

CHAIRPERSON & CEO'S ANNUAL REPORT

It was in the midst of a global pandemic and lockdown that the British government cynically introduced its Command Paper on how not to address the past.

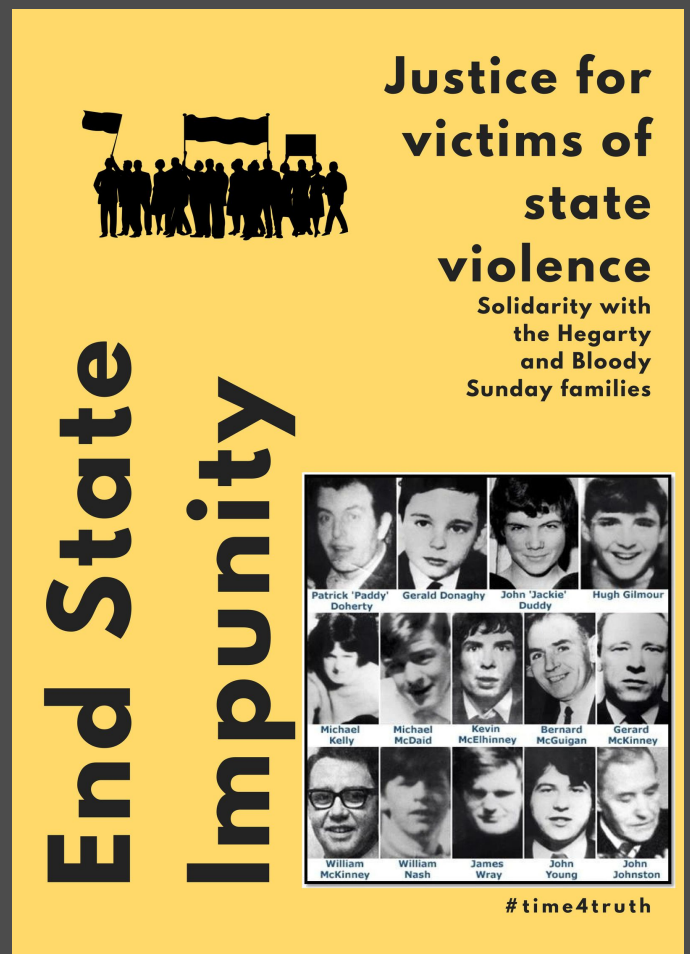
This initially meant that there were no visible manifestations of mass protests, rallies and gatherings to express opposition to a set of proposals that would effectively end all aspects of investigating killings, maimings, even codified violations such as torture, and holding to account the perpetrators.

Generally referred to and accepted as an amnesty by all other than the British government, these proposals have absolutely no community or political support whatsoever in Ireland or internationally.

Like society more generally victims and survivors began to face the everyday challenges of coping and adapting to living with a new and deadly disease. However, they now face additional challenges in these proposals, which for them are as equally important and defining as the pandemic in terms of how the killing of a loved one overshadowed their lives from the very day, hour and moment they were taken. These experiences were sharpened by a total absence of investigation and accountability. Victims and survivors lived throughout the conflict with administrative impunity, not least when the State was involved in killings.

Yet hope remained as the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) had at its core the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the form of Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). This provided new opportunities for families long denied justice.

Along with activism and the use of law, in the application of the ECHR and in taking cases to Strasbourg, positive results began to emerge despite a coordinated fight back from British officialdom. This is precisely why these new proposals were introduced.



As the British government pulls the shutter down on the rule of law, justice, accountability and rights, the chances of putting light and scrutiny on past violations becomes almost impossible.

In doing so, Boris Johnston and his government are prepared to flout domestic and international law. Most alarmingly they are prepared to undermine the very foundation of the GFA in respect to equality, rights, and due process. It is an unparalleled act of political vandalism on the GFA and unprecedented in its boldness in denying rights and justice. It's akin to the actions of dictators and despot regimes.

In response to, and over the past year, the organisation has sought to support and empower families to counter the fact that the pandemic prevented them from taking to the streets.

The organisation coordinated 3,500 signatures from relatives who had a loved one killed in the conflict in an open letter to both governments calling for the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement (SHA) on legacy. That letter, with all the signatories, was carried across two full pages in the Irish News, Andersonstown News and the Irish Echo in New York.

The organisation held scores of webinar and zoom meetings involving victims and survivors with government across these islands, political parties, criminal justice agencies, international human rights groups, and political representatives in the US lobbying against the UK amnesty proposals. Our "never giving up" campaign has also demonstrated how we've adapted and provided a voice to families and survivors.

Scores of videos were also produced and posted online and when restrictions eased smaller groups of relatives held vigils and protests within the guidelines.

The organisation supported relatives to take part in an imaginative and unique street theatre delivering a black coffin symbolising a requiem for truth, justice, and the rule of law to the British government's seat of power in Ireland. This was reported on globally on television and in over 20 newspapers.

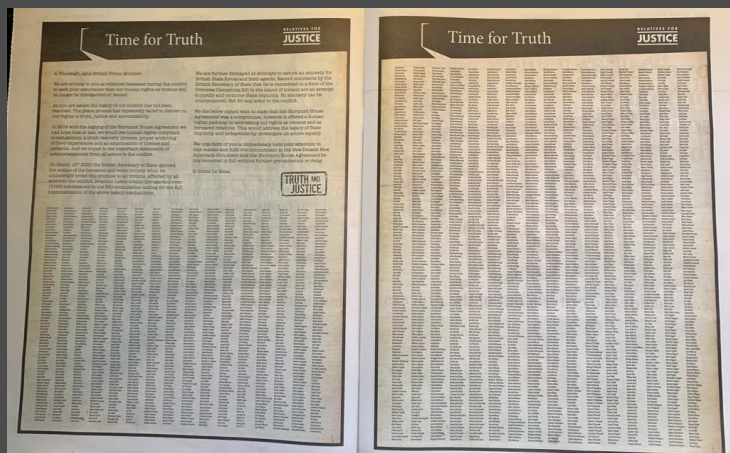


In this past week these organisational efforts have produced one of the most significant international interventions with 36 members of the US Congress signing an open letter to Boris Johnston criticising him and calling on his government to scrap its amnesty plans.

These follow equally damning criticisms from the UN and the Committee of Ministers to the Council of Europe to which the organisation has made submissions and interventions.

Strategic litigation also remains a key feature of the organisation's work. Our involvement in supporting a family in being granted leave and a substantive hearing to challenge the British government's failure to implement the previous legacy agreement (SHA) by way of an expert affidavit with relevant information pivotal to the case was cited by the judge. The organisation also provided expert testimony in a key civil action in which the applicants are supported. The organisation also continues to regularly be involved in ongoing trials, hearings and inquests.

We would like to thank all of our US supporters. In particular our colleagues in the AOH/LAOH for their steadfast support throughout the year and collaborative work in securing several Senate and Congressional resolutions and sign-on letters supporting families, human rights and justice.



The organisation's therapeutic teams moved online providing essential support carrying out clinical assessments, delivering counselling, and a full range of complementary therapies and self-care work. This support remains pivotal in our unique model of holistic support to victims and survivors.

Additionally the online self-care September has seen a huge uptake also and along with a series of excellent online activities has ensured that isolation and loneliness are reduced for those we support given the challenges they face. The overall organisational connectedness with members and delivery of support services has actually increased and the learning and reliance on online work has demonstrated these benefits.

One of the key challenges of the reported period has been the payment scheme for the permanently injured. As one of the main organisations supporting applicants we took on four new staff and designated our Ardoyne office as the main hub for this work with new communications and IT systems.

The organisation continues to raise key concerns around eligibility to the scheme in terms of exclusions. These relate largely to the bereaved and those who have political convictions. Questions also exist around capacity to deliver overall in a timely fashion and not least concerning the psychological injured. We also continue to raise the need for ongoing application of a gender lens to the harms experienced by women.

The organisation has coped well with the challenges to date with great professionalism and dedication and are prepared for the work and challenges ahead.

In conclusion we'd like to thank our funders, outgoing Board of Directors, staff and volunteers.

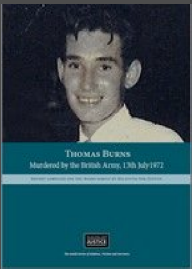
Chairperson, Bill Rolston
CEO, Mark Thompson





CASEWORK, ADVOCACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

It has been a busy year for the casework team, notwithstanding the fact that we have all worked from home for all of it. A major breakthrough occurred in February when the new Attorney General, Brenda King, ordered a new inquest to be held into the killing overnight from 3rd to 4th February, 1973, of Jim McCann, Jim Sloan, Anthony Campbell, John Loughran, Brendan Maguire and Ambrose Hardy, collectively known as of the New Lodge 6. A community inquiry in 2002 had raised many concerns about the actions of the British army that night and confirmed suspicions that all six men were shot in cold blood as a means of provoking the IRA into a response.



The ordering by the AG of a new inquest was on foot of submissions made by RFJ under s. 14 of the Coroners Act (NI) 1959. An initial submission in 2017 was considered by then AG, John Larkin. His view was that, given the prima facie evidence that criminal offences, up to and including murder, may have been committed by British army personnel that night, a police investigation was the correct first step. Such a criminal investigation however would have to be triggered by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

It took the DPP nearly three years to decide that, as these deaths were already on the case file of the Legacy Investigation Branch of the PSNI, they should simply take their turn in the queue. On foot of this decision, we made further submissions to the AG and this led to her ordering a new inquest, a very welcome and significant success. Of course, the inquest falls under threat of this disgraceful Conservative government's plan to ban accountability for state agents (military, paramilitary and informants) through its proposed amnesty for legacy cases.

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 16, 2021

His Excellency Boris Johnson, MP
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, United Kingdom
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister Johnson,

As Members of Congress who have continued to be involved in the effort to bring peace and reconciliation to the island of Ireland throughout our time in the House of Representatives, we believe it would be a serious mistake for the British government to renege on its commitment to the Stormont House Agreement. We represent districts with large Irish American populations, and many of our constituents have expressed grave concern over these new legacy proposals that would lead to major setbacks in the search for justice and reconciliation.

When the British and Irish governments, along with Northern Irish political parties, published the Stormont House Agreement on December 23, 2014, they pledged to create four new legacy bodies. The goal of these bodies was to deliver justice to the bereaved of the conflict by providing human rights compliant investigations under the rule of law. Of critical importance to the agreement was the formation of the Historical Investigations Unit, which was a legacy body established to investigate lingering and controversial killings that took place during the Troubles, including those committed by British state forces.

In January 2020, over five years after conditions were originally laid out, the U.K. government finally pledged to introduce Parliamentary legislation to set up the legacy bodies. Despite this, progress into these investigations has essentially remained stagnant while nearly 1,700 conflict-related cases await investigation. Had the Historical Investigations Unit been provided with the resources and attention it was promised, more substantial progress might have been achieved over the past several years.

We are disappointed to learn that instead of taking constructive steps to fulfill these promises, British Parliament plans to introduce new legislation that would modify Stormont House Agreement legacy laws and institute a ban on legacy inquests and prosecution of former soldiers who served in Northern Ireland during the conflict. To be clear, we strongly disapprove of these proposals. We believe that they would not only prevent a pathway to justice, but that they would also strip these families of their legal rights protected under European Law and the Good Friday Agreement.

The issue of legacy killings spans across generations, and any continued deprival of justice will only further deepen the wound that this history has on Britain and Ireland. We are concerned that these proposed legacy laws would strain the British-Irish relationship and cement widespread feelings that justice is again being denied. There is no doubt that the difficult and troubling

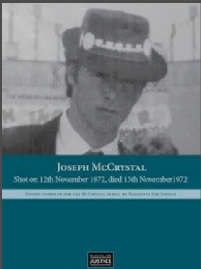
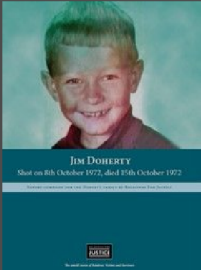
Page 2

legacy of the past must be addressed, and we as Members of Congress will continue to advocate on this issue until good faith action is taken and progress is made.

These legacy proposals require genuine reconsideration. Delivering answers for the bereaved families has been a longstanding priority for the Irish American community and those interested in global peace. We will continue to listen to these families as they await long overdue answers.

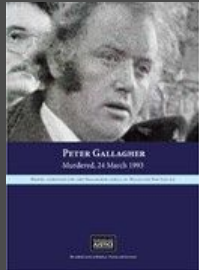
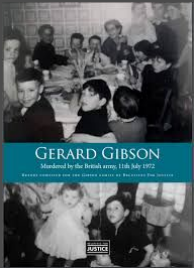
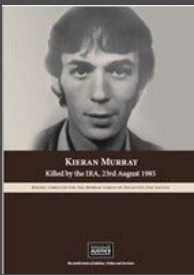
We urge you to reexamine these proposals, reverse the decision, and reaffirm your commitment to the Stormont House Agreement.

Sincerely,



Flying in the face of all civilized international legal opinion, this British government seeks now to block investigations into conflict-related deaths, but also to prevent civil cases against the state and inquests into such cases as well. These are truly the actions of the worst human rights violating autocrats, a rogue state.

It is for these reasons that our work providing up to date information to international human rights mechanisms is so important. Over the last year we have made submissions to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the UN Committee on Human Rights, the UN's Human Rights Council and the UN Independent Rapporteur on Truth, Justice, Reparations and Guarantees of Non-recurrence. All these bodies have agreed with our perspective and condemned the British government's proposals.



In the meantime, we continue to draft and submit complaints to the Police Ombudsman and make submissions to the AG in relation to other cases. We also liaise with the LIB in respect of seeking information where families so request. We have also been processing a number of inquest files that have, after delays of many years, been released to families. Finally, we have been compiling family reports which collate information about the case along with a profile of the deceased victim which seeks to develop a memorial to the loved family member, rather than simply their status as a victim of the conflict.

Mike Ritchie, Paul Butler, Mary McCallan, Pat Conway and Irati Oleaga

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY



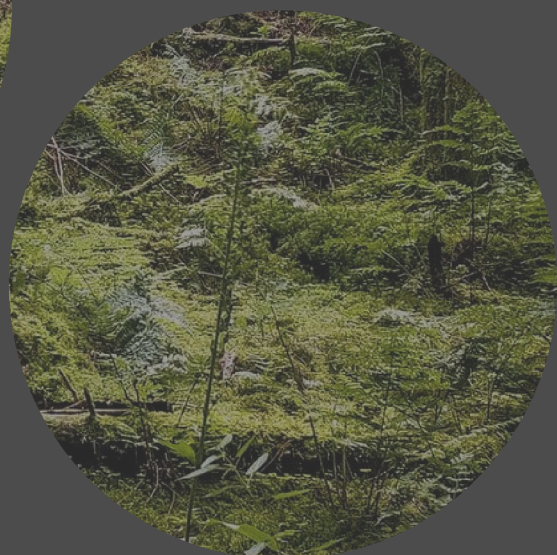
The last 18 months the CT team worked tirelessly to sustain the wellbeing of RFJ members, whilst not being able to see them in a face-to-face setting. Because of the prolonged lock down, members were experiencing heightened anxiety issues alongside their many normal concerns with a noticeable increase in emotional, physical, and mental health problems. Understandably, members were finding it difficult to cope with the pandemic and combined with life challenges such as inquiries and welfare issues we felt it was important to coordinate a remote complementary therapy support system that would ensure members remained connected throughout the pandemic.

The overall aim was to support members to achieve connection and stability in their lives via remote support.

Issues the CT team were dealing with included:

- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fear
- Loss of routine
- Overwhelm
- Sleep issues
- Negative thoughts
- Lack of optimism/hopelessness
- Concerns about ongoing legacy issues
- Concerns about benefits and financial crisis
- Concerns about ongoing legal cases





To help with these issues the following best practice treatment procedures were applied to support RFJ members:

Remote Complementary Therapy Treatments

- Advice on maintaining a routine for mental health and wellbeing.
- Ideas on using time creatively and productively.
- Ear seed therapy
- Bach Flowers Remedy support program
- Mindfulness techniques
- Vision boards, goal setting and mentoring
- Guided meditations
- Reiki
- Acupressure points and breath work
- Breathing techniques for grounding and centering
- Advice and guidance on using hand reflexology and aromatherapy
- Direction on nutrition and exercise for stressful times
- Mental Health First Aid for crisis situations

All these methods were carefully adapted to provide support for trauma survivors remotely. As they had previously been successful in a one-to-one capacity and provided important coping strategies that lead to better psychological health, we felt it was important to apply ongoing support

Keeping connected to members throughout this time enabled the complementary therapy team to continue in-house referrals for legacy, counselling and benefits advice and maintain a holistic approach.

New provisions were also added to our existing treatment program by developing the Bach Flower Support and the NADA ear seed protocol so that it could be delivered remotely. An in-house referral process was established to manage this and to ensure best practice was in place and members were contacted by the appropriate qualified practitioner to gather a detailed consultation. A postal service was also set up and instruction brochures were created to help members on the use and benefits of the remedies and ear seeds.

Many benefits were experienced and feedback from members showed that they felt they had been cared for and not forgotten.

Remote CT Feedback

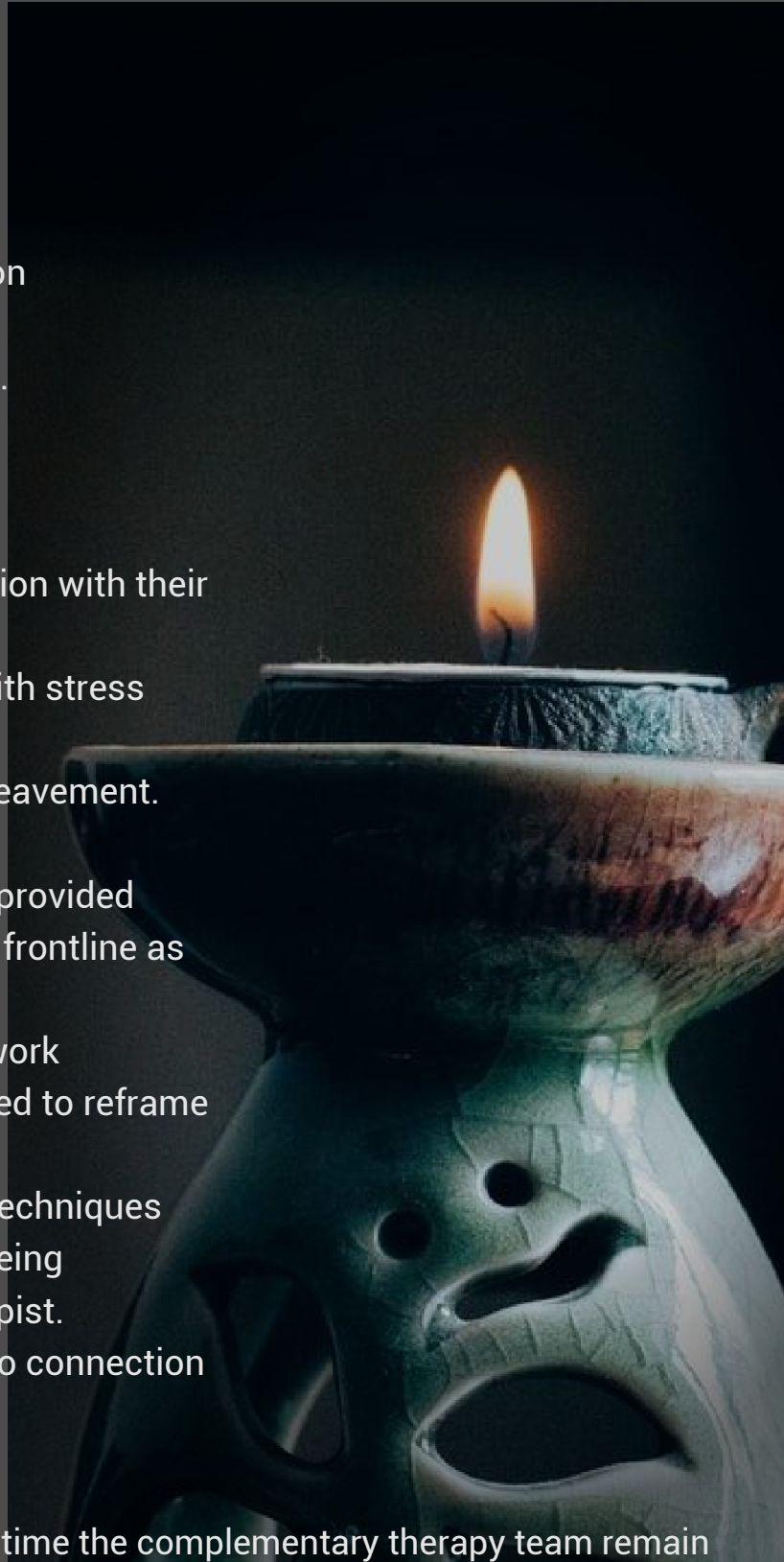
Members have expressed the following:

- Being educated on using different relaxation techniques.
- Prompted to take more care of themselves.
- Feeling more in control.
- Feeling more positive
- Feeling supported.
- Feeling safer knowing they have a connection with their therapist each week.
- Using self-care and mindfulness to help with stress
- Relief from physical pain.
- Feeling supported after experiencing a bereavement.
- Feeling supported after the loss of a job.
- Feeling that the stress management tools provided have been supportive whilst working on the frontline as an NHS worker
- Reduced levels of anxiety through breath work
- Worries and concerns lessened when guided to reframe and introduce a different perspective
- Changes in sleep issues by using holistic techniques
- Improvement in mental and physical wellbeing
- Feeling cared for and connected to a therapist.
- Reduction in isolation and loneliness due to connection with therapist

As connection has been so important at this time the complementary therapy team remain committed to continuing with remote support, providing holistic guidance and a best practice approach. I feel safe and steady work needs to be carried out in terms of identifying the further needs of our members who were supported during the pandemic.

Follow up support, additional treatments particularly for our older members and members who presently live alone will help to support prevent triggers and re-traumatization.

Paula Torney - Complementary Therapy Co-ordinator





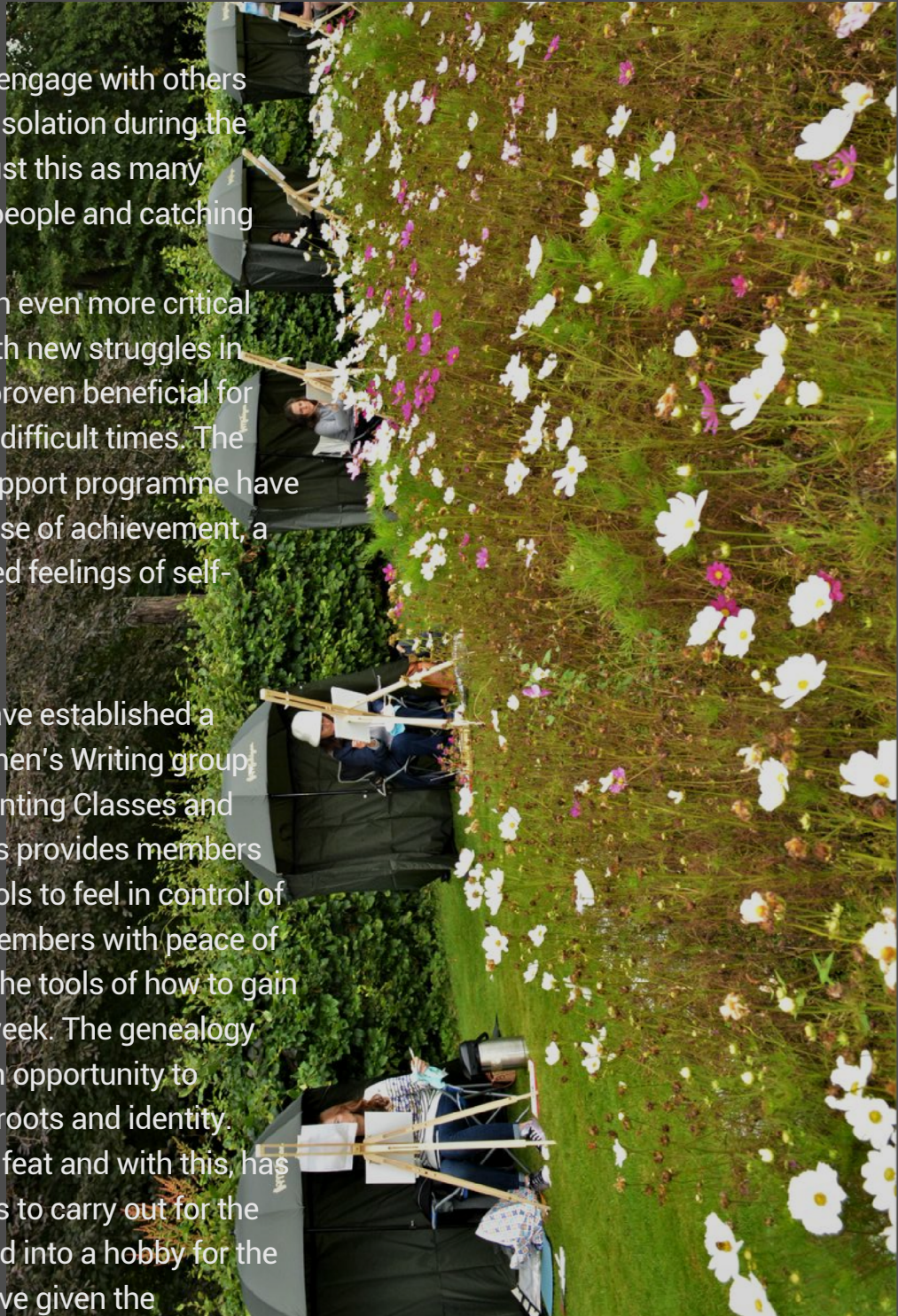
SOCIAL SUPPORT

The last eighteen months have seen Relatives for Justice Social Support programme develop more widely due to the pandemic. Our regular classes moved to an online platform and with this, it brought new challenges. Members have now learned IT skills with our step by step guide to using zoom and on hand help and support to get online to access classes.

The classes supported members to engage with others with the outcome of breaking down isolation during the pandemic. The weekly classes did just this as many members looked forward to seeing people and catching up.

The well-being of members has been even more critical given the Pandemic as they cope with new struggles in their daily lives. Social support has proven beneficial for members to navigate through these difficult times. The therapeutic benefits of the Social Support programme have been to provide members with a sense of achievement, a goal to work towards and has instilled feelings of self-worth and validation.

Over the last eighteen months we have established a multitude of creative classes; A Women's Writing group, Good Food/Good Mood Classes, Painting Classes and Craft Classes. The Mindfulness class provides members with coping mechanisms and the tools to feel in control of their everyday life. It has provided members with peace of mind throughout the class but also the tools of how to gain that peace of mind throughout the week. The genealogy class has provided members with an opportunity to discover! They are discovering their roots and identity. Researching a family tree is no easy feat and with this, has provided members with weekly tasks to carry out for the next class. This in turn has transpired into a hobby for the members which is particularly positive given the pandemic. It was an opportunity to come along with other members to build friendships and ensure social inclusion. There were two separate genealogy classes going on. An advanced class and a beginner class. Those that participated in the previous beginner class moved on and stepped it up a level. They have engaged successfully in this higher-level class and have really enjoyed it.



The embroidery class was a way to get together and create beautiful designs. The kits provided allowed members to pick them up in the evening times also or when they felt they needed a bit of creativity to keep them busy. They all created something beautiful and the majority have gone on to purchase more embroidery materials to continue themselves. Members learned a new skill, this class was simplistic, but the outcomes were exceptional. The sewing class was established in the same vain. Members created beautiful memory bears, stockings at Christmas and Wreaths at Easter.

The Candle making Class allows members to learn about the health benefits of plants and aromatherapy. It is a real opportunity to do something relaxing with beautiful aromas and plenty of conversation. Members get to enjoy their productions as they create candles to help aid sleep, relieve stress and anxiety and help establish a calming atmosphere.

Our online classes do not reach everyone. We were keen to reach as many members as we could to let them know we are here for them. International Women's Day is usually a time to celebrate in Relatives for Justice. This year, we tried to break down isolation barriers and promote health and well-being of the women members. We posted to each women a well-being pack providing them with some mindfulness tips, items to relax and wind down and a message to let them know they are valued. The feedback was fantastic with so many members contacting us. It was a small gesture but lifted so many spirits. It thus created great engagement with members, it gave us an opportunity to check in and refresh them on the services we provide should they require them.

Mary Kate Quinn - Social Support Co-ordinator



Preparing care-packs for International Women's Day

WELFARE

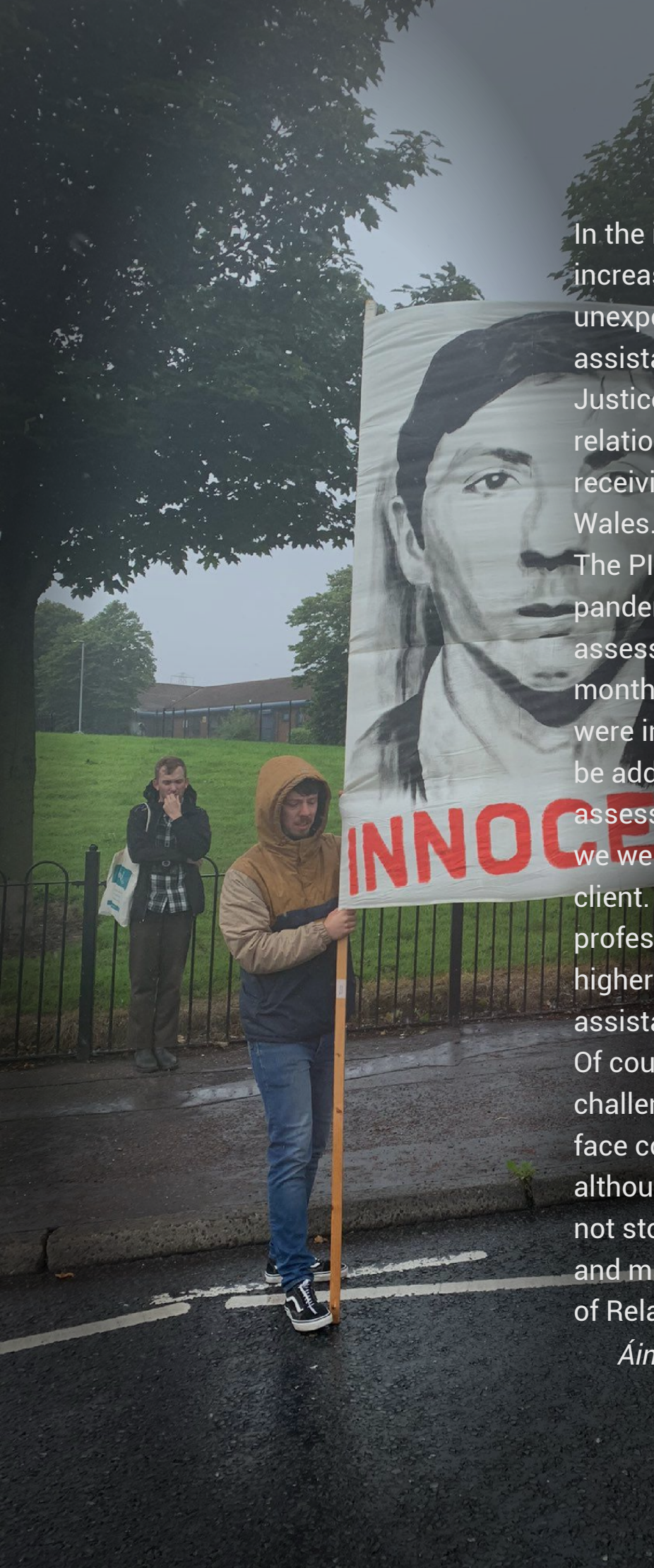


In March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Relatives for Justice had to adapt to a new way of working. Our previous working model had to change, and we had to find new solutions to supporting people with their queries and issues.

When dealing with welfare support the ability to meet face-to-face with a client was considered vital to the support we can offer. However in the past 18 months this has had to be revised. Without the possibility of one-to-one's or home visits we had to find a new way to be able to engage with clients, while still providing the same level of support and assistance. Telephone and zoom calls became the new normal for engaging with clients.

We found ourselves dealing with a wide range of new queries. As many people were furloughed and unsure of their entitlement to benefits, especially during the first few weeks of the lockdown, we were fielding more calls from people trying to access universal credit. There were also those who were self-employed and who did not qualify for the furlough scheme. Initially they only had universal credit for support as the self-employed Income Support Scheme did not open until May 2020.





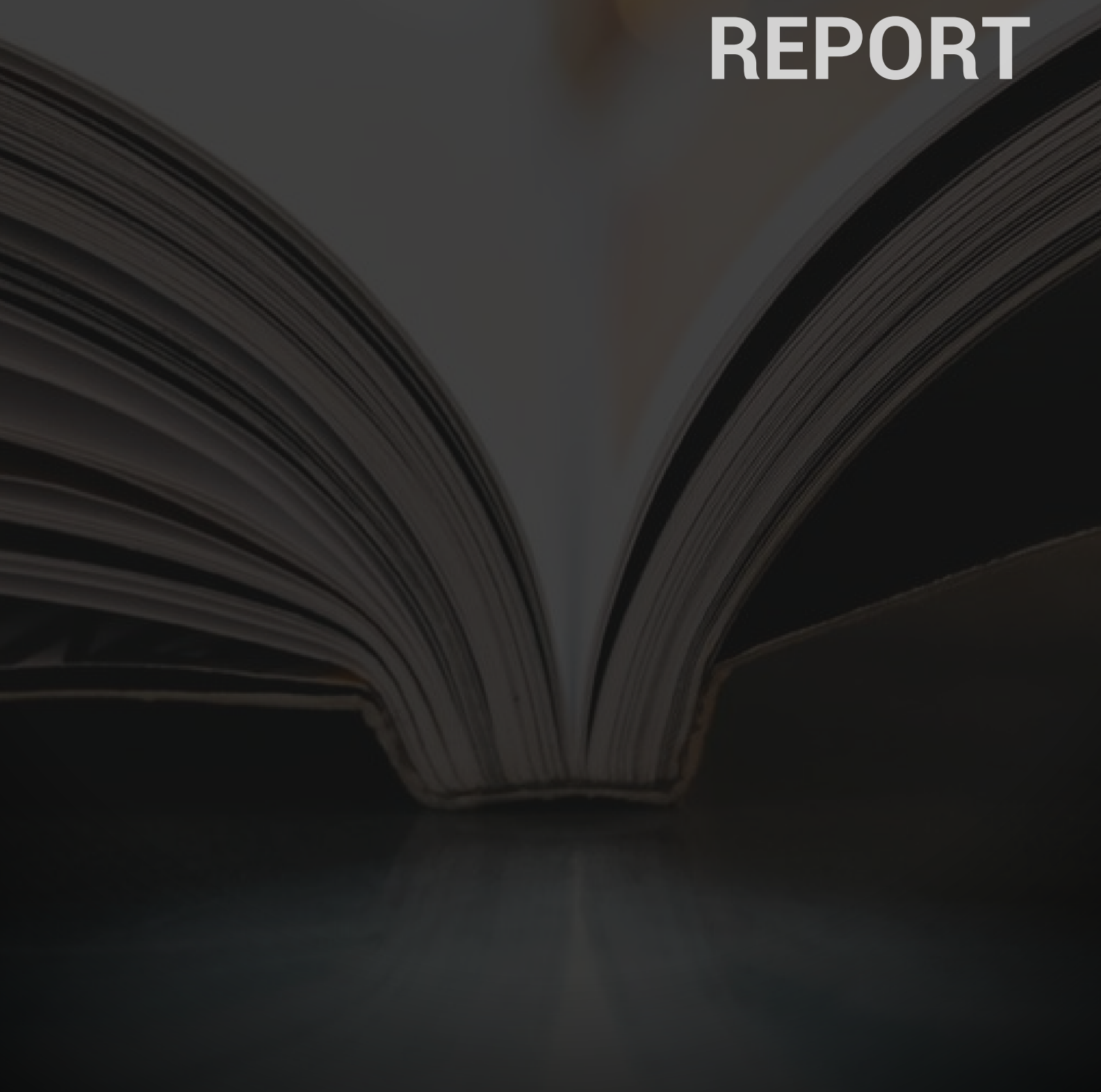
In the initial months of lockdown workload increased as we were supporting new and unexpected members who required assistance. Following Relatives for Justice's Facebook and twitter posts in relation to welfare support, we were even receiving calls from people in England and Wales.

The PIP process was also affected by the pandemic and all face-to-face assessments were suspended for a few months before telephone assessments were introduced. Although we were able to be added to the call this form of assessment was much more difficult as we were unable to be in same room as the client. However, we have been able to offer professional and consistent support to the higher number of clients needing our assistance.

Of course the past 18 months have been a challenge and we have missed fact-to-face contacts, but it has shown us that although things have changed, they have not stopped. We could continue our work and maintain the high standards expected of Relatives for Justice.

Áine Mallon - Welfare Advice Co-ordinator

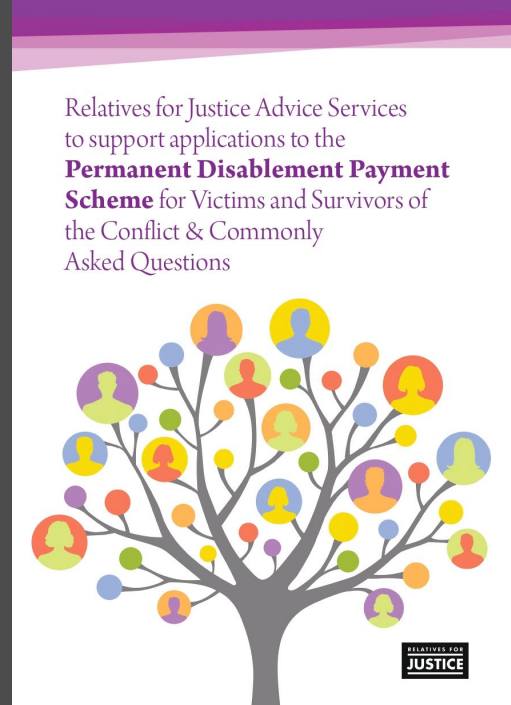
DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT



The reported period is one where our organisation faced unprecedented challenges as the entire globe was engulfed in a pandemic and RFJ was forced to deliver all of our services remotely. However our staff stepped up in an extraordinary fashion as a team and individually.

Not only did every member of staff bring their work home, set up an RFJ office in their home, without an ounce of grumbling, they all transformed their model of face-face delivery to remote delivery.

Staff embraced the challenge and we have now developed a state of the art remote service delivering welfare and benefits advice, complementary therapies, counselling and psychotherapy, social support programmes, legal and casework advice, financial accountability and full administration, in concert with advanced online lobbying and campaigning.



I wish to thank the RFJ team for their commitment which ensured that not only did our outputs remain steady, they increased in most areas and in all areas of work, even in areas such as psychotherapy, demonstrated improved outcomes have been measured from our clients. The commitment of the organisation to professional support programmes delivered on multiple platforms in innovative ways has created additional and effective delivery mechanisms, truly unforeseeable benefits of the Pandemic period. Special mention should be made of RFJ's sessional workers who also stood up. Without the security of fixed term contracts there were many challenges for sessional workers, but most brought imagination, good humour and new skill sets to the challenges, ensuring our members received the professional services they have come to expect from RFJ.





The reported period has seen a concentration on keeping our staff and our clients safe, as so many are vulnerable and medically unwell. We have transformed our Belfast and Dungannon offices to become Covid safe, although some challenges remain due to the size of the Glen Road site in particular. We have secured a long-term tenancy agreement on the Brompton Rd site in Ardoyne and it is now our dedicated benefits and payment scheme hub.

We have been fortunate to be joined by new staff to provide support to those applying to the payment scheme for the permanently injured as a result of the conflict. Bringing a range of expertise, we are confident of delivering a professional and objective support service to applicants of this scheme. Our social media naturally grew exponentially during this period and work is currently underway to upgrade our website and our platforms to encourage this more personal and interactive experience of RFJ through the differing media platforms.

The support of our funders during this period has been exceptional and with special mention to the Victims and Survivors Service, Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, their own responsiveness and facilitation of new working models and risk taking during this trying period was much valued.

Andree Murphy - Deputy Director

PRESENTATION

After 18 months of research, Relatives for Justice is rolling out its GAA Legacy Project. It will be the first collective and centralised effort aimed at recognising and acknowledging the impact of the conflict in Ireland on the GAA and its members. Specifically, the project aims to remember all GAA members killed as a result of the conflict, and to create an historical account of the impact of conflict-related violence on the GAA.

How To Get Involved

RFJ are keen to involve club and county boards in this project to assist with the creation of a culture of awareness within our GAA community about this project, which affects so many of our fellow gael. RFJ have prepared presentations to be delivered to clubs at their request, outlining the key ethos and themes of the project. Through this outreach, it is hoped that club involvement will help us support and encourage the participation of all the GAA families bereaved as a direct result of the conflict.

For more information, and to arrange for a presentation to be delivered to your club, please contact our team: GAA@RelativesforJustice.com or Peadar on 07718178581

GAA LEGACY PROJECT





RELATIVES FOR JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT 2021