



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

Expressions of Interest in Chairperson of the Gaisce Council

Closing Date: 15:00 on Thursday 25th of April 2024

Expressions of Interest in Chairperson of the Gaisce Council

Location:	Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	1 immediate vacancy
Remuneration:	Nil. (Gaisce is not a state body and members of the Council sit in a voluntary capacity) Travel and Subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service Rates.
Time Requirements:	Est. 24 days per annum

1. Expressions of Interest in Chairperson of the Gaisce Council

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and Youth Affairs is inviting expressions of interest for the role of Chairperson of the Gaisce Council.

In line with Gaisce's Articles of Association, the Board shall consist of fifteen members, including two who shall be nominated by the President and one who shall be nominated by the Taoiseach.

A vacancy has arisen for a person of proven ability and experience whom shall be appointed by the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs¹.

2. The Gaisce Council

Gaisce – The President's Award is a company limited by guarantee (CRO: 251020) registered with the Charities Regulator (CRA: 20020903) and with a charity number (CHY: 8482). The organisation is governed by a board of directors: the Gaisce Council. Gaisce - The President's Award comes under the remit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs as, by its governing documents, the Minister appoints members to the Council.

3. Membership of Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all agencies under the aegis of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the body, subject to the objectives set by Government.

¹ pending change in Ministerial title

The Charities Governance Code provides a framework for the application of best practice in governance by charitable bodies. Board members of charitable bodies are responsible for governance and should make sure that the following governance principles are applied:

- Advancing its charitable purpose
- Behaving with integrity
- Leading people
- Exercising control
- Working effectively
- Being accountable and transparent

Gaisce – The President's Award recognises the importance of operating under high standards of corporate governance, and to this end, the Gaisce Council is committed to the standards outlined in the Charities Governance Code and is in compliance with the full range of corporate governance responsibilities. The role of all Council Members is guided by an internal Council handbook which was developed in line with best practice and the Charities Regulator's Code.

Under the guidelines of its handbook, the Gaisce Council is responsible for leading the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives as set out in its strategic plan, over-seeing the establishment of appropriate executive roles, monitoring and reviewing levels and systems of HR and financial resources and ensuring that Gaisce is fully accountable to its funders, stakeholders and the general public.

4. Background

Gaisce – The President's Award is Ireland's national youth award and is a self-development programme for young people aged 14-25. It is a direct challenge from the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, to all young people to dream big and realise their potential.

The programme is open to young people aged between 14 (under certain circumstances 13) and 25 years of age. Participation involves young people setting and achieving goals across three challenge areas - personal skill, community involvement and physical recreation - and undertaking a team adventure challenge. There are three levels of Award: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. At Gold level, an additional residential challenge is required.

Participants are supported through their Gaisce journey by their President's Award Leader (PAL), an adult mentor who supports, guides, and encourages a young person through their Award. Gaisce provides training and support to PALs to deliver Gaisce directly to young people they work or volunteer with. As a result of having a trained PAL, organisations become Gaisce Award Partners. In addition to responding to requests to become a PAL or Gaisce Award Partner, towards ensuring the programme is accessible to as many young people as possible, Gaisce takes a proactive approach to recruiting new PALs and Gaisce Award Partners.

Gaisce's impact is in the personal development of the many hundreds and thousands of young people who have participated in the programme since its inception in 1985, their impact on and in the communities and societies in which they live, and in the commitment and endeavour of the many thousands of President's Award Leaders and others who support and encourage young people to pursue and achieve a President's Award.

To date, more than 480,000 young people have registered for Gaisce and over 250,000 young people have achieved a Gaisce Award. 25,000 young people participate in the Gaisce Awards every year.

Gaisce's Vision: An Ireland where young people dream big and fulfil their potential.

Gaisce's Mission: To provide a positive youth development programme that encourages and guides young people so that their innate talents and abilities, sense of citizenship and social agency can be fully realised.

Gaisce is driven by the following **core values**:

- Empowerment;
- Inclusion and Equality;
- Respect; and
- Excellence.

The organisation has developed a 'values proposition' which sets out: the meaning of each value as it pertains to Gaisce; what the organisation aims to achieve with respect to each value; the approach to work to ensure alignment with each value; and a statement of practice, outlining how practice and behaviour reflects each value.

Gaisce has identified the following Strategic Priorities for the term 2022-2025:

PILLAR I: BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENT

Strategic Objectives:

EQUALITY OF ACCESS

1. Strengthen access points to Gaisce for all young people affected by disadvantage through a diversity and inclusion programme delivered in youth and community settings.
2. Strengthen access points to Gaisce for young people across all post primary and second chance education.
3. Strengthen the Joint Award Initiative partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to ensure any young person in Northern Ireland who wishes to achieve a Gaisce Award can do so.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

1. Continue Gaisce's unique role in encouraging young people, in the pursuit of their Award, to consider and question the world around them and the role they can play in creating a more just and equal society.

2. Incorporate into Gaisce the importance of nurturing young people's role as critical agents with infinite capacity for activism in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Position Gaisce as an essential programme for post-primary schools and centres of education to deliver the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

1. Support, recognise and reward President's Award Leaders (PALs) and Gaisce Award Partners, highlighting the centrality of their role in inspiring positive impact for young people.
2. Through strategic partnerships with civic society, continue to ensure that Gaisce is available to any young person who wishes to participate and explore opportunities for increased accessibility.

PILLAR II: TELL OUR STORY

Strategic Objectives

1. Significantly enhance the profile of Gaisce in Ireland with particular emphasis on the values of the organisation and which underpin the Gaisce Award programme.
2. Evidence the positive impact of participation in the Gaisce Awards and advocate and advance the importance of Positive Youth Development and formation of the self in interaction with others.
3. Engage with Gaisce participants and Gaisce Awardees, harnessing their insight, experience, voice and energy, encouraging them to tell their stories of unlocking the immense potential that is in all of us.

PILLAR III: EXCELLENCE IN WHAT WE DO

PARTICIPANTS

1. Encourage participants to live Gaisce's values in all aspects of their Award.
2. Become a better-informed youth organisation by listening and learning from young people through their involvement and participation in the organisation.

The Gaisce programme is delivered by almost 1,500 PALs working and volunteering in a variety of organisations across Ireland. There are three levels of award – Bronze, Silver and Gold. Since its inception in 1985, more than 250,000 Awards have been achieved across all levels and every county in Ireland and, today, near to 25,000 young people participate annually.

Gaisce – the President's Award was established under the patronage of Uachtarán na hÉireann by trust deed dated 28th March 1985. It was incorporated as a company limited by

guarantee and not having a share capital on 26 June 1996. It was granted Charitable Status on 30th March 1999. Gaisce came under the aegis of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on the establishment of the Department in 2011. As a limited company, Gaisce is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association (a Constitution is pending). Gaisce receives a core grant from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In 2022, the grant allocation was €826,402. Other sources of income include participant fees and statutory and philanthropic grants. Gaisce employs 18 staff, including the CEO.

5. Functions of the Council

The Articles of Association provide that there shall be 15 members of the Gaisce Council, appointed by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Two nominations are received from Uachtarán na hÉireann and a single nomination from An Taoiseach.

The Council is responsible for governance of Gaisce – The President's Award, setting its strategic direction and overseeing its implementation. A strategic plan for the period 2020-2025 has been approved.

6. Objective

The Chairperson will demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to Gaisce and youth development. They will hold the Council and CEO to account for Gaisce's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to Council, ensuring that each Council member fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation. The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the CEO and ensure that Council functions as a unit and works closely with CEO to achieve agreed objectives.

Principal Responsibilities of the Chairperson:

- Strategic leadership

- Provides leadership to Gaisce and its Council, ensuring maximum impact for its beneficiaries
- Ensures that Council members fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation
- Ensures Council operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for the organisation
- Ensures that Council is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks
- Ensures that Council fulfils its duties to ensure the sound financial health of the organisation, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

- Governance

- Ensures that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the organisation
- Develops the knowledge and capability of the Council
- Encourage positive change where appropriate and addresses and resolves any conflicts within Council
- Appraises the performance of Council and Council members on an annual basis

- Ensures Council maintains the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the organisation effectively, and which also reflects the wider population
- Works within agreed policies adopted by Gaisce

- External Relations

- Acts as an ambassador and spokesperson for the organisation and represents Gaisce at meetings and external functions
- Maintains close relationships with the office of the President and key members of the Government
- Facilitates change and addresses any potential conflict with external stakeholders

- Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chairs meetings of Council effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process, ensuring collective ownership of decisions
- Ensures Council is fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best interests (short/long term) of the organisation and
- Fosters, maintains and ensures that constructive relationships exist with and between Council members
- Works closely with the CEO to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Monitors that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

- Relationship with the CEO and the wider management team

- Establishes and builds a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the CEO
- Supports the CEO, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensures regular contact with the CEO and develops and maintains an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaises with the CEO to maintain an overview of the organisation's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Conducts an annual appraisal for the CEO, in consultation with other Council members
- Ensures that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.

Current sub-committees:

- Finance, Audit & Risk
- HR and Remuneration
- Governance

(In addition to working groups and taskforces that may be established on a time-limited basis with specific objectives from time to time, a standing working group is established which oversees Gaisce's relationship with the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation and the Joint Award Initiative (Gaisce's partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award UK which facilitates young people in Northern Ireland who fulfil the obligations of the Award at any level to choose their certification, including a Gaisce – The President's Award).

7. Person Specification

The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth invites applications from suitably qualified candidates with relevant youth development expertise for an immediate vacancy arising on the Council.

Candidates **must** demonstrate in their application evidence of:

Experience

- Successful track record of achievement through their career
- Significant experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within a results-oriented environment, having exposure to and involvement in a strategic planning process
- Proven track record of leadership and consensus building
- Experience of charity governance, working with or as part of a Board of Trustees, or other relevant experience chairing boards/committees
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders, making new contacts and developing relationships
- Strong track record of corporate governance and compliance experience

Personal Qualities

- Demonstrates a strong and visible passion and commitment to Gaisce and youth development
- Has personal gravitas to lead a significant national organisation
- Exhibits strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and is comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Demonstrates tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Has strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of Gaisce
- Has the ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment
- Has the ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and attending events out of office hours
- Has excellent communication and interpersonal skills, is tactful and diplomatic
- Has the ability to think creatively and a willingness to speak their mind
- Has the ability to respect confidences, be impartial and fair

Knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the youth and community sector and current issues affecting it
- Financial management expertise and a good working knowledge understanding of charity finance issues
- Analytical ability and good, independent judgement
- Good understanding of charity governance issues and the role of a Trustee (legal duties, responsibilities, liabilities and relationship with executive).

Desirable

- Should be available for regular meetings in Dublin as well as other key annual events such as the Gold Award Ceremony and PAL Appreciation Awards.
- Have a strong understanding of the Charities Regulator Governance Code.
- Uphold the values of Gaisce in relation to all aspects of the Chair function.

Statutory Requirements / excluded groups

Nominated members of Seanad Éireann or elected members of either House of the Oireachtas or of the European Parliament.

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any legal impediment or conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of a member of the Council. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

Candidates are suggested to refer to the provisions in relation to the role of a Board member within the Charities Governance Code 2018. Particular attention is drawn to the roles and responsibilities of Board Members under principals 2 and 5, namely 'Behaving with integrity' and 'Working effectively'.

In addition, Council has identified the following key competency areas

8. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Council are generally for a period of 3 years from the date of appointment with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term, subject to:

- The membership of any member of the Board may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Minister, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Minister receives the notice.
- Members of the Board shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office upon such terms and conditions as the Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Charities Governance Code
- A board member shall cease to be a member of the board if he or she is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or as a representative in the European Parliament, elected to the European Parliament, or becomes a member of a local authority.

9. Submitting your Expression of Interest

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of the Gaisce Council, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

Interested person should submit

- a Curriculum Vitae
- a cover letter (to include the reasons for seeking a position on the Gaisce council)

Expressions of interest may be submitted via email to youthaffairs@equality.gov.ie

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you do the following:

- 1. Ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Authority position(s) specified in this booklet, and*
- 2. That you fully answer any supplementary questions which are presented to you as part of our online application process.*

6. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to consider and assess the applications received. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
 - consideration of the written applications; and/or
 - meeting/conference call; and/or
 - referee checks; and/or
 - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate.
- Arrive at a shortlist of the most suitably qualified candidates (based on the information provided by the candidate) to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

7. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that

aspect of the process. Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

8. Data Protection Act 2018

If your application is assessed and you are considered to be suitable for appointment, your CV and cover letter (and any additional supplementary information requested as part of the application process) will be held by Gaisce. Gaisce will act as data controller of such data and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment. Unless you request withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.