

The Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities



Sharan Kelly
CEO

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As we enter the final stages of our process, I recall the resounding feedback particularly from the staff team – a universal opinion, that Caplor are excellent facilitators, have a genuine and invested interest in our work, are empowering, inspiring, and supportive.”

“Expectations when in embarking on a strategy refresh and planning process can be set very high. The process itself is hugely important, as it not only will get you to the place you need to be – having a clear, ambitious, and impactful strategic plan for the future – it should also have the buy-in of everyone involved in creating and delivering it. Therefore, a critical success factor in the creation and execution of strategy, is the level of ownership and buy-in from critical stakeholders such as the staff team and our Board of Directors.

Another critical success factor are the people you engage to facilitate that all important process. In our case, this is the team at Caplor Horizons and in particular Dr. Ian Williams, Dr. Kemal Shaheen, and Rosie Bishop. As we are close to three-quarters of the way through the process, I have to acknowledge and give well-warranted credit to the team at Caplor Horizons for exceeding those expectations we had at the outset.

Working in a criminal justice context in Ireland, IASIO works with people who are marginalised from society, and we come alongside them, supporting and facilitating them to envision and plan for a better future. We provide them with support in accessing opportunities such as training, education, employment and practical supports in housing, medical and other supports. To develop the new strategy to shape our future, I really wanted to find people who understood and appreciated the type of organisation we are as well as the work we do. I went in search of those right people and found Caplor Horizons.

At the end of 2022, as IASIO was about to enter the final year of its current strategy, as its new Chief Executive, I engaged Caplor Horizons to work with us on carrying out a review of our progress on current strategy as a first step, since then we have moved on to the planning phase. What first impressed me about Caplor is the extensive experience across their team in working with organisations like us. The understanding and knowledge Caplor have is second to none in terms of their ability to get to grips with different organisations and for us, the work we do particularly in the criminal justice sector in Ireland.

In addition, I particularly valued the emphasis Caplor place on organisational development in terms of culture, teamworking and leadership. These elements have to be in a strong place to ensure any new strategy could succeed. These aspects have been weaved cleverly and successfully into the process. Another bonus is their connection with coaching for performance, also an interesting aspect that brings benefit to a process that requires working from a strengths-

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based, creative, and empowering mindset. During these months I have availed of coaching with Iain Patton, which is tremendously beneficial to me as CEO of IASIO.

Of course, it should also be noted, that they have excellent experience in strategic processes. Maybe someone reading that will think, well of course, however, in reality it is not always the case. Caplor's team are exceptional. An added feather to their bow is that they find ways to make strategic processes very engaging, fun, inspiring and effective. These are some of the many reasons I can say Caplor Horizons are a great choice for IASIO in working with us in our strategy renewal process.

At this stage in the process, we have come together as a Board and staff team on a number of occasions. At each stage, the feedback from the staff and Board has been nothing but high praise for Iain and Kemal, who have worked very closely with us. The Strategy Review stage was an enlightening and knowledge building experience for us, with many of the management team embracing new tools that on applying them, they gained greater insight and understanding that we can bring forward.

Caplor have a wide and well-tested range of concepts, tools and approaches that gave us focus, clarity and depth as well as achieving more from our time than you would generally think was possible. As we enter the final stages of our process, I recall the resounding feedback particularly from the staff team – a universal opinion, that Caplor and people like Iain and Kemal are excellent facilitators, have a genuine and invested interest in our work, are empowering, inspiring, and supportive. As we continue our process and getting closer to the end, I'm reassured by the steady, encouraging, and skilled input of Iain, Kemal, and Rosie.

Going back to those original expectations, as someone who has been through a number of similar processes over the years, I reiterate that the process has exceeded expectations. The emerging strategy is true to our process, the staff team are more united in vision, mission and we have a clearer sense of the type of organisation we want to be. As we move forward in that planning stage, we are in very good hands, with Caplor.

Thanks to Iain, Kemal and Rosie and the broader team at Caplor, I am very confident, we will at the end of the process have a well-thought through, inspiring and ambitious new strategy that will ensure we are – as an organisation, as a staff team, Board of Directors – even more effective in the years ahead.

Thank you for helping us on this journey to being more effective in the transformational work we do."