



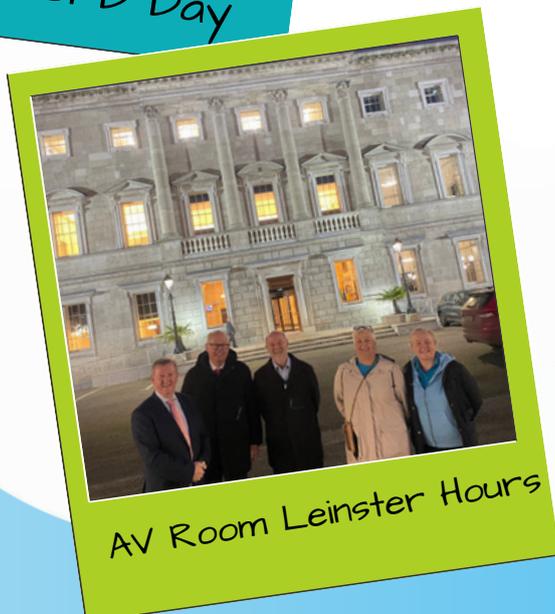
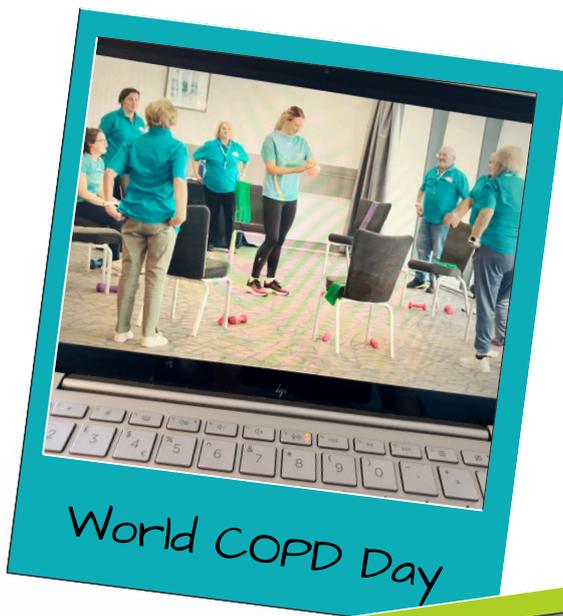
**COPD**  
Support Ireland  
[www.copd.ie](http://www.copd.ie)

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# Annual Report 2023

# Executive Summary

In 2023, COPD Support Ireland grew significantly with the addition of 15 new COPD Support & Exercise groups to bring the total to 43 groups across Ireland. This was due to the organisation securing its first HSE funding through the HSE Enhanced Community Care Programme for weekly COPD support & exercise classes.



# Activities

During 2023, COPD Support Ireland engaged in several activities aimed at supporting those living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and raising awareness of the condition across the country. Efforts focused on both health education and community engagement.

## Support Groups

In 2023 COPDSI delivered 1713 weekly exercise classes through 45 in person & 3 online COPD Support & Exercise groups. By the end of 2023, all support groups had returned to in person activities following the COVID-19 pandemic with 14,992 in person attendances and 819 virtual attendances recorded . In addition COPDSI continued its partnership with SingStrong – Singing for Lung Health through 3 online SingStrong classes each week.

## Advocacy

The National Group Representative Forum online meetings took place throughout 2023 at 2-3 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.

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.

## Organisational Profile

The profile of COPD Support Ireland was raised through participation in various public communications campaigns as well as attendance at professional conferences. Additionally the General Manager was invited to participate in a number of conference panels during the year, through the organisations continued relationship with IPPOSI and the HSE National Patient and Service User Forum, contributing to discussions on patient partnership, just culture and digital health.



## COPD & ME Books

COPD Support Ireland received HSE funding to print and distribute 5,000 copies of the COPD & Me book in 2023. Health professional requests for these books grew significantly in 2023 with 6,767 books printed and distributed to individuals living with COPD and respiratory health professionals.

## COPD Adviceline

COPD Support Ireland continued to support the Asthma Society of Ireland in the delivery of the HSE funded COPD Adviceline in 2023. 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. The adviceline was also promoted when we hosted a stand at the IGPNEA, Anail and Irish Thoracic Society annual meetings.

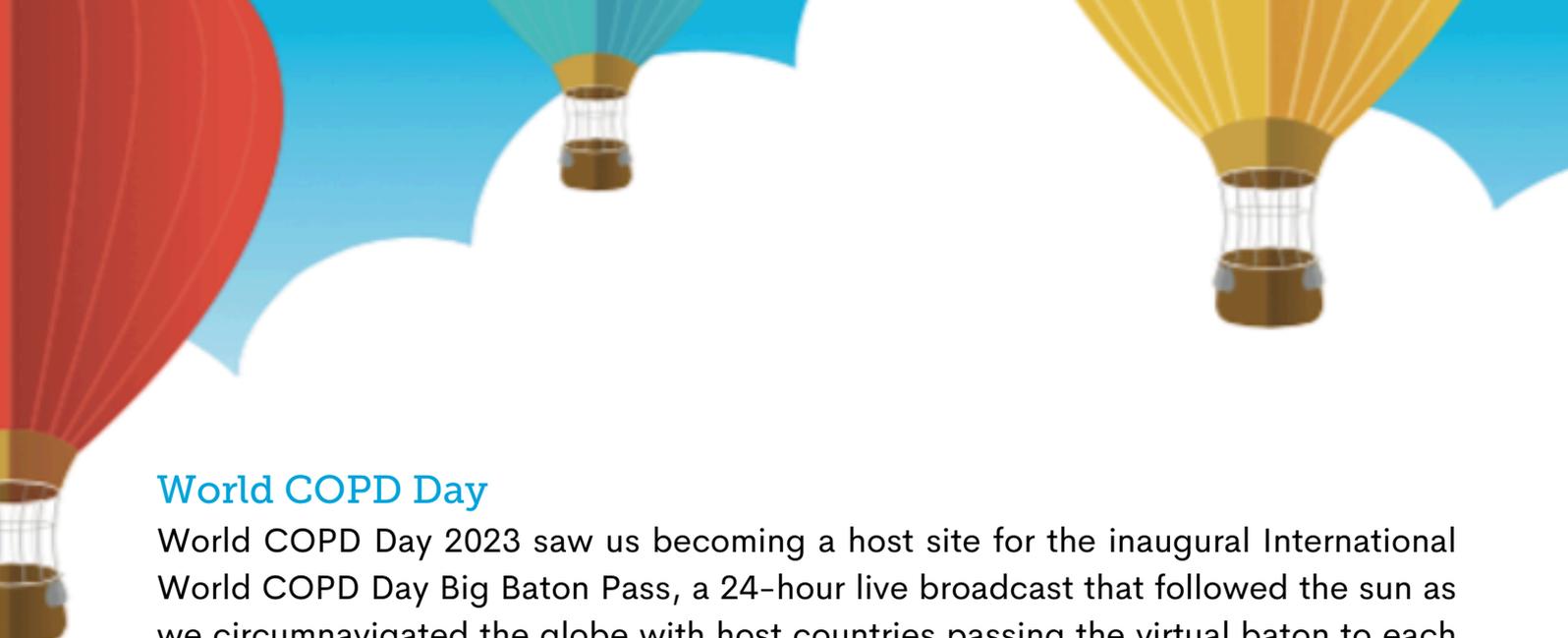
## Oireachtas Briefing - World COPD Day

In honour of World COPD Day on 15 November 2023, COPD Support Ireland held an Oireachtas briefing at Leinster House. The purpose of the event was to highlight the experiences of those living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and their families in Ireland and shed a light on COPD prevention and risk factors, particularly from a health inequalities angle.

It is estimated that 380,000 people are living with COPD in Ireland, yet only 110,000 are diagnosed. It is particularly prevalent in the more vulnerable in society including people from areas with high social deprivation. At least 1500 patients die each year of COPD and over 15,000 patients are admitted to hospital with COPD. COPD has a profound effect on patients and places a significant strain on the health service.

The event was well attended and gave COPD Support Ireland the opportunity to engage directly with policymakers to raise awareness and support COPD Support Ireland's mission of maximising the quality of life of people living with or at risk of COPD.





## World COPD Day

World COPD Day 2023 saw us becoming a host site for the inaugural International World COPD Day Big Baton Pass, a 24-hour live broadcast that followed the sun as we circumnavigated the globe with host countries passing the virtual baton to each other and showcasing their regions COPD management and achievements with a 24-hour virtual run undertaken by founders Russell Winwood – Social medias COPD Athlete and Ruth Barker – Respiratory Specialist Physiotherapist.

During our 2 hour segment we showcased live exercise demonstrations with a number of brave and enthusiastic volunteers from the Tallaght and Ballyfermot Support groups, prerecorded presentations from physiotherapists Ciara Hanrahan on Physical Activity Behaviour Change in COPD & Dr Marie O'Mir, Physiotherapist and CEO of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists on the potential role of advanced practice physiotherapists in Ireland and the work they are doing to allow the profession to deliver a broader service to people living with COPD and other conditions. We heard from Dr Stanley Miller, National Clinical Lead for the Respiratory National Clinical Programme on the progress of the Chronic Disease Hubs roll out as part of Sláintecare, and what these new integrated care COPD services will look like for people living with COPD. We spoke live with our two amazing Siel Bleu trainers on the day and also heard from Thomas McCabe, General Manager of Siel Bleu Ireland on the incredible work they are doing in delivering community-based exercise across a variety of health conditions and community groups. Most importantly we spoke to our volunteer members on the day and heard how the COPD Support & Exercise group has helped them to live the life they wish to live with COPD. We also announced live the results of our weeklong Step up and Step out for COPD challenge, where people from all over the country took part. The target we had set was 380,000 steps - 1 step for each of the estimated 380,000 people with COPD in Ireland to raise awareness of its prevalence nationally. This target was smashed as we totalled over 1 million steps. An incredible effort from all who participated particularly the local groups who organised group activities and went above and beyond to ensure that we hit our target. It really was a wonderful event and a fantastic achievement from all those who took part.



# Staff & Finance

During 2023, the organisations activities were supported by 2.5 whole-time equivalents comprising 0.5 WTE General Manager, 1 WTE Support Co-ordinator, 0.6 WTE Office Manager and 0.3 WTE Administration Officer. Two of these WTE were funded by restricted income grants. Organisational stability remained a concern throughout 2023 as the ability to retain staff at these levels remained uncertain year on year due to the small amount of unrestricted income the organisation generates and the short-term nature of restricted income grants. The 2023 HSE funding was transformative to the organisation and a subsequent existing level of service agreement was reached with the HSE for 2024 funding in December 2023.

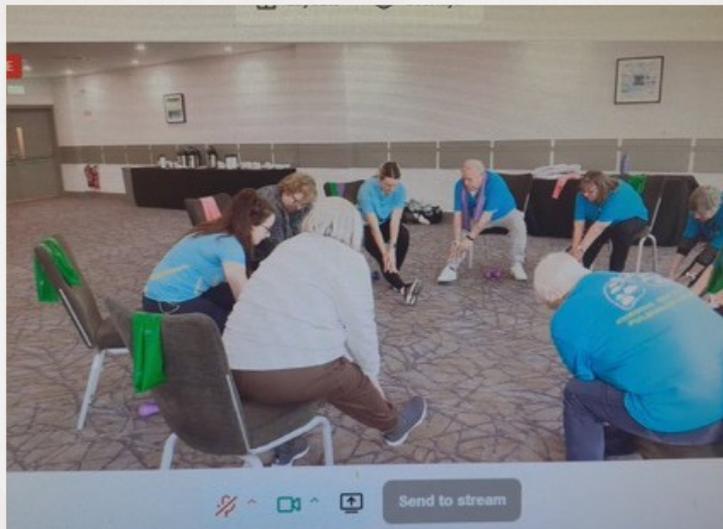
## Lets Get off the Settee for COPD

During June 2023, COPD Support Ireland encouraged its members & supporters to "Get off the Settee for COPD" and fundraise for us. It was a fantastic campaign that had members sharing on social media how they were getting off the settee for COPD from walking to horseriding, running to pogo stick hopping and everything in between.



# Conclusion

2023 was a transformative year for the organisation with funding for 45 COPD Support & Exercise groups being provided by the HSE ECC Programme leading to a year of substantial growth. The public and professional profile of COPDSI grew further through working with the HSE National Clinical Programme, delivery of the World Health Day webinar and participation in the Global COPD Big Baton Pass and presenting in the AV room of the Oireachtas on World COPD Day. There was further progress made in stabilising the financial future of the organisation and growth achieved through the receipt of HSE funding in 2023 and agreement for sustained funding of the 45 local COPD Support & Exercise groups into 2024.



World COPD Day 2023  
Big Baton Pass 24 hour  
global live broadcast