



# Sankalpa

Annual Report 2013



## Our Vision

A sustainable pathway out of addiction leading towards a culture of recovery in Finglas & Cabra, built by support organizations and service users working in solidarity.

## Directors and other information

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### Board of directors

Colm MacCarvill (Chairperson)  
Michael Quilligan (Secretary)  
Michele Bibby (Treasurer)  
Martin Meagher  
Jennifer Clancy

### Manager

Dr Tom O Brien

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Registered Charity Number: **16174**

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## Vision, mission and aims

### Vision

A sustainable pathway out of addiction leading towards a culture of recovery in Finglas & Cabra, built by support organizations and service users working in solidarity.

### Mission

To operate, manage and deliver a holistic drugs rehabilitation service in the Finglas & Cabra area to assist people in recovery from addiction and facilitate development towards a non-dependent lifestyle through the provision of therapeutic, personal development and creativity programs.

### Aims

- To promote equality, respect and fairness among our service users
- To provide therapeutic and learning environment that is safe
- To provide high quality interventions in accordance with best practice
- To work in partnership with other agencies to maximize outcomes for our service user
- To support the use of non-medical approaches to pain and problems
- To promote critical thinking and problem solving among our service users
- To be open and honest in all our dealings with people and to share knowledge and experiences in a democratic way
- To accept that the only person who can overcome an addiction is the person who developed it, and that our role is to facilitate them in this in every way we can

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## Summary

In 2013 Sankalpa Addiction Services had contact with 145 referrals, completed 89 assessments and engaged 72 clients in 2013 across three services. On Turning Point we had 999 individual group and one to one attendances. We are continuing to work on improving quality and outcomes for all our services. On Connect to the workplace we increased the number of employers offering us work placements and so created new pathways into recovery for our service users.

|                                 | Referrals | Assessments | Service users |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Turning Point</b>            | 105       | 56          | 47            |
| <b>Connect to the workplace</b> | 22        | 18          | 13            |
| <b>Explore</b>                  | 19        | 15          | 12            |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 145       | 89          | 72            |

This work is built on and supported by new corporate and clinical Governance structures. Our Governance handbook can be found on our website. We redesigned our website, to reflect our commitment to transparency, governance, accountability and quality. We re-branded our programs to improve communication between our services users and stakeholders.

The staff team at Sankalpa Addiction Services are highly skilled and committed to the work of the service. In 2013 they underwent a competency review of their skills in line with the DANOS standard. The competency review was matched with individualized training plans for each staff member. The training is carried out through a mix of skills sharing, in house training and external training. In 2013 we focused on up skilling the core staff in the Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) and Motivational Interviewing to intermediate level. Staff are supported through a new performance management system, one to one supervision and clinical team supervision with an external clinical supervisor.

## Message from the Chairperson

It is a great privilege to address you as Chairperson of Sankalpa for a second year. I am delighted to state that after a number of difficult years, 2013 was a very fruitful and extremely hardworking year in Sankalpa, with the Board and staff showing their continued dedication to the on-going development of the organization.



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This year marked the mid-point of our strategic plan to turn Sankalpa from a CE Rehabilitation program only, to a charitable organization that offers the public three individual programs with **Turning Point**, **Connect to the Workplace** and **Explore**.

I am pleased to be able to report that Sankalpa has managed to exceed all our service obligations and targets, including the expansion of Turning Point, Connect to the Workplace and Explore, within continuing financial restraints. Sankalpa has increased its number of participants, while offering improved services.

I would like to thank all the representatives from various organizations that supported Sankalpa in the establishment and improvement of Turning Point, through the Inter-Agency Working Group. I would also like to thank each of the organizations that referred participants to Sankalpa and received referrals from Sankalpa (both list-

ed below), helping to keep the continuum of services available to participants.

The need for charities to be transparent and accountable to the public, and funders was never more evident than towards the end of 2013. Sankalpa has continued to improve the structures and governance of the entire organization in line with the Governance Code. We warmly welcomed the appointment of Ireland's first Charity Regulator in February 2014. It is the intention of the Board and management to continue to use [www.sankalpa.ie](http://www.sankalpa.ie) to showcase Sankalpa's commitment to complete transparency.

Without our funders: The Health Service Executive and the Department of Social Protection, the services offered to our participants simply would not exist, and great thanks should be given for their continued support. I would also like to thank the Finglas Cabra Local Drug Task Force

(LDTF), and the Dublin 7/11 Addiction Network, their continued support is of great value to Sankalpa.

I wish to thank all the directors for their invaluable contributions and commitment during the past year. On behalf of the Board, I wish to pay tribute to the leadership of Tom O'Brien, the Manager of Sankalpa, and the fine work and dedication of all our staff and volunteers. Sankalpa,

in comparison to many organizations has a small but exceptional workforce.

Finally, I would like congratulate and thank each and every participant, each of whom have taken the step(s) necessary to fight life's adversities and tackle drug addiction. Your courage is an inspiration to others.

*Colm MacCarvill*  
*Chairperson*

*"I value this work placement as it gives me a sense of purpose, gets me involved with people who understand and gives me structure. I've been given responsibility so its a confidence boost for me as well. This is good for me so that I can talk freely and manage things that I might be struggling with"*

*(Anonymous participant - Connect to the Workplace)*



## Foreword from the Manager

Welcome to the Sankalpa Addiction Services Annual Report 2013. If you are new to Sankalpa, I hope that this report will give you an understanding of the service. This year has seen the Sankalpa consolidate its services and increase the number of service users attending our programs. Addiction to substances continues to present challenges in the Finglas and Cabra communities. Sankalpa understands we cannot solve the drug problem on our own. It is only in working together can we build sustainable pathways out of addiction and in to recovery.



Irish society is starting to emerge from a long period of economic, cultural and social recession. Central to our recovery is the need to create employment opportunities for all of our citizens. There is a wealth of evidence to support the view that the lack of educational and employment opportunities in communities like Finglas is a significant contributory factor in the high rates of drug addiction.

In recognition of this view Sankalpa developed **Connect to the workplace**. This is a Community Employment Drug Rehabilitation Project for service users who have become drug free and are in recovery. By supporting the service users connect

to the workplace, we help to build their self confidence and skills (recovery capital) which helps to sustain their recovery and increase their opportunities of gaining employment. As you will see when you read Ellen's testimonial, Connect to the workplace is meeting an important need on the treatment and recovery continuum. In 2013 there were 22 referrals, 18 assessments and 13 service users on the program.

At the other end of the continuum we have developed **Turning Point**, to support those service users who need the support to become and to remain stable on their prescribed medications.

Turning Point is a six month therapeutic program, that uses a case management approach to support the service user achieve stabilization goals with the view to preparing for the next step in the continuum of treatment and recovery. Turning Point is meeting a need among our target group for structured therapeutic day program, with next step supports. In 2013 there were **105 referrals** to Turning Point for Stabilization.

Sankalpa continues to deliver Educational progression through the **Explore** program, for service users seeking to lay the foundations for further education, treatment and recovery. Education can play an important role in supporting the service user develop the confidence needed to discontinue drug use.

**Dr. Tom O'Brien**  
Manager



CLr Anthony Connaghan talking to Brian Murphy on a visit to Sankalpa

## Overview of 2013

This year 2013, was a significant year in the redevelopment of Sankalpa. We implemented the 80% of the actions and objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan 2012 - 2013. We changed from offering one service in the form of a Special Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment Scheme to today, where we offer three core services; Connect to the workplace, Turning Point and Explore. We have put in place new corporate and clinical governance structures for the organization.

Sankalpa as part of its strategic plan, set for itself a central goal of reviewing our Governance Structures, Human Resources, Clinical Governance and performance management so that the organization would be in a stronger position to meet the new and emerging needs of our stakeholders (Service users, Funders, Community, Local organizations, Staff and board members).



**Connect to the workplace** is a Special Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment Scheme, working with service users who have become drug free and are seeking supports to reintegrate back into their communities through employment and educational supports.



**Turning Point** is a new early recovery stabilization service working with service users, seeking support to stabilize on their prescribed medications with a view to moving to the next part of the addiction services continuum.

**Explore** is an education program (FETAC Level 4) funded by the CDET, for service users in treatment who require education supports to enhance their employment opportunities. Explore forms part of a local continuum of educational services that includes the Voyages program (FETAC Level 3).

## Governance

In 2013 we registered our commitment to adopting the Governance Code for voluntary and charitable organizations. We put in place a plan to become fully compliant with the Governance Code with support from Quality Matters, who facilitated a number of board meetings as part of this process. Following this work, the board approved Sankalpa's Governance Handbook on the 20th of June, 2013.

The new handbook can be downloaded from our website at; <http://sankalpa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Sankalpa-Governance-Handbook-About-Page.doc.pdf> The handbook sets out Sankalpa's policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of the organizations governance from the perspective of the Board. The handbook documents the legal obligations of Board Members as well as good practice standards.

### Principles guiding the Board of Management of Sankalpa

- i. Provide vision and leadership for our organization.
- ii. Be accountable to all stakeholders including service users and funders.
- iii. Monitor all financial activity and ensure all resources are used prudently, effectively, transparently, and are accounted for.
- iv. Monitor and review all elements of activity to ensure Sankalpa complies with all legal obligations and good practice.
- v. Have clear and effective working practices and clearly defined roles for our Board members.
- vi. Behave with integrity in the execution of our duties and as representatives of the organization.
- vii. Respect and support the capacity and leadership skills of our CEO.

Sankalpa is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. All members of the Board are also directors. There are three officer roles on the board, - the chair, the treasurer and the company secretary. The handbook outlines members code of conduct, the process for joining the board, rotation of board members, leaving the board, and board of management review.

## Promoting a quality service

Promoting a quality service is at the heart of our governance practice. Sankalpa works through a system of continuous quality improvements to ensure that we provide a responsive, reflexive and high-quality service to our service users and that we utilize the skills of our staff team and financial resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. We are working towards QuADS compliance. Sankalpa's Quality Assurance Policy details our approach to Continuous Quality Improvement. We systematically collect and use information about service provision in order to improve the service we provide to our service users.

## General Responsibilities of the Board

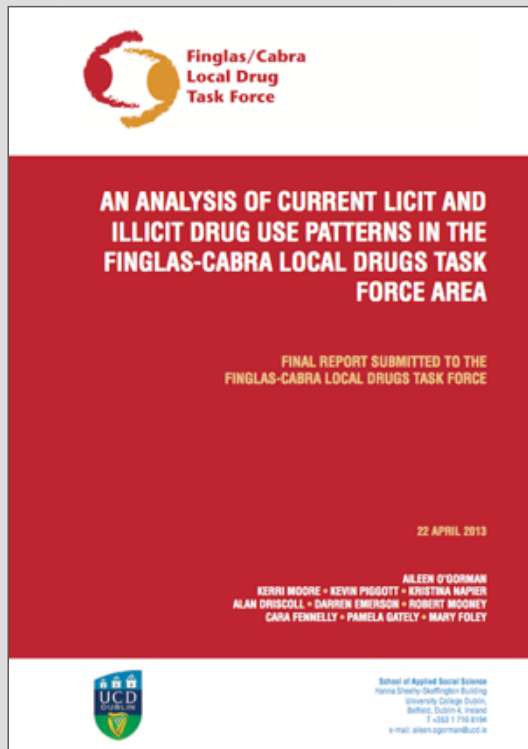
- Upholding and working towards the vision, mission, values and objectives of the organization and ensuring the organization continues to work towards these.
- Acting in the interests of the company at all time in relation to assets, property, statutory obligations and management requirements as outlined in the Guidebook.
- Ensuring the organization complies with relevant legal requirements.
- Promoting prudent and effective management of organizational resources.
- Ensuring there are strategies and policies in place that will support the objectives of the organization.
- Developing and monitoring effective risk management strategies for the organization.
- Developing and monitoring internal systems that are transparent and accountable to stakeholders.
- Formally registering conflicts of interest or loyalty with the Board of Management.
- Not accepting gifts or gifts in kind in the capacity of Board member.
- At all times acting with integrity and upholding the interests of the organization.
- Promoting the reputation of the organization and not bringing the reputation of the organization into disrepute.

## Board meetings 2013

|                                       | 28th<br>Feb | 11th April<br>(AGM) | 9th<br>May | 20th<br>June | 18th<br>July | 12th<br>Sept | 17th<br>Oct |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Colm MacCarvill<br>(Chairperson)      | ✓           | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | -            | ✓           |
| Michael Quilligan<br>(Secretary)      | ✓           | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Michelle Bibby (Treasurer)            | ✓           | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓            | -            | ✓            | -           |
| Martin Meagher<br>(Director)          | -           | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | -            | -           |
| Jennifer Clancy<br>(Director 18.7.13) |             |                     |            |              | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Brid Harrington<br>(Director 18.7.13) |             |                     |            |              | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |
| Tom O'Brien<br>(Manager)              | ✓           | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓            | ✓            | ✓            | ✓           |



Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word meaning an active intention to bring about a positive change in life.



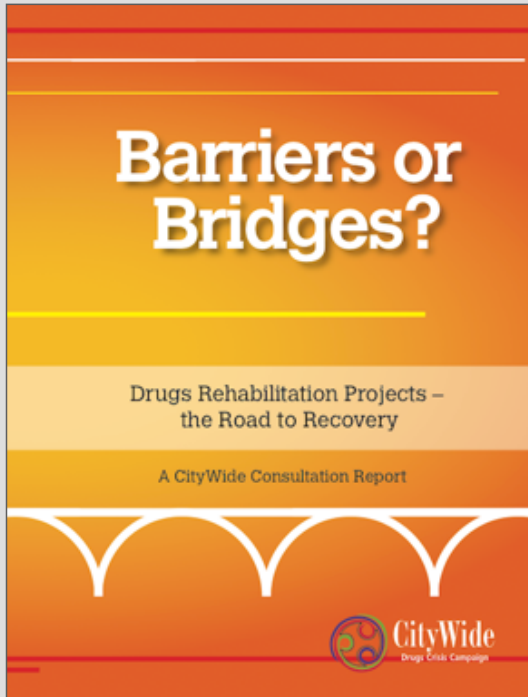
## Finglas Cabra LDTF Research

In 2013 Sankalpa participated in a research project commissioned by the Finglas Cabra Local Drug Task Force and carried by UCD. The research was entitled “An analysis of current licit and illicit drug use patterns in the Finglas-Cabra Local Drug Task Force Area”. The report noted that “It is difficult to assess current and emerging drug trends. Partly due to the criminalised and stigmatized nature of drug consumption activities, drug use tends to be a ‘hidden practice and drug users a ‘hard to reach’ population’ (O’Gorman et al., 2013).” The report also noted that the consumption of drugs has become ‘normalized’ and embedded into the social and cultural practices of

many different social groups.

Over one quarter (27%) of the Irish population have reported using an illegal drug (NCAD 2011). Almost nine out of ten adults (87%) report being current drinkers (NCAD 2012). The trend for taking non prescribed prescription drugs has been increasing for some time (O’Gorman, 2004). Concerns regarding the diversion and circulation of prescription drugs (‘Z’ drugs) among the local population. Poly drug use is now the norm. Heroin continues to be available. Crack cocaine and crystal methamphetamine were reported to be used and available in the Finglas Cabra area. Cannabis (weed, grass, skunk) was identified as the most commonly used illegal drug in the area.

*“It makes them feel like they’re untouchable - bullet proof - thats how all the shootings and shit happens - when you go into a shop and you’re full of Roche (Valium) you think you’re invisible and everyone is looking at you an dour going around out of your head”*



## Barriers or Bridges?

In 2013 Sankalpa participated in research commissioned by CityWide that reviewed the Drugs Rehabilitation Projects (Special Community Employment Schemes).

The Drug Rehabilitation Projects (DRP's), formerly known as Special Community Employment Drug Projects, have been a core element of the National Drugs Strategy (NDS) since the late 1990s, delivered by FAS and now the Dept. Of Social Protection (DSP).

The DRPs have provided the main vehicle for the delivery of drugs rehabilitation services since rehabilitation was recognized as a distinct pillar of the National Drugs Strategy in 2005 (Barriers or Bridges, p. 5).

*'I'm finding my voice again'*

*(Research participant p.14)*

Connect to the workplace is a Drugs Rehabilitation Project (DRP) workign within the framework of the National Drugs Strategy. Connect to the workplace has been redeveloped to meet the needs of todays service users, leaving treatment drug free and looking for programs to support and sustain their recovery.

Recovery capital is referred to as 'the sum (or the totality) of internal and external resources that one can draw on to initiate and maintain recovery'. In Connect to the workplace we are assessing service users recovery capital and designing our interventions to increase recovery capital e.g., communication, employment, social and personal skills.



## Competency review

In 2013 we carried out a staff competency review to ensure our training plan matched the skills required in the emerging new services. This review was carried out by Quality Matters. The review provided us with a performance management strategy for all staff members, measured against DANOS.

We used the DANOS competency framework, which has been identified by the HSE in a number of strategies as being the best competency framework for addiction services to link the roles to a list of acknowledged competencies. The review involved the following;

- Reviewed all job descriptions against DANOS, recommending core competencies for each job and updating job descriptions as required.
- Review with each staff member their skill base against the competencies, also checking out if there other competencies required of the role that need to be added to the list.
- Matching skills to relevant training and support options with consideration given to organizational resources.
- The development of a performance management strategy that will focus on the following areas;
  - Supervision and appraisal systems
  - Innovative ways for rewarding good work
  - Disciplinary procedures in practice

## Building on the existing staff competencies

| Training                                  | Trainer                          |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Children First                            | Barnardos                        |
| Case management                           | Dr. Tom O Brien                  |
| NDTRS Form                                | HRB staff                        |
| Professional Practice                     | Dr. Tom O Brien                  |
| Motivational Interviewing                 | Colin O Driscoll                 |
| Community Reinforcement Approach          | Gerry Ryan                       |
| New drug trends                           | Lisa and Teresa (Sankalpa staff) |
| Understanding the Criminal Justice System | The Bridge Project               |



## Services report

The year 2013 was a busy one for services in Sankalpa, as we continued the work of implementing our strategic plan 2012 to 2013. In the previous year 2012 the service changed significantly and increased the number of services and service users accessing our new programs. The two most significant service developments involved Turning Point our new stabilization service and Connect to the workplace our community employment program. We continued to run the Explore program a key component in the local educational continuum.

**Connect to the workplace** is a completely new program with a focus on recovery, replacing our old Special CE Rehabilitation program, which ran for over ten years. Changes in Government policy and a reduced budget for CE program provided us with a positive opportunity for change. The aim of Connect to the workplace, is to increase connections to work and further education. In that sense that program aims to capitalize on their existing recovery capital and to assist service users to increase their recovery capital.

My work placement in connect  
is as a cleaner/caretaker. I spend two  
days a week in the hub community  
centre in Finglas, where I clean and  
maintain the centre as best as I can.  
It helps me as I'm challenged  
to meet new people and to use my  
initiative. I've been given responsibility  
it's a confidence boost for me as we  
spend another two days of the



## Ellen's story

*"My work placement is doing 2 days a week with Connect and then I do 3 days in St. Helena's Community Center Coffee Shop in Finglas. In Connect I do two groups per week. I can go into groups and talk about what's going on for me. It also built up my confidence and self esteem. Then I have my 3 days work in St. Helena's coffee shop in Finglas. I learn the skills around the kitchen and get to talk to people. Doing my work placement gets me out and about and meeting friends. It also gives me motivation to get up every day and I look forward to going to work and groups. I am really enjoying my work placement"*

## Referral Agencies referring clients to Connect to the workplace

Connect to the workplace takes referrals from treatment centers and individuals who have become drug free and are seeking support to sustain their recovery and increase their opportunities for further training and employment. In 2013 there were 22 referral to the program, with 13 of the 16 CE places being filled.

|                     |                               |                     |                                |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Keltoi              | Dales Project                 | Chrysalis           | Prison Service                 |
| Francis Farm        | New Start                     | BYAP                | Phoenix Aftercare              |
| Tolka River Project | ACRG                          | CDT                 | Chapelizod<br>Residential Care |
| Wheatfield Prison   | Coolmine Drug<br>Free Program | Peter McVerry Trust | Crosscare                      |
| MQI Day Program     | Phoenix Aftercare             |                     |                                |

## List of courses delivered in Connect to the workplace

|                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expressing feelings   | Process work                         |
| Stress Management     | Assertive communication              |
| Mindfulness           | Hepatitis C workshop                 |
| Saying 'No'           | Conflict Resolution in the workplace |
| Dealing with cravings | Training and Education opportunities |
| Stinking thinking     | Work skills                          |
| Relapse prevention    | Employment rights                    |
| Gratitude             | Happiness scale                      |
| Group dynamics        |                                      |

## Employers supporting Connect to the workplace

Sankalpa has been successful in partnering with employers keen to support our service users reconnect to the workplace (See table below). We offer employers an chance to exercise their **corporate social responsibility**. Its a win win situation for everyone.

|                       |                               |                                    |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Age Action            | Pacions Restaurant            | St Helena's Family Resource Center | Musgraves                     |
| Dogs Trust            | Dublin City Council           | Sankalpa                           | Des Kelly                     |
| Divine Doors Ireland  | Finglas Youth Resource Center | The Little Museum of Dublin        | Knife Edge Fencing            |
| Hopkins Merchandising | Dublin Food sales             | Respond Housing                    | The Asthma Society of Ireland |
| Finglas Artsquad      | Axis Center Ballymun          | Eco Mattress Recycling             | Citizens Information Finglas  |

The participants on the program are placed with suitable employers after an assessment and some career guidance. Participants also attend a recovery support group and a jobs skills group on Mondays and Thursdays in Sankalpa. They also receive one to one case management and key working. We focus on the issues that arise after the drugs are out of the system e.g., low confidence, low self esteem, communication skills, emotional intelligence, goals setting and problem solving. These are the same issues that if not addressed can contribute to a relapse. Too often relapses arise out of the conditions of isolation and poor coping skills.

Our aim in Connect to the workplace is to sustain recovery, to build on the work they have done prior to starting in Sankalpa. We emphasis the important of each participant attending counseling, attending an aftercare group and attending some form of fellowship.



## Sankalpa and St Helena's Resource Center

Since January 2014, St Helena's has worked with Sankalpa to provide work placement opportunities for individuals through the 'Connect to Workplace Program'.

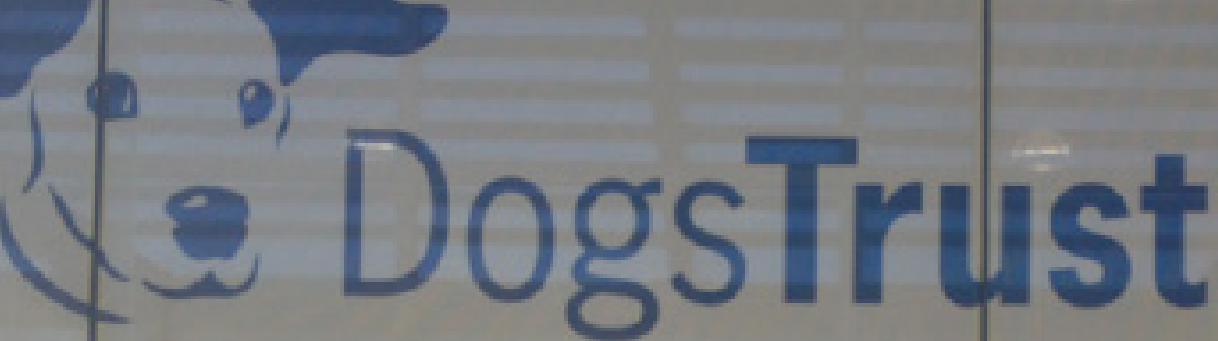
St Helena's is a Family Resource Center in Finglas south and provides a valuable service to the local community through adult education and programs for children and older people. Currently Ellen is working in the Coffee Shop in St Helena's. This involves providing teas/ coffees/ scones for up to 60 people on a daily basis. Light lunches and snacks are prepared, in the afternoon, for children and older people.

Ellen works as part of a team and since she commenced her placement she had learned to make scones and has introduced the kitchen to her apple cakes! She has gained in confidence and she takes her role seriously and is punctual and reliable. She has trained in HACCP.

We are very happy with the support received from Sankalpa and we are pleased to assist and support this important program.

Eileen Kavanagh | Manager | St Helena's





## Sankalpa partnering with Dogs Trust

Dogs Trust are continuously overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity offers the general public. We care for hundreds of abandoned and unwanted dogs every year and always welcome the opportunity to give something back; particularly in our local community near us here in Finglas, which is why we were very happy to work closely with Sankalpa when they approached us.

We have seen a tremendous growth and development in Michael since he began volunteering with us. He takes great pride in his work and we feel that Dogs Trust has definitely played a significant part in Michael's program with Sankalpa, who are striving to help individuals trying to turn their lives around by seizing a second chance at a new life; just like all of our dogs.

Dogs Trust look forward to continuing and developing our relationship with Sankalpa in the future.

Ciara Thomas | Assistant Manager | Dogs Trust



## Connect to the Workplace @ Age Action

Since August 2013, Age Action has partnered with Sankalpa to provide work placement opportunities for individuals through the Connect to Workplace Program. Recently we have provided work placement opportunities for Rachel who was assigned to our Charity Shop in Camden St, Dublin. During her placement Rebecca has received training in the following areas:

- Retails Sales
- Stock Management
- Customer Service

We are very happy with the support received from Teresa in Sankalpa and we have been happy to assist and support Rebecca in this important program and appreciate all the work she has done for us.

## Connecting with recovery and aftercare

|       |                 |             |                   |
|-------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| FAST  | Chrysalis       | Enfield     | ACRG              |
| YMCA  | Respond housing | Station One | Explore drug free |
| Urrus |                 |             |                   |

The participants on the program are assessed using a recovery capital assessment tool. They are also assessed for work skills and career development. This helps to identify what kind of placement can enhance their recovery. Once the service user is placed with a suitable employer they attend Sankalpa two days a week. Day one they attend for a therapeutic recovery support group. Day two they attend for a job/employment skills program. They also attend once a week for key working and case management.



**Turning Point** is new service within Sankalpa Addiction Services. Turning Point is a stabilization service targeting service users, who are at the opposite end of the continuum to Connect to the workplace. Turning Point aims to support service users stabilize on their

prescribed medication and prepare them for the next step on the continuum of treatment and recovery services.

The therapeutic model adopted by Turning Point is an evidenced based psychosocial model encompassing structured interventions aimed at stabilizing and/or reducing the harm associated with illicit drug use. It is believed that reduced drug use will lead to improved social functioning and personal wellbeing. As a stabilization program Turning Point is at the starting point of the continuum on the recovery journey. Recovery starts with stabilization.

The program is run over a six month period during which the client sets small goals for themselves to enable them to reduce their current drug use, make some behavioral changes and prepare for moving on. Turning Point builds on the recovery capital that already exists within the person, limited though it may seem.

## Assessment and care planning

Initial assessment is offered to all referrals. In July we started to use the NDTRS form. We have an initial assessment form, incorporating the Treatment Outcome Profile, Outcome star and Happiness scale. Dr Tom O'Brien is the case manager for all the clients and Brian Murphy and Lisa Whelton have a case load of clients. Each client has a one to one each week and we use CRA to review their progress and monitor their care plans. We promote three way meetings within the first month on Turning Point with other key agencies. In cases where we have had inter-agency case management,

we have had better outcomes. Each week we hold a case management meeting on Thursdays between 11 and 1pm where we review each clients progress.

We provide a breakfast to the clients on Turning Point and add extra activities like Tai Chi, Meditation and social outings from time to time. We have managed to attract and sustain involvement through a quality program, strong community links, word of mouth, good case management and the support of a number of referral services and key partners.

## Meeting a need in the Finglas Cabra community

Turning Point has been successful in attracting referrals and sustaining attendance and engagement in the program over its first year. This clearly reflects a need for such a service in the Finglas Cabra Community. However the challenge of stabilizing illicit drug users is enormous. This challenge is made more difficult where services historically haven't coordinated responses along the recovery continuum. The Turning Point Program is six months in duration. During that time the aim is to work with the client group to reduce their illicit drug use and to stabilize on their prescribed medication, so as to be in a stronger position to move to the next stage of the continuum.

*I came here just over a year ago and I was using heroin every day and I could not stop. It left me in hospital many times over. So I knew that things had to change so that was where Turning Point came in and with their help, seeing a key worker every week and doing groups and taking part in all that they had to offer me it was then that I seen that there is a way out for me if I was just willing to put the work in and that is what I done. So before I knew it, I was starting to get well and I got all the help that was there for me, like my key worker, the groups and it all worked for me*

(ex- Turning Point service user)

## Client profile

Heroin use was the main reason for [52% of referrals](#) to Turning Point in 2013, followed by 20% presenting with prescription addictions, 14% addicted to cannabis and 7% presenting with cocaine issues and 3% where alcohol was the main issue. While a service user may often present with a main drug problem e.g., Heroin or Zimovaine, it is more common for service users to use a wide range of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.

The majority of those assessed for Turning Point said that they were in stable accommodation, the reality is different. The perception of stable accommodation is having a roof over your head/. This was the case in Turning Point where 48% who said they were living in stable accommodation were either living with their parents or with a partner.

It has been widely recognized that illicit drug users experience high levels of educational disadvantage. In a sample group of 50 service users assessed for Turing Point only 17% had completed their leaving certificate, leaving us to conclude that 83% left school early, with a significant 38% not able to say if they had completed the Junior Certificate. The link between educational disadvantage and employment has been demonstrated in research. In our sample group 80% were unemployed.

This profile is not new as several research reports have established the link between heroin addiction, educational disadvantage, unemployment and homelessness. It is this vicious cycle that Turning Point is attempting to disrupt, as it is widely recognized that the outcomes for early recovery or stabilization are more positive where the clients therapeutic and clinical needs and also matched with enabling the client to address their housing, educational, economic and social needs.

### Gender

29 Women (30 %)

76 Men (70%)

### Age

Average age 33 (youngest 21 & oldest 56)

#### Accommodation (sample size 50)

72% said that they were living in stable accommodation, 31% of which were living with their parents, 21% were living alone and 17% were living with their partner.

#### Drug use (sample size 50)

Heroin was the main reason for referral in 52% of cases, followed by 20% presenting with prescription addictions, 14% addicted to cannabis and 7% presenting with cocaine issues and 3% where alcohol was the main issue. All were poly drug users.

#### Employment status (sample size 50)

80% of referrals to Turning Point disclosed that they were unemployed.

#### Education highest level completed (sample size 50)

A significant 38% of the sample did not know what education level they had completed, while 30% had completed their junior certificate and 17% had completed their leaving certificate. Only one of the sample was still in the education system.

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## The program

|             | Monday                     | Wednesday              | Friday            |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 10 to 11.30 | Check in therapeutic group | One to one key working | Therapeutic group |
| 12 to 1.30  | Skills for recovery group  | Optional art class     | Weekend planner   |
|             |                            | Optional Reike Session |                   |

*"This place at the moment, is helping me get a handle on my life. I was out of me head and now I am stable and just taking me prescription" (Anonymous Participant)*

*"I find there is a good balance between the recovery we do on ourselves, the one to ones and the group work" (Anonymous Participant)*

## Skills for recovery program

|                                |                         |                         |                        |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Anger management               | Relapse prevention      | Stress management       | Communication skills   |
| Mindfulness for recovery       | Nutrition for Recovery  | Progression routes      | Toxic relationships    |
| Blocks and gaps to progression | What is a Relationship? | Understanding Zimovaine | Understanding Cannabis |
| Beliefs and values             | Maslow - Basic Needs    | To tell the Truth       | Coping                 |
| Stinking Thinking              | Group roles             | Fork in the road        | Problem solving        |
| Calm in chaos                  | The hole                | Pros and cons           | Stress management      |

The program runs on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Monday is a CRA therapeutic group and an information group on some key aspect of relapse prevention, communications, anger management etc and Friday is an end of week evaluation and check-in and weekend planning group. On Wednesday one-to-one key working takes place for each client and other one-to-one holistic therapies e.g. Reiki and Acupuncture.

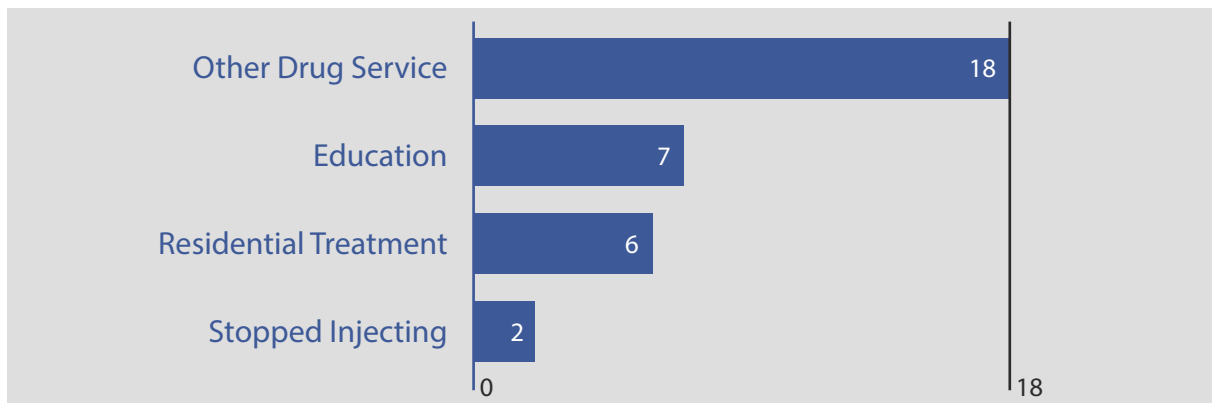
*"Sankalpa has reminded me that I have the power of my own recovery. Sankalpa has reintroduce hope back to my life" (Anonymous Participant)*

*"I am enjoying the groups, learning more about addiction"  
(Anonymous Participant)*

*"Its something to do in the day so I don't use, keep me mind occupied"  
(Anonymous Participant)*

*"The key workers are very good, I didn't feel judged"  
(Anonymous Participant)*

## Outcomes for Turning Point in 2013



### Progressed to another drug services = 18

- 2 Tolko River Project
- 2 Enfield
- 2 Casadh
- 2 Thompson Centre - reduce the use program
- 1 Crinan Youth Project
- 3 FAST
- 1 Chrysalis
- 2 PMVT
- 1 Salvation Army
- 1 Tolko clinic
- 1 Soilse

### Residential Treatment = 6

- 2 Lantern
- 1 Cuan Dara
- 1 High Park
- 1 St Francis Farm
- 1 Tiglinn

### Education = 7

- 1 progressed to FETAC Level 3 (Voyages)
- 3 progressed to FETAC Level 4 (Explore)
- 2 progressed to FETAC Level 3 (Colaste Ide)
- 1 Aware mental health program

## Other Turning Point observable outcomes

Increased awareness around harm reduction, relapse prevention, communication skills, improved social functioning and wellbeing, increased self awareness and promotion of autonomy, relationship skills, drug refusal skills, time management, increased structure to the day and the week, increased up take of additional services, increased motivation towards change, increased awareness of progression route options and the continuum of services, increased up take of 12 step meetings, reduced harm to self and others. Some services users have self reported reductions in the use of Cannabis grass, heroin, crack cocaine and non prescribed tablets.

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Turning Point continues to attract interest from service users and referral agencies looking for stabilization services for their clients. Our six month program prepares service users for the next stage on the treatment and recovery continuum.

The majority of service users attending Turning Point have complex needs and are poly addicted. The evidence suggests that when services work in collaboration they achieve better outcomes for this target group. No one service can meet the needs of this group and so we need to share resources and work collectively with the clients needs at the center of the process. We need to build a clearly defined and integrated pathway of services to meet the needs of drug and alcohol users, whose needs are multiple and complex.

Turning Point is meeting a need on the continuum of recovery. We aim to strengthen the program through better data management and analysis. In July 2014 we introduced the eCASS client data management system, which will provide us with a more accurate picture of the client profile, interventions provided and outcomes achieved. This new method of data collection and analysis will help us to understand better what works with different clients and hopefully provide us with new evidence for the effectiveness of a client centered case management approach.



## Voyages and Sankalpa working together

In 2013 Sankalpa worked closely with the Voyages program run by The Fingal Center. The Voyages program was set up in 2004 with the support of the LDTF. The aim of the program is to engage with adults interested in stabilizing and/or in early recovery from drug use, wishing to engage in an education and training program with a view to seeking employment or further education and training.

The objective of our partnership was to enhance the continuum between Voyages (Level 3) and Explore which was run in Sankalpa (Level 4). By working more closely together we wanted to increase the rate of progression between both programs. One member of the Sankalpa team co-facilitated a personal development group with the Voyages group for 8 weeks. A support worker from The Fingal Center then worked on the Explore two morning a week.

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## Explore Education Pathway

The Explore program is an inter-agency initiative of the LDTF in Finglas and Cabra. It started in 2011 and in its first year it was coordinated by the Cabra Resource Center. In 2012 it was agreed to run two Explore programs one for drug free participants and the other for stabilization participants. This review looks at the stabilization Explore, which was run in Sankalpa 2012 to 2013.

### **19 people were referred to the Explore program.**

- 8 - Voyages
- 8 - Sankalpa
- 2 - FAST
- 1 - Probation

All referrals were offered interviews, however only 14 completed the interview process, out of which 10 were offered a place on the Explore and the remaining 4 were placed on a waiting list. Due to some participants not taking up their places or dropping off at an early stage, we invited those on the waiting list to join.

**The final starting group was made up of;**

- 6 - Sankalpa
- 2 - Voyages
- 1 - FAST
- 1 - Late applicant - Voyages

**Those who completed the Explore Program;**

- 5 - Sankalpa
- 2 - Voyages

**Those who did not complete the Explore Program;**

- 1 left after her CE time expired (Attendance up to leaving was 87%)
- 1 had a car accident (Attendance up to the accident was 54%)
- 1 was too unstable (Attendance up to leaving was 51%)

**Attendance for the 7 who did complete the Explore;**

Average attendance for the 7 who completed the Explore was 85% over 34 Weeks

Average attendance for those who completed and were on CE = 87%

Average attendance for the 2 referrals from Voyages = 76%

Average attendance for the 1 Sankalpa non CE referral = 97%

Lowest average attendance to complete the Explore = 62%

**The program content**

Tuesday - Communications FETAC 4 - Tutor Audrey

Thursday - Computers FETAC 4 - Tutor Barry

Friday - Group support provided by Sankalpa - Facilitator Tom

The Group support on Friday's provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on their week and identify issues or challenges. During this group we were able to identify the need for some participants to access one to one literacy support. It was also an opportunity to affirm the participants for the work they were doing and to encourage them to continue their commitment to the course.

The two tutors Audrey and Barry were excellent. They both were able to teach the course, maintain discipline, express empathy and make the learning experience as enjoyable as possible. The LDTF provided sandwiches for the 10 participants on the two days the course was run. This acted as an incentive and helped in creating a community spirit on the days the course was run.

### **Summary**

The selection process worked well. Referrals were appropriate. Some referrals made different choices during the selection process and decided not to take up the offer of Explore. The probation referral, did not follow up in the absence of the probation officer i.e., he came for an assessment in the presence of the probation officer, but did not turn up on the first day of the course or there after.

The support offered by The Fingal Center was invaluable in helping to sustain their two referrals to complete the program. This also strengthened the inter-agency link between The Fingal Center and Sankalpa as a result of working collaboratively. The Fingal Center also provided a support worker on the days the Explore program ran in Sankalpa. The support worker worked closely with the two tutors in the classroom on the days the Explore program was running.

The Explore program in Sankalpa was a huge success, with seven participants completing the program (70%). FETAC Level 4 is a demanding level of education for any vulnerable adult with an educational disadvantaged background (Early school leavers and literacy issues). It is also a huge achievement for the participants in the context of having concurrent addiction and mental health issues as well as experiencing economic and social exclusion.

Completing two Level 4 FETAC qualifications should put the participants at an advantage in securing further educations in main stream CDETB courses. However this progression route continues to present challenges to this client group. Despite efforts to link with Karen Granville (CDETB Guidance) and make referrals to further education courses, the take up and follow through is breaking down.

Inter-agency collaboration has enhanced the Explore program outcomes in Sankalpa. The two participants referred by Voyages would not have completed the Explore Program without the weekly support in the form of one to one key work sessions to these participants by staff from The Fingal Center.

The seven participants who completed the Explore are all prescribed methadone and other medications. Many of them continue to use non prescribed drugs e.g., Zimovaine, Cannabis, Valium, Alcohol and street methadone. Addiction and mental health issues continue to remain the main challenges to completing the progression pathway into Education and life long learning.



German social work students on a visit to Sankalpa

## Inter-agency work and policy development

Sankalpa recognizes the need for its services to clearly focus on targeting specific service users at different stages of the continuum. The aim of Turning Point is to target illicit drug users seeking support to reduce their use and stabilize their lives, with a view to moving along the recovery continuum. We are committed to implementing the NDRIC protocols, with the aim of implementing more effective case management practices, so as to enhance the treatment outcomes for our service users.

The establishment of the D7/11 Addiction Network is currently working on the implementation of the NDRIC protocols.

Turning Point staff have demonstrated their commitment to collaborative practices and the implementation of the case management model, as demonstrated in the number of inter-agency case management meetings that have taken place among service users in this new service.

## Working together improves outcomes

*"Turning point for our clients is a stepping stone to their path to recovery. The initial challenge is acknowledgment of addiction, by agreeing to be referred to a stabilization program. The next challenge is being part of peer group and accepting the support and guidance provided. Thirdly, the challenge of letting go and moving-on from turning point to the next stepping stone.*

*From the clinic we refer people to Turning Point who are struggling with current drug use. It has proven to be a source of support to many people at an early stage of recovery. It encourages participants to acknowledge and challenge their behavior by being part of a peer group with consistent support from staff. I prepares people to move-on to the next stage of their recovery pathway"*

Michael Fitzgerald  
Counsellor Wellmount Clinic

## Other news and events from 2013

### Networks and meetings

Tom O'Brien attended a number of meetings of the newly formed Finglas Children and Family Network. The purpose of this network is to advise, support and guide the implementation of the service delivery framework in the Finglas area in order to ensure that children and families access required services that are proportionate and timely.

### HSE visit to Sankalpa

Marie O'Sullivan and Brid Walsh from the HSE visited Sankalpa on the 20th of May. They held separate meetings with the service users, staff and manager. Their visit formed part of preparation for the service level agreement 2013.

### Focus Ireland

On May 28th staff from both Sankalpa and Alyward Green (Focus Ireland) held a joint staff meeting. Sankalpa gave a presentation on Turning Point to the team at Alyward Green.

### FAST Sankalpa Joint team meeting

In 2013 Sankalpa and FAST held a joint team meeting to share experiences and knowledge from both services.

### Seminars and conferences

Colm MacCarvill, chairperson of Sankalpa attended the Voyage's (The Fingal Center) presentation of FETAC certificated to

attendees of the 2012-2013 program Tom O'Brien, manager attended a one day seminar on decriminalising of addiction organised by Citywide.

### The Journal Club

The Journal club is made up of local professionals working in the Finglas Cabra area working in drug and alcohol services. Each month a member of the group selects a published article for the group to review. We review the article and meet to discuss its findings. The Journal club offers professionals working in the area to meet informally and to share new ideas emerging from research. It has been a great way to build trust and to network informally between members.

### German students

In May Sankalpa Addiction Services, hosted a group of social work students from Munich, Germany, who visited Sankalpa for a day, to share and learn from each other.

### Social media

Our new website showcases our work as well as providing you with an opt in form for our electronic newsletter. Our Facebook has over 300 likes. Social media provides a useful tool to share stories about recovery and the work we do in the service.

## Human resources



In April **Brian Murphy** was appointed project worker. Brian is originally from Finglas and has previously worked with Merchants Quay.



In November **Teresa Clinch** was appointed Community Employment Supervisor. Teresa started to work in Sankalpa in 2012 as assistant CE supervisor. Teresa has a back ground in Business Studies and Social Care.



### **Student volunteer - Shauna Kelehan**

My experience in Sankalpa has been a very good and positive experience. When I first arrived in Sankalpa I found the place was very warm and welcoming, then when I meet the staff they were very friendly and welcoming to me. While doing my work experience in Sankalpa I feel that the staff make me feel like I am part of the team rather than just a student in doing work placement and in the way. I feel that the staff in Sankalpa value my opinion and input. I find the staff are constantly checking in with each other and myself to see how everyone is getting on and making sure everyone is ok. I find the services users in Sankalpa are also very friendly and showed an interest in what I was doing in college and what it is I am doing in Sankalpa and how long I will be there for. I feel the service users are very respectful towards the staff and myself. I am really enjoying my work placement in Sankalpa and feel I would really like to work in a service like this in the future.



## Conclusion

The year 2013 has seen Sankalpa Addiction Services increase the numbers accessing its services. However more importantly we have improved the quality of our services through training, improved corporate and clinical governance structures and increased inter-agency case management and client progression.

In 2014 we will continue to work on improving the quality of our services, with a stronger focus on improving outcomes, client progressions and service user involvement. The year ahead will see the implementation of a new client data management system, eCASSS and improved screening and assessment practices being introduced.

We will continue to work closely with the Wellmount and Tolko Clinics and our other partners in the Finglas Cabra LDTF and the D7/11 Addiction Network, to roll out the National Drug Rehabilitation Framework (NDRF).

The year ahead will see further developments in Connect to the Workplace, with the roll out of a new assessment procedure aimed at assessing recovery capital. Connect to the Workplace is a model of good practice among the Drug Rehabilitation Projects (Special CE schemes).

Sankalpa is committed to the highest standards in corporate and clinical governance and will continue to work to improve quality standards and outcomes in the year ahead. Thank you for reading this report and please send us your feedback to [hello@sankalpa.ie](mailto:hello@sankalpa.ie)