



Down Syndrome Ireland's fundraising income is down over 30%.



Charitable challenges

The income of support charities has dropped off the side of a cliff since the pandemic began.

Margaret Hawkins speaks to some charities, about the work they do and how they plan to fundraise in 2021

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2021 might be tougher than 2020 on the money front, says the majority of charitable support organisations for those with chronic illness. How do they fund their frontline services when fundraising days are cancelled and charity shops are closed due to recurring lockdowns? Many, as you'll see,

receive no State support – or very little – so are dependent on contributions from the public.

Because of the pandemic, most charities have gone online to try to keep income flowing, so here we give some of those who are in touch with the health page regularly the opportunity to explain what they do and highlight their virtual fundraising efforts.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS IRELAND

Cystic Fibrosis Ireland supports people with cystic fibrosis across the country.

"People with cystic fibrosis are a high-risk group from COVID-19 and have to cocoon from the virus," a representative states. "They need support now more than ever. Cystic Fibrosis Ireland does not receive State support and relies on public donations and fundraising events to raise in excess of €1m each year.

"Unfortunately, these fundraising events cannot take place due to the pandemic. Cystic Fibrosis Ireland is asking for your support for their National Fundraising Day – 65 Roses Day. As it cannot collect, they are asking you to donate online at cfireland.ie. Alternatively you could set up a 65 Roses Challenge. This can be any 65-themed challenge, eg a 6.5km walk/run, 65,000 steps, 65km cycle or 65 lengths of the pool. You could do this on your own or as a team challenge."

Full details available at www.cfireland.ie

Down Syndrome Ireland

Down Syndrome Ireland is the voice of people with Down Syndrome and their families through-

out Ireland. It says:

"We provide a wide range of vital services, including early intervention, speech and language therapy, health, education, personal development and employment opportunities.

"In response to COVID-19, we moved a number of our services online and hosted over 505 virtual events to support children and adults with Down syndrome in their own homes.

"From Zoom classes, training and webinars to virtual puppet shows, our teams have been busy providing support to maintain consistency in the learning and development of our members.

"Our fundraising income is down over 30% and with only 14% State funding, we are heavily reliant on public fundraising. With the help of Irish rugby star Conor Murray we launched our 21-Day Challenge during lockdown."

Please share the journey at www.downsyndrome.ie

IRISH CANCER SOCIETY (ICS)

These are challenging times for everyone, but particularly for cancer patients, the organisation says:

"Imagine having to go in for the first day of cancer treatment all on your own after receiving a life-changing diagnosis, and missing the support of friends and family. This is the reality for so many patients at the moment.

"Throughout the pandemic we are doing our best to help by giving free and safe lifts to chemotherapy appointments. We support people spending their precious final days at home by providing end-of-life night

nursing and helping patients with their concerns through our 1800 200 700 freephone support line.

"2020 was a difficult year for the ICS. We had to cancel our traditional Daffodil Day in March which normally raises up to €4m. This will be another tough year, so your donations at www.cancer.ie can make all the difference for patients relying on our services in 2021."

Despite the efforts of supporters online, the ICS was still down €2m in 2020. It's 21 charity shops were 43% down on budget. Marathon income was down 66%.

MORE CHARITIES

There are many more charities in Ireland that support people with illness.

See www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/carer-support/supportorganisations/ to find the one important to you.

ASTHMA SOCIETY

Under the strain of the COVID-19 pandemic the Asthma Society of Ireland's services are needed now more than ever, a spokesperson says.

"Three hundred and eighty thousand people in Ireland are living with asthma, and our nurse-led Asthma Adviceline (1800 445 464) and Asthma/COPD WhatsApp (086-059 0132) are experiencing an unprecedented number of calls from concerned patients and caregivers alike.

COVID-19 has had a severe impact on our fundraising capabilities and we are really struggling. Urgent financial support from the public is required to keep our doors open so we can continue to meet the demand for our services. Please support our crucial work by donating on www.asthma.ie or fundraising on behalf of The Asthma Society. Email fundraising@asthma.ie to arrange your fundraising pack today."

Irish Heart Foundation

This St Valentine's Day, 'Show Some Heart' and help the Irish Heart Foundation support people living with heart conditions around the country.

Take part in their virtual Love Run on Valentine's Day – a 5km run or walk – in celebration

of love in all its guises. Run for your mum, your dad, your partner, your grandparents, your kids, your friends – or even for yourself. Register and the Irish Heart Foundation will send you out an Irish Heart Foundation neckwarmer.



LauraLynn Children's Hospice

LauraLynn, Ireland's Children's Hospice, has launched a fundraising challenge fronted by broadcaster Ray D'Arcy which involves running or walking a marathon a week during 2021.

Ray is a long-standing supporter of LauraLynn and he is also an avid marathon runner, which is how Ray's Marathon Challenge was born. Ray decided to set the nation's running and walking lovers a challenge of clocking up 26.2 miles in a week, every week, for a full year. Ray is hoping

to get 1,000 like-minded people to sign up and join his challenge. If every one of those 1,000 people raised €500 each throughout the year, that would raise a whopping half a million euro for LauraLynn.

If you think you're up for the challenge you can register your interest and find out more information at www.raysmarathonchallenge.ie. By joining this challenge, you will get access to a community of runners and walkers who are also taking part in the challenge.

Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the national leader in advocating for and providing dementia-specific supports and services.

The ASI says this pandemic has been a perfect storm.

"The closure of our face-to-face services such as day centres, social clubs, Alzheimer cafes and carer training has really hit our people hard.

"The ASI has continued to support our people during the crisis as our Home Care, Dementia Advisers, National Helpline and Online Family Carer Training have remained open and we have implemented new ways of providing

supports remotely.

"However, many are still missing face-to-face contact and have nowhere to go each day to keep them active and stimulated.

"The ASI has a number of national fundraising campaigns planned for 2021 to provide essential care and support to those living with dementia whose lives are being torn apart by COVID-19."

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am-5pm and Saturday 10am-4pm on 1800 341 341. **CL**

www.alzheimer.ie



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND (NCBI)

Ireland's charity for the blind, the NCBI, has said it is "genuinely concerned" over its ability to fund frontline services as it expects to lose more than €1m due to the closure of its shops for six weeks under the new Level 5 lockdown.

The charity said the closure of its 114 shops around the country would put it under enormous pressure and is asking anyone wishing to support NCBI's frontline services to check out hundreds of quality stock items for sale at www.thriftify.ie

Chris White, CEO of NCBI says,

"Our services throughout 2020 have been in high demand and we've responded accordingly to ensure people who are blind or vision impaired are supported and stay connected. COVID-19 has affected everyone's lives, but it has also robbed people of their sense of touch, which is vital for people who are blind or vision impaired and has led to increased feelings of isolation and vulnerability."

NCBI runs a weekly Eye Can lottery, as well as other online events. donate.ncbi.ie