Ireland Active | Leisure, Health and Fitness Association

AGM 24th September 2018

Activites Report 2017-2018

Ireland Active is the representative body for the leisure, health and fitness sector representing over 250 leisure centres, swimming pools, gyms, activity centres and education providers.

MORE PEOPLE, MORE ACTIVE, MORE OFTEN

IRELAND ACTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson : Barry Walsh, MD, Iconic Health Clubs
Treasurer : Joe Cosgrove, MD, Kingfisher Club
Secretary : Clodagh Kilmurray, CEO, Swan Leisure
Lorna Brady, CEO, SPORTSCO
Liam Cunningham, GM, Athlone RSC
Susan Grady, CEO, K Leisure
Michael Harrison, Head of Department of Sport and Exercise Science, WIT
Sarah Keane, CEO, Swim Ireland
Guy Thompson, GM, Castleknock Hotel
Siobhan Tighe, MD, Coral Leisure

IRELAND ACTIVE STAFF

Chief Executive : Conn McCluskey
Business Services Manager :
Niamh Norton/Cliodhna MacNamara (maternity cover)
REPs Registrar : Vincent O'Flaherty
Accounts & Vetting Administrator : Stephanie MacSweeney
Get Ireland Swimming Marketing Officer : Miriam Queally

IRELAND ACTIVE PARTNERS

SPORT IRELAND
hi Healthy Ireland
reps ireland register of exercise professionals
SWIM IRELAND
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Introduction from Chairperson Barry Walsh

The past year has seen sustained growth in Ireland Active with our new Strategic Plan 2017-2020 guiding the Board on our key objectives in the years ahead. The inclusion of Ireland Active in key aspects of the new National Sports Policy 2018-2027 has given the organisation renewed optimism that our voice is being heard at government level and the importance of our sector is being recognised.

Financially the organisation has operated a surplus for a second year which is a positive step if we are to grow our reserves and ensure that Ireland Active is on a sound footing. We have done this whilst at the same time growing the number of staff in the office and the services that we have offered over the past year. There are now five staff members supporting the work of our members and delivering on the operational plan.

The Board took the decision earlier this year to update the branding of the White Flag and to clarify the name to the National Quality Standard Award (for leisure, health and fitness). We hope that this change will modernise the award and bring greater awareness amongst stakeholders and the public. We have received letters of support from Minister Griffin in the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and John Treacy in Sport Ireland for the National Quality Standard further ensuring that government supports the initiative.

Irish Water Safety has begun a consultation process on the regulation of swimming pools in Ireland which is due to begin in October and we believe this process has the potential to introduce a regulatory framework based on the National Quality Standard.

Our lobbying work has continued throughout the year and we met with Minister Griffin in January to discuss our priority areas which included REPs Ireland, the 9% VAT rate and the National Quality Standard. The Minister was supportive of our work and followed up with a letter of support. The 9% VAT rate has come under increasing pressure over the past two years and we have made a submission to the Department of Finance on Budget 2018 and around the reduced rate for the sector. We will again make a submission on Budget 2019 in the coming days.

We are currently preparing for our third National Fitness Day and this has been supported since its inception by Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland for which we are grateful. In addition, this year we will run an outdoor

fitness event with Dublin City Council and Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership as part of SportsFest to promote the sector to the public. Our member facilities will be running their own events and in schools Active Schools Flag will run fun competitions. We are happy to be supported by our brand partner Fitbit this year and hope this partnership will continue into the future.

Minister John Paul Phelan addressed our conference in Kilkenny last year, as we hosted discussions with stakeholders from the industry and also held a REPs Ireland seminar focused on fitness instructors and personal trainers. The conference was well attended and feedback was positive and we will look to grow the event again this year at Druids Glen Resort.

We hosted four regional meetings again this year with presentations from Tusla around the new Children First legislation and with a particular focus on the new National Quality Standard. The meetings are an essential tool for the organisation in keeping abreast of members queries and feedback each year.

Ireland Active attended a number of meetings on the proposed CEN European standards, appointed by the NSAI, over the past year and it is our expectation that the standards will be published early in 2019. The new standards will place a voluntary standard at a European level for fitness centres for the first time, following on from the swimming pool standards that already exist.

In August, we hosted our second Suppliers and Board dinner in advance of the Conference to network and gain feedback on what our partners would like to gain from the event and how to maximise their investment in the conference and awards evening.

September 2018 saw the launch of our third National Fitness Day which was attended by Minister Catherine Byrne and representatives from our key stakeholders in Sport Ireland, Healthy Ireland and Dublin City Council as well as our ambassadors Anna Geary and Adam Byrne.

More detail on the nature and scale of our activities are set out on the pages that follow. I would however like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members and the staff in the office for the commitment they continue to show to Ireland Active. Over the past year Jonathan Fitzpatrick stepped down from the Board and we thank him for his contribution to Ireland Active. Thanks, are also due to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the Department of Health and to Sport Ireland for their continued support.

On behalf of the Board I would also like to thank Ireland Actives suppliers and commercial partners and of course each of the members without whom there would be no Ireland Active.

Yours in leisure, health and fitness,
Barry Walsh,
Chairperson

Advocacy, Representation & Partnership

Pre- Budget Submission

In September 2017, we made a submission to government with five key asks -

- the retention of the 9% VAT rate for the leisure and sport sector and;
- the expansion of the VAT exemption on swimming lessons for children to other programmes and activities
- removal of the BIK on gym membership and extension of the once off gift for employees from €500 to €1,000
- capital investment on an annual basis
- ringfencing of the sugar tax for physical activity programmes and nutrition education for children

The submission was sent to every member of the Oireachtas in advance of the Budget and thankfully our asks were listened to with the retention of the 9% VAT rate and a new Sports Capital programme of €40m in 2018.

Workplace Wellbeing Day, IBEC

The health and wellbeing of staff has become an enormous focus of business today and in March 2018 we partnered with IBEC on Workplace Wellbeing Day. Our members supported the initiative by offering free activities and passes as well as visiting workplaces on the day.

National Fitness Day

Ireland Active launched its second National Fitness Day in 2017 as part of the European Week of Sport and this was hosted successfully in over 100 facilities and 150 schools across Ireland on 27th September. Anna Geary, Alan Quinlan and Philly McMahon were on hand to help launch the initiative which was supported by both Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland.

Europe Active – LetsBeActive project

We received funding again from Europe Active to run a LetsBeActive project which will see a physical activity intervention in gyms aimed at getting inactive people active. The initiative will launch during the European Week of Sport in September 2018.

Policy & Standards

REPs Ireland

The Board took the decision to appoint a dedicated Registrar within the office in 2017 to develop REPs Ireland. The initial focus of the Registrar was to provide a service to existing members and to audit the education providers. Active IQ were appointed to be the external auditors for REPs Ireland and 17 audits have been carried out over the past year.

CEN European Fitness Facility Standards Group

Over the past year we have attended three meetings in Brussels and Berlin on the development of standards for fitness facilities in Europe as well as hosting two mirror group meetings in Ireland with our members and the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). It is expected that the standards will be approved by the end of 2018.

Irish Water Safety consultation on the regulation of swimming pools

The first consultation meeting will be held in October 2018 and Ireland Active will be one of a number of key stakeholders present to put forward the views of its members. This process and any potential regulation has the potential to change the way pools are managed over the coming years.

Services & Events

Garda Vetting

The Garda Vetting service has continued to grow over the past year with the introduction of legislation beginning to ensure that every person working with children or vulnerable adults are being vetted. We have carried out over 2,000 vets in the past year which has placed additional resource requirements on the office.

Regional Meetings

In March, we hosted four regional meetings which allowed us to meet our members and have discussion and feedback on Ireland Active activities and services. The focus this year was on the updated branding for the White Flag National Quality Standard to the simplified National Quality Standard (for leisure, health and fitness) with updated criteria to include the new GDPR legislation and accessibility criteria included. We also had presentations from Tusla on the new Children First legislation.

Suppliers Forum and Dinner

As part of our lead up to the conference this year at Druids Glen we again invited our supplier members to view the conference space and outline their preferences for the exhibition this year. This was followed by a dinner with Board members and staff.

Annual Conference

The Annual Conference was held in November 2017 at the Lyrath estate in Kilkenny and attracted over 200 delegates attending to hear speakers from the world of sport, health and fitness. Discussion and debate as well as learnings were taken away by delegates and feedback was generally positive and allowed us to build for 2018.

White Flag Awards Dinner

The annual gala dinner attracted over 240 people from across the leisure and fitness industry to celebrate their achievements in raising standards in the sector. The Awards were hosted by Anna Geary and were well enjoyed.

Industry Training

We have developed new Safeguarding training over the past year and have recently developed a DLP course for the sector. Pool Plant courses have continued to be held and we will be reviewing the format over the coming months. We hosted three GDPR training days as well as industry guidance and online training for members.

Organisational Excellence

Governance Code

The Board of Directors have been working through the requirements of the Governance Code towards full compliance by 2020. We have updated our Constitution to allow for term limits, independent directors and gender balance on the Board.

Attendance of Board Directors at Board meetings since AGM 2017

Board Director	12th Oct 2017	14th Dec 2017	25th Jan 2018	13th Mar 2018	24th May 2018	23rd Aug 2018	Total attendance (out of 6) – 50% required
Barry Walsh	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Clodagh Kilmurray	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
Guy Thompson	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
Joe Cosgrove	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Liam Cunningham	0	1	1	1	0	1	4
Lorna Brady	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
Michael Harrison	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
Sarah Keane	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Siobhan Tighe	1	0	1	1	0	1	4
Susan Grady	0	1	0	1	1	0	3

Financial

The organisation has been working to diversify its income streams as well as building existing financial resources; in particular membership, training, REPs and the National Quality Standard (White Flag). Significant funding and partnership have been received from Sport Ireland, the Healthy Ireland fund, Dublin City Council and Fitbit in 2018 to allow us to develop National Fitness Day. In addition, we have received funding from Healthy Ireland for the Get Ireland Swimming initiative with Swim Ireland.

Office

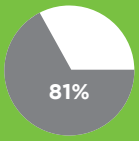
Ireland Active now has an office space in Irish Sport HQ which is at the heart of the National Sports Campus and the hub of Irish Sport. We have 5 members of staff (the CEO, Business Services Manager, Administrator, Get Ireland Swimming Marketing Officer and REPs Registrar) which are there to support our members and implement the Strategic objectives of the organisation.

The Irish leisure, health and fitness sector in numbers

490,000 people participate in personal exercise in gyms and leisure centres each week, making it the most popular sport in Ireland.

300,000 additional adults swim in our member's pools each week.

33% of all club members are members of gyms or leisure centres, making it the most popular club membership in Ireland.



81% of gym members exercise regularly, compared to only **60% of other club members** meaning it is a proven forum to getting and keeping people active.

9,500 people are employed in the leisure and fitness sector across Ireland.

€450m is spent on health and fitness club memberships alone, contributing to a **€2.4billion** sport and physical activity sector in Ireland.

250 organisations
are members of Ireland Active.

100 organisations participating in the White Flag National Quality Standard.

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