



Chime

The National Charity for
Deafness and Hearing Loss



**Annual Report
2020**

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Chairman's foreword



DECLAN KEANE

Like many other organisations, Chime experienced a very challenging year in 2020. However, as I reflect on our achievements, I look back with a sense of pride in how Chime reacted to those challenges. While many of our in-person activities had to be curtailed, our teams found new and innovative ways to support our service users. On a brighter note, one of the upsides of the devastating COVID-19 situation has been the regular sight of ISL interpreters on our daily news bulletins, an important development that Chime and other organisations have long been calling for.

During 2020 we established a new approach to the delivery of Specialist Services, including a very ambitious range of new projects for the coming years. Last year proved to be a breakthrough year for our Residential Home Care Service, as we secured HSE funding to open our first ever Home of Choice — something we have been campaigning on for many years. It was heartening to see the hard work and resilience of our management team paying off. I look forward to future support from the HSE and Government as we develop this and other services to meet the needs of many vulnerable Deaf people.

As Chime reached the end of the three-year strategy we put in place in 2017/2018, we are very satisfied with the progress made on many of our priority objectives. We took the time in early 2021 to reflect further on those objectives and our aims for the future; part of this process was listening to all our stakeholder groups as we worked on refreshing our strategic focus for the coming years. We have launched our new strategy for 2021/2024 (read more about the new strategy on page 39.)

Finally I would like to thank Mark Byrne, his management team and the entire Chime staff for the tremendous job they have done during 2020. Chime has achieved some hugely positive changes over the past few years, progress only made possible with the support of our entire team.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Declan Keane', written in a cursive style.

DECLAN KEANE
Chairman of the Board



CEO's foreword



MARK BYRNE

While 2020 was marked by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was also a year of great pride and achievement for Chime. Our organisation faced many obstacles as we connected with clients — including the need to protect staff, the opening and closing of services and a series of financial hurdles. However, instead of retreating to the sidelines, the team discovered new reserves of resilience and creativity. Together we worked to overcome our challenges and transformed 2020 into a positive year with many of our goals accomplished.

Back in 2018, Chime first began dividing its activities between Community-based Services and Specialist Services. Community Services really came into their own during the pandemic when our staff went the extra mile to connect with clients, regularly checking in with over 500 individuals. With the help of our newly-launched Facebook Live updates, we kept our community in the loop and shared advice and information both about our services and how they were impacted by COVID-19. We were also able to enhance our services in the South-East with the opening of a new resource centre in Waterford.

In late 2020, plans for two new Specialist Services became a reality and today that side of our work continues to go from strength to strength. Continuous hard work behind the scenes resulted in the launch of Chime's first Residential Service and the Explore programme, both opening their doors in early 2021.

Sadly health and safety restrictions meant the cancellation of Chime summer camps and other in-person activities but we quickly pivoted to move events online. Among other events, we launched the very successful Newly Diagnosed Virtual Information Day and hosted an international conference in partnership with Hear and Say Australia and parents group Our New Ears.

Successful awareness and advocacy campaigns in 2020 included:

- Unaddressed Hearing Loss: a campaign to achieve an increase to the Hearing Aid PRSI grant, enabling people without medical cards to improve their quality of life
- Connect Project: a campaign launched with the HSE to obtain additional devices for people with hearing loss in order to reduce their vulnerability and sense of isolation during the pandemic.



Despite the difficulties of 2020, we continued to look for ways to strengthen our organisation. These included:

- a refresh of our organisational values
- the rollout of a new customer relationship management (CRM) system
- the launch of a second Employee Engagement Survey
- an improved financial position.

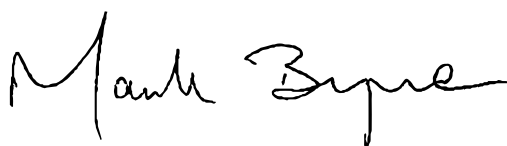
Governance remains an important priority for Chime and we continue to adhere to the three key Governance standards:

- Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- Fundraising Code of Best Practice
- Charities Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

There are a number of people and groups without whom our hard work and success would not be possible. I would like to pay tribute to the entire management team for their continued dedication, energy and passion for making a difference to the lives of so many people across Ireland. Our staff members, volunteers, Board of Directors, Board Sub-committees, partners, supporters, donors and funders all work hard to bring Chime's mission to fruition; their contribution makes a meaningful difference to thousands of individuals each and every year.

In particular, I would like to thank Declan Keane, our Chairman and the other members of our voluntary Board of Directors for their commitment, engagement, leadership, support and guidance.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank our clients for putting their trust in Chime as we help build a society in which deafness and hearing loss do not hold back potential, personal choice or quality of life.



MARK BYRNE

Chief Executive Officer



Mission



Mission and vision

Since 1964, Chime has championed for equal rights, greater accessibility and opportunities for individuals impacted by deafness and hearing loss in Ireland.



OUR VISION

A society with no limits or barriers for anyone living with deafness or hearing loss.



OUR MISSION

To limit the impact of deafness and hearing loss through promoting accessibility, creating supportive communities and enabling personal choice and community participation.

Our values

At Chime, we are determined to work with our values in mind. We want to create a service and support network that is inclusive and empowering, has a positive impact, shows integrity and is collaborative. We are proud of our core values because they help shape our culture and empower our team with decision-making.



AIM HIGH AND THINK BIG

We respect diversity and recognise the worth and dignity of every person. We are driven to inspire everyone to reach their potential.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We work together with dedication, empathy, creativity and passion to meet the needs of our clients. We hold ourselves accountable for delivering on our commitments.



TOGETHER IS BETTER

Teamwork is important to us. We strive to build meaningful relationships and to create more accessible services and supportive communities.



DO THE RIGHT THING

Our person-centred approach is open, honest, ethical and fair and we are proud of what we do.



Highlights of 2020



Home of Choice Residential Service

One of our key goals at Chime is to remove limits and barriers for individuals impacted by deafness and hearing loss. We achieved a significant step forward in that mission in 2020 as the foundations of the long-awaited Chime Home of Choice Residential Service were laid in place.

Since the service opened its doors in 2021, our three clients have all settled in exceptionally well to their new home. One of our first residents was Jenny, who has shared her impressions of life in Lorcan Villas in this Annual Report. She now lives in a house where ISL is the first language, enabling her to fully engage with what is happening in the house without aids such as an iPad, phone or an interpreter. Staff have observed that Jenny thrives in this environment and enjoys chatting with staff and other residents. Read her full story on page 24.

While health and safety restrictions in the first part of 2021 kept residents and staff indoors most of the time, there were plenty of opportunities for fun, laughter, and development of essential Independent Living Skills, with new weekly routines and daily activities now established.

Located in Santry, Dublin 9, the comfortable and modern four-bedroom house is relatively close to Deaf Village Ireland in Cabra, with minor accessibility works taking place in mid-November. Chime's first ever residential recruitment process was also completed in 2020, with Eithne Poufong brought on

board as our experienced Residential Services Manager, and Patrick Maher, Megan Sheridan, Gavin Wynn and Philip Culhane in place as our four Residential Community Facilitators.

This will be a two-year pilot programme initially, with hopes to expand the service to include more residents with the support of the HSE. Through Home of Choice, our residents are making developmental leaps forward, growing in confidence and independence and forming strong new relationships — a very important milestone for Chime in 2020.



Explore: young adult mentoring programme

“
A mentor empowers a person to see a possible future and believe it can be obtained.
”

Chime is passionate about supporting the rights of people with disabilities to access work by helping to build the skills, capacity and independence of our clients around Ireland. To this end, Explore, the Chime mentoring programme, went live in March 2021 after months of hard work in 2020. Explore provides individualised structured support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing young adults (aged 16–25 years) who are transitioning to further education, vocational training and/or employment.

Our programme mentors, Laura Donnellan and Julianne Gillen, have been working behind the scenes alongside David Buxonat, Chime Director of Specialist Services, since early September 2020, while funding (€97K) received from Pobal for this service was instrumental in making it happen.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the right of persons with disabilities to work in an environment that is open, inclusive and accessible. Here at Chime, we believe the mentoring element of Explore represents a very important step towards achieving that goal.

By encouraging job retention and entry into the workforce, the programme also aims to bridge existing gaps by ensuring appropriate support is provided — in this way we'll promote a more coordinated, self-directed and seamless transition beyond post primary education.

Low retention rates for young Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults in higher education is an area of concern, with research identifying the lack of deaf awareness amongst Access Officers as a contributing factor (AHEAD 2015). Explore mentors act as the link to connect the various support services with young Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults, in an effort to improve retention rates.

Thus far, the Explore programme has had a great reception and we have received over 20 referrals to date. In providing support for young Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults, Explore will also provide assistance to the many stakeholders that the young adult will engage with along the way, such as the education sector; vocational training bodies; professional agencies; employers; community and voluntary sector and residential and day services.



Rising to the challenges of COVID-19

As we look back at the unique, challenging and unpredictable year that was 2020, we can reflect with pride on the enormous efforts that were made to reach and support our clients in the face of COVID-19 restrictions. It was certainly a setback when Chime services were suspended and all Resource Centres closed in March, but the team quickly reacted with creativity and positivity to design and roll out a suite of new remote and virtual services.

We launched a suite of HSE resources for teams supporting Deaf clients during COVID-19 and increased our media exposure, with five Chime press releases covered by RTÉ, local radio, Journal.ie, The Irish Examiner, and Q102/FM104.

Our Newly Diagnosed Weekend migrated online in November, with great engagement from 14 families, thanks to the hard work of David Buxonat, Teresa O'Rourke and all the team. Presentations from Jennifer Robertson of Beaumont Hospital and Laura Keating, Valerie Downes, Geraldine Brennan, Damien Owens and Dave Browne, all from Chime, were a huge source of information and advice for the families that attended and feedback was extremely positive.



COVID-19 SUPPORT IN NUMBERS

87,000

views/shares via new Facebook Live sessions helped to reach a wider community.

500

Deaf adults supported by Social Workers and Community Resource Officers via video and in-person.

100

adults received a hearing device through the Connect Project.

295

clients were supported by social workers in 2020, an increase from 219 in 2019.

867

goals achieved in 2020, with 1,193 goals set.

21%

increase in drop-in and remote contacts.

Achievements of the Chime team

The impact of COVID-19 was felt by every member of the Chime team and each staff member went above and beyond in what was a very difficult time — often putting themselves in harm's way to reach vulnerable clients. As an organisation, Chime is very client-focused and our newly launched values now underpin that philosophy more accurately.

We chose to recognise four staff members who epitomised one of the Chime values through their approach to their work in 2020:

- **"Do the Right Thing: Integrity"**

Damien Owens received this award to acknowledge the assistance and support he provided to the social work team. Damien made a significant impact on a number of challenging cases.

- **"Make a Difference: Accountability and Positive Impact"**

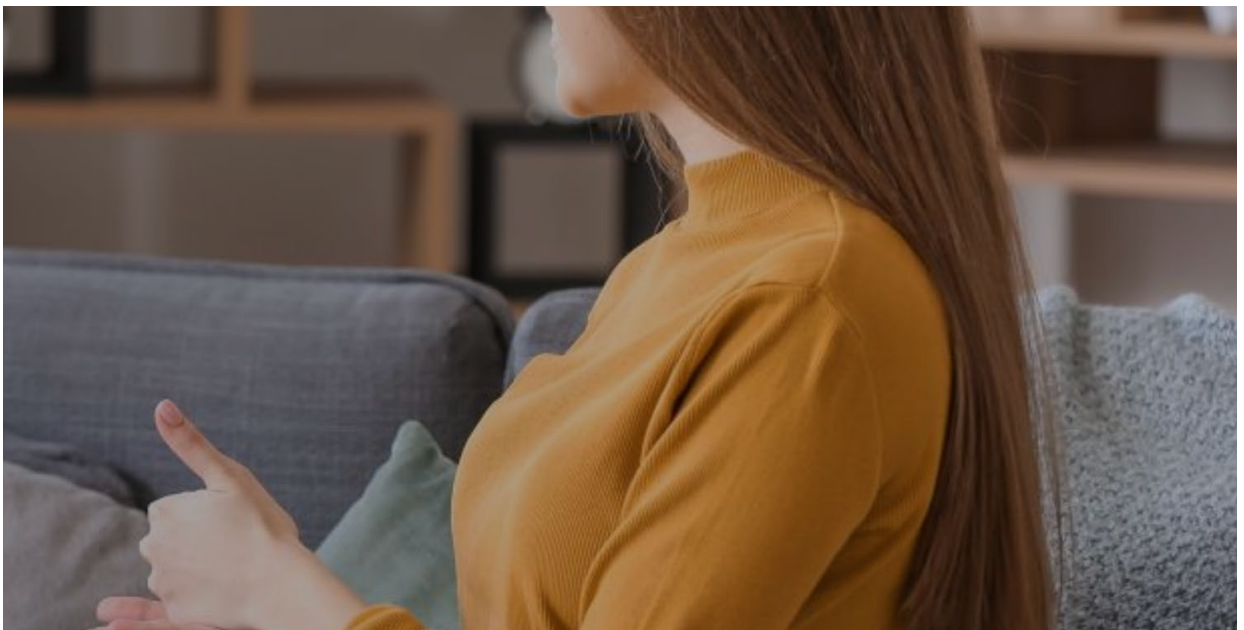
Fiona Hope was honoured with this award for her willingness to make a huge difference to the lives of individuals greatly impacted by the restrictions of COVID-19.

- **"Aim High and Think Big: Inclusion and Empowerment"**

This award went to Teresa O'Rourke. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, Teresa reinvented how social work services were delivered to Chime clients and took on a range of virtual challenges with enthusiasm.

- **"Together is Better: Collaboration"**

Shane Hamilton received this award for the hours of his personal time that he has dedicated to making Chime videos — supporting the Connect Project, Vulnerable Deaf Group and advocacy groups, amongst others.



Enhancing Listening and Spoken Language Worldwide Webinar

In October 2020, Hear and Say Australia, Our New Ears and Chime hosted a two-day webinar, presented by national and international experts in listening and spoken language (auditory-verbal practice). Professionals from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Australia presented various topics suitable for professionals and families of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Information on supporting children with cochlear implants, hearing aids and advice on developing listening, speech and spoken language skills was also offered.

Topics included:

- building a literate, social and musical brain
- how local groups can help you
- accelerating auditory brain development for optimal listening and speaking
- family-centred listening and spoken language practice
- red flags and causes of hearing loss
- 10 tips to engage learners in listening and spoken language sessions.

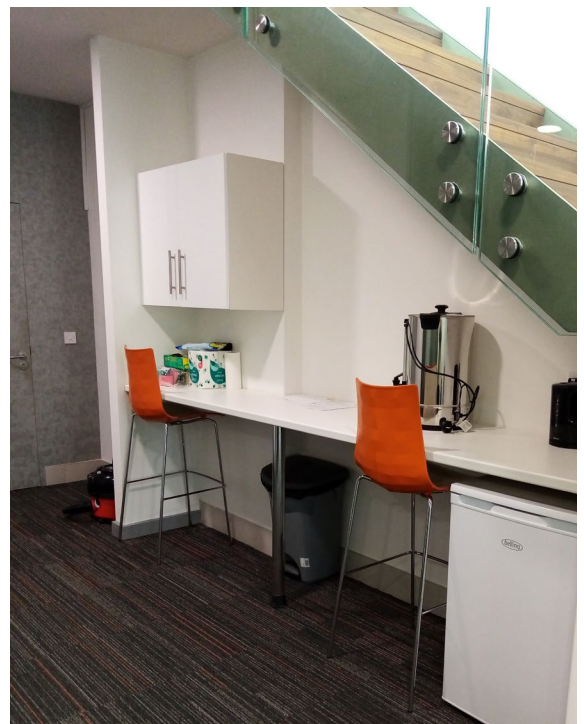


New Chime Waterford office

“
We are now fully accessible, on the ground floor and close to parking and public transport so clients now arrive to a more welcoming, bright, spacious and comfortable setting.
”

In September 2020, the Waterford Chime team moved into their new location on Merchant Quay. The new building has been given a Chime makeover and is now fit for purpose, with a bright and more client-friendly environment. Alona Troy, Chime Area Manager, explained that while the renovation and move was a huge team effort, it has brought many benefits.

“Our new office is a great showcase for Chime's brand. The convenient, busy location and office design are in keeping with our strategic goals. We are now fully accessible, on the ground floor and close to parking and public transport so clients now arrive to a more welcoming, bright, spacious and comfortable setting. The brighter office has been fitted out with new furniture and technology, which has boosted staff morale, making working days more comfortable and productive.”



Community service achievements

Technology assistance

Despite the pandemic we still managed to support over 1,000 people with their technology needs in 2020.

- Over 400 school children benefited from new edutech equipment.
- Over 350 people purchased hearing aids from Chime.
- Over 300 people were supported with personal and household technology through our LifeTech team.

Tinnitus

For the majority of the year, our tinnitus support service was required to operate online. Nonetheless we were able to support over 400 people who live with tinnitus — delivering 1:1 support and online well-being group sessions that focused on coping strategies such as mindfulness and meditation.

Advice and information

A key part of Chime's work is to ensure that the first step of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people towards seeking support is greeted with compassion and professionalism. In 2020, we launched a new booklet for our Information Officers that maps out key advice on a wide range of topics — from technology to rights and entitlements, minor hearing aid repairs to battery sales. In 2021, we followed up with our first ever mystery shopper programme.

Outreach clinics

Prior to the pandemic, we made a conscious decision to expand our outreach clinic service in the knowledge that some of our clients struggle to reach us. By March 2020, we had expanded to over 30 locations around Ireland, with locations at community centres, national hospitals and even a clinic on the Aran Islands. (See the map on page 16 for a full list of clinics.)

Support groups for Deaf clients

Like many other in-person activities, support groups were curtailed during the pandemic but moved online with great success. While we couldn't meet people face-to-face, our online support kept people connected and monitored their safety and well-being during this tough time.



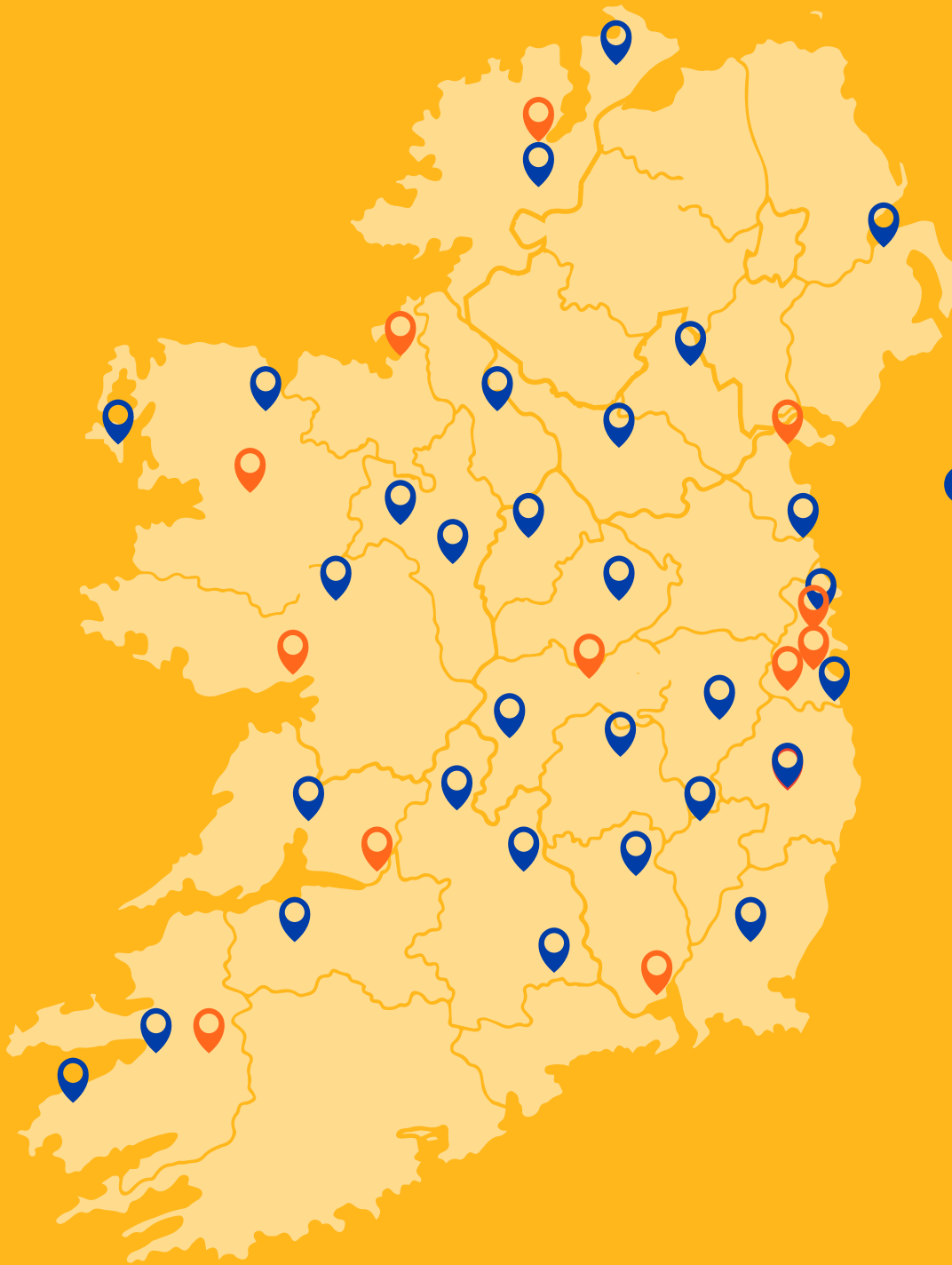
Where we are

Offices

North Frederick St, Dublin
Cabra, Dublin
Tallaght, Dublin
Dundalk
Tullamore
Killarney
Limerick
Waterford
Castlebar
Galway
Sligo
Letterkenny

Outreach

Carndonagh
Stanorlar
Leitrim
Achill
Roscommon
Castlereagh
Ballina
Monaghan
Longford
Cavan
Mullingar
Drogheda
Tuam
Swords
Birr
Mater Hospital
Newbridge
Portlaoise
Bray
Arklow
Ennis
Carlow
Newcastle West
Clonmel
Gorey
Nenagh
Killorglin
Kilkenny
Caherciveen
Thurles



Chime offices can be found in **12 different locations** around Ireland. **Chime outreach clinics** (a free and confidential support service on all aspects of deafness and hearing loss) can be accessed in around 30 nationwide locations on a monthly basis.

Impact



Our year at a glance

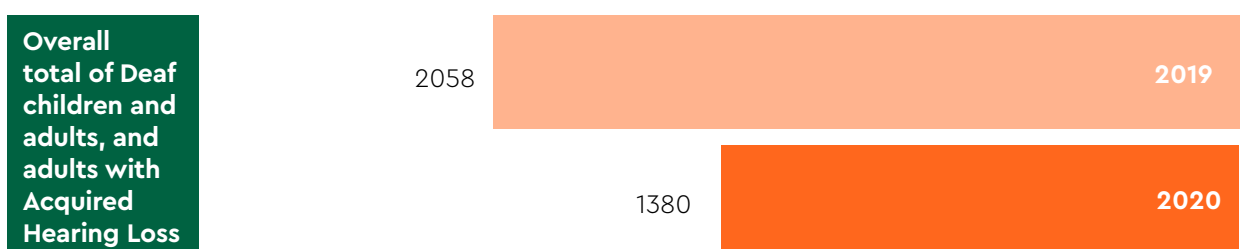
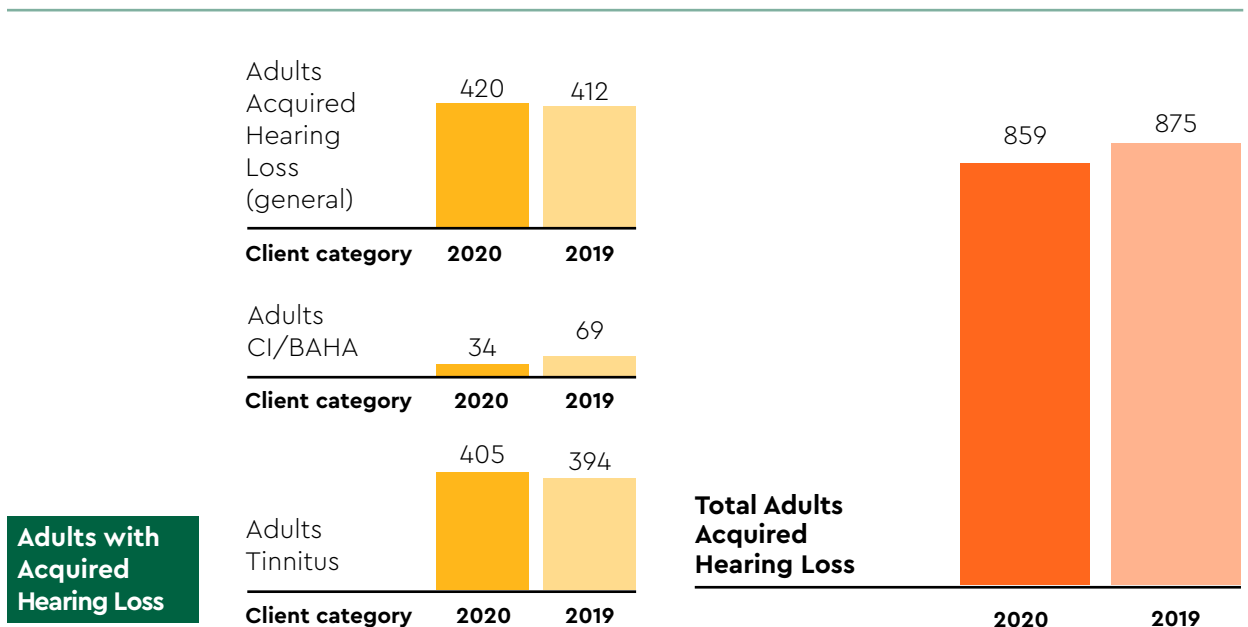
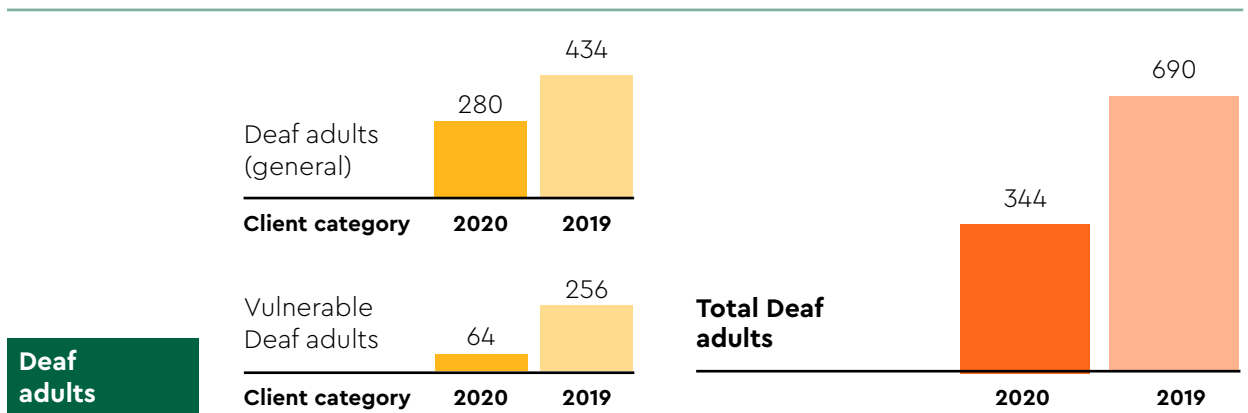
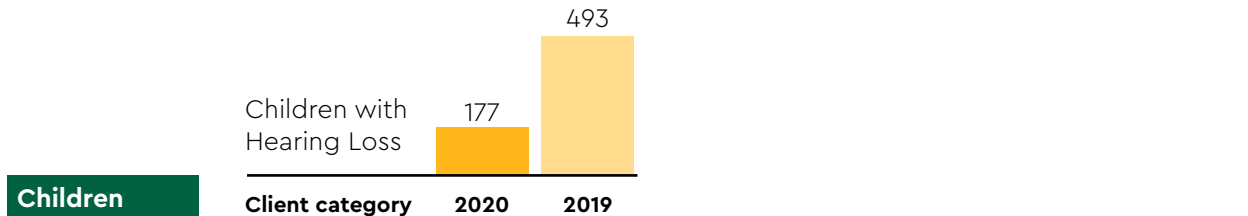
As we all know, 2020 has been the most challenging year in recent memory. Unfortunately for Chime, that meant a reduced amount of contact with our clients, the people who rely on our services and advice. Our social events, services and in-person support were all greatly curtailed last year as the pandemic took hold, while the number of people to whom we provide in-depth ongoing support dropped from 2,058 in 2019 to 1,380 in 2020.

However, significantly, the number of people whom we provide with advice, information and day-to-day support remained consistent at approx. 27,000 contacts. These statistics don't tell the full story of Chime's 2020. It was a rollercoaster of a year that was difficult and unpredictable but also rewarding and memorable. Read on for some of the key areas of impact for Chime in 2020.

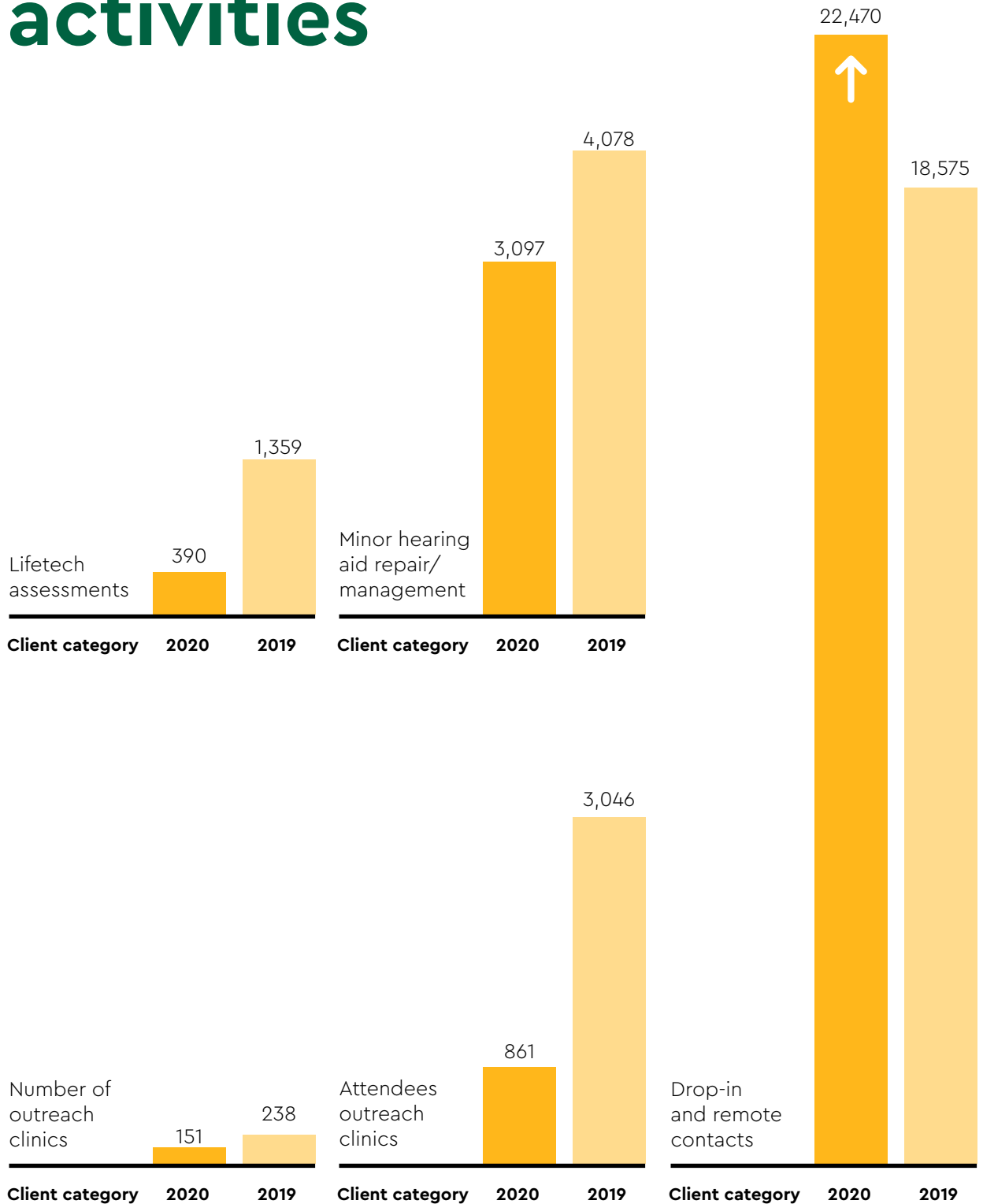


Achievements and performance

While we continued, where possible, to support all our clients, the majority of our work with groups and some of our work with Deaf children and adults could not take place due to COVID-19. However, Chime still provided essential support and care to our clients in 2020.



Summary statistics for other resource activities



While COVID-19 restrictions greatly curtailed the level of in-person support that Chime was able to provide in 2020, our number of drop-in and remote contacts increased — a testament to the hard work of the Chime team.



Client stories



Japhet

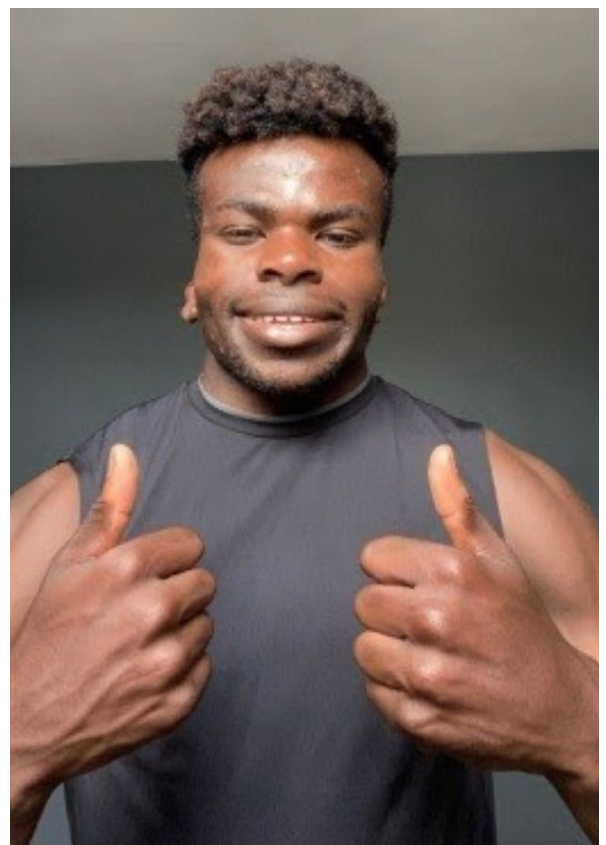
Japhet Orgu is a native ISL user from Meath, who self-referred to Chime's Explore programme. He has just been awarded a Distinction in Engineering Technology with Electronics (QQI level 5) from Dun Laoghaire Institute of Further Education and is hoping to get offered a place on a Degree course in UCD or DCU next term.

Apart from seeking educational support, Japhet's biggest issue was finding a part-time job like some of his Deaf friends. "I applied to several retailers but heard nothing back from any of them, which was a bit discouraging," explained Japhet. His mentor Julianne noted he had no work experience of any kind on his CV as he did not do a Transition Year in secondary school and it was agreed that he needed to have some retail experience before applying again.

The Explore mentors have engaged with Circle K to arrange two weeks of work sampling at their Trim location in Meath starting in July 2021. Deaf Awareness Training was provided to local team and HR personnel beforehand and a full day induction training with ISL interpreters will be given to Japhet to prepare him for working in their environment — as this is the first time they will have an ISL user as employee in Circle K.

We are all really excited for him and look forward to reporting back on his progress.

“
Deaf Awareness Training was provided to local team and HR personnel beforehand and a full day induction training with ISL interpreters will be given to Japhet to prepare him for working in their environment.
”



Lexie

Shortly after our daughter, Lexie Noone, was born, she was diagnosed with a mixed hearing loss. Although different hearing aids were introduced, we became concerned when we didn't see much progress in speech development. When Lexie turned two she was diagnosed with profound sensorineural hearing loss; thus began her journey towards a cochlear implant.

As parents, we linked in with our local Chime office for support and attended their parent coffee mornings, meeting other families whom we are friends with to this day. The emotion of receiving the sensorineural hearing loss diagnosis was as overwhelming as the initial diagnosis but we kept in contact with Chime throughout.

Lexie is now seven years old and has just finished first class in our local school. Despite her initial language delays she is a really active, fun, happy little girl with lots of friends. She participates in so many activities — piano lessons, football, swimming, dancing and ballet.

We know she struggles with reading and phonics and we put a lot of work into developing her literacy at home. We have just found out that dyslexia is also an issue for her but her sheer determination and all the work she puts in means she falls just below average in her recent standardised tests.

We tell Lexie's story at Chime's Newly Diagnosed Day family panel — she knows she is coming along to help other mummies and daddies whose children may need a cochlear implant. We are so aware that Lexie will continue to need support around her hearing loss but it really doesn't hold her back. As parents, our ambition for her is that she has a life without barriers and achieves everything she wants in her future. We will be there to support her every step of the way.



“
**We are so aware
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”

Jenny

“
**In Lorcan Villas, ISL is the first language,
enabling Jenny to fully participate in
what is happening in the house.**
”

Jenny moved into Lorcan Villas in January 2021; since then, staff have noticed her coming on in leaps and bounds in many areas and Jenny herself has reported being happy living there.

Before entering the Chime Home of Choice Residential Service, Jenny lived in a nursing home for around four years. There Jenny was neither with peers or in a space where she could communicate using ISL; ultimately this environment did not help to promote her independence and community involvement. During COVID-19, Jenny was effectively confined to the nursing home, with no opportunity to enter her community or visit her family and friends.

"In Lorcan Villas, ISL is the first language, so I can get involved in what is happening in the house without needing my iPad, phone, or an interpreter. I like chatting with staff and am getting to know my new housemates. I spend a lot of time with them, going for drives, taking walks and doing movie nights."

Jenny's person-centered progress plan sees her integrating herself into her community, learning to cook, taking responsibility for her personal care and learning new domestic skills. She also goes for coffee in the local café and gets her hair and nails done. Jenny has

also expressed an interest in swimming, bowling, dining in a restaurant and going to the cinema, activities she'll be supported to experience in future.

"I've become more independent and mobile since moving here. I can get from my bedroom to the sitting room, sit up from my wheelchair and get to the bathroom or the couch on my own. Once when one of the staff offered me some help, I was able to say I didn't need it, which was nice."



Therese

“
It's absolutely life changing because I do feel much more like I'm more part of the human race than I was beforehand.
”

Therese Dormer is one of 300,000 Irish people living with hearing loss. Sadly, only one in five of the people who need support are actually getting it.

Before obtaining a hearing aid, Therese began to develop a feeling of isolation — removing herself from certain situations because she struggled to hear conversations.

"I could feel that in crowded circumstances, like in a pub or a group of people with a lot of background noise, that I wasn't really able to hear what was going on a lot of the time. You kind of isolate yourself, you zone out a bit."

Since receiving her hearing aids, Therese said her quality of life has

hugely improved. Interviewed on Virgin Media News as she spoke out in support of World Hearing Day, she said: "It's absolutely life changing because I do feel much more like I'm more part of the human race than I was beforehand."

For Therese the radio and TV are no longer blaring at full volume and her message to people is not to wait to get checked.

"Don't leave it until your 70s or 80s. If you feel a hearing loss developing, no matter how young you might be, go and get it looked at — you'll certainly feel the benefit."



Advocacy



Our commitment

Chime is committed to a society with no limits or barriers for anyone living with deafness or hearing loss in Ireland. We work towards achieving this vision by seeking changes in legislation, policy, practice and resource provision to address inequality, exclusion and injustice.

Our advocacy efforts include working with and on behalf of people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing through personal advocacy and representative advocacy.

In 2020 Chime launched the Connect Project, a COVID-19 response programme to support older people with hearing loss — read the full story on page 28.

We also launched a campaign to support more people to access hearing aids, lobbied for the Hearing Aid PRSI grant amount to be increased (find out more on page 29) and called for action on audiology waiting lists in 2020.

Other Chime advocacy highlights include:

- calls for more services for Deaf people, most notably, the first multi-disciplinary team (MDT) for children in Ireland, community-based and ISL-based residential services and a new deaf specialist day service in Cabra
- a campaign around World Hearing Day 2020, calling on the Government to act now to invest in hearing and ear care
- our call for action on audiology waiting lists, covered by Virgin Media News.



Connect Project

“
The core aim of the project was to help those older people who were extremely socially isolated and vulnerable during the pandemic to connect with people in their family and community.
”

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges within society, including increased social isolation and vulnerability for some citizens. Some individuals are more difficult to reach and support during periods when there are restrictions on movement and meeting people.

One such group is those living alone with significant hearing loss, people who are often not able to make phone calls (particularly those with severe to profound losses). Those who are older are less likely to use the internet or have a smart phone and many who live alone can have real difficulty seeking help or getting support (most helplines can only be contacted by phone or email).

In May 2020, the HSE agreed to provide funding to Chime to supply listening devices to 100 socially isolated older persons with significant hearing loss. The core aim of this project was to help isolated and vulnerable older people to connect more easily with family and community during COVID-19 — hence the name “Connect Project”.

This group of people typically had difficulty conversing without the help of hearing aids and were less likely to receive visits from neighbours or friends as a result. The new listening devices were designed to help them communicate more easily with family and friends and enable them to reach

out for support. Interventions that support conversation and communication (like listening to the TV for example) can often help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Ultimately, 100 participants (ranging in age from 61 to 101 years old) received a device. The average age of participants when they received the device was 83.7 years. Comments from participants indicated that cognitive decline, dexterity and tolerance were common challenges faced by some participants in using hearing aids.

Feedback from participants on the Connect Project was extremely positive and it made a huge difference to the lives of 100 people. “The device has been life changing for me. I can't believe I can hear and communicate with family and friends,” said one participant, while another explained that using the new device made it possible to hear their grandchildren's voices properly.



Unaddressed hearing loss

With over 20,000 people in Ireland currently on audiology waiting lists in 2020, a key part of Chime's advocacy work last year was lobbying the Government to act immediately to invest in hearing and ear care. Eight percent of the adult population need audiological support (300,000 adults in Ireland) but only one in five receives support, while some individuals wait up to three years for an appointment.

Ireland has a serious problem with high levels of unaddressed hearing loss; it's the third most common health condition in adults and the most common amongst older people. More and more people are experiencing hearing difficulties and investment in early intervention can help address this — as Therese Dormer knows from personal experience (read her story on page 25).

Head of Advocacy at Chime Brendan Lennon said: "The World Health Organisation states that for every €1 invested in hearing and ear care there is a return of almost €16 over 10 years. The Government needs to implement measures to tackle the long waiting lists and ramp up the level of hearing aids being prescribed; currently Ireland prescribes hearing aids at less than half the rate of the UK."

He explained that unaddressed hearing loss has long-lasting and damaging effects on both the individual and society. "It can lead to increased rates of depression, higher rates of dementia and increased hospitalisation figures. By being proactive and adopting a universal approach to hearing and ear care the Government can help prevent this."

In 2020 Chime also raised public awareness of the need for everyone to take the initiative when it comes to their own hearing and ear care. "There needs to be a sea-change in Irish society in how we view going for a hearing test," explained Brendan. "We must attach the same level of importance to getting your hearing checked as we do to getting a blood pressure test with your doctor. Leaving hearing loss unaddressed means you are exposing yourself to significant health risks and a worsening hearing condition.

"Most of all, you are missing out on having a better quality of life — more than 80 percent of hearing aid users say that hearing aids and other technology improve their relationships and social life. If you noticed you were struggling to read the newspaper you would not hesitate to book an eye test. If you are struggling to hear conversations, you should also not hesitate to book a hearing test."



Funding and finances



Financial report and auditors report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF T/A CHIME

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements of National Association for the Deaf T/A Chime (the 'company')

In our opinion the financial statements:
give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as of 31 December 2019 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the financial year then ended; and
have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework and, in particular, with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

- the Statement of Financial Activities;
- the Balance Sheet;
- the Statement of Cash Flows; and
- the related notes 1 to 29, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council ("the relevant financial reporting framework").

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report.

We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Reports and Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2019, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern

basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity (or where relevant, the group) to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that the auditor identifies during the audit.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.
- In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements and the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Act 2014 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.

Margarita Martin

MARGUARITA MARTIN

For and on behalf of Deloitte Ireland LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Deloitte & Touche House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2



Statement of financial activities

(Including income and expenditure account)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR
ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	2020	2020	2020	2019	2019	2019
	Restricted Funds €	Unrestricted Funds €	Total €	Restricted Funds €	Unrestricted Funds €	Total €
INCOME FROM						
Donations and legacies	37,887	26,604	64,491	—	58,095	58,095
Charitable activities	3,955,949	377,119	4,333,068	4,072,146	221,675	4,293,821
Other trading activities	—	2,066,526	2,066,526	—	2,035,178	2,035,178
Other	—	8,200	8,200	—	4,279	4,279
Total	3,993,836	2,478,449	6,472,285	4,072,146	2,319,227	6,391,373
EXPENDITURE ON						
Charitable activities	4,142,420	108,183	4,250,603	4,656,753	300,358	4,957,111
Raising funds	—	1,513,927	1,513,927	—	1,315,369	1,315,369
Total	4,142,420	1,622,110	5,764,530	4,656,753	1,615,727	6,272,480
NET (EXPENDITURE) /INCOME BEFORE TAXATION	(148,584)	856,339	707,755	(584,607)	703,500	118,893
Taxation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfers between funds	176,442	(176,442)	—	648,156	(648,156)	—
Net movement in funds	27,858	679,897	707,755	63,549	55,344	118,893
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds brought forward	189,418	330,208	519,626	125,869	274,864	400,733
Total funds carried forward	217,276	1,010,105	1,227,381	189,418	330,208	519,626

There are no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed. All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Chime balance sheet

AS AT 31
DECEMBER
2020

	2020 €	2019 €
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	1,011,767	1,004,363
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	125,519	139,633
Debtors	217,592	325,639
Cash at bank and in hand	894,746	200,339
	1,237,857	665,611
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	(579,841)	(654,032)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	658,016	11,579
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,669,783	1,015,942
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after one year	(442,402)	(496,316)
NET ASSETS	1,227,381	519,626

Funds of the charity

ACCUMULATED FUNDS — RESTRICTED	217,276	189,418
ACCUMULATED FUNDS — UNRESTRICTED	1,010,105	330,208
	1,227,381	519,626

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 6 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Declan Keane
Chairman






Kevin Coleman
Director

Fundraising

Chime relies heavily on funding from the HSE to provide the services that we offer. In 2020 the HSE contributed €4m towards funding services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people through Chime. In addition to that, Chime provides technology services through our social enterprise model when offering clients access to hearing aids, school equipment and personal and household devices. All monies generated are retained in the charity and used to supplement or enhance our services.

We have also been supported by a number of other organisations in 2020:

 government supporting communities Pobal under the COVID-19 Stability Fund	€200,000
 Dublin City Council Comhalte Cathrach Bhaile Atha Cliath	€11,887
 ESB Youth Project to part-fund Explore	€10,000
 THE IRELAND FUNDS The Ireland Funds to part-fund raising your Deaf Child	€10,000
 Charities Aid Foundation	€3,000
 The Hospital Saturday Fund	€3,000
 UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES	€1,000

Other corporate donations from Tesco and Coillte were received, together with numerous generous donations from members of the public. Your vital generosity and support is gratefully appreciated.

Technology

In 2020, Chime was able to provide over 1,000 pieces of technology equipment to clients to help with their deafness or hearing loss. This is a core service for Chime, as we know the real benefits to people from the use of this technology in their daily life.

As a charity, we ensure that we provide this service in a client-led, independent way and that all products are delivered by experienced, caring professionals. Our pricing structures reflect our charity status and are provided below market rates to ensure value for money.

Thank you to all clients who trusted us with addressing their technology needs, as all funding received for these products is used to provide other Chime services — such as the Newly Diagnosed events, teenage camps and other social and community activities.



Strategy



Looking to the future: the new Chime Strategic Plan

As we look to the future of Chime and set about achieving the goals of our new 2021/2024 plan, there are certain key themes that emerge. Specialist Services, in particular Children's Services, continue to be a priority and we are committed to developing and expanding individualised Specialist Services for people at critical stages of their journey with deafness and hearing loss. Community Services will be integral to our mission going forward, with plans to develop and roll out an increased Community Support Service to be delivered across the country.



Specialist Services

- We will establish a Specialist Multi-disciplinary Team, supporting Deaf children in an engaging new Children and Families Therapy Hub by year end 2022.
- We will support 1,000 children annually under Social Care and Technology Services.
- We will support 10 clients to live in a home of their choice, assisting them through the language of their choice.
- We will support 150 young adults through the EXPLORE programme by YE 2024.
- We will establish two day service locations supporting 40 clients at a time by YE 2024.



Community Services

- We will support 60 more Deaf adults through person-centred plans annually.
- We will carry out 5,000 audiology appointments annually.
- We will establish fully defined hearing loss support, deaf support, tinnitus support, cochlear implant support and assistive technology services by YE 2022.
- We will make a full complement of services available in all regions.
- We will hold 144 group sessions, covering all service areas and supporting 720 attendees annually.
- We will provide 480 outreach clinics per year, supporting 10 clients per clinic.



Brand

- We will increase spontaneous brand awareness to 15 percent and prompted brand awareness to 33 percent by 2024.
- We will achieve an overall increase in referrals of 20 percent.



Finance

- We will hold unrestricted reserves that equate to approximately 10 weeks of annual operating costs.
- We will operate activities under HSE Service Level Agreements at break-even overall, while increasing the annual surplus generated by our assistive technology and fundraising by 50 percent.



Advocacy

- We will secure funding through advocacy for a new Specialist Multi-Disciplinary Team for Deaf Children by Q1 2022.
- We will secure funding through advocacy for residential services for 10 clients.
- We will launch an advocacy campaign to achieve a fully restored HSE Mental Health Service.
- We will achieve a 50 percent reduction in audiology waiting lists through advocacy, as well as a 20 percent increase in the provision for hearing aids.
- We will achieve universal timely access to speech and language therapy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.
- We will positively influence attitudes and behaviours re. hearing health; our aim is to reduce the average age of those seeking a first test by one year.



People and Culture

- We will improve staff engagement through employee engagement surveys.
- We will develop a People Strategy by Q2 2022.
- We will create an environment in which to thrive by doubling T&D investment by YE 2023.
- We will create individualised T&D plans by YE 2022 and review every six months.
- We will undertake a culture audit and develop a plan to address recommendations by YE 2022.



Impact and Quality

- We will implement a client experience programme to commence by Q2 2022.
- We will carry out and publish a Service Evaluation Report on one service every year.
- We will publish an annual Impact and Quality Report.
- We will develop and implement an action plan to address results and non-compliances of both reports by YE 2022.

KEY METRICS

1,000

We will support 1,000 children annually under Social Care & Technology Services.

5,000

We will deliver 5,000 audiology appointments annually.

20%

We will achieve an overall increase in referrals of 20 percent.

150

We will support 150 young adults through the EXPLORE programme by YE 2024.

20%

We'll influence society to better understand hearing loss and see a 20 percent increase in hearing aid adoption.

2022

We will develop a People Strategy by Q2 2022 to further improve staff engagement and development.

Governance



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for the overall control, governance and management of Chime.

The day-to-day management of Chime is delegated to the Senior Management Team, which comprises the Chief Executive Officer and several key senior managers.

The Board and four sub-committees oversee the organisation to ensure transparency and best practice in all areas of the business. All directors are employed on a voluntary basis.

In accordance with best practice for charitable and not-for-profit entities, the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102 has been adopted for this set of financial statements.

Chime has policies and procedures in place that adhere to the requirements of the Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code and complies with this

Code on an ongoing basis.

Chime has also adopted the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public, issued by the Charities Regulator in September 2017 and we are committed to being accountable and transparent so that donors, prospective donors and fundraisers can have full confidence in Chime.

Chime is a registered charity (CHY 5633). Chime is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA); our CRA Number is 20008772.

Chime is registered with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) where we maintain our corporate information.

Structure and role of the Board

The business of the Company is governed by the Board of Directors. The Board may comprise between three and 15 individuals elected for a three-year term. Ordinarily, directors are restricted to a maximum of three terms. In undertaking its role, the Board must have regard for the interests of the service users and beneficiaries. The Board is responsible for keeping an overview of the organisation's direction and progress, ensuring that the organisation is accountable and verifying that the organisation is operating legally. The Board ordinarily meets on a bi-monthly basis.

While the Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for Chime, the CEO, who is directly accountable to the Board, manages the day-to-day running of the organisation, making management decisions that are in accordance with the agreed strategic and operational direction provided by the Board.

BOARD MEMBERS

Declan Keane,
Chairman

Brian Symington MBE

Sandra Creagh

Sylvia Nolan

Pat Flynn

Kevin Coleman

Gerard Smith

Thomas Maguire

Jennifer Robertson



Board attendance

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It currently comprises nine Non-Executive Directors. The Board meets regularly, as required, and met six times during 2020 (six in 2019).

Board attendance at eligible meetings

BOARD MEMBERS	FEB	APRIL	JUNE	AUG	OCT	NOV
Declan Keane	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kevin Coleman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandra Creagh	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joan McCarville	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Pat Flynn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thomas Maguire	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓
Sylvia Nolan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jennifer Robertson	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓
Paul Ryan	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Mark Saunders	✗	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gerard Smith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Symington	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗

The CEO and Company Secretary were invited to and attended all six Board meetings.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

The changes to the Board of Directors during 2020 are outlined below.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr Thomas Maguire was appointed to the Board on 17 November and Ms Jennifer Robertson was appointed to the Board on 30 November. Mr Andrew Caffrey was appointed as Company Secretary on 17 September.

RESIGNATIONS

Mr Mark Saunders resigned from the Board on 2 April and Ms Joan McCarville and Mr Paul Ryan resigned from the Board on 5 October. Mr Mark Byrne resigned as Company Secretary on 17 September 2020



Sub-committees

The Board adheres to a Code of Conduct which was updated in February 2021.

The Directors work in a voluntary capacity and have not received any remuneration in respect of their services to the organisation. They are entitled to avail of out of pocket expenses for Board business.

Chime has developed a Conflict of Interest Policy which outlines the procedure and process to deal with and manage all potential and existing conflicts, as and when they arise. In addition, Chime maintains a Register of Directors' Interests which identifies any interests that could give rise to a conflict of interest.

Sub-committees

The Board operates a number of sub-committees which enables oversight of the key activities of the organisation. The committees are as follows:

- Finance, Audit & Governance Committee
- Remuneration and Nominations Committee
- Commercial Development Committee
- Our New Ears Committee

The sub-committee that oversees the relationship with the Irish Tinnitus Association has been stood down.

Finance, Audit and Governance Committee

The Finance, Audit and Governance Committee was established to review all matters relating to the financial affairs of Chime, to manage audit relationships, to ensure that there is a strong framework for accountability and governance, to examine and review all systems and methods of control, both financial and otherwise, including risk analysis and risk management and to ensure the organisation is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. The Committee met five times in 2020. The Directors who comprise the Committee are

Kevin Coleman (Chairman), Declan Keane and Gerard Smith. Joan McCarville retired from the Board and Committee during 2020.

Remuneration and Nominations Committee

The Remuneration and Nominations Committee was established to provide strong oversight of Board recruitment and HR activity. The Directors who comprise the Committee are Declan Keane (Chairman) and Sandra Creagh. The Committee met once in 2020.

Commercial Development Committee

The Commercial Development Committee was established in 2020 to oversee the development of the social enterprise services, fundraising and brand development. The Director who comprises the Committee is Pat Flynn (Chairman). The Committee met twice in 2020.

Partner Organisations Sub-Committees Our New Ears Committee

The Our New Ears Committee was established in 2017 to ensure that the objectives of the Collaborative Working Arrangement between Chime and Our New Ears (ONE) are being met. The Committee comprises Brian Symington (Chair) who is on the Chime Board of Directors; Mark Byrne, Chime CEO; David Buxonat, Director of Specialist Services and representing the ONE Committee are Laura Keating; Lorraine Murphy; Rachel Broderick and Ger O'Brien. During 2020, there were two meetings of the One New Ears Sub-Committee (2019: 2 meetings).

Irish Tinnitus Association Sub-Committee

The sub-committee overseeing the relationship with the Irish Tinnitus Association did not meet in 2020 and has been stood down as the work of the Association has been subsumed into the work of Chime. The committee last met on 21 November 2019. The committee has ceased due to the retirement of Jean Scott and Martin Carroll. The Board would like to acknowledge the dedication of Jean and Martin over many years in providing excellent support to people with tinnitus.





chime

The National Charity for
Deafness and Hearing Loss

Head office

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FOR THE DEAF T/A CHIME**

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