



Merchants Quay Ireland

Homeless & Drugs Services

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A Community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice

ANNUAL REVIEW 2009



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The Merchants Quay Project is a company Ltd. by guarantee.
Reg Charity No CHY 10311

The Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives is a company Ltd. by guarantee
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Merchants Quay Ireland

Vision, Values, Mission

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.

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Compassion

Looking Back 2009

In 2009 the recession started to bite. During the course of the year we saw steep rises in the numbers becoming unemployed and falling into poverty. These trends bode ill for the future. We know from our own history that high levels of long term youth unemployment fed the drugs crisis in the 1980's, and equally that rising poverty can in the long run lead to higher levels of homelessness. A rising tide of desperation is in danger of sinking many boats. In 2009 we worked with 9,422 people. We saw a jump of almost 9% in numbers availing of our drugs services. Already in 2010 we have seen a 16% rise in those using our homeless services between January and June compared to the same period last year.



In these difficult times, Merchants Quay Ireland, just like everyone else has suffered sharp funding cutbacks. In 2009 we took a range of difficult steps to ensure that we could protect, grow and develop our frontline services to meet the increased need. We significantly pared back our costs in relation to areas like administration, research, training and other back office functions while at the same time agreeing new working arrangements with staff to ensure that we could develop new much needed initiatives for our service users.

The ground work undertaken in 2009 and earlier this year has allowed us to put in place a range of new initiatives to the benefit of our clients. These include:

- Developing extended hours day services for homeless persons in partnership with Focus Ireland to ensure that for the first time persons sleeping rough have somewhere to go for a meal and for shelter in the evenings.
- In partnership with Coolmine Therapeutic Communities and Respond! housing we have developed aftercare accommodation and vocational training initiatives for persons completing residential drug treatment.
- At St Francis Farm building work is almost completed on our new Detox facility – when up and running this will increase our bed capacity at St. Francis Farm from 10 to 26.
- We have increased the range of services we are offering across the four Midland counties of Westmeath, Offaly, Longford and Laois. We now have premises in both Athlone and Portlaoise and have in place a range of services including Family Support, Community Harm Reduction,

Rehabilitation and Aftercare Services and from October 2010 a new traveller specific drugs initiative.

- We are continuing to develop and deliver our services in the Prisons having successfully tendered for the delivery of the National Addiction Counselling Service for a further three years.

Merchants Quay Ireland is now delivering services in eleven counties across Ireland which simply reflects the fact that the drugs crisis is a national crisis. Addressing the drugs crisis is fundamentally about reducing human misery or it is about nothing. It should not be reduced to economics. Nonetheless in these era where policy is focused almost exclusively on reducing public expenditure it is important to note the fact that according to the British Home Office every £1 spent on drug treatment saves £3 in criminal justice costs alone. When Health savings are included the saving is £9.50. Investing in harm reduction service directly reduces health care expenditure. Investment in drug substitution treatment has been shown to reduce other healthcare costs and to reduce crime and investment in drug free treatment and aftercare can reduce expenditure on healthcare, criminal justice and social welfare. Most of all investing in all of these areas reduces the misery associated with drug use for everybody involved.

Tony Geoghegan
Chief Executive

Merchants Quay 1969 – 2009

- 1969 Bro. Sebastian and Bro. Salvador begin serving afternoon tea for homeless men and others in need from the parlor in the Franciscan Friary.
- 1970 They move afternoon tea to the Old Oratory. The number of men coming to the “Tea Room” continues to grow.
- 1977 The Tea Room begins serving breakfast to fill a gap in services while the Capuchin Food Centre is under refurbishment. Numbers for breakfast remain high after Capuchin reopens so the Tea Room continues serving breakfast.
- 1979 The Tea Room moves to a temporary building on the Friary grounds. As a result of generous donations of fish and chicken from local business men, the Tea Room begins serving a cooked meal on Sunday for 120-130 men.
- 1984 The Tea Room moves to a permanent base. A garage at the back of the Friary is converted and given a separate entrance from Cook St. This becomes St Francis’ Food Centre.
- 1989 Under the direction of Fr Sean Cassin, a new project is established to respond to the growing drug problem in Dublin offering information, counselling and referral to appropriate services. The demand for these services grows and the Merchants Quay Project begins to take shape.
- 1990 An Advisory Team is formed of professionals with experience in drugs and HIV services to define the direction of the project. The project takes on its first volunteers to meet the increased needs of clients.
- 1991 The Merchants Quay Project is registered as a limited company and granted charitable status. The objective of the project is to prevent the spread of HIV through drug use and related behaviour and to provide non-judgemental care and treatment to drug users with HIV and their families. As part of this, MQI opened the first NGO needle exchange service in the country.
- 1991 House in Swords opens, providing residential respite care programme and detox support.
- 1992 House in Monaghan opens, providing family breaks and a respite care programme.
- 1994 Day Programme begins, providing skills training and structured support programmes.
- 1995 High Park opens (replacing Swords house) providing a fully structured 16 week residential detox to drug free programme.
- 1996 The Fáiltiú Resource Centre is set up to cater to the daytime needs of homeless people. These services include counselling, settlement, information and advice, crisis intervention, personal development programme, low-threshold drop-in service and two meals per day.
- 1997 MQI links with U.C.D. and develops a formal accredited professional training programme in Drugs Counselling & Intervention Skills.
- 1997 Research department is established.
- 1998 St Francis Farm is given to Merchants Quay by the Franciscan Friars to be used as a therapeutic educational community. Settlement Service begins working with homeless people in Dublin.
- 2000 President McAleese formally opens the refurbished Fáiltiú Center.
- 2001 Homeless Service is expanded to 7 days a week, 10 hours a day.
- 2002 MQI hosts an International Conference on Homelessness and Drugs. Prince Charles visits Merchants Quay.
- 2007 Partnership with Irish Prison Service to provide addiction counselling services in all prisons.
- 2008 Midland Community Harm Reduction & Family Support Services established covering the four counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.
- 2008 Head Office, Training and Day Programmes move to new premises leaving core services at Merchants Quay.
- 2009 40th Anniversary of Homeless Services at Merchants Quay. 20th Anniversary of Drug Services.
- 2009 Expanded the MQI/UCD Drugs Counselling Course into Cork.
- 2009 Midlands Rehabilitation and Aftercare Programme established covering the four counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.

Addressing Crisis

OPEN ACCESS SERVICES

Open Access Homeless Services

In 2009 as a result of building work in the Franciscan Friary at Merchants Quay our services were severely restricted for a period of 6 weeks during January and February 2009. As a result of these restrictions our overall numbers for 2009 are generally lower than in 2008.

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 2007 and 2009.



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 2009 we recorded 4061 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 45,725 meals were provided in 2009. This is very similar to the number provided in 2008 despite the fact that the service was severely restricted in January and February due to construction work at Merchants Quay. Sunday remains our busiest day with more than 400 persons attending for breakfast or lunch each Sunday.

Primary Health Care Services

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 3,216 health care interventions during the year.

Nursing: In 2009 there were a total of 1958 nursing interventions, or 163 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 & 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.

At the Coalface: Nursing



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 455 counselling sessions in 2009.

Dental Service: In 2009 there were just 20 dental interventions. Building work and maternity leave meant that the service did not operate for most of the year.

G.P Service: Our two GP's had in the region of 776 consultations or 65 per month with a variety of acute and chronic illnesses.

Acupuncture: We offer auricular acupuncture to address a variety of issues including stress and drug/alcohol stabilisation. In 2009 up to 6 persons availed of this service each week.

My name is Steven Doyle, and I joined Merchant's Quay as a full time Nurse back in April 2009. I work as part of our medical team at MQI's Primary Healthcare Unit. We provide primary healthcare to people who are homeless including men and women who have problems with alcohol or drug use.

As you can imagine, being homeless or having a drug problem is a challenge in itself. But a host of medical issues are related to addiction and sleeping rough, and as a Nurse, I see many of these. **I can honestly say there is never a dull moment.** I might clean a wound or treat a minor injury, then see someone with an acute or chronic illness. Right now a big concern is treating chronic leg ulcerations. It's like a wound that won't heal, which is frustrating for us – and exhausting for our clients. We also test for blood-borne viruses like Hepatitis C.

The issues are sensitive, but we always speak openly with the men and women we help – whether we're talking about safer injecting practices or the connection between healing and a healthier diet. By understanding the nature of their wounds and other illnesses, they can become an active part of the healing process. And once they feel better, many begin working toward a better quality of life. **I feel honoured to care for each and every one of my patients at Merchants Quay Ireland.**

I can say from listening to their stories that there is a stigma around substance misuse and homelessness. But when you sit down and hear the hardships they've gone through in their lives – and still go through on a day-to-day basis – you see beyond the addiction and homelessness and the real person shines through. They are some of the gentlest, nicest people and despite all they've endured, they have so much respect for the ones who care for them.

Special thanks to Steven, our nurse, who also donates his time taking amazing photos of our wonderful staff and clients.

40th Birthday Party



Clockwise from top left:

- Cupcakes for everyone
- George Hook and Fr Caoimhín Ó Laoide, (Chair of MQI Board) cooked breakfast for a hungry crowd.
- Now we're cookin'!
- The staff of Open Access celebrate 40 years of service.

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

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.

In 2009 the number of visits to the needle exchange was just under 30,000. The number of service users was 4,092. A total of 642 new injectors presented in 2009. In addition a total of 1,112 safer injecting workshops were undertaken with injecting drug users. The figures 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.

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 2009 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 Clients in Custody

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.

Promoting Positive Change

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS PROGRAMMES

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:

Stabilisation Services

Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support:

Methadone substitution therapy helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use. There were 19 service users on this programme in 2009.

Into Education and Employment offers 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 for this programme, which is of considerable importance in addressing the educational disadvantage experienced by so many of our service users. There were 12 participants on this year long programme in 2009.

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 95 persons participated each month.

Settlement Service

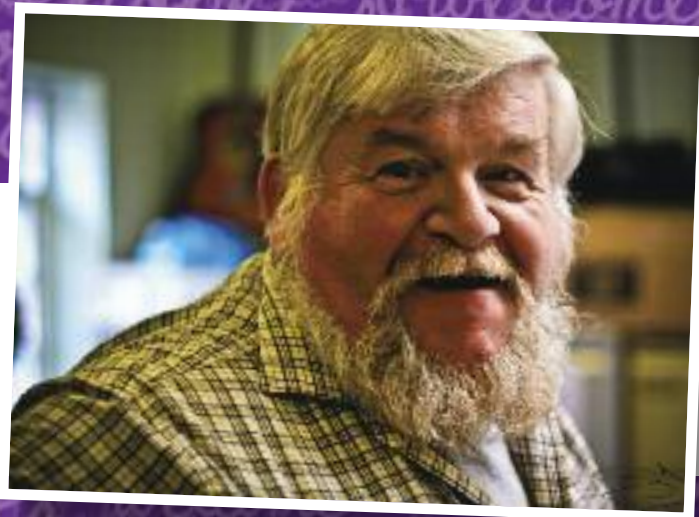
The Settlement Service is delivered to those seeking to move away from being homeless and we actively seek to include those who have a history of drug and alcohol problems. We work with homeless people from a variety of settings - rough sleeping, hostels, B&B's, short-term arrangements with friends/families 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 2009 the Settlement Team (including our High Park Settlement Worker) provided support to 92 persons working with an average of 62 service users each quarter. In terms of outcomes 43 of the 92 clients (47%) were resettled during the course of the year, with 10 (23%) returning to the family home, 9 (21%) moving into housing without needing further support and 24 (56%) moving into housing with either on site support or visiting support,

Our Staff and Volunteers



Clockwise from top left:

- Laurence
- Clare & Angela
- Deirdre & Gabriella
- Kevin
- Lorraine & Mary

Opposite page, clockwise from top left:

- Moses
- Robert & Mags
- Sr Bridgit
- Bernie and Lynda
- Martin
- Andrea
- Sharon, Lynda, Mags, Ryan, Bernie and Bernie

are the Heart of

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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. 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. All service users are also offered a one-to-one counselling and support during their stay. In 2009 a total of 5 people stayed at Ballymunt House during the course of the year and four were successfully moved on to long term accommodation.

Training and Work Programmes

FAS – Community Employment Services: MQI works in partnership with FAS to provide hands on training for prospective drugs workers, clients and post-treatment 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 2009 a total of 121 persons participated in CE programmes at Merchants Quay Ireland. Of those 49 completed their FAS placement at Merchants Quay during the course of the year. Of these 20 (41%) secured permanent employment and 3 (6%) moved into full time further education. In addition 12 (24%) completed a MQI residential or community based drugs intervention programme as part of their CE project. 14 (29%) were still seeking employment at the end of the year

Midlands Family Services

The problem of drug use has spread out from Dublin to the Midlands in recent years. There is now a significant and growing problem with heroin, cocaine, headshop drugs and other substances in towns such as Athlone, Portlaoise, Birr and Longford. With support and funding from the Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force Merchants Quay Ireland is now providing much needed services in the four Midlands counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath.

The MQI Family Support and Community Harm Reduction Team was established late in 2008 and provides dedicated outreach services for individuals actively using drugs and Family Support Services focussed on the needs of the families of active drug users

The team consists of Two Family support Workers and two full time and two part time Outreach Workers working across the four counties:

1. Provision of Family Support Services

This involves the provision of services and interventions that support families in carrying out their functions. Such services often concern counselling, guidance and advice. Family support is seen as increasingly important in the areas of drug treatment and prevention.

The Family Support Service assists families to:

- deal with the trauma associated with discovering their loved one is involved in drug use
- work with vulnerable families in the area of drugs prevention
- act as a reliable source of information and advice on drug use and related issues
- deal with the reaction of neighbours and others to this fact
- overcome self blaming responses
- create positive coping strategies that will help parent and thus the drug user
- make positive decisions
- build their capacity to respond
- set rules of behaviour for those living in their house

- challenge views that they caused it, can control it, or can cure it.

We also provide one to one support by appointment for parents and other close relatives seeking advice and support. We work to proactively link people with other support or treatment services that may be relevant to their needs.

In the year from July 2009 to June 2010 our Family Support Service providing services to 499 person across the four counties, with 215 participating in Family Support Groups, and 399 accessing one to one support (115 were accessing both service types).

2. Provision of Community Harm Reduction Services

We are aware that most local people and organisations are very concerned about the level of public and community harm associated with drug use in their communities. They are also very worried about the risks that drug users may expose themselves to.

Aims

The aims of this service are as follows:

- To act as a resource for community groups in the target areas in their efforts to minimise the impact of problem drug use on their communities.
- To reduce the level of individual and community harm experienced in local communities as a result of drug use in the target areas.
- To reduce the associated level of public health risk experienced in the designated areas.
- To provide harm reduction and crisis support services to local drug users in places and at times where such services are unavailable.
- To ensure that problems associated with drug use are minimised.
- To promote a partnership model between Residents associations, Estate Management Committees, Community Policing services and Midlands Outreach Service in tackling the drugs issue at local level.

Our harm reduction service was provided needle exchanges to 497 clients in the same period. 700 one to one harm reduction advice sessions were also provided for clients during the course of the year.

Midlands Rehabilitation and Aftercare Service

Merchants Quay Ireland, with the support of the Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force established a Rehabilitation and Aftercare Service in September 2009. The purpose of this service is to provide a range of rehabilitation and aftercare supports targeting clients from the region including those exiting drug treatment or exiting prison. This involves assisting clients in the process of regaining their capacity for daily life from the impact of problem drug use and enabling their re-integration into their community.

Our Rehabilitation and Aftercare Worker provides case management for clients with a view to ensuring that all have their needs assessed, and have the opportunity to participate in developing a care plan offering a pathway towards rehabilitation. She also provides psychosocial support for persons leaving drug treatment or released from prison via one to one support and aftercare group work.

In the nine months from October 2009 to June 2010 a total of fifty nine individuals accessed the services. Of these, forty seven were referred from other agencies and twelve individuals self referred to the service.

Places and Programmes



Clockwise from top left:

- Art Room – Into Education and Employment- Chapelizod
- Tending the turkeys – St Francis Farm – Tullow
- Newest expansion of St Francis Farm – Tullow
- Royal Back of Scotland generously funded a new van for High Park
- Sr Brid in action – Health Promotion Unit – Merchants Quay

National Prison Based Addiction Counselling Service

Overview of Services

Merchants Quay Ireland, in co-operation with the Irish Prison Service has been delivering the national counselling service for prisoners with drugs and alcohol problems to 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 in the context of care planning within multidisciplinary teams.

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

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

Outcomes

In 2009 the Addiction Counselling Service provided in excess of 1,000 counselling hours in the prisons each month. MQI Addiction counselling service engaged with a total of 1,196 prisoners over the course of the year. The service has been successful in attracting new entrants into treatment. A clear majority (57%) of our clients had never before been engaged in treatment.

Opiates were identified as the primary drug used by more than half (53%) of service users. Alcohol (18%) and Cocaine (16%) were the next most common primary drugs. Results from an internal evaluation survey indicated that prevalence of drug use was substantially reduced for counselling participants with 73% of those surveyed indicating that they had been using illicit drugs when they first availed of the counselling service while just 34% indicated they still used illicit drugs at the time of the survey

The vast majority (89%) of service users found the counselling service to be useful or very useful and 93% indicated that they would recommend the service to another prisoner.

Drug Free Treatment Services

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 2009 there were 46 admissions to the High Park programme, 30 (65%) were male and 16 (35%) were female (high by international standards). The proportion of homeless persons accessing the service in 2009 was 59%, a significant increase compared to 2008 where 47% of our admissions were homeless. A total of 13 persons were admitted for community assisted detoxification in 2009 and 9 (70%) of these successfully completed the detoxification. 19 (41%) of clients completed the full programme. This figure compares well with international norms and is particularly positive in the light of the relatively low threshold of access to the service.

Our Residential Settlement Worker continues to offer settlement support to homeless residents of High Park and St Francis Farm. This programme has been very successful with 14 clients referred and admitted into transitional and supported housing in 2009.

In 2009 more than 30% of clients come from outside Dublin City and County. This reflects the spread of opiate use outside its traditional base in Dublin and a consequent demand for drug treatment in the regions.

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, with support from FAS, 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 31 participants in 2009, with just 2 women and 29 men. 8 (26%) clients were from the South east. 10 residents moved on, with support from the staff team, after completing individual care plans of 3 to 6 months duration. A further 10 left after completing less than 3 months at the Farm. Seven residents remained with plans to complete programme in 2009.

Building work on the extension programme at St. Francis Farm will be completed in Autumn 2010. When completed the St. Francis Farm programme will be in a position to provide services for 26 clients at any one time, compared to just 10 currently. We will be offering a full medical detox programme linked to a 14 week residential rehabilitation programme.

At the Coalface: Residential drug treatment



Marie loves to laugh. You'd notice that first about this young mother with the sparkling blue eyes. And she's not above laughing at herself, at finding humour in all she's been through. Because on her journey toward a drug-free life, Marie has learned to face both good and bad. She's forthright about it all. The beloved horse she rode every night as a teenager, her devastation when he was sold. Out of school at 14... troubles with drinking and smoking hash... the violence at home. Now in her 30s, she seems to have lived a lifetime. In and out of treatment while her mother cared for her children, Marie had issues with multiple drugs – typical for heroin users – making it doubly difficult to stop using.

She hit rock-bottom before realising her true source of strength: her children. By then her own mother was out of patience – the kids would always have a home, but Marie was on the streets. “She was a great supporter, and I'd be lost without her... I ended up homeless then and in the hostels. I used to have a photograph of me kids on the shelf and I wanted to stop taking [the drugs] but I couldn't. No pride, no dignity – everything just goes out the window. So I decided I needed to get help.”

Like many of Ireland's nearly 15,000 heroin users looking to break the addiction cycle, Marie faced an uphill battle. She'd decided to seek treatment, but was still surrounded by drug users at the hostel – including a friend who smoked heroin constantly. “I used to sleep with a T shirt over me face so's not to smell it...”

Even at High Park, our residential treatment programme, it wasn't easy... especially for a woman. Of every ten drug users in treatment, just three are female. Marie explains that it's tougher for women “With children especially. I don't think I could go through treatment knowing that my kids were in someone else's house being looked after... it's very hard on the mothers and I can only imagine what it's like on the kids.”

She credits Merchant's Quay staff for helping her stay in the programme. “They sat up with me 'til one or two o'clock in the morning and if you were going through something they'd ask... they won't let you hide in any corner. With other places I never really got that.”

Marie remembers when she'd turned the corner. It was, she recalls, “when my kids came up to see me. I just started to realise that I want to be there for my kids. From that moment on I really started putting in the work attending our aftercare sessions. She couldn't be more delighted, summing it up with customary wit: “I used to ring High Park when I left and I'd be havin' a chat with the staff and I'd say, 'I want to come back.' And they'd say, 'We miss you... but we don't miss you that much!' I'd be lost without the support from Merchants Quay. I'm grateful that I got the chance to go in there. Me kids they are benefitting so much from it.”

Aftercare Support

The Aftercare Support for clients is available from facilities in the Parish Centre in Carlow provided by St. Francis Farm Staff . In addition clients from Dublin are able to avail of our Dublin based aftercare services.

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.

rehabilitation

Training

In 2009 a total of 686 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
- Volunteer Induction Training
- MQI/University College Dublin: Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills – Delivered in both Dublin and Cork
- MQI/University College Dublin: Diploma in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills

One hundred and forty persons enrolled in our three UCD courses two of which were delivered in Dublin and the other in Cork. MQI Staff participation in training was very high accounting for 168 participants. A further 378 training participants, comprising staff from other organisations involved in the delivery of drugs and homeless services, participated in short courses delivered at MQI.

Support

Finance

2009 was another difficult year for Funding given cut backs in state finances. MQI has continued to focus on maximising the resources spent on direct client service costs. MQI continues to provide value for money with €0.87c in each Euro donated going to client services.

Income for 2009 was down €25k due mainly to funding cuts offset by the full rollout of services to the Prisons and Midlands. Expenditure was up €78k due to increased spend on fundraising costs €147k, contract catering €51k, Repairs and Maintenance €29k. There was a combined deficit of €38k for the year.

Due to funding cuts of up to 10%, MQI continued to implement cost saving measures on all expenditure lines in order to operate within our means. These measures include the following areas:

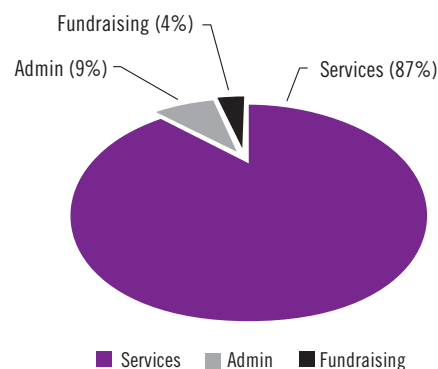
- Focus on flexibility of services and inter operability of staff
- Continued implementation of a salary pay freeze / increment freeze.
- Renegotiation of contracts and pricing for all overheads.
- Performing a reorganisation of finance, HR and administration.
- Utilisation of outsourcing where appropriate & cost effective.
- Continued consolidation of administration.
- Enhance financial information and empowerment of service managers to effect savings and control budgets.
- Implementation of higher levels of integrated automation throughout MQI

Implementation of the cost saving measures has meant that for the most part front line services to those in need continued throughout the year untouched by cuts.

The year end 2009 balance sheet position is a €129k deficit due mainly to the recognition of pension liability in line with FRS17. Allowing for a full year impact of the cost containment measures outlined

above we anticipate a small surplus in 2010 sufficient to strengthen our balance sheet position.

Figure 2. 2009 Where the money was spent



MQI will continue to implement best practice taking into account recommendations from Industry, the Statutory sector and our auditors. The Finance and Audit sub committee met quarterly in order to continue strong financial governance within MQI in line with best practice.

Enhancements to internal controls recommended by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) in March 2009 including a finance policy manual, automation, and month end checks and balances were implemented.

In 2009 MQI received € 721k (10% of running costs) from fundraising. The support of those who donate to MQI is vital in delivering services to the poorest and most marginalised in our society.

The outlook for 2010 is for another difficult year with further cut backs in state funding projected. This will further necessitate optimising cost efficiencies and increasing donation revenues. MQI is committed to continuous improvement in how funds are spent and to maximizing the value for these funds.

Income and Expenditure Account for MQI for the year ended Dec 31st 2009

	Total 2008	Total 2009	Difference
Income	6,978,716	6,953,064	-25,652
Expenditure	-6,907,819	-6,986,265	-78,446
Surplus (Deficit) for the year before interest	70,896	-33,202	-104,100
Interest received	8,230	-4,334	-12,564
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	79,128	-37,536	-116,664
Accumulated surplus at 1 January 2009	-25,407	53,721	79,128
Accumulated surplus at 31 December 2009	53,721	-129,034	-182,755

Merchants Quay Project Ltd. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2009

	2009		2008	
	€	€	€	€
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets		108,418		135,104
Current Assets				
Debtors	314,485		564,258	
Cash at bank and in hand	554,878		319,109	
	<u>869,363</u>		<u>883,367</u>	
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	-739,794		-799,848	
Net Current Assets		<u>129,569</u>		<u>83,520</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		237,987		218,624
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)		-219,061		-156,285
Net assets excluding pensions liability		18,926		62,339
Net Pension liability		-138,651		0
Net liability including pension liability		<u>-119,725</u>		<u>62,339</u>
Represented by: accumulated (deficit)/surplus		<u>-119,728</u>		<u>62,339</u>

Franciscan Social Justice Initiative Ltd. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2009

	2009		2008	
	€	€	€	€
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets		93,933		150,074
Current Assets				
Debtors	184		24,151	
Cash at bank and in hand	232,693		228,273	
	<u>232,877</u>		<u>252,424</u>	
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	-242,613		-268,424	
Net Current Assets		-9,736		-16,565
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>84,197</u>		<u>133,509</u>
Deferred Grants (Capital Grants)		-93,506		-142,129
Deferred Grants (Revenue Grants)				1
Deficiency of Assets		<u>-9,309</u>		<u>-8,619</u>
Capital and reserves				
Income and expenditure account		-9,309		-8,619
Total reserves		<u>-9,309</u>		<u>-8,619</u>



A community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice. 1969 – 2009

