



Chair's Annual Report 2024

2024 has truly been a defining year for FASD Ireland; one that brought both challenge and momentum, growth and learning. It was a year that tested our resilience as an organisation but also highlighted just how much progress can be achieved when people with shared passion and purpose work together.

On a personal note, 2024 was the year I was appointed Chair of the Advisory Board, and it has been both a privilege and an honour to take on this role. Chairing our first meeting was a milestone moment and a reminder of the incredible range of voices and expertise that now sit around the table, all united by one goal: improving understanding and support for individuals and families living with FASD in Ireland.

The early part of the year focused on connection and development. We engaged with a number of Deputies, Senators and Ministers including Timmy Dooley TD; Neasa Hourigan TD; Violet-Anne Wynne TD; Thomas Pringle TD; Clare Kerrane TD; Minister Hildegard Naughton, Minister Anne Rabbitte as well as An Tanaiste Micheal Martin, to keep FASD on the national agenda. We delivered online and in-person training, and developed and delivered website and social media updates. We continued to work tirelessly to offer support to hundreds of people looking for information/guidance through our FASD Hub for Ireland and the FASD Hub was established for Northern Ireland. Our FASD Hub has been described by many as a “life changer and life saver”.

We also grew our team, welcoming Cillian Flynn, Mike Taylor, Áine O'Halloran, and Áine Talty — each bringing energy and new ideas to the organisation.

The latter half of the year brought its share of challenges, most notably the HSE funding delay, which resulted in a temporary closure in August. Despite this setback, the team's professionalism, creativity, and resilience shone through. Shortly after, we made the strategic decision to end our partnership with Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, returning responsibility to the UK parent organisation so we could refocus entirely on our core mission.

Amidst the challenges, there were many highlights. We welcomed Rob O'Connell back part-time following his Erasmus placement, established the Advisory Board, and were delighted to appoint Professor Raja Mukherjee as our first Expert Medical Advisor, strengthening our clinical expertise and national credibility.

We also proudly joined the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and the European FASD Alliance (EUFASD), marking important steps in building our connections at both national and international levels.

Awareness of FASD reached new heights this year. For the first time, Leinster House, along with Galway City Council and Limerick City Council, was illuminated in red to mark World FASD Awareness Day — a powerful visual symbol of recognition. These moments were supported by increased media coverage, including interviews with Clare FM and Kilkenny community radio and an article in the Clare Champion Newspaper.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to my fellow Advisory Board members, who give their time, knowledge, and expertise so generously. Their insight, encouragement, and support have been invaluable to me in my role as Chair, and their shared commitment continues to strengthen the work and direction of FASD Ireland.

Through every challenge and achievement, our focus has remained the same: to prevent prenatal alcohol exposure, to promote access to timely diagnosis and intervention, and to provide meaningful support for those living with FASD.

I would also like to sincerely thank Tristan and the entire team for leading with such dedication and compassion, and to acknowledge our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters, without whom none of this progress would be possible.

As we look ahead to 2025, we do so with renewed determination and optimism. FASD Ireland will continue to drive awareness, influence policy, and strengthen supports, so that FASD is no longer hidden or misunderstood, but recognised, understood, and supported across every community in Ireland.

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Kate FitzHerbert
Chair of Advisory Board
FASD Ireland CLG

23rd October 2025