



ISPCC
ALWAYS HERE FOR CHILDREN

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Annual Report 2008

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A letter from the Chairman

2008 could certainly be described as a year of two halves. The year started with great promise, with our economy still reasonably vibrant and with a significant development plan in place for our organisation to make our services available to many more children. By the end of the year, we had indeed achieved great things in terms of service delivery, but our operating environment had utterly changed and serious issues were being encountered in relation to income generation.

I stated in my report of last year that “our focus remained on growing the availability of our services to as many children as possible”. The most tangible evidence of this can be seen in the growth of our Childline service during 2008. The Society, through careful stewardship of funds in recent years and the timely sale of our previous head office in Molesworth Street, had built up a development fund and this fund was used last year to implement a major expansion of Childline. Almost 120,000

additional calls were answered in 2008 compared to the previous year and call answering rates reached an all time high of over 60%. We believe that the answering of these additional calls made a real difference to the lives of many children in Ireland and certainly formed the highlight of our year.

As you will see from the individual sections of this report, many positive developments took place in the Childfocus, Teenfocus and Leanbh services. I might specifically draw attention to Leanbh, which has been doing much good, unheralded work in recent years. We believe, and the hard evidence clearly supports the fact, that much progress has been made particularly in dissuading those of other nationalities from bringing their children to Ireland for begging purposes. This has been achieved through a combination of education and good old fashioned foot leather from our Leanbh staff and volunteers and is certainly worthy of particular note.

A less positive note must be struck in relation to public policy and the proposed Children’s Rights Referendum in particular. It is extremely disappointing to note that there was no breakthrough in this regard in 2008. In fact such a Referendum still (in the middle of 2009) has not been scheduled. The position of your Society on this point does not change, i.e. the fundamental rights of the child in Ireland cannot be adequately protected without a change to the constitution and we should commence the process of bringing about that change now.

As always, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Board of the Society. Mary Bennett, Bruce St. John Blake, Anne Condon, Caroline Downey, Dan Flinter, Judge John Garavan, Sharman George, Clodagh Hopkins, Therese Melia and Rose O’Driscoll have continued to give time, commitment and ideas to the greater good of the ISPCC. As Chairman, I am always grateful for their counsel and I cannot over

emphasise how important their knowledge and experience is, in good times and in bad.

The economic uncertainty which gained momentum during the later part of 2008 obviously impacted on our ability to fundraise. The challenge for us going forward is to balance the undoubted huge demand for our services (clearly shown for example by our Childline development plan) with the much more difficult financial climate which now pertains. I am confident that the unique mix of staff and volunteers which makes up the ISPCC will be up to this challenge.



Pat Byrne Chairman 2008





A letter from the CEO

We constantly remind ourselves of the Vision of the ISPCC being “An Ireland where all children are heard and valued”. The year 2008 was another step towards that vision and as always there were some positive developments and some negatives to be overcome.

Among the positive developments we would cite:

- The successful implementation of the first year of the Childline expansion plan. The stand-out figure in this regard was the almost 120,000 extra calls that were answered in 2008 versus the previous year. This also means that over 400,000 calls were answered in total, which is a phenomenal figure and a massive tribute to our staff and volunteers.
- A key part of attaining these figures was an improvement in volunteer retention which in turn was strongly related to investment in the fabric of our offices. The Waterford and Monaghan units relocated to new

premises and major refurbishments were undertaken in Dublin, Limerick and Galway.

- All of our services were enhanced by the installation of a computerised Client Relationship Management system across the Society and every staff member and volunteer now has access to a fully computerised data system.
- The re-opening of our facility in Mullingar was a great boost to our efforts in the Midlands and hopefully will be the start of great things in that area.
- A new logo and website for the Society was launched in the first half of the year and was extremely well received, with the Childline Online site receiving a national award.
- A Services Development Plan was presented to, and approved by, the Board of the Society which provides a clear pathway for our future development.

Unfortunately, we would not be telling a

complete story if we did not say that 2008 also contained its share of disappointment:

- Once again, top of this list is the non-appearance of the Children’s Rights Referendum. We need to ensure that children’s rights remain a priority. The Government seems quite happy for the consultation process to inch along and appears to have no real appetite for a referendum. This remains an unacceptable state of affairs and is in no way in the best interests of children in Ireland.
- During the year, we approached the Government with a proposal to help fund the expansion of Childline. This was met with a resounding “No”, despite the fact that we were only looking for a contribution to total costs. So the ridiculous situation of having a national service which handles over 400,000 calls from children and receives minimal Government support continues.
- The final major negative of the year was the effect of the economic down-



turn on the last few months of the year. This impacted significantly on our two major sources of funds (i.e. personal and corporate donations) and has obviously created real uncertainty going into 2009.

One of the ongoing tests for management and staff of your Society is to keep making sure that the positives out-balance the negatives. This was certainly the case in 2008 and I would like to thank the Board of the Society for its continuing support for service development, and to pay tribute to our staff and volunteers for their desire to take on ever bigger challenges and to keep pushing the limits of the ISPCC.

Ashley Balbirnie CEO



Childline provides a 24 hour service for all children up to 18 years of age. Childline seeks to empower and support children using the medium of telecommunications and information technologies.

CHILDLINE PHONE SERVICE

Childline receives thousands of calls every year, which are answered by volunteers and staff who are trained to listen to and understand children and young people. Young people contact the service for a wide range of reasons such as bullying, sexuality, everyday chat and a variety of other issues. Childline believes the most effective way of supporting children and young people is by listening to them and will continue to adapt its service to reflect new methods of communication. It is vital that children seeking support can access it through the medium that best suits their needs. Childline supports children by valuing, respecting and empowering them to make real change in their lives.

How does Childline work?

The telephone service has been in existence for 21 years. This Freephone service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The phone service can be accessed by dialing 1800 66 66 66.

Statistics

A total of 414,072 telephone calls were answered by Childline in 2008, representing a 16% increase on the number of calls answered in 2007. The Childline telephone service is now answering 63% of all calls received.

While Childline and the ISPC are proud of the fact that more children have been able to access the service, a gap remains in that we are unable to provide a service to all the children who try to access Childline. These calls simply cannot go unanswered and, to address this, the ISPC launched a strategy to

dramatically improve and expand our services to children.

Childline could not survive without the support of the public and its corporate sponsors, whose commitment to the service enables it to grow and develop each year. The ISPC would particularly like to thank eircom, the main sponsor of Childline, for their ongoing support through their funding of telephone calls over the last 21 years. Without their support, Childline simply could not function.



Childline Case Study - Sarah, age 13

Sarah began ringing Childline a year ago. She was feeling suicidal and found it difficult to talk. She said she had no friends, that her mum and dad are always fighting with her, and she was always in trouble at school. Sarah's dad recently lost his job. He was drinking a lot and there were even more arguments at home. She was feeling very low at

that time and said she couldn't talk to her parents because it would only end in a row.

Sarah mentioned that she had been suspended from school for fighting and that this happened just before her dad lost his job. She said that her dad missed a lot of work due to him attending meetings at Sarah's school and she feels that it's her fault that he lost his job.

Sarah's calls to Childline became more frequent. When Childline explored with Sarah what she could do to make her life better, she blocked ideas of talking to a trusted adult or seeking help. She said that Childline was the only one she could talk to and that she just needed someone to listen.

Sarah is back in school now but still feels very alone. Her teacher has asked her to write a poem for the school magazine and she's decided to write about how she's feeling. She continues to ring Childline for support. A new girl has started at her school and she is being nice to her. She said she will let us know how she is getting on.

CHILDLINE ONLINE

Childline Online seeks to empower and support children using the media of telecommunications and information technology. By utilising the www.childline.ie website and automated text service, a child can avail of 24-hour support and information. Childline Online offers the following:

Web Based Support

Childline's award winning website www.childline.ie. It has a public and

private message board where children can post messages which will be responded to within 4 days. It also has a support page which contains information/fact sheets with standard information about the service, children's rights and support topics.

Since September 2008, children and young people can also access Childline Online's one-to-one web based live chat service which is available from 6pm - 10pm every evening. We also have polls available on the website which seek out children's views/opinions on matters that directly relate to them.

Automated Text Support

By texting the word 'List' to 50101 a child can access an automated text service that responds to a series of issues including bullying, suicide, pregnancy, relationships, feeling lonely and being in danger. The child receives a text response within minutes which offers support and redirects the child to another service or to someone they can trust in their community.

Talk Text

By texting the word 'Talk' to 50101 a child can avail of a one-to-one live text support service. This service is available every evening from 6pm -10pm.

Email Service

Lastly, a child can access support by posting a query, via a Childline moderator, onto a message board. A response message is posted by a call facilitator within 4 days.

2008 Statistics

- 38,231 web hits
- 933 emails
- 2,698 children engaged with Childline's text support service
- 555 children engaged with new one-to-one live chat service since Sept. '08
- Automated service received a total of 40,714 texts

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Zamano for their support in providing Childline's text services, and the various other mobile providers for their continued support in providing free texts for the whole range of text services.



Childline Online Case Study – Laura, aged 16

Laura first contacted Childline Online in 2008 using the one-to-one chat service. She was feeling sad and depressed having lost several loved ones in the space of a year. Laura told Childline how she felt and that the slightest things

were causing her to lose her temper and that she was no longer interested in doing the things that used to make her happy, like exercising and meeting up with her friends.

Through various contacts with Childline Online, Laura talked about how she was getting into trouble in school due to her temper and the school had contacted her mother. Laura felt she couldn't talk about how depressed she was feeling as she thought that her mother wouldn't understand. She was feeling down about not being able to talk to her friends and she was worried that they no longer wanted to be friends with her. She didn't know how to talk to anyone about all the feelings she was having but Childline Online reassured her that she was right to seek support and that she always explained her feelings really clearly when talking to us.

Three months after her first contact with Childline Online, Laura decided to write her feelings down and show them to her mother. She felt good about doing this and said that she felt relieved that she would finally be letting her mum know that she was feeling depressed and angry and that was why she had been acting the way she had been.

LEANBH

ISPCC

Leanbh is a service that works with children, young people and parents who are begging or at risk of begging on the streets of Dublin. Leanbh also provides support to children from minority ethnic backgrounds including the Roma, travelling and new communities who are seeking asylum in Ireland.

Established in 1997, Leanbh is a 24-hour, 7-day support service that works with children and young people at risk of, or engaged in, begging on the streets of Dublin. Leanbh extends this support to members of the travelling and immigrant communities by developing an expertise in working with minority ethnic groups. Leanbh's child centred, non-judgmental, non-directive approach has proven to be effective and successful in the area of working with vulnerable children.

How does Leanbh work?

Leanbh is staffed by ISPCC professionals and trained volunteers, and works in partnership with statutory agencies and other services. It aims to:

- Provide a supportive service to children from minority ethnic backgrounds, to children seeking asylum in Ireland and children at risk of begging on the streets, through face-to-face, web based, telephone support and/or mentoring services.
- Monitor the presence of child begging and engage with children begging or at risk on the streets.
- Engage in parental and public education with a view to changing societal ambivalence towards, and parental acceptance of, this form of child exploitation.
- Involve children in preventive group work initiatives and day activities.
- Conduct specific parenting initiatives for parents from the travelling community, Roma community and from other minority ethnic backgrounds, to educate them around the needs and rights of their children.
- Leanbh receives referrals from parents, professionals and young children themselves.

Leanbh Statistics

In 2008, the Leanbh service had 1,240 sightings of child begging. Leanbh staff and volunteers provided one to one support to 64 children, a total of 102 children have been engaged successfully in day activities and 26 children have been involved in group work programmes. Parenting support has been offered to 32 parents from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

In December 2008, Leanbh relaunched the "Giving Money is Not the Answer" campaign, which aims to increase public awareness of the root cause of begging and to offer to the public alternatives to giving money.

In 2008, Leanbh set up a service to address the specific needs of young Roma people involved with the Probation Services. This service provides support work to both children and parents, with the aim of preventing these young people from getting involved in serious crime. Leanbh developed a very positive partnership with the Probation Services and with the Educational Welfare Board in securing a holistic, multidisciplinary approach for dealing with this child protection concern.

The Leanbh service has been part funded by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform for the last number of years. This funding is greatly appreciated and has enabled Leanbh to provide, and continue to develop, its services to children who are begging or at risk of begging. Through its 24-hour networks, the ISPCC continues to build links with An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive. This inter-agency response, coupled with public

support, enables Leanbh to develop new ways of working with some of the most vulnerable children in Irish society.



Leanbh Case Study – Erica, age 14

Erica first met Leanbh while begging on Grafton Street, she was 14 years old at the time. Erica and her family were living in a halting site which had no child friendly amenities or facilities. Like most of the families and children there, Erica's family was living in over-crowded conditions, with a lack of washing and toilet facilities. For Erica and her younger siblings, begging was not only a way of getting some extra money but also a way of staying away from their living conditions. The streets were a better place for them at the time.

Leanbh got involved with Erica and her family with the aim of stopping her from begging and to help identify and offer alternatives to begging. Leanbh has

helped Erica's parents to not only understand their children's needs and the risks associated with begging, but also to overcome some of the difficulties they faced at the time. Erica has received one-to-one support from Leanbh and her parents were advised on how they could improve their living conditions. They were also advised on where to access further support.

Erica is now 19 years old and she has stopped begging due to Leanbh's intervention. She and her family are currently living in a house and are all doing much better. Erica thinks she would make a good Leanbh volunteer one day and she would like to help other children.

Leanbh Case Study – Christine, age 7

Christine is originally from Romania. The ISPCC Leanbh service received a referral for Christine with concerns around her behaviour, in particular her aggressive outbursts and the suspected use of physical punishment in the family home. Christine is currently in foster care as the social services were concerned for her safety. Christine had been separated from her siblings and mother as they had come to Ireland a few years before her.

Initially, Christine found the foster placement very difficult, she was finding it difficult to manage her aggression and she refused to go to school. A Leanbh support worker began to work with Christine. They worked on helping her express her feelings and to try and understand them, they explored her relationships and addressed her anger and boundary issues. It took time to

build a trusting relationship with Christine and for her to find her voice and open up.

Since the Leanbh worker began working with her, she has become more aware of her emotions. She is attending school on a regular basis and she is enjoying it. She has made new friends, is now more in control, more aware of her emotions and able to express them more appropriately.

The Leanbh support worker will remain connected with Christine to support her through her foster placement and to continue to assist her to develop a positive relationship with her mother and her siblings.

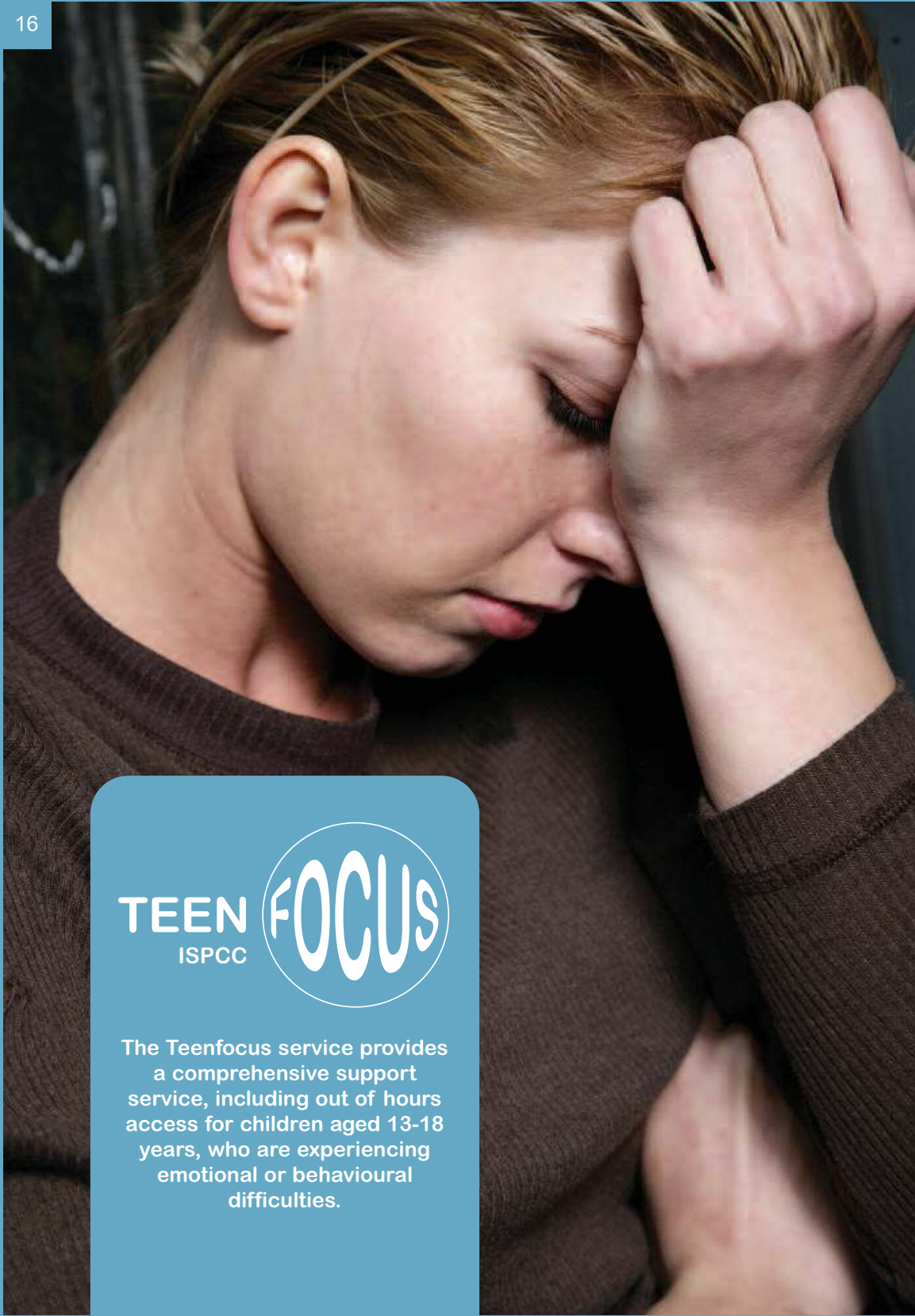


All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents

In 2007 the ISPCC and a Project Management Committee embarked on phase one of The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents (All IPIP), a cross-border, inter-agency initiative aimed at immigrant parents throughout Ireland.

The programme was aimed at developing and disseminating a range of parenting information, training and resources for immigrant families and the practitioners who work with them. The project is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, Health Service Executive, Reception and Integration Agency, Department of Education and Science, Family Support Agency and a number of agencies in Northern Ireland.

The overarching objective for phases one and two, was to provide information and support for the additional stresses that face immigrant parents. This was done through the development of a toolkit (which can be used by practitioners who support this target group), an information booklet for immigrant parents (which is translated into 10 languages) and an accompanying DVD, to ensure that language and literacy difficulties are addressed. 2008 saw the successful completion of phases one and two. Phase three of this programme will be the roll out of all materials by the Project Management Committee via training days in 2009.



The Teenfocus service provides a comprehensive support service, including out of hours access for children aged 13-18 years, who are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties.

In 2008, the service was rebranded as Teenfocus (formerly known as 4me!). Teenfocus ensures that young people who are excluded from society are given the necessary support to enable them to overcome their difficulties and participate actively and constructively in the main structures impacting on their lives. Referrals to the Teenfocus service are welcomed from young people, parents, statutory and voluntary sectors, education, probation, youth and community groups.

How does Teenfocus work?

The Teenfocus service provides a number of mechanisms through which individual support is provided:

- Face-to-face support: The ISPCC meets the young person on a weekly basis in the child’s home, school or another place they choose.
- Telephone support: this kind of support allows the child to make contact with us without meeting face-to face. As children today use the telephone to communicate, this kind of support allows some children to feel more comfortable in communicating with us.

- Web based support: many children today are used to communicating through the internet and may feel more comfortable talking about what’s going on for them using the web. Web based support can also make it easier for children who live away from local services to access for the support they need.
- Mentoring programme: The Mentoring programme is based on the principle of informal support, with the Mentor being a ‘role model’ and ‘supporter’ of the child/young person. Volunteers are specifically selected and trained to work in a mentoring capacity with young people, they receive on-going training, support and supervision from ISPCC staff.

Statistics

During 2008, Teenfocus provided an individual support service to 241 young people and a further 50 children availed of the Teenfocus mentoring service during the year.

Total number of children involved in this service in 2008 was:

Service:	Number of individuals involved:
Face-To-Face	241
Web Based Services	45
Telephone Based Services	59
Mentoring Clients	50
Tracking/Top Up/Brief Intervention	309
No. of Teenfocus Workers	17

As well as providing face-to-face and mentor support, the Teenfocus service provides telephone support. 59 children used this means of support during 2008. In addition, the service developed a web-based support initiative in which 45 children were able to engage in this growing form of communication amongst young people.

The Teenfocus programme also facilitated group work and outreaches across the country. 17 group work programmes were facilitated during 2008; these included bullying, anger management, transition to secondary school and self esteem programmes. Outreaches to schools, community groups and volunteer organisations are another important component of the Teenfocus service. In 2008, a total of 131 Outreaches were facilitated by Teenfocus staff and volunteers.

In 2008, and after lengthy review, the decision was made to phase out groupwork nationally and to focus resources on increasing the number of clients we work with individually. Research shows that one-to-one work has a longer lasting impact than groupwork initiatives alone.



Teenfocus Case Study – Niamh, age 13

Niamh was referred to the Teenfocus service by the family social worker because her behaviour at home had become challenging and unmanageable. She was also bullying her younger siblings in an aggressive manner. Niamh's parents were finding it difficult to chastise her as she had become defiant and often aggressive. Niamh herself had been exposed to a history of domestic abuse.

An assessment concluded that Niamh had been a victim of bullying which led to body image concerns and low self-esteem. Niamh's parents were in constant conflict with her and were not available to manage Niamh as she went through this difficult period in her life. Niamh also felt that she had to take on a lot of responsibility which made her feel angry. Niamh felt guilty for feeling this way as she knew her mother needed her. This led to feelings of low self-worth.

The intervention service provided by Teenfocus focused on Niamh's experience of bullying and looked at how this affected her self-image and confidence. The service also focused on the history of domestic abuse and how it had affected Niamh's relationship with her father. Niamh completed the intervention and has reported that she is using her coping strategies to deal with any conflicting situations which now arise, and relationships with her family have improved. Niamh feels that she can cope better with issues and she is doing very well in general.



Teenfocus Case Study - Martin, age 15

Martin is currently living in foster care with his auntie. Martin was referred to Teenfocus by a social worker. Martin had to be placed in foster care as his parents were unable to care for him anymore as a result of their ongoing addiction problems. Martin missed large amounts of school in the last year and has

experienced many traumatic events in his life. Pupils had also bullied Martin in his former school because of his parent's troubles. Martin said that he had low self-esteem and found it hard to make friends because of his experiences.

Martin was deemed, by the social services, to be at risk of early school leaving and possible alcohol and/or drug abuse and was referred to the Teenfocus service. Martin was supported by the Teenfocus service for 6 months. He received face-to-face and web based individual support which focused on improving his self-esteem and reducing the risk of drug and alcohol use. Martin also received mentoring support and he began attending a local drama class.

Following completion of the support, Martin reported that his self-confidence had improved and he had also made several friends in the drama class. A tracking session was carried out 6 months after Martin had completed his work with Teenfocus. Martin said he had recently finished his Junior Certificate and was attending school regularly. He also said that he had made more friends in his school and was still friendly with peers from the drama class.

CHILD FOCUS

ISPCC

Childfocus provides a comprehensive one-to-one support service including out-of-hours access for children aged 12 years and under who are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Childfocus also supports parents through the provision of a supportive parent mentor programme.

Childfocus places a particular emphasis on providing support to children who are vulnerable and may not have access to other support options. Childfocus is a child-centred service which is preventative in nature. Children are fully involved in the development of their own intervention plan. Their views are actively sought and taken into account throughout all stages of the process. Referrals to the Childfocus service are welcomed from young people, parents, statutory and voluntary sectors, education, probation, and youth and community groups.

How does Childfocus work?

The Childfocus service provides a number of mechanisms through which individual support is provided:

- Face-to-face support: The ISPCC meets the young person on a weekly basis in the child's home, school or another place they choose.
- Telephone support: this kind of support allows the child to make contact with us without meeting face to face. As children today use the telephone to communicate, this kind of support allows some children to feel

more comfortable in communicating with us.

- Web-based support: many children today are used to communicating through the internet and may feel more comfortable talking about what's going on for them using the web. Web based support can also make it easier for children who live away from local services to access the support they need.
- Parent Mentoring: the Parent Mentoring service is based on the principle of informal support, the concept of the Mentor being 'the older and wiser parent'. Parents meet for a coffee and chat once a week and concentrate on their needs in improving their child/parent relationship.

Statistics

During 2008, Childfocus provided an individual support service to 262 young people, 31 parents availed of the Mentoring service during the year and 46 children availed of the phone and web-based options of support. Alongside the individual support work provided by Childfocus, 27 group work

Total number of children involved in this service in 2008 was:

Service:	Number of individuals involved:
Face-To-Face	262
Web Based Services	27
Telephone Based Services	19
Mentoring Clients	31
Tracking/Top Up/Brief Intervention	229
No. of Teenfocus Workers	13

programmes and 106 outreaches were facilitated during 2008.

In 2008 the decision was made, after a lengthy review, to phase out the group work programmes nationally and to refocus our resources on increasing the number of clients we work with on an individual basis. Research has shown that one-to-one support work has a longer lasting impact than the provision of group work initiatives alone.



Childfocus Case Study – Ciarán, age 7

Ciarán, an only child, began working with the Childfocus worker after his mother contacted the service about his behaviour. Ciarán's mother was upset because she was finding his behaviour difficult to control and she was especially worried that Ciarán's behaviour would make it difficult for his mum's new partner Joe to get to know him. Ciarán's behaviour worsened when Joe was present and he tended to act

aggressively on these occasions.

The Childfocus worker met with Ciarán and his family for the next 6 weeks. From talking to Ciarán and using a mixture of role play and drawings, he began to open up about his feelings towards his mother and Joe. Ciarán was able to say that he felt sad that his mother 'had a new friend' and he was scared that she didn't care about him as much anymore.

The Childfocus worker spent time with Ciarán's mother and she said she was anxious for Ciarán and Joe to get on as she was very lonely on her own. The Childfocus worker was able to explain Ciarán's feelings about the changes that were happening in his life and suggested ways she could encourage Ciarán to adapt to these changes. With encouragement from the Childfocus worker, Ciarán and his mother began to spend more time together and slowly Ciarán began to feel happier about the times when Joe was with them.

At the end of 14 sessions Ciarán said he felt much happier and his mother noticed a big improvement in his behaviour. Ciarán was starting to adapt to having another person in his life.

Three months after the work finished the Childfocus worker contacted Ciarán and his family and they reported that all was going well. Ciarán was happy and feeling better about the times that Joe was with them. Ciarán's mother reported that she had no worries about his behaviour and the Childfocus worker agreed to contact the family again in six months.



Childfocus Case Study – Sarah, age 6

Sarah started seeing a Childfocus worker shortly after her parents separated. She felt angry and upset and blamed her mother for making her father leave. Sarah was having difficulties in school and her behaviour was a concern to both her parents. The Childfocus worker met with Sarah and spent time with her over the next 4 weeks, getting to know her and listening to how she felt about the recent changes in her life. In time, Sarah was able to say how sad she felt about her dad not living at home anymore. She found it hard when other girls at school talked about their families as she felt that she didn't have the same kind of family anymore.

The Childfocus worker listened to Sarah and reassured her that her feelings were normal. The sessions helped Sarah to explore the different types of feelings she had regarding her parent's

separation such as hurt, fear and feelings of being different. Childfocus helped Sarah gain a better understanding of her feelings and find alternative ways of expressing and dealing with them. Increasingly, Sarah was able to understand that when she reacted angrily it was because she was scared that she would lose touch with her father and she wanted to 'test him' to see if he really loved her.

Sarah was encouraged to speak to both her parents about how she was feeling and, together with the Childfocus worker, they agreed a plan whereby Sarah would spend time with both her parents. By having a set routine and knowing when she would next see her father, Sarah felt more secure and less anxious that her father didn't care about her. At the end of 15 weeks Sarah said that she was coping much better and that she felt less angry towards her mother which enabled them to get on better at home.

Sarah received regular calls from the service over the next year and she continued to do well as she gradually adapted to her parents separation. She continued to see her father on a regular basis and felt that her relationship with her mother had improved. Sarah was happy that the Childfocus worker would stay in touch with her and they agreed to speak at regular intervals.

ADVOCACY

The ISPCC has been advocating for and on behalf of children since its inception. We have a firm belief in and commitment to children's rights and safeguarding the welfare and protection of all children and young people.

The ISPCC recognises advocacy as a tool for facilitating change by creating awareness and understanding, ensuring that all children and their families have a voice and empowering them to use that voice. Advocacy is a pivotal tool to ensuring we see an Ireland where children are truly valued and, as such, it is central to the goals the Society strives to achieve.

In 2008 the ISPCC advocated for children in a number of key areas:

Children's Rights Referendum: Over the last number of years, the ISPCC has

been advocating for constitutional change to enhance the protection afforded to children and to further enshrine the rights of children. The ISPCC believes that a referendum is key to strengthening children's rights, supporting families and ensuring children are better protected. This referendum has yet to come to fruition and the ISPCC will continue to advocate for this constitutional change.

Child Protection and Welfare services:

There appears to be a 'firefighting' approach by the Health Service Executive in responding to child protection and welfare concerns, and this often means that the threshold for intervention can be quite high. As a result, vulnerable children and families remain at risk. In addition to expanding service provision that responds to immediate child protection concerns, we

need to have a system that focuses on early intervention and prevention and to have the availability of directly accessible services.

The need for an **out-of-hours (24 hour) social work service:** The ISPCC has long since voiced its concerns regarding the impact that an under resourced, overwhelmed, 9-5 child protection service has on children who are victims of emotional, sexual and physical abuse. While the Government has taken steps in announcing the provision of foster care accommodation for children at risk out of hours, this is not enough to protect vulnerable children who are at risk.

Missing Children: It is important to note that there are different types of missing children, including family abductions, runaways, non-family abductions, lost, injured, or otherwise missing children, most notably separated children seeking asylum. The ISPCC believes that the Government and all other stakeholders need to take action in response to the issue of missing children, to ensure that we have robust legislation, as well as the necessary service provision to prevent and respond to the issue of missing and sexually exploited children.

Leanbh Public Awareness Campaign:

ISPCC's Leanbh service launched a public awareness campaign to tackle the issue of child begging. This campaign seeks to educate the public around the dangers of child begging and advises the public what it can do to tackle the issue. The key message in this campaign is 'Giving money is not the answer'. Giving money increases the chances of child begging on a regular basis and does not address the root cause of begging.

In 2008 the ISPCC made a number of submissions regarding children including the following:

- Proposed Referendum on Children's Rights
- Immigration Residence and Protection Bill
- Policing Plan
- The Agenda for Children's Services
- Traveller Accommodation Programme

All of these submissions are available on www.ispcc.ie

Inter-agency Work

In addition to the ISPCC's individual lobbying and campaigning work, we have a firm commitment and belief in an inter-agency approach. We have worked with a number of other NGOs and statutory agencies to address child protection, welfare and children's rights issues. For example:

- Action for Separated Children in Ireland
- Stop it Now!
- Children's Rights Alliance
- Child-Trafficking Working Group
- Missing Children Europe
- Child Helpline International
- Garda Vetting Implementation Group
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- An Garda Síochána

The work carried out via these inter-agency platforms ensures that key stakeholders are working together to enhance the policies, legislation and service provision relating to children and young people.



CONSULTATION & PARTICIPATION

The ISPCC has been at the forefront of developing participation and consultation initiatives with children throughout Ireland, most notably Dáil na n'Óg, Comhairle na n'Óg and the inclusion of children in the Ombudsman for Children interviewing process. Internally the ISPCC operates four local Children's Advisory Committees (CAC) and a national Junior Advisory Board (JAB).

CACs comprise children from the local communities where the ISPCC operates Teenfocus and Childfocus services. The young people on the committees meet on a monthly basis providing on-going feedback on children's issues within their region and on ISPCC service delivery. Two members from each regional CAC are elected to represent the region on the Junior Advisory Board. The JAB meets twice yearly to report to the ISPCC Board of Directors on young people's views throughout Ireland and on where they, as young people, feel the ISPCC should direct its service provision, advocacy and campaigns.

The ISPCC also consults with young



people on a bi-annual basis through its Viewpoint questionnaires. These questionnaires are designed to assess the level of satisfaction among users of ISPCC services. Young people were consulted using Viewpoint in May and November 2008.

National Schools Consultation Programme

In 2008 the ISPCC piloted an exciting new National Schools Consultation Programme (NSC). The NSC programme is a new development to consult with young people through a network of schools. Students involved participated in a consultative and participative process in September/October 2008 and allowed the ISPCC

to gather the opinions and views of children and young people in Ireland from a much wider base than before. 4,894 children completed the questionnaire which was almost split 50/50 between primary and secondary schools, and likewise between rural and urban communities.

The focus of the pilot of the National Schools Consultation in 2008 was twofold:

- To assess children's knowledge of ISPCC services.
- To gauge whether mental health was an issue for young people in Ireland today.

Findings of the Survey

A total of 2,837 primary school students and 2,057 secondary students were surveyed across the country in 2008. The key findings were as follows:

- 65% of primary school students and 56% of secondary school students reported feeling sad and depressed.
- 76% of primary school students and 54% of secondary school students reported knowing where to access support if they experienced these feelings.

- 15% of secondary school students reported feeling suicidal and 54% felt there were not adequate supports available for young people to access.
- 82% of primary schools students and 75% of secondary school students felt that hitting children should be stopped in Ireland.

Following the successful pilot of this programme, the ISPCC will continue to develop the National Schools Consultation Programme in 2009 and will increase the numbers of young people consulted. Information gleaned from this consultation will be used to inform national campaigns and will have a direct input to ISPCC service design and service delivery on a national basis.



FUNDRAISING REVIEW



A Promising Start In Challenging Times

2008 was the first year of our ambitious strategy to double the Society's income within five years. This involved an extensive overhaul of and investment in our fundraising plans to focus on both significant and sustainable growth in income. As a result, 2008 was a very busy year with a full and focused fundraising team and a series of noteworthy successes.

However, it was also a year of great frustration, as these successes were inevitably tempered by the economic downturn. While increases in statutory, legacy and in-kind support, including corporate sponsorship, increased the bottom line, voluntary income was 9% less than 2007 at €4.59 million. The primary cause of this decline was a noticeable regression in individual and

corporate donations, parallel to the downturn in the latter half of the year.

Nonetheless, corporate partnerships, community fundraising activities and events largely held strong and/or exceeded our best expectations. Our fundraising volunteer ranks and supporting schools doubled, as did the registrations for many of our core campaigns, resulting in a four-fold increase in our supporter base. The

entire fundraising operation is now online with the re-launch of the ISPCC website which now underpins all of our activities. As such, despite the economic obstacles, the fundraising department has laid essential groundwork which will see us through the tough times and maintain our course toward future growth.

Fundraising Supporters In Action

Community spirit is truly alive and well at [Crescent College Comprehensive](#) in Dooradoyle, Co Limerick, where transition year staff and students raised over €6,500 to become the top Holly School of 2008. The school has long been an annual supporter of the campaign, but students outdid themselves last year.

After hearing about Childline's difficulty answering every call, Managing Director



Declan O'Donnell and his staff at [Lee Travel](#) in Cork decided to take action. The entire team banded together to organise a raffle. Thanks to their hard work, and the great support from their clients, friends and family, they raised €12,175 – well over their original target of €10,000.

Highlights Of The Year:

The [Centra Childline Big BBQ](#) marked the start of a 3-year partnership - the first exclusive company-wide charity partnership in the retailer's history. In addition to sponsoring all media and related costs of the summer BBQ, which increased both participation and income 10-fold, the retailer installed collection tins and sold Holly, helping to raise €408,000.

The 2008 [Cheerios Childline Concert](#) was the first ever concert staged in the 02, Dublin. Hosted by Westlife's Nicky Byrne, mega-stars lined up for the concert included Boyzone, Enrique Iglesias, Shayne Ward, Anastacia, The Script, Scouting for Girls, Alphabeat and The Saturdays. X-Factor runners up JLS and Eoghan Quigg also made special appearances. The

show was absolutely spectacular, raising nearly €400,000 for Childline.

Hosted by RTE's Gerry Ryan at the Four Seasons Hotel, the 22nd annual [Dove Ball](#) was once again a success, raising over €150,000 for the ISPCC. Undoubtedly, the evening's highlight was the auction featuring top prizes including membership to the O2's elite Audi Club and VIP tickets to the X Factor final. Great thanks go to the organising committee chaired by Mary Coffey.

Once again, Cheerios also sponsored the [Childline Breakfast Together Appeal](#) in October. Over 418 breakfasts were held nationwide by families, friends, colleagues, community groups, schools and crèches, helping to raise €140,000 – double the income from the previous year.

The fourth annual [Abrakebabra for Childline Day](#), launched by Colin Farrell and Keith Duffy, raised an astonishing €100,000 – the proceeds of one full day of sales. In honour of Abrakebabra's 25th birthday in 2008, magician Keith Barry helped launch a special children's



meal to benefit Childline. A highlight of the autumn social calendar, the annual **Brown Thomas/ISPCC Lunch** took place in September at the Four Seasons Hotel. Brown Thomas showcased its Autumn Winter collections with a stunning display of international designer collections. Emceed by fashionista presenter, Pamela Flood, the event raised €60,000 for the ISPCC.



Dublin's newest and most innovative radio station **Christmas FM** hit the capital's airwaves for the first time in 2008, broadcasting in the weeks running up to Christmas. The station chose the ISPCC as the inaugural charity to benefit from their unique mix of Christmas music, sponsorship and on-air activities. Over €25,000 was raised from public and corporate donations.

The **Holly Days** campaign has long been one of the ISPCC's biggest fundraising

appeals each year and 2008 was no exception. Over 500 volunteers, 150 schools and hundreds of retail outlets joined forces to raise almost €200,000. Our great thanks to all 2008 supporters. With over two thousand world class martial artists competing, the **Irish Open for Martial Arts** is now a premier world fighting tournament benefitting charity. The ISPCC were the lucky beneficiaries of the 2008 event, and we extend our great thanks to all the athletes, volunteers and officials for their enthusiasm and support.



Over 400 Irish schools took part for the first time in the world's largest simultaneous sing-a-thon to smash the Guinness World record for the greatest number of children singing the same song in unison, while raising much needed funds for the ISPCC and Special Olympics Ireland. **The Big Sing** record looks set to be broken and over €33,000 was raised.

Special thanks to the following corporate partners & major donors:

Star

Abrakebabra
Centra
eircom
Nestle Cereals

Platinum

AIB
Anglo Irish
Eco-Environmental
Matheson Ormsby Prentice
McCann Erickson
Microsoft

Gold

Debenhams
Piranha Bar

Silver

11850
Accenture
B&Q
Bank of Ireland
Bank of Scotland Ireland
Digiweb
Eason
Lee Travel

Bronze

AOL Broadband
Allied World Assurance Company Ltd
Capel Developments Ltd
Dell
Merrill Lynch Ltd
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Slate/Reelgood

Corporate Champions

Baxter Healthcare Ltd
Febvre & Company Ltd
Lantz Stationery Ltd
Larsen Building Products
Links of London
The Costume Shop
William Fry Solicitors

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Abhann Production
Academy
A.B. O'Reilly, Dolan & Co. Solicitors
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Dublin Chamber of Commerce
Faber Maunsell
First Solutions
Hibernian Insurance
Irish Commercials Ltd
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LSM Ltd
Mark Fastener Specialists Ltd
National Toll Roads
NCB
Pacnet Services Europe Ltd
Panelling Centre
PC PRO Computers Ltd
Pepsi-Cola International
PJ Carroll & Company
Procter and Gamble
Renaissance Reinsurance of Europe Limited
Rottapharm Ltd
Snickers Workwear
Stanley Holdings
TNT
21 Club & Lounge



FINANCIAL REVIEW 2008

The ISPCC understands the need for prudent financial management to protect the investments that so many have made in the work of the society. Once again in 2008 our financial control function was maintained through FGS and our auditors were PricewaterhouseCoopers.

In 2008, the continued support of corporate donors, members of the public, ISPCC Committees, fundraising and service volunteers and staff commitment and effort have helped ensure adequate funding for the provision of services to children.

The Society's overall income in 2008 fell by 5% in comparison to 2007 income. This decrease in income is a result of the economic slowdown in 2008. The Society will continue to build fundraising targets during these challenging times to ensure that we retain and develop our range of services.

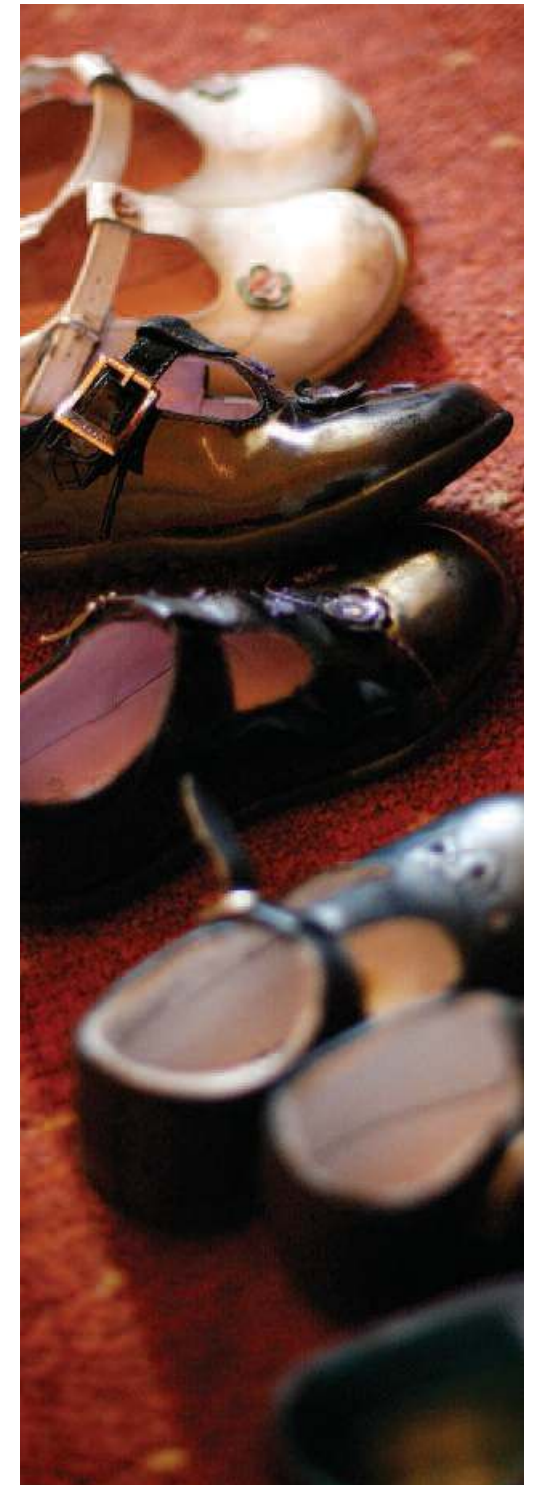
The Society planned and delivered, within budget, a significant level of investment in a number of key areas in 2008, including the following:

- Investment in technology to support services and specifically Childline
- Investment in recruitment and training for services

The increase in expenditure in 2008 was expensed to the provision of services to children. The Society's administration costs have remained in line with prior year costs. The ISPCC vigorously monitor all levels of expenditure and continue to utilise a value-for-money approach in all areas.

The following summary accounts have been extracted from the statutory financial statements of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children for the year ended December 31st 2008.

The detailed Auditor's report and accounts are available from our Head Office at 29 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2.



Statement of Financial Activities			Balance Sheet		
Year Ended 31 December 2008			Year Ended 31 December 2008		
	2008 Total €	2007 Total €		2008 €	2007 €
Income			Fixed assets		
Income from statutory bodies	675,191	667,643	Tangible fixed assets	6,412,711	6,229,573
Raised voluntary income	4,585,633	5,047,458	Investments	117,212	263,521
Legacies	152,297	84,393		6,529,923	6,493,094
Investment income	276,958	166,535	Current assets		
Other income	964,166	1,070,641	Debtors	182,751	15,784
	6,654,245	7,036,670	Bank and cash	5,353,957	6,729,321
Expenditure				5,536,708	6,745,105
Services to children	5,354,901	4,472,071	Creditors	(474,938)	(408,744)
Fundraising and services promotion	2,136,693	1,665,839			
Administration	254,104	249,202	Net current assets	5,061,770	6,336,361
Total expenditure	7,745,698	6,387,112			
			Net assets	11,591,693	12,829,455
(Deficit) / Surplus	(1,091,453)	649,558			
			Funded by		
Unrealised (loss)/gain on investments	(146,309)	(79,170)	Restricted funds	(674,093)	(574,559)
Sale of property		3,982,150	Unrestricted funds	12,176,215	13,314,443
Total (losses)/gains	(1,237,762)	4,552,538	Revaluation reserve	89,571	89,571
				11,591,693	12,829,455
Balance of funds at 1 January	12,739,884	8,187,346			
Balance of funds at 31 December	11,502,122	12,739,884			
The Society has no recognised gains and losses other than those included in the surplus above and, therefore, no separate statement of recognised gains and losses has been presented.					
There is no material difference between the deficit for the year stated above and the historical cost equivalent.					
The results above derive wholly from continuing operations.					

LEGACY

Imagine a world in which every child is given the opportunity to experience love, happiness and equal opportunity. With your support, we can make our shared dream a reality. By remembering the ISPCC in your will, you can provide a lasting gift to future generations of children in Ireland.

Within these pages, you've seen the impact of our community-based services which touch the lives of thousands of children throughout Ireland each year. Over 90% of our income is derived from public donations, and we rely heavily on legacies, which enable us to plan long-term funding for our range of services.

There are three types of charitable legacies: Pecuniary is a gift of a specific amount; Residuary is a share of the rest of your assets that you have not already committed; while Specific is a gift of a specific asset.

If you already have a will and wish to include a gift to ISPCC, contact your solicitor about adding a simple Codicil (addition). If you have not yet prepared a will, it is actually quite easy and inexpensive to do so. Simply contact your solicitor or ask friends and family to refer you to one, who will advise you throughout the process.

We are extremely grateful for any amount we receive and can guarantee that your gift will make a lasting difference for year to come. For more information about legacies or any form of financial support, please contact our Fundraising team:

Address: 29 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
Phone: 01 676 7960 Email: ispcc@ispcc.ie
Web: www.ispcc.ie

HONORARY PATRON & BOARD MEMBERS

HONORARY PATRON

Ms. Mary McAleese - Uachtarán na hÉireann

BOARD MEMBERS

Pat Byrne - Chairman
Dan Flinter - Hon. Secretary/Vice Chair
Mary Bennett - Hon. Treasurer
Bruce St. John Blake
Anne Condon
Caroline Downey
Judge John Garavan
Sharman George
Clodagh Hopkins
Therese Melia
Rose O'Driscoll

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ashley Balbirnie

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The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

(Company Limited by Guarantee)

Cumann Na h-Eireann um Chosaint Leanbhai

Company Registration No. 15958

Registered Office: 29 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2

Charity Registration No. CHY 5102

Bankers: Bank of Ireland, 2 College Green, Dublin 2

Allied Irish Bank, 62 St. Brigid's Road, Artane, Dublin 5

Auditors: PricewaterhouseCoopers, One Spencer Dock, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1

Solicitors: Arthur Cox & Co. Earlsfort Centre, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

For confidentiality, the pictures of children and parents used in this publication are posed by models or taken at actual ISPCC events