPR, as part of the corporate services function for data protection.

## 9.4 Corporate Governance

NAS successfully registered with the Charity Regulatory Authority in 2018. NAS ensured that the register of Trustees was up to date and annual reports and audited accounts filed.

The Board of NAS completed training for Directors on their roles and responsibilities and the Corporate Services Manager coordinated training for all new Board members in 2018.

The Board of Directors of NAS held six meetings in 2018. Ms Nuala Doherty chairs the Board. The AGM was held on May 31st 2018 at which time some Board members submitted their resignation and others were appointed and reappointed.

Retired Board Members: Sean Sheridan, Eithne Fitzgerald, Peter Kearns and William Ebbitt.

Susan Shanahan resigned from the NAS Board as well as the NAS Company Secretary position.

Newly Appointed Board Members: Elaine O' Mahoney, Helen McDaid, Noel Beecher, Donal Buggy.

Board Members returned: Brege Mc Carrick, Liz Chaloner, Michele Tait, Diarmaid Ó Corrbuá.

There are three subcommittees of the Board;

- Finance, Audit and Risk
- Human Resources
- Policy and Communications

Both the Finance, Audit and Risk and the HR subcommittees met five times in 2018. The Policy and Communications subcommittee met three times.

# 10. Conclusion

from NAS National Manager

In 2018, NAS provided full, representative advocacy to 916 people, and information and advocacy support in response to 3,025 enquiries. NAS provided a high quality, professional service across Ireland, increasing the number of people we worked with compared to 2017 by 8%.

NAS worked throughout 2018 to ensure that the human rights of the people with disabilities we work with are protected, and that equality for people with disabilities is promoted across all services that we came in contact with.

In the year that Ireland finally ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), NAS sought to embody the spirit and substance of that landmark Convention in our work, by putting the will and preferences of the people with disabilities that we work with at the centre of how we provide advocacy. All of our work promotes increased recognition and understanding across public and private services in Ireland that people with disabilities are equal before the law, have an equal right to participate in society and have fundamental human rights that must be actively protected.

In particular, our work focuses on promoting an understanding across Irish society that people with disabilities must be listened to, and their views and preferences must be respected when decisions are being made that affect them, at both an individual and policy level. In line with the UN CRPD principles, NAS is doing its part in promoting a culture change in Ireland to move fully towards a rights-based model of providing services to people with disabilities, that recognises the full equality of people with disabilities, and away from a charitable, 'best interests' approach to provision of services.

Through launching our Strategic Plan in 2018-2021, we officially put the values of independence, autonomy, equality/citizenship, respect and empowerment at the core of our work. NAS also showed ambition in the Strategic Plan to influence the development of advocacy standards in Ireland. In that respect, I warmly welcomed the awarding of a contract to provide a new Patient Advocacy Service to NAS by the Department of Health in 2018, and look forward to delivering this vital new service.

I look forward to working with stakeholders across the disability sector in 2019 to continue to pursue our vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities can exercise their rights across society with dignity.



Louise Loughlin



# Appendix

Directors' Report and Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2018

## Company Information

### Directors

Brege McCarrick  
Michele Tait  
Diarmaid O'Corrbui  
Susan Shanahan (resigned 31 May 2018)  
Liz Chaloner  
Nuala Doherty (Chairperson)  
Peter Kearns (resigned 31 May 2018)  
William Ebbitt (resigned 31 May 2018)  
Sean Sheridan (resigned 31 May 2018)  
Eithne Fitzgerald (resigned 31 May 2018)  
Donal Patrick Buggy (appointed 31 May 2018)  
Noel Beecher (appointed 29 November 2018)  
Helen McDaid (appointed 26 September 2018)  
Elaine O'Mahony (appointed 31 May 2018)

### Company secretary

Susan Shanahan (resigned 31 May 2018)  
Diarmaid O'Corrbui (appointed 31 May 2018)

### Registered number

535779

### Registered office

Ground Floor  
George's Quay House  
43 Townsend Street  
Dublin 2

### Independent auditors

Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm  
Paramount Court  
Corrig Road  
Sandyford Business Park  
Dublin 18

## The directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

### Activity review

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

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities is a free, independent and confidential representative advocacy service, available to adults with disabilities across Ireland. NAS is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. NAS has a remit to provide advocacy support to people in particularly vulnerable situations, such as those living in inappropriate accommodation, residential settings, attending day services, those with communications differences or little formal or natural supports.

### Results

The deficit for the year, amounted to €135,372 (2017 loss €83,363).

It should be noted that the National Advocacy Service did not, and does not, exceed the cash allocation provided annually by its funder.

The accounts are prepared in accordance with FRS 102, which requires the accounts to be prepared on an accruals basis. This requires the provision for certain items which have no cash impact in the year in which they are accrued.

### 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 controlled and closely monitored spending of the funds received.

### The principal nonfinancial 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.

### The following mitigating actions have been undertaken in relation to these principal nonfinancial risks:

- quality recruitment processes including competency based interview assessment; HR workforce planning
- ongoing support and supervision for all staff;
- ongoing relationship building with service providers who facilitate access to people who use the service;
- ongoing discussions with the Citizens Information Board and Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection regarding statutory powers for NAS;
- ongoing relationship building at a national level with key stakeholders including the HSE, HIQA, Mental Health Commission and the Department of Health;
- inputting into the CIB social policy remit through responses to consultations;
- providing regular reporting to our funder in relation to finance, governance and oversight. But also in relation to service delivery activity and qualitative data such as case studies;
- regular review of Risk Register by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

## Political contributions

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

## 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 George's Quay House, 47 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, LHM Casey McGrath Limited, have resigned and Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited were appointed on 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 and signed on its behalf.

**Noel Beecher**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

**Nuala Doherty**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

## Directors' Responsibilities Statement

### For the year ended 31 december 2018

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. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of 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 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 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.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Company's website. Legislation in the Republic of Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the board

**Noel Beecher**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

**Nuala Doherty**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

## Report on the audit of the financial statements

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (the ‘Company’) for the year ended 31 December 2018, which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Equity and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and Financial Reporting Standard 102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland’.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at 31 December 2018 and of its deficit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard 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, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), 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 ISA (Ireland) 570 requires 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 Directors Report and Financial Statements, 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:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- 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 any 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 and restrictions on use**

### **Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement on page 6, 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/ISA700\(Ireland\)](https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/ISA700(Ireland)). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

## The purpose of our audit work 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

for and on behalf of

**Nexia Smith & Williamson (Ireland) Limited**

Chartered Accountants  
Statutory Audit Firm

Paramount Court  
Corrig Road  
Sandyford Business Park  
Dublin 18

Date: 27/06/2019

## Statement Of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 December 2018

|   | Note | 2018<br>€          | 2017<br>€   |
|---|------|--------------------|-------------|
| Income  |      | <b>3,052,673</b>   | 2,933,558   |
| <b>Gross surplus</b>                              |      | <b>3,052,673</b>   | 2,933,558   |
| Administrative expenses                           |      | <b>(3,188,045)</b> | (3,016,921) |
| <b>Operating deficit</b>                          |      | <b>(135,372)</b>   | (83,363)    |
| Deficit for the financial year                    |      | <b>(135,372)</b>   | (83,363)    |
| <b>Other comprehensive income</b>                 |      |                    |             |
| Total comprehensive income for the financial year |      | <b>(135,372)</b>   | (83,363)    |

There were no recognised surpluses or deficits for 2018 or 2017 other than those included in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Signed on behalf of the board:

**Noel Beecher**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

**Nuala Doherty**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2018

|  | Note | 2018<br>€             | 2017<br>€             |
|--|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Fixed assets</b>                            |      |                       |                       |
| Tangible assets                                | 11   | <u>14,043</u>         | <u>11,887</u>         |
|  |      | <b>14,043</b>         | <b>11,887</b>         |
| <b>Current assets</b>                          |      |                       |                       |
| Debtors: amounts falling due within one year   |      | <b>8,856</b>          | -                     |
| Cash at bank and in hand                       | 13   | <u>745,677</u>        | <u>629,783</u>        |
|  |      | <b>754,533</b>        | <b>629,783</b>        |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 14   | <u>(313,944)</u>      | <u>(51,666)</u>       |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                      |      | <u><b>440,589</b></u> | <u>578,117</u>        |
| <b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>   |      | <b>454,632</b>        | <b>590,004</b>        |
| <b>Net assets</b>                              |      | <u><b>454,632</b></u> | <u><b>590,004</b></u> |
| <b>Reserves</b>                                |      |                       |                       |
| Funds  | 16   | <u><b>454,632</b></u> | <u>590,004</u>        |
| <b>Members funds</b>                           |      | <u><b>454,632</b></u> | <u><b>590,004</b></u> |

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:

**Noel Beecher**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

**Nuala Doherty**  
Director

**Date: 27.06.2019**

## Statement of Changes in Members Funds

For the year ended 31 December 2018

|  | Funds          | Total<br>members<br>funds |
|--|----------------|---------------------------|
|  | €              | €                         |
| At 1 January 2018                              | 590,004        | 590,004                   |
| <b>Comprehensive income for the year</b>       |                |                           |
| Deficit for the year                           | (135,372)      | (135,372)                 |
| Other comprehensive income for the year        | -              | -                         |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b> | (135,372)      | (135,372)                 |
| Total transactions with owners                 | -              | -                         |
| <b>At 31 December 2018</b>                     | <b>454,632</b> | <b>454,632</b>            |

## 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             |
| <b>Comprehensive income for the year</b>       |                |                     |
| Deficit for the year                           | (83,363)       | (83,363)            |
| Other comprehensive income for the year        | -              | -                   |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b> | (83,363)       | (83,363)            |
| Total transactions with owners                 | -              | -                   |
| <b>At 31 December 2017</b>                     | <b>590,004</b> | <b>590,004</b>      |

## Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2018

|   | 2018           | 2017            |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
|   | €              | €               |
| Cash flows from operating activities                          |                |                 |
| Loss for the financial year                                   | (135,372)      | (83,363)        |
| <b>Adjustments for:</b>                                       |                |                 |
| Depreciation of tangible assets                               | 6,728          | 4,965           |
| (Increase)/decrease in debtors                                | (8,856)        | 1,756           |
| Increase in creditors   | 262,278        | 11,448          |
| <b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>           | <b>124,778</b> | <b>(65,194)</b> |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>                   |                |                 |
| Purchase of tangible fixed assets                             | (8,884)        | (3,622)         |
| <b>Net cash from investing activities</b>                     | <b>(8,884)</b> | <b>(3,622)</b>  |
| <b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>   | <b>115,894</b> | <b>(68,816)</b> |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year                | 629,783        | 698,599         |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year</b>           | <b>745,677</b> | <b>629,783</b>  |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year comprise:</b> |                |                 |
| Cash at bank and in hand                                      | 745,677        | 29,783          |
|   | <b>745,677</b> | <b>629,783</b>  |

# 1. Accounting policies

## 1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with FRS 102 “Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland” and with the 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: the Company as lessee

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 on 01 January 2016 to continue to be charged over the period to the first market rent review rather than the term of the lease.

## 1.13 Pensions

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 dependent on grants from Citizens Information Board (CIB) for a significant proportion 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 has been successful in its efforts to secure additional sources of income as in December 2018 the company was awarded the contract to provide Patient Safety Advocacy Services on behalf of the Minister for Health.

The directors are confident that this in conjunction with the continued support of the CIB will allow the company to continue for the foreseeable future.

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 business is as follows:

|   | 2018                    | 2017             |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|
|   | €                       | €                |
| Grant income - Citizens Information Board | <b>3,009,009</b>        | 2,933,558        |
| Other income                              | <b>43,664</b>           | -                |
|   | <b><u>3,052,673</u></b> | <u>2,933,558</u> |

Other income represents Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection refunds received in the year.

Analysis of income by country of destination:

|                     | 2018                    | 2017             |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
|                     | €                       | €                |
| Republic of Ireland | <b>3,052,673</b>        | 2,933,558        |
|                     | <b><u>3,052,673</u></b> | <u>2,933,558</u> |

### 4. Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation

The operating deficit is stated after charging:

|                                       | 2018                  | 2017           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|                                       | €                     | €              |
| Depreciation of tangible fixed assets | <b>6,728</b>          | 4,965          |
| Defined contribution pension cost     | <b><u>149,866</u></b> | <u>142,078</u> |

## 5. Auditors' remuneration

|   | 2018         | 2017  |
|---|--------------|-------|
|   | €            | €     |
| Fees payable to the Company's auditor and its associates for the audit of the Company's annual accounts | <b>6,150</b> | 5,658 |
|   | <b>6,150</b> | 5,658 |
|   | -            | -     |

## 6. Employees

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

|                | 2018      | 2017 |
|----------------|-----------|------|
|                | No.       | No.  |
| Administration | <b>45</b> | 47   |

The profile of employees engaged in the year differs from the prior period as it reflects an increase in the numbers of management staff. The 2018 wages and salaries recorded in the financial statements also reflect annual increments applied in the year.

Staff costs, including directors' remuneration, were as follows

|                                | 2018             | 2017      |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
|                                | €                | €         |
| Wages and salaries             | <b>2,200,585</b> | 2,113,648 |
| Employers PRSI                 | <b>236,794</b>   | 216,201   |
| Employers Pension Contribution | <b>149,866</b>   | 142,078   |
| Board of Management Expenses   | <b>6,722</b>     | 5,301     |
| Recruitment Fees               | <b>2,147</b>     | 32,340    |
|                                | <b>2,606,114</b> | 2,509,568 |

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:

|                               | <b>2018</b> | 2017 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------|
|                               | <b>No.</b>  | No.  |
| Salary band €70,000 - €80,000 | <b>1</b>    | 1    |
|                               | <b>1</b>    | 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:

|   | <b>2018</b>   | 2017   |
|---|---------------|--------|
|   | <b>€</b>      | €      |
| Salaries and other short term employee benefits | <b>76,570</b> | 73,872 |
| Long term benefits                              | <b>5,360</b>  | 5,165  |
|   | <b>81,930</b> | 79,037 |

## 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 | €3,009,009      | 1 Year |

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€3,009,009

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Reconciliation of deferred income during the year ended 31 December 2018:

|   | Deferred Income at 1 Jan 2018 | Amount taken to Income in 2018 | Cash received in 2018 | Deferred Income at 31 Dec 2018 |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
|   | €                             | €                              | €                     | €                              |
| Citizens Information Board                            | -                             | 3,052,673                      | 3,052,673             | -                              |
| Department of Health Patient Safety Advocacy Services | -                             | -                              | 197,100               | 197,100                        |
|   | -                             | 3,052,673                      | 3,249,773             | 197,100                        |



## 11. Tangible fixed assets

|                                     | Freehold<br>property<br>€ | Fixtures<br>and<br>fittings<br>€ | Total<br>€ |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Cost or valuation</b>            |                           |                                  |            |
| At 1 January 2018                   | 5,237                     | 19,588                           | 24,825     |
| Additions                           | 6,808                     | 2,076                            | 8,884      |
| At 31 December 2018                 | 12,045                    | 21,664                           | 33,709     |
| <b>Depreciation</b>                 |                           |                                  |            |
| At 1 January 2018                   | 2,493                     | 10,445                           | 12,938     |
| Charge for the year on owned assets | 2,395                     | 4,333                            | 6,728      |
| At 31 December 2018                 | 4,888                     | 14,778                           | 19,666     |
| <b>Net book value</b>               |                           |                                  |            |
| At 31 December 2018                 | 7,157                     | 6,886                            | 14,043     |
| At 31 December 2017                 | 2,744                     | 9,143                            | 11,887     |

## 12. Debtors

|             | 2018<br>€ | 2017<br>€ |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Prepayments | 8,856     | -         |
|             | 8,856     | -         |

## 13. Cash and cash equivalents

|                          | 2018           | 2017    |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------|
|                          | €              | €       |
| Cash at bank and in hand | <b>745,677</b> | 629,783 |
|                          | <b>745,677</b> | 629,783 |

## 14. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

|                               | 2018           | 2017   |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------|
|                               | €              | €      |
| Taxation and social insurance | <b>62,026</b>  | -      |
| Accruals                      | <b>54,818</b>  | 51,666 |
| Deferred income               | <b>197,100</b> | -      |
|                               | <b>313,944</b> | 51,666 |

The company received an advanced payment of €197,100 in respect of the award of the contract to provide Patient Safety Advocacy Services. This service is due to be launched in 2019, and the income has therefore been deferred to 2019.

## 15. Financial instruments

|  | 2018           | 2017    |
|--|----------------|---------|
|  | €              | €       |
| Financial assets   |                |         |
| Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit | <b>745,677</b> | 629,783 |

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

## 16. Members funds

This account relates to the cumulative retained surplus and deficit amounts, accumulated by the organisation since its incorporation.

## 17. 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.

## 18. Commitments under operating leases

At 31 December 2018 the Company had future minimum lease payments under noncancellable operating leases as follows:

|  | 2018          | 2017   |
|--|---------------|--------|
|  | €             | €      |
| Not later than 1 year                        | <b>30,652</b> | 30,652 |
| Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years | -             | 35,010 |
|  | <b>30,652</b> | 65,662 |

## 19. Events after the year end

In December 2018 the company was awarded the contract to provide Patient Safety Advocacy Services on behalf of the Minister for Health. This service is due to be launched in 2019.

## 20. Approval of financial statements

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on 27 June 2019.

Registered number: 535779









## **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

W: [advocacy.ie](http://advocacy.ie)

design by [www.thewonderworks.ie](http://www.thewonderworks.ie)

NAS is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board