

## 6,000 People Participate in Grassroots Movement to Develop Leadership Skills Across Every Level of Irish Life

LIFT Ireland publishes two-year impact report, with aim of reaching 10% of population by 2028

[**Dublin, May 14, 2020**] Six thousand people have participated in leadership skills sessions over the past two years, thanks to [LIFT Ireland](#), a not-for-profit initiative that aims to improve the quality of leadership in Ireland.

The organisation published its [two-year impact report](#) today (14.05.20), highlighting how LIFT has grown since its establishment in 2018 to become embedded in workplaces, schools, communities, and public-sector organisations nationwide.

LIFT's leadership programme is delivered through a series of roundtable sessions, led by a volunteer facilitator. The programme runs over eight weeks, and focuses on areas such as accountability, honesty and integrity, listening skills, empathy and understanding, and determination.

Currently, LIFT has 51 corporate partners, 28 partner organisations from the community sector, and is working with 28 secondary schools, with a further 22 schools on a waiting list. Organisations that have worked with LIFT over the past two years include ESB, Bank of Ireland, AIB, Munster Rugby, PREM Group, RSA, Vodafone, Cpl, SOLAS, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, the Teaching Council, WeddingDates.ie, The Burren Smokehouse, and GOAL.

### Impact Report Findings

Key findings from the LIFT Ireland impact report published today include:

- 1,450 people have been trained as LIFT facilitators over the past two years, enabling them to deliver the LIFT programme within their own workplaces and organisations.
- The youngest facilitator trained to deliver the LIFT programme is 14; and the oldest is 82.
- Over 6,000 people have participated in LIFT training sessions.
- Over 80% of all participants identified positive changes in their behaviour that they attribute directly to the LIFT process.
- The top organisational benefits identified by LIFT partners were:
  - Improved employee engagement;
  - Better relationship-building, communication and teamwork; and
  - Value for time and money.

Commenting on the report's findings, Joanne Hession, co-founder of LIFT, said: "Over the past two years, LIFT has built partnerships with over 50 businesses across Ireland, from the biggest public companies right down to small start-up enterprises. LIFT has also been introduced into Ireland's sporting organisations; non-profit and charity sector; families; community groups; schools; and public-sector organisations.

"Our aim at LIFT is to improve the quality of leadership in Ireland – from the kitchen table to the clubhouse; and from the classroom to the boardroom. What is unique about LIFT is that we focus on changing individuals first. We empower people one by one and, by doing so, we enable them to lift themselves, the organisations they are involved with, and wider society. We also encourage people to 'live LIFT' – to continue the process of participating in our roundtable sessions, and facilitating their own sessions, well beyond their initial eight-week training programme. We believe that, just like with any habit, you need to continuously practice your leadership skills in order to be a good leader."

## **Future Targets**

Ms. Hession said LIFT aims to have reached 10% of the Irish population by 2028.

“We are ambitious in our targets,” she said. “By our 10<sup>th</sup> year in operation, we aim to have delivered training to 10% of the population, helping them become better leaders at individual, organisational and societal levels. We are seeding LIFT into multiple sectors of Irish life, so that individuals can engage with it whatever their background and at multiple stages in their lives.

“Over the next two years specifically, our aims include strengthening the roll-out of LIFT within our current partner organisations; expanding our programmes for schools and young people; increasing the diversity of LIFT participants to ensure we reach into every corner and sector in Ireland; and sharing the lessons we are learning with international collaborators. We aim to have over 10,000 LIFT facilitators trained and 60,000 people across Ireland engaged in the LIFT programme in the next two years.”

## **Support During Covid-19: ‘Cocooning’ and ‘Bounce Back’ Packages**

Since the start of the Covid-19 crisis, LIFT has moved from being a face-to-face organisation to a fully online operation. Within days of public health restrictions being imposed, LIFT had developed new online programmes to support adults, schools, and those required to ‘cocoon’.

“We designed two special online programmes in response to Covid-19,” said Joanne Hession. “Our TY Bounce Back package is targeted at Transition Years in our partner schools, with the aim of helping young people to navigate this difficult time.

“And our Cocooning package has seen grandchildren running online LIFT sessions with their grandparents. This has the dual benefit of building up the resilience of the participants; and ensuring older people can remain connected with their loved ones while they are cocooned.

“In addition to these new programmes, our core LIFT sessions have continued throughout the Covid-19 crisis. In fact, many of our partners realised early on that running their LIFT sessions online offered them the opportunity to keep in contact with staff in a meaningful way, keeping teams connected and giving them an outlet to reflect on how they could adapt to the Covid-19 situation.”

## **Feedback from LIFT Partners**

The impact report published today contains testimonials from a range of LIFT partners.

Commenting on his organisation’s involvement with LIFT, Paul Flynn, Chief Operating Officer with Bank of Ireland, said: “I’ve seen an increase in openness and understanding throughout our organisation. LIFT deepens relationships, with participants around the table creating tangible organisational change. The increased employee engagement from LIFT not only improved company morale, but also increases productivity. The ROI from LIFT has impressed me.”

Darina Gallagher, Leadership Development Manager at ESB, said: “LIFT is a uniquely simple and effective process to strengthen people’s leadership abilities, and engage and connect people across all levels of the organisation. Our Graduate Programme colleagues became the first LIFT facilitators in ESB and are leading LIFT throughout our organisation, with positive feedback coming from all who participate. The programme gives people the time to reflect on both their personal and work lives and gives the opportunity for people to make a small commitment to change.”

LIFT Ireland’s two-year impact report is available to download [here](#).

**ENDS**

**Contact: Darragh McGirr / Martina Quinn, Alice PR & Events, Tel: 086-2599369 / 087-6522033, Email: [media@alicepr.com](mailto:media@alicepr.com)**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

LIFT Ireland is a not-for-profit initiative aimed at increasing the level of positive leadership in Ireland. The organisation was founded by Joanne Hession, who is a leadership expert with a background in entrepreneurship training, along with her brother, David Hession, an education accreditation expert, and Sonya Lennon, broadcaster, designer and social entrepreneur.

LIFT – which stands for ‘Leading Ireland’s Future Together’ – provides leadership and facilitation training to individuals and organisations across the country, ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs, NGOs, schools, sports organisations, and individuals from all walks of life.

Follow LIFT Ireland on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn at @LiFTIreland.

#### **Images**

Photos are available [here](#), for reproduction free of charge.

#### **Photo captions**

##### **Image 1**

Pictured at [LIFT Ireland](#) event in January 2019, are the organisation’s founders (L-R) Sonya Lennon, David Hession and Joanne Hession. The organisation, which aims to improve the quality of leadership in Ireland, published its two-year impact report **today, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. To date, six thousand people have participated in leadership skills sessions over the past two years thanks to LIFT.

LIFT works with organisations ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs, NGOs, schools, sports organisations, and individuals from all walks of life and aims to reach 10% of the Irish population by 2028.

##### **Image 2**

Pictured at the launch of [LIFT Ireland](#), which **today, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020** published its two-year impact report, LIFT co-founder Sonya Lennon. The not-for-profit initiative, which aims to improve the quality of leadership in Ireland, revealed in the impact report that it has trained six thousand people in leadership skills over the past two years.

LIFT works with organisations ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs, NGOs, schools, sports organisations, and individuals from all walks of life and aims to reach 10% of the Irish population by 2028.

##### **Image 3**

Pictured at the launch of [LIFT Ireland](#), which **today, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020** published its two-year impact report, is LIFT co-founder Joanne Hession. The not-for-profit initiative, which aims to improve the quality of leadership in Ireland, revealed in the impact report that it has trained six thousand people in leadership skills over the past two years.

LIFT works with organisations ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs, NGOs, schools, sports organisations, and individuals from all walks of life and aims to reach 10% of the Irish population by 2028.