



Merchants Quay Ireland

Homeless & Drugs Services

MERCHANTSQUAYIRELAND

A Community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice

Annual Review 2007

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Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO

Looking Back	3
Vision and Mission	4
Addressing Crisis	
<i>Open Access Homeless Services</i>	
- The Drop In Centre for People who are Homeless (Faiiltiu)	5
- Primary Health Care Services	6
<i>Open Access Drugs Service</i>	
- Needle Exchange - Health Promotion Unit	7
- Crisis Contact Service	7
- Outreach Service	8
- Family Support Group	8
- Work with Prisoners	8
Promoting Positive Change	
<i>Stabilisation Services</i>	9
<i>Settlement Service</i>	10
<i>The Integration Programme</i>	10
<i>Training & Work Programmes</i>	11
<i>Drug Free Treatment Services</i>	14
Towards a Fairer Society	
<i>Training</i>	15
<i>Research</i>	15
<i>Social Policy & Communications</i>	16
Supporting our Staff to Respond	
<i>Human Resources</i>	17
<i>Staff Training and Development</i>	17
Finance, Administration & Fundraising	18

LOOKING BACK

INTRODUCTION

In reflecting back over 2007 one can't but help being struck by the harsh reality of life for our service users. It is ironic that while Ireland enjoyed unprecedented economic success and prosperity the drugs issue continued to grow and people continued to sleep rough on our cities streets. The old adage "a rising tide lifts all boats" was not true for the people availing of our services.

Reflecting the harsh reality of homelessness and life on the streets the demand for our homeless services has continued to rise. Merchants Quay Ireland provides a crucial safety net for homeless people. Every morning seventy or more rough sleepers come into our service for breakfast and perhaps a shower. Homeless people are increasingly vulnerable to ill health. Our primary health care services (G.P. services, nursing, dentistry and chiropody) delivered 6,658 interventions in 2007 – a 32% increase on 2006.

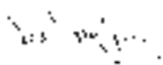
The use of heroin and other so called hard drugs is no longer a Dublin issue. Heroin is now available in all of our cities and in many of our towns across the country. In response to the spread of heroin nationwide MQI has been working to develop services outside of the Dublin region. In this regard we are currently building on our presence in the South East where construction has begun on new larger premises at St. Francis Farm – when completed this will bring the capacity of our residential treatment and rehabilitation programme to 28 persons at one time compared to 10 currently. We are also developing Family Support and Community Outreach Services in the four midlands counties of Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford. In addition to this 2007 saw the roll out of our National Prison Based Addiction Counselling Service in thirteen prisons across the state. This service is staffed by a team of 25 counsellors. Many people end up in prison as a consequence of their drug use. They are at great risk of reoffending and of experiencing increasing levels of drug related harm unless their addiction issues are addressed. This initiative marks a key step in addressing this issue,

The new initiatives outlined above are driven by the increasing prevalence of the drugs problem. In 2007 a total of 1,333 new individuals presented at our Needle Exchange Service in Dublin. Needle exchanges are a proven means for improving health in injecting drug users and for promoting engagement in treatment. It is essential that these public health initiatives are expanded to be available in all parts of Dublin and of the country where there is evidence of injecting drug use.

Our experience at Merchants Quay Ireland is that drug treatment works. Similarly, we know that there are pathways out of homelessness. In 2008 we will see the launch of new national strategies in the areas of homelessness and for the drugs issue. The success of these new strategies depends on ensuring that comprehensive and effective services are in place across the country. We need a network of crisis and emergency services at local level to ensure that help is available at the earliest possible opportunity, before problems become entrenched. The key to solving the problem of homelessness is the provision of long term housing for homeless people with the supports in place to ensure they do not fall back into homelessness. An effective drugs strategy must involve the development of an appropriate mix of treatment services from harm reduction initiatives to residential drug free treatment across the country.

From the vantage point of 2008 and the climate of economic downturn and recession I am fearful as to whether the political will exists to commit the necessary resources to address these issues. The first cutbacks announced by Government this year were targeted at homeless services. Drugs services have also been targeted for cutbacks, despite Government assurances that the most vulnerable in society would not be affected. We have spent the last decade addressing a crisis that was created by a failure to invest in vital social services in the 1980s. It would be a tragedy if the same mistakes were to be made today.

Any attack on services for the poorest people in society is an attack on society itself.



Tony Geoghegan
Chief Executive

MERCHANTS QUAY IRELAND

Merchants Quay Ireland is a national voluntary agency providing services for homeless people and for drug users. We provide creative and innovative responses to the issues of drug use and homelessness in Ireland.

Vision

We look forward to a society where nobody is without a place to call home and where drug related harm is minimized and the range and quality of drugs services is maximized.

Values

- Providing quality services for drug users and homeless people
- Offering access for the most marginalized
- Promoting positive change
- Working at the cutting edge
- Involving our Service Users
- Valuing our staff
- Managing finances prudently
- Promoting partnership

Mission

Merchants Quay Ireland is a community of hospitality, hope and justice. We seek to:

- Work for justice and opportunity for those who are excluded in partnership with those who share our aims
- Create a place of safety, compassion and welcome for all who enter our doors and offer high quality services to meet their needs
- Remain committed to supporting all who work in Merchants Quay to enable us to achieve our full potential in our various roles
- Believe in and cherish the value of every human being in keeping with our commitment to social justice coming from our origins in the Franciscan Tradition.

ADDRESSING CRISIS

OPEN ACCESS SERVICES

Open Access Homeless Services

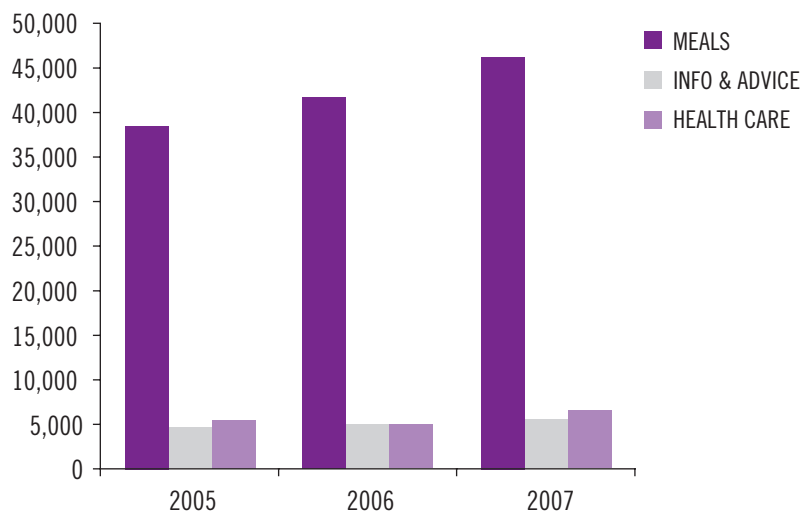
MQI (Open Access) is a good service. It helps with the loneliness. I had nowhere to go before. Good having the different services together. You can link between staff in various services

'ANGELA' (50), currently staying in Emergency Homeless Accommodation

The Drop-in Centre for People who are Homeless (Fáilteú)

The aim of the Drop-in Service is to provide a "one stop shop" offering a range of interlinked services meeting the key daytime needs of homeless persons with the twin purpose of minimising harm associated with life on the streets and offering clear pathways towards settlement and reintegration. Our Cook Street Centre is open seven days a week from 7.15a.m. to 4.30p.m. with shorter hours at weekends.

FIGURE 1. Homeless Services between 2005 and 2007



The services we provide for homeless people from this centre are as follows:

Information, Advice and Crisis Support Service: The drop-in service includes assessment of service users' needs, advice and information on health, social welfare, emergency accommodation, long-term housing and other issues. In 2007 we recorded 5,625 supportive interventions with service users of our homeless service. Interventions include key working sessions, referrals to emergency accommodation, social work services, medical services and social welfare services, help in contacting friends or family, access to drug treatment and support in a variety of other matters. The Dublin Simon Outreach Team links in with this service on a weekly basis.

Meals Service: Homeless persons are offered two meals a day (breakfast and lunch). A total of 46,431 meals were provided in 2007, an increase of 11% on the same period in 2006.

Primary Health Care Services

They treat everyone the same at MQI. You are not just treated for illnesses, they help out with clothes, showers and cleaning products. You wouldn't get the same in hospital

'EAMONN' (29) is homeless

MQI is working in partnership with the HSE in providing a primary health care service for homeless people. The service has General Practitioners, a dentist, nurses, a counsellor and a chiropodist. All told there were 6,658 health care interventions during the year. This represents an increase of 32% on 2006.

Nursing: In 2007 there were a total of 4,387 nursing interventions, or 366 per month. The drop-in nurse led clinic provides a full range of primary health care services such as wound care management, blood testing, sexual health, medication management, and women's and men's health issues. Mental health presentations range from acutely suicidal clients to those who need to be referred back to services they have lost contact with. Referrals to tertiary services such as A and E and other hospital services and advocacy are a large part of the nursing role.

The citywide Primary Care Safety Net Service, of which MQI medical unit is part, is still developing and will provide for consistency and continuity of care between those homeless services involved.

Counselling: Homelessness is often associated with severe stresses and difficulties in life, and it is not surprising that many people find it hard to cope. The Counselling Service for homeless people works at two levels – firstly providing a brief crisis counselling service targeted at service users in distress and secondly offering medium to long-term counselling relating to issues such as relationships and bereavement as well as issues of drugs and homelessness. In addition we provide group support for homeless service users attending our day programmes. We provided 437 counselling sessions in 2007.

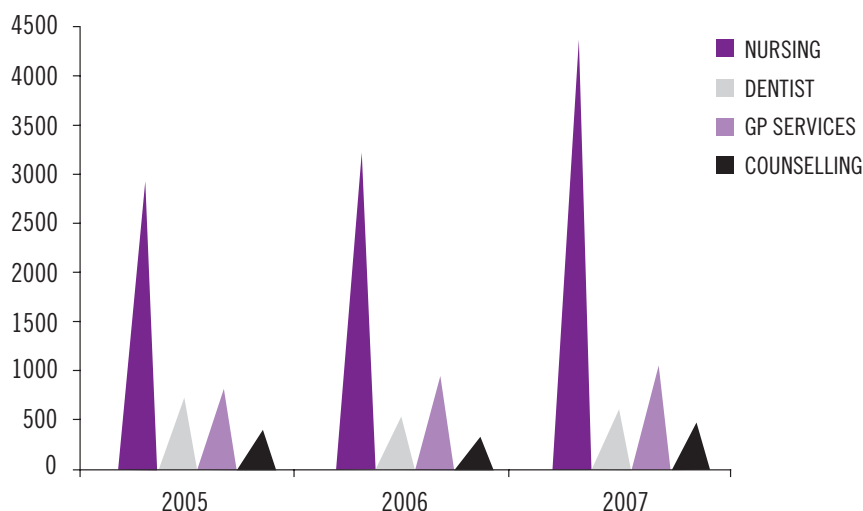
Dental Service: In 2007 there were 583 dental interventions, averaging 49 each month.

G.P Service: Our two GP's dealt with in the region of 1,033 consultations or 86 per month with a variety of acute and chronic illnesses.

Chiropodist: The chiropodist provided 91 interventions over the course of the year.

Acupuncture: We offer auricular acupuncture to address a variety of issues including stress and drug/alcohol stabilisation. A total of 123 service users availed of this service over the course of the year.

FIGURE 2. Primary Health Care Services 2005 - 2007



Open Access Drugs Services

These services can be accessed by drug users simply by walking in from the street. For this reason we are often the first place to which drug users turn for help. Services include:

Needle Exchange – Health Promotion Unit

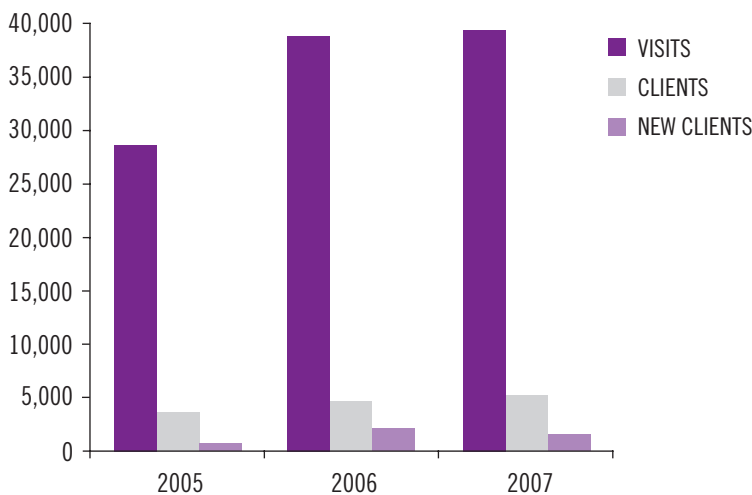
I'm not sharing works (needles and syringes) any more

'MARK' (25), Rough Sleeper

Here we provide drug users with information about the risks associated with drug use and the means to minimise such risks. We also offer drug users a pathway into treatment and the possibility of living life without drugs.

In our needle exchange and health promotion service our main focus is on HIV and hepatitis prevention, promoting safer injecting techniques and safer sex and on providing information on overdose and other risks. We also offer early referral to drug treatment services.

FIGURE 3. Attendance at HPU between 2005 and 2007



As can be seen from the above chart the number of visits to the needle exchange stayed steady at just under 40,000. The number of service users increased by 4% to 4,705. A total of 1,333 new injectors presented in 2007. In addition a total of 606 safer injecting workshops were undertaken with injecting drug users. The increases here serve as a reminder that heroin use remains at very high levels and that significant numbers of new people are beginning to use heroin every year.

The vast majority of those using the HPU service (84%) were male. Just under 1 in 7 were female. The age profile of heroin users appear to be getting older with 85% of the total being over 25 and almost half being over 30 (46%).

Crisis Contact Service

Many of the drug users who come to us are in crisis. Some have become homeless, others have financial problems or are in trouble with the law. Relationship or family breakdown is an issue for many people. We offer drug users practical help in getting through such difficulties – by providing counselling, advice and information, through referral to other relevant services or by providing support to people facing court action and working with people in prison.

Outreach Service

This service aims to make contact with drug users not engaged with services and to make referrals to Merchants Quay Ireland services as well as to other external agencies. In 2007 the outreach team contacted vulnerable drug users on the street, collected used needles and syringes and also liaised with local community groups, the Gardai, Dublin City Council and other drugs and homeless service providers.

Family Support Group

The Family Support Group meets regularly providing a forum where parents, and other close relatives and friends of drug users are offered support and advice on a range of issues. The participants provide support for each other and the group is continually open to new members joining. The Family Support Group is linked to the Citywide Family Support Network which offers an opportunity to raise issues at a national level.

Work with Prisoners

Merchants Quay Ireland endeavours to continue working with service users within the prison system. We offer support, advice and counselling with a particular focus on accessing appropriate post-release options. This process entails a close working arrangement with the Probation and Welfare Service and with members of the legal profession.

I actually find it great now I have to say. They have a great service here ... I have great respect for the staff here because most of the staff I've dealt with have been wonderful to me. If I needed any help I got the help no problem at all. They are great. That's what I say - I have the greatest respect for them

'GEORGE' (51)

PROMOTING POSITIVE CHANGE

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS PROGRAMMES

Stabilisation Services

These services offer the first steps away from crisis drug use and towards stability. They are aimed at people who are currently using street drugs, or those recently engaged in treatment and seeking more stability and structure in their lives.

Services include:

Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support:

Now I'm on methadone, I'm not injecting any more.

'CHRISTY' (38) had been injecting for 21 years

Methadone substitution therapy helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use. There were 30 service users on this programme in 2007.

Since I became a participant on the day programme I have something to look forward to every day. I'm getting my life back and I would love to learn about counselling to help other people.

'IAN' (27) is on methadone treatment

Supportive Day Programmes offering therapeutic groups, life skills training, personal development work and pre-employment training to help drug users reintegrate into society. Links with the City of Dublin VEC allow us to include a strong educational component in our stabilisation services, which is of considerable importance in addressing the educational disadvantage experienced by so many of our service users. There were 17 participants on this programme in 2007. Many managed to obtain FETAC Certs in areas such as Computer Literacy, Craft – Glass work, Video Expression, Personal and Inter-personal Skills, Preparation for work, Food and Nutrition

The Gateway Programme offers a bridge between crisis services and stabilisation services. This Programme provides one to one support linked to a range of leisure and learning opportunities. The aim is to encourage service users to examine alternatives to drug use. The programme offers access to more structured treatment, education and training. An average of 48 persons participated each month.

One-to-One Counselling assists service users availing of the Stabilisation Day Services to deal with emotional and psychological issues relating to their drug use. This service is provided for all of those availing of the prescribing service as well as those involved in the supportive day programmes. Relationship and bereavement support is a key part of this service.



(Clockwise from top) Fergus McCabe and David Connolly discussing the issues at MQI Seminar on Safer Injecting Drug Use in April. Tony Geoghegan greets Minister Pat Carey at a conference on Cocaine Use in Croke Park in June 2007. Plaque in memory of those who have died as a result of drug use at the Garden of Remembrance, St. Francis Farm, Tullow. Tony Geoghegan speaking at the opening of the "Garden of Remembrance at St. Francis Farm in December with MJ Nolan TD, Minister Pat Carey, St. Francis Farm Manager Joe McGran and staff member Liam Hunter.



(Clockwise from top)
 Merchants Quay Ireland Staff Nurse Lynda Harran speaks about risks associated with injecting drug use at MQI Seminar.
 Talking Turkey at St. Francis Farm.
 Mr. Pat Rabbitte TD with Cllr. Eric Byrne at Seminar on Safer Injecting at Merchants Quay Ireland.
 Pointing the Finger: Fr. Colm McGloinn OS with Tony Geoghegan and Minister Pat Carey at St. Francis Farm, Tullow.

Settlement Service

When I started coming to MQI first,...., I was homeless and I was on the streets for a short while and then the Corporation put me into a hostel for the homeless not too far away from here. I was there for a while, I linked in with the Settlement Team here in Merchants Quay and they actually got me transitional housing. Now I'm in my own place."

Pete" Age 43 is no longer homeless.

The Settlement Service is delivered to those seeking to move away from being homeless and we actively seek to include those who have a history of drug and alcohol problems. We work with homeless people from a variety of settings - rough sleeping, hostels, B&B's, short-term arrangements with friends/families and transitional and supported accommodation. We have a dedicated settlement service targeted at those using our residential drug treatment services, where a high proportion of participants have effectively no home to return to on completing the programme.

We use assessment interviews, individual support plans, one-to-one key working sessions, group support, personal development and life skills training, advocacy and pre and post settlement support to assist our service users to find, access, and sustain long-term appropriate accommodation. We have a dedicated Settlement worker for our Residential Drug Treatment Services who works to ensure that homeless persons becoming drug free in those services are able to secure appropriate long term housing.

During the settlement process the main issues being addressed with service users are accessing interim and long term accommodation, family relationships, money management, counselling, legal matters, and employment.

In 2007 the Settlement Team carried out 128 assessments and provided support to 91 persons, working with an average of 52 service users each month. Thirty six persons were successfully settled in 2007.

In addition, we also saw increased use of services such as money advice services and counselling, improved relationships with family members and friends and a return to employment, education or vocational training.

The Integration Programme

This innovative programme offers transitional accommodation to drug users who find themselves homeless after completing residential drug treatment. The programme aims at assisting the integration of former drug users into mainstream society by providing opportunities for those who had drug or alcohol problems to participate in group and one-to-one therapeutic sessions and activities.

These service users have transitional accommodation in a house in the Dublin suburbs or Athlone for a period of up to six months. Residents are offered one-to-one support, an aftercare group and a weekly community night with staff. Service users' settlement needs are addressed from the start of their stay. In 2007 there were 6 residents of the house in Dublin and 9 in the house in Athlone.

Pre- and Post -Settlement Support: Our settlement and integration service includes a pre-settlement support group and a drug free aftercare group particularly targeted at meeting the needs of persons with drug and alcohol problems. The aftercare group worked with an average of 6-8 people each week.

Pre - Tenancy Group: The pre-tenancy group is attended weekly by between 5 - 7 service users. The programme is run in twelve week modules and includes such sessions as accommodation seeking skills, budgeting, cookery, tenant responsibilities, problem solving and coping strategies. All service users are also offered a one-to-one service.

Training and Work Programmes

FAS – Community Employment Services: MQI works in partnership with FAS to provide hands on training for prospective drugs workers and for service users. This is done through a number of Community Employment (CE) projects based in our services. CE projects provide participants with skills that enable them to access permanent employment. In many cases our CE projects have often provided service users with their first experience of paid employment.

In 2007 a total of 130 persons participated in CE programmes at Merchants Quay Ireland. Almost half (45%) of those who completed a FAS placement at Merchants Quay in 2007 secured permanent employment or moved into full time further education. The others are actively seeking work.

Catering Training Programme: Merchants Quay Ireland, with assistance from FAS, and the Homeless Agency, continued to provide a culinary skills programme focused on providing “on the job” training in hygiene, cookery, food service and life-skills at a practical level. This programme is primarily aimed at homeless adults and persons in recovery. The Catering Training Programme prepares cooks and serves meals for up to two hundred people per day, in the Refectory kitchen at Merchants Quay Ireland and in our Open Access drop in service on Cook Street.

National Prison Based Addiction Counselling Service

Overview of Services

In 2007 Merchants Quay Ireland, in co-operation with the Irish Prison Service and its partners, began rolling out a new national counselling service for prisoners with drugs and alcohol problems. When fully rolled out the service will be available in 13 Prisons in all parts of the country. The service offers structured assessments and evidence-based counselling interventions with clearly defined treatment plans and goals. This occurs within the context of care planning within multidisciplinary teams.

Who can use this service?

Counselling is available to prisoners who have a history of drug use including opiates, cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines, LSD, anxiolytics, hypnotics, alcohol, cannabis and other illicit and licit drugs.

What services are offered?

The services offered include:

- Brief interventions,
- Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement therapy
- 12-step facilitation programme
- Relapse Prevention
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy which would also include problem solving approaches, development of alternative coping strategies, anxiety and stress management and anger management.
- Harm Reduction Approaches

By December 2007 MQI had recruited staff for ten of the thirteen prisons. These were Castlerea Prison, Cloverhill Prison, Cork Prison, Loughan House, Co. Cavan, Midlands Prison, Mountjoy Prison, Portlaoise Prison, Shelton Abbey, Co. Wicklow, St. Patricks Detention Centre and Wheatfield Prison. In 2008 we will be appointing staff to Dochas Women's Prison, the Training unit, Mountjoy and to Limerick Prison.

As of December 2007 we were providing 400 counselling hours in the prisons each month. In 2008 when the service is fully operational in all prisons this will increase to 1,000 counselling hours each month.

Drug Free Treatment Services

I have learned a lot of coping skills in High Park. I am starting to get to know myself and to have greater confidence.

'CLAIRE' (33)

Our Drug Free Treatment Services aim at providing easily accessible treatment for drug users who wish to become drug free. Service users can be self referred or may be referred from a wide variety of agencies across the country.

High Park Residential Programme

This is a 17 week fully residential programme designed to help participants to become and remain drug free. The programme is a low threshold programme that seeks to attract service users who might not otherwise engage in drug free treatment such as homeless drug users and female drug users. The emphasis is on assisting service users to gain insight into the issues which underpin their drug use and developing realistic measures to prevent relapse. The High Park programme offers individual care plans, which, where necessary incorporate in-house detoxification in partnership with community GPs, individual counselling, group therapy, educational groups, work assignments and recreational activities.

In 2007 there were 52 admissions to the High Park programme. Over two thirds (67%) were male and 33% were female (high by international standards). The proportion of homeless persons accessing the service remains very high at 38%. A total of 20 persons were admitted for detoxification in 2007 and 16 of these (80%) successfully completed the detoxification. Our Residential Settlement Worker continues to offer settlement support to homeless residents of High Park and St Francis Farm. This development has been very successful.

The St. Francis Farm programme has given me a chance to work on my addiction and to live a more productive life. Working on the farm was an important part of this improvement of self esteem, creativity and healing.

'PAM' (30)

St. Francis Farm

This is a therapeutic facility which offers a long-term programme of six months duration for people with a history of problematic drug use. We provide a safe drug free environment where service users can adjust to life without drugs and make positive choices about their future. We also afford service users the opportunity to explore the reasons for their drug use and to learn more effective coping mechanisms. We provide former drug users with access to training and education as a means to gaining employment and we enable service users to develop their individual, social and interpersonal skills

The programme covers areas of relapse prevention, one to one counselling, group therapy, self esteem seminars, assertiveness training, anger management, farm training, literacy skills, and computer skills training (ECDL). Service users also receive training in Emergency First Aid and in life skills and budgeting. In addition service users are offered the opportunity to participate in Yoga classes and reflexology and fortnightly spirituality workshops.

What makes St. Francis Farm unique is the fact that our programme is situated in a working farm environment. Service users gain work experience in animal care, vegetable production, and in general farming. The food produced at the farm is used to supply the kitchens in our various centres, feeding up to three hundred people every day. The St. Francis Farm programme had 54 participants in 2007, with just two women and 52 men. Seventeen residents moved on, with support from the staff team, after completing individual care plans of 3 to 6 months duration. A further 27 left after completing less than 3 months at the Farm. Ten residents remained with plans to complete programme in 2008.

Aftercare Support 2007

The Aftercare Support Service started in March 2007 and was initially based in St. Francis Farm however we now avail of facilities in the Parish Centre in Carlow and operate the service from there. We also ran a fortnightly support group in the evening which was well attended over the course of the year and the team provided addiction support to residents in the hostel for homeless persons in Carlow.

TOWARDS A FAIRER SOCIETY

TRAINING, RESEARCH AND SOCIAL POLICY

Training

In 2007 a total of 815 persons participated in Merchants Quay Ireland's various training courses. The courses offered included the following;

- Project Worker Training Programme
- Drugs Awareness Training Programme
- Information and Communications Technology
- Management Development Programme
- Volunteering Induction Training
- MQI/University College Dublin: Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills
- MQI/University College Dublin: Diploma in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills

Research

The MQI Research Team worked on a variety of projects in 2007 including:

Nature and Extent of Drug Use in the Clondalkin Area

The Clondalkin Local Drugs Task Force commissioned the Merchants Quay Ireland Research Department to conduct research project on the nature and extent of drug use in Clondalkin. The report found that the drug scene in Clondalkin is perceived to be becoming more problematic every year. There appears to be greater quantities of drugs, more varieties of drugs and younger people using drugs. Cocaine has become a frequently used recreational drug. Heroin is the overwhelming primary problematic drug of use and significant numbers of heroin users were not linked in with drug treatment services.

Older People's Experience of Housing and Exclusion

Merchants Quay Ireland was commissioned by the National Council on Aging and Older People to undertake a piece of research aimed at providing a demographic profile of older people experiencing all kinds of housing exclusion in Ireland. This study explored the experience, perceptions of housing circumstances and preferences of older people experiencing all forms of housing exclusion. The study identified implications for policy, service planning and delivery in terms of meeting the needs of this group and of prevention.

Dublin City Rapid Needs Assessment

Merchants Quay Ireland was commissioned by the Homeless Agency to undertake a Rapid Needs Assessment with a view to identifying the needs of individuals congregating in a number of city centre areas engaged in street drinking and drug use. The second aim was to promote awareness of and encourage engagement with existing drugs services where appropriate. This research, completed in 2007, found that 78% of persons congregating in public areas were homeless and that a majority (55%) said they were on the streets because they had nowhere else to go during the day-time. The range of service gaps identified by participants included issues around accessing emergency accommodation and the need for a diverse range of day and out-of-hours services. Also highlighted was the need for better access to appropriate drug treatment, education and training, and the importance of meeting the leisure needs of the group both in terms of social spaces and targeted activities.

An Assessment of the Numbers and Profile of EU10 Nationals using Homeless Services in Dublin

Merchants Quay Ireland were commissioned by Dublin City Council to undertake a survey and count of persons from the 10 new EU accession states who find themselves accessing homeless services in Dublin. The research found that a total of 283 people from the EU10 countries were using homeless services during the week of the count in December 2006. Of these almost two thirds (65%) were Polish; 10% were Lithuanian; and 9% were from the Czech Republic. Men accounted for 83% of respondents.

In addition to the above the Merchants Quay Ireland Research Team also engaged in evaluation of Merchants Quay Ireland services, specifically focusing on our Community Liaison service and on our Tenancy Sustainment Project.

Social Policy and Communications

In 2007 Merchants Quay Ireland continued to prioritize policy change in the areas of drugs and homelessness as part of its core work. In this regard we;

- Continued to participate in the Drug Policy Action Group which is focused on developing effective drug policy in Ireland
- Continued to run a Social Policy Forum within Merchants Quay Ireland which provides staff and service users with a forum where they can bring policy issues for attention.

In addition our Social Policy and Communications Officer participated in and contributed to the following policy orientated forums;

- The Homeless Agency Information Network
- The Habitual Residency Condition Coalition
- The South Western Regional Drug Task Force

2007 also saw the launch of a completely re-designed Merchants Quay Ireland website, the production of a new Safer Injecting Guide aimed at active drug users and the production of a number of policy submissions to various policy forums.

SUPPORTING STAFF TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY

Human Resources

Merchants Quay Ireland originated as a totally volunteer-based organization. However over the years we have become increasingly dependent on professional staff and in tandem with the growth of the organization, our staff numbers have expanded significantly. By the end of 2007 there were 205 full-time, part-time, community employment and volunteer staff, providing a wide range of services at Merchants Quay Ireland. We are now seeking to achieve best practice in Human Resource management and, in doing so, to foster a positive working environment for all at Merchants Quay Ireland.

The HR Department works to ensure that the organization has human resources policies that are in line with existing legislation and that achieve best practice in this area.

Volunteers: Volunteers have always been essential in the delivery of our services. In the early days the majority of staff were volunteers. Merchants Quay Ireland values the contribution and commitment that volunteers offer at all levels in the organization. The organization appreciates the invaluable contribution made by their experience, knowledge, skills, vitality, diversity and dedication. At any one time there are 20 – 30 volunteers involved in our various projects and services.

Areas of Work

- Job Planning and Recruitment
- Management Information Systems and Communication
- Staff Training and Development
- Development of Policies and Procedures
- Performance Planning and Review

Key Priorities

MQI like other charities is dealing with an increasingly complex legal framework in terms of employment law, health and safety legislation e.g. National Employment Rights Authority

A key challenge is to ensure a consistent approach to the interpretation of policies/procedures to ensure that fair decisions are reached.

In 2008 we will establish an Employee Consultative Committee to develop consultation regarding development and plans for the organisation which affect the welfare and conditions of our staff

Staff Training: In 2007 we ran 50 courses for our own staff and others working in Homeless and Drugs Services across Dublin. Issues covered included Motivational Interviewing; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; Issues of Diversity; First Aid Training; Theories of Addiction; Cocaine & Crack Cocaine and Network Computer Skills. We will be building further on this in 2008.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDRAISING

Finance & Administration

The financial resources of the organisation are managed closely in order to deliver the greatest level of quality services by achieving the best value for money.

The organisation has integrated financial planning into all aspects of decision making, thereby ensuring that the clients and stakeholders of Merchant Quay Ireland get the maximum benefit from funding.

Fundraising

In 2007 we received €686,386 from fundraising and general donations - an increase of 52% on 2006. To all who supported us we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Financial Report

The accounts of Merchant Quay Ireland are summarised below. These accounts cover the activities of Merchant Quay Project Ltd. (MQP) and Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives Ltd. (FSJI). These companies relate to the organisation's drug and homeless services respectively.

Income and Expenditure Accounts: Total income and expenditure for MQP and FSJI for the year ending 31st December 2007 was as follows:

	MQP	FSJI	Total
	€000	€000	€000
Income	4,480	1,744	6,224
Less: Expenditure	4,616	1,757	6,373
Surplus/(Deficit)	(136)	(13)	(149)

Income: Income from statutory agencies represents more than 80% of the income of MQP and FSJI. The remaining income in these companies was raised from grants and donations from charitable trusts, from individuals, from the corporate sector and through other fundraising activities.

Expenditure: Wages and salaries represent 77% of total overhead expenditure. Remaining overhead expenditure is broadly in line with that of previous years.

Balance Sheets: The Balance Sheets of MQP and FSJI as at 31st December 2006 are set out as follows:

MERCHANTS QUAY PROJECT	2007	2006
	€, <i>000</i>	€, <i>000</i>
Fixed Assets	124	113
Current Assets		
Debtors	826	900
Cash at Bank and on hand	1,525	378
	2,351	1,278
<i>Less:</i>		
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	(2,377)	(1,258)
Net Current Assets	26	20
Total assets less liabilities	98	133
Creditors	(101)	--
Net Assets	(3)	133
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Accumulated Surplus	(3)	313
FRANCISCAN SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES	2007	2006
	€, <i>000</i>	€, <i>000</i>
Fixed Assets	209	298
Current Assets		
Debtors	0	22
Cash at Bank and on hand	206	22
	44	44
<i>Less:</i>		
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	(246)	(156)
Net Current Assets	(40)	(112)
Creditors: amt falling due after one year		
Deferred Income	(191)	(194)
Net Assets	(22)	(9)
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Accumulated (Deficit) Surplus	(22)	(9)

NOTES
