



The Thrill Seekers!

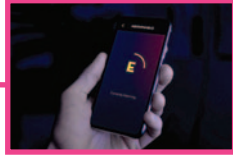
Descending from 18,000ft., NCBI service user Rita Corley and Skydive tandem master Roger Kileen.



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inSight

NCBI inSight

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Getting involved in advocacy

Mena Fitzpatrick is a trained advocate with the NCBI. She lives in Gorey, Co. Wexford with her guide dog Pepe and her friend Siobhan whom she met through work. She has had limited sight since birth. Her sight loss is as a result of a detached retina, and it has deteriorated over time.

“At thirteen, I learned Braille. I was coming to grips with the loss of more sight due to my detached retina. It was hard, but I overcame it.”

She attended UCD and has a degree in English and History. Mena then attended Roslyn Park, where she learned computer and other Business skills. With these skills, she got a job in AIB. Mena worked in AIB for nearly 12 years where she worked in Telesales, HR Administration and Property and Facilities Management.

“My favourite department that I worked in was HR Shared Services. I enjoyed dealing with staff and training my work colleagues on the Telephone and HR Policy.”

NCBI has provided Mena with much support, and she would highly recommend NCBI to others. In recent years she has attended a computer course in the Training Centre.

“I found the course at the Training Centre invaluable. I gained confidence after an extended period out of work.”

In March last year, she did a pre-employment course with the NCBI's Employment Advisor Denis Daly.



The courtyard of NCBI's Lochrann Training Centre, Wexford.

In her free time, Mena enjoys singing and attends singing lessons. She has also been going to the Lochrann Centre, Wexford, where she can socialise with other vision-impaired people.

The biggest challenges Mena faces are crossing the road and using public transport. She says that there are no audio signals on traffic lights between her house and the town. By becoming an advocate, Mena would like to engage with Wexford County Council and represent the needs of people who are blind and vision impaired.

Mena's main reason for getting involved with advocacy is to assist with campaigns that would dispel myths about sight loss amongst the general public. She is also very keen to see an increase in employment of people who are blind and vision impaired.

Becoming involved in advocacy with the NCBI has inspired Mena to go back to college. She will be studying Social Care in Carlow IT, Wexford Campus this coming year. She hopes that this will help with her advocacy work.

Tips for blind and vision impaired people in college

Every person who makes the transition from second level to third-level education has to get used to significant changes in their lives. To a certain extent, we are prepared for these sometimes scary changes throughout the latter parts of secondary school.

A solid system of support is fundamental for someone who is blind or vision impaired. As a vision-impaired person: I found that the supports I needed in school were given to me. I had always felt like I was being backed up by my parents, visiting teacher, my SNA's and my teachers. I found the change that I experienced when I went to college was drastic, but I managed to adapt, and I thoroughly enjoyed my three years in university.

Here are a few tips that I think are important to keep in mind when making the leap to college:

Don't hide

Embrace your disability; everybody is different in college. The more open you are about your needs and abilities when it comes to your sight loss, the more comfortable yourself and your fellow peers will feel. Things as simple as letting people know that you can't recognise faces or that you have trouble finding a particular seat in a lecture hall will make all of the difference.

Be brave

It's now your job to make the first move, no more hand-holding. The first thing you should do is contact the Access Office. Here you will find people to support you throughout your third level journey in any way they can. The Access office will help with a range of things such as assistive technology, extra tutoring and any other accommodations you need to make your



Aoife Watson reading ipad.

college experience as smooth as possible.

Another essential thing to do is to reach out to each of your lecturers. Send an email to each introducing yourself and stating your needs. 9/10 times they will be delighted to help in every way they can.

Carry on

Don't be discouraged if you receive that one bad response. If you can't find a lecture room, ask and try again. Trial and error is a large part of finding your feet. Navigating around a new place can be difficult at the best of times so don't stress about it.

Independence

Independence is vital for every single student in college. This can be terrifying when you enter an unfamiliar environment, coming from a smaller community or a supportive background.

Being an independent college student doesn't mean that you can't ask for help. Help is always there, and everyone needs it at some point. Don't be ashamed of it. You are doing well. You will do great.

Earcatch is coming to Ireland

People with sight loss in Ireland will soon be able to access audio description on their smartphone when they go to the cinema. Thanks to a new accessible free app called Earcatch.

Audio description makes films available to viewers who are blind and vision-impaired by adding in a verbal description in between the dialogue so that the viewer can follow what's happening on screen. Earcatch is going to be trialled in Ireland for the first time at the festive opening of the film *Abominable* on 12th October @ movies at Dundrum at 14:00. The app will also be available to try out at showings of the film in all cinemas throughout the country. Check out your local cinema to find out more.

From the moment a film is released, people who are blind and vision-impaired cannot access it fully. The reason is, only a handful of Irish cinemas have the facilities in place to offer audio description. Earcatch will change this. All the viewer needs is a smartphone and a headset. The audio description track for a film can be downloaded in advance of the screening. During the screening, you don't need an internet connection. As soon as you hit "play", a unique digital fingerprint is made of the ambient sound. Within a few seconds, Earcatch knows precisely which part of the film you are watching, and it will start playing the corresponding audio description automatically over your headphones. Earcatch also allows the user to fade the screen of their phone after initial synchronisation with the film.



Bartiméus Foundation, the sight loss organisation in The Netherlands, initiated this project a few years ago in partnership with Soundfocus, a post-production facility specialising in accessible media. Eveline Ferwerda, of the Bartiméus Foundation, spoke to inSight Magazine about the success of the project in The Netherlands said:

"Earcatch has already been rolled out across The Netherlands and Belgium covering 1,300+ screens. Over 20,000 people are now using the app in their local cinema so that they can experience films in more detail than ever before.

"People can use the app at any screening of a movie. There is no longer a need to go to a 'special' screening, they can go just like anyone else. We are very excited to branch out to other territories to give more people who are blind or visually impaired the full cinematic experience. The best thing about Earcatch is that you can use the app not only in the cinema. Earcatch will also be available at home with similar usage being available for TV, DVD/Blu-ray, and VOD".

Update on Electric Cars



Environmentally, it is clear, Electric Vehicles (EVs) are the way to go. However, in order, for these silent vehicles to be safe for vision impaired and blind people the installation of the Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System (AVAS) is necessary.

It is now mandatory that all new electric cars are fitted with sound devices (AVAS) for the protection of all pedestrians. This European Union rule came into action in July 2019. By 2021, all-electric and electric cars must be retrofitted with AVAS.

The minimum sound of AVAS at 20km/h is 56dB(A). The maximum sound is 75dB(A) which is comparable to a conventional vehicle. The sound will be activated when a vehicle is reversing or travelling below 20km/h.

The driver will have the ability to deactivate the noise until 2021 when a constant sound at low speeds will be mandatory for speeds up to 30km/h. NCBI believes that the minimum sound requirements need to be increased.

Although, there is a clear movement for improving the EV System for all road users, NCBI's Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns team will continue to lobby for improvements and adjustments in Electric Vehicle legislation.

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

Funding was secured from the HSE's Acute Hospitals Division to begin a process of providing targeted support in Eye Clinics across the Dublin area through the ECLO service. The aim of this service is to provide timely support to patients at the point of, or as close to diagnosis as possible. The service receives referrals from hospital outpatient department clinics, inpatients and day surgery patients. ECLOs represent all VISPA partners - NCBI, ChildVision, Irish Guide Dogs and Fighting Blindness. Each organisation has its own unique service offering, which the ECLO can highlight matching the needs of the patient.

Currently the service has two ECLOs: Elaine Crossan five days a week in the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and in the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital. Hilary Devlin is supporting Temple Street Children's University Hospital one day a week.

The ECLO meets with patients in the hospital setting. The key part of the ECLO role is to listen and signpost to appropriate services. Patients often have not had the opportunity to speak with someone in the clinic with regards to their concerns around their diagnosis, and the future. They may not have enough information about their eye condition or the treatment that is being offered. The patient may have experienced sudden traumatic sight loss or a slow gradual loss of sight. Quite often patients don't realise there are supports and services out there and they don't have to



ABOVE: Hilary Devlin with team in CHI Temple Street.



RIGHT: Elaine Crossan with team in RVEEH.

go it alone. The ECLO also has a key role in advocating on behalf of the patient and provides information and training to hospital staff, for example sighted guide training.

To date the ECLO service has received 225 patient and family referrals. There have been 61 Hospital staff ECLO presentations, and 28 staff have completed sighted guide training in the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear hospital. Feedback on the impact of the ECLO service to date has been very positive. One patient described the fear she used to feel, “I used to be afraid to sleep in case I woke up totally blind, now I feel more reassured” and “the ECLO encouraged me to go back to work, I

didn’t think I could do it”. In total, 84% of patients surveyed felt their emotional wellbeing has increased after having contact with the ECLO.

To celebrate the 100th referral from the ECLO service to NCBI on July 18th 2019 presentations were made in both Temple St Children’s Hospital and the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear hospitals. It was great to be able to highlight the success of the role and lovely to show appreciation to our two champions in both hospitals who had been very proactive in referring and advocating on behalf of the service.

Vision Sports are on a roll

In less than three months Vision Sports Ireland co-hosted the Ryder Cup of Blind Golf, the 37th multi-sport MayFest as well as being the chosen charity for the 33rd Maynooth-Galway Cycle.

For the Maynooth-Galway Cycle, 175 cyclists, including 40 tandem pilots and stokers, headed west from Maynooth in early April. Three days and 400km later they returned from Galway with €62,000 in their saddle bags.

Bernie Everard, leader of the campaign to designate Vision Sports as sole beneficiary of the Maynooth-Galway Cycle said, “It’s a game changer for Vision Sports. We’ll bring our message of health and well-being to 1,500 vision-impaired children. Classes with vision-impaired pupils can participate in multi-sport activity days. Armed with new ways to do old sports they can return to school and play together”.

Trinity College, where we tested the Inclusion Games concepts last year, was the venue for the 37th Annual MayFest. 150 vision-impaired people from all ages joined in 15 sports including, swimming, tennis, wrestling, dance, and tug of war.

On June 16th Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone TD opened the Vision Cup at Portmarnock Links, Dublin. Here the top blind golfers from the US/Canada challenged the Rest of the World Team.



Pictured at the award ceremony, L-R Joe Geraghty, Vision Sports, award winner Lottie Murray and her Mum, Minister Katharine Zappone, award winner Hanna Rylska-ciesieka and her parents and Paul McCormack, Vision Sports.

At this event, Minister Zappone presented the Vision Sports Ireland James Joyce Art and Essay Awards to Lottie Murray (11) and Hanna Rylska-ciesieka (10) respectively.

Then children and adults were tutored in blind golf by the world’s best at the Vision Sports Inclusion Games at Kinsealy, Dublin. They also tried out football, tandem cycling and athletics.

Back on course in Portmarnock the Rest of the World Team, after an early lead finished the day untouched, resulting in a victory.

Holding the Vision Cup high Rest of World Team captain and event director Paul McCormack said “This week Blind Golf has reached a brand-new level. We reached out



BELOW: Pictured at the award ceremony, L-R Chris Watts (stoker) and James Ryan (pilot)



to vision impaired people, we reached the world through CNN, BBC and RTE. We will now witness vision-impaired people of all ages take to many sports”.

Find out more about Vision Sports at www.visionsports.ie, [@visionsportsireland](https://www.facebook.com/visionsportsireland) (Facebook), [@visionsportsirl](https://twitter.com/visionsportsirl) (twitter). Contact **Alex** Phone: **085-8500193**, email alex@visionsports.ie .

Farewell to Sharon ShortCuts!

We said a final farewell to our EDCL Evening Class Tutor Sharon Lyons who has spent 10 years working within the National Training Centre as a tutor in Assistive Technology.



L-R: Sharon Lyons and Jodie McGrielle Training Services Manager.

When Sharon joined she worked Full Time within the NTC and her green fingered enthusiasm still remains today with the legacy of the Greenhouse and our home grown veg which students chop and cook in the Independent Living Skills sessions!

Sharon set up the EDCL evening class three years ago to give a flexible offer to those engaged in employment or further education. Since then, she has supported many students in achieving ECDL certification via manual examinations and the use of Assistive Softwares. Many students have gained their full award and this year Esosa Okoro was certified and his achievement recognised by the group.

Sharon and her husband Trev have great Entrepreneurial spirit and have set up their own business aptly named cordial ALT + TAB. From all at the NTC we wish Sharon the very best in her new venture.

National Training Centre

Graduation BBQ

On July 24th the Trainees gathered to reflect on the new skills and achievements they had made over the last 12 months and to celebrate the graduation of two of their peers from the Rehabilitation Training Programme.

Alistair Clews achieved his major award in General Learning QQI level one, he also achieved his full ECDL award. Although Alistair is exiting the programme he will return in September to tutor the Trainees in Music Sessions and to volunteer as a Peer Support mentor for our new programme aimed at supporting individuals with sight loss and providing them and their families with essential skills to enable and support self-management.

Eoin Sheehy exited to transition to the National Rehabilitation Hospital where he will continue to intensively work and progress his skillset and knowledge for the future. We wish both Trainees every happiness in their future endeavours!

Eamonn Gallagher also achieved his Major Award in General Learning (QQI Level One) and Jide Lawal, Kifu Mogabin, Patrick Morgan and Sherif Owoiya Awwal achieved components of their major awards.

The students decided this year to host a BBQ to showcase skills learnt within Rehabilitation Studies and to invite staff from



Graduates at the BBQ.

NCBI and family members to enjoy the culinary delights on offer. Luckily, the weather was kind and a great day was enjoyed by all! The graduation ceremony completed the end of another busy academic year in the NTC. We look forward to welcoming back old and new faces alike for the launch of our new academic calendar year in September.

Inclusion not Isolation

Iona Resource Centre

Engage

Enable

Empower

When you are having a tough time, feeling a bit low what do you do to make yourself feel better? Go and see your family? Meet with a friend for a coffee and a chat? Pop round to your neighbours for some company? Go for a walk or some retail therapy? Imagine that you are visually impaired. Live alone and do not feel safe to leave your home on your own. What do you do then?

The reality is loneliness can affect almost one in ten people in Ireland. Combine that

with having a visual impairment and this can exacerbate feelings of isolation.

Many people who have a visual impairment often feel socially restricted, as they may not feel confident enough to access public transport, go to the shops or go out to meet people. Your world suddenly becomes very small.

Services such as the NCBI Iona Resource Centre plays a vital role in enabling people to connect and make new friends. They are a hub for socialisation and development of friendships.

Support from qualified specialist staff is always available, which means that we can assist people in developing and progressing skills to enable people living with sight loss to be more independent, confident and live a fulfilling life.

We offer three specialist programmes; Skills4Stability, Skills4Life and Skills4Me ensuring that we cater for everyone's need from the ages of 18 – 100+years.

Sessions that service users can benefit from include IT and Assistive Technology, Gym Classes, Zumba, Pottery, Arts & Crafts, Beauty Therapy and many more. Our programmes promote the daily development of social skills and great friendships often form. David Kortkohun one of our service users of the Iona Resource Centre explains what the service means to him:

“Humans are not made in isolation, we are part of a larger community, which includes people from different backgrounds, life



Inclusion is key for L-R: Eamon Hurley and David Kortkohun.

experience and when we meet together we share these experiences with one another. It helps us to be strong and confident in our day to day activities. Coming to the Iona Resource Centre gives me a sense of happiness because I see my physical problems shared by other NCBI members. Therefore in the face of adversity we should not lose hope, we should be able to anchor and support each other in those challenges and make better use of our God given skills and talents. For your true power is only known in the face of life's greatest challenges.”

At the Iona Resource Centre we are here to provide assistance to anyone who is affected by sight loss. “Engage, Enable and Empower” forms our guiding principles and we are here to aid our service users achieve their goals and playing a valuable role in their local community.

If you would like to visit the Iona Resource Centre or would like more details of the service we offer, you can obtain more details via our Facebook Page or contact the Manager **Maggie Richardson** on **01 830 4014** or **086 606 3112** or via email: **Maggie.Richardson@ncbi.ie**

An unwavering zest for life

In this edition we feature two people with an unwavering zest for life, Rita Corley of Dublin and Tom Kennedy from Kilkenny. Here are their stories.

From cycling to the arctic circle to soaring freely at 18,000 ft inSight magazine spoke to two of NCBI's service users Rita Corley and Tom Kennedy who have never let anything stop them.

"This was my third time skydiving. I think I became braver after I lost my sight' Rita explains as she sits with us in the Iona Resource centre. 'It will be 30 years in October that I've been blind, it was the result of a car accident with a milk float. I wanted to mark the milestone by doing something special for my grandchildren. I have been involved with the National Council for the Blind from the time I lost my sight."

Rita was 46 when she lost her sight "to lose your sight overnight is not easy, with kids at home too. If I had a choice, I think I would have rather been born blind, because I wouldn't have known what it was like to see. I have a great family they all live nearby, great neighbours and friends too. I have eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, but I have never seen their faces and that is tough."

Rita has been heavily involved in fundraising for NCBI, doing many treks and trips over the years.



Rita Corley NCBI service user and fundraiser.

"Being involved in fundraising kept me very busy, and I didn't have time to get too depressed. Things at home were difficult, my mother lived with me and she found it very challenging to adapt to me being blind. The first trip I ever went on with NCBI was to Florida, and there were alligators in the river that we canoed up. My most enjoyable trip though was to South Africa. We climbed Table Mountain, we didn't think we were going to be able to do it as there were a couple of days that were too windy, but in the end, we did!"



Rita Corley and Roger Kileen on terra firma.

“I loved the skiing trip, a lovely couple who were very good to me on this trip made skiing possible. We had a long stick and would ski together, holding it. As the trip went on, I did become braver and then skied by myself. On the last day, I went right down the mountain, and as I went down I fell, but when I got back up, I went back to the top and did it again. It was a wonderful experience.”

“I fundraise because NCBI has been very good to me, and I like to think that I am helping the young people as well as my own age group, the seniors. There is so much potential for younger people with sight loss now with the training provided, they have a

chance to gain the skills because of NCBI and this means they have a better chance of going to college and getting a job.”

“I enjoy coming to the Iona Centre just chatting with the different groups but it has been hard too when so many of my friends here have passed away. I do classes like exercise to music to keep me fit, as I find it hard now to go out walking with the cane. I have become nervous that if I fell, someone would have to look after me, so here I can exercise safely.”

Rita is a truly inspiring and humbling 75-year-old lady as her modesty about her achievements is overwhelming.

Tom Kennedy's Tale

This is also true for Mr. Tom Kennedy from Kilkenny; “I lost my eyesight in a car accident when I was 19”, Tom, now 60 tells inSight magazine. “To be honest, I treat my blindness as a nuisance more than a disability. It is very frustrating even after all of these years, but when you have seen once, you never forget it.”

Tom's energy and drive to undertake extremely adventurous trips is breath-taking. His latest trip in June 2019 saw him do a 4,500km cycle over 35 days from Kilkenny to the top of Norway.

“I did this to mark turning 60 in February. I rounded up a crew of friends and colleagues; I had six different pilots who cycled on average about 900km each with me.

Continued on page 14.

Continued from page 13.

For the first leg of the trip, I cycled from Kilkenny to Rosslare getting the ferry from Rosslare to Fishguard in Wales and then cycling to Dover. The ship brought us from Dover to Calais in France, and then we rode up to Dunkirk. We cycled through Belgium and into Amsterdam, where I met my second pilot.”

Tom’s energy and excitement about the trip is palpable as he recalls cycling through Holland, Germany, Denmark and then eventually on to Sweden which took 12 days to get through. He headed into Finland, passing through places like Lapland.

“Cycling on roads that reindeer were on was so enjoyable. It was a great buzz for me. Then just before we crossed into Finland, we went through the Arctic Circle. There is a big sign saying Welcome to the Arctic Circle, and although I still had the rest of the trip, getting there was something I will never forget, it was definitely a highlight”.

“To get to the finish at the North Cape was just fantastic. It is the most Northerly point on the European landmass. I am probably the first blind Irish man to get there. If you ask me what the downside to my trip was, it would be that I could hear the mosquitos flying around and I knew there were reindeer on the road because I could smell them, but it really would have been nice to be able to see them.”

This didn’t dampen Tom’s spirits, though. Tom, who works for Kilkenny County



Tom Kennedy raises the tandem above his head at the North Cape.



Tom Kennedy and tandem pilot Jim Fitzpatrick.

Council, explains “this trip allowed me to meet people with different experiences and backgrounds. I am on a natural high from it. I am a positive person. The way I look at life is that it is just a journey for us all.”

Both Rita and Tom have benefitted from the services provided by NCBI and are a true inspiration.

50th Wedding

Anniversary celebrations

A huge congratulations to Sean and Eilish Egan, from Ballisodare Co. Sligo! They recently celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary and very kindly requested donations in lieu of gifts from all their family and friends. As a result, an amazing €460 was raised for NCBI, for which we are most grateful. Their son, Thomas Egan, is also a volunteer, so NCBI is definitely a charity the family clearly hold close to their hearts. Thank You Very Much!



Thanks to Mayo University Hospital

Many thanks to the staff of Mayo University Hospital for choosing NCBI to be their charity of choice. They generously raised €2500 through a staff bake/cake sale in the foyer of the hospital and they also hosted a raffle.

The children pictured in the photo actually donated money they collected from participating in 'The Wren' on St. Stephen's Day. They went door-to-door singing and playing the ukulele for their family, friends and neighbours. This donation is being spent on NCBI Children's Service in Mayo.



Catherine Donohoe, (General Manager MUH), Claudia Oliveira (fundraising committee), Colleen Clarke (CRW, NCBI Mayo), Oran Cloherty, Clodagh Quinn, Leah Cloherty, Monica Voiginer (fundraising committee), Mary O'Donnell (fundraising committee).

NCBI World Sight Day takes place on 10th October!



We're delighted to launch NCBI World Sight Day, our new national campaign promoting awareness of sight loss and raising vital funds to transform opportunities for people with sight loss. This annual day focuses global attention on blindness and vision impairment and we'll be rolling out a national informative campaign to tie-in with this. This World Sight Day show your support in any of the following ways:

- Text VISION to 50300 to donate €4
- Pick up free 'Protect Your Sight' cards from any of our shops and share the tips!
- Sell tickets for our World Sight Day national draw
- Visit www.ncbi.ie to make an online donation
- Take part in our Silver Selfies competition:
(visit www.ncbi.ie for more info!)

For more information about any of the above contact **Aileen** on (01) 882 1973 or aileen.moon@ncbi.ie

Tesco Bag Pack

Thank you once again to all who participated in our NCBI – Tesco Bag Pack on Saturday 27th April, 2019 from which €28,097 was raised.

We now have the opportunity to do it all over again on Saturday 28th September, 2019. We can make this Bigger and Better than the April figure — but we need your help!

You can get involved —volunteer your time from as little as two to four hours on the day; ask family and or friends to join in and make it a FUN DAY to raise vital funds for NCBI.

If you think you can assist, please do not hesitate to contact Angela Levins at: angela.levins@ncbi.ie or 01 8307033.

Your time is valuable and we value your time!

NCBI officially opens its Drogheda store



RTÉ Sports Presenter, Darragh Maloney cuts the ribbon to officially open NCBI's Drogheda store.

In July, NCBI officially opened its Drogheda store with the help of RTE Sports Presenter, Darragh Maloney.

NCBI now has over 110 shops across the country and continues to be the second largest charity shop chain in the country. The growth of our stores and subsequent increased profits provide vital funds for our services to over 6,000 people each year.

But by supporting our shops, customers not only generate funds for our services but also support the drive for more environmentally

friendly and sustainable fashion and furniture. Like our other stores, the Drogheda shop sells quality ladies, gents and children's clothing as well as an extensive range of furniture. All donations are gratefully received. Furniture collection can also be arranged.

Also check out our dedicated retail website www.retail.ncbi.ie allowing customers to see the breadth of stock, ranging from specialists bridal shops, dedicated vintage departments and details on where our shops are located.

Sustainable Fashion

There has been a rapid growth in public awareness around the dangers of “fast” fashion and fashion in general. We have seen Burberry burn €38,000,000 worth of good stock rather than diminish their brand by discounting it. These actions by high end and high street retailers have led to legislative focus on how the textile and fashion industry operates.

The amount of clothes bought in the EU per person has increased by 40% in just a few decades, driven by a fall in prices and the increased speed with which fashion is delivered to consumers. Clothing accounts for between 2% and 10% of the environmental impact of EU consumption. This impact is often felt in third world countries, as most production takes place abroad.

The production of raw materials, spinning them into fibres, weaving fabrics and dyeing require enormous amounts of water and chemicals, including pesticides for growing raw materials such as cotton. Consumer use also has a significant environmental footprint due to the water, energy and chemicals used in washing, tumble drying and ironing, as well as to microplastics shed into the environment. Less than half of used clothes are collected for reuse or recycling when they are no longer needed. Only 1 % of these are recycled into new garments since technologies that would enable recycling clothes into virgin or new fibres are only starting to emerge.

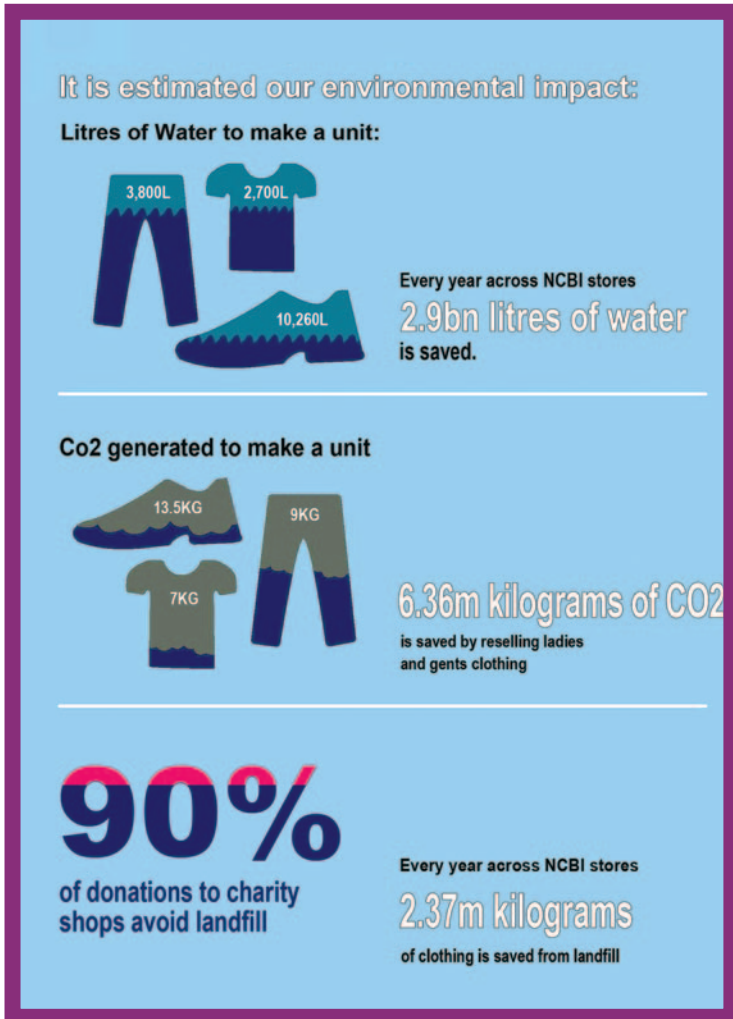
Various ways to address these issues have



been proposed. These include developing new business models for clothing rental and designing products in a way that would make reuse and recycling easier (circular fashion). By convincing consumers to buy fewer clothes of better quality (slow fashion), and generally steering consumer behaviour towards choosing more sustainable options.

In 2018, the EU adopted a circular economy package that will, at the insistence of the European Parliament, for the first time ensure that textiles are collected separately in all Member States, by 2025 at the latest. The European Parliament has for years advocated the use of ecological and sustainable raw materials and the reuse and recycling of clothing.

Charity Retail, therefore, is at the heart of changing how we think about fashion and how we think about charity retail and reuse. NCBI has invested heavily in expanding our chain of charity shops across the country and also improving the look and feel of the 114 shops that we operate. Following on from innovation in London with shops like TR Aid bringing the issue of sustainable



fashion and charity retailing to the fore in their branding.

Even the London High-End Department Store Harrods opened a Pop Up Charity Shop.

NCBI is, therefore, at the forefront of what sustainable fashion means in Ireland. We haven't, until recently, spoken about how good our 'green' credentials are, but the figures above show it is good for the economy and good for NCBI. These credentials also show that it is good for the planet to buy in your local NCBI shop. So let's keep donating, stop land filling and start buying pre-loved clothes.

Call for nominations for NCBI's first community of interest panel

In the interests of being more open, responsive and involving people experiencing sight loss in the work of the organisation, the National Council for the Blind (NCBI) are setting up a Community of Interest Panel – from which individuals could be placed onto the NCBI Board and / or Committees.

Nominations for the panel is open to adults who are vision impaired or blind, or parents / guardians of children who are vision impaired or blind.

Nominations are being sought from a variety of sources, including:-

- The general public.
- Those who have gone through our Advocacy training.
- Service Users.
- Those aligned to NCBI, including those who have volunteered.
- Volunteering Ireland and similar volunteer organisation.

Aligned to best practice, the term for participation on the panel would be limited to three years. There will also be a selection procedure before being placed on the Board and / or Committees. This would involve not relying solely on the person being a member of our community of interest, but we would also seek some level of interest from them in the board that they may serve on, and some alignment with the mission and plans of NCBI.

For further information or to register your interest to join the panel, please contact:

Kevin Kelly, Head of Advocacy —
kevin.kelly@ncbi.ie or 01 830 7033

My Dad's Blind

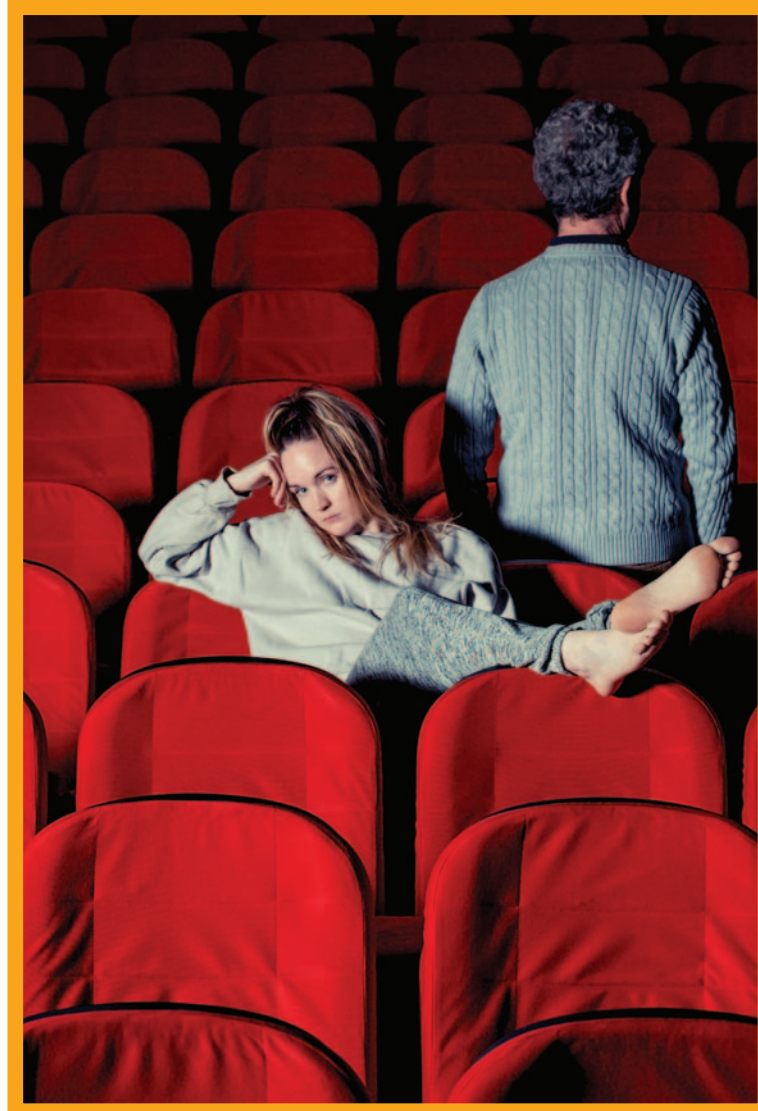
“My Dad’s Blind”, winner of Best Production at the Dublin Fringe 2018, is embarking on a nationwide Irish tour in September 2019! — Writer and actor Anna Sheils-McNamee reveals what’s in store.

Growing up, people would often tell me my Dad’s amazing! He’s not, he’s just blind. I wrote My Dad’s Blind in response to this particular reaction. I wanted to challenge people’s perceptions around disability and push audiences to challenge their own ideas around blindness, especially infantilism.

The show is fiction, but it’s inspired by my family’s real-life experiences. Included in the show are real audio recordings I did with my Dad and family documenting their experiences of living with blindness. My family have a dark sense of humour, and we were brought up to have a laugh with Dad being blind and to never take it too seriously. To myself, my brother and sister, blindness was just another chore we had to deal with. Dad would often come home to school bags and shoes lying in the hallway, walk into them and start shouting:

“You do know I’m blind”, we just ignored him, to us he was just grumpy, boring old Dad giving out about us not cleaning the house enough.

Dad has RP (retinitis pigmentosa) and lost his sight over 20 years. There were a lot of awkward and ridiculous things that happened as a result of Dad losing his sight. A lot of these stories are included in the show. Once when my sister was six, she asked a friend how they were getting



somewhere. They said their Dad was driving them and she wondered how this could be the case, “Dad’s don’t drive”. However, the blindness in the show acts as a catalyst to tell a father, daughter relationship story.

We premiered My Dad’s Blind at Dublin Fringe last year. We discovered through working with NCBI and Arts and Disability Ireland that one of the main reasons people with visual impairment go to the theatre is

Aniridia Day

because audio description is available. We have audio description throughout the tour, we're grateful to Fighting Blindness for sponsoring this. According to the 2016 census, over 54,000 people in Ireland are blind or visually impaired. Most of the shows that tour Ireland, do not offer audio description. I find this shocking that more theatres and touring companies don't advertise this type of access, especially given the box office advantages in getting that audience to see shows.

In this PC obsessed world, it's important that we can feel free to express what we think even if the majority disagrees. I hope My Dad's Blind will push people, with and without a disability, beyond their fear and discomfort of saying the wrong thing and into a place of discussion and openness.

Tour Dates as follows:

- 3rd – 7th September – Civic Theatre, Tallaght, Dublin 24
- 11th September – Town Hall Theatre, Galway
- 12th September – VISUAL, Carlow
- 18th September – Ballina Arts Centre, Co Mayo
- 19th September – Wexford Arts Centre
- 20th September – Ramor, Virginia, Co Cavan
- 24th September – glór, Ennis, Co Clare
- 26th September – Watergate, Kilkenny
- 28th September – An Grainan, Letterkenny, Co Donegal

Please contact your local theatre to request Audio Description if required.

Well done to Eleanor Martha Burke, Founder of the Aniridia Network Ireland for highlighting Aniridia Day with the Lord Mayor Paul McAuliffe on June 21st.

Aniridia is a rare genetic disorder, present from birth, that causes lack of irises (the colour) in the eyes. Without the iris to block out bright lights, people with Aniridia find glare and sunshine debilitating, even painful.



Pictured outside the Mansion House, Eleanor Martha Burke and Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe.

Sunshine Pottery Group Carlow



Carlow service users with crafts teachers.

NCBI Carlow wish to thank the local VEC for their continuing funding and support, which enables people who are blind or vision-impaired to try their hand at different activities. There is a wide variety to choose from. Over the years in Carlow we have tried a lot of things: from learning a new language to making your own homemade facials, expression in art, using acrylics and different mediums, to cooking or music therapy.

This year, however, the unanimous request was: “Can we get Jayne back to do more pottery?” Jayne is a fully qualified arts and crafts teacher and travels to various locations. She specialises in working with all different groups, including children.

The group had seven service users attending. Well done to all the artistic people who took part and had great fun amongst themselves. They made new friends, and some had never tried any kind of pottery before but with a gentle nudge of encouragement, they gave it a go, the last word was theirs — “when is the next class going to be?”

— **Facilitator Jayne Foley.**

The Amazon DOT



A smaller version of the original Amazon Echo, the Echo Dot is a voice-controlled smart speaker that uses the now-familiar Alexa to carry out a broad range of activities.

This device, at its basic level, can respond to commands such as “What is the weather like today?” “Spell ubiquitous”, “Find me an omelette recipe” to the smart home commands such as “Turn on the sitting room lights”, “Adjust the thermostat and much more.”

This small device (about the size of an ice hockey puck) needs to be plugged into the mains and set up through the Alexa app before it can work. It costs around €50.00.

If you and a family member who live a distance apart and both have an Echo Dot, then you can enable/use the ‘drop-in’ feature so that you can effectively have an intercom set up between the devices.

Both parties must consent for the ‘drop-in’ feature to work as this could potentially be used as an eavesdropping function when enabled!

Audio description training for museum and gallery staff



In February 2019 Arts & Disability Ireland organised two days of audio description training with Anne Hornsby of Mind's Eye Description. Anne is the pioneer of audio description in the UK and has three decades of audio description experience.

The training gave gallery and museum staff the skills and confidence to deliver audio-described experiences for visitors with visual impairments. They learned how to describe 2D, 3D, film works and to provide audio described tours. They took part in Disability Equality Training delivered by Executive Director Pádraig Naughton; with Blind Awareness and Etiquette Training by Anne Hornsby. This gave everyone the tools to provide high quality and thought through experiences for their visitors with visual impairments from beginning to end. Anne even worked with participants on the quality of their voice as they deliver live and recorded descriptions!

Our partners, the Butler Gallery, very kindly hosted this training in their current home at Kilkenny Castle. This was a perfect environment to study the best way to deliver tours as Butler Gallery's Permanent Collection provided us with a selection of incredible artworks to describe. We also had a visit to the Spitting Image exhibition by Eva O'Leary, in their then gallery space. Working with actual artworks while learning about audio description was incredibly valuable. It was a treat for people, passionate about art to get up close and personal with works by, some of our favourite Irish artists like Grace Henry, Evie Hone, Brian Maguire and Janet Mullarney.

After the initial two days of training, the participants were tasked with delivering one audio-described experience for visitors with visual impairments, within six months.

The participants also organised and hosted meetups to practice and share their experiences of offering audio described tours. Jessica O'Donnell hosted the first meetup in March at The Hugh Lane Gallery. Kate Drinane hosted the second in May at the National Gallery of Ireland and Jenny Papassotiriou hosted the third in June at Dublin Castle. Being able to check in with one another and problem-solve was a real bonus.

Anne Hornsby travelled back to Dublin for a follow up. The meetup was hosted by Leah Hilliard and the National College of Art and Design.

Throughout the training, we were lucky to have our audio describers Bríd Ní Ghrúagáin and Máirín Harte pitch in with their invaluable experience. A big thank you to those who gave their time to and supported this training! Everyone who participated is keen to put their new skills to use.

If you know anyone who would be interested in audio described tours, at any of these galleries or museums, do get in touch with the participants: Aideen Quirke – Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Bairbre-Ann Harkin – IMMA and DLR Lexicon Gallery, Dublin, Clair O'Brien – Galway Arts Centre, Fala Buggy – Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, Jenny Papassotiriou – Dublin Castle.

Foundation's Calendar of Events 2019

23 JUN		NCBI Des Cullen Classic & Vintage Car Show, Sunday 23rd June	
6 SEPT		<p>NCBI Cycle of Light Friday 6th September</p> 	
7 SEPT	<p>Dublin Awareness Walk Saturday 7th September</p>		
15 SEPT		<p>Holmpatrick & Granard Cup, The All-Ireland Final, Sunday 15th September, Balbriggan Golf Club</p>  	
15-21 SEPT		<p>NCBI Camino Walk Sunday 15th to Saturday 21st September</p>	
28 SEPT	<p>Tesco Bag Pack Saturday 28th September</p>		
6 OCT	<p>Trip to TIPP Sunday 6th October</p>		
DEC		<p>NCBI Christmas Hampers, Cards and Crackers</p>	
2019		<p>Sky Dive 4 Sight Loss Ongoing/ All year round</p>	

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