

ACQUIRED
BRAIN INJURY
IRELAND

Annual Report 2019



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INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2019 was an incredibly busy and very successful year for our organisation. We continued to develop our services and secured grant funding for vital new projects, while maintaining the highest level of international accreditation for the work we do.

Throughout the year our talented teams continued to deliver the very best quality of person-centred service for people with brain injury. We supported our clients' right to choose their own rehabilitation goals and rebuild the life they want. We worked with brain injury survivors and their families to achieve those goals.

When families were given the devastating news that their loved one had suffered a brain injury, we were there to help them negotiate the health system and find the best services available after brain injury. Every day we empowered our clients to do things for themselves and to find new ways to adapt to their changed circumstances. We were with them every step of the way, supporting them to learn new strategies and helping to rebuild confidence.

Our teams advocated strongly to secure local funding for placements for people with newly acquired brain injuries. We called on the government, policy-makers and local Councils to improve support for people in need of brain injury rehabilitation. We did all of this and more, to make the invisible – visible.

This year, we also launched a new Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 which sets out our ambition for the next five years. Our major, overarching goal during the lifetime of this Plan is to expand our services, to ensure that everyone, nationwide, has access to neuro-rehabilitation as and when they need it.

Despite all we achieved in 2019, we cannot ignore the continuing, severe fiscal challenges that threaten the life-changing work we do and the outcomes of brain injury survivors in Ireland. Many service gaps persist across the country in relation to rehabilitation pathways for people affected by brain injuries. These gaps result in waiting lists and delayed discharges from acute and national rehabilitation hospitals. Unfortunately, it is still not unusual to see young people with brain injury wrongly placed in nursing homes when they leave hospital.

In the face of all of these challenges, our excellent team continues to shine a light on the issues affecting brain injury survivors and their families each day. Their committed work and the progress of the clients they engage with is a testament to what can be achieved with the right supports and services. I wish to thank them for their dedication and passion. I also wish to thank our central office staff who support our regional teams daily.

My final thanks go to our supporters, volunteers, partners and professionals for all that you have done this past year to empower more people to rebuild their lives after brain injury. We cannot do it without you.



Barbara O'Connell, Chief Executive, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

From its inception, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland has placed people at the heart of its service and this ethos runs throughout the organisation. We are a person-centred organisation with an inherent sense of purpose at our core. Every day, our regional and national teams go the extra mile to advocate on behalf of clients and their families, so that they get the access they vitally need to specialised rehabilitation services. This passion and drives underpins our newly articulated mission statement, which has been published as part of our new Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2024.

Our services are internationally accredited to the highest standards and are delivered by skilled, committed teams. I wish to congratulate our Chief Executive, the management team and staff of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland on continuing to provide a uniquely professional and personal service that is life-changing for so many families across Ireland. I would also like to thank our Board Members for their leadership, commitment and time given to this great organisation.

Fundamental to our work is a strong ethos of partnership and collaboration. Partnerships are crucial to grow our world-class neuro-rehabilitation services, and our teams on the ground are natural collaborators, working closely with local HSE offices and other services to find funding and placement solutions for brain injury survivors and their families. We also work together with specialists in the field of brain injury to drive greater research investment in this area and to put brain injury on the political agenda.

All our partners and collaborators are united by the same idea – that brain injury rehabilitation is a right, not a request.

For the next five years, our shared strategic planning will focus on five key areas:

1. *Equal Access*: to neuro-rehabilitation
2. *Public Policy*: to influence change and raise the voice of brain injury survivors
3. *Education*: to develop specialist training in brain injury rehabilitation
4. *Support Networks*: to reduce the caregiver burden for families affected by brain injury
5. *Capacity*: to build and optimise our organisational resources

These objectives are not without challenge. We face continual underfunding of community-based services and operate in a health environment with an over-reliance on acute services. Like many not-for-profit organisations, the funding environment continues to be difficult. Most of our revenue funding in 2019 was secured for client services through Service Level Agreements with the Health Service Executive (HSE). These agreements cover basic running costs but fail to take account of vital equipment, like accessible vehicles to help clients re-engage in their community.

Furthermore, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland cannot exist at all without strategic financial functions, human resources, administration of data and services to ensure absolute compliance with HIQA and other regulatory bodies.

These core business functions are necessary, vital and integral to ensure:

- Strong, strategic finance and accounting
- Robust human resource practices
- Capable and responsive board governance
- Talented and engaged staff

When funding only supports service delivery costs, a gap emerges around core business functions and governance. Ultimately, that is unsustainable. It puts the organisation at large in jeopardy and poses an acute risk to the closure of vital services.

We continue to work closely with our partners in the HSE to find ways to resolve this persistent issue of funding for strategic business functions.

Notwithstanding, as an organisation we remain indebted to our funders, and to the supporters, donors and volunteers who give their time, commitment and hard-earned money to help rebuild more lives after brain injury. I look forward to what more we can achieve together in the year ahead.



Chairman of the Board, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Our Mission

We will passionately serve and relentlessly advocate to empower and support people impacted by brain injury to rebuild their lives.

Our Vision

A society where brain injury is understood and all those impacted receive world-class, personalised rehabilitation and support, as and when they need it.

Our Values

Dignity and respect –

We treat each other with the utmost dignity in our interactions.

Choices –

We empower each other through choices to manage and direct our lives within our capabilities.

Relationships –

We engage meaningfully with each other promoting honesty, integrity and kindness.

Contribution –

We encourage everyone to play their part no matter how small, within their capabilities.

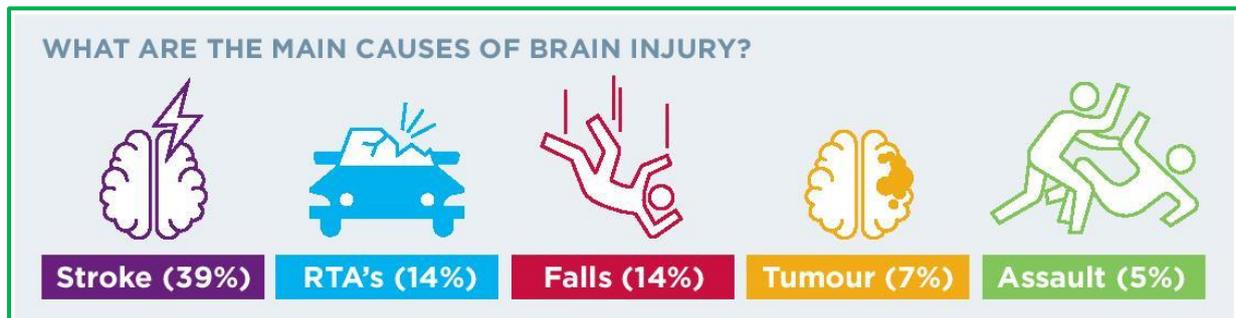
Sharing everyday places –

We value inclusion for all in our communities and sharing everyday experiences.

BRAIN INJURY IN IRELAND

Brain injury is a hidden phenomenon in Irish society. Nobody ever thinks it will happen to them. Yet each year, as many as 19,000 lives are turned upside down here in Ireland from newly acquired brain injuries.

Brain injuries can happen suddenly and are often traumatic. The biggest causes of brain injury that we see in our services are caused by stroke, road traffic accidents, assaults, falls and brain tumours.

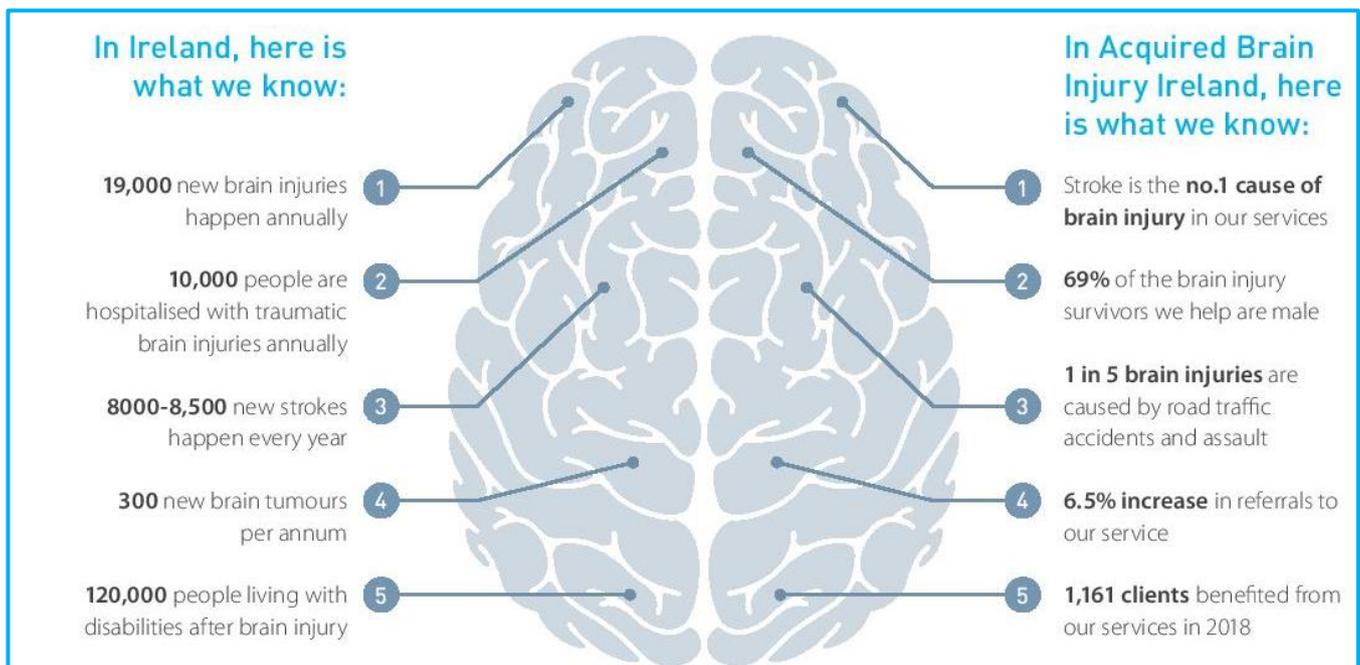


Too often people who acquire brain injuries are young and due to lack of services available at the time of their injury, these young people are often left in inappropriate settings such as nursing homes, community hospitals or at home where families are unable to cope.



This highlights a greater need for awareness around brain injury. If more people understand about brain injury at political level, in the health system and widely in the public, the easier it is to push for the services needed to support individuals and their families.

Currently there is little Irish epidemiological research to show the actual incidence or prevalence of acquired brain injury. Without this research it is difficult to secure additional financial resources required to ensure people have access to vital, specialist neuro-rehabilitation services like ours.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019

February: Our Midlands Service hosted its second annual Valentine's Ball in Tullamore, County Offaly, raising almost €10,000 for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's vital neuro-rehabilitation services.

It was an incredible evening and we are so grateful to all our guests for coming out to support people living with brain injury.

- *Martin Nunan, Local Services Manager*

March: During Brain Awareness Week 2019 we called on the nation to raise some dough for our eight annual 'Bake for Brain Injury' fundraiser.



April: We launched STEP AHEAD, a brand new vocational rehabilitation initiative to help young people aged 18-29 to get back to work and education after brain injury.

...after someone has come through the trauma of a brain injury, it is vital that they have access to the supports they need to rebuild their lives and chase their goals as much as any of us.

- *Kevin McLaughlin, Irish Rugby International*

June: Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's second national #BrainPower Research Seminar took place, attended by more than 100 delegates and eight leading expert speakers.

More research is crucial so we can increase effectiveness of interventions in the short time period immediately after injury. The more we know and learn, the more progress we can make with neuro-rehabilitation and ensure more people live to their full potential.

- *Dr Niamh Lowe, Clinical Psychologist*

July: There was cause for celebration in Kilkenny as legendary hurling manager Brian Cody formally launched a new Clubhouse Service that would benefit 50 brain injury survivors in local communities.

August: Irish footballing legend Paul McGrath hosted the inaugural Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Golf Classic to raise vital funds for our specialised neuro-rehabilitation services.



October: We launched On With Life, a new support initiative for families and carers of those living with acquired brain injury in Ireland. The project aims to reduce caregiver burden by providing a platform for peer support, advice and information about physical and emotional wellbeing and practical guidance on meeting family needs.

December: We were delighted that construction was completed on site at a new Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Resource Centre in Castleisland, County Kerry, opening up the door to more survivors of brain injury to a new rehabilitation facility in the heart of their community.

REBUILDING LIVES

Jennifer was 33 when her life changed dramatically forever. A youth worker, she had a job she loved, she was independent, went on holidays, had friends and career goals. She had achieved her degree while working, and had dreams of helping more young people into the future.

But in 2009 she was the victim of assault. Jennifer was punched hard in the head and suffered a bleed on her brain which continued into the following day. She was displaying signs of something being terribly wrong, but ignored it at first, thinking 'I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine.' She even got back up and finished her shift in work.

'It was only when I offered to make someone a cup of tea at work that morning, that I began to admit something was wrong', said Jennifer. 'I couldn't remember how to make a cup of tea.'

As the day went on, Jennifer began to mix up her words. She visited her GP, who sent her directly to the Hospital for a CT scan. It was then Jennifer discovered that she had a subdural haematoma – a bleed between the skull and the surface of the brain.

Jennifer was admitted to hospital under a general surgeon and stayed there for several weeks, until it was safe for her to return home. 'I had no idea what was to come though', remembers Jennifer, 'and neither did my family. We didn't even know I had lost my hearing'.

'I moved to my parents' homes because I couldn't look after myself. However none of us knew how to handle this new life. In fact, we didn't even know that our lives had changed forever.'

Jennifer thought her brain injury was like breaking a leg – something that could be fixed within a number of weeks. But the reality is that survivors and their families live with the effects of brain injury for a lifetime.

In addition to hearing loss, changes in her behaviour and her character, Jennifer began to notice that she, and her family, felt completely alone. She explains that 'This new world was a completely different one to the one I knew.' What's more, 'My parents didn't know what to do. I wasn't the daughter they knew.'

Jennifer tried to live independently, but she needed enormous support from her family and ultimately moved back home again. 'My mother had to give up her job to take care of me because I couldn't be left by myself. I went from being completely independent to being entirely dependent on her... She made phone calls, searched for information and one day she found Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.'

Jennifer admits she lost most of her 30s to isolation, frustration and struggle, but now she is hopeful that she won't have to experience the next decade in the same confused and lonely way: 'For a long time, I was hopeless. I didn't have any hope for a future... But today, I don't feel hopeless. Now, I have a village behind me... since Acquired Brain Injury Ireland have become part of my life, everything is so much easier.'

With the support of her key worker, Carolina, Jennifer began to prepare to live on her own again. She worked on strategies to build her independence, including using daily planners, assistive technology and time management tricks. 'It might seem so simple', reflects Jennifer, 'but without them I wouldn't be able to live my life with any sort of success. Carolina makes such a difference to my life. I spent ten years trying to describe my struggles and she understood straight away. She even put it into words for me to others could understand too.' Today, Jennifer states confidently: 'I am a brain injury survivor.' But she doesn't feel lost anymore. With tools developed uniquely for her circumstances and particular to her brain injury, Jennifer has embarked on a life-changing rehabilitation journey:

'I am so excited to tell my story to you because I had no life. I had no chance of a life and, by sharing my story with you, I know I did. You've helped me rebuild.'

WHAT WE DO

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is the leading national provider of community-based brain injury rehabilitation (also known as neuro-rehabilitation) services for adults with brain injury and their families. A brain injury can affect a person's ability to manage their own life which is why we work in communities across Ireland to empower people with practical strategies to rebuild their lives. Our services cater for different stages of an acquired brain injury as individuals make progress with rehabilitation goals. We also campaign, educate and advocate for the rights and needs of this hidden group in society.

In 2019 –

- **381** people were supported by our Case Managers
- **352** brain injury survivors were supported through our Home and Community services
- **268** individuals with brain injury participated in our Clubhouse and Day Resource services
- **73** survivors of brain injury received specialised neuro-rehabilitation in our Residential services

Our services

Case Management

When a brain injury happens, individuals and families often feel overwhelmed and don't know where to turn. The role of our Case Managers is exactly designed for these times of distress. Our Case Managers are brain injury experts who act as a single point of contact, listening to the families' needs and identifying resources applicable to their situation. Through our Case Management service, we help to provide a clear pathway to support and individual's transition from hospital to home, and link them to a variety of services.

Home and Community Rehabilitation

Our Home and Community services deliver one-to-one brain injury rehabilitation to support individuals to achieve their goals at home, and to encourage integration back into their community and family life. Often people have experienced some rehabilitation in hospital, but further skills may need to be re-learned at home after discharge. Our Home and Community Rehabilitation services ensure those individuals continue to make progress on their recovery and maximise their potential after brain injury.

Clubhouse and Day Services

Our Clubhouse and Day Services provide vital peer support to enhance independence and encourage learning of new skills. Attendees benefit from group and cognitive rehabilitation in a supportive and welcoming environment. Our services also create a space for survivors of brain injury to socialise and develop new relationships, as well as helping them explore new interests that will help to build on their strengths and capabilities. Our clubhouses and Day Services are particularly important to support individuals working on goals such as building self-esteem, independence, community involvement and personal growth.

Transitional Living Unit

Our transitional living service bridges the gap for brain injury survivors as they prepare to return to independent living at home. The service provides intensive rehabilitation and support in a residential setting Monday to Friday, for a period of 6 weeks up to 6 months, depending on a client's needs. Currently we operate one Transitional Living Unit in Sligo and we continue to seek to secure funding to grow this much needed service.

Residential Rehabilitation

For some survivors of brain injury, returning home after a stay in hospital is not an option straight away. Our Residential Rehabilitation services offer those individuals a home from home, where they can benefit from long-term tailored brain injury rehabilitation. Our residential units typically support 4 or 5 residents in a house. In this setting, residents can work on rehabilitation goals related to personal care, cookery, home management and household finances, ultimately maximising their independence in a safe environment with 24/7 support. Community integration is a key focus throughout all our services and, like any other clients, our residents are encouraged to access local amenities such as libraries and leisure facilities.

Family Support Services

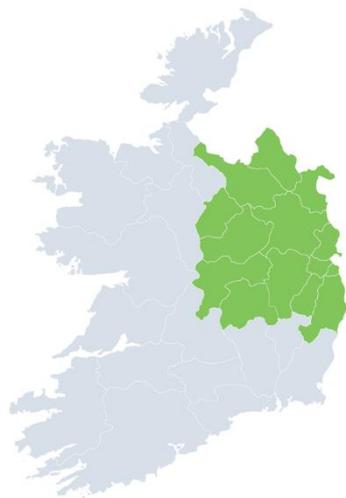
At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, we understand that a brain injury doesn't just happen to the individual – it happens to the whole family. Delivering support to families individually or in groups is integral to the work we do. We provide a range of supports, ranging from local information and education events right through to counselling, couples or family therapy, and parenting skills training as needed. Our Case Managers and Local Service Managers are vital points of contacts to families who need to access these supports. They may refer cases on to other members of our clinical team, including psychology and social work.

Where We Work



Case Management

Number of clients: 381



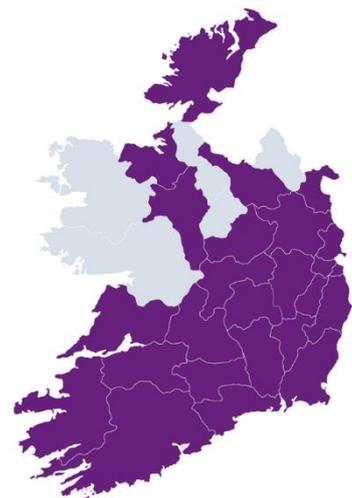
Our Case Managers are brain injury experts who act as a single point of contact providing a clear pathway and linkages to the variety of services to support a person's transition from hospital to home.

- Cavan
- Dublin
- Kildare
- Laois
- Longford
- Louth
- Meath
- Monaghan
- Offaly
- Westmeath
- Wicklow



Home and Community Rehabilitation

Number of clients: 352



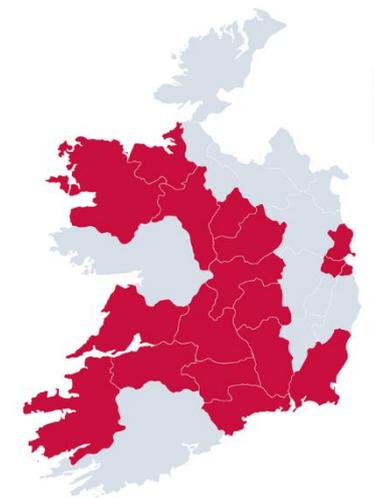
Our Rehabilitation Assistants deliver one-to-one neuro-rehabilitation to support individuals with their rehabilitation goals at home and integrate back into their community and family life.

- Carlow
- Cavan
- Clare
- Cork
- Donegal
- Dublin
- Kerry
- Kildare
- Kilkenny
- Laois
- Limerick
- Louth
- Meath
- Offaly
- Roscommon
- Sligo
- Tipperary
- Waterford
- Westmeath
- Wexford
- Wicklow



Day Resource/Clubhouse Service

Number of clients: 212



Our clubhouse day services provide vital peer support, group rehabilitation and cognitive rehabilitation to enhance independence and encourage learning new skills.

- Clare
- Dublin
- Kerry
- Kilkenny
- Laois
- Limerick
- Longford
- Mayo
- Offaly
- Roscommon
- Sligo
- Tipperary
- Waterford
- Westmeath
- Wexford

Where We Work



Transitional Living Services

Number of beds: 4



Our transitional living service is a bridge for brain injury survivors to prepare to return to independent living. It provides intensive rehabilitation and support in a residential setting Monday to Friday from 6 weeks up to 6 months.

- Sligo



Residential Services

Number of beds: 73



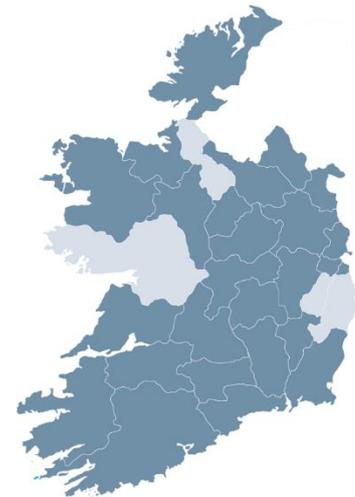
Our unique neuro-rehabilitation residential homes provide long-term tailored rehabilitation and support to 4-5 residents in a house to maximise their independence in a safe and homely place on a 24/7 basis.

- Clare
- Cork
- Donegal
- Dublin
- Limerick
- Louth
- Offaly
- Waterford
- Wexford



Family Services

Nationwide



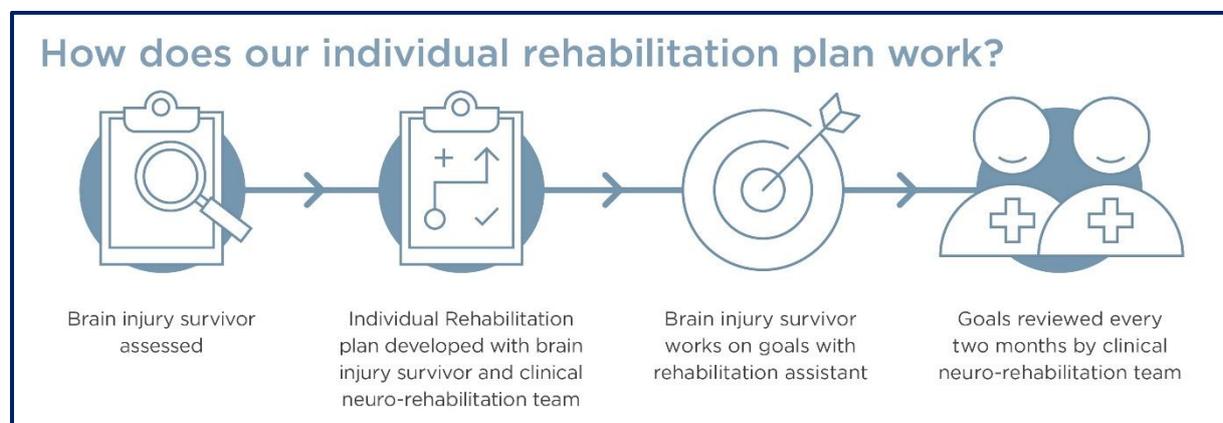
Our family services deliver support nationally through case management, family therapy, parenting skills training, carer training and peer support groups.

- Case management
- Parenting skills training
- Family and carer training
- Peer support groups
- Nationwide

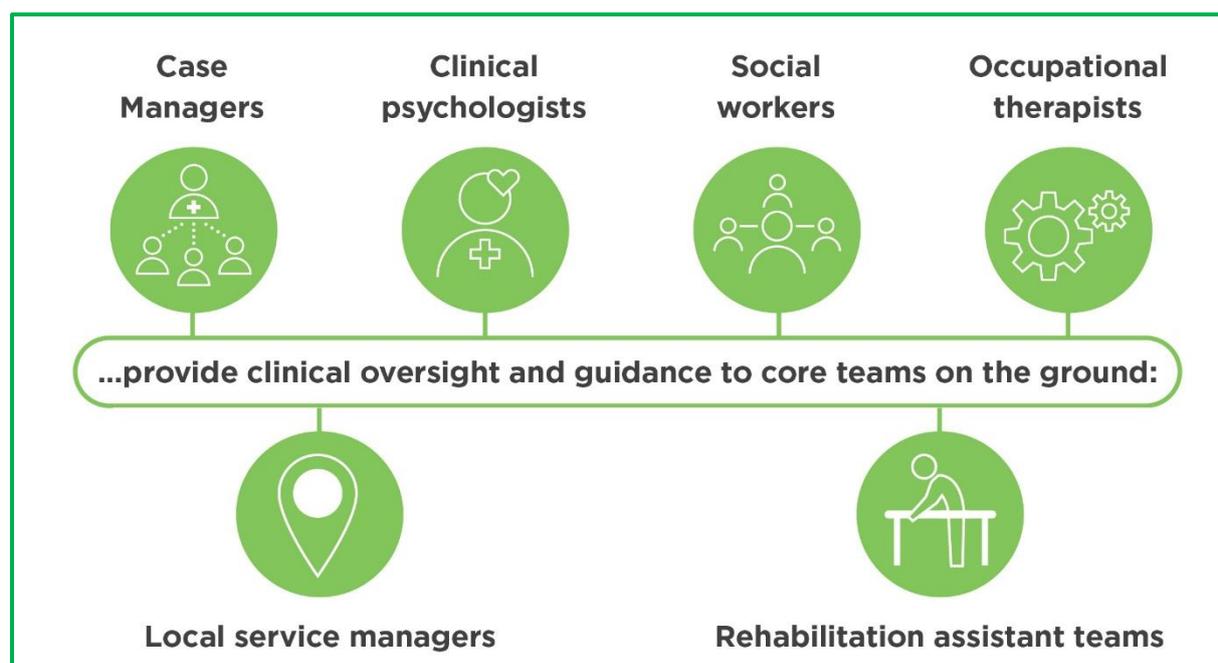
Our Model: A Person-Centred Approach

Every brain is different, unique to each individual affected. At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland we look at the whole person. We take account of their environment, their ability and support needs. We look at the life they had before their brain injury. We support them and their families through a bio-psychosocial model which takes account of biological, psychological and social aspects of rehabilitation.

For this reason, we champion the Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP). The plan is developed with the individual, their family and our Inter-Disciplinary Team with a focus on achieving specific goals related to the individual's need and personalised rehabilitation. This bespoke person-centred approach to neuro-rehabilitation is at the core of everything we do at Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.



Our Clinical Neuro-rehabilitation Teams



Acquired Brain Injury Ireland services are clinically-led and overseen by a range of clinicians with acquired brain injury expertise, including in Neuropsychology, Occupational Therapy and Social Work. The clinicians are supported by an expert team of Local Service Managers, Case Managers, Team Leaders and Rehabilitation Assistants.

In 2019, following a full review of clinical processes in the organisation – from referral and assessment right through to discharge as appropriate – a new, service-wide clinical process was introduced to ensure a consistent and measurable approach to service quantum and outcomes nationwide. Our clinical teams utilise clinical outcome measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of the rehabilitation interventions, leading to increased levels of independence and reduced caregiver burden on families.

What Our Clients Say About Us

At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, our day-to-day work is built on transparency and two-way communication with clients. Every year we run an independent customer satisfaction survey with clients, using the internationally benchmarked USPEQ survey. We believe this is of the utmost importance to enable us to measure what we do through the feedback of those we serve, to ensure our standards are maintained, and that our clients are continually empowered to achieve their rehabilitation goals.

The USPEQ survey provides feedback in relation to five key areas: service responsiveness, informed choice, respect, participation and overall value. This feedback informs the organisation of any areas of concern, so we can respond to reported issues or needs. It is also a source of motivation and positively drives our person-centred culture so we can continuously improve and grow services to help more brain injury survivors rebuild their lives in every corner of the country.

USPEQ findings 2019 –

- Effectiveness: **93.4%** said the ‘services enabled me to do things better’
- Value: **94%** said the services ‘met my need’
- Responsiveness: **94%** said I ‘got what I needed, when I needed it’
- Informed choice: **96.4%** said ‘I agreed with goals in my plan’
- Participation: **91.5%** said they felt ‘able to make important choices’
- Respect: **98%** said that ‘staff treated me with respect/courtesy’

Delivering a first-class, quality service

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is actively committed to providing services at an internationally recognised standard which is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). This accreditation is a prestigious and internationally recognised quality mark which signals that the services we provide meet or exceed international best practice.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland has been successfully accredited every three years since 2003. Our most recent accreditation inspection took place in October 2018. This also marked the first time we applied for accreditation in Case Management which was successfully achieved to gold standard, in recognition of the significant work by our Case Managers for many years.

We are currently accredited for the following services, and look forward to the next accreditation cycle in 2021:

1. Home and community services (Adults)
2. Home and community services (Children)
3. Residential Rehabilitation programmes (Adults)
4. Governance standards
5. Case Management

Additionally, all Acquired Brain Injury Ireland neuro-rehabilitation residential services are fully registered with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and are monitored under the Health Act 2007 (Care and support of residents in designated centres for persons (children and adults) with disabilities) Regulations 2013. There were a number of HIQA inspections across services in 2019, all with excellent outcomes and very positive feedback regarding the work of staff teams and our person-centred practice.



CAMPAIGNING, INFLUENCING POLICY AND DRIVING RESEARCH

A Challenging Landscape

Unfortunately, due to insufficient resources, many national acquired brain injury service gaps in the community remained unaddressed in 2019. In particular there was insufficient investment in Home and Community and Residential services leading to significant waiting lists, delayed discharges from acute and NRH hospitals, as well as inappropriate placement in nursing homes of people with an acquired brain injury.

Additionally, our organisation faces insufficient investment in:

- Brain Injury Assessment Services: For clinical and vocational assessment
- Brain Injury Paediatric Services: There is no permanently funded service provision, support or assessment for children and adolescents with acquired brain injury. We currently have a pilot programme for two adolescents operating from our rehabilitation Centre in Mountbolus, Co. Offaly. However, there is no funding to expand this essential service nationally.
- Case Management Services: We are funded by HSE CHO areas 6, 7, 8 & 9 to deliver case management in Cavan, Dublin, Laois, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly and Westmeath. But a huge gap remains across the rest of the country where families are left to struggle to navigate the health system and get the resources they need to cope with brain injury.
- Transitional Services: Currently we are only funded to provide one 4-bed Transitional Living Service based in Sligo which serves the Sligo/Leitrim area. Transitional services are essential to bridge the gap between hospital and home and allow people with an acquired brain injury to acquire the skills to increase independence and return home.
- Step-down Facilities and Services: Currently there are no step-down facilities for people with acquired brain injury to transition from hospital to meet their needs. This often results in people under the age of 65 being inappropriately placed in nursing homes for the elderly. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland has a physical facility which could develop quickly given immediate development.

Step Ahead: vocational rehabilitation programme

In late 2018, being aware of the deficit in Vocational Rehabilitation Services for people with brain injury, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland applied to the Pobal-Funded Ability Programme for a Vocational Assessment Service that would support young adults aged from 18 to 29. The project, called Step Ahead, commenced in January 2019 and is due to finish in June 2020.

Throughout the year, at our two bases in Dublin and Cork and facilitated by a team of Senior Occupational Therapists and Vocational Facilitators, individuals received their assessments and were signposted and supported into exploring or maintaining educational, training, volunteering or employment opportunities.

Submissions, Policy and Political Advocacy

In 2019 Acquired Brain Injury Ireland held a policy roundtable event with 25 high level stakeholders to discuss policy issues in relation to rehabilitation for people with brain injury.

As a result of the roundtable, a paper was published in an international peer reviewed journal by Health Policy Analyst Dr. Sara Burke et al from Trinity College Dublin.

An Oireachtas briefing for all TDs and senators in Leinster House was held in October, to raise the profile of our organisation among key political stakeholders. People with brain injury, family members, staff and other supporters attended the event.

We prepared our election campaign materials and our asks for Election 2020. We also collaborated with other organisations to advocate the implementation of the Neuro-rehabilitation Strategy and the funding challenges facing Section 39 organisations.



Raising Awareness

Throughout the year Acquired Brain Injury Ireland coordinated and participated in a variety of local, regional and national communication, policy and research activities. These events and activities helped to raise awareness of acquired brain injury as a condition and the work of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland as the leading national service provider.

Several events and activities, internal and external, publicised acquired brain injuries and Acquired Brain Injury Ireland through media channels including TV, radio, print and social media. These events included placement of national media features on TV and radio as part of Brain Awareness Week and promotion of the organisation's Pre-Budget Submission, as well as writing opinion editorials in media and driving engagement across our social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn).

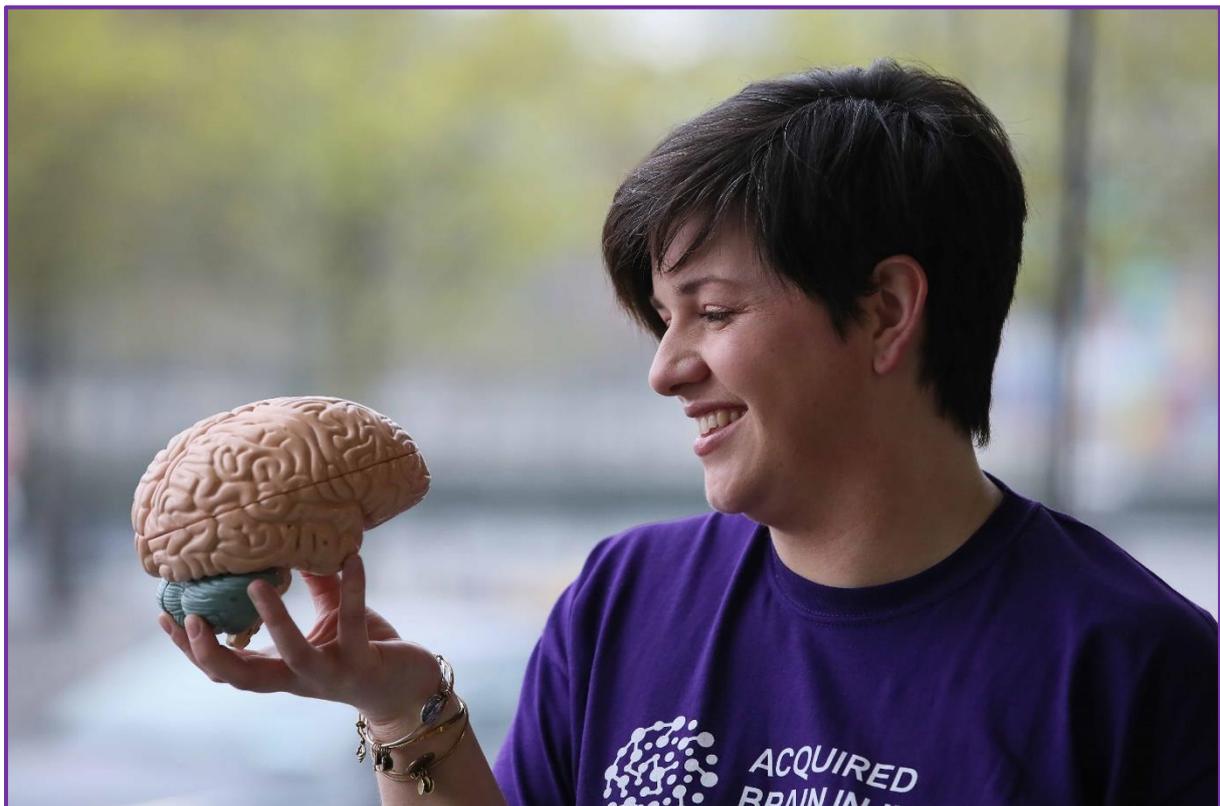


National Research Seminar

In 2019 we hosted our second national research seminar focusing on 'Acquired Brain Injury research in Ireland'. The seminar sought to advance our knowledge and grow our community. It was an enormous success, attracting more than 100 delegates who heard from eight expert speakers, showcasing brain injury research in Ireland. This represents a 20% increase in attendance on the previous year.

Supporting Brain Injury Research in Ireland

- Throughout the year, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland supported post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in accessing research subjects, including people with an acquired brain injury, family members and staff
- Our Research Ethics Committee reviewed 12 ethics applications from researchers which are contributing to the acquired brain injury knowledge and evidence base nationally and internationally.
- In addition, we partnered with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and were successful in a funding bid to Irish Research Council to engage a post-doctoral researcher. The researcher, who will investigate health economics and rehabilitation for people with an ABI, will be based in the Global Brain Health Institute at TCD.



OUR PEOPLE

Just as every brain injury is unique, at Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, our people are unique. Our teams are highly skilled and qualified in their area and extremely passionate about the work they do. Rebuilding lives through neuro-rehabilitation takes time. In addition to key skills, it requires the ability to see things differently and think outside the box. That's why we hire people who are problem-solvers and who have an ability to drive everyday solutions to help our brain injury survivors adapt to life after their brain injury.

Providing choice to clients is at the heart of what we do and our teams thrive on finding creative solutions to preserve our clients' rights to choose. Our approach to service delivery is about partnership and collaboration with our clients. Building positive relationships between clients and our rehabilitation assistants is essential to achieving personalised goals – in fact, it's the magic.

During 2019, the average employee headcount was 303 by year end to meet the requirements of the organisation. This included 20 staff in head office covering key functions such as finance, human resources, administration, research and policy, fundraising and communications.

Human Resources Team

The Human Resources (HR) Team provides a broad range of services to the organisation across the employee life cycle, including recruitment and selection, induction and training, employee engagement, employee relations, HR administration, performance management and learning and development. The team is responsible for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) requirements. The HR Team partners with the organisation in meeting the strategic and operational objectives through effective HR strategies.

HR Highlights in 2019

There were a number of projects undertaken by the HR team in 2019.

- An internal review and re-engineering of the internal HR processes and workflows was undertaken by the HR team in order to implement a paperless HR office;
- The capability of the HR and recruitment system was further developed in support of this and to achieve enhanced reporting capability;
- Engagement and Retention Strategic initiatives were implemented across 2019 in response to the challenges in the Sector regarding recruitment and turnover;

- In further support of this, Employee Wellness was highly prioritised throughout the year. In addition, Wellness and Resilience formed a key part of the Annual Employee Information Days in July 2019, which were very well received;
- In 2019, further significant progress was made in relation to organisational compliance with the GDPR Regulations.

Employee Communications and Engagement

Communication is an ongoing challenge for every organisation and at Acquired Brain Injury Ireland it is essential to the work we do. At Senior Strategic Level, Employee Communication and Engagement has been a key priority for the past two years.

In July 2019 we hosted our Annual Employee Information Days which were chaired by the Chief Executive. The days were extremely well received and gave our staff the opportunity to hear from the Executive Management Team about the organisational direction and the new Strategic Plan.

Feedback from staff workshops was invaluable and this continues to inform the organisation's activities, processes and performance. An enormous benefit of the days was peer-to-peer interaction. Staff were able to hear and learn from each other's experiences and form vital support networks within the organisation.

What our staff has to say

An Employee Feedback Survey was carried out in 2019 covering key areas including Organisational Culture, Communication, Leadership, Teamwork, Manager Support, Work Environment, Employee Development, Compensation and Recognition, and Work Engagement.

The Survey achieved a strong response rate (80.8%) and the scores were extremely positive for the organisation overall.

These scores are testament to the fact that our employees bring the organisational values to life in their role each day with a strong commitment to deliver a person-centred service. The survey also highlighted areas for improvement. These were predominantly focused on compensation as well as the need for opportunities for growth and development. As an organisation, we will continue to work on these areas.

- Organisational Culture received some of our highest scores: 97% of employees said they are aware of the organisation's mission; 96% of employees support the overall direction; 96% said they would recommend us to friends and family;
- Results reported a significant improvement in the organisation's Communication: 80% of employees felt well informed about plans and progress in the organisation compared to 72% in 2018;

- 80% of employees felt up-to-date on news and issues in Acquired Brain Injury Ireland. These scores have not only increased since last year, but they also outperformed international benchmark scores amongst other organisations
- 86% of employees believe the organisation is managed effectively by senior management within current resources – a testament to the leadership of the organisation. This is significantly higher than international benchmarks which scored 11% lower;
- Scores remained consistently strong for Teamwork, Work Environment, Employee Development and Manager Support: 94% of employees reported that their manager treats them with respect, compared to 84% in 2018.

Learning and Development

To ensure the highest standards of brain injury rehabilitation, we deliver ongoing best practice professional training for staff through our dedicated ‘Learning & Development Team’ in the organisation. This programme is vital to drive essential benefits for our staff and for the organisation including:

- Increased job satisfaction and morale
- Increased employee motivation and buy-in
- Increased efficiencies and innovation
- Reduced employee turnover
- Risk management

In 2019 we continued to invest in staff by offering learning and development opportunities including mandatory and organisation specific training according to legislative and regulatory compliance and best practice. This continued to enhance Acquired Brain Injury Ireland’s standards in line with CARF.

Two Certified Brain Injury Specialist training events were coordinated in 2019 resulting in 35 staff receiving certification and registration as Certified Brain Injury Specialists.

The average pass rate for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland attendees was 94.44% – an excellent performance standard.

A new Learning Management System was also developed and launched in 2019. This is an online platform to allow for internal, interactive eLearning delivery, record keeping and reporting.

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's work goes so much further through the generous donations and fundraising of hundreds of individuals, groups, and businesses. We are also supported by grants from many organisations around the country.

Combined, this support allows us to progress local and national projects that would otherwise not have been possible, as well as enabling us to respond quickly and effectively when challenges arise. It allows for the purchase of essential equipment, resources and activities required by our client group and supports us to engage essential specialist services on a short-term basis.

We are extremely grateful to all our Donors, Funders and Grant Agencies for their support which truly makes a life-changing difference for survivors of acquired brain injury.

Objectives and Activities

Throughout 2019 the fundraising department worked to raise sufficient funds to enable Acquired Brain Injury Ireland to deliver and expand its work.

The key objectives for the year were to:

1. Grow the supporter base with existing and potential new supporters
2. Develop a diversified income base

Achievements

Fundraising activities during 2019 attracted generous support from all corners of the country.

Community Fundraising

A range of community-based fundraising events provided essential additional income that allowed Acquired Brain Injury Ireland to enhance its services.

Three significant fundraising events raised a combined €46,549: a Valentines ball hosted by our Midlands services in Tullamore; the third annual '10k fun-run' in Clane which attracted more than 700 participants; and a Golf Classic hosted by former Irish international Paul McGrath.

National Annual Event

The eighth annual 'Bake for Brain Injury' fundraising event took place as part of Brain Awareness Week in March 2019, generating as much income as the previous three years combined.

Corporate, Major Donors and Trusts

During 2019, private companies and public sector bodies supported Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's work through employee fundraising, corporate donations and project sponsorship.

Corporate sponsors included BNY Mellon, Dublin Bus, Roche Ireland, GlaxoSmithKline, EI Electronics, Megazyme, Tableau Software, Drummonds Ltd. and Deutsche Bank. Additionally, we received grants from Pobal, The Hospital Saturday Fund, Monkstown Hospital Foundation and from Local Authorities.

Individual Giving

Developing a culture of committed Individual Giving as an important future source of sustainable income is one of the key strategic priorities of the Fundraising Department. In 2019 we had our first structured year of activity to progress this objective, including direct mail appeals, newsletters and targeted communications using post, email and digital media.



FINANCES AND ACCOUNTS

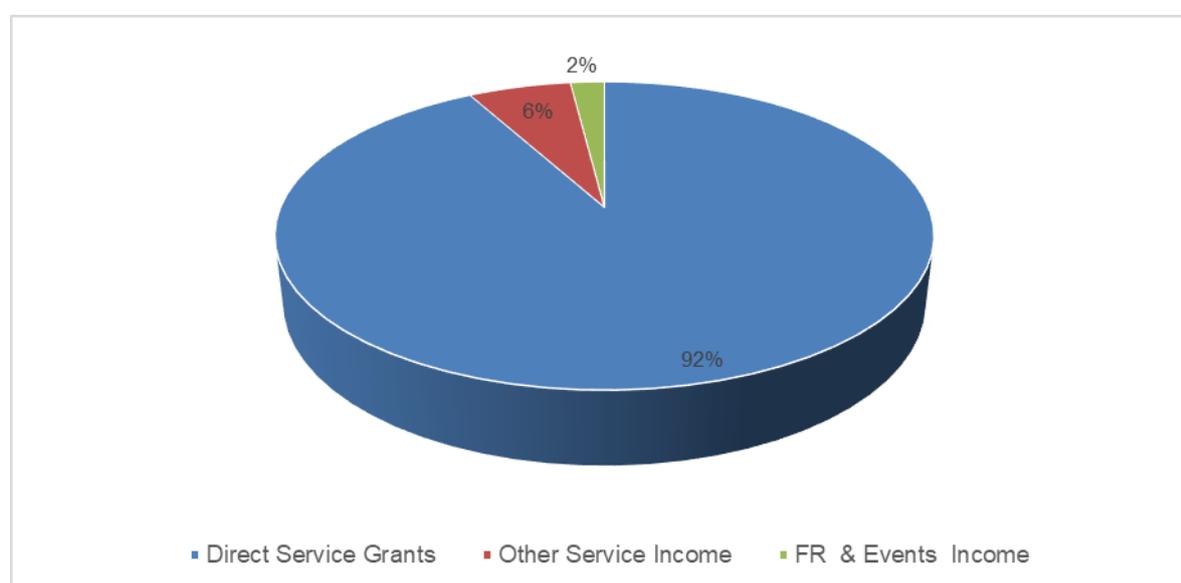
Acquired Brain Injury Ireland reported a deficit of €271k in 2019.

Total income for the year ended December 2019 at €15.1m, representing an increase of €0.7m (5.03%) over 2018. Direct service and other income (excluding HSE sleepover funding arrears declared in 2018) increased by 10.09% year on year. Combined fundraised and events income increased by 38% to €301k in 2019, versus €218k in 2018. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland recorded €338k income in respect of our Ability grant project. Funding for this project was granted by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection – European Social Fund. The Department of Rural and Community Development provided €40.7k to the organisation in relation to our Carers and Families programme under the Dormant Account Fund.

Total charitable expenditure in 2019 increased by 8.3% to €15.4m. Whilst increased service provision contributed to this increase, the organisation's move to a new national office premises and recruitment of vacant posts essential to service provision were a major contributor to this increase.

The organisation is engaging with the HSE regarding funding shortfalls and this engagement will continue into 2020.

2019 income: % split



Direct service grants	92%
Other service income	6%
Fundraised and events income	2%

Grant funding 2019 (breakdown)

Every year Acquired Brain Injury Ireland seeks funding from both statutory and non-statutory sources to resource its national community based neuro-rehabilitation services and supports.

In 2019 a variety of grant applications were prepared and submitted to potential funders. A number of submissions/bids were successful and, while it is not possible to reflect full details of individual receipts and amounts recognised, the table below highlights some key achievements of the year. The figures present amounts recognised as income in our 2019 audited accounts.

Funder	Amount	Purpose
Health Service Executive National Lottery & Respite	€38,155	Part or fully fund a variety of national projects including: flexible respite; day resource/clubhouse activities and facilities; gardening tools; rehabilitation equipment.
PBF Trust Grant	€18,000	To fund research, including the International Brain Injury Association World Congress on Brain Injury.
Local County Council & Community Grants	€38,188	Part or fully fund a variety of national projects including: residence upgrades; rehabilitation and art activities; gardening equipment; gym; swimming lessons.
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Pobal)	€338,425	Ability Grant Programme which provides vocational assessment and individualised planning and support for people with an acquired brain injury between the ages of 18 and 29 who wish to return to work or education.
Department of Rural and Community Development (Dormant Accounts Fund)	€40,687	Carers and Families Programme which facilitates peer support projects for Carers of those with an acquired brain injury.

Income & Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019 €	2018 €
Income	15,136,100	14,412,187
Expenditure	15,406,688	14,218,978
(Deficit)/Surplus before Taxation	(270,588)	193,209
Taxation	-	-
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(270,588)	193,209
STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES		
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(270,588)	193,209
TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES FOR THE YEAR	(270,588)	193,209

Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2019

	2019 €	2018 €
Tangible Assets	1,998,463	1,936,826
Current Assets		
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	558,186	724,043
Cash at bank and in hand	1,054,329	948,924
	1,612,515	1,672,967
Current Liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	1,901,912	1,425,548
Net Current Assets	(289,397)	247,419
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	1,709,066	2,184,245
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	459,729	569,031
Net Assets	1,249,337	1,615,214
Total Reserves including Capital Reserves	1,249,337	1,615,214

 The accounts were approved on October 15th 2020

Denis Buckley
Director

Marzena Golinska
Director

DIRECTORS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Directors	Mr Denis Buckley (Chairperson) Ms Niamh Cahill Ms Clair Cullinan Ms Marzena Golinska Mr Martin Quaid Ms Laurie Mannix Mr Seamus Moore Mr Hugh O'Connor
Chief Executive & Secretary	Barbara O'Connell
Auditors	Duignan Carthy O'Neill Limited, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, 84 Northumberland Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Registered Company Name	The Peter Bradley Foundation company limited by guarantee
Trading as	Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
Registered office	Century House, 100 George's Street Upper, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
Registered Charity Number	CHY 14289
Solicitors	TP Robinson Solicitors, 24 Fitzwilliam Street Upper, Dublin 2
Bank	Allied Irish Bank plc, Cornelscourt, Dublin 18
CRA Number	20046200
Company Registration Number	334659

BOARD AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors met eight times in 2019.

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee did not meet in 2019. Members in 2018 were Seamus Moore and Denis Buckley.

Quality, Safety and Risk Committee

This Committee met a number of times in 2019 with the support of external consultant M. Fitzgerald. Members include (Chairperson) Denis Buckley, Barbara O'Connell (Chief Executive) and Donnchadh Whelan (National Services Manager) attended.

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee met seven times in 2019. Members included (Chairperson) Martin Quaid, Denis Buckley and external consultant Evelyn Fitzpatrick.

CONTACT US

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