Irish Foster Care Association
Annual Report 2018
Contents

Chairperson’s Statement 1
Chief Executive Review 2
Mission Statement 4
IFCA Highlights 6
IFCA Advocacy Work 8
IFCA Services Overview 11
Financial Statements 21

Board Names & Titles
Mark Turner, Chairperson; Neil Whoriskey, Company Secretary;
Pat O’Flynn, Vice-Chair & Regional Representative South;
Colette Crotty, Board Treasurer; Beatrice Cronin, Tom Casey,
Michelle NiThiamain, Moira McCallig, Janice Culley.
Dear Members,

Welcome to the Irish Foster Care Associations 2018 Annual Report. It was a busy and constructive year for all our volunteers and staff as you shall read in the Report. There were numerous events, projects and meetings held throughout the year facilitated by staff and volunteers at Branch and local level and in IFCA’s new Foster Care Hubs. This partnership between staff and volunteers is the nucleus of the Irish Foster Care Association, and the Board acknowledges the importance and value of this.

The Board’s role is to steer the Irish Foster Care Association towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical and legal governance and financial management policies, while ensuring we have the resources to carry out those duties. During 2018 we signed up to the Charities Governance Code and it is the objective of the Board to continue to employ good oversight and governance of IFCA.

Key Board priorities for 2018 included:

• To further strengthen governance and accountability within the Association and remain continuously focused on our mission to promote best practice in foster care in order to achieve better outcomes for foster carers, children, and the communities who we advocate on behalf of.

• Planning IFCA’s 2019–2021 strategic plan and to align the new strategic plan with IFCA’s mission, vision and values and have built-in measurement processes to assess if IFCA and the Board are reaching its agreed goals.

• Implement recommendations from the Montague Report. During 2018, we developed six new Foster Care Hubs and held our first Regional Gatherings. The Gatherings are offered as an open forum for members to hear IFCA news and updates, meet with members of the Board and staff and provide an opportunity to communicate with members of the Board. We continue to work towards the full implementation of the recommendations of the report.

• Lobbying in relation to the General Insurance Scheme and meeting with DCYA and Minister Zappone to highlight the concerns and dismay of foster carers about not being insured under the group scheme and the length of time it is taking to rectify this.

• We continue to advocate for our members on issues which impact on foster care.

Our recent newsletter IFCA News, highlights the various activities, events and advocacy which IFCA offers on your behalf.

I would like to thank my fellow Directors of IFCA’s Board who have worked tirelessly during 2018, our volunteers and staff without whom much of our work could not be achieved.
Chief Executive

Review

IFCA’s Annual Report offers a comprehensive overview of our work during 2018 on behalf of our members in striving to meet our vision of a society where the importance of fostering is recognised, valued and supported. We sought to achieve this through offering a range of existing and new services and events to our members, promoting the needs of foster carers with key stakeholders and with the promotion of foster care through the media.

The dedication and commitment of foster families to the children for whom they care should never be underestimated, and the important role they play in the alternative care system for children in the care of the State. It is therefore essential that foster families feel supported in their role, and particularly at times of pressure in the foster care placement. An emergent and continuing trend in calls to our National Support Helpline is that of allegations being made against foster carers. This is likely to be the most stressful experience which any foster carer can have. The introduction of Tusla’s Interim Policy (2017), in response to allegations made against foster carers has offered more clarity in responding to allegations, however, the distress and anxiety experienced by foster families can be enduring. It is essential for all involved in foster care to support foster families during a period of crisis, and that they experience a response to such issues with respect, support and with a clear and consistent approach with clear timelines for conclusion of the investigation process.

In responding to these needs, IFCA developed a new advocacy service in 2018, to offer in-depth support to foster carers who were involved in complex and distressing experiences in their fostering role. This pilot development, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, proved to be very supportive for foster carers with positive outcomes for both them and the children in their care. Another initiative to support foster carers experiencing complex distressing experiences was Moving Forward, a project funded by An Pobal, which offered foster carers who experienced loss, through placement disruptions, bereavement or children moving on a range of supportive workshops and access to counselling.

A focus of our work during 2018 was the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 Montague Report which offered IFCA strategies to increase membership, member participation, governance and profile. A key objective during 2018 was the initiation of Foster Care Hubs in six pilot sites nationally to reach members in areas which do not have active branches, and we are delighted that IFCA is bringing together foster carers for peer support and events in these areas. Another new initiative to bring members together was IFCA’s Gatherings. These Gatherings were held in four locations nationally and members had an opportunity to come together to discuss issues relevant to them in their fostering role, and to hear of the work which IFCA’s Board and staff were doing on their behalf. IFCA’s branches continue to be vibrant, also bringing together foster carers and foster families to share common experiences. Our branches organised training and family events for members during the year. We continue to implement the recommendations of the Montague Report to make IFCA a vibrant community of foster families who receive a wide range of services to support them in their fostering role.

IFCA works in close alignment with our colleagues in Tusla, HIQA and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to ensure that issues which impact on the quality of foster care are raised and discussed and joint solutions implemented. We raised issues which emanate from our National Support Helpline with Tusla during 2018 and contributed to policy development. At a national level, IFCA prepared submissions on the Review of the 1991 Childcare Act and to the Mental Health Reform Commission on the Role of the Voluntary Sector in Mental Health. We were delighted to have Minister Zappone launch IFCA’s position paper on Fostering to Adoption with input from our patron, Justice Catherine McGuinness, and our eminent colleague Dr Geoffrey Shannon. IFCA launched the position paper with the objective of provoking conversation about the legislation which will enable foster carers to adopt in some circumstances. More discussion by the relevant departments and agencies is required for this legislative development, and IFCA believes it has a central role to play in this development.

A continuing item of concern is the lack of progression on the reinstatement of the General Insurance Scheme for foster carers. We are aware that the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is working diligently for the reinstatement and have had many meetings with them to advance the reinstatement. You can be assured that this matter remains IFCA’s priority.

2018 saw our media profile increase steadily with greater media exposure in all media forum. In particular, we received great response to Fostering Fortnight which goes from strength to strength.

We continued to empower foster carers with knowledge through offering information workshops, learning events and through IFCA’s Journal. This is a key objective and one which will continue in 2019.

As you read through our Annual Report you will see the work undertaken on your behalf by our very dedicated staff, Board of Directors and valued volunteers, to enable IFCA offer its services to you our valued members, all of whom I would like to thank for their dedication and commitment.
Mission
The Irish Foster Care Association is the national organisation that supports foster families and the wider fostering community. We advance and promote best practice in foster care through support, learning and advocacy.

Vision
A society where the importance of fostering is recognised, valued and supported. Where every child can grow up in a safe and caring family.

We Value
- The rights of the child
- The role of the family in a child’s life
- Respect, compassion & kindness
- Effective partnerships & open communication
- Innovation and research
IFCA – A Year in Numbers

- **6** New Foster Care Hubs
- **15** Branches
- **4** Regional Gatherings
- **831** new cases in the Support Service
- **5** number of years our support line has been in operation
- **2,160** hours spent by Branch Volunteers delivering **87** Branch Events
- **1,220** Support Coffee Mornings with **122** in attendance
- **166** Attendees at our National Conference...including **38** children and young people
- **28** workshops over 3 days at our National Conference
- **50** Branch Volunteers spent **2,160 hours** delivering **87** Branch Events
- **122** Support Coffee Mornings with **1,220 people** in attendance
IFCA’S Advocacy Work

Advocacy Service

In response to the continuing trend of foster carers contacting the National Support Helpline with complex and difficult issues within their fostering role, it was identified that greater levels of support was required in some cases. IFCA, with support from Atlantic Philanthropies, employed two part-time advocates during 2018. IFCA’s advocates, national support volunteers and coordinator, responded to 139 foster families during 2018, and supported them in complex situations such as allegations, placement breakdowns, foster care reviews, directions by the court and breakdown in communication between Tusla and the foster carers.

The role of the advocate is to support the foster carer with communication, correspondence and meetings with Tusla and others where issues were teased out, where their voice could be heard and solutions identified. Positive outcomes were achieved for many foster families and most importantly, children whose placements were at risk of disruption, remained with the foster family with supports put in place. In some instances, not all placements continued, however, foster families were supported in the decision and enabled to conclude their role with dignity and acceptance. IFCA hopes to continue with this very valuable service to foster carers.

Fostering to Adoption Position Paper

IFCA convened a working group in the area of fostering to adoption to identify the information and supports that will be required by those who may wish to adopt from foster care following the signing into law of the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017. IFCA launched its position paper in Buswells Hotel, Dublin in November with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. Katherine Zappone TD, Dr. Geoffrey Shannon and Justice Catherine McGuinness. The position paper outlines the key points from the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017 that will impact on foster care. It also identifies key recommendations in relation to fostering to adoption, while also outlining key supports that foster carers will need post adoption. More discussions will take place by relevant Departments and agencies for legislative development and IFCA will continue to play a key role in this area. You can find a copy of our position paper on www.ifca.ie

General Insurance Scheme For Foster Carers

IFCA is continuing to lobby to ensure that full public liability insurance cover for foster carers is reinstated and is in regular communication with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) on the matter. IFCA received communication from the Secretary General during July to outline the steps which are required of the Department to reinstate insurance cover for foster carers which will come under the General Indemnity Scheme. Discussions have also taken place between DCYA and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with a view to obtaining Government approval to the new system. IFCA has been assured that this is a priority for DCYA. We communicated with the Secretary General again in early September, to seek assurance that the matter will be prioritised with the Government.

IFCA Member Surveys

IFCA conducted two member surveys in 2018. The first survey asked members about the issues that were most affecting them and the issues they would like IFCA to advocate on their behalf. The top four areas of concern were:

- Communication with Social Workers
- Foster Child Support – access to relevant and appropriate emotional, counselling and psychological support
- Foster Carer Support – access to relevant and appropriate emotional, counselling and psychological support
- Allegations

Our second survey was for Fostering Fortnight where we asked members to tell us about why they foster and here is what they told us:

---

Do you think fostering can change lives?

- Yes: 99%
- No: 1%

---

What advice would you give to someone thinking about fostering?

- Talk to a foster family before going ahead: 27%
- Join a support group: 18%
- Do your research & make sure it is right for you & your family: 17%
- Discuss with your own family: 15%
- Putting the child first: 13%
- Continuity of Support: 11%

---

What is the hardest part about fostering?

- Dealing with all the different services and supports for my foster child: 34%
- Communication with Social Workers: 29%
- Trying to get additional support for my foster child: 12%
- Impact on own family: 10%
- Fear of disruption/breakdown of a placement: 9%
- Navigating the system: 9%

---

What one change would help you to improve the lives of the children you care for?

- Putting the child first: 99%
- Better Communication: 52%
- Listening to Foster Carer: 34%
- More Information on Child: 15%
- National Standards and Procedures: 13%
- Continuity of Social Worker: 11%
SERVICES OVERVIEW
IFCA National Support Helpline 5 Year Anniversary

December 2018 saw the celebration of five years of IFCA’s National Support Helpline. The Helpline created 4,800 cases and dealt with 7,300 inbound contacts over the five-year period. In addition, 290 cases were offered high levels of support facilitated by a team of staff and national volunteers.

The service has evolved considerably over these last five years in terms of what is provided to callers and the difficulties and challenges that the Helpline is assisting with. But equally many of the issues that are presented to us are the same as issues seen when the Helpline first started operating.

Support is the concept that underpins our organisation. From the initial conception and planning through to today’s developments, the helpline itself and our current model of support has flourished due to the input of countless members of staff and callers.

It is important to pay credit to the input of everyone involved. Most of what IFCA has learned about fostering – in terms of challenges and successes, has come through the stories we have been told and the experiences shared with us. Without the continued input from those who use the service, we would not have travelled so far nor learned so much.

IFCA’s National Support Helpline

In 2018 the Support Service dealt with 831 new cases. The response to the complexity of new cases and cases carried forward from 2017 resulted in the helpline handling 3,674 contacts (in/out phone calls/email/in person) in 2018. This is an increase of 213% in our correspondence and response to queries from the previous year.

Case Volumes 2018

Cases by County

- Midwest – Limerick, Clare & North Tipperary: 8.9%
- Cork: 8.5%
- Galway & Roscommon: 8.4%
- Dublin North: 5.4%
- Cavan: 3.4%
- Carlow: 1.1%
- Clare: 2.9%
- Cork: 8.5%
- Dublin: 3.3%
- Dublin North: 5.4%
- Dublin North City: 3.5%
- Dublin South East: 4.2%
- Wicklow: 3.6%
- Dublin South Central: 4.2%
- Dublin South West: 4.9%
- Galway: 4.5%
- Kerry: 1.6%
- Kildare: 4.7%
- Kilkenny: 3.4%

Leitrim: 1.1%
Louth: 2.4%
Mayo: 1.8%
Meath: 3.5%
Monaghan: 1.2%
Offaly: 1.6%
Other Counties: 0.4%
Roscommon: 3.9%
Sligo: 3.0%
Waterford: 5.1%
Westmeath: 2.2%
Wexford: 3.2%
Wicklow: 1.4%
Tipperary North: 3.1%
Tipperary South: 1.6%

Cases by Primary Issue

- Aftercare: 5.1%
- Carer Emotional Support: 5.3%
- Issues with Access: 5.9%
- Financial Query: 6.1%
- Allegations: 7.3%

Cases by Secondary Issue

- Financial Queries: 8.4%
- Tusla Policy & Procedures: 13.4%
- Communications Issues – Social Work Team: 20.3%

Profile of Callers

- General Foster Carers: 68%
- Prospective Foster Carers: 9%
- Social Workers: 8%
- Relative Foster Carers: 4%
National Conference 2018 – Fostering Stability

IFCA’s National Conference brings together all those with an interest in foster care, including general and relative foster families, health and social care practitioners, academics, students, teachers, policy makers, and members of the community and voluntary sector to learn together, engage in dialogue, and share their experiences and best practice. As part of our National Conference, we ran three parallel programmes for children, young people and adults.

The National Conference theme for 2018 was ‘Fostering Stability’ and offered scope to explore how the system can better support stability for children in foster care; looking at many aspects of practice and policy of relevance to this theme. It is well-recognised that a secure and stable environment is key to children’s healthy development and well-being. Due to the circumstances which lead to children being received into care and the many changes to their world that may be part of this, it is critical that we do all we can to support the most vulnerable children in our society to feel safety, security and stability. One of our primary objectives was that the content explored in IFCA’s 2018 National Conference would stimulate further debate, discussion and learning on the many aspects of fostering stability.

Our keynote speaker was Dr Montserrat Fargas of Queens University Belfast, who has worked on a number of notable studies such as Care Pathways and Outcomes, At Home in Care and Regional Variations – all with a focus on children in care.

Feedback gathered from the National Conference was positive, with a number of participants noting the 2018 National Conference as having one of the most relaxing environments to date.

The 2018 conference had over 166 participants taking part in 28 workshops over three days. Each year we co-ordinate a children and young people’s programme to run alongside the national conference, ensuring that our conference is a family friendly event.

IFCA’s 2018 Children’s Programme catered for children of ages 5–12 years old. The programme of offerings largely focused on art-based activities such as Slime-Making, Lego and Dance workshops. Teams were formed ensuring children of similar ages could enjoy activities suitable to their age groups and that participating children had the appropriate support and supervision throughout.

One of the activities which garnered a great response from the children, was the Art workshop held by David of ‘Me and the Moon’. This two-hour workshop aimed to encourage the creativity, confidence and imagination of participating children through art, play and fun. Additionally, the closing ceremony for children was a focal point of the weekend; where children gathered to offer their feedback on activities and to also come together and sing the “Goodbye Goodbye” song together with other children, IFCA volunteers and IFCA staff.

Foster Care Hubs

IFCA launched six Foster Care Hubs to offer services for all those involved in foster care to come together and meet for a range of activities such as: peer support, social events, learning opportunities and information talks. Coordinated by IFCA, these events are supported by staff and trained volunteers who are recruited and supported by IFCA. IFCA identified areas that do not currently have branches for the new Foster Care Hubs, including:

1. Laois/Offaly
2. Dublin North
3. Dublin South
4. Longford, Westmeath
5. Mid West
6. Cavan/Monaghan

IFCA aims to bring existing and potential members together through a wide range of services delivered through the Hubs. Foster Care Hubs are open to foster carers, those involved in foster care, and those who have an interest in foster care. There will be times when foster carers will meet as a distinct group together to seek and offer peer support to each other in a safe space which is facilitated by a trained IFCA facilitator.

IFCA’s Foster Care Hubs offer a variety of events including:

- Learning events
- Social events
- Information sessions
- Social events for children and families
- Peer support for birth children
- Peer support (foster carers only)

IFCA is delighted with the feedback gathered so far in relation to the Foster Care Hubs and a number of events have already taken place including Information sessions, learning events and coffee mornings. IFCA will be launching additional Foster Care Hubs in new locations in 2019.

IFCA Regional Gatherings

IFCA launched its first set of Regional Gatherings in March 2018 in four locations around the country - Galway, Cork, Dublin and Kilkenny. The purpose of the Regional Gatherings is to bring together, and provide an opportunity for IFCA Members, the CEO, Board Members and Staff to communicate and share information with each other. The aim is to provide members with an additional forum, to hear updates on IFCA services and developments as well as an opportunity to share issues which are impacting on foster carers and inform IFCA’s local and national advocacy for foster care. We were delighted with the turnout at our first Regional Gatherings and will continue with these in 2019.

“...They were dealing with the trauma of leaving brothers and sisters behind, of being separated from their parents and of being brought to a stranger’s house. They mightn’t talk for a while when they’d arrive or they mightn’t eat. I wouldn’t rush them into talking; I’d never put any pressure on them to tell me anything they weren’t comfortable with. I’d just let them know we are there for them and that we have their best interests at heart. We are effectively representing their parents. I’m very conscious of that, so we’d look after them as if they were our own.”

— Sally and Donal Daly, Foster Carers, Skibbereen
IFCA Branch Events

In 2018 IFCA had 15 active Branches throughout the country and 50 volunteers coordinating and delivering over 87 branch events. A variety of events took place such as information sessions and learning events on topics of importance in foster care, support coffee mornings, social events and family days out.

Moving Forward

The Irish Foster Care Association’s Moving Forward programme offered foster carers a space to come together and explore the impact of loss, grief and change in a supportive and confidential setting. The programme consisted of three linked sessions over a period of three months. Workshops were held nationwide from May to September in Cork, Tullamore, Enniscorthy, Limerick, Tuam and Tallaght.

The content looked at types of loss and grief and the links between attachment and grief and loss. Consideration of coping strategies and information on stress and relaxation was incorporated into the programme. Participants were invited to consider their personal loss histories and engage with the programme in an experiential way.

The overwhelming response of participants to the workshop content and style was positive. Foster carers felt both better informed and supported on issues of loss and grief in foster care. Foster carers felt that the workshops gave them the space and permission to acknowledge and reflect on the impact of loss in their lives.

A booklet was prepared as part of the programme which will provide anyone who couldn’t attend a workshop with useful information. It is available online or in hard copy from the IFCA office.

This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Foster Journal

Foster Journal 5 – Realising Potential in Foster Care

This Journal is drawn from contributions to the 2017 IFCA National Conference. Dr Helen Gogarty contributes an article, on the subject of developmental challenges in foster care. Foster carer and school principal Anne McCluskey writes on the topic of the educational experiences of children in care, and Eavan Brady and Professor Robbie Gilligan also contributed an article on this topic. Other articles include Dr Valerie O’Brien and Cahal McHale’s ‘Visioning a Working Party on Foster Care in Ireland – a call to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs’, ‘Building resilience through families for children in care’ (Róisín Farragher), ‘Outcomes for permanence and stability for children in long-term care in Ireland’ (Professor Caroline McGregor et al) and ‘Fostering in a changing landscape of care’ (Dr Teresa Brown). Jim Cantwell draws on his conference workshop in his article, ‘Foster carers working with trauma symptoms’ and Marianne Dwyer describes how as adults we can build our own resilience in her article, ‘You are your own best resource’.

Foster Journal 6 – Navigating the System – Part Two

This issue, the second on this theme, offers more practical information designed to empower the reader with knowledge of the different systems at play within foster care. The themes explored within the different articles are: supporting LGBTI+ children in care, counselling and psychology services for foster carers, preparing foster children to leave care, how access is facilitated at a Tusla access centre, financial matters in foster care, foster carer reviews and ensuring access to justice for foster children.

IFCA Knowledge Bank

IFCA launched a new addition to its website ‘The Knowledge Bank’. The Knowledge Bank is a practical support resource open to all with an interest in foster care. In it you will find information on a wide range of topics related to foster care. It is divided into different themes including Child Development and Parenting, Practical Skills, and Children’s Mental Health, with more themes coming on stream soon. Within each theme you will find a diverse range of topics and under each topic there are resources including articles, videos, websites, booklets and helpful tips.

Learning & Development

We were delighted to offer a number of learning events based on members’ expressed learning needs in 2018. These events were planned in consultation with Branch Officers and Tusla teams. Events offered were as follows:

Parenting the hurt child with Christina Enright:

IFCA was delighted to offer members the opportunity to work with Christina Enright a psychotherapist with expertise in parenting guidance. In September 2018 IFCA launched four ‘Parenting the Hurt Child’ workshops in four locations – Louth, Longford, Maynooth and Sligo. Over the course of the four session foster carers were facilitated to develop their understanding and think about some of the complex challenges that children carry and reflect on their own challenges in parenting the child.

Feedback from members was overwhelmingly positive and similar events will be taking place in 2019.

“We are your mother and father, my heroes. I got a loving home, I got security and stability. That’s the main thing for any kid I think. I don’t think I’d be where I am now if it wasn’t for them.”

— Bernard McDaid, Care Leaver

“There are huge benefits to fostering. I was too young to be finished parenting, I had a lot more to give. I think fostering when my own children had moved on has kept me and my husband fresh and young.”

— Christine Moore, Foster Carer, Blanchardstown
Irish Foster Care Association     Annual Report 2018

19

— Pat O’Flynn, Foster Carer, Cork

Fostering Fortnight

Fostering fortnight is IFCA’s annual awareness campaign about fostering in Ireland. It is a chance to for all those involved in fostering and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences. This year Fostering Fortnight was extended to two weeks of activities and took place from 26th February—9th March. A range of activities took place over the two weeks including branch packs distributed to all branches with posters, balloons and bunting, encouraging branches to get involved and host their own events. There was also a national launch in the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and an extensive media campaign which resulted in interviews taking place across the country on TV and radio.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

Fostering Fortnight

Fostering fortnight is IFCA’s annual awareness campaign about fostering in Ireland. It is a chance to for all those involved in fostering and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences. This year Fostering Fortnight was extended to two weeks of activities and took place from 26th February—9th March. A range of activities took place over the two weeks including branch packs distributed to all branches with posters, balloons and bunting, encouraging branches to get involved and host their own events. There was also a national launch in the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and an extensive media campaign which resulted in interviews taking place across the country on TV and radio.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

Fostering Fortnight

Fostering fortnight is IFCA’s annual awareness campaign about fostering in Ireland. It is a chance to for all those involved in fostering and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences. This year Fostering Fortnight was extended to two weeks of activities and took place from 26th February—9th March. A range of activities took place over the two weeks including branch packs distributed to all branches with posters, balloons and bunting, encouraging branches to get involved and host their own events. There was also a national launch in the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and an extensive media campaign which resulted in interviews taking place across the country on TV and radio.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

Fostering Fortnight

Fostering fortnight is IFCA’s annual awareness campaign about fostering in Ireland. It is a chance to for all those involved in fostering and the communities that support them to tell their stories and share their experiences. This year Fostering Fortnight was extended to two weeks of activities and took place from 26th February—9th March. A range of activities took place over the two weeks including branch packs distributed to all branches with posters, balloons and bunting, encouraging branches to get involved and host their own events. There was also a national launch in the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and an extensive media campaign which resulted in interviews taking place across the country on TV and radio.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.

We also co-ordinated a number of features in the press with some of our foster carers including the Irish Examiner full page feature and photographs with Sally and Donal Daly and the Irish Independent full page feature and photographs with Niamh Bonner. Sally and Donal Daly were also interviewed on the Sean O’Rourke Show. We also received coverage in regional papers including a full page feature in the Connacht Tribune and an opinion piece in the Evening Echo. IFCA supported our campaign with coffee mornings and cake sales, starting with a ‘Bake Off’ in Cork. There was also a special screening of Resilience, The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope, in association with IAIA. This was held in the auditorium in Tallaght Hospital and despite the snow arriving, was well attended, with a panel discussion afterwards.
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Where Our Funding Comes From

Tusla
IFCA receives its core funding from Tusla to continue to offer a range of supports for our members who are predominantly foster carers. The range of supports offered to IFCA’s members are detailed in this 2018 annual report.

Pobal
The Pobal SSNO (Scheme to Support National Organisations) 2016-2019 predominantly funds the work of IFCA’s National Support Helpline. This funding strand concludes in June 2019 and IFCA will make submissions to the new calls for funding when calls are received for applications.

IFCA was also successful in receiving funds from the Dormant Accounts Fund (Measure 2) for a 12 month project which enabled IFCA to offer a range of services to foster carers who had experienced loss within their fostering experience.

Atlantic Philanthropies
The Atlantic Philanthropies fund enabled IFCA to pilot the development of a new Advocate Service to support foster carers who faced very challenging experiences in their fostering role. It also offered IFCA the opportunity to develop publications and offer workshops to members, as well as supporting an extensive media campaign for fostering fortnight.

Membership Fees
Another strand of IFCA’s income is generated through its membership fees.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs
We successfully applied to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for funding to cover the cost of the children’s programme at our National Conference. This funding is invaluable as it allows IFCA to offer a comprehensive children’s programme thus ensuring that our conference remains family friendly.

Sponsorship
IFCA was also successful in applying for funding from the JP McManus Foundation which went towards our National Conference in Limerick.

Irish Foster Care Association CLG
(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Summary of Income and Expenditure for the Financial Year ended 31/12/2018

Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2018 €</th>
<th>2017 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
<td>207,768</td>
<td>247,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising/Donations</td>
<td>30,791</td>
<td>21,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tusla Funding</td>
<td>459,542</td>
<td>459,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tusla Funding for regions/branches</td>
<td>33,298</td>
<td>39,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Pobal</td>
<td>129,365</td>
<td>55,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Philanthropies Project</td>
<td>108,454</td>
<td>16,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Children &amp; Youth Affairs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tusla - Training Development</td>
<td>46,856</td>
<td>39,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,016,074</td>
<td>917,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost of Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2018 €</th>
<th>2017 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,016,074</td>
<td>917,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2018 €</th>
<th>2017 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overheads</td>
<td>98,280</td>
<td>99,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll &amp; Pension Costs</td>
<td>535,978</td>
<td>420,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone &amp; Postage</td>
<td>23,613</td>
<td>26,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference/Seminars/Meetings</td>
<td>78,263</td>
<td>91,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning &amp; Development</td>
<td>75,705</td>
<td>45,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment/IT/Website Costs</td>
<td>24,688</td>
<td>40,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Expenses</td>
<td>74,126</td>
<td>183,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family social events</td>
<td>34,112</td>
<td>35,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>7635</td>
<td>7366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,052,400</td>
<td>950,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year</td>
<td>(36,326)</td>
<td>(33,188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interest receivable or similar income</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Loss)/Profit</td>
<td>(36,282)</td>
<td>(33,068)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irish Foster Care Association (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Balance Sheet as at 31/12/2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018 €</th>
<th>€</th>
<th>2017 €</th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible Assets</td>
<td>43,265</td>
<td>41,739</td>
<td>43,265</td>
<td>41,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43,265</td>
<td>41,739</td>
<td>43,265</td>
<td>41,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>128,091</td>
<td>12,764</td>
<td>128,091</td>
<td>12,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch/Regional</td>
<td>153,119</td>
<td>182,823</td>
<td>153,119</td>
<td>182,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Office</td>
<td>171,511</td>
<td>334,879</td>
<td>171,511</td>
<td>334,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>452,721</td>
<td>530,466</td>
<td>452,721</td>
<td>530,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</td>
<td>(152,182)</td>
<td>(192,118)</td>
<td>(152,182)</td>
<td>(192,118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current assets</td>
<td>300,539</td>
<td>338,348</td>
<td>300,539</td>
<td>338,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets less current liabilities</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets</strong></td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital and reserves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit and loss account</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members funds</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
<td>343,804</td>
<td>380,087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland’.
IFCA would like to thank all who contributed to its success and development in 2018. Thank you to all our volunteers who take time out of their day to support IFCA and thank you to all our members for supporting each other and IFCA through participation in consultations, events, presentations and surveys. It is with this support that IFCA can continue to advocate on behalf of our members and continue to support them through their fostering experiences.

IFCA kindly acknowledges the funding we receive from our partners to support our services.