

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Issued by The Wheel**

### **COVID-19 SUPPORTS PACKAGE A 'LIFELINE' FOR CHARITIES, SAY THE WHEEL**

*Losses of up to €400 million forecast for charity sector*

The Wheel, the national association of charities, community and voluntary organisations, and social enterprises, has welcomed the Government's announcement of a €40m package of supports for the charity sector that will comprise:

1. A €35 million Covid-19 Stability Fund which will provide a level of support to qualifying organisations who are most in need and have seen their trading and/or fundraising income drop significantly during the crisis; and
2. A €5m Government commitment to a Philanthropy Fund which will focus on supporting responses to the COVID-19 crisis that require innovative and adaptive solutions to existing and emerging challenges.

Deirdre Garvey, CEO of The Wheel, said that the announcement "is an essential lifeline" for the charity sector. "We welcome recognition by Government of the contribution that the sector is playing countrywide in the battle against COVID-19, and the role it will continue to play as our society emerges from the devastation of the pandemic," she added.

She noted that charities and community groups in every part of the country have strongly supported government initiatives during the current emergency and will continue to do so: "In tackling the COVID-19 crisis, charities are working alongside statutory bodies and agencies to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable in society, including older people, those with underlying medical conditions, homeless families and those requiring psychological, social and material supports."

“The unprecedented mobilization of volunteers and resources to provide these services is being made possible by the expertise and collective effort of our long-existing community, voluntary and charity sector. Surveys conducted by The Wheel over the last few weeks show the significantly increased demand for the work that our sector does in communities and within families. However, this has occurred at a time when charity fundraising and the possibility of earning income through service fees, for example, has been completely decimated,” she continued.

“Many charities have seen their income collapse, and a shortfall of up to €400 million in generated income is being forecast this year. The funds announced today will go some way to protecting the vital services provided by charities, social enterprises and community & voluntary groups at a time when they are most needed, and we will continue to work with government towards supporting the medium to long term needs of the sector. In this regard we note that Minister Ring recognises that significant challenges remain for community and voluntary groups and charities during this time and that government will continue to work closely with the sector in managing through these challenges over the coming months.”

“I would like to thank Minister Michael Ring and the Department of Rural and Community Development for their ongoing commitment to see a vibrant and sustainable community and voluntary sector in Ireland. The Wheel will continue to work closely with the Government and the Department of Rural and Community Development to further incorporate planning for our sector in ongoing and future strategies and funding mechanisms as we move beyond the peak of this crisis,” she concluded.

-ENDS-

**For more information or to arrange an interview contact Gert Ackermann on 086 176 9287 or Sarah Monaghan on 087 672 1154.**

#### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

- The Wheel is working with 13 charities and sector infrastructure bodies and this grouping has come together to campaign for a support package for charities, social enterprises and community & voluntary organisations. The group made formal submissions to Government on 6 and 15 April 2020.
- The group comprises: The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs<sup>1</sup>, Boardmatch Ireland, Carmichael, Charities Institute Ireland, Clann Credo, Disability Federation of Ireland, Dóchas, Irish Rural Link, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, National Forum of Family Resource Centres, National Youth Council of Ireland, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Volunteer Ireland. The Wheel

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<sup>1</sup> Eight NGOs working in the ageing sector in Ireland have formed The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs to address the key issues facing older people. These organisations are Active Retirement Ireland, Age Action, Age & Opportunity, ALONE, Alzheimer Society of Ireland, The Irish Hospice Foundation, the Irish Senior Citizen’s Parliament, and Third Age Foundation.

- According to the Register of Charities there are over 10,000 charities registered in Ireland, and a further 20,000 community and voluntary organisations in the wider nonprofit sector.
- Registered charities in Ireland employ 189,000 people and have an estimated annual turnover of around €14.5bn.
- The Wheel (in association with Irish Rural Link) is the national coordinator of the COVID-19 Community Outreach programme, which is a vital component of the Government's **Community Call** initiative rolled out in each local authority area.

## **ABOUT THE WHEEL**

The Wheel is Ireland's national association of charities, community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises. With over 1,750 members, it is the largest representative body for the charity, community, voluntary and social enterprise sector. Visit [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie) for more information. [Follow us on Twitter.](#)