



IAPC Strategic Plan

October 2021 – December 2022

Irish Association for Palliative Care



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1. About IAPC

1.1 IAPC – The Voice of Palliative Care

Established in 1993 as an all-island body with the purpose of promoting palliative care nationally and internationally, the Irish Association for Palliative Care (IAPC) is a multi-disciplinary membership non-government organisation. The intention of the founders was that IAPC would be identified by its inclusiveness and would encompass the whole island of Ireland.

The IAPC membership reflects the entire spectrum of all those who work in or have a professional interest in the provision of palliative care. This includes doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains and pastoral carers, pharmacists, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, as well as executive staff, academics and educators. Membership also includes clinicians and allied health professionals working in related areas such as geriatrics, oncology, psycho-oncology, paediatrics, and pain management.

The IAPC is organised around a number of working groups designed to create forums aimed at promoting best practice, professional development, research and learning in palliative care.

The Association pursues its objectives through providing structured opportunities for:

- Networking
- Learning
- Research
- Promoting evidence-based practice
- Publications
- Representation on national bodies to influence the development of national policy.

Internationally, the organisation is strongly aligned with the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC).



The IAPC Working Groups (fora) inform the strategic direction and policy decisions of the Board, thereby creating a strong foundation for the IAPC's position as the primary collective voice for palliative care in Ireland. Currently the IAPC are working towards re-developing the forums that will actively support the work of the organisation and its membership. As part of the ongoing review and development of the various fora, there will be continuous discussion on each forum and its relevance to the future outcomes of the Strategic Plan. Key fora that have been identified for this first strategic plan and highlighted by the needs of our members are:

1. Ethics
2. Nursing
3. Spirituality
4. Continue to support Pharmacy Forum
5. Continue to support Education & Research Forum

Fora for future Board discussion:

- IAPC Education and Research Forum — *active*
- IAPC Palliative Nursing Forum — *in progress*
- IAPC Ethics Group — *In Progress*
- IAPC Psychology Group — *to be discussed*
- IAPC Palliative Care Pharmacy Group — *active*
- IAPC Older Person Care Special Interest Group — *to be discussed*
- IAPC Primary Palliative Care Special Interest Group — *to be discussed*
- IAPC Spirituality in Palliative Care Special Interest Group — *in progress*
- IAPC Children's Palliative Care Special Interest Group — *to be discussed*

We receive project funding through the HSE and POBAL. We are a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. A plan for funding the organisation and allowing it to continue to meet its objectives, will form part of the ongoing sustainability of the organisation.

1.2 IAPC Constitution

A voluntary committee drew up the Constitution for the Association which was ratified in 1993. The IAPC has amended its Constitution over the years to reflect the changes to Company Law and the changing needs of the organisation.



1.3 Vision –

The Vision of
the IAPC is using
our collective
expert voice to
advance palliative
care in Ireland.

1.4 Mission Statement

The mission of the IAPC

As a multi-disciplinary membership organisation, the Irish Association for Palliative Care brings practitioners together in order to influence palliative care policy and practice.

We do this:

- By engagement with our members;
- By supporting education and research in palliative care;
- Through collaboration and involvement with the palliative care community, service users and others.

1.5 Our Values informing our Strategic Goals

- Challenge** The Irish Association for Palliative Care will challenge whenever it is appropriate, both internally and externally, to ensure good palliative care policy and practice.
- Collaboration** The Irish Association for Palliative Care will collaborate with others to ensure good palliative care policy and practice.
- Independence** The Irish Association for Palliative Care will seek to remain independent of any vested interests in order to help it ensure good palliative care policy and practice.
- Good Governance** The Irish Association for Palliative Care will ensure that it is accountable and transparent in its working and decision-making.
- Multidisciplinary** The Irish Association for Palliative Care will encourage the participation and development of all relevant healthcare disciplines in order to ensure good palliative care policy and practice.
- Valuing all voices** The Irish Association for Palliative Care work to hear and value the perspectives of all participants in order to ensure good palliative care policy and practice.



2. What is palliative care.

Palliative care is, first and foremost, about life. It is an approach to care that is life-affirming and life-enabling.

“You matter because you’re you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you to die peacefully, but also to live until you die.” (Dame Cicely Saunders)

This quote from Dame Cicely Saunders, one of the founders of the modern hospice movement, captures the person-centred and life-enabling approach that underpins palliative care. The ultimate aim of palliative care is to enable every person with an illness from which he/she will not be cured, to live as well as possible right up until he/she dies. In its modern sense, this is a relatively new concept, originating in the late 1960s / early 1970s.

The World Health Organisation defines Palliative Care as follows:

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.



3. Governance

The Governing Body of the Organisation is the Board of Directors, in accordance with the Companies Act 1963, and comprises:

- Ten elected membership members, “members” as outlined in the Constitution; of which there will be Four Officers.
- The four Officers constitute the Officer Board and includes the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Honorary Secretary, and the Honorary Treasurer.
- And up to five additional co-opted Directors
- The Board shall not exceed 15 Directors

The Board of Directors, take on the responsibilities of Governance in conjunction with the General Manager, to continually interrogate and update policies and procedures in line with current legislation. To develop and maintain a strong and sustainable organisation the Board of Directors has to possess the capacity and willingness to use their expertise to assist the organisation in meeting its policy and operational functions.

The key role of the Board of IAPC is to provide efficient and effective leadership for the Organisation within a framework of practical controls. The Board performs three roles. It firstly provides strategic direction to IAPC based on listening to, understanding and representing the needs of the members and relevant stakeholders. Secondly it has specific oversight responsibilities in respect of executive functions and thirdly it self-regulates and evaluates to ensure the Board functions efficiently and effectively.

In 1995 the Committee on Standards in Public Life (The Nolan Committee) drew up seven principles of conduct. The principles which are now widely used in relation to the directors of charitable organisations are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership (Nolan, 1995). These principles are the bedrock of excellent governance and should be practised to ensure the governance of IAPC is continually striving to achieve the pinnacle of success.



4. IAPC Membership

With over 250 members from the broad spectrum of palliative care provision in Ireland, the IAPC regards its membership as a key resource which provides the organisation with a frontline, authentic reflection of the multidisciplinary teams working in the sector. The membership profile comprises a rich mix of professionals who work in, or individuals who are deeply involved or have a special interest in the development of palliative care provision in Ireland. Our members are genuinely involved in and committed to the concept of equitable palliative care for all in need. IAPC affords its members a unique space to meet and reflect on how provision for people with palliative care needs can be improved.





5. Key achievements October 2019 – October 2021

Membership:

- Delivery of the 2019 AGM and Lecture Series (Mr. Michael Harding)
- Delivery of the 2020 AGM and Lecture Series (Dr Ira Byock)
- Delivery of the 2020 Education and Research Seminar (Prof Karen Ryan)
- Delivery of the 2021 Education and Research Seminar (Prof Andrew Davies)
- Development of the membership newsletter
- The BMJ invited the IAPC to submit abstract winners from the Education and Research seminar to be published.

Partnerships/stakeholders engagement:

- Stakeholder engagement:
 - AIIHPC; represented by Jacinta Cuthbert & Coman Hennelly on the reference committee for Palliative Care week.
 - AIIHPC, represented by Hannah Linane on the Children’s Palliative Care Conference Committee.
 - EAPC met with Prof Sonja McIlpatrick to progress the representation of the IAPC on EAPC Board matters. Coman Hennelly has since met with the Board of the EAPC and the Chair of the Association will continue to attend EAPC updates to represent the IAPC Board.
 - Worked with HRB, IHF, and AIIHPC to develop workshops for the 2021 seminar, however they were postponed due to restrictions and will be hosted at the 2022 seminar
 - Worked with POBAL to amend our funding stream to improve the essential staffing requirements of the organisation.
 - Met with Sheilagh Reaper-Reynolds, HSE Strategy and Planning Lead for Palliative Care to discuss and progress IAPC membership strategic agenda and discuss future funding.
 - Met with Lee Collins, HSE Primary Care to discuss future funding streams



Policy:

This is an area that will be developed over the course of the new Strategic Plan

- In Spring 2021 the IAPC responded to a call for submissions to the Joint Committee on Justice submissions on the Dying with Dignity Bill. When submissions are sought from the IAPC on a policy issue, the submission is prepared by a sub-committee of the Board with the invitation to the membership to express distinct views and opinions. A relevant forum is active, this forum or its membership has a key role in the development of submissions. All submissions return to the Board of Directors for oversight and approval. In its submission, the Irish Association for Palliative Care and Board of Directors reiterated its opposition to change in the current law and its opposition to the proposed bill.
- In Autumn 2021 the IAPC prepared an organisational submission for the Department of Health on the Update to the Palliative Care Policy in Ireland for Adults. Again this work was undertaken by a sub-committee of the Board and the IAPC reiterated its commitment to the vision of the original Adult Palliative Care Policy, the need for its renewal and its wish to represent its MDT membership in its development.
- The IAPC continues to respond to and engage with a number of Delphi Consensus Panels which feed into position papers and EAPC white papers. In recent months we have sat on EAPC Delphi Panels for Palliative Sedation and Standards and Norms in Palliative and Hospice Care.

Governance:

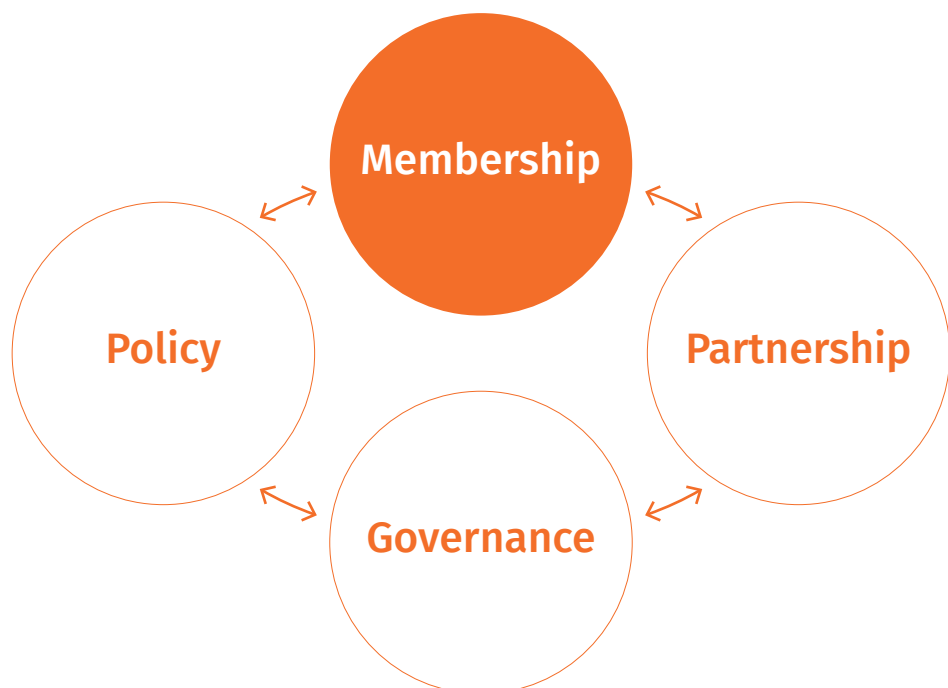
- Recruitment of a General Manager
- Recruitment of new Board members – full Board representation
- Recruitment and development of the Education and Research Forum 2020 and 2021
- Development of all Statutory policies and procedures
- Preparation of accounts for regulatory reporting 2019 and 2020
- Compliance with all reporting requirements re: funding
- Compliance with all statutory reporting, Revenue, Charities Regulator, CRO, and RBO
- Recruitment of an Accounts and Administration Officer



6. Strategic Review

Following a lull in activity for the IAPC and its membership, the Board together with the General Manager agreed that it was necessary to collectively examine our purpose and aims. We carried this out by engaging an external facilitator to review and re-assess the positioning of the IAPC in the wider context of the palliative care environment. We had two review meetings to discuss our collective vision. Another aspect of the review process was to disseminate a questionnaire to membership, with a view to garnering as much information as possible regarding the needs of the membership. This provided a platform to commence the discussions on how the organisation could best address these needs.

The following strategic plan is the combined results of the review process. It is set for October 2021 to December 2022 (dependant on funding). This new plan will set the strategic goals and will be supported by a definitive workplan. The core principles of the strategic plan are Membership, Policy and Partnerships, underpinned by good governance and building organisational capacity.





7. Future developments in palliative care

Palliative Care in Ireland is facing increasing demand over the coming decades. Future development of the services will need to incorporate the needs of an increasingly aging population. Innovation and adaptability of service will be vital to enable the palliative community to react to the changing demands on services going forward. The incorporation of technology, provision of palliative education to healthcare professionals and the ongoing efforts to achieve equity of specialist palliative services across the country will remain essential. Development of palliative paediatric and adolescent services will also be a vital component in the provision of equitable care. Ongoing research will be pivotal to enable up to date evidence-based care to a growing palliative population. It will also serve to promote the quality of palliative care services in Ireland on the international stage. As a membership based, multidisciplinary association, the IAPC will enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and promote cohesiveness within the palliative community.



8. Strategic Plan

8.1 Key Strategic Goals

1. Grow and support the membership of the organisation by providing information, networking and education opportunities for members
2. Ensure the collective voice of the Irish Association for Palliative Care is represented on appropriate external bodies
3. Influence legislative and policy changes to further the aims of IAPC
4. Ensure good governance and build organisational capacity
 - 4.A Implement and evaluate the Strategic Plan



8.2 Work Streams

We will do this by:

1.
 - Successfully recruit a communications officer (advertised)
 - Develop and implement a Communications Strategy
 - Identify and re-establish 4 forums – each forum agreed by the Board
 - Develop and implement focused campaign to recruit new members – Board members will promote and disseminate information on membership over an agreed one week period
 - Review and update membership benefits information – flyer for noticeboards, website development, social media campaigns
 - Update website with agreed Vision and Mission together with Strategic aims and Board makeup
 - Host the Education and Research Seminar – annual event
 - Host the IAPC AGM and Lecture series – annual event
2.
 - Create a list of all groups relating to palliative care in Ireland
 - Research the related groups to identify areas of special/relevant interest
 - Develop a framework for selecting relevant stakeholders and agree at Board level for each new engagement
 - Develop terms of reference for each engagement
 - Identify IAPC members who may already have connections to the related groups
 - Gain a formal presence on identified groups
 - Communicate stakeholder engagement to the membership



3.
 - Re-establish the ethics forum – this forum will contribute to the main legislative and policy issues (i.e., assisted dying debate).
 - Strengthen our members knowledge of relevant policy developments in the sector to assist members to engage with policy debates/consultations/submissions
 - Continue to engage with partners and stakeholders (i.e., HSE/AIIHPC/IHF/HRB/EAPC). Develop new strategic partnerships.
 - Develop memorandum of understanding with AIIHPC, seek formal funding to become a member of the AIIHPC Council of Partners.
 - Seek a representative from the Irish Palliative Consultants Association to become a member of the IAPC Board to re-establish the collaboration between the Associations.
4.
 - Build the capacity of the staff team to deliver the work plan through continuous professional development
 - Build the capacity of the Board to provide good governance for the organisation, through training and development and draw on their expertise in the sector
 - Manage effectively and make best use of financial, human and IT resources available to the organisation, and grow funding streams
 - Ensure all regulatory requirements are met and in a timely manner
 - Continue to improve our own capacity to gather and disseminate data both from and to our members and other stakeholders.
 - Ensure regular review of work progress is on every Board meeting agenda
- 4.A
 - Develop annual workplans
 - Review workplans twice yearly
 - Hold six Board meeting each year to monitor the progress of the plan
 - Prepare annual reports and financial statements
 - Report to the General Membership at the Annual General Meeting
 - Submit annual reports to IAPC funders: HSE & POBAL



9. Acknowledgements

The Board of the IAPC and the Association itself has undergone significant change since I first joined in 2017. The Board is now fully staffed and more representative of the entire MDT that deliver palliative care services to patients and their families. This core representation of individual disciplines and the hearing of their collective voice is an essential part of the palliative care community in Ireland and should continue to be so. The externally facilitated strategic review of the Association has helped focus the Board and its executive officers on the short to medium goals for the Association over the next fifteen months. It was fantastic to see the experience and enthusiasm of board members coming together along with the insights of our membership to set some key goals for the association's growth and development. These strategic goals, which are underpinned by the vision and mission of the IAPC, will guide and direct the work of the Board and Executive to truly address our growing memberships needs. It's undertaking has been a key focus of the Board in recent months and sees us in a confident and engaged position for the coming year and the next iteration of the Board of Directors.

Coman Hennelly

Dr Coman Hennelly - Chairperson



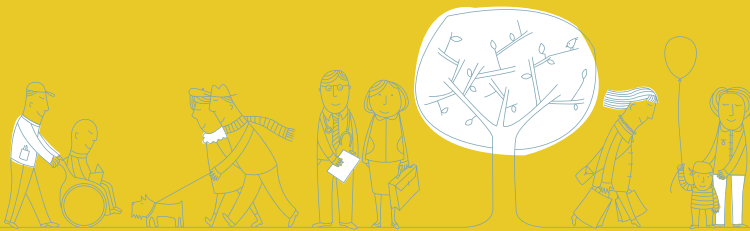
I commenced my role in the IAPC in October 2019 and barely had time to breathe until June of this year. While it has been a hectic two years, it has also been extremely gratifying to see an organisation gradually becoming the best organisation it can be and continuing on that journey. The journey does not end there, this Strategic Plan will build on the foundations that have been created and will continue to grow and develop. I am delighted to have been part of this growth, however I wish to gratefully acknowledge the co-operation, support and guidance I have received from the Officer Board in the first instance and then the Board in full. It has been invaluable to me knowing I had the full support and backing of the Board.

A special thanks goes to Coman Hennelly, Bettina Korn and Hannah Linane who have assisted me in steering this ship into clear waters.

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous work and commitment that the representatives of the Education and Research forum have shown over the last two years. In particular, in 2021 when the whole world had to move to a virtual platform and we all had to swiftly negotiate a different way of delivering the seminar. The forum dedicated a lot of time and energy to make the “Looking back to look forward” seminar a success. They continue to dedicate their time to developing the upcoming 21st Anniversary of the Seminar in February 2022.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support and funding we have received from the HSE and POBAL which has allowed us to continue the development of this unique organisation in the palliative care environment.

Jacinta Cuthbert – General Manager



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