



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

**Preventing Disease
& Promoting
Cardiovascular Health**

Saving Lives

**Promoting Recovery
& Wellbeing**





Company Information

Chairman: Mr Kevin O'Reilly <i>Principal, Beechdale Consulting</i>	Director: Dr Faisal Sharif <i>Consultant Cardiologist, Galway University Hospital</i>
Director: Prof James Crowley <i>(Medical Director) Consultant Cardiologist, Galway University Hospital</i>	Director: Mr James David Toohey <i>CEO and Founder, SyncroPhi Systems Ltd.</i>
Director: Ms Patricia Orme <i>(Company Secretary, Resigned May 2018) Director, KPMG</i>	Director: Mr James Ward <i>Solicitor, Patrick J Durcan & Co</i>
Director: Ms Marie Gavin <i>(Company Secretary, Appointed May 2018) Associate Solicitor, Ronan Daly Jermyn</i>	Director: Mr Paul Carey <i>CEO, Carey Developments</i>
Director: Dr Catherine Caulfield <i>Chief Operations Officer, Ovagen Group Ltd.</i>	Director: Ms. Mary Heffernan, <i>Tax Director, KPMG (Appointed March 2018)</i>
Director: Mr Mark Gantly <i>Managing Director, HP Galway</i>	Director: Dr. Emer Curtis <i>Lecturer in Accounting, NUI Galway (Appointed Sept. 2018)</i>
Director: Dr Tom Walsh <i>Consultant Geriatrician Stroke Specialist, Galway University Hospital</i>	CEO: Neil Johnson

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Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

VISION.


Our vision is to lead in the prevention, control of, and recovery from cardiovascular disease and to serve as exemplars of innovation and best practice.


MISSION.

Our mission is to prevent heart disease and stroke, save lives, empower and support families, communities and future generations to take control of their health and well-being.

GOALS.




1. Build healthy communities through support, education and empowerment
2. Amplify the patient voice
3. Pursue the highest level of cardiovascular healthcare
4. Facilitate, participate and collaborate in vital research
5. Build capacity in preventive healthcare nationally through the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health:
 - Engage with policy makers and health practitioners in pursuit of excellence in preventive healthcare.
 - Develop innovative models of preventive care and service delivery.
 - Produce a new generation of scholars and leaders in cardiovascular health and disease prevention.
6. Align with the World Heart Federation's mission and ambition to reduce premature death and disability from cardiovascular disease by 25% by 2025.

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2018 Highlights
in Numbers



25,000+

visits to Croí
Heart & Stroke Centre



2,019

availed of free cardiac
health checks in the community



100+

families stayed
in the Courtyard
Apartments



100+

fundraising events
organised to
support Croí



1,300

participated in the 4th
Annual Night Run



656+

attended our Stroke
Support programme



3,200

yoga practices
in the Croí Centre



897

people referred to
our specialist health
programmes



16,000+

Individuals engaged with
our health, training and
education programmes
across the region



2,000+

healthcare professionals
engaged in a range of
continuing professional
education and training
programmes



58,092

people received a
Croí Christmas card



824

people trained
in CPR



480+

healthcare professionals
attended our Annual
Conferences



14

students graduated
from the MSc in
Preventive
Cardiology



75,000+

visits to our website
www.croi.ie



15,195

followers on Facebook, Twitter,
Instagram & LinkedIn
Join the conversation
[@croiheartstroke](https://www.facebook.com/croiheartstroke)

Meet the team at Croí



Pictured from left, back row: Maria Kearney, Physical Activity Specialist; Edel Burke, Communications Manager; Lianne Dunleavy, Finance Director; Maureen Boyle, NIPC Training & Education Coordinator; Luigi Ryan, Community and Events Fundraiser; Jacqui Aupiais, Executive Assistant; Neil Johnson, CEO; Christine Flanagan, Fundraising Director; Lisa Pearson, Fundraising Administrator; Irene Gibson, Director of Programmes; Edel O’Dea, Cardiovascular Nurse Coordinator.

Pictured from left, Front row: Denise Dunne, Specialist Cardiac Physiotherapist; Jessica O’Malley; Front of House Operations; Sianna Fallon, Communications Coordinator; Richie Hynes, Events and Hospitality Coordinator; Patricia Hall, Cardiovascular Nurse Specialist; Suzanne Seery, Lead Dietitian.

Missing from picture: Annie Costelloe, Health Programmes Coordinator; Dylan Keegan, NIPC Training, Education and Research Administrator.

A message from the
Chairman & CEO

Dear Friends,

In 2018 we witnessed further growth and development in our organisation. Against the background of the on-going challenging economic environment, we remain indebted to all those who consistently and generously respond to our requests for financial and other supports. As we are funded entirely through our own revenue generation activities, we could not survive without your goodwill and generosity.

Our mission and focus in recent years has moved very strongly into the community, focussing particularly on how we can contribute to the prevention of cardiovascular disease, and support those individuals and families affected by heart disease and stroke. Our constant focus is on delivering measurable impact. Our healthcare programmes and initiatives are evidence-based and guided by international best practice guidelines. We are keen to make a real difference to the lives of those we serve and support.

We constantly reflect and evaluate as we are acutely aware of the need to deliver a tangible return to those who have entrusted their support to us. We are fortunate to have a staff team of highly-committed professionals who are united in the mission to serve their community and to support those living with, or affected by, chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and obesity.

In the past year, we are delighted to see the continued development of the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health. The leadership of the Institute has been strengthened by the arrival of world-leading experts, committed to establishing Galway as an international centre for excellence in prevention and cardiovascular health promotion.

Our transition to a patient organisation is well advanced, and our role in the establishment of the Global Heart Hub is testament to this.

This report illustrates the many facets and impact of our work in preventing disease, saving lives, supporting patients and their families, and promoting health & wellbeing across the community. We hope you find this informative and that it reaffirms your support – as a donor, partner or volunteer. We are deeply grateful for your contribution and partnership.

Kind regards,



Mr Kevin O'Reilly
Chairman



Mr Neil Johnson
Chief Executive

PREVENTING DISEASE AND PROMOTING CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

In the Community

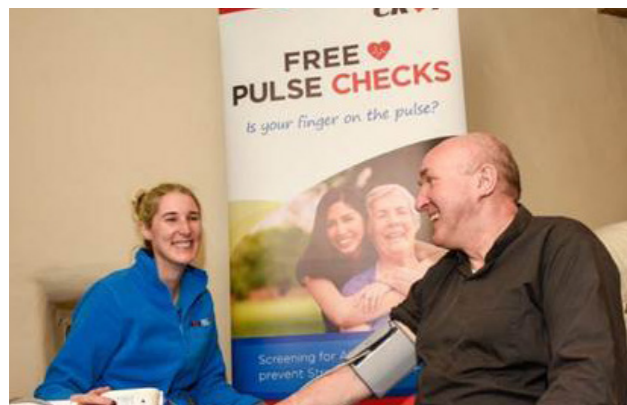
After a long history of supporting the development of cardiac services in the region, in recent year's our focus has moved to the community - before and after an event - leading the way in cardiovascular disease prevention and heart health promotion.

Our objectives in cardiovascular disease prevention are to reduce morbidity and mortality, improve quality of life, and increase the chances of a longer and healthier life. It is estimated that over 80% of cardiovascular disease can be prevented through simple lifestyle changes and risk factor management.

Croí's work in the community is focussed on raising awareness of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease and promoting early detection, early diagnosis and timely treatment. Equally, we are committed to patient and carer education, and the promotion of optimal self care and self management.

Last year, the Health Team completed free heart health checks on over 2,000 people across Galway and Mayo.

16% of those screened presented with high blood pressure, requiring referral to their GP.



Community collaborations

Croí responds to the needs of the community, and one of our goals is to build healthy communities through support, education and empowerment.

Throughout 2018, Croí and Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) rolled out a unique, new programme of activities, in collaboration with a wide range of local communities and groups.

The goal of the programme was to engage and empower communities to take control over their health through adopting healthier lifestyle habits.

Croí worked with a number of partners, **reaching 490 people across 24 Health and Wellbeing events.**



These projects comprised of a combination of health screening, health education workshops and a modified Croí iBalance healthy lifestyle programme.

The Croí team provided free blood pressure, pulse, BMI checks, and lifestyle advice at events throughout Galway. Cardiac risk factors were identified, with individual recommendations provided for lifestyle modification and referral to GP as appropriate.

68% of participants were not achieving physical activity target guidelines.

Community event highlights

The Croí Health Team were busy throughout 2018, reaching thousands of people with lots of community talks and public health promotion activities.

Highlights of our 2018 community events:

- 18 public talks delivered as part of the Healthy Ireland 'Health in the Library' initiative across Galway.
- A Women at Heart public talk with Dr Blaithead Murtagh, Consultant Cardiologist, Galway Clinic, in Tuam.
- Healthy Cooking demo's as part of the 'Seafest' festival in Galway City.
- Contributed to the Bon Secours Galway Cardiology Department 1st Anniversary patient event.
- Delivered health checks (blood pressure and pulse) at several events, including:
 - A cancer survivor evening in Castlebar.
 - The farming community at 'Teagasc Farm to Fork' in Athenry and at Ennis Mart.
- World Heart Month celebrations in Evergreen Health Stores throughout Galway City.
- 'Men on the Move' initiative in Ballina, Co. Mayo.
- Eyre Square shopping centre screenings, in partnership with Boston Scientific.

Corporate health promotion

In 2018, Croí launched its new Corporate Health Programme and visited several work places offering a series of healthy lifestyle talks, courses, information stands and completing heart health screenings.

Highlights of our 2018 corporate events:

- Reached 200+ ESB staff across 7 locations, including Athlone, Galway, Ennis, Limerick, Rathkeale, Thurles and Nenagh.
- Checks provided to 100 female staff at Boston Scientific as part of the 'Go Red for Women' campaign.
- Screened 180+ staff at the Bon Secours Hospital Galway as part of a staff health and wellness initiative.
- Delivered talks at Galway County Council, Medtronic and Smurfit Kappa.
- Galway Hospice health checks.
- Health checks with Lufthansa Technik (Shannon).



PREVENTING DISEASE AND PROMOTING CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

At Croí Heart & Stroke Centre

Following the opening of Croí Heart & Stroke Centre in 2012, we have been to the forefront in pushing the prevention agenda.

The Croí specialist health team work to develop and facilitate evidence-based health programmes and interventions which allow people to take control of their health and reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease. Our programmes at the Croí Centre cater to high-risk individuals referred by their GP, as well as non-referral (walk-in) programmes like our Yoga, Pilates and exercise classes for those looking to improve their general well-being.

Public Talks

Croí holds regular public talks throughout the year at Croí Centre. Here are some highlights from 2018:

Over 160 people attended a free public talk at Croí Centre with information on heart disease on January 26th with Dr. Jim Crowley, Medical Director, Croí; Consultant Cardiologist, Galway University Hospital.

During the year, Croí also held an information evening, *Living More Confidently with your Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)*, providing expert advice and support for people and the families of people living with an ICD.

Referral Programmes

MyAction

The Croí health team strive to deliver innovative models of preventive care. The Croí MyAction Programme is a great example of an evidence-based and outcome-driven model, now running for the 9th year at Croí Centre.

The 12-16 week programme helps individuals and their families reduce their risk of developing heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and it continues to lead the way in its approach to cardiovascular disease prevention.

Active Heart

Throughout 2018, Croí, in partnership with the Health & Wellbeing Division of the HSE, assessed the feasibility of developing, implementing and delivering a community based model of cardiac rehabilitation, called Active Heart.

This first-in-Ireland feasibility project was driven by the need to explore alternative models of cardiac rehabilitation care to help address the challenges that exist around uptake and accessibility in Ireland.

The project was designed to help participants explore current lifestyle habits and make changes that are realistic and achievable for the long-term.

By December 2018, the programme **reached 487 patients** and resulted in significant changes across multiple risk factors, including a 33.9% increase in those achieving physical activity targets!



Terry Small was referred to Croí after having a stent inserted. He started with Croí's Active Heart Cardiac Rehab programme, before continuing on with the Phase IV class.

CLANN

The Croí CLANN programme (**C**hanging **L**ifestyle with **A**ctivity and **N**utrition) is a specialised 10 week, healthy lifestyle initiative which aims to help individuals achieve a healthy weight and shape through physical activity and healthy eating.

This programme is a unique collaboration with the Bariatric Medicine Service at Galway University Hospital. In 2018, almost **400 people** travelled from different parts of Ireland, including Donegal, Sligo, Clare and Limerick to participate in the programme.

Read CLANN programme participant Máirtín's story:

Máirtín's Journey

Máirtín Walsh is a dedicated Croí programme participant. He completed the Croí CLANN programme in January 2018, and since then has participated every Tuesday in the Back to Fitness programme (a rolling 6-week programme, delivered by a Cardiac Physiotherapist/Physical Activity Specialist).

"It's not easy. Every Tuesday is tough, but I can feel the benefits immediately," says Máirtín. "It's about changing behaviour. This is my routine now...It's like going to work, visiting family and doing my Back to Fitness class every Tuesday. It's part of my life now, and I've never once regretted going to a class," says Máirtín.

"I was terribly unfit and I knew this would be a long-term project. I found it tough at first, but I enjoy it now and I look forward to it. It's a positive part of my weekly routine.

"Croí was a launch pad for me... I just bought a bike and have started cycling to work. I'm also training for a 5km run. I'm not a gym person, but I love the group activities at Croí and how everyone is so supportive," says Máirtín.

"I am much fitter, I've more energy and I am more confident. There are no downsides. Once established, it's easy. Croí has really helped me on this journey. The trainers and advisors are fantastic and put you at your ease. And I think the world of the other people on the programme – they are a great bunch and made me feel so welcome when I joined. New people are also welcomed warmly... people come and people stay."



PREVENTING DISEASE AND PROMOTING CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Engagement and advocacy

European Heart Failure campaign

'Acting on Heart Failure' is a patient-group led initiative dedicated to increasing global awareness of heart failure. Galway was the first city to launch this European campaign in 2018.

The campaign was created by Global Heart Hub – of which Croí is a founding member – to help raise awareness of heart failure and call for local action to improve the quality of life for those living with the condition.



As part of this initiative, Croí partnered in the Stand Up to Heart Failure campaign to raise awareness of the red flag symptoms of heart failure. These symptoms include; fatigue; shortness of breath (especially with activity or lying flat); swollen feet or ankles.

This campaign, which was a partnership initiative between Croí, The Heartbeat Trust and the Irish Heart Foundation, supported by Novartis and Edelman, won the **Patient Education Project of the Year Award** at the 2018 Irish Healthcare Awards.



Croí Represents Ireland At European Parliament

In September 2018, Croí represented Ireland as part of a European alliance calling on national governments to make "demonstrable improvement" to reduce hospitalisations in heart failure and to address the "routine and tragic gaps" in the care of this serious but common heart condition.

The call to action, together with a landmark policy analysis of best practice and current performance, is made in a new heart failure handbook which was launched at the European Parliament, Brussels.



Croí joins European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day

Croí is a founding member of a European Alliance of heart patient organisations who have come together to raise awareness of heart valve disease. The European Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day was held for the first time on September 8, 2018 and aimed to improve diagnosis, treatment and management of heart valve disease across Europe.

On September 4, 2018, Mairead McGuinness MEP hosted a round table discussion on heart valve disease at the European Parliament in Brussels to mark the launch of a European White Paper on Heart Valve Disease.



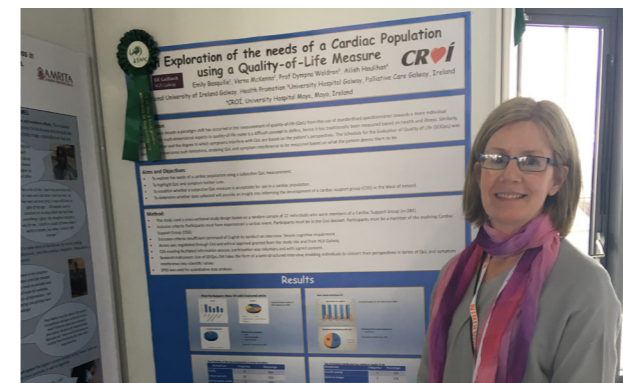
Award-winning work

Quality of Life Mayo Study

A Croí-sponsored Poster, presented at the 10th World Research Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care, Switzerland, won first prize!

NUI Galway graduate, Emily Basquille's Mayo study focused on the needs of a cardiac population using a subjective quality of life measure.

The study was a collaboration between Croí, NUI Galway and Prof Dymphna Waldron of Galway University Hospital, and it was the first time that a subjective Quality of Life measure was tested on a cardiac population in Ireland.



Emily Basquille at the World Research Congress

Excellence in Business

Croí was delighted to accept the 2018 'Healthcare (Heart & Stroke) to the Public Sector Award' as part of the Public Sector Excellence in Business Awards.



Working with students

As part of our community engagement, Croí is delighted to support students from across Ireland and globally in their healthcare education and training.

Last year we hosted 3rd level students on placements from multiple programmes including: MSc in Biomedical Engineering, NUIG; MSc in Clinical Research, NUIG; MA in Health Promotion; MSc in Preventive Cardiology; BSc Physiotherapy, UL; MSc in Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, UCD; and Undergraduate BSc in Physiotherapy, University of Amsterdam.

We continued our partnership with the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering, Purdue University, Indiana. We hosted a student visit in May and are delighted to continue as their international community partner in biomedical engineering design.

In addition to 3rd level placements, we also facilitated transition year student placements from 2nd level schools in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

Teaching & Presentations

Croí staff presented and taught at various health care professional conferences and postgraduate courses, including:

- Workshops as part of the Specialist Certificate in Health 'Approaches to CVD & Diabetes Prevention'.
- Hosted a live webinar streamed across 43 countries with the European Society of Cardiology.
- Delivered a 10-week Special Studies Module on the 'Patient Voice' to undergraduate students at NUIG.
- Participated in a panel discussion as part of the 'Aspire to Prevent' meeting in Imperial College, London.
- Presented at the National Bariatric Medicine Conference and the Irish Cardiac Society conference.

PREVENTING DISEASE AND PROMOTING CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health

The National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health (NIPC) was established by Croí, in a strategic alliance with the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG). The NIPC aims to position Ireland as an international leader in cardiovascular health.

2018 saw a significant increase in our professional and academic membership. The NIPC continued to develop and deliver the MSc in Preventive Cardiology and the PgCert in Health Promotion. NIPC also delivered a range of training and education programmes, including Masterclasses and conferences for health care professionals.

In 2018, we welcomed two world leaders to Galway as members of our NIPC team. Professor Bill McEvoy returned to Ireland from John Hopkins University School of Medicine USA as Professor of Preventive Cardiology, NUIG; Consultant Cardiologist GUH; and Research & Medical Director, NIPC. Professor David Wood, immediate past president of the World Heart Federation moved to Galway from Imperial College London as Adjunct Professor of Preventive Cardiology at NUIG; and Director of Science, Strategy and International Relations, NIPC.



Pictured from left: Prof Bill McEvoy; Professor David Wood; Prof Jim Crowley (Medical Director, Croí) and Neil Johnson.



Research: I-ASPIRE

NIPC partnered with the European Society of Cardiology's (ESC) EURObservational Research Programme (EORP), and coordinated by Croí to deliver the 2018 Ireland-ASPIRE (I-ASPIRE) Survey of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Diabetes.

The survey aimed to provide a unique and representative picture of the state of secondary prevention in Ireland and to help inform future action by cardiologists, general practitioners and other specialists looking after patients with coronary disease.

Nine centres across Ireland provided data, with patient participation rates exceeding expectation with many centres reporting a 98% engagement.

The project aims to raise standards of preventive care for individuals living with coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective of the study is to examine the delivery of care against European guidelines on CVD prevention.

Data collection was completed in December 2018, with results available in 2019. See www.nipc.ie for the I-ASPIRE survey results.

Ireland-ASPIRE Research Study
National Coordinators:
Prof David Wood; Prof Jim Crowley;
Prof Bill McEvoy.

Central coordinating team:
Annie Hearn, Research Project
Manager; Patricia Hall, Research
Nurse Coordinator; Annie Costelloe,
Administration Coordinator.

NIPC Education & Training

MSc in Preventive Cardiology

The NIPC aims to produce a new generation of scholars and leaders in cardiovascular health and disease prevention.

The Masters in Preventive Cardiology is the only one of its kind in Ireland and is delivered in a unique community partnership with Croí. In 2017/18, 14 students graduated from the Masters programme, with the inaugural NIPC Alumni meeting taking place at the 2018 National Prevention Conference. 13 students commenced the 2018/19 programme.

Conferences

The NIPC conferences are going from strength to strength with **over 200 attendees** at our annual West of Ireland Diabetes Integrated Care Conference and **over 280 attendees** at our 5th Annual National Prevention Conference.

Short Courses

In 2018, the NIPC delivered CPD training and education programmes to **over 500 healthcare professionals** across a Hypertension Masterclass, two Cholesterol Masterclasses, Motivational Interviewing training courses, a short course in Cardiac Rehabilitation and ECG interpretation workshops.



SAVING LIVES

In the Community

Teaching life-saving skills

In Ireland, over two-thirds of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurred at home in 2018. Large numbers of survivors received bystander CPR. When a person collapses with sudden cardiac arrest, every second is vital. Performing CPR and using a defibrillator can mean the difference between life and death.

Throughout 2018, Croí, in collaboration with the HSE Social Care Services Galway, delivered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillation (AED) training to hundreds of family carers in Galway, providing a valuable, innovative service in the West of Ireland. This training initiative is integral to ensuring that family carers are key contributors to this whole system approach to saving a life.

Galway is the only county in Ireland where the HSE are supporting the provision of first-responder training for family carers.



This project was the Innovative Project Category Award winner at the inaugural HSE Community Healthcare West Staff Recognition Awards in October, 2018. Pictured from left: Michelle Harrison, HSE West Carers Dept. Manager; Catherine Sheridan, Croí Training Site Coordinator; & Neil Johnson, CEO, Croí.

Equipment for Achill Island

In December 2018, the GPs on Achill Island took delivery of a Cardiac Holter Monitor - an important piece of cardiac equipment used by doctors to monitor a patient's heart rhythm. This diagnostic tool will be of huge benefit to patients on Achill Island, Clare Island and Inishbiggle in gaining access to earlier diagnosis of potential heart problems.

This support by Croí to these communities recognises their long-standing fundraising efforts since 1991. The local Croí Friends committee, which is led by John P. McGinty, organise a programme of fundraising activities each year, including a bumper whist drive each Shrove Tuesday, pub collections and the sale of Croí Christmas cards.



Photo shows members of Croí Friends Achill at the presentation of cardiac equipment for the local community, donated by Croí. Pictured from left: Kieran Sweeney, Klaus Sweeney, Mary McGinty, Dr. Edward King, John P McGinty, Dr. Noreen Lineen, Dr. Bernadette O'Leary, and Peter Connaughton. Absent from the photo: Mary Patton, Julie-Anne Gallagher.

At Croí Heart & Stroke Centre

Centre for Lifesaving Training

In Ireland in 2018 there were 2,442 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests where resuscitation was attempted.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are key steps in the chain of survival when someone is a victim of cardiac arrest.

Croí's Centre for Lifesaving Training teaches the vital skills of CPR and AED use. In addition, training includes the management of choking in adults, children and infants and the recognition of the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke.

Croí also delivers Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training to healthcare professionals, including Basic Life Support training to 5th year medical undergraduate students at NUI Galway.

These vital lifesaving skills are making a significant difference in survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the West of Ireland (Nationally, a 3% increase in Return of Spontaneous Circulation was reported between 2012-2018).

- In 2018, **over 800 members** of the public, family carers, primary care staff, hospital-based healthcare professionals and medical students were trained on Croí-led courses.
- Additionally, customised courses for HSE Carers', HSE Mayo and Roscommon employees, and Boston Scientific employees were delivered throughout the year.



RECOVERY & WELLBEING

In the Community



Reflexology helping stroke survivors

Penny Jones has been practicing complementary therapies for many years, and for the past six years she has worked with **800+ stroke survivors** in Galway, in a Reflexology project funded by Croí.

What is Reflexology?

Reflexology was first practiced by the ancient Egyptians and is based on the principal that all the areas on the body are mapped out on the feet. During a treatment, the feet are worked on with finger pressure inducing deep relaxation, cleansing, revitalising and balancing the whole system.

One morning each week, Penny alternates her time between three stroke units: St. Anne's Ward at University Hospital Galway, Hospital Ground, and Unit 4 at Merlin Park Hospital, meeting with patients who are recovering from acute and long-term affects of stroke.

The effects of stroke can vary widely and depend on what part of the brain has been injured. A stroke survivor may experience paralysis, muscle weakness or loss of sensation on one side of the body.

The Reflexology treatment supports the body's natural healing process and helps patients recovering from a stroke

to relax. "It works especially well before a patient receives physiotherapy as it improves circulation and the patient has greater awareness of the stroke affected part of the body," says Penny.

Penny's background is in Nursing and Yoga, which compliments her practice of Reflexology. "The hospital staff are so supportive and really see the benefits for patients. It's a real treat for patients... I listen to their stories and the treatment allows them a chance to truly relax and feel at ease," says Penny.

At Croí Heart & Stroke Centre

Stroke Support Services

Croí offers a range of stroke support services, which include:

- Stroke support groups which meet monthly in Galway (Croí) and in Mayo (Castlebar and Ballina).
- Family Carers' Group meet throughout the year, coming together to share experiences, reduce isolation and provide support to others in similar situations.
- Specialised physical activity programmes and Yoga, designed specifically for those who have had a stroke. Croí volunteer Vicky Harkin lends her time to teach these customised yoga programmes for those with chronic conditions.
- A Communication Group, led by our volunteer Speech and Language Therapist, Libby Kinneen, supports those with speech and communication difficulties.
- Health and lifestyle educational programmes focused on risk reduction.
- Fun activities, like our summer day out, World Stroke Day event and Christmas party every year.

In 2018, **over 650 people** attended these free stroke support sessions, thanks to the generous donations received from our donors.

Paddy's journey to recovery

Paddy (pictured top right) suffered a stroke four years ago, and since then has been very involved with the work and activities at Croí.

"It really changed my life. I come to Croí every Wednesday for the stroke survivor's yoga class, and then every month for the support group. I can link with people who understand, and I feel comfortable in their company," says Paddy.

Paddy's recovery from stroke was not smooth. One year after his stroke, Paddy ended up in intensive care after an operation to remove a cancerous tumour. The operation almost re-activated his previous stroke symptoms and Paddy had to relearn how to walk again. "I worked hard to get back to where I am today. My mission is that I can walk into a room and no one would ever know I've had a stroke."

Paddy is a regular at the Croí stroke yoga sessions, where Vicky Harkin volunteers her time as the stroke yoga instructor. "Vicky was born for this job. She's the most enthusiastic person."

Vicky's stroke survivor yoga classes are very popular and numbers have grown to over 30 per class.

Paddy's words of advice for other stroke survivors is to get involved with a network, like the Croí Stroke Support Group.



Paddy practicing Chair Yoga at Croí Centre.



Croí's Afternoon Tea party, in recognition of 2018 World Stroke Day.



Monica, a member of Croí's Stroke Carers Group, pictured with Vicky, Stroke Yoga Instructor.



Members of Croí's Stroke Support Group enjoying a Christmas celebration at Croí House.

RECOVERY & WELLBEING

Family Support - Croí Apartments

As part of our patient and family support services, we provide free accommodation and other supports in our Courtyard Apartments at Croí House. At a time of crisis and trauma, we help families stay close to their loved ones undergoing surgery or receiving stroke or cardiac care at Galway University Hospital.

The Croí Courtyard Apartments consist of three self-contained ground floor accommodation units, located within a few minutes walk from the hospital. These apartments are funded entirely through the generosity of those who support out fundraising activities.

In 2018, **we helped over 100 families** in their time of need, from all over Ireland and overseas, with an occupancy rate of 100%.

Families who stayed with us travelled from Clare, Donegal, Dublin, Limerick, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Austria, Scotland, England, USA, and even as far as Australia.



“Without the support of Croí, we would have been lost.” – Mairéad Kelly

A few days before last Christmas, Mairéad and Tom’s 16-year-old son, Tomás, went for a routine, elective surgery to treat an injured back. They had no idea of the trauma that lay ahead. Tragically, Tomás suffered multiple serious strokes after his surgery which left him paralysed and fighting for his life.

It was Christmas Eve when Tomás was transferred to Galway University Hospital for emergency treatment.

But the Kelly family live in Tipperary. They had nowhere to stay and no one to call on for support while Tomás was in critical condition.

Thankfully, a family friend put Mairéad in touch with Croí and we were able to offer her one of our on-site apartments. For Mairéad & Tom, that simple support meant the world.

“Without the support of Croí, we would have been lost. In the early days I slept on a pull out bed beside Tomás in the ICU, but I was able to go back to the Croí apartment during the day to get a shower or get some rest. It’s not until you are in the situation that you realise how valuable it is,” said Mairéad.

The Courtyard Apartments at Croí have been specifically designed for short-term stays, to allow family members to be as close as possible to patients who are in hospital for heart or stroke care in Galway University Hospital.

Croí’s wonderful apartments enable families to stay together and this means that no one is forced to leave their loved one alone during the most difficult days of their lives.

Mairéad and her family were able to stay with Tomás for over three months while he received treatment in Galway University Hospital.

“As a family it was so important because my other children were very confused as to what was going on. But because we were able to stay in the Croí apartment, they could come up to see Tomás and we could spend time together as a family, especially at Christmas. That was so important,” said Mairéad.

Thank you for supporting the Croí Courtyard Apartments.



Mairéad, Tomás & Tom Kelly



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

In the Community

Community Fundraisers

2018 proved one of our biggest years in community fundraising, with **almost 1,000 volunteers** helping to organise fundraising events in aid of Croí.

Community events included walks, cycles, marathons, BBQs, vintage car and tractor runs, bake sales, golf events, dances, bucket collections, pub quizzes and so much more!

We are so grateful to all of our volunteers - community fundraising makes up a huge percentage of our funding in the fight against heart disease and stroke in our community.

Here is a look back on a few of last year's biggest community fundraising events:

32 for Croí

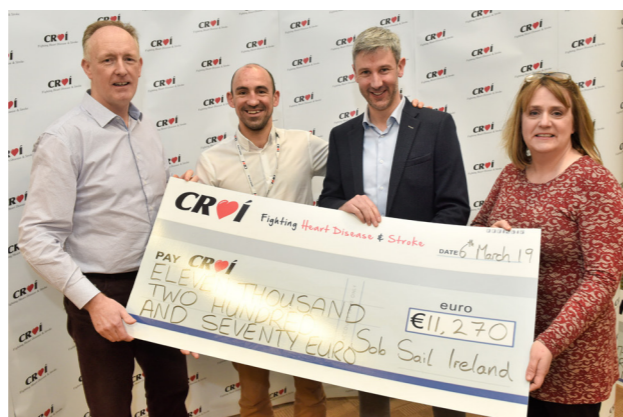
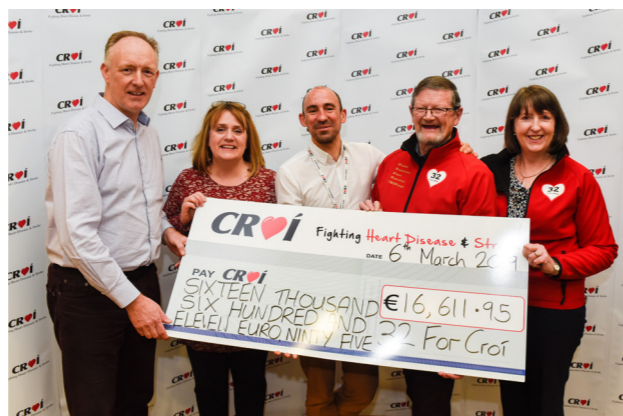
Martin Ward and his wife Linda Conroy set a unique challenge to visit the capital towns/cities of the 32 counties of Ireland in 32 hours in a 32-year-old car, in celebration of car enthusiast and rally driver Martin's 70th birthday!

Martin and Linda took to the road in their 32-year-old Mercedes 190E Cosworth and raised an astonishing **€16,611.95** for Croí!

Solo Sail Ireland

Richard Hayes sailed around Ireland in a dinghy boat (weighing less than 60kg) to raise funds for Croí.

Richard arrived back into Galway Bay Sailing Club on September 14th after 54 days out on the water, and close to 1,600 miles completed. Richard has become the first person ever to sail around Ireland in a tiny laser dinghy, with no water support team. Richard raised **€11,270** to support Croí and part-fund the purchase of defibrillators for communities in Ireland.



Galway Rose supports Croí

Deirdre O'Sullivan, the 2018 Galway Rose, chose Croí as her Charity Partner as part of the Rose of Tralee Festival. Deirdre is a long-time volunteer at Croí and throughout her year as the Galway Rose she supported Croí in many ways, including the launch of our 2018 Christmas cards, pictured below. Thank you, Deirdre, for supporting Croí and helping us raise awareness during your time as the Galway Rose.



Online fundraisers

Last year, we saw a huge increase in online fundraising, with donors using platforms such as Facebook, GoFundMe and iDonate to raise funds for Croí.

Liam Mac Craith, Galway, celebrated his 40th birthday with a Facebook birthday fundraiser in aid of Croí. Liam's goal was to raise €300, but 150 of Liam's friends donated and raised an incredible €3,586 in aid of Croí! Thank you to everyone who created an online fundraiser or supported Croí online last year.

Legacy giving

"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." - W. Buffett

Croí received great support from legacy donation in 2018. Thank you to those

who remembered us in their will - your contribution leaves a long-lasting impact on those affected by heart disease and stroke. Legacy gifts to Croí will save lives. **Imagine a future without heart disease and stroke.**

Croí Friends Groups

We are really grateful to our Croí Friends Groups throughout the West of Ireland - Achill, Annaghdown, Ballina, Donegal and Westport. These groups are made up of volunteers who like to help Croí by fundraising with all sorts of fun activities and events run in their communities. This fundraising is vital to us and helps ensure we can continue in the fight against heart disease and stroke.

Key 2018 fundraising highlights, among many others, included:

- The Achill Friends Group annual Whist Drive on Pancake Tuesday, and their annual collection in August;
- The Annaghdown Friends Group annual St. Stephen's Day Turkey Walk and Fun Run;
- The Ballina Friends Group annual Table Quiz, Church Gate, Flagday, Backpacking, and Mart Collections;
- The Donegal Friends Group annual summer counter box collection;
- The Westport Friends Group annual golf AM AM and Church gate collection.

Volunteers

In 2018, **almost 1,000 volunteers** supported our work at health promotion and fundraising events. Volunteer roles included registration support at our events, marshalling, fundraising support and much, much more. We are very grateful to all our volunteers who give so generously and tirelessly of their time in support of Croí.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Croí Events

Highlights from 2018

Our annual Croí fundraising events are going from strength to strength thanks to your on-going support.

Thank you for participating in last year's programme of events and campaigns, which included the 4th Annual Croí Night Run; the Croí Race Day at the Galway Races; the 24th Annual Tour de Lough Corrib Cycle; New York, London and Dublin Marathons; the Croí Gala Ball; the Golden Raffle, the Christmas Card Campaign, our 'Women at Heart' and World Heart Day initiatives, and lots more.



Pictured at the 33rd Annual Croí Ball in the Galmont Hotel, Galway.



Pictured at our annual Croí Women at Heart event in the Glenlo Abbey Hotel, Galway.



Pictured at the 2nd Annual Croí Am/Am at Bearna Golf Club, sponsored by Burkeway Homes.



Dedicated Croí volunteers taking part in the 2018 World Heart Day Church Gate Collections.



Pictured at the 24th Annual Croí Tour de Lough Corrib Cycle on June 10, 2018.



Pictured at the 4th Annual Croí Night Run on October 19, 2018.

FINANCIALS

Our total income for 2018 was **€2.36m**, the majority of which was generated from donations, sponsorships and fundraising activities. We received grant support for our work through HSE Section 39 Grants, totalling €360,000.

We take very seriously our obligation to ensure that all income is used effectively and efficiently in support of our mission and goals. We are governed by a Board of voluntary non-executive Directors who do not receive any remuneration or compensation. We adhere to the highest standards of governance and accountability having adopted the Code of Governance for Charities and the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

Each year, our organisation undergoes an independent audit and we file accounts with the Companies Registration Office. We are also registered with the Irish Charities Regulator.

This year, our multidisciplinary team worked across the areas of Nursing, Physiotherapy, Exercise & Fitness, Dietetics & Nutrition, Diagnostics, Education & Training, Research, Fundraising and Programme Administration. Each year, our staff engage with hundreds of stakeholders, from Courtyard Apartment guests to healthcare professionals, collaborative partners, policy makers, patients and carers.

We are here to serve our community.

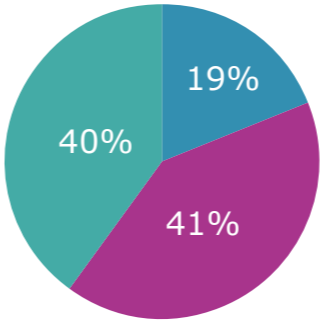
As an independent not-for-profit organisation, all our activities are funded from our own fundraising initiatives and revenue generating activities.

We are not a state-funded organisation so each year we have to generate enough revenue to ensure that we can continue to lead the fight against heart disease and stroke in the region.

Our work would not be possible without the tireless support of so many. You – our volunteers, donors, fundraisers, corporate and educational partners – help us make a real difference and literally save lives.

Our ability to innovate and to save lives depends on the generous financial support you afford us. We are deeply grateful for this and we do not take it for granted.

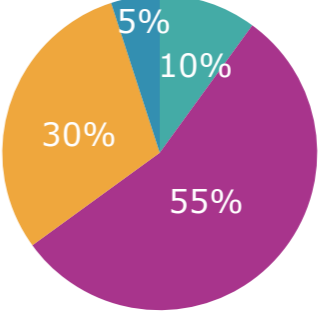
How our work is funded



Total Income 2018 = €2.36m

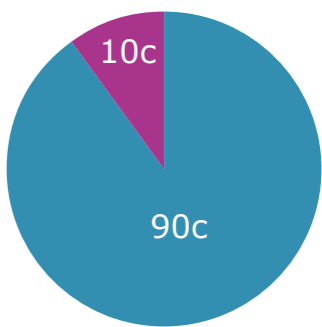
- 19% Programme grants
- 41% Fundraising activity & donations
- 40% Earned income

Your money at work



- 10% Cost of Income Generation, Management, Administration & Governance
- 5% Patient and Family Support Accommodation
- 30% Research, Training and Education
- 55% Prevention and Recovery, Programme Delivery

For every €1 raised





- 90c Supported our core mission to prevent cardiovascular disease, save lives, and promote
- 10c Was invested in income generation, management and governance





MAJOR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS





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