

10 YEARS PROUDLY SUPPORTING



**FOCUS**  
Ireland

# A decade of partnership, a vision for progress



# Reflections from our leaders



## A message from Dave Kirwan

10 years ago, we asked ourselves how, as a national energy company, we could make a positive contribution to society and drive meaningful change. In consultation with our colleagues, we concluded that we should direct our energies toward one strategic partner – and lend our support to Focus Ireland’s mission to end homelessness in Ireland for good.

At Bord Gáis Energy, we are committed to being a purpose-led organisation – energising a greener, fairer future. Our partnership with Focus Ireland is a powerful expression of that purpose, one that resonates with our colleagues, our customers, and wider society.

From the outset, a close working relationship with Focus Ireland ensured that the funding and support provided were directed where they could have the greatest impact – often in areas that go unseen. These include services such as a careline to assist those at risk of homelessness, and funding educational and support needs for families living in temporary accommodation.

Volunteering has been a cornerstone of the partnership, led by a cross-company steering committee of volunteers. In recent years, representation has expanded to all departments, with activity aligned to the unique skills of our people. For example, our Legal team supported a Pre-Election Campaign; Customer Care ran a “Thankathon”; our Services team installed heating upgrades; and our Women’s Network advised on building effective internal networks.

**“No one in this country should be without a home. The mission must be to end homelessness forever.”**

Shine A Light has been another key initiative through which Bord Gáis Energy has raised awareness of – and funding for – those at risk of homelessness. Each year, I’m humbled by the number of colleagues who choose to join me in sleeping out for the night. We are lucky to return to warm beds and welcoming homes. The experience reminds us why this work matters.

The benefits of these initiatives for the business are far-reaching – from team building, to apprentices gaining valuable experience, to job candidates citing our social impact work as a reason for applying. We are a stronger community of people and, as a result, a better company.

I’m proud and deeply grateful for the commitment and compassion shown by our colleagues over the past decade. Their continued efforts to raise awareness and funds are helping those impacted by homelessness in Ireland. No one in this country should be without a home.

*Dave Kirwan*



**Dave Kirwan,**  
Managing Director,  
Bord Gáis Energy

## A message from Pat Dennigan

At Focus Ireland, our work is rooted in people – their challenges, their resilience, and how we can best support them on their journey out of homelessness.

Every one of us has a right to a place we can call home. Yet in Ireland today, more and more people are becoming homeless. Over 500 families have become homeless in the past two years alone.

When you’re made homeless and end up on the street or in an emergency accommodation, your world collapses. You lose your bearings, your family and friends, your hope for the future. It’s crushing.

The main reason is that for decades the government has failed to build enough social and affordable housing to meet people’s needs. Some people think nothing can be done about it. But it can.

Bord Gáis Energy recognised this 10 years ago when they partnered with Focus Ireland. The partnership between Focus Ireland and Bord Gáis Energy is built on mutual respect and shared purpose which is what truly makes it so impactful.

Since 2015, the unwavering support from Bord Gáis Energy and MD, Dave Kirwan has played

**“Bord Gáis Energy has been a beacon of hope – offering not just support, but real hope for a better future.”**

a pivotal role in our efforts to help prevent homelessness for as many families as we possibly can. Bord Gáis Energy’s commitment has provided essential support to some of the most vulnerable in our society. Just as importantly, they have helped amplify our message by raising vital awareness about the importance of preventing homelessness.

It is with deep gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Bord Gáis Energy and its incredible team for being a beacon of hope. Their compassion and dedication have helped shine a light during some of the darkest moments, offering not just support, but real hope for a better future.

*Pat Dennigan*



**Pat Dennigan,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Focus Ireland

## A vision for progress

*“For 25 years, Business in the Community Ireland has enabled business-community partnerships. It is exciting to see how these initiatives have evolved from discretionary and reactive projects to strategic and aligned to business objectives and brand value, engaging employees and customers.”*

*It is wonderful to mark 10 years of the Bord Gáis Energy – Focus Ireland partnership. One that is rooted in strategic intent, that has gone beyond funding to a two-way impactful relationship that was maintained over the years and has led to key initiatives such as Shine A Light making real impact. Homelessness is a key societal challenge that requires concerted effort and systemic change. This partnership shows how we can work together to address the challenge of our generation.”*



**Tomás Sercovich**

CEO, Business in the Community



*“We’re profoundly grateful to Bord Gáis Energy for their steadfast partnership over the past 10 years. Their support has gone far beyond financial assistance – it’s been a true partnership grounded in compassion, solidarity and a shared commitment to ending homelessness in Ireland.”*

*Over the past decade, the Bord Gáis Energy team has not only helped sustain vital services through generous funding, but they have also given their time and energy through thousands of volunteer hours. Their employees have shown up year after year – from the magical Christmas party where children get to meet to Santa to sleeping out against homelessness in the depths of winter to helping to maintain our facilities – always with kindness and humility.*

*This partnership has made a real and lasting difference in the lives of families we support. It is a shining example of how corporate responsibility can be a force for good, and we are truly thankful to have walked this path together.”*



**Sr Stanislaus Kennedy**

Life President, Focus Ireland

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## A decade of partnership

Ireland is fortunate to have such a vibrant charity sector which works to address many of the most severe challenges and crises facing the country. We’re doubly fortunate in having one of the most generous populations to be found anywhere in the world when it comes to charitable giving.

Corporate Ireland also has a role to play by partnering with charities to strengthen resources to create meaningful and lasting change. This is about a lot more than mere financial donations, it’s about the application of expertise, ingenuity, and human effort.

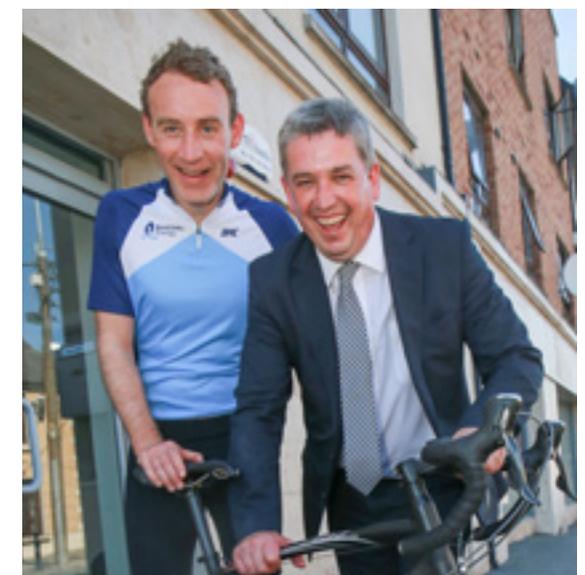
The effectiveness of such partnerships cannot be measured in crude monetary terms; the only true metric is the impact on the ground for the people being supported by the charity. That must be the North Star for every corporate charity partnership.

That has been the guiding principle for Bord Gáis Energy throughout our 10 year partnership with Focus Ireland and aligns with our purpose as an organisation – energising a greener, fairer future. In aiming to maximise the impact we as a business could achieve, the decision was taken to

concentrate our support towards a single charity. After close consultation with our colleagues, the homelessness crisis was identified as the social issue they most wished to tackle, resulting in Focus Ireland being our obvious choice to partner with.

Focus Ireland is driven by the belief that everyone has a right to a place we can call home. Not just a roof over our head, but somewhere we feel settled, safe and secure, and can build our life and future. A belief we strongly stand behind.

In Ireland today, more and more people are becoming homeless. Over 55,000 people have been homeless at some stage in the last 10 years. Right now, there’s a record



Cork to Dublin fundraising cycle 2016



Four peaks challenge 2019

15,580 total people homeless, with even more people at risk. Over 500 families have become homeless in the past two years alone. Over 4,600 children don't have a home.

**We now have the opportunity to solve this crisis, not just manage it, and this partnership has proven this.**

In Ireland, for decades there has been a failure to build enough social and affordable housing to meet people's needs.

We now have the opportunity to solve this crisis, not just manage it, and this partnership has proven this.

During the period of our partnership with Focus Ireland we have helped to support more than 8,500 families. While numbers remain high, thanks to the vital work of Focus Ireland, many more people have been prevented from experiencing homelessness.

Our support has ranged from the financial to the highly practical. Over €4.4 million has been committed since 2015 with an additional €300,000 provided to fund Focus Ireland's Advice and Information service in Wexford and Carlow. On top of this, our colleagues and company matching have helped raise an additional €405,000.

Overall, our colleagues have given more than 8,000 volunteer hours to support events and activities including the Shine A Light fundraiser, summer sports days, and the annual Christmas party in Croke Park. In 2024, more than a third of our people volunteered for Focus Ireland and we are constantly seeking new ways to enable more of them to contribute their time and expertise.

But it all comes down to impact. What makes this partnership unique is the close working relationship that has developed between the two organisations and their people. We ask Focus Ireland what they need from us, what we can do that will make a genuine difference to their work and to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Just as importantly, they guide us on what doesn't work.

Well-meaning but misdirected efforts won't create meaningful change – honest conversations do.

What does matter is the impact: the smile on a child's face when they get their present from Santa at the Christmas party or a medal at the summer sports day, the families who find places to call home, the advice given to people at risk of homelessness, educational and healthcare supports for children, empowering people with experience of homelessness to speak about their lives and advocate for others who are in that situation, and countless other ways.

It's been a privilege to have made a contribution to that impact and the work of Focus Ireland on behalf of our customers and colleagues over the past 10 years, and we look forward to continuing the partnership for many years to come.



Pat and Dave at Shine A Light 2024

**What does matter is the impact: the smile on a child's face when they get their present from Santa at the Christmas party or a medal at the summer sports day**



Cork to Dublin cycle 2017



Croke Park abseiling fundraising 2023

# In numbers 10 years of support



**+€7.5 million**

Total funding provided through the partnership

**€4.4 million funding**

**8,500 families supported**



**€482,329**

**Empowerment Fund**

9,082 parents and children supported through the Empowerment Fund

**Support areas:** Basic Necessities, Children's Activities, Therapeutic Supports



**Over €2.5 million**

**in funding for Focus Ireland's Advice and Information Helpline**

In Q1 2025, 627 people received direct advice and support through the service

## Volunteer led family days

Since 2015,

**over 3,800**

mums, dads, guardians and children have been supported at Bord Gáis Energy volunteer led family days.



**Shine A Light campaign sponsorship**

Main sponsor since 2018

€2.5 million provided in campaign support

60 colleagues participated in the 2024 Sleep Out

## Aylward Green long-term accommodation service

**24**

homes upgraded with high-efficiency boilers and smart tech

**12**

colleagues volunteered 260 hours over two phases

**€6,000**

in financial savings each year



Colleague engagement

**8,379 hours volunteered over 10 years**

1 in 3 colleagues volunteered in 2024 alone

More than €400,000 in additional fundraising and company matching by colleagues.

# Funding change with Focus Ireland

## The Bord Gáis Energy Empowerment Fund

Homelessness deprives families and children of so much more than a roof over their heads. The financial burden on families entrenched in homelessness is immense. Children lose out on many of the joyful moments that should be part of their childhood; things that most people take for granted like Christmas celebrations and days out with their families. Even simple things like going to school in the morning can present challenges.

The Bord Gáis Energy Empowerment Fund was created to help bring those joyful moments back into children's lives and put smiles back on faces. During the 10 years of partnership between Bord Gáis Energy and Focus Ireland, over €480,000 has been committed to the Empowerment Fund, benefiting more than 9,000 parents and children.

The average length of time children spend in emergency accommodation has increased from six months to two years. Among the aims of the Empowerment Fund is to try to mitigate the impact of that by allowing those children to enjoy at least some of the experiences which are part of the everyday lives of children and to put hope back in their lives even though they are living in emergency accommodation.



### The fund helps in three key areas:

- Basic necessities covering travel costs, clothing and school uniform costs, household bills, household appliance maintenance costs, rent arrears.
- Children's activities including family days out, summer camps, swimming lessons and support for participation in other sporting activities, and assistance in areas like art and music.
- Providing timely access to therapeutic interventions and supports which would ordinarily be out of the financial reach of the families involved. The financial support provided through the Empowerment Fund has allowed for hundreds of timely and accurate diagnoses which in turn have positively changed the course of the lives of many Focus Ireland customers.

## The Focus Ireland Advice and Information Helpline

The Focus Ireland Advice and Information Helpline provides guidance on all aspects of housing and homelessness with an emphasis on prevention. The helpline offers supports ranging from information to help people avoid homelessness to advice on navigating the system and securing a home. This includes sourcing legal advice, arranging mediation with landlords and engaging with local authorities if required. In the first quarter of 2025, 627 individuals received direct advice and assistance through the service.



Very often, people do not realise they're at risk of homelessness until it's too late. An advertising and public awareness campaign in the Southeast region in 2024 funded by Bord Gáis Energy was aimed at helping families and individuals in private rented accommodation to recognise early warning signs or "red flags" and encouraged them to contact the helpline.

The impact of the campaign was remarkable. Calls to the helpline from the region increased threefold and Focus Ireland was able to help 90% of the callers to remain in their homes.

*"Because of Bord Gáis Energy's generous support and on-going belief in our services, we have supported customers in very different situations including tenants in rent arrears, with notices of termination from their landlord, issues with standards of tenancies and overcrowding situations to name a few. Our teams are able to support customers with these issues by providing advice, guidance, advocacy, as well as support and representation when needed. The impact of this support has been instrumental in preventing customers from becoming homeless."*



**Nicola Stewart,**  
Focus Ireland frontline worker

Due to the success of last year's campaign, we launched it again this year in Tipperary and Clare – where homelessness has been on the rise – ensuring those at risk of losing their homes knew how to access support in a timely fashion.



# Shine A Light

## Sleeping out against homelessness

If real progress is to be made on tackling the homelessness crisis, the issue must be kept at the forefront of the public consciousness. Family homelessness is often unseen and therefore too easily forgotten. At the same time, the demands on Focus Ireland's resources are increasing every year in line with the rise in the number of people experiencing homelessness.



Colleagues braving the elements at Shine A Light

homelessness is not forgotten, Bord Gáis Energy expanded its partnership with Focus Ireland by becoming the lead sponsor for the Shine A Light flagship event in 2018. This was motivated by a desire to deepen the impact of our support for Focus Ireland as well as to encourage other companies to get involved in the event.

We support the event through a direct financial donation, additional fundraising efforts, and by leveraging our network of business contacts and broad reach with customers nationwide to encourage business leaders, workplaces, students and the general public to participate. We are delighted to be part of the continued growth of Shine A Light as a fundraising campaign. Since 2018, participation from companies and the business community has grown more than sixfold, amplifying the message on the issue of homelessness as well as raising awareness.

In addition, volunteers from across Bord Gáis Energy head outdoors with their sleeping bags each year to spend a night under the stars in solidarity with people who are experiencing homelessness.



Launching Shine A Light in 2020

The annual Focus Ireland Shine A Light October sleepout events serve a dual purpose – raising awareness and fundraising. Business leaders and communities across the country are invited to 'sleep out against homelessness' to raise funds and bring the homelessness crisis to the attention of policymakers and the wider public.

As part of our goal to ensure that unseen



Bord Gáis Energy team presenting cheque for colleague fundraising efforts – 2024



Thankathon 2024

Our marketing team has devised a highly impactful series of advertising and awareness campaigns to support the event each year since 2021. These campaigns, worth over €2.5 million, have been hugely successful and over the past seven years Shine A Light has raised over of €9.1 million for Focus Ireland.

A new element was added last year when our customer operations team ran a 'thank-a-thon' where they telephoned businesses and individuals around the country who had supported Shine A Light to say thank you on behalf of Focus Ireland. That initiative was so well received that Focus Ireland has now decided to run it in future years for Shine A Light and other fundraising campaigns.

*"We're very proud to support Shine A Light and it's become a hugely important element of our partnership with Focus Ireland. It is really important that business leaders throughout Ireland respond to this call to action from Focus Ireland. No one in the country should be without a home. As business leaders we should support Focus Ireland with conviction and commitment. They need our help."*



**Dave Kirwan,**  
Managing Director of Bord Gáis Energy



Bord Gáis Energy colleagues at the 2024 sleep out



# Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP)

## Driving systemic change

One individual speaking about their personal experience of trauma is far more powerful than any number of experts or advocates speaking on their behalf. However, one of the barriers Focus Ireland faced over the years was creating an effective programme that empowered people to speak publicly about their lived experience of homelessness.

Focus Ireland successfully established the Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP) in 2022 – sponsored by Bord Gáis Energy from the outset. This innovative project, the first of its kind in Ireland, helps to empower people with first-hand experience of homelessness to tell their stories, inform policymakers and advocate for other people experiencing homelessness.



Launch of the LEAP programme 2022

Focus Ireland provides specialised training in media relations, storytelling, public speaking, advocacy work, and other transferrable skills to enable the ambassadors to use their voices to support social change and bring a deeper level of understanding of homelessness and the issues faced by those who have first-hand experience of it. By sharing their own stories and direct knowledge of homelessness, they can influence the provision of services, help prevent homelessness and inform public opinion.

Since the programme was established, LEAP ambassadors have attended Bord Gáis Energy colleague events and conferences to tell their stories and speak about their personal experiences of homelessness and how their lives had been positively impacted by support they received from Focus Ireland. They've also taken part in discussions on homelessness on national radio, spoken at Oireachtas Committee meetings, European meetings, fundraising events, and have participated in presentations to existing and potential commercial partners.

The impact of the LEAP programme has been, and continues to be transformational for Focus Ireland. A number of the ambassadors now sit on the organisation's advisory committee and have attended board meetings to ensure that the lived experience of homelessness remains at the centre of Focus Ireland's activities.



Hello Goodbye Event 2024 with Mary MacAleese welcoming new ambassadors and saying goodbye to old.

## James's story

James is a Focus Ireland tenant and an ambassador for the organisation's Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP). As a child, he experienced homelessness with his mother, spending time in their car, with extended family, and in homeless services like hostels and family hubs.

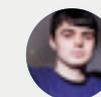
He struggled with mainstream education and left school at 15, later engaging with learning centres where he completed his Junior Certificate and a pre-apprenticeship course in metalwork, maths and engineering.

Now living in a secure home, James has progressed to working as an engineer and continues to build his career. In 2023, he became a LEAP

Ambassador and recently took part in a European homelessness conference in Athens, sharing his experiences and contributing to panel discussions.

Through his role, James hopes to inspire others and advocate for the policy changes needed to end homelessness.

***"The reason I became a LEAP Ambassador is to share my story so it can help other people who are going through the same trauma as me and the same background, so they can build a future like I have".***



**James Flanagan,**  
LEAP Ambassador



# Aylward Green

## Providing more energy-efficient and comfortable homes

At Bord Gáis Energy, our ambition is to deepen our longstanding relationship with Focus Ireland by going beyond financial support and using our core skills and technical expertise to deliver real, lasting impact. Working closely with Focus Ireland to establish where our support would make the biggest difference, we identified Aylward Green, a supported family accommodation facility in the Dublin suburb of Finglas, where old and inefficient heating systems were negatively impacting residents' comfort and energy costs.

The Focus Ireland Aylward Green facility continues to provide crucial turnkey accommodation for families affected by homelessness. The accommodation comprises 13 short-term emergency units: 11 with three beds and 2 with two beds, along with 11 long-term supported housing units for families with complex needs.

The primary goal is to offer temporary accommodation while helping families develop the skills needed for independent living. The service aims to empower individuals and families to reach their full



Bord Gais Energy colleague installing a smart heating control system at Aylward Green



Phase 1 of the Aylward Green heating upgrades

potential, fostering equality, respect, and confidence within their communities.

Beyond shelter, families receive comprehensive support in housing, family and childcare, and life skills. Each family works with a case manager or child support worker on a personalised plan.

We've helped to reduce energy bills at the facility by some €6,000 a year by making the homes more energy-efficient and comfortable. During 2023 and 2024, teams of Bord Gáis Energy engineers and apprentices volunteered their time to deliver heating

upgrades on all 24 homes in the facility in a two-phase project. The extensive work included the installation of state-of-the-art boilers and smart heating controls.

The collaborative effort was hands-on and involved regular communication to fully understand the needs on the ground. It also required joint planning and close coordination between Bord Gáis Energy's engineers and apprentices and Focus Ireland's housing team to ensure the work was delivered smoothly and respectfully.



Phase 2 of the Aylward Green heating upgrades

***"Aylward Green was the first accommodation service of its kind. We've 24 units of accommodation, own-door key, fully furnished, ready for people to move in because they've come from emergency accommodation, hotel rooms, cramped conditions. This partnership with Bord Gáis Energy and Focus Ireland is one of our most invaluable initiatives to date."***



**Elaine Flemming,**  
Manager Aylward Green

# People power

## Skills sharing and volunteering

Money alone can't buy impact. It needs to be combined with hands-on support to make a real difference to people's lives. The exceptionally strong volunteering culture in Bord Gáis Energy has seen our people give freely of their expertise and time to support families in distress and engage underserved communities. Most of all, their efforts help to put a smile on people's faces. Here are just some of the many initiatives our colleagues have been involved with:



*"All families that attended the Bord Gáis Energy Croke Park Christmas party were very happy, the joy on the kids' faces exiting the grotto was just magical! To all the elves that helped to make the Santa experience go smoothly a big big thank you, but especially a big shout out to the men playing with the kids in and around the dance floor. These kids tend to have less experience with men that are sound, sensitive, attuned role-models, and to just have fun for an afternoon is potentially changing kids' perspectives on how a male should behave."*



**Hester Rodenhuis,**  
Team Leader,  
Family Services, Focus Ireland

## Annual Christmas party

For many of the families supported by Focus Ireland, the highlight of the year is the Family Christmas Party in Croke Park. Every December, up to 50 colleagues volunteer their time to help create a magical winter wonderland – from setting up the space and coordinating logistics to dressing as Santa's helpers. Families enjoy a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, take part in party games, let their hair down on the dance floor, visit Santa's grotto, and leave with a present.



Volunteers at the 2023 Christmas Day



Volunteers at the Easter cinema day

## Family cinema visit

Going to the cinema may be a commonplace occurrence for most people, but when living in emergency accommodation, the opportunity for families and children to attend the latest screening does not come around too often. Focus Ireland organises family cinema visits at Easter time, with around 10 volunteers from the Bord Gáis Energy team bringing a little magic by dressing up as Easter bunnies and chicks to hand out popcorn and Easter eggs.

## A network of support

Our Women's Network has supported the development of Focus Ireland's Women's Network, promoting dignity and empowerment for women and families. We've backed the Family Centre through donation drives and visits to connect with the work on the ground. Each year, we run a women-focused pop-up shop at the café, offering clients a warm and dignified experience. In 2024, we helped relaunch the Women's Philanthropy Circle, supporting youth homelessness through fundraising and events.



Supporting students with the Back to School backpacking initiative 2024

## The Big Busk

One of Focus Ireland's more high-profile fundraising events is The Big Busk where seasoned buskers and other musically talented individuals and celebrities take to the streets to raise funds and raise awareness of homelessness. Between 20 and 30 Bord Gáis Energy volunteers support their efforts each year by joining the national campaign and encouraging the public to donate.



Cooking up a storm

## Cooking up a storm

Individual volunteers can make a real difference. Members of our Customer Operations team spent a day batch cooking healthy and nutritious meals to be utilised by Focus Ireland customers within the Family Centre. The meals were created with all dietary requirements in mind and catered to a wide variety of diets such as gluten free, halal etc.



Volunteers fundraising at the Big Busk 2024

## Making every vote count

One of the highlight initiatives of 2024 was Focus Ireland's Voter Registration Drive, launched in the run-up to the local elections. The aim was to support people who are experiencing homelessness in registering to vote. This empowered them to have their voices heard and their vote counted at the ballot box, ultimately to drive political change and help end the housing and homelessness crisis. Bord Gáis Energy got involved in the campaign and five volunteers completed a 90-minute training session on voter registration and subsequently attended voter registration drive sites organised by Focus Ireland.



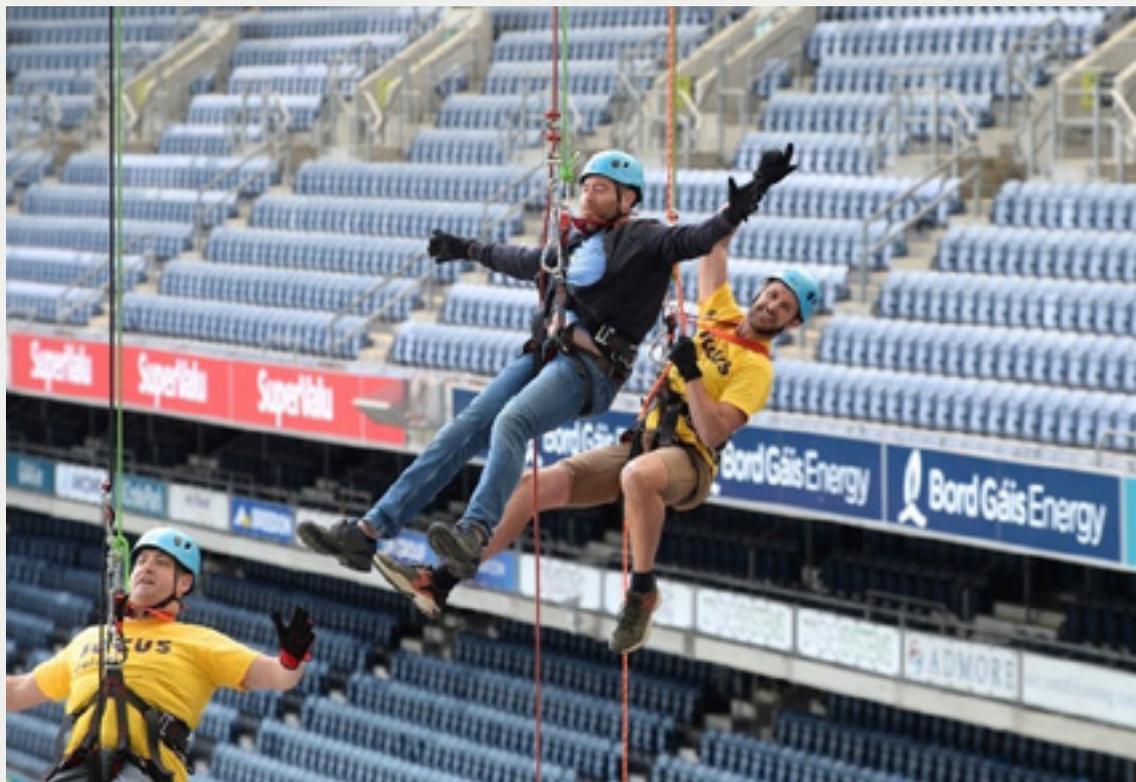
State of Play campaign promoting inclusion in sport 2022



IBEC panel discussion 2023



Summer sports day 2023



Abseiling challenge in Croke Park 2023

## Summer sports day

When you don't have a garden or even a neighbourhood to play in with friends, taking part in fun sports games is not always possible. Each year Bord Gáis Energy and Focus Ireland organise a Summer Sports Day to welcome families and children in Dublin, and soon Cork, to play, interact and take part in the friendly competition of sports. The Sports Day is always an incredibly enjoyable experience with the fun capped off by ensuring each child leaves with a medal. These events wouldn't be possible without the dedication and support of a fantastic team of 50 Bord Gáis Energy volunteers.



2023 volunteer led family sports day



Volunteers at the 2023 Christmas Day

## Crafted with care

Originally designed as a mindfulness and wellbeing initiative, Sharon Hegarty from our data protection team started a group to share her knowledge and teach other people how to crochet during lunchtimes. Using wool and yarn donated by colleagues around the business, this crochet group are now crocheting baby blankets and novelty blankets for Focus Ireland.



Lunchtime crochet group creating baby and novelty blankets for Focus Ireland

## Bord Gáis Energy induction days

Representatives from Focus Ireland frequently present at induction days at the Bord Gáis Energy offices in Dublin. Newly joined colleagues learn about Focus Ireland's work, and about the partnership between the organisation and Bord Gáis Energy. Inductees are also provided with an overview of opportunities for them to get involved in the partnership. This approach solidifies the value placed on the partnership as soon as an individual begins their role within Bord Gáis Energy, setting the tone for future volunteering and engagement.

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