CRÍ

Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

The West of Ireland
Cardiac & Stroke
Foundation

STRATEGY 2024–2027

PROTECTING HEALTH AND SAVING LIVES.

VOLUNTEER HEROES
CRÓÍ
...fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

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For over 40 years, Croí has served the community in the West of Ireland. From its early years of fundraising to establishing cardiac surgery services, it is now focused on improving overall cardiovascular health, in particular, serving those who are at risk of heart disease or stroke and supporting those who have experienced these events in their recovery. This strategy document sets the way forward for Croí, with detail on what we intend to achieve over the next three years.

INTRODUCTION

Our context is changing. Our population is growing, and with a marked increase in ethnic diversity, lifestyle-related diseases are an increasing threat to health, a threat that cannot be averted simply by investing in acute hospital capacity. Our public health system has an intent to 'shift left' but it will never fully address the broader challenges of educating the population on how to live healthily, early identification and support of those at risk, and the long-term care of those impacted by heart disease or stroke.

Our plan is based on extensive consultation with our stakeholders. We were heartened by the many positive comments we received. For example, our team at Croí House were called out, not just for their professionalism, but also for their warmth and humanity. There was a strong message from stakeholders to extend our services beyond Galway to reach communities right across the region, particularly those in isolated communities who have been deprived of services. We were also encouraged to talk more about our successes, to tell the stories of those who have benefited from their experience at Croí.

Our strategy sets out some new objectives, reflecting the stakeholder feedback. We are also committed to ensuring that Croí protects its existing strengths, not least our team of healthcare professionals. Financial sustainability is a key objective; transformational projects require a long-term, strategic approach to fundraising. Finally, we are committed to maintaining best practice governance in order to deliver the highest standards of transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

The document sets out specific actions for the next three years across eight strategic objectives. We are committed to reporting on progress against these strategic objectives and actions on an annual basis.

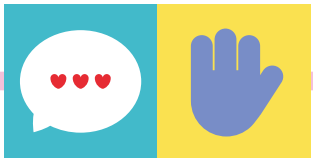
We must acknowledge the exceptionally generous legacy donation provided to Croí by the Joe and Helen O'Toole Charitable Trust (Tuam). This funding allocation has been a very important catalyst in enabling us to plan with ambition for a step-change in our levels of service-delivery, geographical reach and impact.

We encourage you to read this plan and tell us what you think. Thank you for your continued support - it is only with this support that we can bring this plan to life. Together we can make a real difference to the health of our community in the west of Ireland.

Mark Gantly
Croí Chairman

Mark O'Donnell
Croí CEO

STRATEGIC PROCESS



1 KICK-OFF

A Steering Team, comprising of the Management Team of Croí, with Board representation, was guided through the strategy development process by an external consultant, Mary Carroll, from Growth Potential. The Vision, Mission and Values of Croí were defined.

2 CONSULT

Multiple stakeholders were consulted to inform the direction and priorities for the next three years. The consultation included facilitated sessions with the Board, staff, service users and supporters; 1-1 interviews with key external stakeholders; and a survey of donors, service users, supporters and volunteers. We are very grateful to all stakeholders for their time and input.

3 ANALYSE

The Steering Team then analysed the context within which Croí operates and the organisation itself and identified possible challenges to be addressed, opportunities to be pursued and areas of focus for the next three years.

4 FOCUS

All stakeholder consultation outputs were reviewed, including challenges to be addressed and opportunities to be pursued, as well as analysing the context within which Croí operates and the organisation itself. The Steering Team agreed on eight key areas of focus for the period of the strategy. A strategic objective was agreed for each of these areas.

5 FINALISE

Metrics and actions to demonstrate how these strategic objectives will be measured and delivered were agreed. These specific and measurable strategic objectives and top-level actions are key so that progress can be measured with certainty and people are clear as to how progress is to be made.

6 REVIEW

Final review by both the Steering Team and Board completed the strategy development process.

OUR VALUES

CONNECTION

INTEGRITY

CREATIVITY

AMBITION

Our strength lies in connecting with everyone with **empathy** and **warmth**, offering a listening ear and encouraging them to live a life of **purpose** and **fulfilment**.

We behave with **integrity** and **respect**, dedicating ourselves to **our Mission**, while always showing **gratitude** to those who support our work.

We create an environment where **collaboration**, **teamwork** and new ideas are cultivated to foster **innovation**.

We **push boundaries** and are focused on increasing our **positive impact** to improve the lives of present and **future generations**.

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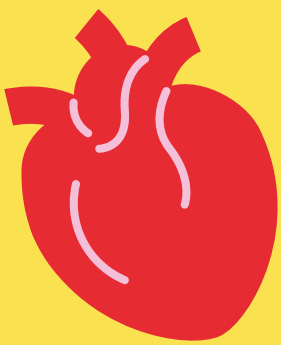
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VISION, MISSION AND 3-YEAR GOAL

1 OUR VISION

Our vision is an end to premature death or disability from cardiovascular disease in Ireland.

2 OUR MISSION

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

3 OUR 3-YEAR GOAL

Our 3-Year Goal is to widen geographical reach and increase capacity, leading to better cardiovascular health outcomes in more communities.

CROÍ
CORRIB Oil
fuel for life
Croí Corrib
Charity Cycle
FOOD STOP

Croí
Helping
Hearts

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, METRICS AND ACTIONS

The following are the Strategic Objectives, the achievement of which will deliver on the Mission of Croí for the period 2024-2027. The Metrics are designed to be clear and measurable indicators of the successful achievement of the Strategic Objectives. The Actions outline at a high-level how these Strategic Objectives will be met.

1. **Prevention**
2. **Support**
3. **Patient Empowerment and Advocacy**
4. **Community**
5. **People**
6. **Financial Sustainability**
7. **Communication**
8. **Governance**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **BY THE YEAR**

1. PREVENTION 2027

To work to prevent heart disease and stroke by increasing access to early detection and supporting risk factor management.

METRICS

1. Impact Measurement Systems in place by December 2024, with improved impact from 2025–2027.
2. Annual Impact Review.
3. Total number of people that attended prevention events.

ACTIONS

- Deliver targeted prevention programmes and campaigns based on a Risk Factor Management Approach.
- Continue to offer education and awareness programmes, resources and events online and in-person.
- Develop additional offerings, if appropriate, leveraging technology, on a prioritised efficacy basis.
- Develop a Cardiovascular Health Ambassador Programme with a particular focus on young people.
- Develop a select number of strategic partnerships with clear objectives and ensure that all projects align with these, building on our existing partnerships, for example, with the National Institute for Prevention and Cardiovascular Health (NIPC).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

2. SUPPORT

BY THE YEAR

2027

To provide care and support to people who have experienced heart disease and stroke and their families, with an emphasis on living well into the future.

METRICS

1. Impact Measurement Systems in place by December 2024, with improved impact from 2025–2027.
2. 50% increase in Croí Connects contacts and registrations.
3. Satisfaction levels with services – targets to be set by mid-2025.
4. Stroke Hub fully operational in 2025.

ACTIONS

- Develop and deliver a comprehensive, multi-tiered, psychological support service for people who have been impacted by cardiovascular disease and their families by 2026.
- Further develop our range of stroke support programmes and ensure optimal impact of the new Stroke Hub at Croí House.
- Expand the Croí Connects Support Service, including both telephone and online support initiatives.
- Review exercise delivery model and increase our offering, both in-person and online options, by end 2025.
- Develop and deliver a pilot Cardiac Rehabilitation and Prevention Model under the EU project Joint Action on Cardiovascular Health & Diabetes (JACARDI), to be completed by 2027.

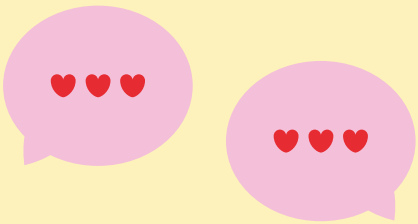
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

BY THE YEAR

3. PATIENT EMPOWERMENT & ADVOCACY

2027

To establish an engaged and empowered community recognising patients as equal stakeholders to guide an advocacy agenda and effect policy change.



METRICS

1. Increased active membership of Heart and Stroke Voice Ireland (HSVI), to include geographical representation and all cardiovascular disease areas.
2. Four policy initiatives and campaigns per year.
3. Four advocacy events/ campaigns per year.

ACTIONS

- Increase the number of active members in the Heart and Stroke Voice Ireland (HSVI) Patient Alliance, ensuring that priority actions are patient-led and determined.
- Deliver training and capacity building programmes for patient advocates.
- Arrange at least bi-monthly engagement opportunities for patients, with one larger-scale annual event.
- Identify key policy objectives and actively campaign in support of these, in particular, the development of a National Cardiovascular Health Plan.
- Support increased patient involvement in research and actively seek out partnerships to support increased patient engagement.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

BY THE YEAR

4. COMMUNITY

2027

To identify and prioritise serving the communities with the greatest unmet need, with an expanded focus across our region.

METRICS

1. At least six events per annum in each of our seven target counties.
2. Communities and cohorts of greatest unmet need defined by December 2024 and prioritised delivery plan in place by June 2025.

ACTIONS

- Expand our footprint to include counties Galway, Mayo, Clare, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo and Donegal.
- Research to identify communities with the greatest unmet need in the region.
- Connect with community leaders and organisations to build relationships and partnerships.
- Create tailored outreach programmes.
- Develop a Women's Heart Health Campaign.
- Implement outreach programmes (supports, heart health checks, awareness, talks, etc.) across the region to reach community groups with greatest unmet need.
- Engage through the utilisation of Croí services, resources, facilities, mobile units and technology.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **BY THE YEAR**

5. PEOPLE 2027

To ensure that we have a committed, skilled and valued team, volunteers and Board to deliver on our mission.

METRICS

1. Metrics on staff retention to be set.
2. Team, volunteers and Board satisfaction surveys – 75% or more for each group – "very satisfied".
3. Annual review of Capability Matrix and People Development Plan.

ACTIONS

- Embed organisational values and ensure alignment with behaviours and systems.
- Maintain Capability Matrix / Assessment to ensure we have the competence and capacity to deliver our Mission, underpinned by a resourced People Development Plan.
- Staff:
  - Ensure regular reviews with clear goals and objectives.
  - Implement remuneration and benefits review.
- Volunteers:
  - Define and communicate volunteer roles and responsibilities clearly.
  - Implement annual Volunteer Programme review.
  - Develop and implement a Volunteer Recognition and Reward Plan.
- Board: Develop and Implement a Board Recognition Policy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

BY THE YEAR

6. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

2027

To develop a sustainable financial model to underpin the development of the organisation and its capacity to deliver greater impact.

METRICS

1. Income at least matches expenditure in each financial year.
2. Metric to be developed around regular/multi-year giving.*
3. Increased income from legacies and major gifts.*
4. Increase in % of revenue from multi-annual partnerships, public and private.*

ACTIONS

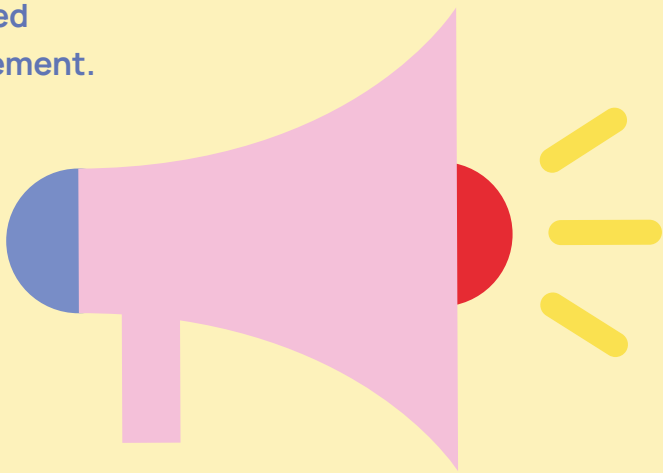
- Implement our Strategic Fundraising Plan, which includes increased revenue from major gifts, legacies and regular giving.
- Develop partnerships to access more funding from EU projects, with participation in at least 4 EU co-funded projects by 2027.
- Continue to adhere to best practice in financial management, budgetary control and procurement.
- Carry out impact audits on selected programmes and projects to ensure optimal value for money.

* Specific targets for these metrics are detailed in our Strategic Fundraising Plan

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **BY THE YEAR**

7. COMMUNICATION 2027

To create a better awareness of Croí's mission and brand and increased public and professional engagement.



METRICS

1. Increase in brand awareness indicated in public surveys.
2. Baseline and targets to be set.
3. At least 300 referrals annually from healthcare professionals.
4. Six collaborative projects per year.
5. Increase in metrics for online engagement as per our Communications Strategy.

ACTIONS

- Gather and share stories of patients, carers, clinicians, service users and families to empower people to take ownership of their cardiovascular health.
- Collaborate and build relationships with healthcare professionals and researchers.
- Develop and deliver a clear policy, and training to ensure that best practice communication standards are upheld.
- Improve communication through timely and accessible reporting and sharing of health information from reputable and academic resources.
- Develop and implement metrics around accessibility.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

BY THE YEAR

8. GOVERNANCE

2027

To consistently implement best practice in all elements of governance to ensure the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and effectiveness.

METRICS

1. Charities Institute of Ireland Triple Lock Standard secured by 2026.
2. Compliance with Charities Governance Code – Annual Review.
3. Clear unqualified Audit Opinion on our annual financial statements.

ACTIONS

- Define and implement decision-making criteria for project evaluation and resource allocation.
- Implement a Board Effectiveness Review.
- Develop a Board Recruitment Policy.
- Align Board agenda with execution of Strategic Plan.
- Review and broaden Clinical Governance in response to expanded offerings and make more visible to the Board.
- Publish accounts from 2024 to SORP standards.
- Secure the Charities Institute of Ireland Triple Lock Standard by 2026.
- Review our annual reporting format and content to ensure a greater focus on impacts and increased transparency.
- Undertake an environmental sustainability audit and factor in environmental considerations when planning any new activities.

Aortic valve

RedTag
220
Timing
#CROI Night Run

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

To be effective, the strategy must drive all activity within Croí. What we are doing on a day-to-day basis must be linked back to the strategy and, ultimately, our Values, Vision and Mission.

To achieve this, the strategy will be further developed into an operational plan and into goals and performance metrics for all employees.

An ability to respond to changing dynamics and circumstances is critical, so agility must be built into the strategy implementation. A review of the external and internal environment will be built into the implementation and review processes and, where necessary, appropriate modifications or recalibration may be made to the strategy. It will be imperative that any such changes, their rationale, and any resulting amendments to operational plans and individual goals, be agreed and communicated clearly and consistently.

HEART VALVE
WOMEN AT
Heart
the heart facts for every woman
#ListentoYourHeart

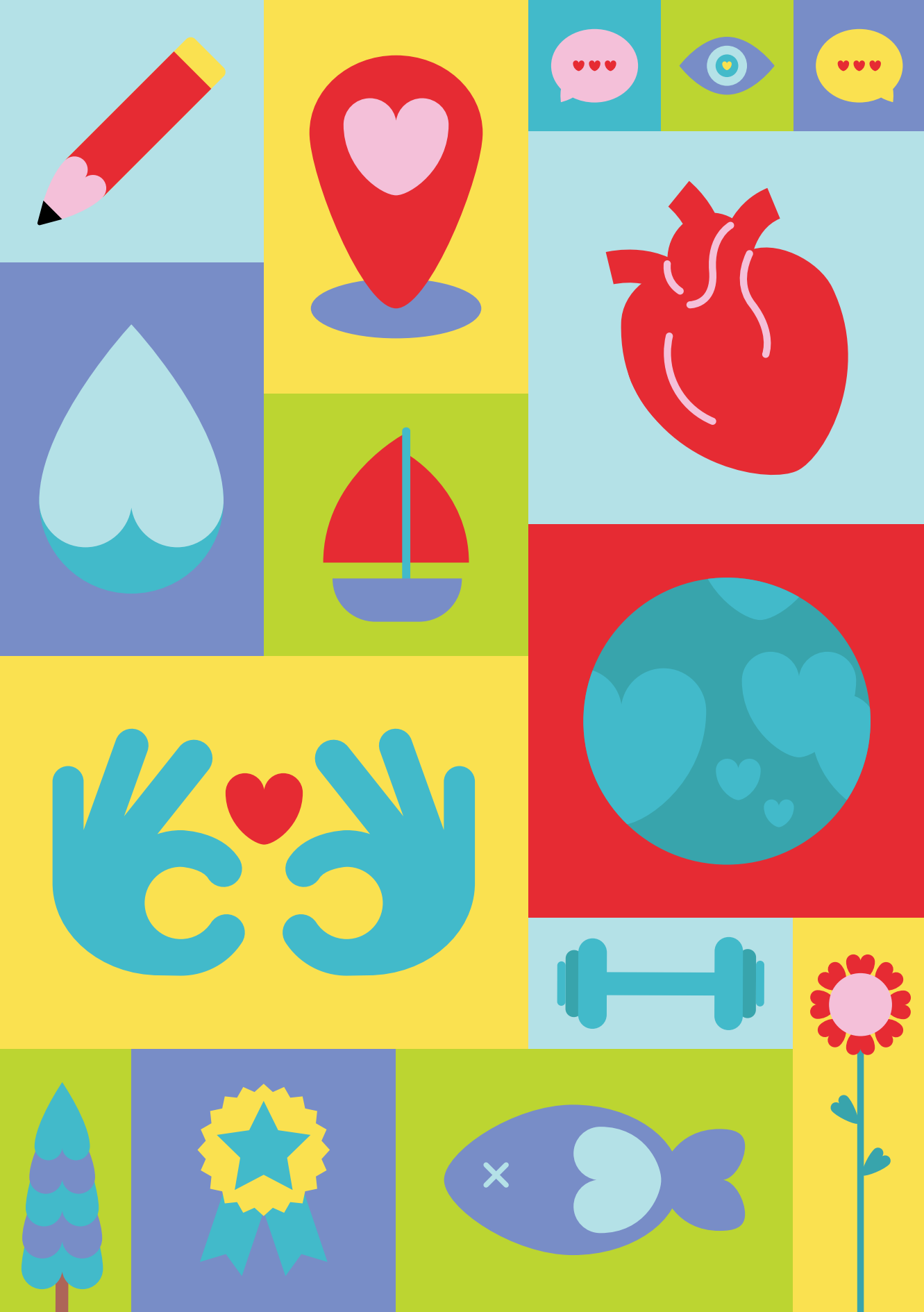
STRATEGY REVIEW

The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Board, with the CEO and Management Team providing regular updates at Board meetings on strategic, financial, and operational issues.

To measure and communicate our progress in executing this strategy, we will employ the following methods:

- Regular updates to the Croí Board on milestones, targets, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the operational plan.
- A yearly evaluation of the strategy and all associated metrics conducted by the Board and Management Team.
- The Annual Reports of Croí.
- The Annual Financial Statements.
- Keeping stakeholders informed through meetings, engagement activities, as well as via communication channels and routine reporting.
- Additional impact assessment techniques as defined in the implementation of this strategy.

ALWAYS MAKE TIME FOR A HEART TO HEART.



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CLG

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