

2022-2025

STRATEGIC  
PLAN



GAISCE  
THE PRESIDENT'S  
AWARD

# FOREWORD

**Gaisce – The President’s Award is delighted to present our 2022-25 Strategic Plan.**

As a result of considerable change within Gaisce – The President’s Award, which included both an internal restructure of the organisation and an almost entirely new Council coming on board, Gaisce decided to extend the period of our last strategic plan by one year.



In 2020, A new Strategic Plan had just been signed off by Gaisce’s Council members, when Covid-19 struck. Necessarily, our priorities as an organisation shifted to operating quickly and efficiently in the new reality of a global pandemic.

Gaisce’s Award programme withstood the challenges of public health restrictions and stepped up to meet the evolving needs of our team, our incredible network of volunteer President’s Award Leaders, and most importantly, our Gaisce Award participants aged between 14-25 nationwide, from a diversity of backgrounds, locations, and cohorts.

In light of Covid19, this Strategic Plan was reviewed once again by Gaisce’s Council and was found to be very much fit for purpose - and that the vision, mission, values and priorities set out stay true.

## **Our priorities 2022-2025 include:**

- To **build** on what has been achieved, ensuring Gaisce is accessible to as many young people across Ireland as possible, through partnerships with likeminded organisations;
- To **evidence** the positive impact of Gaisce through telling the wonderful stories of Gaisce participants, Gaisce Awardees and President’s Award Leaders;
- To **strive** for excellence in all that we do.

Gaisce – The President’s Award’s emphasis on global citizenship and social agency, and the commitment to unlocking and celebrating the innate talents and abilities of young people across Ireland is exactly where the focus of the organisation should be, and will be in the years ahead.

There is a lot in store for the next few years – the journey continues here!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cunningham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

John Cunningham

Chairperson, 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

<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	Making a difference, effecting change and enabling young people to shape their path to self-discovery, through and with others
<b>INCLUSION AND EQUALITY</b>	Every person having the opportunity to grow their potential through equality of access, participation and outcome
<b>RESPECT</b>	Valuing people equally, recognising diversity, and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity
<b>EXCELLENCE</b>	Making an impact through pursuing the highest standards, operating with integrity and in a transparent manner



# PILLARS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



# PILLAR I: BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

## Strategic Objectives



### **EQUALITY OF ACCESS**

1. Strengthen access points to Gaisce for all young people affected by disadvantage through a diversity and inclusion programme delivered in youth and community settings.
2. Strengthen access points to Gaisce for young people across all post primary and second chance education.
3. Strengthen the Joint Award Initiative partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to ensure any young person in Northern Ireland who wishes to achieve a Gaisce Award can do so.



### **RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP**

1. Continue Gaisce's unique role in encouraging young people, in the pursuit of their Award, to consider and question the world around them and the role they can play in creating a more just and equal society.
2. Incorporate into Gaisce the importance of nurturing young people's role as critical agents with infinite capacity for activism in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Position Gaisce as an essential programme for post-primary schools and centres of education to deliver the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

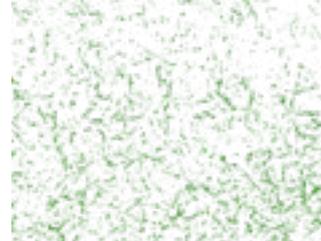


### **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

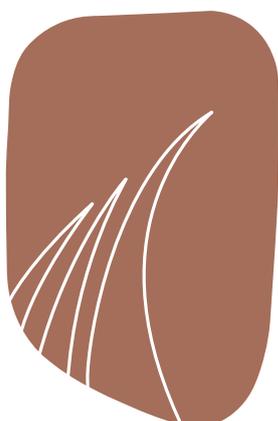
1. Support, recognise and reward President's Award Leaders (PALs) and Gaisce Award Partners, highlighting the centrality of their role in inspiring positive impact for young people.
2. Through strategic partnerships with civic society, continue to ensure that Gaisce is available to any young person who wishes to participate and explore opportunities for increased accessibility.



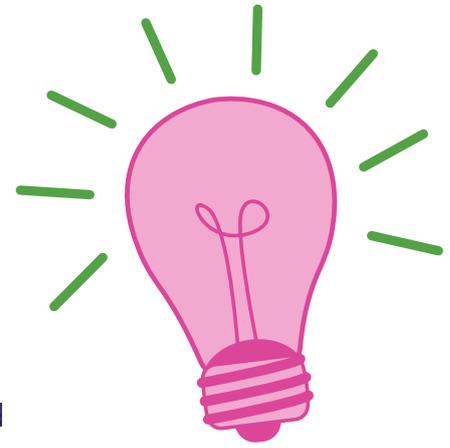
## Actions:



- Maintain and grow relationships with schools (both DEIS and non-DEIS), achieving targets in relation to participation in Gaisce and across all levels of the Award.
- Advance post-primary second-year pilot to mainstream delivery.
- Maintain and grow relationships across alternative education settings, achieving targets in relation to participation in Gaisce and across all levels of the Award.
- Identify opportunity to embed Gaisce as a key programme in delivery/ implementation of Wellbeing Policy and Framework.
- Establish formal relationship with school leadership through partnership with National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD).
- Achieve targets in relation to existing diversity, equality and inclusion projects, developing new projects in specific areas.
- Put Gaisce’s values at the core of how and where young people and PALs engage with the programme.
- Forge new partnerships with civic society organisations to ensure participants can engage with and embrace the Sustainable Development Goals into their Gaisce journey.
- Design and implement enhanced PAL and Gaisce Award Partner reward and recognition plan.
- Working in partnership with Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, develop and implement annual Joint Award Initiative workplans to include communications campaigns, joint initiatives and Award ceremonies.



# PILLAR II: TELL OUR STORY



## Strategic Objectives

-  1. Significantly enhance the profile of Gaisce in Ireland with particular emphasis on the values of the organisation and which underpin the Gaisce Award programme.
-  2. Evidence the positive impact of participation in the Gaisce Awards and advocate and advance the importance of Positive Youth Development and formation of the self in interaction with others.
-  3. Engage with Gaisce participants and Gaisce Awardees, harnessing their insight, experience, voice and energy, encouraging them to tell their stories of unlocking the immense potential that is in all of us.



## Actions:

- Put Gaisce’s values at the forefront and central to all the organisation’s communications, from training to collateral.
- Implement 360° Communications Plan (incorporating anniversary plans as Gaisce turns 40 in 2025), achieving set targets.
- Design and implement a targeted public awareness and stakeholder-engagement campaign highlighting Gaisce’s relevance across a broad range of policy areas and which can influence policy and practice.
- Liaise closely with the President and the Office of the President to update on progress and ensure continued alignment of values and objectives.
- Identify and establish partnerships that tangibly advance the specific strategic objectives of Gaisce in relation to positioning and awareness.
- Undertake research that builds on current (PhD) evidence of benefits and impact of Gaisce.
- Implement participant and Awardee engagement plans, achieving set targets.

# PILLAR III: EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO



## PARTICIPANTS

1. Encourage participants to live Gaisce's values in all aspects of their Award.
2. Become a better-informed youth organisation by listening and learning from young people through their involvement and participation in the organisation.



## PRESIDENT'S AWARD LEADERS

1. Build and maintain a strong community of President's Award Leaders that are appropriately trained and supported to deliver Gaisce to the highest standard.



## GOVERNANCE

1. Be fully compliant with all requirements under charities legislation, company law and other regulations and best practice.
2. Engender a culture of governance practice which empowers Council members to play an active role commensurate with the legal and ethical responsibilities of their position.
3. Be a responsible employer, adhering to best HR policy and practice, and providing an environment in which people flourish.
4. Ensure an effective and efficient organisation through an appropriate management information system and information and communication technology.
5. Based on an appropriate and sustainable model, ensure the organisation has sufficient funding to achieve the aspirations of the plan.





## Actions:

- Utilise appropriate opportunities to engage directly with participants, ensuring the core values and objectives of the Award are communicated.
- In addition to the formal structures encouraging young people to apply to join the Gaisce Council, establish a youth panel to advise and sense check the organisation's activities.
- Create and maintain feedback loops with PALs and participants to ensure that the programme is being delivered to a high standard, is being experienced as it should be, and that Gaisce is learning from PALs and participants in relation to improving support.
- Train sufficient numbers of PALs across a diversity of Gaisce Award Partners and with a strong geographic spread, addressing gaps where necessary.
- Continually evaluate and regularly review and refine PAL training, achieving targets.
- Review, improve and deliver a comprehensive PAL support programme that ensures consistent high-quality programme delivery and PAL retention.
- Design and implement an internal evaluation framework that measures impact of participation for PALs and participants.
- Explore quality assurance mechanisms for Bronze/Silver.
- Achieve set targets in relation to full compliance with Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code and all other regulatory obligations, identifying opportunities for sectoral recognition.
- Review and revise current Performance and Development Process, incorporate reward and recognition element, and implement.
- Develop wellbeing programme for staff and implement.
- Implement the diversity, equality and inclusion framework.
- Through tender, identify partner/supplier for new IT system and project manage its implementation.
- Undertake Council-led review of funding opportunities towards development of sustainable and appropriate funding model plan and its implementation.



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# VALUES PROPOSITION

Gaisce is motivated by the following four core values:



We are committed to ensuring these core values are embedded across all areas of our work, and in our practice and processes.

This Values Proposition sets out:

- A value statement, setting out the meaning of each value as it pertains to Gaisce;
- A statement of objective, setting out what the organisation aims to achieve in regard to each value;
- A statement of process, setting out the approach to the organisation’s work in regard to each value;
- A statement of practice, setting out how staff and management practice and behaviours will reflect each value.



# EMPOWERMENT

## VALUES STATEMENT:

Making a difference, effecting change and enabling young people to shape their path to self-discovery, through and with others.



## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE:

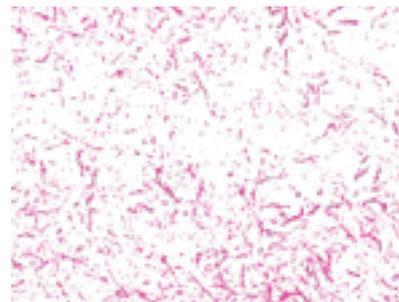
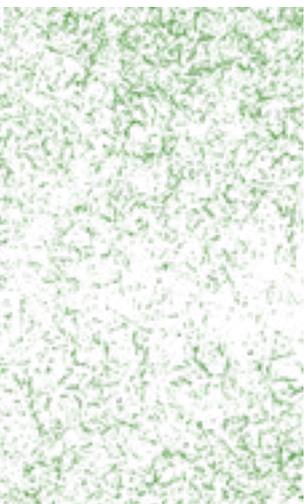
Gaisce seeks to ensure that our programme contributes to making a difference: in the lives of young people who participate; to the communities those young people belong to; and to wider Irish society. We seek to create opportunities for people to feel a sense of belonging with the world and resonance with others through shared experiences.

## STATEMENT OF PROCESS:

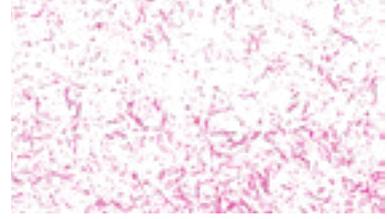
Gaisce enables young people to shape their own Gaisce journey, ensuring this is one of discovery and self-development and which enables them to make a positive contribution to their communities. We identify and communicate the difference our programme seeks to make and we assess our programme in terms of: young people's development; stronger communities; and more engaged communities.

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE:

Gaisce staff practice is characterised by a youth-friendly and collaborative approach.



# INCLUSION AND EQUALITY



## VALUES STATEMENT:

Every person having the opportunity to grow their potential through equality of access, participation and outcome.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE:

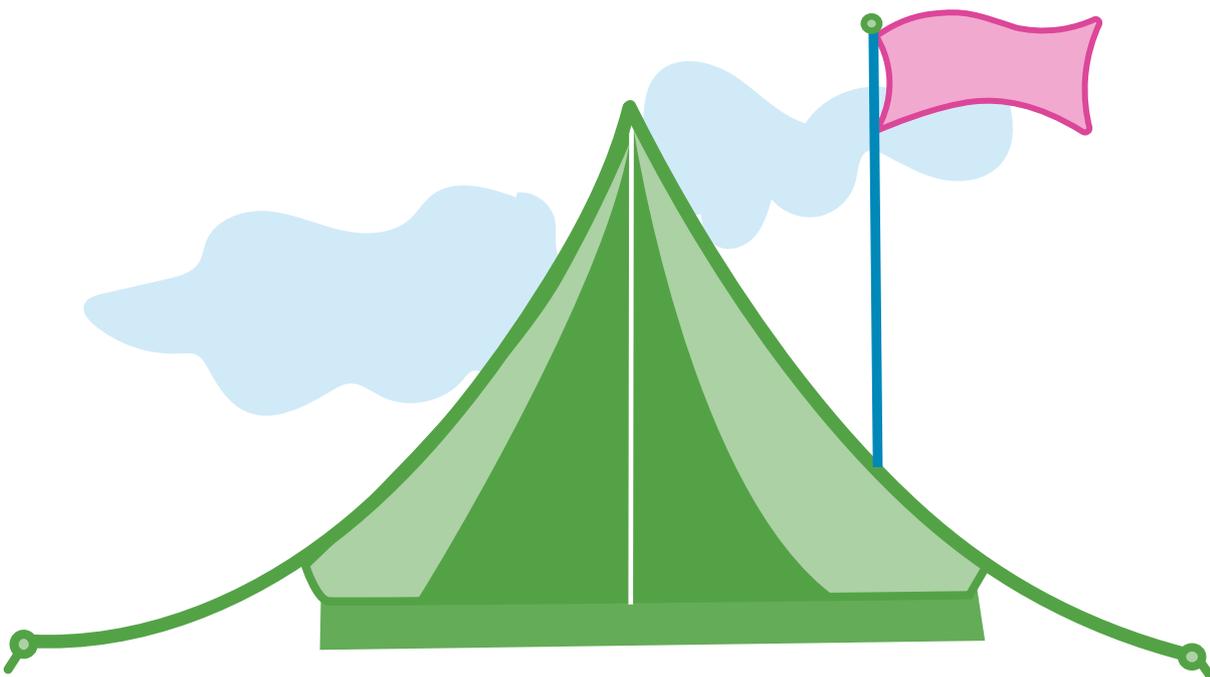
Gaisce seeks to ensure diversity in regard to: the young people participating in our programme; our partners; and our staff and council membership, with a view to achieving equality of access, participation and outcome for people from groups covered by the equality legislation and those who experience inequality on the basis of their socio-economic status. To this end, we emphasise the importance and centrality of empathy to the Gaisce programme.

## STATEMENT OF PROCESS:

Gaisce sets equality targets for its work, takes action to identify and remove barriers to our programme and Awards for young people experiencing inequality, makes adjustments to take account of and ensure accessibility for a diversity of staff members, and a diversity of young people participating in our programme.

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE:

Gaisce staff practice is informed by an understanding of equality and diversity issues and this is supported by training on equality and diversity.



# RESPECT

## VALUES STATEMENT:

Valuing people equally, recognising diversity, and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE:

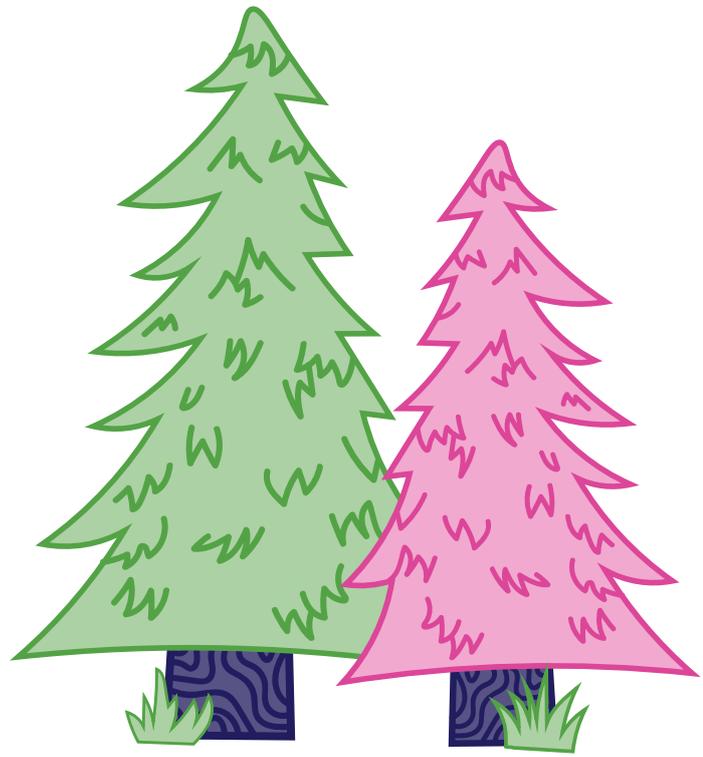
Gaisce seeks to ensure high standards in its working relationships, by valuing and taking account of the diversity of our staff, stakeholders and partners, promoting inclusivity and community, and eschewing all mitigating barriers.

## STATEMENT OF PROCESS:

Gaisce listens and responds to stakeholders, treats them with dignity and courtesy, and communicates in a timely and relevant manner with them. We ensure a respectful and safe work environment free from harassment and discrimination.

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE:

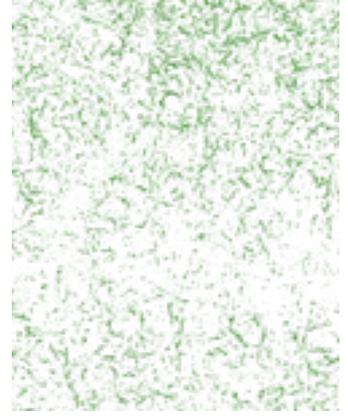
Gaisce staff practice contributes to a work environment where everyone's views and opinions are listened to, acknowledged and respected, where colleagues are respected and their contribution and potential recognised, and where there is open and transparent internal communication.



# EXCELLENCE

## VALUES STATEMENT:

Making an impact through pursuing the highest standards, operating with integrity and in a transparent manner.



## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE:

Gaisce seeks to ensure our work adheres to best practice standards and legal requirements and strives to continually innovate in achieving our mission, recognising and privileging the efficacy of co-operation over efficiency.

## STATEMENT OF PROCESS:

Gaisce is transparent about its work, has adequate and appropriate internal policies and procedures to govern our operations and practice, and ensures these are implemented. We prize innovation in the design and delivery of our programme and ensure this innovation is: evidence based; subject to evaluation; and reflective of our values. Our human resource management processes strive for the highest standards and we ensure our values are embedded in these processes.

## STATEMENT OF PRACTICE:

Gaisce staff practice reflects our core values, is results-driven and outcomes-focused, and is supported by training to ensure staff can fulfil their responsibilities to best effect.

## LIVING OUR VALUES:

Gaisce is committed to a planned and systematic approach to living our core values. This will be achieved by applying our Values Proposition as follows:

Key Organisational Moments:

We will include a focus on our values at key moments in our operations, in particular:

- Planning and delivery of our Awards ceremonies;
- Annual reviews and reports;
- Strategic planning.

## OPERATIONS:

We will include a focus on our values proposition as part of our day-to-day operations, in particular:

- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained and supported to give life to the values proposition in order to embed core values into their work (for example, training on equality and diversity issues);



- Ensuring relevant policies and procedures (recruitment, induction etc.) are aligned with the values proposition and reviewing regularly;
- Implementing a values-led approach by ensuring our internal processes (such as annual staff appraisals, annual work plans) include a values-focus;
- Ensuring the induction of Council members includes a focus on our core values;
- Undertaking regular critical review of our operations to ensure delivery reflects the commitment to build in, and sustain, relevant accommodations and modifications to ensure equality of access, participation and outcome for the diversity of young people seeking to take part and/or taking part in the programme.

### **ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:**

We will include a focus on our values proposition as part of our engagement with external stakeholders, in particular:

- Incorporating our core values and ensuring the values proposition is reflected in the work of our partnerships, strategic connections, and in new relationships.



### **PAL TRAINING:**

- Ensuring our core values are communicated in our publications and on our website;
- Communicating our values to key stakeholders and our funders.

### **BUILDING AND SUSTAINING THE CULTURE OF OUR WORKPLACE:**

We will use our values proposition to shape the culture of the organisation, in particular:

- Engaging in periodical team reviews to ensure we are living our core values and implementing the values proposition;
- Hosting an annual team values workshop;
- Including a values-focus in the recruitment of staff and volunteers to ensure an alignment with our core values;
- Visually displaying our core values in the workplace;
- Building a workplace culture where people can be respectfully challenged where core values are not being lived;
- Undertaking team-building activities to foster a values-led workplace.



# STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT OF IRELAND, MICHAEL D. HIGGINS





UACHTARÁN NA HÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

**STATEMENT FROM MICHAEL D. HIGGINS**  
**UACHTARAN NA HÉIREANN - PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**  
**ON THE OCCASION OF GAISCE PUBLISHING ITS STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2022-2025**

Gaisce, the President’s Award, has now been in existence for some 36 years. The Awards initially flourished under the patronage of my predecessor President Patrick J. Hillary and have been continually supported by each President since then. It has been my pleasure to continue this legacy and to engage with the continuing evolution of this Award which has now seen the participation of over 500,000 young people.

During my Presidency, one of the initiatives I have put forward has been that of ‘Transformation and Participation’. This initiative compliments the core goal of Gaisce in encouraging everyone in Ireland to realise their personal contribution, delivered with others, with the purpose of strengthening society through the recognition, support and encouragement of a diversity of abilities, experiences and perspectives.

Gaisce is driven by a commitment to a better society, by the enthusiasm, ability and resilience of young people. Through the Gaisce programme, young people are encouraged and guided so that their innate talents and abilities, as well as their sense of citizenship and social agency, can be realised to their full potential.

Gaisce seeks to follow and adhere to core values that are set out by its staff and council members and that seek to achieve the projects of the President as patron. These values include empowerment, inclusion and equality, respect, social responsibility and excellence. I am happy to see that these values feature prominently in the new Gaisce Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Gaisce has decided that the vision for this Plan is for “an Ireland where young people dream big and fulfil their potential”. This is apposite. Never more than now do we need young people to join with others of different generations, becoming engaged as activists for change as we face the great challenges of our time – including those of climate change, rapidly declining biodiversity, global poverty, famine affecting 41 million of our fellow global citizens, and rising inequality, as well as falling social cohesion which itself is leading to democratic crises around the world.

Inclusive, participative and active citizenship is a project of my Presidency. I believe that it represents our best hope for solving so many of these great challenges, and that Gaisce, by providing a platform for young citizens to make a difference, and by its encouraging and partnering of young people so that their innate talents and abilities, sense of citizenship and social agency can be fully realised, is making a vital contribution.

Gaisce is about self-discovery, through and with others, seeking to enable every young person to have the opportunity to grow their potential through equality of access, participation and outcome. At my request, in recent times, Gaisce has widened its remit to include young people in prisons as well as in direct provision, and I have asked it to work towards achieving a balance between urban and rural projects and, above all, to achieve a participation of young people irrespective of income, class or circumstance.

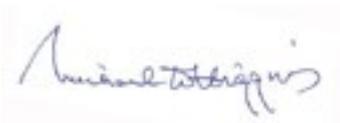
Gaisce is about valuing people equally, recognising and celebrating diversity, and ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity. Gaisce is also about making an impact through the pursuit of the highest standards, while operating with integrity and transparency.

I welcome the statements and actions contained in the new Gaisce Strategic Plan. They will, I believe, help and enhance Gaisce's existing strengths and capacity by building on these, continue the fostering of all of the innate talents and abilities of our young people, thus contributing to active citizenship, participative democracy and developing social agency.

Gaisce has achieved so much by enabling so many to embark on a journey in which young people across the island have demonstrated not only a personal determination, but also a commitment to the service of their communities and of their fellow citizens. I commend all of those who have participated in Gaisce since its inception for their efforts, efforts that cross such a wide range of activities and innovations that have enriched both themselves individually as well as their local communities and wider society.

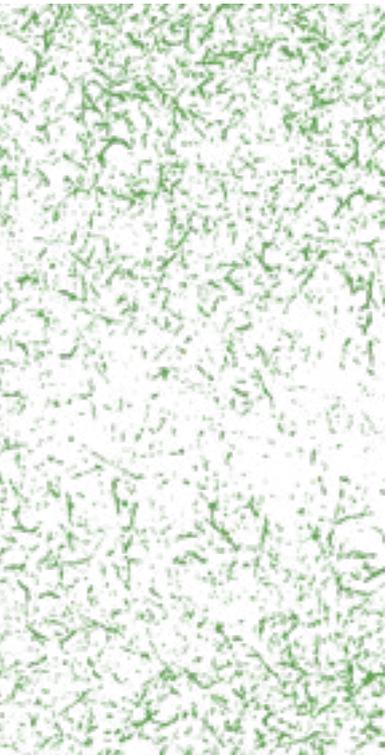
May I take this opportunity to thank the entire team at Gaisce, led by Yvonne McKenna, and the Gaisce Board, for their tireless work, excellence and dedication.

Beir beannacht.

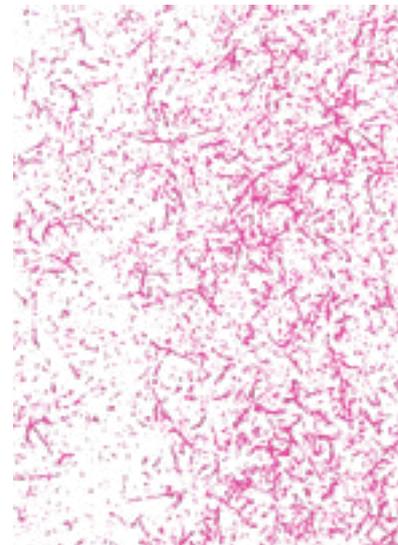


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THE PRESIDENT'S  
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Gaisce - Gradam an Uachtaráin, The President's Award is a company limited by guarantee (CRO 251020) and with a CHY and RCN number (8482 and 20020903 respectively). Our registered address is Ratra House, Phoenix Park, Dublin D08YD62.

Current members of Gaisce Council can be viewed here:



