



**Ireland
active**

The Leisure
Health and
Fitness
Association

AGM 21st September 2017

Activities Report 2016-2017

Ireland Active is the representative body for the leisure, health and fitness sector representing 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

Treasurer : Joe Cosgrove

Secretary : Clodagh Kilmurray

Lorna Brady

Liam Cunningham

Jonathan Fitzpatrick

Iain Foulger

Susan Grady

Michael Harrison

Sarah Keane

Guy Thompson

Siobhan Tighe

IRELAND ACTIVE STAFF

Chief Executive : Conn McCluskey

Business Services Manager : Niamh Norton

REPs Registrar : Vincent O'Flaherty

IRELAND ACTIVE PARTNERS



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Introduction from Chairperson Barry Walsh



Last year at our AGM we outlined the transition period the organisation was in, having appointed a new CEO and staff, moved office to the Sports Campus in Dublin and stabilising the finances of the company after a number of years of difficult trading conditions. I am happy to report this year that we have continued the growth of the organisation with another year of surplus.

At our AGM last year concern was expressed around the operation of REPs Ireland and in this regard the Board decided to dedicate a specific office resource to the maintenance and development of REPs Ireland. Whilst there is still much work to do we have made progress this year with the appointment of Active IQ as auditors to the education centres and the growth again of the register with more focus being put on promoting and assisting those wishing to get on the register. The industry needs standards in place to ensure the public can exercise in a safe environment and to build confidence in the sector. To this end we will continue to support and grow REPs Ireland over the coming year.

In advance of Budget 2017 we made a submission around the retention of the 9% VAT rate and the VAT exemption on children's swimming lessons. We were pleased that the government listened to our request, as targeted tax measures are required to support the industry and the promotion of physical activity in Ireland.

2016 saw the launch of our first National Fitness Day as part of the European Week of Sport. The initiative aims to raise the importance of physical activity across the population and the key role that our members play in getting **More People More Active More Often**. We had over 100 facilities taking part in the initiative as well as partnerships with CARA, Swim Ireland, Get Ireland Walking and Active Schools Flag. The initiative would not have been possible without the support of Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland and we extend our gratitude again to these key government stakeholders.

At our Conference at the Hodson Bay Hotel in November we hosted discussions with the Department of Sport, Health, the HSE and for the first time produced an industry

specific report around gym membership and participation in personal exercise by Sport Ireland. The conference was well attended and we will look to grow again this year as we move to the Lyrath Estate in Kilkenny.

In February, this year we hosted our Leaders Forum supported by MCSport and were delighted to have former England and current Leinster Coach, Stuart Lancaster speak on the topic of leadership, motivating high performance teams and implementing culture change.

As part of our Strategic Plan consultation process we hosted four regional meetings in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Cavan in addition to a Suppliers forum, all facilitated by Maeve Buckley, and we listened to our members shape what they would like Ireland Active to become. The process allowed us to produce our new Strategic Plan and create a vision for the future.

The White Flag National Quality Standards remain to be a central part of what we do. In April, we held four regional meetings in Waterford, Dublin, Mayo and Monaghan following the launch of the Awards cycle for 2018. The meetings produced an opportunity for members to provide feedback and ask questions on the process again this year.

In August, we hosted a Suppliers and Board dinner in advance of the Conference to network and gain feedback on what our supporters would like to see provided and how to maximise their investment in the conference.

September 2017 saw the launch of National Fitness Day which was attended by Minister Catherine Byrne and representatives from our key stakeholders in Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland as well as our ambassadors Anna Geary and Alan Quinlan.

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. We wish Sarah Kerrigan the best of luck in her new career in Irish Life and thank her for her time and effort in the organisation. Over the past year both Christine Moloney and Iain Foulger have stepped down from the Board and we thank them for their 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 2016, we made a submission to government with two 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.

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.

Workplace Wellbeing Day, IBEC

The health and wellbeing of staff has become an enormous focus of business today and in March 2017 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.

Fit4AllWeek, CARA

Our work with CARA included support of their Inclusion Awards and Fit4All week and Expo where we got a chance to exhibit and network with stakeholders in the sector. We will continue our partnership with them again into 2018.

National Fitness Day

Ireland Active launched its first National Fitness Day as part of the European Week of Sport and this was hosted successfully in over 100 facilities and schools across Ireland on 16th September. Anna Geary was on hand to help launch the initiative which was supported by both Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland.

CEN European Fitness Facility Standards Group

Over the past year we have attended four meetings in Berlin on the development of standards for fitness facilities in Europe as well as hosting two mirror group meetings in Ireland with our members.

National Physical Activity Plan Sub Group

The Department of Transport Tourism and Sport invited Ireland Active to sit on a number of sub groups of the National Physical Activity Plan. The groups are due to meet before the end of 2017.

Europe Active- ALCIS project

We received funding again from Europe Active to run the second ALCIS schools project which saw a physical activity intervention in schools in partnership with a local gym or leisure centre. The project was deemed a success and we aim to have another European project in place for 2018.

Policy & Standards

National Sports Policy Submission

In January 2017, Ireland Active and Swim Ireland made a joint submission on the National Sports Policy consultation process, which aims to develop a masterplan for Irish Sport, and which is due for publication later this year. Our priority areas included developing a swimming strategy, increasing participation in physical activity, investment in infrastructure and reform of the local authority swimming pool programme.

Aquatic Leisure Industry Regulation Consultation

We met with Irish Water Safety (IWS) and the Environmental Health Association of Ireland to discuss the upcoming consultation process for the regulation of the aquatic leisure industry. IWS have moved to the newly established Department of Rural and Community Development which has delayed the process, however we expect the consultation to begin before the end of the year.

REPs Ireland

The Board took the decision to appoint a dedicated Registrar within the office to develop REPs Ireland, help support members queries and to grow the register. Vincent O'Flaherty has taken up the role and has begun audits of education providers and more regular meetings of the REPs Council to help develop future strategy.



Services & Events

Industry Training

A new Safeguarding course for the leisure and fitness sector was developed by Ireland Active in partnership with TUSLA and we have delivered 3 courses to date in 2017. We have continued to deliver pool plant training and we aim to update our course curriculum in advance of 2018.

Garda Vetting

The new Garda vetting legislation requires all people working with children and vulnerable adults to be vetted. Ireland Active processed over 1,400 vets over the past year ensuring that our members staff are compliant with the law and our sector is a safe place for children to enjoy.

Leaders Forum

Stuart Lancaster presented to our members on leadership and bringing culture change to an organisation, following his experience with England in the World Cup and more recently with Leinster Rugby. The event was kindly supported by MC Sport.

Strategic Plan Meetings

Throughout February we held four regional meetings to gain our members views on the future direction of Ireland Active. The outcome can be seen in our new Strategic Plan



White Flag Regional Meetings

In April, we hosted four regional meetings which allowed us to meet our members and have discussion and feedback on the criteria for the current cycle.

Suppliers Forum and Dinner

As part of our lead up to the conference this year we 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 2016 at the Hodson Bay in Athlone and attracted over 100 people 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 2017.

White Flag Awards Dinner

The annual gala dinner attracted over 220 people from across the leisure and fitness industry to celebrate their achievements in raising standards in the sector. The Awards were hosted by Marty Morrissey and were well enjoyed.



Organisational Excellence

Governance Code

The Board of Directors agreed to sign up to the Code of Governance for the Voluntary Sector in March 2017 and have been working a cross the past year to modernise our Constitution and include a number of key requirements of the Code; term limits, skills based Board and independent directors.

Financial

The organisation has been working to diversify its income streams as well as building existing financial resources; in particular membership, training, REPs and White Flag. Significant funding has been received from Sport Ireland and the Healthy Ireland fund in 2017 to allow us to develop National Fitness Day and a new national swimming initiative.

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 4 members of staff (the CEO, Business Services Manager, Administrator 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.

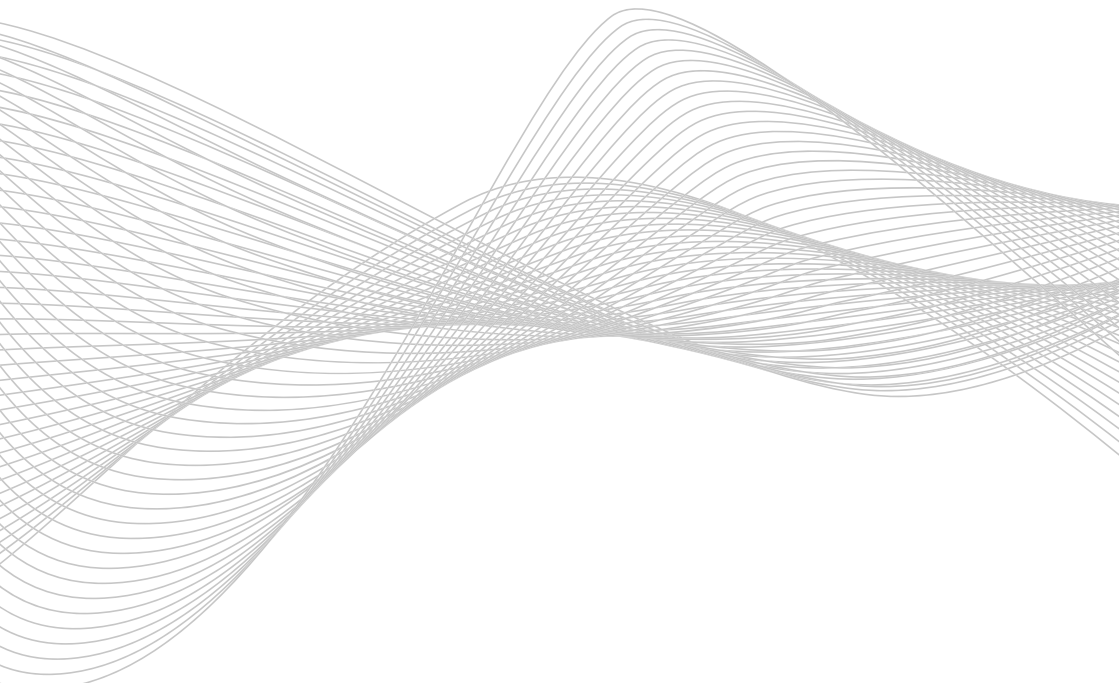


€450m is spent on health and fitness club memberships alone, contributing to a **€2.4billion** sport and physical activity sector in Ireland.

250 organisations are members of Ireland Active.



100 organisations participating in the White Flag National Quality Standard.



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