



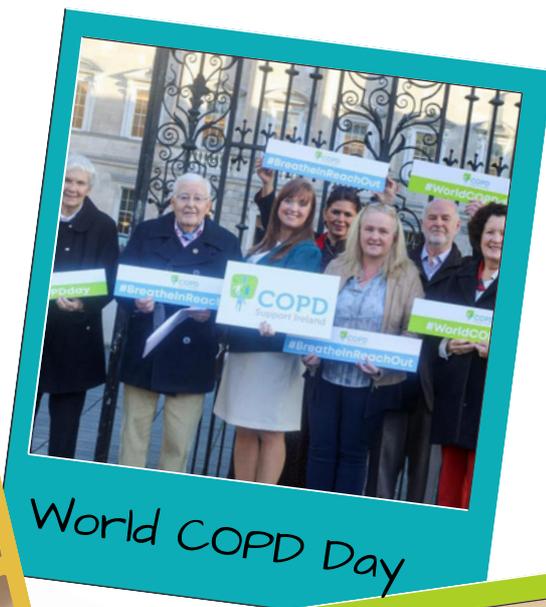
COPD
Support Ireland
www.copd.ie

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Annual Report 2022

Executive Summary

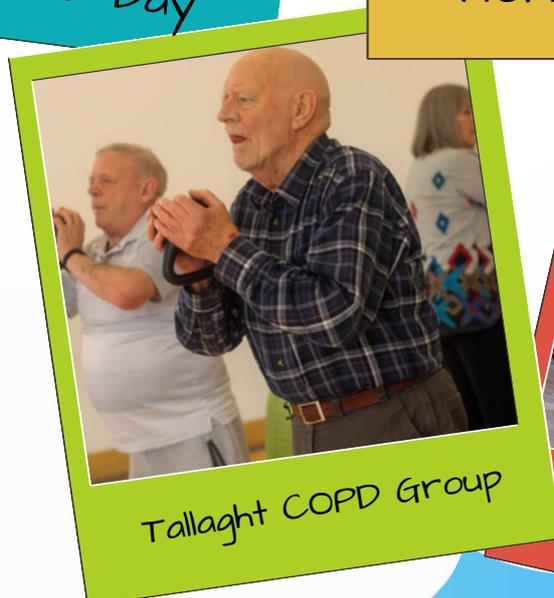
2022 was a year of overcoming challenges and ultimately the organisation finished the year stronger than it began. While most of our local support groups chose to resume face-to-face weekly peer support and exercise classes, the COVID-19 pandemic remained a concern for many people living with COPD and thus a small number of groups and members chose not to resume meeting in person



World COPD Day



World Health Day



Tallaght COPD Group



COPD Group



Activities

Support Groups

In 2022 COPDSI delivered 869 weekly exercise classes through 34 in person & online COPD Support & Exercise groups. By the end of 2022, 30 support groups had returned to in person activities or were planning to return in early 2023. In addition to these in-person groups, we delivered 4 virtual COPD support groups, running weekly exercise and peer-to-peer support nationally. COPDSI continued its partnership with SingStrong – Singing for Lung Health through 4 online SingStrong classes each week.

Advocacy

The National Group Representative Forum online meetings took place throughout 2022 at 1 -2 monthly intervals to sustain two-way communication between the national organisation and the local support groups around Ireland. This has been a very useful project and, through direct contact with the groups, the national organisation has been better able to prioritise the support that is needed at the local level. One such priority was a working group of members supported by staff being established to develop a local COPD Support group manual outlining committee roles and responsibilities as well as governance of local group activities in line with the national organisation's governance.

From these meetings and a stakeholder survey, advocacy was highlighted as a key area members felt the organisation could improve on, unfortunately due to staffing constraints, this work had been less of an organisational priority compared to our service delivery in 2022. COPDSI did raise several issues with relevant statutory bodies in collaboration with other organisations such as IPPOSI, the Irish Thoracic Society and the Tobacco 21 alliance. COPDSI continued its participation in the HSE Community Vaccine Network, with a two-way flow of information around the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, infection prevention and control measures and COVID-19 therapeutics. The General Manager of COPDSI was a patient partner member of the COVID-19 Therapeutics Advisory group in 2022, this opportunity arose through her role on the Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science, and Industry (IPPOSI) Board, as part of the COPDSI membership of that organisation.



COPD & ME Books

COPD Support Ireland received HSE funding to print and distribute 5,000 copies of the COPD & Me book in 2022. Health professional requests for these books grew significantly in 2022 with the roll out of the HSE Ambulatory Care Hubs.

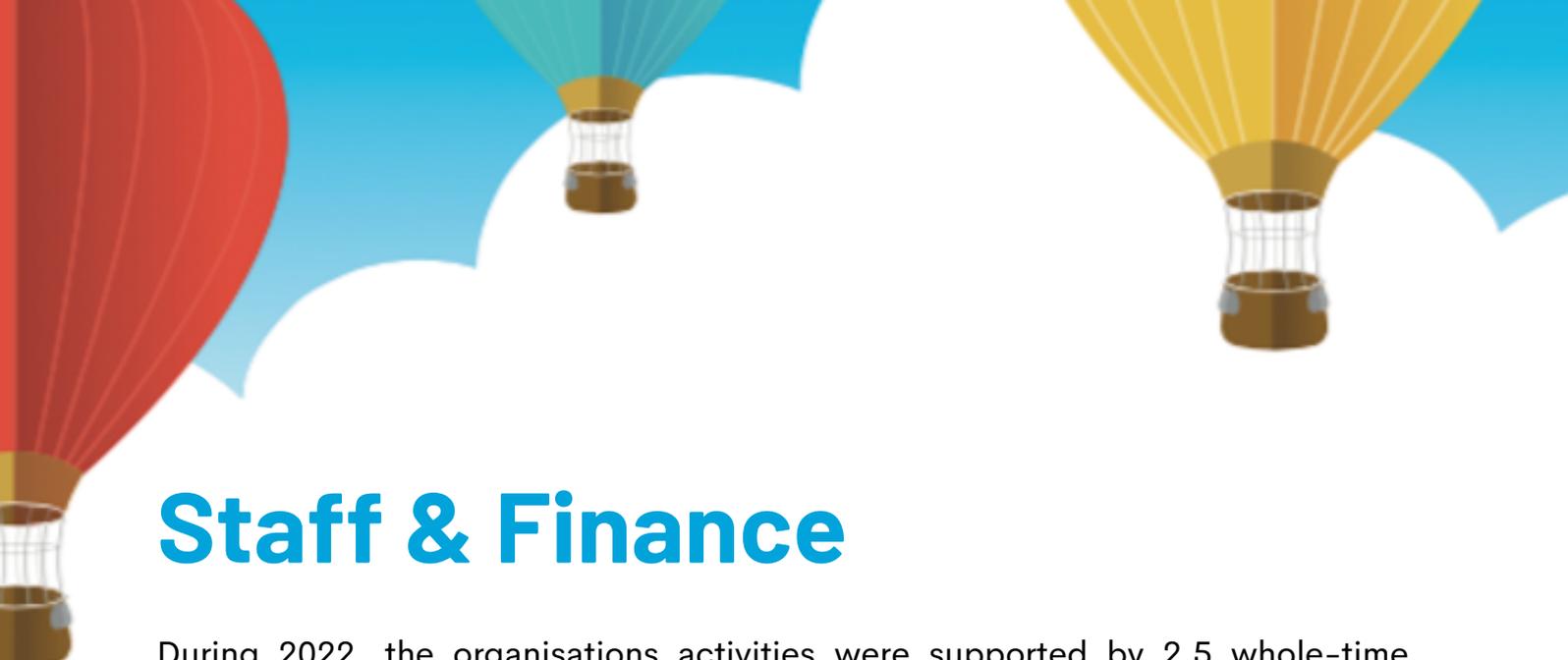
COPD Adviceline

COPD Support Ireland continued to support the Asthma Society of Ireland in the delivery of the HSE funded COPD Adviceline in 2022. Tasked to help grow its utilisation in the COPD population, the COPD adviceline was promoted across all public facing media as well as through paid and unpaid World health day and World COPD Day advertising. A COPD Adviceline mail out campaign to Respiratory Consultants was undertaken with COPDSI branded materials including the COPD Adviceline freephone number being included with an information poster and COPD & Me Book. The adviceline was also promoted when we hosted a stand at the Senior Times Live Expo - RDS April 22nd - 24th, co-hosted a stand at the ICGP annual meeting in June with The Asthma Society of Ireland and when we hosted a stand at the Irish Thoracic Society meeting in December 2022.

World COPD Day

World COPD Day activities in 2022 focused on raising awareness through creation and promotion of a series of expert self-management education videos, radio & print media advertising and a PR campaign promoting the ABC (Age, Breathlessness, Cough) of COPD diagnosis.

Additionally, COPD Support Ireland were invited by Mr. Denis Naughten, TD to make a presentation in the Oireachtas AV room on World COPD Day. This presentation was a fantastic opportunity for the organisation to raise awareness about the condition and especially the challenges of living with the condition. We are very grateful to our member, Mr. Ted Hayes, for speaking at this event and eloquently describing his life with this chronic disease as well as highlighting the benefit he receives from weekly attendance at his local COPD support and exercise group. This was a great opportunity for COPDSI to highlight these issues on World COPD Day, which was well attended by TD's, Senators, and staff of the Oireachtas.



Staff & Finance

During 2022, the organisations activities were supported by 2.5 whole-time equivalents comprising 0.5 WTE General Manager, 1 WTE Support Co-ordinator, 0.5 WTE Information and Administration Officer and 0.5 WTE SingStrong Administrator. Three of these 4 posts were funded (either fully or partially) by restricted income grants.

Organisational stability remained a concern throughout 2022 as the ability to retain staff at these levels remained uncertain due to the small amount of unrestricted income the organisation generates and the short-term nature of restricted income grants. COPDSI appealed to its member groups and industry partners to support the continued funding of the Support Co-ordinator post following exhaustion of the Comic Relief funding from 2021 in Q2 2022.

Fortunately, several partners stepped up and fully funded this post to continue for 12 months.

However, there were also several unsuccessful applications such as the SSNO (scheme to support national organisations) multiannual funding and several HSE lottery grant applications, with approximately half the required funding being granted to deliver the weekly support and exercise classes in 2022. In September, COPDSI were faced with the real possibility of having to discontinue delivering these groups in several locations across the country in 2023. Based on this, a comprehensive funding proposal was sent to the HSE in September 2022, and in December 2022 COPD Support Ireland were notified that this proposal was partially successful. The funding secured was to deliver 48 support & exercise groups in 2023. However, this did not include direct funding of any WTE staff, but instead included a contribution towards the administration costs of the organisation.

This funding commitment was transformative to the organisation and work will continue in 2023 on securing multiannual funding for the whole of the organisation – activities and staffing.

Conclusion

Overall, 2022 was a year of continued financial and operational challenges for the organisation, however it was also a year that resulted in transformative growth, with the public and professional profile of COPDSI growing significantly through participation on HSE committees and presenting in the AV room of the Oireachtas and mainstream media campaigns. Additionally, there was some progress made in future financial stabilisation and growth achieved through securing HSE funding in 2023 to deliver its core activities of 30 peer to peer support and exercise groups nationally and further grow this number by 18 new groups to deliver 48 groups nationally in 2023.



World COPD Day 2022