



NAI STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

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STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Neurological Alliance of Ireland was established in 2003 as a national umbrella for charities providing services and supports to people with neurological conditions and their families. As we draw near to marking twenty years as an alliance, this strategic framework aims to reflect on the contribution the organisation has made, and what is needed both to sustain its future and to position the umbrella to work with its members, and other stakeholders to deliver better care for people with neurological conditions in Ireland.

From early achievements such as securing the development of a national neurorehabilitation strategy, through to the launch of national campaigns for investment in neurology and neurorehabilitation services as well as a successful campaign to restore vital funding to twelve of its member organisations, the umbrella has a

strong track record of “punching above its weight” in contributing to national policy and increasing the profile of neurological conditions across health and social care.

The past three years have seen the Neurological Alliance of Ireland develop a strong advocacy platform, mobilising expertise at board level and among its membership to create opportunities for member involvement and engagement with policy makers and public representatives.

Important achievements during this period include securing progress in relation to a key goal for the NAI’s “We Need Our Heads Examined” campaign with the publication of the long-awaited implementation plan for the National Neurorehabilitation Strategy as well as ensuring strong representation for the voluntary sector in the development of models of care for neurology and rehabilitation medicine services.



Tom Scott,
Chair Of NAI

The next three years will see continued changes in the structure and operation of our health services with the implementation of Slaintecare reforms as well as a continued challenging environment for not for profit neurological organisations in an environment of increasing regulation, funding constraints and increasing demands on their services.*

NAI has to continue to secure real changes in how Ireland responds to the needs of people with neurological conditions. One of the key elements of this plan is the development of a three year advocacy and communications strategy which aims to provide our members and other stakeholders with the opportunity to shape the design and delivery of our advocacy agenda going forward.

The 2020-2022 plan recognises that NAI has to grow and change in important ways in order to be an effective organisation going forward. Over the next three years, we aim to deliver our work plan commitments to Pobal under the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) while identifying additional resources to develop in new directions, most significantly through new ways of



Mags Rogers,
Executive
Director Of NAI

working with our members, the research community and other stakeholders to inform and strengthen our advocacy platform. We are committed to focus on how best to secure a sustainable future for the organisation, within a framework of diversified funding sources while not forgetting the imperative to deliver the highest standards of governance and financial control.

Our plan is ambitious and many challenges lie ahead but with the support of existing and potential funders, our members and other stakeholders we aim to continue to deliver our vision of a country where people with neurological conditions have access to the full range of integrated supports and services to enable them to enjoy full quality of life.

We want to thank everyone who gave input or feedback to the development of this Plan.

**This strategic plan was developed before the 2020 outbreak of COVID19 and the resulting impact on charity fundraising and sustainability as well as the likely long term economic impact across all sectors of society. The Board of NAI are fully cognisant that the strategic context for the delivery of the three-year plan has changed significantly in the interim.*

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NEUROLOGICAL CARE IN IRELAND: AN OVERVIEW

Neurological conditions affect the brain and spinal cord and range from common conditions such as migraine, stroke, dementia, epilepsy and acquired brain injury to rare and genetic neurological conditions.

It is estimated that there are over 800,000 Irish people living with neurological conditions, with an additional 40,000 diagnosed each year. The ageing demographic of developed countries like Ireland means that the neurological conditions associated with ageing,

such as dementia, stroke and Parkinson's disease for example, will increase significantly in the future. In addition, due to advances in care and treatment, including improved trauma and perinatal and paediatric care, more people are surviving with congenital or acquired neurological conditions.

While it is challenging to generalise across such a range of conditions, many have a life-changing impact – not only on those directly affected, but also their family members and carers.

In 2004, a World Health Organisation report on neurological disorders highlighted them as the “greatest challenge facing public health systems in developed countries worldwide”. Ireland has been very slow to respond to this challenge - in terms of development of policy, investment in specialist services, and supporting these individuals and their families.

NAI and its members have been at the forefront of calling for a concerted policy focus on the needs of people

with neurological conditions within the Irish health system. Due in large part to these efforts, a national neurorehabilitation strategy has been developed, together with models of care for neurology and neurorehabilitation services. A key challenge for NAI, and all of the other stakeholders involved in supporting people with neurological conditions, is to ensure these policies are implemented in full with appropriate investment.



¹ *Strategic Review of Neurology and Neurophysiology Services (2007) National Hospitals Office: Health Services Executive*

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THE NEUROLOGICAL ALLIANCE OF IRELAND: A BRIEF HISTORY

2000-2002

NAI publishes a three volume series of Standards of Care for People with Neurological Conditions, a key starting point for policy development in this area in Ireland

2003

NAI is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee

2007

NAI successfully advocates for the Rehabilitation Strategy within the Programme for Government to focus specifically on neurorehabilitation

2010

NAI launches “The Future for Neurological Conditions in Ireland: A Challenge for Healthcare: an Opportunity for Change”

2014

NAI successfully campaigns for restoration of funding to twelve of its member organisations under the Scheme to Support National Organisations

2015

NAI conducts the first national survey of neurology resources

2016

NAI launches its campaign for neurorehabilitation services “We Need Our Heads Examined”

2017

Private members motion on neurological services passed in Dail Eireann

2018

NAI publishes the first patient experience survey of neurology patients in Ireland

2019

NAI successfully secures one of the key aims of its “We Need Our Heads Examined” campaign with the publication of the long awaited implementation plan for the National Neurorehabilitation Strategy

2020

NAI launches three year Strategic Plan

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OUR MEMBERS



An Saol

Ataxia Ireland

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Aphasia Ireland

Bloomfield Health Services

Cheshire Ireland

Chronic Pain Ireland

Dystonia Ireland

Epilepsy Ireland

Enable Ireland

The Irish Heart Foundation

The Irish Hospice Foundation

The Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland

Headway

Migraine Association of Ireland

Move4Parkinson's

Multiple Sclerosis North West Therapy Centre

MS Ireland

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland

Neurofibromatosis Association of Ireland

National Council for the Blind

The Parkinson's Association of Ireland

PSPA Ireland

Polio Survivors Ireland

The Rehab Group

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland

Spinal Injuries Ireland

Associate Members:

Syringomyelia Chiari Ireland Support Group

Brain Tumour Ireland

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ABOUT OUR WORK

Working closely with our members and other stakeholders, NAI endeavours to act as a strong platform to drive the development and implementation of policy and best practice to meet the needs of people with neurological conditions and their families in Ireland. We provide an effective structure for our members to interface with, and influence, key policy makers and public representatives. We act as a specialist hub to inform and interpret health policy as it relates to people with neurological conditions and communicate this to our members, through organising conferences, seminars, workshops. We have also developed a growing communications platform through our websites, social media and our awareness initiatives, including organising National Brain Awareness Week each year, to champion our members' missions, and also the wider community of people with neurological conditions, their families and carers and the general public. Increasingly, we are working to collaborate with European

partners to support calls for Europe-wide investment in service provision and research into neurological conditions.

Together with our members, we work in partnership with other organisations across the health and disability sector to promote a greater

recognition of the needs of people with neurological conditions and their families and provide informed responses to those needs.



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DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

This plan was developed following comprehensive engagement with our members through a detailed survey and subsequent workshop and review by the Board.

During this process, a number of key themes emerged which highlighted the need to introduce new ways of working and a new emphasis on certain areas of activity in order to strengthen and sustain the work of NAI going forward.

Key Themes

1. NAI needs access to high quality research, information and expertise in order to drive the development and implementation of policy.
2. NAI needs to focus on issues of importance to its members and work with them in providing opportunities to engage in advocacy, policy development and awareness raising.
3. NAI needs to develop and strengthen its advocacy activities to promote investment in and implementation of existing policies.

New Approaches

A key focus when crafting this plan was to ensure that all commitments made to Pobal on securing the SSNO funding would be met.

An important feature of our plan is devising new approaches and new ways of working to ensure that we can mobilise the experience and energy of our membership, as well as the work of researchers and clinicians, to act as a strong collective voice for neurological care in Ireland.

In particular, where possible, this plan quantifies NAI's planned outcomes and outputs as well as identifying the activities and resources needed. A detailed workplan focusing on how each outcome will be achieved has been agreed by the Board and will be delivered over the next three years.

Funding

Full implementation of the 2020-2022 is dependent on additional resources being secured to expand the activities of the organisation. While this will entail challenges for the organisation, we are committed to securing the additional funding required to meet our objectives as well as delivering on our existing commitments to our funders. Implementation plans and budgets will be agreed annually by the Board based on the funding available.

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

VISION

Our vision is an Ireland where people with neurological conditions experience and enjoy full quality of life

MISSION

Our mission is to work together to ensure the best services and supports are available to people with neurological conditions and their families.

GOALS

NAI has set itself 6 high level ambitious goals, which are summarised below. Further detail on each of the goals are in following pages

GOAL	TARGET BY 2022
1 ADVOCACY To strengthen its advocacy platform through improved messaging and increased engagement with public representatives and policy makers	Development of an Advocacy and Communications Strategy and achievement of NAI Advocacy Programme in terms of investment in neurology and neurorehabilitation services
2 RESEARCH & POLICY DEVELOPMENT To utilise research findings and to commission research where required to inform its advocacy and policy work	Development of a research strategy and research function within NAI
3 MEMBER SUPPORT To improve engagement with members, through providing shared opportunities for advocacy, policy development and awareness raising	Increased member engagement in all areas of NAI activity in particular advocacy campaigns
4 COMMUNICATIONS To improve NAI communications in order to raise awareness of the organisation and its messages	Development of an advocacy and communications strategy in order to improve communication of advocacy messages and two-way communication with key stakeholders, including members
5 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT To secure the future sustainability of the organisation within a framework of best practice in the areas of governance, quality and financial management	Ensure Board and Executive adopt and comply with best practice in terms of good governance, financial control and risk management
6 SUSTAINABILITY To ensure NAI's impact will extend in the coming years and becomes less reliant on a single source of funding	Sustainability plan developed by the Board and Executive to secure diversified funding sources in order to continue to deliver an expanded programme of activities



GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Achievement of NAI advocacy programme in terms of investment in neurology and neurorehabilitation services</i></p> <p>To advocate for investment in neurology and neurorehab services over the political cycle 2020-2022</p> <p>To engage with policy makers in HSE/DOH and other stakeholders to follow through on political advocacy and secure commitments in annual HSE service plans.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement around advocacy with members and other relevant stakeholders</p> <p>ADVOCACY GOALS: IDENTIFIED OUTCOMES BY 2022 INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full neurology consultant staffing in regional centres, including locations where there are currently only single posts in place • increased CNS posts in MS, PD, Migraine & Epilepsy • advocacy agenda for paediatric neurology for next electoral cycle • implementation of framework for neurorehabilitation strategy 2019-2021 	<p>1.1 Campaigning in lead up to General Election 2020 and subsequently to secure commitments in Programme for Government</p> <p>1.2.1 Sustained engagement with elected reps post-election 2020, minimum target of 4 mtgs per year</p> <p>1.2.2: Communication and engagement with members around the development and running of advocacy campaigns and initiatives</p> <p>1.3: Development of an Advocacy and Communications Strategy for NAI engaging key stakeholders, including members</p> <p>1.4 Engagement with policy makers HSE/DOH minimum target of 2 mtgs p.a.</p> <p>1.5 Working with clinical programmes around advocacy including minimum target of annual structured engagement opportunity for all members with clinical programmes in neurology and neurorehabilitation</p>	<p>1.1.1 Development and dissemination of election manifesto, contact to secure inclusion in party manifestos, strategic targeting of candidates for support</p> <p>1.2.1 Ongoing engagement with political process, generating profile and support through mtgs, AV room, PQs, briefings etc including engagement around annual Pre Budget submission</p> <p>1.2.2 Mobilise members to inform NAI advocacy agenda and to support ongoing political engagement & specific campaigns</p> <p>1.3: Advocacy Outputs and Targets as per agreed Strategy</p> <p>1.4.1 Mtgs with policy makers in context of Estimates process and development of HSE Service Plan</p> <p>1.5 Working as part of the clinical programme teams and with individuals & representative groups within the clinical community in order to identify priorities, gather data, develop clear messaging and secure support for NAI advocacy platform among clinicians</p> <p>1.5.1 Working with other organisations in the wider health and disability sector and with international organisations including EFNA (Europe) and Neurological Alliance (UK) to inform NAI messaging, seek their support for NAI advocacy agenda and to lend NAI support to relevant campaigns</p>

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT POLICY



GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Development of a research strategy and research function within NAI</i></p> <p>Comprehensive research strategy developed and funded within NAI</p> <p>and</p> <p>Research outputs as determined and prioritised through delivery of research strategy</p>	<p>2.1 Report summarising current level of neurology service resourcing, with recommendations for improvements</p> <p>2.2 Research Strategy by 2021</p> <p>2.3 Fund research opportunities</p> <p>2.4 Annual report on the activities of the organisation</p> <p>2.5: Annual seminar on an emerging policy/advocacy issue</p> <p>2.6 Effective responses to calls for policy submissions and development of policy/advocacy publications by NAI</p>	<p>2.1.1 Audit of current provision of neurology services in hospitals throughout country – complete by 31/12/2020</p> <p>2.2.1 Craft research strategy – complete by 31/12/2021</p> <p>2.3. Secure resources to fund individual research projects as opportunities arise: through applications to IRC, HRB etc including joint applications with members/stakeholders</p> <p>2.4 Annual report published</p> <p>2.5 Annual seminar to inform emerging policy/advocacy</p> <p>2.6 Four publications by NAI per annum in line with SSNO commitment</p>

**MEMBER
SUPPORT**

GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Increased member engagement in all areas of NAI activity in particular advocacy campaigns</i></p> <p>To be a strong voice for neurology and neurorehabilitation services, ensuring NAI is consistent with, and supportive of, the members' objectives.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Generate greater member engagement with NAI campaigns</p>	<p>3.1 Needs of members captured</p> <p>3.2 Members more involved in delivering NAI strategy</p>	<p>3.1.1 Annual Information sharing and structured networking event for NAI members</p> <p>3.1.2 Annual collaborative platform with external stakeholders</p> <p>3.2.1 Active engagement with individual members on specific advocacy / campaign initiatives</p> <p>3.2.2 One to one engagement with NAI members to fully debrief members' needs & perspectives</p> <p>3.2.3 Communicate NAI's achievements to members</p>

COMMUNICATIONS

GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Development and rollout of a Communications and Advocacy strategy for the organisation.</i></p> <p>To raise the profile of the need for additional investment in neurology and neurorehabilitation services to agreed target audiences</p> <p>(ensuring it is consistent with and supports the advocacy objectives)</p>	<p>4.1 Develop Advocacy & Communication Strategy</p> <p>4.2 Public Campaigns</p> <p>4.3 Updated website & e-zines</p>	<p>4.1.1 – Communications outputs and targets as per agreed strategy</p> <p>4.2.1 Deliver “Brain Awareness Week” annually in line with ssno committment</p> <p>4.3.1 Ensure website updated with latest developments/research findings/progress on advocacy etc.</p> <p>4.3.2 Production of montly e zine for members</p>

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Ensure Board and Executive adopt and comply with best practice in terms of good governance, financial control and risk management</i></p> <p>To be best in class for a small organisation with respect to governance, financial stewardship and risk management.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Ensure the Board is effective in its role and contribute to delivering NAI's strategy.</p>	<p>5.1 Deliver the SSNO commitments agreed with Pobal</p> <p>5.2 Good Governance</p> <p>5.3 Financial Control in place</p> <p>5.4 Risk management</p>	<p>5.1.1 Ensure all SSNO commitments are captured in the strategic plan</p> <p>5.1.2 Regular audit of performance against plan</p> <p>5.2.1 Board participation in workshop on compliance & board development –</p> <p>5.2.2. Review internal policies & practices as appropriate to a small organisation</p> <p>5.3.1. Preparation of budget, annual, quarterly and monthly accounts for board</p> <p>5.4.1 Update risk management policy and ensure top 5 risks are identified and how they are managed is reported to Board</p>

SUSTAINABILITY

GOALS	TARGET NAI OUTPUTS TO HELP DELIVER THE GOAL	ACTIVITIES THAT WILL DELIVER THE OUTPUTS
<p><i>Sustainability plan developed by the Board and Executive to secure diversified funding sources in order to continue to deliver an expanded programme of activities.</i></p> <p>Strengthen NAI's capacity, by securing more resources and/or partnering with others with shared objectives.</p>	<p>6.1 Position NAI to be in a better situation to secure funding</p> <p>6.2 Secure new lines of funding</p> <p>6.3 Existing supporters properly stewarded</p>	<p>6.1.1 Prepare a long-term financial sustainability plan</p> <p>6.2.1 Submit funding application(s) for additional resources</p> <p>6.3.1 Steward existing supporters by providing timely reports to Pobal and others</p>



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