



GAISCE  
THE PRESIDENT'S  
AWARD

# IMPACT REPORT 2022

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# IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

**+9.5%**

PARTICIPATION  
LEVELS

**23,953**

REGISTRATIONS

**12,562**

AWARD  
COMPLETIONS

**80%**

GAISCE AWARD  
PARTNERS RETAINED

**80%**

PARTICIPATING POST-  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**79%**

PARTICIPATING  
DEIS SCHOOLS

**1,237**

PRESIDENT'S  
AWARD LEADERS

**484**

NEW PALS  
TRAINED

**99**

JOINT AWARD  
INITIATIVE AWARDS

**4,183**

THE RIDE AWAY FROM  
THE STORM VISITORS

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Council of Gaisce - The President's Award, I am pleased to present the organisation's 2022 Impact report.

The purpose of the Gaisce Awards programme is to provide young people with an opportunity, through participation in personal, physical, community and team/adventure challenges, to learn about themselves and the world around them and the role they can play in making it better. In essence, to provide the environment in which they can unlock their own potential and be the best version of themselves.

Throughout 2022 the country continued to emerge from the impact of Covid-19. We witnessed a welcome return to norms with many young people looking to reconnect with their communities and peers in a post-Covid era. This was validated by the confident results delivered by Gaisce, with participation levels growing by 9.5% with 23,953 young people registering for the programme. 12,562 Award completions were recorded, just exceeding 2021 levels. Based on registrations in 2022 we expect completions to rise accordingly in 2023. Overall participation in Gaisce in 2022 indicates a positive and steady post covid recovery to pre-2020 levels.

A particular highlight for the organisation in 2022 was its progression in driving equality of access for marginalised young people. Several key initiatives championed this ambition including the Wavelength project, Generation Change, Rural LGBT+ event and 'The Ride Away from the Storm' exhibition in IMMA which was launched by Minister Roderic O'Gorman. These initiatives demonstrate the value of bespoke projects that increase visibility, access, and inclusion for so many young people whom we wish to ensure can see themselves in and participate in Gaisce.



Gaisce's core grant from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth was increased in 2022 and I wish to thank and commend Minister Roderic O'Gorman and officials within his department for securing this vital funding to support staff activity promoting and supporting participation for young people in the Gaisce Awards.

2022 was a year of change on Council: three members retired following the expiry of their term, and we welcomed two new Council members in their place. All Council members - retiring, continuing and new - discharge their duties with exceptional professionalism and generosity and I wish to thank them all for their commitment to Gaisce in 2022. Yvonne McKenna, after eight years of dedicated and exemplar service to the organisation, completed her tenure as CEO and wish her every success with her next endeavours.

We are indebted to President Michael D. Higgins and officials within Áras an Uachtaráin in for their continued support and engagement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Cunningham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Cunningham, Chairperson



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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The entire team in Gaisce, were highly motivated and energised to get back to more face-to-face interaction with PALs, participants, and Awardees, whilst also utilising the technical advancements that COVID-19 accelerated to extend our reach and access, 2022 brought hope and fresh perspective.

This was particularly evident in the training programmes delivered for our President Award Leaders, the lifeblood of the Gaisce programme, who tirelessly support and guide thousands of young people through their Gaisce journey each year. Throughout 2022 484 PALs were trained across 17 training sessions.

A major achievement was the completion of our Digital Transformation Project with the transfer of data and the implementation of a brand-new Salesforce system supporting our database and application process for PALs and participants. 40 PALs received training on the new Gaisce Online (GO) system along with the distribution of accessible system support resources sent to all PALs.



A Gaisce Award is far more than a medal and certificate: these are only the physical representation of the personal growth of a young person and the development of vital social and emotional competencies, from confidence and self-management to resilience and empathy - each Award representing an individual story for a young person to share and reflect on. Participant engagement in the programme continued to prove strong in 2022 with 23,953 young people registering for Gaisce and 12,562 Gaisce Awards were achieved.

The Gaisce Award programme relies on individuals and organisations that share both our belief in and ambition for young people and we remain ever grateful for their support of the Gaisce programme.

The Gaisce Award programme relies on individuals and organisations that share both our belief in and ambition for young people and we remain ever grateful for their support of the Gaisce programme.

Significant events in 2022 that amplify and support our development to ensure as many young people as possible feel part of and see themselves in the Gaisce Awards include the following:

- **Gold Award Residential Project**, a partnership with the Joint Award Initiative/Duke of Edinburgh's Award NI. The core theme of the residential was to develop young leaders through the collaboration of Gold Award participants across the island of Ireland to tackle global issues at a local level.
- **'The Ride Away from the Storm'** public exhibition by 12 Gaisce participants was officially launched in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) by Minister for Children Roderic O'Gorman in April 2022. The vibrant and ground-breaking collaboration, between Gaisce, IMMA and Oberstown Children Detention Campus aimed to create a platform to highlight the benefits and value of engagement in the Gaisce Awards and how shared creative processes can give a voice to young people's experiences and the chance to make a positive change in their lives. 4,183 visitors attended the exhibition.
- The **Wavelength** workstream finished with strong results, fulfilling our ambition to make the programme available to young people from direct provision and new communities. 148 young people registered for the award with 35 participants completing their awards and more to complete in 2023. 52 partner organisations engaged with the project and 77 PALs registered with the programme, 35 of which were newly trained in 2022, and many new to working with the refugee community.
- **Generation Change**, an event to highlight the connection and value of Gaisce Awards as a personal development programme that can help young people flourish and increase confidence building towards employment opportunities post custody, was successfully launched by Minister of State James Brown on October 5th, 2022, at Google HQ. The event, which was attended by over 250 people and filmed, for the purposes of showing to prisoners via the internal prison television system, was a huge success and the audience heard examples of clear pathways of hope and successful outcomes for young people in custody.
- **The Story Exchange** project in partnership with Mountjoy Progression Unit and Maynooth University featured as a primary segment on Change Makers, a 6-part documentary series, and was broadcast on the 24th of January 2022 and repeated in Autumn 2022.

Financially and through the achievement of our work plan goals to develop the Gaisce Awards, 2022 was a very productive year. We look forward to further implementing the aims of the Strategic Plan in 2023 and redoubling our efforts to ensure accessibility so that every young person in Ireland, no matter their circumstances, has the opportunity to take on the President's Challenge to dream big and fulfil their potential.

Special thanks to all our partner organisations and to our President's Award Leaders, without their commitment the delivery of the Gaisce programme would not be possible. I want to particularly pay tribute to Gaisce's wonderful Council who give so generously of their time and to the energetic Gaisce Team for their dedication and belief in the value of Gaisce for young people.

Avril Ryan  
CEO



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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As President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the young people who have completed their Bronze, Silver and Gold Gaisce awards over the past year, and indeed to recognise the invaluable work done by the President's Award Leaders who volunteer their time to provide important support and mentorship to our participants every year.

Every young person who achieves a Gaisce award receives a medal, and while this medal represents a recognition of a wonderful achievement, more importantly it is an achievement of capacity for life.

It is a statement that you are not only committed to your own personal development and wellbeing, but to engaging with the world around you, to others and their vulnerabilities, to being an active and informed citizen, and to respecting those around you in all their diversity.

The programmes initiated by the Gaisce team throughout 2022 focused on fostering diversity and inclusion, striving to encourage as many young people as possible to be part of the Gaisce experience.



Events such as 'Wavelength', 'Generation Change' and the 'Ride Away from the Storm' exhibition show that Gaisce is opening its arms to each and every young person in this country. I applaud the efforts of the Gaisce team in continuing to create and develop these important and meaningful programmes which are of such benefit to young people.

I welcome the young people who are embarking on their Gaisce journey, and wish them every success in achieving their Gaisce award in the year ahead.  
Beir beannacht.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland



**GAISCE**  
**THE PRESIDENT'S**  
**AWARD**

## **VISION**

**An Ireland where young people dream big and fulfil their potential!**

## **MISSION**

**To provide a positive youth development programme that encourages and guides young people so that their innate talents and abilities, sense of citizenship and social agency can be fully realised.**

## **VALUES**

- **Empowerment**
- **Inclusion and Equality**
- **Respect**
- **Excellence**

## **STRATEGIC PILLARS**

- 1. Build on Achievement**
- 2. Tell Our Story**
- 3. Excellence In What We Do**

# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Wavelength

Over the past 3 years, Gaisce has been running the Wavelength Programme designed to meet the strategic guidelines outlined in the Government's 'Action Plan for Jobs 2016-2020' and the Department of Social Protection's 'Pathways to Work 2016-2020'. Through this programme and thanks to the support of the European Social Fund/AMIF, Gaisce has successfully supported young people seeking international protection and refugees in Ireland to engage with the Gaisce Awards.

The lifting of strict Covid 19 restrictions early in 2022 provided an auspicious moment for Wavelength. Early in the year there was a sudden uplift in registrations and engagement as relationships nurtured with GAPs and PALs during 2021 finally began to bear fruit.

We also took the opportunity to develop a new recruitment drive. Hundreds of new contacts were carefully selected and approached directly through email. Meetings were held individually with more than 70 Youth Officers, Youth Workers and potential PALs across the country. Our new strategy focused on engagement with ETB Youth Officers and SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programmes) who work with large numbers of youth groups in each county. Responding to the needs identified by youth workers, the Wavelength resources were translated into Dari and Ukrainian.

Early in the year we also engaged with Universities of Sanctuary who support refugees in further education. In-person information days were held in UCD, Trinity College, UCC and Maynooth. We also began developing a relationship with Schools of Sanctuary who work especially on the area of integration in schools. We are looking forward to building a long-term partnership between Gaisce and Schools of Sanctuary, a fitting legacy to this project.

The Ukrainian crisis saw hundreds of new refugees take up residence in Ireland. We recognised the unique self-development and integrative benefits that Wavelength could provide, especially after the settling-in period and during the summer months when school had finished. We learned that many Ukrainian teenagers were couped up in hotels in out-of-the way locations with little by way of activities to engage them. We looked for partner organisations who wanted to host activities for this cohort and who could support their Gaisce awards.



Wavelength Group at Carlingford Adventure Centre



Unfortunately, the crisis had placed huge pressures on youth services meaning that many organisations who wanted to engage with us just did not have capacity to do so. However, we successfully engaged with the Citywise youth service in the west of Dublin and with Ukrainian Action, a new group affiliated with the Irish Red Cross, who serve a very large community of Ukrainian young people. In Cork we worked with Kinsale Adventure Centre who are now mentoring 3 groups of Ukrainian refugees through their Gaisce Awards thanks to Wavelength. This initiative was organised in cooperation with Cork ETB who complimented Gaisce on the quality of our communications and were very clear that the initiative would not have been able to proceed at all without Wavelength. We also developed strong relationships with several other groups in County Cork which we anticipate will bear fruit going forward.

In early July 2022, a bespoke Adventure Journey was organised directly by Gaisce in the UL Adventure Centre in Killaloe, County Clare. 14 Wavelength participants from three different groups in Ireland travelled to Killaloe and were supported by a Gaisce Project Officer while there. This gave them a wonderful opportunity to meet their peers and enjoy their adventure in the beautiful Irish countryside. They also had a chance to do some of the fun activities offered by the Adventure Centre, including climbing and kayaking.

24 Ukrainian refugees also undertook an Adventure Journey in Carlingford, County Louth, during two blisteringly hot days in August. They completed their 25-kilometre hike, picked blackberries, took selfies with Irish cows and enjoyed mingling with large groups of other Irish young people staying at the hostel.

The Wavelength Project held an awards ceremony by way of formal closure of this project in the beautiful setting of the Hunt Museum in Limerick on 28th August 2022. This event celebrated the truly impressive achievements of a group of young Syrians who were resettled in Shannon in August 2020 as well as two young women from Pakistan who moved to Kerry in 2019.

Overall, the project finished with strong results, fulfilling our ambition to make the programme available to young people from direct provision and new communities. 148 young people registered for the award with 35 participants completed their awards and more to complete in 2023. 52 partner organisations had engaged with the project and 77 PALs had registered with the programme of which 35 were newly trained in 2022, with many new to working with the refugee community.



Wavelength Award Ceremony at The Hunt Museum, Limerick

# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Rural LGBTI+ Event

Partnering with the Midlands LGBT Project during Pride Month 2022, this event was a chance to discuss how we as teachers, youth workers and volunteers can help create and maintain safe spaces and places for the young people we engage with to grow and self-develop.



LGBT Midlands x Gaisce Livestream Promotion

Hosted at Youth Work Laois' Youth Space, the panel discussed how the needs of the LGBTI+ community, and in particular the needs of young LGBT+ people in rural Ireland, could be met and supported and how the Gaisce Award could serve as a useful tool.

The event included input from Gaisce Award participants who engaged in the 'LikeMinded' exhibition in the National Gallery of Ireland in 2021, who spoke about how and why the Gaisce Award worked so well in supporting their development.

The group of LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming young people used their Gaisce Award challenge areas to develop pieces of artwork around the themes of sexuality, identity, and inclusion. Their transformative experience of using the Gaisce Award in this way - to consider their identities in a creative and structured way - is a model we want to support youth groups and schools to deliver nationwide.

We also heard from representatives from the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI), BelongTo, Youth Services and Jigsaw - The National Centre for Youth Mental Health on their supports for young people in rural Ireland.

The Midlands LGBT Project also spotlighted and discussed the growing needs of young people in rural areas and how they could be addressed and supported. The event was livestreamed and can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnaesggAe60>



LGBT Midlands x Gaisce Event Promotion



# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## The Ride Away From The Storm Exhibition

Gaisce - The President's Award is highly active in supporting young people, who find themselves in the youth justice system, to participate in the Gaisce programme. Our Youth Justice Programme seeks to continue to address the disadvantage these young people experience through assisting them develop the vital 'building blocks' that are identified as central to employability, making positive life choices and flourishing. We aspire to provide an inclusive framework for self-development and progression, ensuring that every young person's voice, no matter their circumstance, is heard. In 2022, two key workstreams brought this ambition to life.



Roderic O'Gorman viewing The Ride Away From The Storm Exhibition

On the 26th of April 2022, 'The Ride Away from the Storm' public exhibition was officially launched in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) by Minister for Children Roderic O'Gorman.

The vibrant and ground-breaking art exhibition was the culmination of more than six months of work from 12 young people at Oberstown

Children Detention Campus, representing the Community Involvement challenge of their Bronze Gaisce Award.

The young people chose subjects that depicted their own personal history or that expressed their connection with Irish history, heritage and culture. Art teachers guided the young artists, who also took part in workshops facilitated by the IMMA SPICE project - a citizen curation initiative to help groups with limited or no access to art galleries to connect with and draw inspiration from the IMMA collection.



Event attendee viewing The Ride Away From The Storm Exhibition

The collaboration, between Gaisce, IMMA and Oberstown Children Detention Campus aimed to create a platform to highlight the benefits and value of engagement in the Gaisce Awards and how shared creative processes can give a voice to young people's experiences and the chance to make a positive change in their lives.

The exhibition ran for 2 weeks and was attended by 4,183 visitors.

# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Gaisce Glas

Spanning the whole organisation, the Gaisce Glas is an Irish Aid funded project that included a number of key objectives targeting staff, PALs and participants. After being successful in a multi annual grant to cover two year, Gaisce was able to build on the successes of the previous annual grant that designed a PAL training course.

At the beginning of 2022 we held an online Showcase event of the work that was completed under the previous funding. Patrick Costello TD represented the Minister Pippa Hackett at this event to get a better insight into the work. We have four GAPs presenting at this event covering topics such as Environmental action and Social Justice.

The first part of the project focused on building on the capacity of staff to be more aware of Global Citizenship and links to all our work. We completed an awareness training during the summer with Global Action Plan on the steps that we could and should be taking to being more sustainable as an organisation. This was followed up by a second staff session in December to map how each staff member can play their part.



President's Award Leader speaking about her experience with Gaisce Glas

The second part of the project was focused on PAL training and we hosted three online sessions delivered in October focusing on Global Citizenship Education with the participation of 17 PALs impacting more 70 young people using the themes for their Gaisce Awards. This work builds on a similar set of training workshops delivered in 2021 for PALs which culminated in a showcase of activities, inspired by GCE/SDG themes, by participants towards their Gaisce Awards in Spring 2022.



The third part of the training completed in 2022 was Gaisce's signing up to the Irish Development Education Association's Code of Good Practice for Development Education. The Code of Good Practice is the first of its kind in Ireland and a trailblazer internationally. Developed by IDEA members it is a quality framework that articulates how to strengthen good practice across all our Development Education work and aids our ability in having quality in our work and also supports us in telling our story.

[Gaisce Glas impact video made in 2022.](#)

# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Generation Change

Another key initiative aimed at breaking down barriers and driving inclusion of hard-to-reach young people was Generation Change, which took place in Google HQ on October 5th, 2022. The event, which was a cross-sectoral dialogue looking at the challenges for those leaving the probation service and prison system in finding employment opportunities, was hosted by Gaisce - The President's Award, the Department of Justice's 'Working to Change' strategy and supported by James Long and Timmy Leonard of 'The Two Norries' Podcast.



Gaisce staff and Chairperson at Generation Change

The dialogue aimed to critically consider how key programmes, re-engagement in education opportunities and the alignment with 'One Good Adult' for young people within the system can strongly support a reduction in reoffending, as well as promoting active citizenship, safer communities, and fewer victims. The audience heard examples of clear pathways of hope and successful outcomes for young people in these circumstances.

James Browne TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with responsibility of Law Reform and Youth Justice addressed the audience as well as Sinead Gibney, Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. Contributions from pro-Athlete Ger Redmond, Chef and entrepreneur Domini Kemp, founder of Speire Nua in Galway - Damien Quinn, and Siobhan Cafferty, Pobal, Implementation Manager of the of 'Working to Change' strategy of the Department of Justice were also heard.



Crowd from Generation Change event

The event had in attendance over 250 people from across the Irish Prison Service, Probation Service, Youth Justice sector as well as Social Enterprises.



Frontline Make Change with James Browne TD

# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Gaisce Gold Residential

Gaisce – The President’s Award has been working closely with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award for over twenty years with the intention of bringing communities together. In previous years, there has been a focus on Cross Community engagements with a particular interest in the North of Ireland. However, with the recent urgency on all people to connect more with Climate change, an opportunity arose to bring the focus on a global setting.



Promotional Flyer for Gold Residential

With that in mind, it was decided to look at how a Humanitarian approach could be better used to not only bring a deeper meaning and relevance for the Gaisce and Duke of Edinburgh’s Award but also to move beyond the issues that consume us our island to the bigger external factors that effect our island.

A partnership with the Joint Award Initiative/Duke of Edinburgh’s Award NI was advertised in September calling for 15 Gold Award participants aged 18-25 from all over Ireland to participate.

The residential project was held over two weekends. The first weekend was held in Belfast at the Irish Girl Guide Centre in the Lorne Estate. The second weekend was in Gaisce’s HQ, with accommodation provided by the Civil Defence.

The programme was designed to be delivered over two Weekends – 21-23 October (Belfast) and 28-30 October (Dublin). It would be delivered by Gaisce The President’s Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award, with Gaisce taking the lead on the event. It was opened to Participants doing their Gold Award that are eighteen years or older. It would also fulfil requirements for Gold Award Residential which requires participants to “embark on a residential in an unfamiliar environment with people who are not their usual companions, working towards a common goal.”

The core theme of the residential was to develop young leaders through the collaboration of Gold Award participants across the island of Ireland to tackle global issues at a local level.

The event also focused on using external expertise, and Trocair and Tearfund Ireland were involved to get involved, based on these two organisations being leading NGOs working on the island of Ireland with a global focus.



# 1 BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Defence Forces Challenge

The Defence Forces Challenge is an annual four day event which provides up to 30 young people with the unique opportunity of experiencing life with the Defence Forces and fulfils the 'adventure journey' section of their Gaisce Award programme.

This annual event has been taking place and supported by the Irish Defence Forces for over 30 years, and the feedback from the young people who take part every year shows that the experience is nothing short of life changing.

After a two-year hiatus due to Covid19, the annual Gaisce Award Defence Forces challenge was back, running 14-17th June 2022. Over 70 young people from across the Republic of Ireland applied for the 33rd Defence Forces Challenge and 28 were chosen through the selection process. Over four days, the young people take part in outdoor pursuits, aerial runways, zip wires, river crossings, obstacle courses, hiking and survival skills.

The Challenge involved 4 days and 3 nights of activities led by the Defence Forces. Young people aged between 15-17 who were currently undergoing a Gaisce Award nominated themselves. The Challenge covered the Adventure Journey requirements for Bronze and Silver participants.



Defence Forces Participants climbing an indoor wall.



Defence Forces Participants planning their route.



Defence Forces Participants getting a helicopter tour.

# 2 TELL OUR STORY

## Lá Gaisce

Lá Gaisce was the main 2022 communications campaign, which celebrated Gaisce impact and value stories from participants and Gaisce Awardees, as well as the work of the President's Award Leaders.



Supported with a live timer on our website and a 4-day countdown on socials, participants were encouraged to share their story with a photo or video clip, including the hashtag #LáGaisce and tagging @GaisceAward across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

All tagged stories were entered into a prize draw to win Gaisce merchandise.





# 2 TELL OUR STORY

## Story Exchange

In 2020 the Story Exchange Project was launched in partnership with a number of stakeholders; Gaisce – The President’s Award, Mountjoy Progression Unit, Maynooth Access Programme and Narrative 4. The project was conceived following consultation with Gaisce Award Participants in Mountjoy Progression Unit who questioned if the Gaisce Award they achieved was similar to the experience of those who undertake the award outside a prison setting.

The project aimed to work with young people from both the Mountjoy Progression Unit and the Maynooth Access Programme to build a level of empathy and understanding between the two groups. This was achieved through facilitated story exchange based around a series of themes that were developed throughout the sessions over a 3-week period.

We continued our collaboration with Maynooth University and Mountjoy Progression Unit on the Story Exchange project with a new partner DCU College Connects.

In this iteration of the programme, we introduced a new element called the Change Makers which is a Mentoring project allowing the participants to become Peer Mentors. Ten Participants volunteered to engage in the project, 5 from Maynooth and 5 from the Progression Unit. Introduction sessions were facilitated in Maynooth and Mountjoy separately before the group of 10 young people met for the first time in March of 2023.



Mountjoy Gaisce Participants wearing Gaisce t-shirts.

The introduction of the Mentoring element proved to be more challenging than had been anticipated, potentially because the MJPU participants were not used to the format, and perceived it as more academic. The Story Exchange (Narrative 4) element was more successful however, and the participants fully engaged with it.





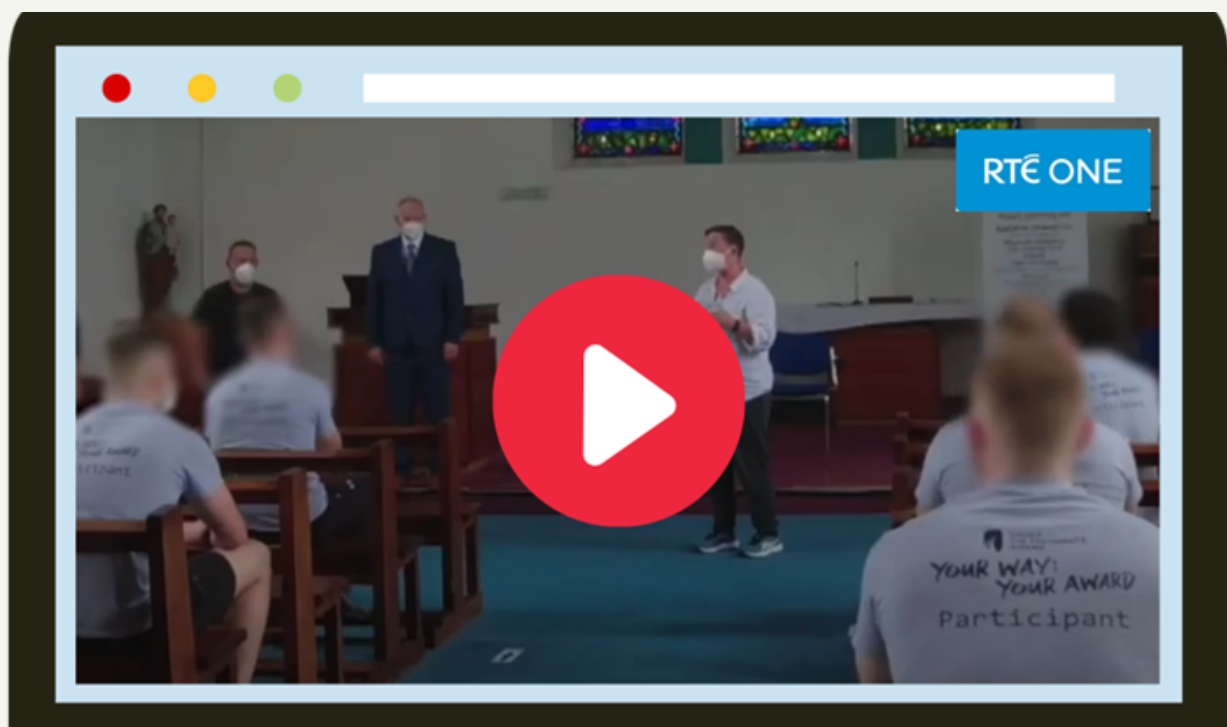
# 2 TELL OUR STORY

## The Story Exchange

One of the MU students left the programme following the Easter break because of exam pressure and one of the PU participants was transferred. The remaining students and MJ participants completed the programme with the MJPU participants earning their Gaisce Awards (3 Bronze and 2 Silvers). The Maynooth students must complete an Adventure Journey, which Gaisce will support, and they will then be able to complete their Awards.

There was a great deal of learning for both organisations from this collaboration and we hope to continue to work together into the future.

The RTE1 Documentary series 'Change Makers' documented the journey and it was broadcast on the 24th of January 2022 and repeated in Autumn 2022.



[Watch the RTÉ segment here!](#)

# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## Gaisce In Schools

Gaisce was highly active in the schools across the country throughout 2022. It was wonderful to see so many schools continue and be more determined than ever to support young people on their Gaisce Awards.

A 'See your Bees' competition was launched with Lidl Ireland through a nationwide photo competition, with prizes including €5,000 towards the winning GAP's Adventure Journey, as well as €1,000 for an individual prize winner and €100 for each county winner. There were 337 entries in total with 80 Gaisce Award Partners, and submissions were received from every county in Ireland. The overall winner of the competition was Bailieborough Community School in Cavan.

The campaign was extremely successful, delivering a media relations campaign that reached 447,692 people with a PR value of almost €20,000 with 100% positive sentiment.



Bailieborough Community School winning their prize.

Gaisce in 2nd Year: A focus group with seven teachers was conducted to review their experiences of running Gaisce in second year, with teachers representing different parts of the country and various levels of experience with running the Gaisce award. The focus group had three distinct areas of review: Benefits, Barriers, and Solutions/Recommendations. The findings of the review were published in the NAPD newsletter in May.

Gaisce, partnering with Challenge Partner the Thomas Francis Meagher Foundation, was featured prominently in the Irish Independent's 'The People's Flag' supplement, via a double page spread. 400 secondary schools were directly involved in the 'Flag Day' programme.



Engagement with Flag Day on social media.

Gaisce sponsored the SU Team of the Year category at the National Student Achievement Awards. TU Dublin presented a team member, Emily Wolfe, with a Community Partner Award for her involvement with the marketing students, delivering Gaisce as a live brief, meeting with the students and being on a judging panel to choose the best marketing plan.

Gaisce also attended and promoted the Irish Youth Music Awards, another of our key Challenge Partners.

# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## Network of Independent Youth Diversion Programmes

A challenge for many youth justice projects is that they very often are supporting young people 1-2-1 in small numbers, and this can make it difficult to get enough young people together in order to undertake an Adventure Journey for their Gaisce Award.

In 2022 Gaisce was able to resolve this obstacle for a collective Adventure Journey at Cavan Centre bringing together a network of independent youth justice projects (youth diversion programmes). Gaisce brought together 16 young people from 6 different projects - KEEP Kilmore West, Wooddale Youth Justice, Sphere 17 (Dublin 17), CLAY (Dublin 12), Brú (Dublin 12), Swan Youth Service (Dublin 1) and SMART (Trim, Co. Meath). 9 youth justice workers (PALs) also attended to support and supervise their participants.

The group did a 22km walk on the first day (June 29th), an overnight stay and then a 6km walk on Day 2. On the afternoon of June 30th, the young people got to do some water-based activities in the beautiful surrounds of Lough Sheelin, with supervision by the fantastic Cavan Centre staff. Gaisce's staff were on site for the activities.

On September 28th, the participants received their Gaisce Awards at a ceremony in Ratra House. A positive outcome was that several Community Gardaí from the regions/areas where the youth justice projects (youth diversion) are based attended the ceremony in addition to their service coordinators (PALs), and parents.

Click the link below to watch their story:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zT6Hsm2064>



Cavan Adventure Journey Video Screenshot.

# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## Approved Adventure Journey Providers

The Approved Adventure Journey Providers (AAJPs) initiative launched in April 2022 with eight Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) applying. After visits were undertaken to the approved centres, the numbers grew to eleven OETCs in the ETB network by the year end.

The work that Gaisce is doing in this area is being discussed positively in numerous outdoor education circles and with the launch of the initiative to all outdoor adventure centres in October, added a further eleven centres (and counting). The total centres who are now AAJPs by the end of 2022 was 22.

The AAJPs are a Gaisce approved and recognised national network of adventure centres providing quality Adventure Journey options for PALs and participants aligned with the Award requirements.

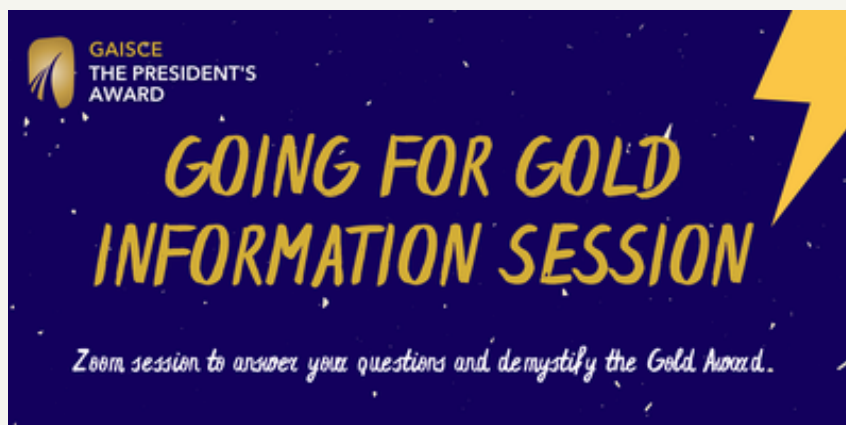


Approved Adventure Journey Provider Stamp

## Going For Gold and Gold Portfolio Preparation

In 2022 we hosted 5 Gold support events online, in order to support current and future gold participants and PALs on their Gold Journey.

Over 150+ PALs, Participants and those interested in undertaking the Gold Challenge attended Going for Gold Sessions and over 60+ participants came along to our Portfolio Session and Gold Check in Support in June and September respectively



Going for Gold Event Banner.



# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## President's Award Leaders

Gaisce's aim is to ensure young people, wherever they are and whatever their circumstances, can take up the President's Challenge and pursue a Gaisce Award. For that to happen, Gaisce must ensure sufficient 'access points' to the Award i.e. organisations that deliver Gaisce. The primary focus of Gaisce's work, therefore, is supporting President's Award Leaders, recruiting new Gaisce Award Partners and President's Award Leaders, and promoting the Award to potential participants.

A total of 772 organisations delivered Gaisce in 2022. Schools remain the environment in which most young people register for their Gaisce Award. In 2022, 588 or 80% of all post-primary schools in Ireland delivered the programme. This number includes 156 or 79% of Deis schools in Ireland which is a significant increase on the 114 or 56% of Deis schools in 2021. In addition to recruiting new and/or 'returning' Gaisce Award Partners, Award Partners remaining active year to year is another metric by which we measure success. Retention levels of Gaisce Award Partners remained healthy at 80% in 2022. In addition to organisations that 'returned' to delivering Gaisce after a break of a year, 37 new Gaisce partners were welcomed.

President's Award Leaders are the heart of Gaisce and we are indebted to the 1,237 PALs who supported young people through their Gaisce journey in 2022.

Throughout 2022 484 PALs were trained during 17 training sessions.

In September 2022 a new PAL Pack for 2022 was sent to 3,181 PALs.



President's Award Leaders with CEO Avril Ryan and Chair John Cunningham.

# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## Gaisce Gold Award Ceremony

140 young people achieved their Gold Awards in 2020 and 2021; 103 through Gaisce and 38 as part of the Joint Award Initiative with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

We were able to hold a ceremony for these Awardees in July 2022, with 74 young people in attendance, some assisted by parents and guardians or PALs.



Gold Awardees at Ratra House, Gaisce HQ.

The event began in Ratra House where the Awardees had the chance to meet each other, members of the Gaisce Team and Gaisce Council over afternoon tea and listening to music from local musician Kenan Flannery.

Buses then transported all Awardees to Áras an Uachtaráin for the ceremony, MC'd by Tara Flynn, attended by President Michael D. Higgins and with a special contribution from poet and Gold Awardee, Colm Keegan.



President Michael D. Higgins at the Gold Award Ceremony

All 74 young people were presented with their medal, pin and certificate by President Michael D. Higgins and CEO of Gaisce Yvonne McKenna before being hosted at a special celebratory reception in Áras an Uachtaráin main reception rooms.



Gold Awardees showcasing items relating to their Challenge Areas.

# 3 EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

## Digital Transformation

2022 saw the culmination of a digital transformation project in Gaisce that was two years in the making.

The project involved the introduction of a new online system to manage PALs, participants, and the awards process, with the objective of providing an enhanced user experience with our PALs at the forefront.

Previously there were two separate systems in place, which were not compatible with each other. The digital transformation project involved amalgamating the two separate systems into one integrated system.

The new system, GO (Gaisce Online) provides a smoother, more efficient user-friendly experience for PALs, and offers enhanced reporting functions for the Gaisce team.

In addition, it is a more efficient system with reduced administration requirements. The operating costs are also reduced by having one integrated system, rather than two separate systems.

The introduction of GO has proved very successful, receiving a positive response from PALs and the Gaisce team alike.





# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## INCOME

€1,016,043 (72%)

STATUTORY FUNDING & GRANTS

€290,713 (21%)

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FEES

€85,000 (6%)

NON-STATUTORY PHILANTHROPIC  
DONATIONS AND GRANTS

€4,331 (1%)

OTHER

## EXPENDITURE

€1,452,685 (98%)

CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE

€35,091 (2%)

COST OF RAISING FUNDS

Gaisce - The President's Award prepares its accounts in line with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Please note that the financial statements of the most recent three years are available on our website.

[2022 financial statements](#)

# GAISCE COUNCIL

**Our sincere thanks and appreciation to all members of the Gaisce Council, who give their time to support Gaisce - The President's Award work and governance in a voluntary capacity**

- Marcella Bannon (Term completed 15/9/2022)
- Samantha Briody
- Dr. Norah Burns
- John Cunningham (Chairperson)
- Pauric Dempsey
- Miriam Dollard (Term completed 30/6/2022)
- Denis Duggan
- Jenny Gannon
- Dr. Emma Farrell
- Áine Kerr
- Dr. Ali Khan
- Philly McMahon (Term completed 1/9/2022)
- Paul Sweetman
- Vincent Teo
- Emily Ann Whelton (Appointed 1/7/2022)

# GAISCE STAFF

*Yvonne McKenna, CEO*

*Avril Ryan, Acting CEO*

*Shane Barr, Niall Barrett, Ger Brady, Síona Cahill, Paul Darby, Alex Davis, Karen Dervan, Niamh Dillon, Shauna Hoey, Marion Irwin-Gowran, Kate Kelly, Maria Leavy, Siobhan Noctor, Eve O'Brien, Stephen Peers, Deirdre Phelan, Louise Place, Karol Quinn, Susie Spratt, Joy Winston, Emily Wolfe, Mary Yore*

Gaisce - The President's Award, Ratra House, North Road, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8, Ireland, D08 YD62 t: +353 1 6171999 | e: [info@gaisce.ie](mailto:info@gaisce.ie) | w: [www.gaisce.ie](http://www.gaisce.ie) @GaisceAward Gaisce - Gradam an Uachtaráin, The President's Award is a company limited by guarantee (CRO 251020) and with a CHY and RCN number (8482 and 20020903 respectively). Our registered address is Ratra House, Phoenix Park, Dublin D08YD62.

# THANK YOU

## GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT

### PRIMARY SUPPORTER



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

### PROGRAMME SUPPORTERS



**Irish Aid**

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund

Our special thanks to President Michael D. Higgins and the staff of the Office of the President.

Thank you to all of our brilliant President's Award Leaders and Gaisce Award Partners and all the young people who register for and complete their Gaisce awards, and all those who support us throughout the year, including our philanthropic supporters and key support staff for our grants.

Many thanks to all our many Programme Partners in 2022 including: IMMA, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Narrative 4, Mountjoy Progression Unit, Maynooth Access Programme, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Northern Ireland, The International Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Lidl Ireland, Irish Prison Service, The Defence Forces and Staff in Custume Barracks Athlone, Midlands LGBT Project, TENI, Belongto, Jigsaw, NYCI, Eco Unesco, Working to Change, Google Ireland, parkrun Ireland, Tidy Towns, Tusla, Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, our Dual Award Partners in Scouting Ireland, Irish Girl Guides and the Catholic Guides and many more.



**GAISCE**  
**THE PRESIDENT'S**  
**AWARD**