



INFORMATION PACK

Director of Services
October 2026



CONTENTS

Welcome	2
Our Story	3
What We Do	4
Our Vision, Mission and Values	5
Job Description	6-10
Person Specification	11-12
Why Work for Us?	13-14
What we offer you	15
How to Apply	16
Timeline	17
Our Strategy	18-31



WELCOME

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Services at Cancer Fund for Children.

This is an exciting time for our organisation as we expand our support for young people and families affected by cancer across the island of Ireland, while preparing to open our second Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo.

As Director of Services, you will help lead the delivery of our ambition through three key priorities:

Deepening Our Impact and Broadening Our Reach

We are committed to ensuring that no young person faces cancer alone. While we currently support more than 1,000 families each year, we know there is more to do. We are expanding our reach so that families can access support wherever they live across the island of Ireland, including families where a parent has a cancer diagnosis and young people diagnosed with cancer up to the age of 24.

Championing the Voice of Young People

Young people must be at the centre of everything we do. We are committed to ensuring they are seen, heard and given meaningful opportunities to shape our services and influence our future direction. Through advocacy, research, partnerships and service development, we will ensure their experiences and aspirations help drive better outcomes for young people affected by cancer.

Leading Innovation in Cancer Support

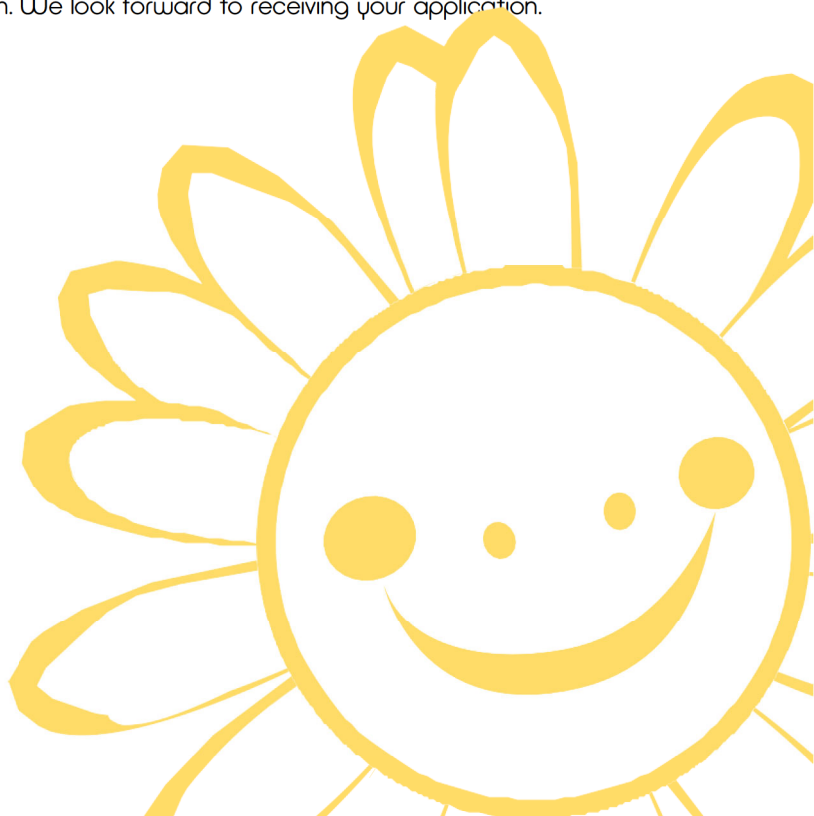
We are committed to reshaping support services for young people and families affected by cancer. By removing barriers to access, working alongside parents and partners, and pioneering new approaches to informal therapeutic support, we aim to set the benchmark for excellence. Through innovation, research and collaboration, we will continue to strengthen the evidence base for our services and increase their impact across the island of Ireland.

Joining Our Team

We are seeking an exceptional leader who is passionate about improving outcomes for young people and families affected by cancer. This is a unique opportunity to shape services, influence national practice, and help deliver our vision that no young person should face cancer alone.

Thank you for your interest in joining Cancer Fund for Children. We look forward to receiving your application.

Phil Alexander,
CEO



OUR STORY

No child should face cancer alone.

Cancer Fund for Children is an ambitious charity with a vision that every child impacted by cancer should receive the right emotional support at the right time, no matter where they live on the island of Ireland.

The charity was founded in 1973 by Margaret McAlpine MBE who was a teacher who had been recruited to provide continuity to children's education whilst they were receiving treatment on the wards at Belvoir Park Hospital in Belfast.

Over the following years, Margaret recruited a range of volunteers, including consultant oncologist Dr George Edelstein, to form a Board of Trustees to help deliver a range of practical and financial support to families impacted by childhood cancer. This evolved into residential support with the purchase of Shimna Valley House in Co. Down in 1996. Shimna Valley provided families caring for a sick child with a tranquil space to spend quality time together, far removed from the stress of hospital wards and treatment routines. Shimna Valley was the forerunner to Daisy Lodge, which was opened by professional Golfer, Rory McIlroy 2014.

Over the last 20 years, our Board of Trustees has helped shape Cancer Fund for Children into the charity it is today, bringing in skilled, passionate staff to support families through therapeutic services and fundraising. As a result, we've grown into one of the leading Irish charities supporting children and young people affected by cancer.

At Cancer Fund for Children, we believe that the voice of young people is at the heart of everything we do. We employ people who are compassionate, skilled, and driven to make a real difference in the lives of the families we support.



WHAT WE DO

Cancer Fund for Children provides a wide range of support to children and young people impacted by cancer and their families. You will find more information on our website at cancerfundforchildren.com.

Connections Team

Our Connections Team is the first point of contact after a referral, ensuring families feel heard, supported, and informed about Cancer Fund for Children's services. Each family is assigned a dedicated Connections Support Specialist who regularly checks in to assess their needs and provide additional support where required.

Hospital-Based Support

We have a Youth Support Worker who offers age-specific support to adolescents and young adults (11-24) in St. John's Ward, Crumlin, where they receive cancer treatment. We provide opportunities for group activities on the ward and run Young Adult short breaks (18-24yrs) to provide opportunities for peer connection with others who have had a similar experience.

Community-Based Support

Our Cancer Support Specialists work one-to-one with children, young people, and parents at home and in the community, providing support when and where it's needed most. We also facilitate group programmes that foster peer support for young people affected by cancer and for those who have experienced bereavement.

Youth Engagement

Our Youth Engagement Team ensures that young people's voices are at the heart of Cancer Fund for Children, empowering them to influence policy and practice. Our Youth Engagement Groups have completed training in recruitment and selection, teamwork, advocacy, presentation skills, leadership, and more. Young people actively participate on interview panels and have shared their experiences of cancer at a variety of speaking events.

Daisy Lodge

Therapeutic short breaks at Daisy Lodge in Newcastle, Co. Down offer families quality time together in a safe, supportive environment. Feedback shows that after their stay, 90% of families felt more hopeful, 95% felt better able to manage their situation, and 96% said their relationships were strengthened.

As Daisy Lodge is at full capacity, we are building a second therapeutic centre near Cong, Co. Mayo, which will more than double our annual short breaks, increasing family members served from 1,800 to 4,000.



OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our Vision

Our vision is that no child faces cancer alone.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower, connect and strengthen children, young people and their families so they feel equipped to cope with the emotional impact of cancer.

Our Values

At Cancer Fund for Children, our values are the foundation of everything we do. They shape our vision and drive our mission, define who we are, how we behave and how we collaborate with others.



Powerful Connections

Powerful connections are at the core of our organisation. We nurture impactful connections between the young people and families we support, with our communities and stakeholders, and across our all-island staff team.



Bold Ambition

Our vision drives us to go further, to reach more young people with greater impact. We embrace bold aspiration and turn ambition into action. By aiming high and pushing boundaries, we make extraordinary things possible.



Courage

We have the courage to lead and have difficult conversations. We embrace open communication and address sensitive topics, always with the intent of empowering those we support and those we work alongside.



Compassion

Compassion guides our work to create safe spaces, offer genuine care, and approach others with kindness. We aim to ensure every person we interact with feels seen, heard, and supported.



Integrity

We build trust through honesty and openness, upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability, and ensuring our actions reflect our words and beliefs.



Collective Responsibility

Each one of us plays a vital role in achieving our collective goals. We take personal ownership of our actions and support each other to ensure that as a team we reach our shared vision.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Role:	Director of Services
Reporting to:	Chief Executive
Direct Reports:	Service Management Team members
Salary Scale:	PPT: 57-63 (£56,139 - £67,302) - equivalent ROI
Hours:	35 Hours
Location:	Belfast or Maynooth Office (Hybrid) with all-island remit
Date:	October 2026

Cancer Fund for Children is the leading voluntary organisation supporting children, teenagers, young adults and families impacted by cancer across Northern Ireland and Ireland.

We provide a unique and comprehensive range of therapeutic services designed to meet families where they are, helping them feel supported, connected, empowered and strengthened throughout their cancer experience.

Our services include Connections support, community-based support, groupwork programmes, hospital and family support, phone support, and residential short breaks at Daisy Lodge. Delivered by a multidisciplinary team of Cancer Support Specialists, Youth Support Workers and Connections support workers, our services are tailored to the needs of children, young people, parents and wider families.

Role Overview

As a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, the post holder will be jointly responsible for developing the vision and delivering the strategic plan for Cancer Fund for Children.

They will lead the development and implementation of an effective and integrated Services Strategy on an all island basis to improve outcomes for children, young people and families living with cancer and to meet operational needs as defined by Cancer Fund for Children's Strategic Plan.

They will work with key stakeholders across the Island of Ireland to ensure Cancer Fund for Children's services are widely known, accessible and open to all young people impacted by cancer. This will include commissioners, elected representatives, health service personnel, other charities, local communities and primary care.

They will also, through strong and compassionate leadership, develop the Services Management Team to deliver on the Strategic Plan and meet targets as set out in the operational plan.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Executive Responsibility

- As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Director of Services will share responsibility with the Trustees, Chief Executive and other Directors for the vision, strategy, business plans and policies for Cancer Fund for Children in order to deliver leading-edge therapeutic services to children living with cancer and their families.
- The Director of Services will provide appropriate support and guidance on Services matters to the Board, SMT, Service Teams and Income Generation teams as required
- As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Director of Services will keep apprised of developments within the voluntary and community sectors in NI, ROI, UK, and internationally focusing on Services Research, Best Practice and Government Policy to inform the work of Cancer Fund for Children
- The Director of Services will be the Safeguarding lead for Cancer Fund for Children and will report directly on a quarterly basis to the Board of Trustees on key developments, risk, concerns and progress.

Operational Responsibilities

The Director of Services will:

- Lead the development and implementation of an effective and integrated Services Strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision for children, young people living with cancer and families, as defined by Cancer Fund for Children's Strategic Plan.
- Oversee the development and implementation of services for both diagnosed children and their families and diagnosed parents and their families, throughout Ireland to include hospital-based support, community support, phone support, youth engagement and residential services.
- Design, set and monitor annual operational plans and respective budgets, effectively managing these resources to maximise impact, targeting unmet need and managing costs to deliver a high standard of services.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Create a culture of best practice through evaluation, analysis and research to inform future planning and to ensure that Cancer Fund for Children's Services teams learn, grow and build on their successes.
- Lead on key research and development which helps to ensure CFFC's bespoke model/approach receives academic endorsement and validation from academia.
- Further develop the Cancer Fund for Children's Services teams' capacity by encouraging and supporting innovation to refresh existing services and establish new services identified by need.
- Embed a culture of excellence across all Services so that children, young people and their families feel supported, connected, empowered and strengthened.
- Work closely with Communications and Marketing team to maximise the use of Cancer Fund for Children's website, mobile communications, social media, literature to optimise PR outputs regarding service provision, key messages and services outcomes.
- Work closely with the CEO, to identify and pursue opportunities to expand Cancer Fund for Children's influence and reputation so it is at the forefront of best practice in service provision for families living with cancer.
- Network at a senior level with key influencers and decision makers, in the statutory and voluntary sectors; managing relationships at a local, regional and national level in Ireland and UK.
- Develop processes and structures to ensure children and their families have an opportunity to have their voice heard inside and outside the charity. Act as a spokesperson and representative of Cancer Fund for Children with key stakeholder groups.

Key Accountabilities

Operational Accountabilities

- To develop, agree and implement, in conjunction with the CEO, effective operational plans for the delivery of Services across Northern Ireland and ROI, in line with Cancer Fund for Children operational and strategic plans.
- To lead on the development of new ideas and proposals for delivering Services within realistic time frames and realistic budgets.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- To ensure that the range of Services are relevant to and meet the needs of children, young people and families and that all resources are appropriately allocated according to priority of need.
- To ensure that all services are delivered in partnership with children, young people and families, designed and informed by their needs as they arise and through evaluative feedback.
- To line-manage all members of the service management team.
- As services develop throughout Ireland ensure they do so with a shared approach, ethos and culture.
- To regularly review and account for all Services activity and to measure and evidence impact/outcomes.
- Ensure that all Services operations comply with internal and external policies, procedures and legislation, including Health and Safety, Risk Management, HR, Finance, administration and regulatory frameworks.
- To provide written reports as required and to an agreed standard on a quarterly basis to the CEO.

Training, Development & Communication

- Provide effective leadership, direction and performance accountability for the Services Management Team.
- Develop and enabling all staff to reach their full potential, to achieve high standards of professional conduct and practice.
- To liaise with the Communications & Marketing team to facilitate Media/PR opportunities and or requests regarding staff and or families.
- To address and report all service user complaints and comments.
- To oversee the reporting of all safeguarding issues alongside ensuring that accidents or near misses are properly recorded.

Financial Management

- To develop and set an agreed service budget in cooperation with service management team and work within an agreed annual expenditure, in line with budgets, up to a limit set by the CEO.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- To monitor and report on services budget activity at ELT.
- To sign off all expenditure and staff expenses on a monthly basis.

General Duties:

- To authorise the recruitment, training and management of all Services staff.
- To commit to on-going professional development, training opportunities and to attend all mandatory training.
- To perform any other reasonable duties and specific projects deemed to be within the post holder's competence, as assigned by the CEO to contribute to the overall aims of the Cancer Fund for Children.
- To travel as required by the role.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

<u>Key Criteria</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>
<i>Qualifications</i>	• Recognised Professional Qualification in Social Work, Health Care, or Youth and Community work or similar • Recognised Professional Qualification in Leadership/Management	• Registered with the Social Care Council or equivalent in Health / Youth Work • Coaching qualification • Able to demonstrate clear evidence of ongoing professional development
<i>Experience / Knowledge</i>	• At least 3 years direct leadership/management experience in the last 5 years • At least 5 years' experience of working in/delivering or managing services supporting children/young people and their families • Experience of design and delivery of creative interventions based on identified need. • Knowledge of relevant government policy supporting children and families affected by cancer in NI & Ireland • Knowledge and working experience of child protection legislation and procedures. • Knowledge and working experience of Risk Assessment and how this relates to safe measured service delivery • Experience of developing and leading budgets	• Experience of line managing, individuals and teams of managers • Experience of working in the field of critical illness, disability, bereavement and loss • Experience of developing and embedding approaches that enable young people to influence services, policy or organisational decision-making
<i>Competencies</i>	• Strategic thinking • Innovative and dynamic. • Excellent leadership skills • Supervision / people management skills • Lead and oversee change • Results orientation • Excellent relationship building skills across varied groups and stakeholders • Commitment to meaningful young people's participation, ensuring their voices, experiences and ideas influence service design, delivery and evaluation	

PERSON SPECIFICATION

<u>Key Criteria</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>
	• Ability to create inclusive opportunities that empower young people to express their views and contribute to organisational decision-making • Strong decision-making skills • Innovative, resilient and adaptable to change • Ability to influence decision makers and opinion formers • Excellent written and verbal communication skills • Strong report writing skills • Monitoring and Evaluation skills • Delegation skills • Able to manage a complex workload • Ability to forward plan, prioritise and manage time/workload • Proficient use of industry-standard ICT software, including database packages • Ability to work both independently and as part of a team	
Job Circumstances	• Ability to travel as required • Driving licence or alternative means of flexible transport • Work flexible hours	

This job information is not intended to be either restrictive or definitive. It is important to note that the responsibilities of the post may change to meet the evolving needs of the services that the charity provide.

This organisation reserves the right to enhance the above criteria to facilitate short-listing.

Why work for us?

At Cancer Fund for Children, our work is rooted in a clear and powerful purpose: to ensure that no child or young person has to face cancer alone. For more than 30 years, we have provided specialist therapeutic support to children, teenagers, young adults and families impacted by cancer, helping them feel empowered, connected and strengthened during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

This is an exciting and significant time to join us. We are expanding our services across the island of Ireland, preparing to open our second Daisy Lodge short break centre, and developing a bold new strategy that will place the voices of children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

The Director of Services will play a central role in this next chapter. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you will help shape and deliver our strategic vision, lead the development of an integrated all-island Services Strategy, and ensure our support remains accessible, evidence-based and responsive to the needs of children, young people and families affected by cancer.

Working with us means joining a compassionate, courageous and ambitious organisation where relationships matter, innovation is encouraged, and every colleague has a part to play in creating meaningful and lasting impact.

When you join Cancer Fund for Children, you will have the opportunity to:

- **Lead with purpose** – contribute to a mission that directly supports children, young people and families facing the emotional impact of cancer.
- **Shape services across Ireland** – lead the development and delivery of integrated services across hospitals, homes, communities and residential settings.
- **Influence meaningful change** – work with stakeholders, commissioners, elected representatives, health professionals and partner organisations to strengthen access, awareness and support.
- **Champion the voices of children and young people** – ensure their experiences, needs and ambitions inform service design, advocacy and organisational decision-making.

Why work for us?

- **Develop and inspire teams** – provide strong, compassionate leadership to a skilled and committed Services Management Team.
- **Drive excellence and innovation** – embed evaluation, research and best practice so our unique model of support continues to grow, improve and achieve recognition.
- **Be part of a pivotal moment** – join us as we expand our reach, open new services and deliver an ambitious strategy for the future.

This is a rare opportunity to combine strategic leadership with deep professional purpose, helping to shape the future of therapeutic support for children, young people and families across Ireland.

Staff Benefits



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Staff Development

- Organisation Wide Training Budget linked to Role, Strategic Plan, Individual Requests and Competencies
- Induction Programme
- Personal Development Plans
- Ongoing Supervision
- Continued Personal Development Support
- Regular Staff Information Days / Annual Staff Conference

Work Life Balance

- Standard 35 hour working week
- 28 Days Annual Leave and Statutory Days
- The offices close during Christmas week, staff have the option to work the 3 days during this period or to take annual leave. Arrangements should be agreed in advance with Manager.
- Day off for your Birthday
- Flexible Working Opportunities
- Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) in compensation of additional hours worked
- Career Breaks
- Family Friendly Policies

Social, Physical and Mental Health Wellbeing

- Health & Wellbeing Committee delivering organisational-wide initiatives
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Cross-department team-working/volunteering opportunities
- Private Healthcare

Financial Reward and Recognition

- Annual Increment to Top of Scale
- Pension Scheme
- Work Related Professional Membership Fees Paid
- Mileage Allowance at Civil Service Rates



HOW TO APPLY

Please complete the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (NI only) for this role and email to hr@cancerfundforchildren.com. The deadline for applications is **2nd November 2026 at 5.00pm**. If you have any queries about the role or the application process, please contact hr@cancerfundforchildren.com.

Right to Work

All applicants must be legally entitled to live and work in the island of Ireland in accordance with relevant immigration legislation. Dependent on place of residence, you will be required to undertake ACCESS NI/GARDA VET checks.

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the application form, you will be asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (NI only). Shortlisted applicants will also be asked to complete a confidential disclosure form regarding any unspent criminal convictions. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the role you are applying for, please contact our People & Culture Team. We are committed to ensuring all applications are considered fairly and will endeavour to put in place any necessary arrangements or reasonable adjustments to support you throughout the recruitment process and, if successful, in your role.



TIMELINE

Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (NI applicants only) to be received no later than **5.00pm on Monday, 2nd November 2026.**

Interviews

Will take place on **10th and 12th November** in Narnia at our Daisy Lodge complex in Newcastle, Co. Down.

Equal Opportunities

Cancer Fund for Children is an Equal Opportunities Employer, and all applications are considered strictly on merit.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national or national origins, being an Irish Traveller)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Please address any enquires relating to the advertised position, and your submission to:

Joanne Symington
People & Culture Officer
Cancer Fund for Children
E: hr@cancerfundforchildren.com



Strategic Plan
2026-2030

Power of Connection

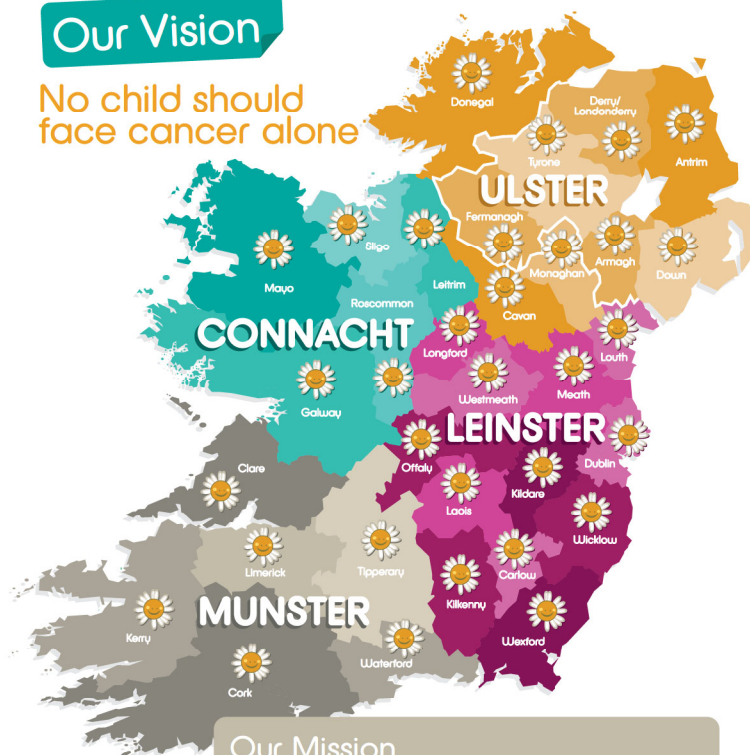
Reaching Every Young Person,
Empowering Voices, Leading Change



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Our Vision

No child should face cancer alone



Our Mission

To connect, empower, and strengthen children and families so they are better equipped to deal with the emotional impact of cancer:

- We connect children and their families with the right people, so they do not have to face cancer alone
- We empower children and their families to identify and develop the resources they need to better cope with cancer
- We strengthen children and their families by creating space and time for them to be together

Welcome from our Chair

At Cancer Fund for Children, our purpose has always been clear: to ensure that every child, young person and family impacted by cancer feels recognised, listened to and fully supported. Our 2026-2030 strategic plan, Power of Connection, sets out the next phase of our ambition to strengthen the support we provide across the island of Ireland.

This strategy is built around three core ambitions - Reaching Every Young Person, Empowering Voices, and Leading Change. Together, they represent our commitment to delivering compassionate therapeutic support to the whole family, advocating for the needs and experiences of young people, and continually improving how we work together as an organisation.

Over the next five years, we will focus on expanding access to our services, deepening our engagement with young people, strengthening the evidence behind our approach, and ensuring families are supported at every stage from diagnosis and treatment, through survivorship and, when needed, bereavement.



With the opening of our second therapeutic short break centre, continued investment in our team, and stronger partnerships across the voluntary and healthcare sectors, we are well placed to reach more families than ever before.

Grounded in compassion and guided by the voices of those we support, this strategic plan reflects our commitment to ensuring no child or young person faces cancer alone. Together with supporters, partners and communities, we are building a future where every family impacted by cancer feels truly seen, heard and supported.

Peter O'Brien

Peter O'Brien
Cancer Fund for Children Chair



About Us

Cancer Fund for Children supports children and young people (age 0-24) impacted by cancer and their families. We provide informal emotional, social and therapeutic support over the phone, at home, in hospital, and at our short break centre Daisy Lodge in Newcastle, Co. Down and soon to be Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo.

Our approach is flexible, compassionate, and young person led. We are an ambitious charity with a vision that every child diagnosed with cancer throughout the island of Ireland should receive the right support at the right time, regardless of where they live.

We are committed to upholding the highest levels of governance. Cancer Fund for Children is governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for governance, strategic direction, ethos and values.



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Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC100532). Registered Charity in the Republic of Ireland (20142681) CHY 21682.

Our Values

At Cancer Fund for Children, our values are the foundation of everything we do. They shape our vision and drive our mission, guiding our decisions, actions, and relationships. Our values define who we are, how we behave and how we collaborate with others.



Powerful Connections

Powerful connections are at the core of our organisation. We nurture impactful connections between the young people and families we support, with our communities and stakeholders, and across our all-island staff team.



Bold Ambition

Our vision drives us to go further, to reach more young people with greater impact. We embrace bold aspiration and turn ambition into action. By aiming high and pushing boundaries, we make extraordinary things possible.



Courage

We have the courage to lead and have difficult conversations. We embrace open communication and address sensitive topics, always with the intent of empowering those we support and those we work alongside.



Compassion

Compassion guides our work to create safe spaces, offer genuine care, and approach others with kindness. We aim to ensure every person we interact with feels seen, heard, and supported.



Integrity

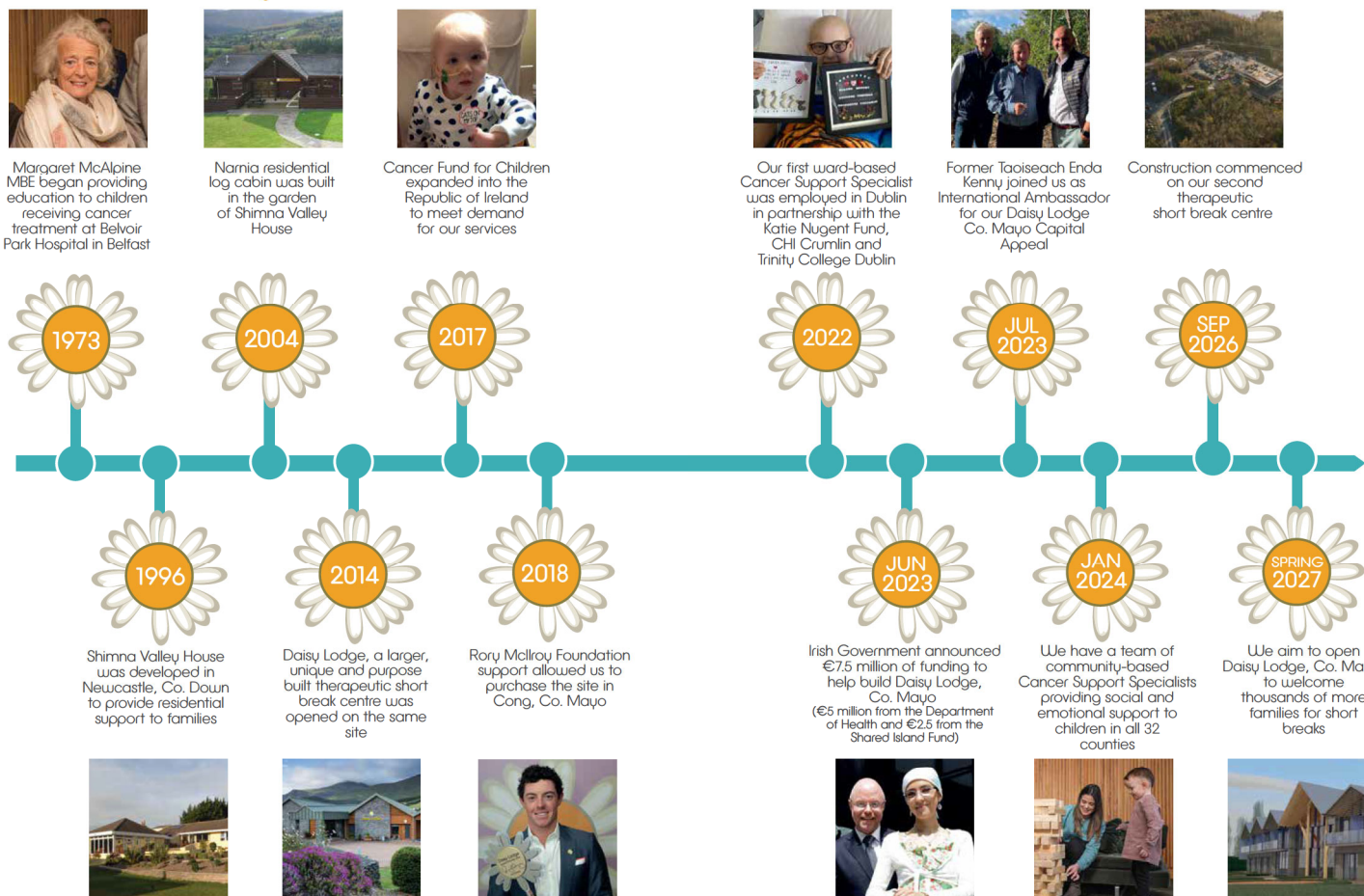
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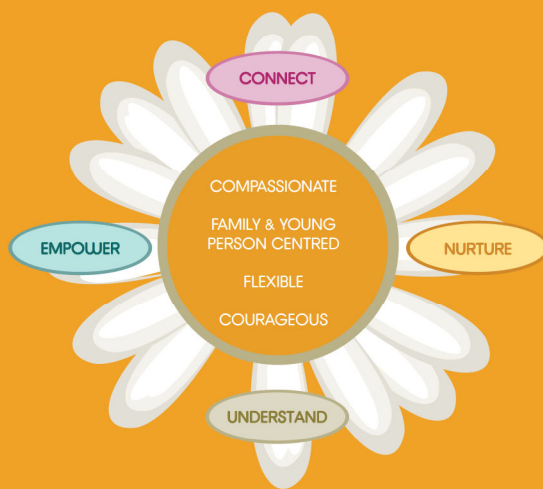
Collective Responsibility

Each one of us plays a vital role in achieving our collective goals. We take personal ownership of our actions and support each other to ensure that as a team we reach our shared vision.

Our History



Our Informal Therapeutic Support Model



CONNECT

- We connect with young people and their families so they can access specific Cancer Fund for Children support e.g. individual support, group activities, Daisy Lodge and opportunities to connect with others in similar situations
- We connect with young people so they feel heard, understood, less isolated and can access services that will support them
- We connect with families where they are, with compassion and flexibility

UNDERSTAND

We work with young people and families to help them understand:

- Their own feelings and emotions
- How other family members are feeling/coping
- Ways that might help them to better regulate their emotions
- How to use approaches that might help them to cope better
- How others in similar situations are feeling and coping

NURTURE

We deliver support through the development of trusted relationships, nurtured through:

- Developing a clear understanding of support needs
- Working in ways that are best for each individual /family
- Being there in the reality of cancer day to day
- Helping families to work on relationships within the family unit
- Offering young people and families the opportunity to relate to others in similar situations
- Signposting to other organisations and support
- Providing access to services that seek to nurture family relations

EMPOWER

We work with young people and families so they may:

- Feel more relaxed
- Feel able to use practical ways of coping
- Have increased self awareness and confidence
- Feel more able to cope with current circumstances

Our Services



By Phone

Our Connections Team are the first point of contact following a referral. They ensure that families feel heard and listened to. The Connections Team share information on the services that Cancer Fund for Children provide. Each family is appointed a dedicated Connections Support Specialist who will check in with them to see how they are and determine if any further support can be put in place to meet their needs.



Individual Support

Individual support can be delivered in hospital, in the community, in school or in the family home. It can be a one-off session or a programme of sessions. Delivered by our Cancer Support Specialists, individual support helps children and young people to identify and express their emotions. It helps to reduce anxiety and encourages young people to develop the confidence and practical skills to cope with their cancer or cancer in their family.



Group Support

Therapeutic groupwork programmes allow children and young people with a similar cancer experience to build friendships and peer connections, gain support and develop skills to help them cope better with cancer. This support is delivered at our residential centre, Narnia Log Cabin which is based in the grounds of Daisy Lodge, and within community settings.



In Hospital

Our Youth Support Workers work alongside the wider hospital team to support young people during their time on the ward. They provide emotional and practical support, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and cope with the impact of cancer. This support is tailored to each young person and may include creative or informal activities, games, or simply providing space to talk and connect with other young people.

Our Parental Cancer Support Specialist works alongside the wider hospital team to support parents during time spent on the ward. They offer a compassionate, listening presence, helping parents to manage the emotional and practical challenges of their child's illness and the impact of extended hospital stays. This support is responsive to individual needs, often focusing on providing space to talk and feel heard and providing opportunities to connect with others.



Short Breaks

Therapeutic short breaks offer families quality time together in a safe and supportive environment, far removed from the pressures of cancer treatment and hospital wards. Daisy Lodge offers both privacy and the opportunity to meet and gain support from other families going through a similar experience. Families enjoy nutritious meals and a range of complementary therapies. They can also benefit from informal therapeutic support delivered by our Cancer Support Specialists.



Right Support Right Time Right Approach

2021-2025 Strategy

Right Support, Right Time, Right Approach

2021-2025 Strategy Review and Achievements

In 2021, we launched our 'Right Support, Right Time, Right Approach' strategy setting out a clear ambition to strengthen our services, extend our reach and ensure every child, young person and family affected by cancer across Ireland could access the support they need.

Over the past five years, we have broadened access to informal therapeutic support across the island of Ireland, strengthened our model of practice, and amplified young voices through the launch of our Youth Engagement and Young Ambassador Programmes.

Annually we now support up to 1,000 families living across 32 countries through individual support, group work, phone support and therapeutic short breaks. Significant progress was made on our second Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo. The centre is currently under construction and will open in 2027, allowing many more families to benefit from vital therapeutic short breaks.

Building a Resilient Organisation

Over the past five years, we have taken significant steps to build a more sustainable and resilient organisation. We have invested strategically in developing a more diverse fundraising portfolio and in strengthening long term relationships with supporters and funders. Our fundraising capacity has expanded through the creation of an all island team, by investing in and strengthening our partnerships, expanding philanthropic giving, enhancing individual giving, and establishing a new volunteer model that extends our reach into local communities.

By adopting a supporter focused approach and prioritising connection and partnership, we have enhanced both engagement and income. This has enabled us to secure philanthropic support from Ireland, the UK, and the USA, ensuring the funding required to build and equip our second therapeutic facility, Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo.

We continued to invest in our people, nurturing a positive, inclusive culture where staff, supporters and the families we work with feel valued, supported and listened to. Our newly formed People & Culture team has been central to shaping an ambitious, values driven organisation where staff feel heard, supported and empowered. By strengthening policies and maintaining a strong focus on wellbeing, we are building a workplace that enables our people to thrive as we grow.

We also enhanced our governance, systems and evidence informed practice, ensuring we can clearly demonstrate the impact and value of our services. By raising awareness of our work and strengthening partnerships across the voluntary and healthcare sector, we have increased understanding of the impact of childhood cancer, and the vital role Cancer Fund for Children plays in supporting families.

Looking Ahead

The achievements of the 2021-2025 strategy have created a strong platform for the future. However, we recognise there is still unmet need with many children, young people and families across the island of Ireland not yet supported.

As we enter our 2026-2030 strategy we are at a pivotal moment, ready to build on our progress, extend our reach and ensure more families feel seen, listened to and fully supported.

Our Impact

Northern Ireland



New family referrals

2021-2022 2022-2023 2023-2024 2024-2025

279 324 315 293



Individual support sessions in the community

940 1,147 686 811



Individual support sessions in hospital

NA* 240 596 778



Short breaks

370 452 517 521

*delivery of support in hospital paused due to Covid-19 pandemic

Ireland



New family referrals

2021-2022 2022-2023 2023-2024 2024-2025

NA* NA* 201 141



Individual support sessions in the community

NA* NA* 257 456



Individual support sessions in hospital

NA* 486 957 926



Short breaks

54 65 65 65

*all-island service fully implemented in 2023



CC

Your support and kindness have meant more to me that I can put into words. It has allowed me to grow in confidence, and encouraged me to speak out and make my voice heard and I always felt you had my back and looked out for me and I'll never forget how much that meant to me. Through Youth Engagement you just help and support me - you lifted me...even when going through my tough cancer journey you made it feel lighter - I'll never forget that.

Youth Engagement Group Member

CC



Power of Connection

2026-2030 Strategy

Power of Connection

The Strategic Process

In 2025, we undertook a six month strategic planning process, supported on a pro bono basis by Deloitte Ireland. Our aim was to define our long term strategic ambition for the next decade, while also shaping a focused five year strategy that aligns with our vision as an all island charity.

The strategic process work involved a programme of engagement, including workshops with our Board Strategy Group and Leadership Team, stakeholder analytics of cancer services across the island of Ireland, staff consultation, service user feedback, an all staff town hall, and a charity wide survey.

These insights helped us develop a strategic direction that is grounded in experience, informed by evidence, and reflective of the needs of the families we support.

Our Promise

By 2035, no young person on the island of Ireland will face cancer feeling alone, unheard, or unsupported.

- We will remove the barriers that prevent young people from accessing the support they need.
- We will support young people with cancer and their siblings, as well as young people who have a parent diagnosed with cancer or who have been bereaved.
- We will bring equitable support to every corner of this island — every county, every city, every town, and every village.
- Working in partnership with parents, we will empower young people with cancer, their siblings, and those who have a parent with cancer to take control of what matters most in their lives.
- We will stay true to our vision to ensure no child faces cancer alone, while broadening our reach and deepening our impact.

The Need

Understanding the scale of cancer's impact on young people and families across the island of Ireland is essential as we shape our strategic direction for the years ahead. Every diagnosis affects not only the individual but also their siblings, parents, and wider family network. By looking at the latest incidence figures and our current reach, a clear picture emerges of both the progress we've made and the gaps that urgently need to be addressed.

Across Northern Ireland, around 140 children, adolescents, and young adults aged 0–24 are diagnosed with cancer each year, and we currently support approximately 70% of them.

In the Republic of Ireland, around 369 young people in this age group are diagnosed annually, yet we are only able to reach 42%. This leaves many young people without the emotional and practical support they need at one of the most challenging time in their lives.

The impact extends further. Each year, around 828 adults in Northern Ireland and 2,897 in the Republic of Ireland are diagnosed with cancer while caring for dependent children. While we support around 25% of these families in Northern Ireland, we currently provide no equivalent support in the Republic of Ireland—an urgent gap we aim to close by 2028.

The reality is stark — thousands of young people still face the fear and uncertainty of cancer's impact without adequate support. Closing this gap is central to our mission and our long term strategic ambition.

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030

Our purpose has always been clear: to ensure that we are here for every child, teenager and young adult facing cancer, every step of the way.

Our 2026–2030 strategic plan sets out the next phase of our ambition to strengthen the support we provide across the island of Ireland. It is built around three core ambitions.

1



Reaching Every Young Person

Expand our support to all young people and families impacted by cancer across the island of Ireland

2



Empowering Voices

Ensure children and young people impacted by cancer are seen, heard and supported to be an active voice for change

3



Leading Change

Provide strategic leadership to transform cancer support across the Island of Ireland



Reaching Every Young Person

Expand our support to all young people and families impacted by cancer across the island of Ireland

Overview

Our focus is on deepening our impact and broadening our reach to all young people and families affected by cancer across the island of Ireland. We remain firmly committed to our vision that no child should face cancer alone. We support over 1,000 families every year but we need to do more. We will extend our support so that families can access our services wherever they live across the island of Ireland. This includes expanding our reach to families where a parent has received a cancer diagnosis and to young people with a cancer diagnosis up to the age of 24.

Strategic Objectives

- Expand our support to reach families where a parent is diagnosed with cancer across the island of Ireland.
- Ensure all adolescents and young adults (AYAs) across Ireland have access to Cancer Fund for Children's support.
- Open our second therapeutic short break centre, Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo.
- Ensure we have a robust and seamless referral pathway in place, supported by efficient systems and processes.
- Continue to deliver our core services and invest where needed to ensure we meet critical needs.
- Continue to refine and review our services so they best meet the needs of those we support.
- Ensure a culture of proactive, child centred safeguarding that protects every child and young person.



Empowering Voices

Ensure children and young people impacted by cancer are seen, heard and supported to be an active voice for change

Overview

Central to this ambition is ensuring that children and young people affected by cancer are genuinely seen, heard, and placed at the centre of our work. We will continue to champion their voices and create meaningful opportunities for young people to influence our direction.

Externally, we will champion better outcomes for young people through national advocacy, innovation, and partnerships. By embedding young people's insights into our campaigns, policy and research activity, and service development, we will ensure their needs and aspirations guide our decisions and actions.

Strategic Objectives

- Ensure children and young people are at the heart of Cancer Fund for Children and their experiences and perspectives shape our decisions, services, and culture.
- Develop and deliver a clear, impactful campaigning strategy that advocates for the needs and voices of children, young people, and families affected by cancer.
- Deepen our understanding of cancer's impact by gathering insights from young people and families and using this evidence to inform our work.
- Establish a dedicated policy and research function to strengthen our influence, support our advocacy, and drive evidence based development across all services.
- Strengthen our voice and influence across the island of Ireland, ensuring young people have meaningful opportunities to participate, lead, and contribute to positive change.



Leading Change

Provide strategic leadership to transform cancer support across the Island of Ireland

Overview

We are committed to courageous, innovative leadership that reshapes cancer support services for young people and their families across the island of Ireland. Our aim is to remove the barriers that prevent young people from accessing the support they urgently need. By working closely with parents as trusted partners, and alongside key stakeholders, we will empower young people to take charge of what matters most to them even in times of uncertainty and challenge.

We will set the benchmark for informal therapeutic support, pioneering new approaches and building a strong evidence base that demonstrates their transformative impact. Through the pursuit of academic endorsement and validation, we will strengthen recognition of the vital role our services play, ensuring they become an integral and accessible part of cancer care for all who need them.

Strategic Objectives

- Secure academic endorsement and validation for Cancer Fund for Children's Informal Therapeutic Support Model and approach.
- Ensure all support and services are effectively measured and evaluated using evidence based, validated tools that demonstrate impact and drive improvement.
- Collaborate with charities, organisations, and policy makers across the island to champion a more coordinated and integrated approach to cancer support.
- Strengthen our presence and influence on key forums and advisory groups, ensuring an active and ongoing voice for children, young people, and their families.

Strategic Enablers

To make our strategic ambitions a reality, we will invest in six key enablers that will help us grow, adapt, and deliver even greater impact for children, young people, and families.

- 1 Future Ready Funding**
Build a stronger, future ready funding model that secures long term sustainability, supports innovation, and unlocks new opportunities to grow our impact.
- 2 Communication & Awareness**
Create a bold, trusted, and distinctive brand that elevates Cancer Fund for Children and champions the voices and experiences of children, young people, and families affected by cancer.
- 3 Technology & Infrastructure**
Implement secure, scalable digital platforms and systems that enable innovative service delivery and data driven decision making.
- 4 People & Culture**
Ensure we are a values driven and ambitious charity where our people feel seen and heard and are supported and empowered to be their best.
- 5 Partnerships & Networks**
Develop innovative and meaningful partnerships that enhance our services, unlock new opportunities, and increase our impact for children, young people, and families.
- 6 Processes & Governance**
Ensure robust policies, compliance frameworks, and performance management systems are in place to strengthen accountability and efficiency.



CC
Cancer Fund for Children can't take away the cancer, but they can make life with cancer better, for you and for others in your life. When you're told you have cancer, you think you have no control over your life, but Cancer Fund for Children can help you see that you do have choices, and that those choices matter, that you can still have fun and do new things. Before I met anyone from Cancer Fund for Children, I was in a void, and without the support I have received, I would have been left there. There would have been no bridge to connect me to other people, to bring me back to my family and my friends, and to help me see what I can achieve.

Young person

CC



@CancerFundChildren



@cancerfundforchildren



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