

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



**NOVAS**  
Housing | Health | Recovery

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2017

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# A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

In housing and homeless services, it was a typical recent year. Waiting lists got longer and more people were homeless; breaking the previous year's record (like each of the previous 5 years). The situation, described by many as being the worst in the history of the state, deteriorated. Certainly many more houses were built and that was encouraging but still far short of the number needed.

Rent control efforts by government failed and evictions continued to increase. Rent levels reached those at the time of the 'super crash' 10 years ago. More families became homeless. House prices surged making it impossible for most families to afford buying a house.

The statistics of our work are difficult to comprehend. In 2017 client numbers were 4,572; an annual increase of 29%; and over the previous 7 years by 375%!

Our staff of course work with people, not statistics. They are now accustomed

to supporting many more clients than in the previous year. The housing environment is at its most benign, 'unhelpful' more accurately, 'extremely hostile'. Yet again their professionalism was inspiring. The board acknowledges the extraordinary depth of our staff team commitment to each client.

We expanded services significantly. This included an almost 50% increase in the number of clients using our Limerick city out-of-hours service to 1900 (people contact us needing accommodation on an emergency basis; of great concern was that 146 families needed this immediate same-night support). New services introduced in 2017; a second night shelter in Limerick, new family 'hub' service in Dublin, outreach support service in Tipperary and Housing First service in Kerry (fast track people into long term accommodation).

Financial management has never been more critical. Some services continue to suffer legacy cuts in funding despite the huge increase in demand. Also, the board gave priority to increasing housing stock. This requires careful and accurate borrowing and cash flow projections. The Government's fresh impetus to the Capital Assistance Scheme is greatly welcomed. It enabled us move forward with confidence. We strongly urge this option be even more widely available.

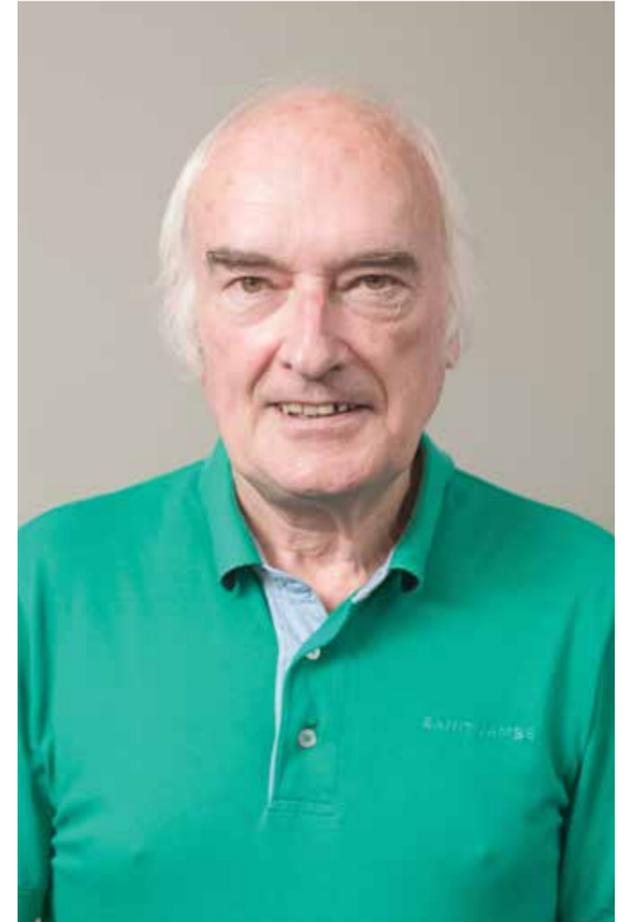
Our clients need long term solutions. Homeless services regardless of their professionalism and application offer the process whereby clients can move

on and cease to be homeless. For this to happen there must of course be long term accommodation available and accessible. However simplistic it may seem, the solution to the present situation is housing; Long term and adequate to meet people's needs.

Our strategic plan aims to increase the number of houses we have by at least 20 family homes each year. In 2017 we exceeded this goal. We compete aggressively for every single purchase; it is encouraging that families who were homeless are now in safe secure housing.

The outlook for 2018? Regrettably it looks like more of the same. Indeed even that may be optimistic.

**Greg Maxwell**  
Chairperson



“  
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WORK WITH PEOPLE,  
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YET AGAIN THEIR  
PROFESSIONALISM WAS  
INSPIRING.

# CEO WELCOME

Despite the evident economic recovery, the scourge of homelessness continues unabated. In 2017 Novas worked with 4,572 people. This was an increase of 29% from the previous twelve-month period and more than 375% since 2010.

In this year we underwent balanced regional development, opening new services in Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry and Dublin. This was a reflection of the national crisis and the national demand for our services.

We sought to support more people than ever before through innovative programme development and a commitment to providing long-term solutions to homelessness. Throughout the year we procured 30 properties, of which 22 were tenanted by formerly homeless individuals and families by year end. The final set of keys were handed over on the 22nd of December, just in time for Christmas. A mum and her three children, who had previously been living in B&B accommodation, were given a home for life.

Throughout 2017 we also expanded our Housing First programmes nationally. In Limerick we transferred 27 units of accommodation to Housing First, to provide tenants with the best opportunity of maintaining their homes. In Kerry we inaugurated Housing First in partnership with Kerry County Council and the service has already become integral to the suite of programmes offered to homeless people in the region. The harm reduction ethos of Housing First, which has always been a fundamental principal of Novas' service provision, enabled us to adopt and develop this programme with ease. We support clients through Housing, Health and Recovery.

None of this would have been possible without our staff team, who continue to provide professional support with empathy and compassion to all our clients. This is done in challenging times when demand continues to exceed capacity. Our staff inspire the Senior Management Team to extend and re-imagine service provision. I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank staff for the care and support they provide to our clients, for continuing to do more so that we can extend services and offer innovative support programmes.

I also wish to acknowledge the phenomenal work completed by our volunteer team throughout 2017,

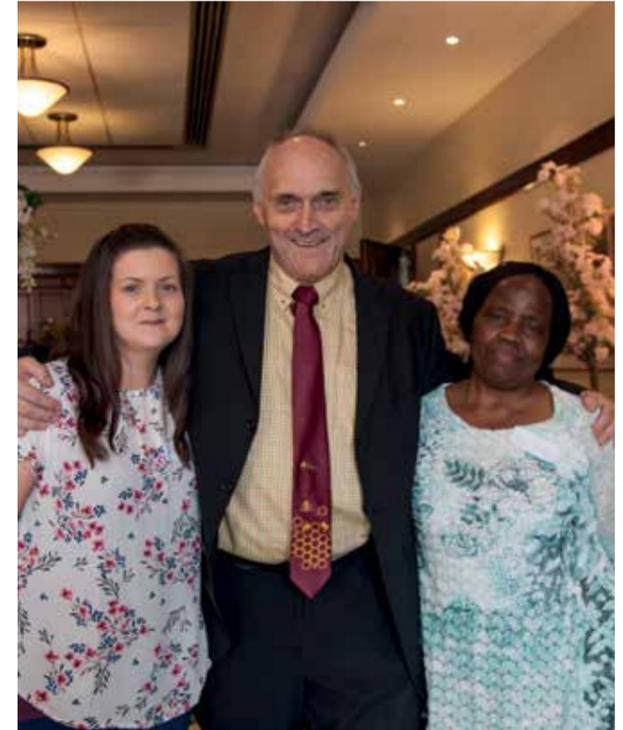
“

THROUGHOUT 2017 WE ALSO EXPANDED OUR HOUSING FIRST PROGRAMMES NATIONALLY. IN LIMERICK WE TRANSFERRED 27 UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION TO HOUSING FIRST, TO PROVIDE TENANTS WITH THE BEST OPPORTUNITY OF MAINTAINING THEIR HOMES.

supporting core services such as our Street Outreach and TEP as well as helping us to raise vital funds towards frontline services. The added value that volunteers provide to our organisation cannot be overstated. The time you give to enhance the lives of others is truly inspiring.

The Novas Board of Directors continued to steer our ship throughout 2017. I wish to take this opportunity to thank each member of our Board for their unwavering commitment to Novas and for the time and effort they give to ensuring we are providing high quality services in a prudent and sustainable manner.

In 2017 our long-standing Board Member, Dermot Sadlier, retired due to ill-health. Dermot sadly passed away this year. Dermot displayed huge commitment to the organisation for the 6 years he was a Board member and as Chair of the Board. He led the sub-committee on Health and Safety and was steadfast in this role. I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to Dermot's family at this sad time.



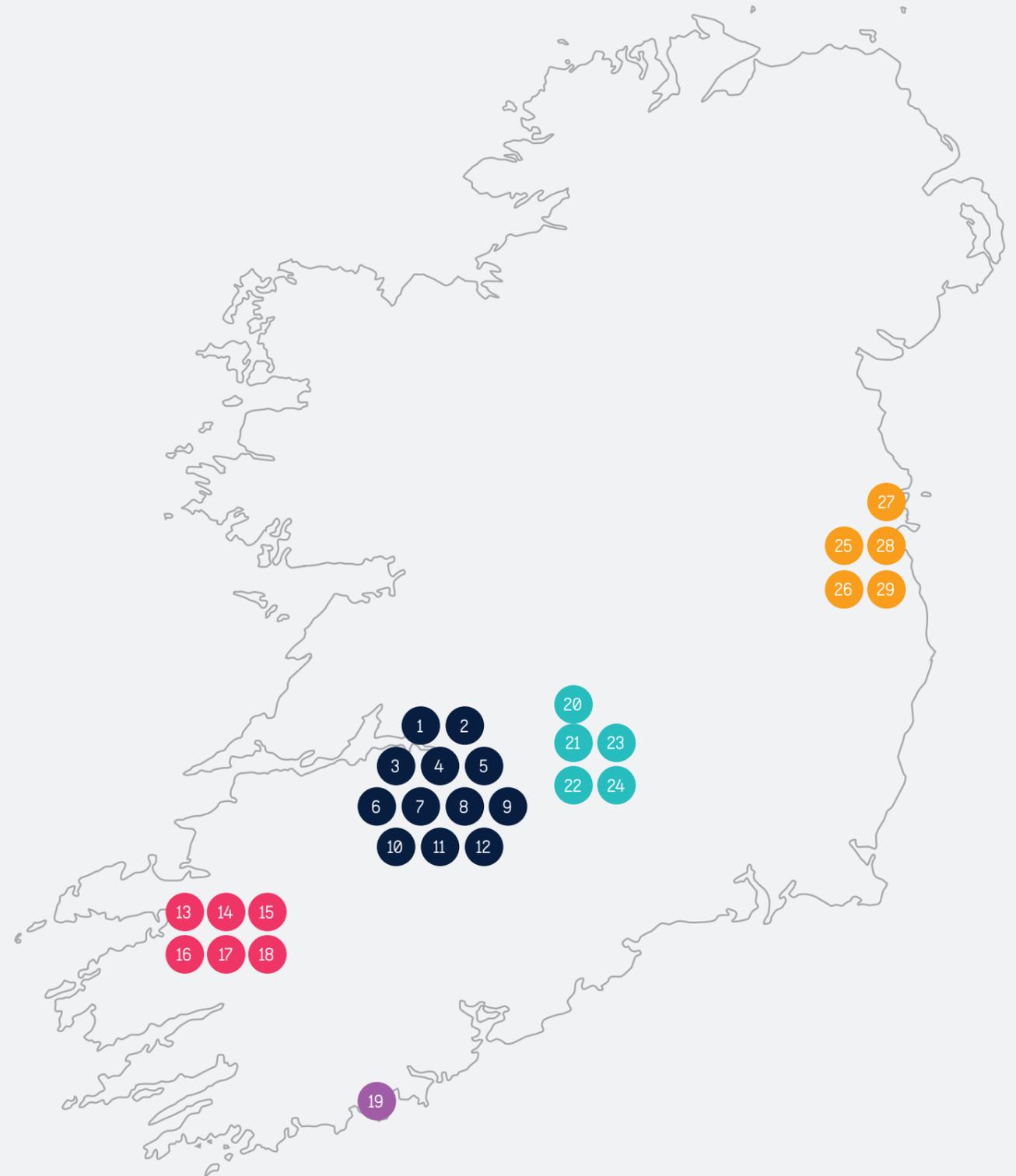
Pat Quaid, a tenant in our long-term units also retired from the board. He had represented client interests at board level for 10 years.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge our clients who face considerable adversity. You motivate us to do better and to do more. To those who kindly shared their story for this report, I thank you.

**Michael Goulding**  
Novas CEO

# MAP OF SERVICES

- **Dublin**
  - 25 The Abigail Women's Centre
  - 26 Bellevue House
  - 27 Haarlem Court
  - 28 Sarsfield Family Hub
  - 29 Family Homes
- **Tipperary**
  - 20 Novas Respite House
  - 21 Prospect House
  - 22 Mitchel Street
  - 23 Outreach Support Service
  - 24 Housing
- **Limerick City**
  - 1 Street Outreach
  - 2 McGarry House
  - 3 Intensive Family Support Service
  - 4 Brother Stephen Russell House
  - 5 Housing First
  - 6 DIAL House
  - 7 Mid-West Community Detox
  - 8 Out-of-Hours Service
  - 9 St. Patrick's Hill Disabilities Services
  - 10 Long-Term Family Homes
  - 11 Temporary Emergency Provision
  - 12 Temporary Emergency Provision 2
- **Kerry**
  - 13 Killeen Woods
  - 14 Knocklee House
  - 15 Old Golf Links Road
  - 16 Arlington Lodge
  - 17 Long-Term Apartments
  - 18 Housing First
- **Cork**
  - 19 Tenancy Support and Sustainment Scheme



▶ 2002

**BRIDGELAND HOUSE**  
Novas opens its first service, a temporary supported direct-access homeless accommodation service for men and women in Limerick City.

▶ 2003

**ARLINGTON LODGE**  
Kerry's only temporary supported low-threshold homeless accommodation.

**ST. PATRICK'S HILL**  
Long-term supported group home for formerly homeless men in Limerick City.

▶ 2005

**BELLEVUE HOUSE**  
Long-term supported accommodation for unaccompanied minors entering the country based in Tallaght, Dublin 24.

**BROTHER STEPHEN RUSSELL HOUSE**  
Provision of temporary and long-term supported accommodation for men in Limerick City, previously managed by the Alexian Brothers since 1978.

**INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE**  
Preventative service working with families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Limerick City.

▶ 2006

**KNOCKLEE HOUSE**  
Temporary supported accommodation for individuals with medium-level support needs in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

**OUT OF HOURS SERVICE**  
An out of hours service for people in Limerick City to access temporary and emergency accommodation.

**DIAL SERVICE**  
Two year life-skills programme of supported accommodation and services to young adults leaving the care system.

▶ 2007

**MOUNT BROWN**  
Dublin's only low-threshold dedicated female homeless service.

▶ 2008

**PROSPECT HOUSE**  
Temporary supported accommodation in single apartments for men and women requiring a low level of support in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

▶ 2009

**KILLEEN WOODS**  
Long-term supported accommodation in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

**STREET OUTREACH**  
Voluntary service providing meals for people in need of support in Limerick City seven nights a week.

**RESPITE HOUSE**  
Caring for and improving the lives of the families of people with addiction throughout the Mid-West Region.

**MCGARRY HOUSE\***  
Provision of temporary supported accommodation for homeless men and women in Limerick City.

▶ 2011

**OLD GOLF LINKS ROAD**  
Long-term supported accommodation for older residents in peaceful one-floor setting in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

**MITCHEL STREET**  
Provision of temporary supported accommodation and services for homeless men and women from North Tipperary.

\* McGarry House replaced Bridgeland House in the provision of temporary supported accommodation for homeless men and women in Limerick City.

▶ 2012

**MID-WEST COMMUNITY DETOX**  
Providing support and services to people wishing to detox from prescribed and non-prescribed medication in the Mid-West Region.

**TENANCY SUPPORT AND SUSTAINMENT SERVICE**  
Securing accommodation and providing support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in West Cork.

**MCGARRY HOUSE LONG-TERM SUPPORTED HOUSING**  
37 units of long-term supported housing in one, two and three-bed apartments.

▶ 2013

**HOUSING FIRST LIMERICK**  
Commencement of Housing First on a pilot basis in Limerick City, supported by a multi-disciplinary team, managed by Novas.

**MILK MARKET LANE**  
Long-term unit of supported accommodation in Tralee.

**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**  
Inception of Novas's Research Department and roll out of its first project looking at overdose prevention in McGarry House.

▶ 2014

**HAARLEM COURT**  
8 two-bed apartment complex for families and individuals with special needs.

**BELLEVUE HOUSE**  
Relocation and redevelopment of Bellevue Children's Home for unaccompanied minors and refugees.

**BROTHER RUSSELL HOUSE**  
Redevelopment and extension of Brother Russell House to provide 33 units of long-term accommodation in Limerick.

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
Development of an outreach mental health service under the auspice of Brother Russell House.

**THE ABIGAIL WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
Relocation and redevelopment of our women's service (formerly Mount Brown) to accommodation up to 40 homeless women.

**RESEARCH**  
Publication of HEADS UP - Preventing and Responding to Overdose in McGarry House.

▶ 2015

**HOUSING FIRST**  
Development of a new Housing First programme in collaboration with the Limerick Homeless Action Team.

Long-Term Apartments  
Procurement of four long-term apartments in Kerry for households with a housing need.

**FAMILY HOMES**  
Procurement of eight family homes in Limerick for families experiencing homeless and engaging with the IFS.

**INNOVATION**  
Participation in the HSE's National Naloxone Demonstration Project.

**INNOVATION**  
Development of a Peer Overdose Education Programme - TOPPLE.

▶ 2016

**TEMPORARY EMERGENCY PROVISION**  
Emergency shelter-style accommodation for up to 20 individuals on a nightly basis.

**FAMILY HOMES**  
Procurement of four family homes in Limerick for families experiencing homelessness and engaging with the IFS.

▶ 2017

**TEMPORARY EMERGENCY PROVISION 2**  
Additional, separate-site emergency accommodation for up to 10 individuals on a nightly basis.

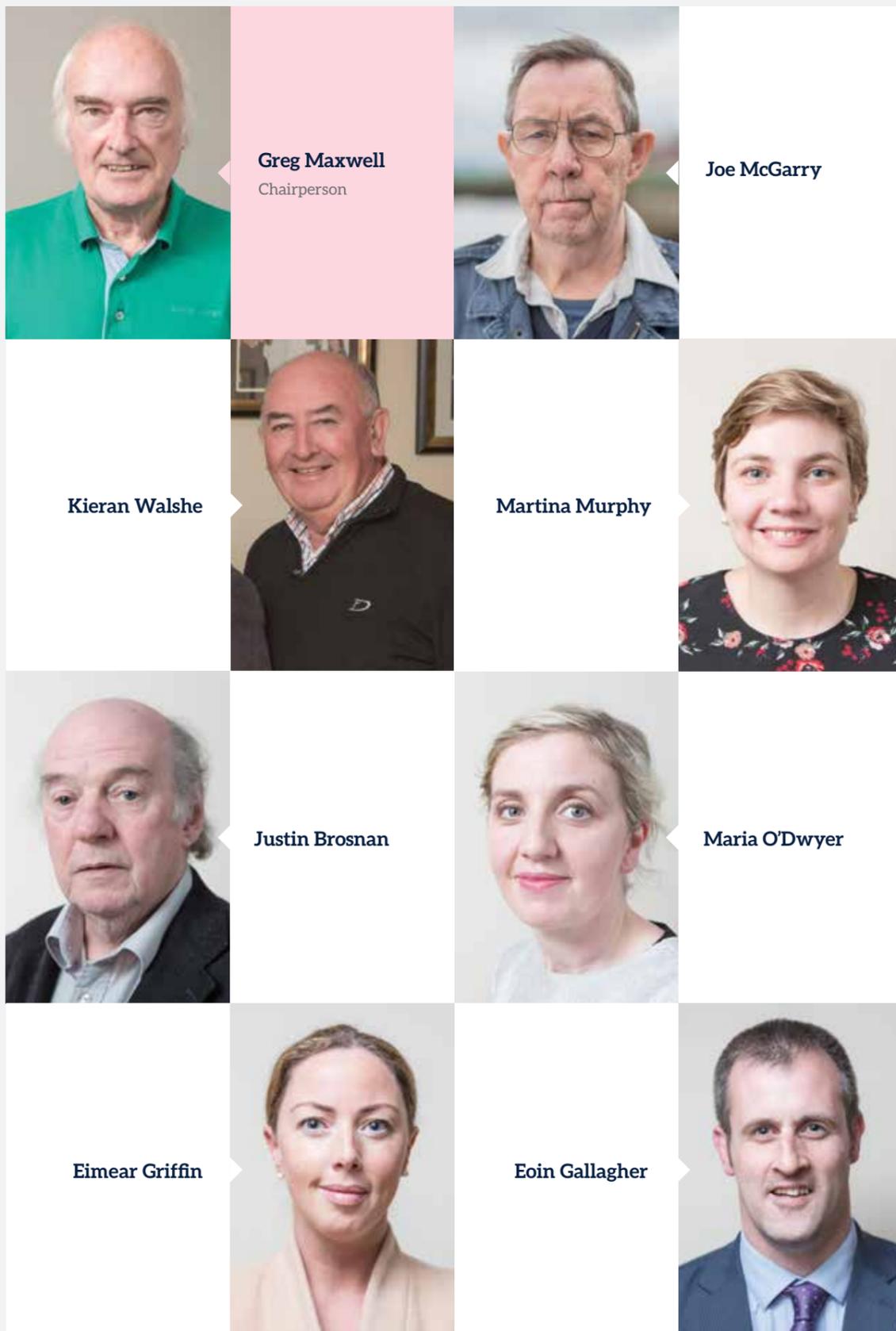
**OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICES**  
A new office/information centre in Co. Tipperary, supporting people in a preventative and resettlement capacity

**SARSFIELD FAMILY HUB**  
A hub for 12 small families experiencing homelessness and previously living in emergency accommodation.

**HOUSING FIRST**  
Development of a new Housing First service in Kerry in collaboration with Kerry County Council & the HSE.

**LONG-TERM HOMES**  
Procurement of 30 homes in Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry, Kildare & Dublin for households experiencing homelessness.

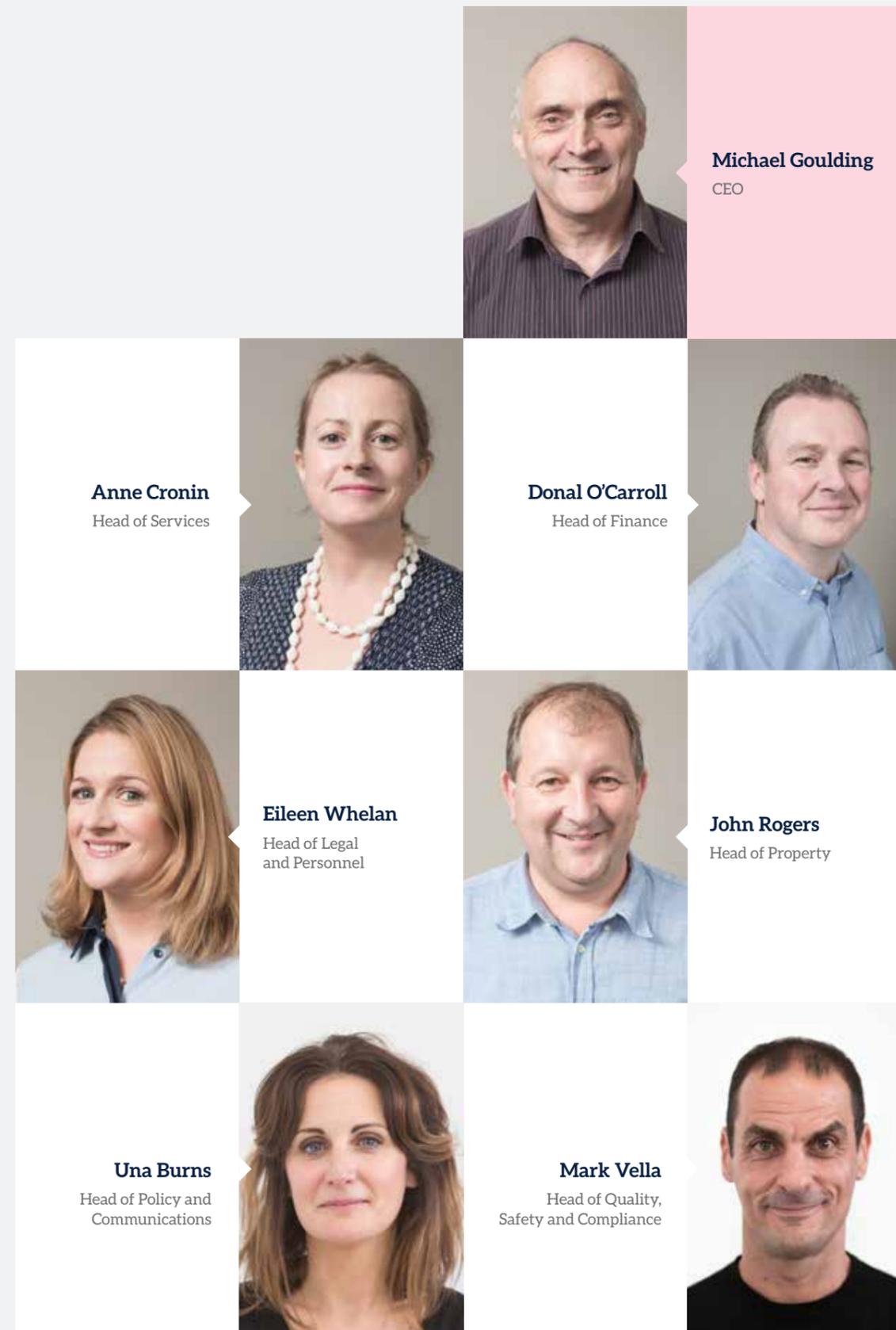
## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



This is our current Board of Directors at time of going to print. Two members have retired that were active during 2017: Pat Quaid and Dermot Sadlier.

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Board of Directors and Senior Management Team



# VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES & VALUES

## Vision:

To provide lasting solutions to homelessness.

## Mission Statement:

Novas promotes social inclusion through Housing, Health, Recovery.

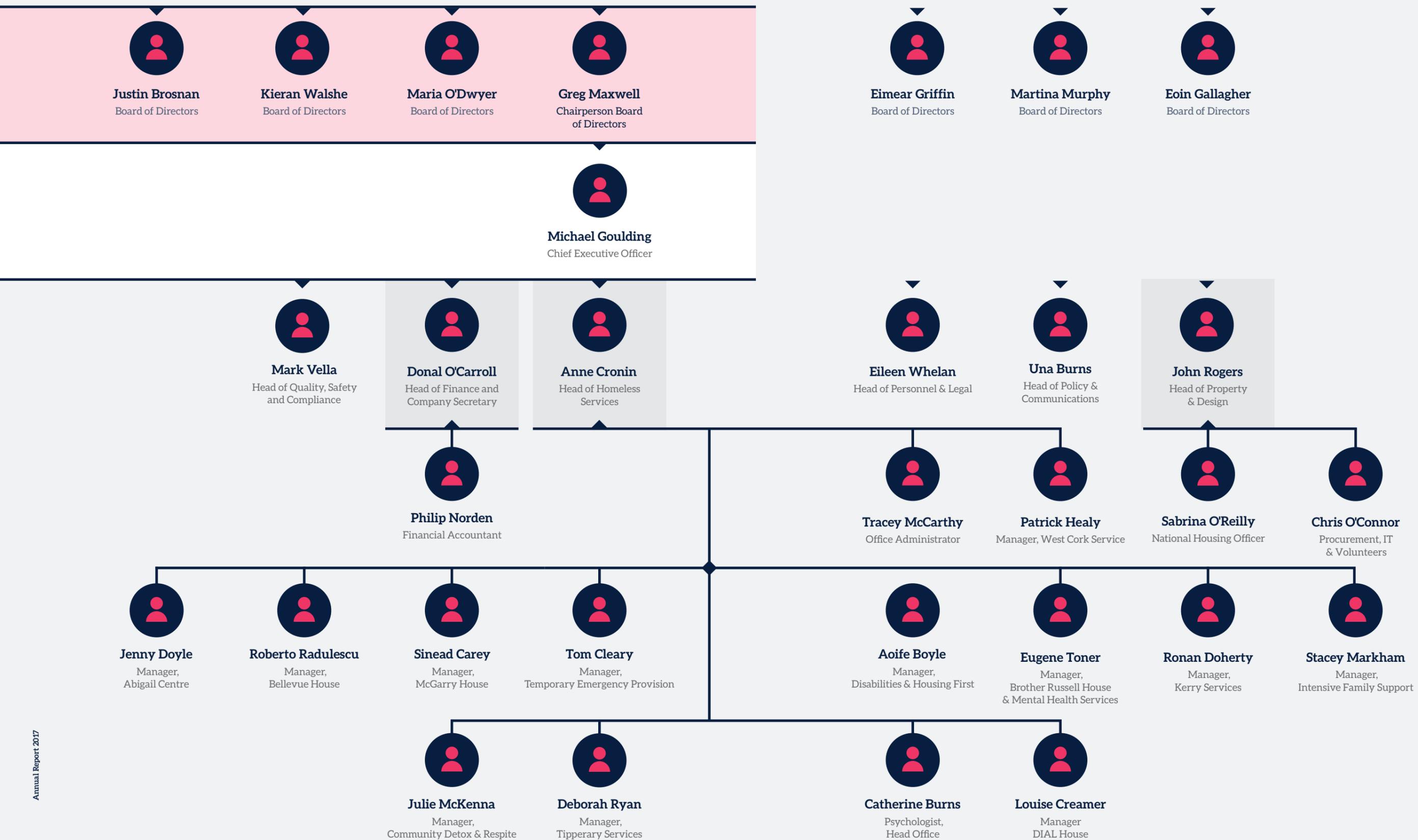
## Aims and Objectives:

- > To provide homes to people who are homeless.
- > To support homeless people to have better health outcomes through interventions in drug use, mental health and disabilities.
- > To provide recovery pathways for homeless people with enduring mental health issues.
- > To empower and promote the independence of those who use our services.
- > To treat all our clients with dignity and respect.
- > To provide client-centred services, rooted in evidence, quality and good practice.
- > To advocate on behalf of people who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, entrenched in addiction or those experiencing social marginalisation through a strengths-based approach.

## Novas' Core Values Are:

- > Equality
- > Diversity
- > Dignity
- > Self-determination
- > Strengths-based
- > Rights-based

# NOVAS MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE





In 2017 we supported 4,572 people who were homeless, at risk of homelessness or recovering from addiction. This was the highest number of people ever supported by our organisation.

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# 2017: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

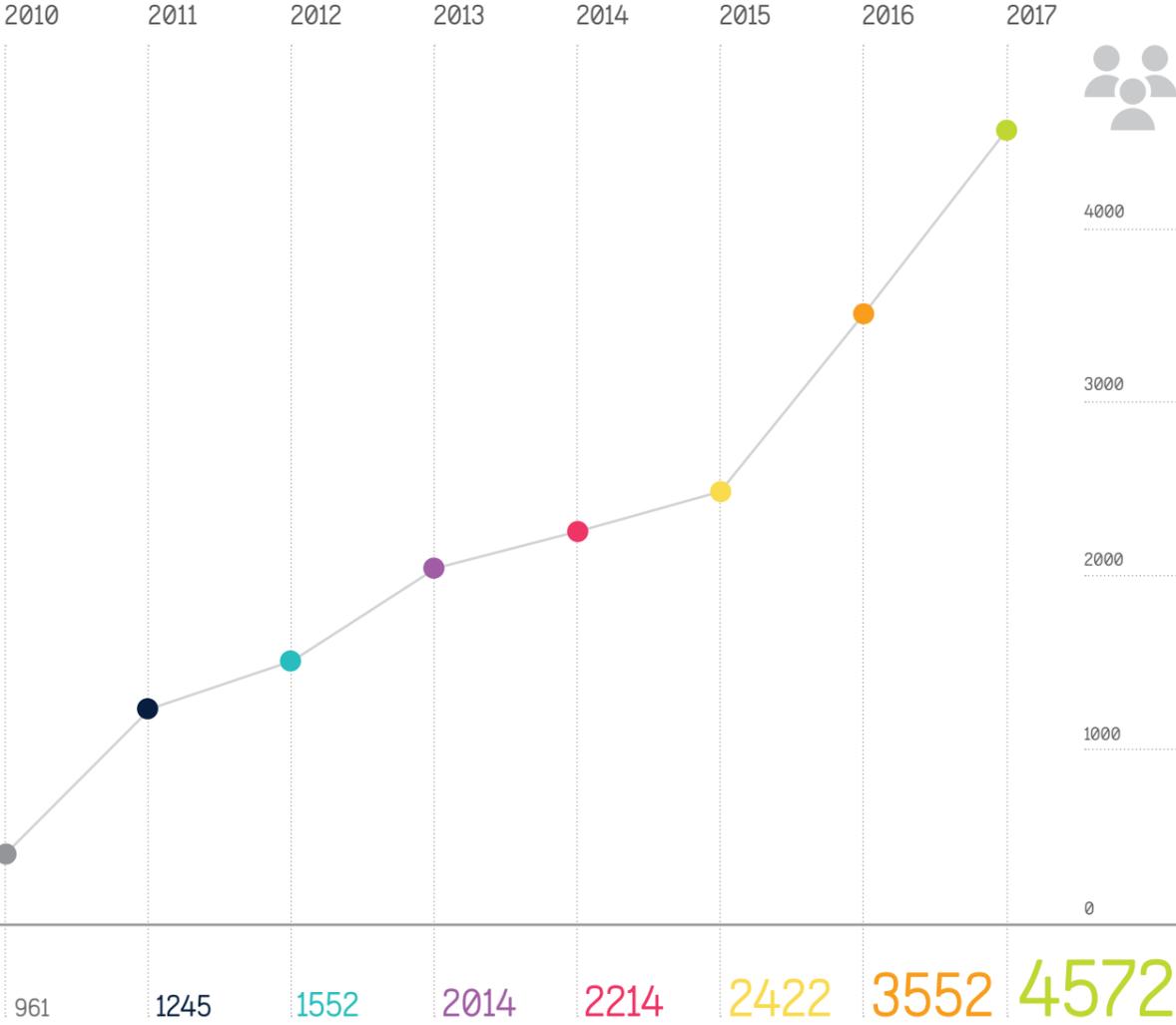
During 2017, Novas again set records for the number of people supported, the number of services operated and the number of people referred to the organisation. The escalation of the homeless crisis, coupled with more people than ever seeking support for addiction and recovery, resulted in another unprecedented year in Novas.

**In 2017 we supported 4,572 people who were homeless, at risk of homelessness or recovering from addiction.** This was the highest number of people ever supported by our organisation. **Since 2010 there has been**

**significant annual increases in the number of people accessing our services, a rise of more than 375%.**

The reasons people seek support from Novas are complex and multi-faceted, however, the extraordinary rise in recent years can be attributed in large part to the national housing and homeless crisis and the significant dearth in accommodation in our population centres. An over-reliance on the private rented market has resulted in unfettered and unsustainable rent increases that have forced many households into homelessness.

### NUMBER OF CLIENTS



While we supported more people than ever before, demand continued to exceed capacity in all of our services. **In Mitchel Street in Thurles Co. Tipperary, just 9% of those referred were able to access accommodation. In Arlington Lodge in Kerry the figure was 18%, in the Abigail Centre in Dublin it was 32% and in McGarry House in Limerick it was 39%.** These figures highlight the national demand for homeless services.

In Limerick, the demand was met through the operation of Novas' Temporary Emergency Provision (TEP), which made huge inroads in accommodating the most marginalised individuals in the city, who could not access existing accommodation services and who otherwise would have been at risk of ongoing rough sleeping. To illustrate this point, if we consider all accommodation services collectively, some 82% of clients who were referred to Novas were able to access accommodation. However, if TEP is removed from these figures, the proportion drops to 32%. **During 2017, there were almost 7,000 presentations to TEP.**

The reasons for access to Novas accommodation services throughout

the year were primarily underpinned by the current housing shortage. Some 21% of all clients accessing Novas homeless accommodation were evicted from the private rented market (due to landlords selling, moving in to their own property, undergoing renovations, non-payment/inability to pay rent). A further 40% had to leave the family home. This is frequently due to multiple generations of one family living together, usually after some members have been forced to exit the private rented sector. This can be a fragile arrangement that can suddenly break down forcing some people to present as homeless.

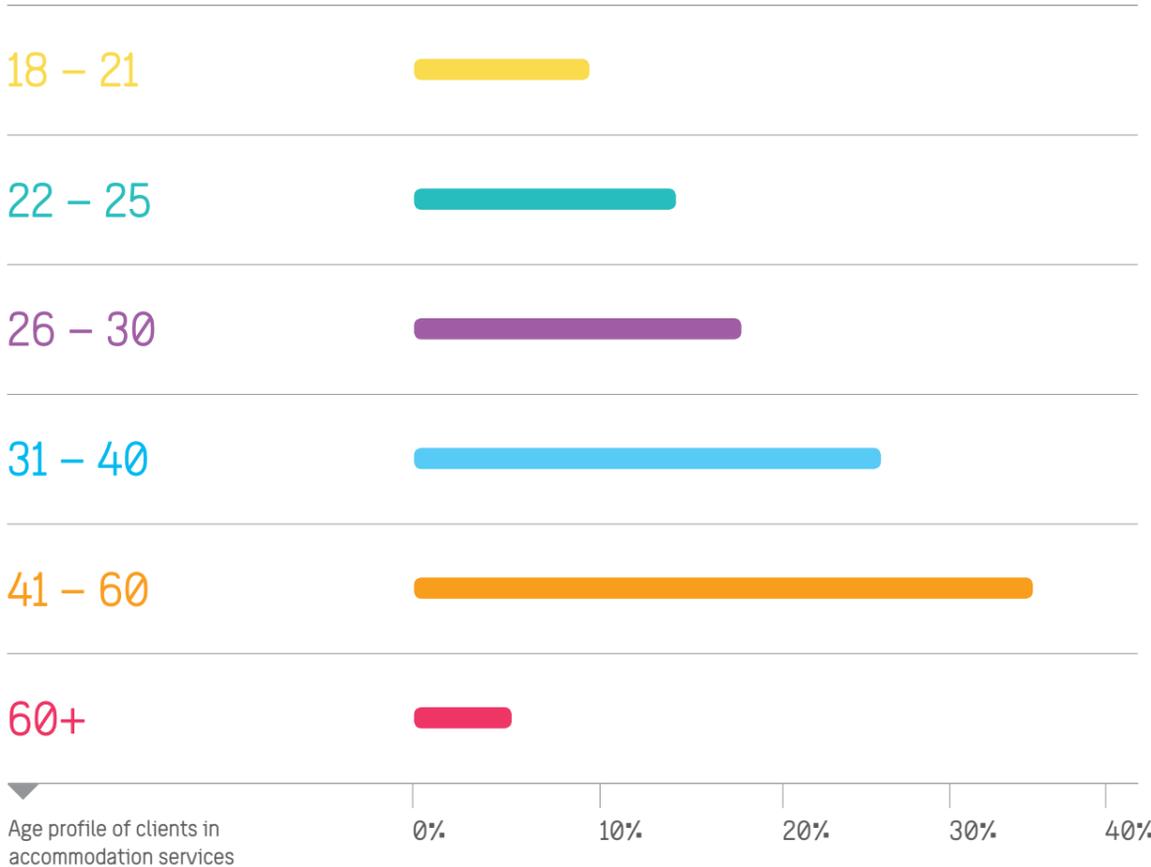
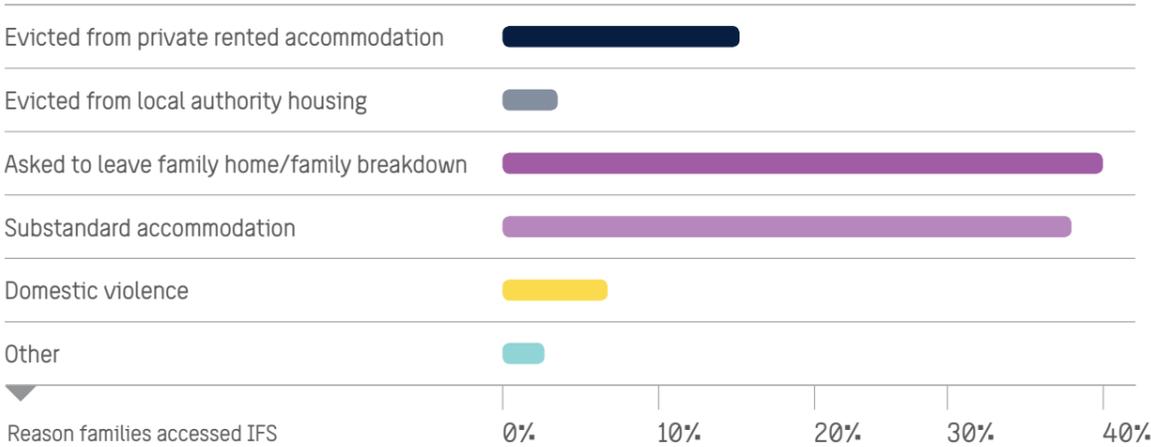
Considering family homelessness in isolation, it is even more directly correlated to the current housing crisis. An examination of presentations to the Intensive Family Support Service throughout the year reveals that up to 90% of all clients accessed the service due to exclusion or exit from the private rented market: some 14% had been evicted from accommodation in the sector, a further 40% were living in the family home and could not access the private rented market and 36% were living in overcrowded and sub standard accommodation.

The number of families requiring support in our Intensive Family Support Service remained high throughout the year. The service underwent significant restructuring in 2016 in response to growing family homelessness at the time. This proved immensely successful in eliminating waiting lists for IFS support in 2017. **In this twelve-month period, 176 families were referred, with all but one successfully accessing support. Last Christmas the IFS Annual Toy Appeal supported 895 children, the largest campaign to date!**

During the year Novas acquired 23 long-term family homes in Limerick and Dublin to support

families experiencing homelessness and living in emergency B&B accommodation. Such procurement is a central component of our strategic objective to finding lasting solutions to homelessness.

**The age profile of Novas clients reflects the number of young people becoming and remaining homeless.** Considering all our homeless accommodation services, **some 9% of clients were aged between 18 and 21 years**, an increase of 5% in a 24 month period. Almost 40% of all clients accessing accommodation services were under 30 years of age and 65% were less than 40 years old.



While the proportion of women accessing a Novas service declined from 42% in 2016 to 34% in 2017, this was due largely to a significant rise in men accessing night-by-night accommodation in TEP, rather than a decline in the number of women seeking support.

**2017 was the first full operational year of TEP (having opened in December 2016). There were almost 7,000 presentations to the service throughout the year, accounting for approximately 300 individuals. Some 77%**

of these were male. The client profile of this service indicates a very vulnerable group of individuals with significant addiction and mental health needs.

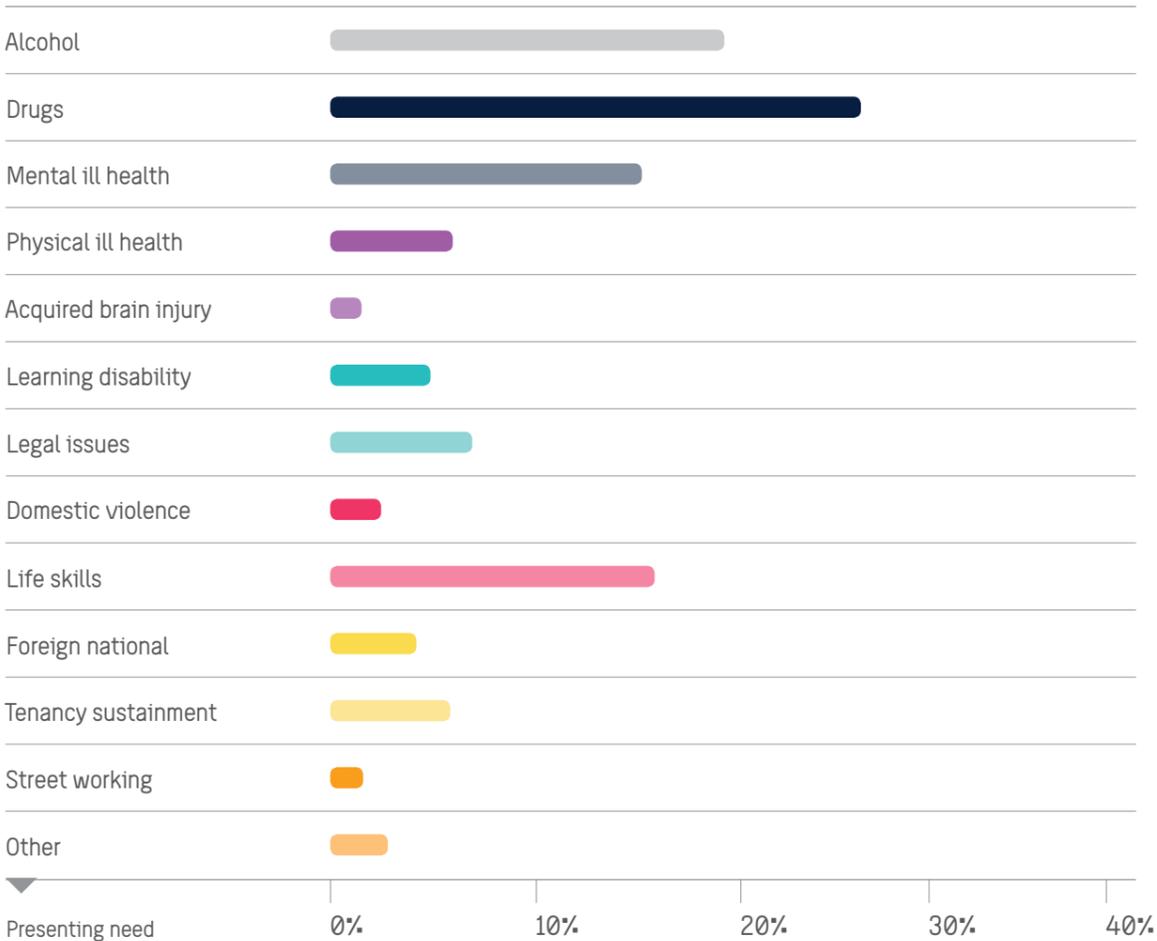
The presenting needs of clients accessing accommodation services throughout the year were broad-ranging and complex, requiring intensive support underpinned by the values of harm reduction, empowerment and client focus.

**Addiction accounted for 44% of all presenting needs of clients in our accommodation services.** Issues relating to mental health and life-skills accounted for 13% each, while people requiring support for legal issues was 7%, physical health 5% and tenancy sustainment 5%. These returns highlight the importance of recognising, supporting and treating clients for dual diagnosis of mental health and addiction. Since inception in 2002, Novas has employed dedicated dual diagnosis workers. We also provide ancillary addiction services such as

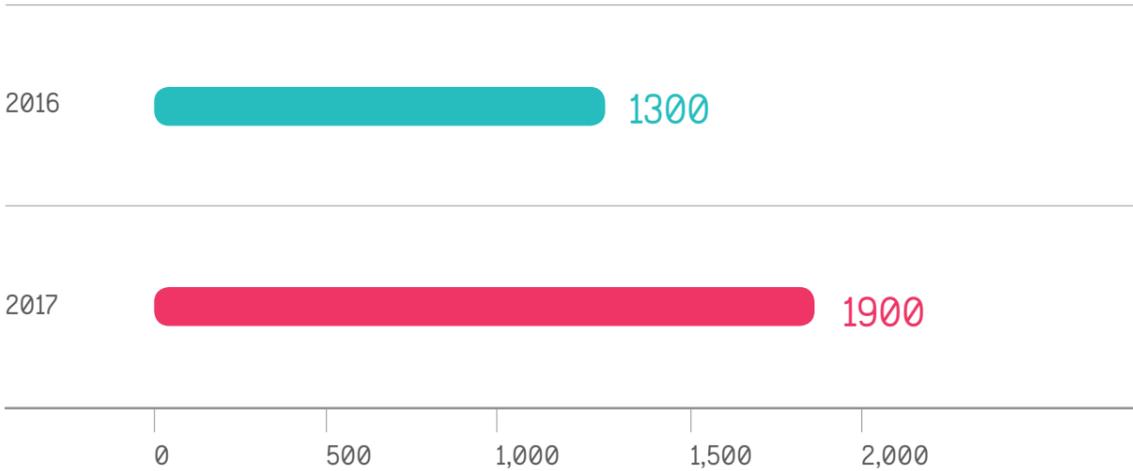
our Community Detox and Respite Facility and well as drop-in dual diagnosis clinics in TEP.

**There was unprecedented demand for Novas' Out-of-Hours service during 2017, with more than 1,900 presentations to the service. This was an increase of 46% in twelve months.**

PRESENTING NEEDS OF CLIENTS ACCESSING ACCOMMODATION SERVICES



NO. OF CLIENTS ACCESSING OUT-OF-HOURS SERVICE

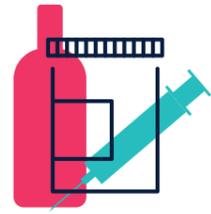


**For the first time ever 146 families presented to the service, with no accommodation arrangements for the night.** Before then, the Out-of-Hours Service was predominantly accessed by single individuals.

During 2017 our Street Outreach service continued to be a vital point of contact

for some of the most vulnerable people in society and a means of entry to mainstream services. **During the 12 month period the service distributed 11,250 meals, and had almost 8,000 presentations.** The service continued to be operated by our invaluable volunteers who offer a hot meal, warm clothing and support and advice to clients.





Addiction Services



Prevention



Street Outreach



4,572

The number of people supported by Novas throughout the year



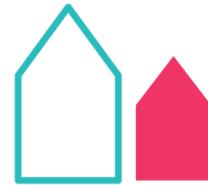
11,250

meals distributed by our Street Outreach throughout the year.

# Our Services



Housing First



Housing



79

tenancies in long-term accommodation nationally; 41 for single individuals and 38 for families.



Homeless Accommodation



Family Support



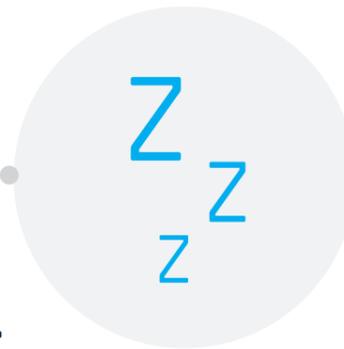
716

The number of children Novas worked with throughout the year



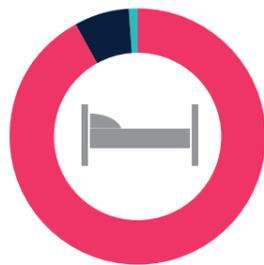
895

children were supported through our Christmas Toy Appeal.

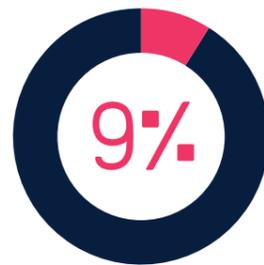


6,783

bed-nights in our Temporary Emergency Provision, which provides accommodation to people at risk of homeless from 9pm to 9am on a nightly basis.



92% of all bedrooms in our homeless accommodation are single occupancy, 7% are shared by two people and 1% have more than two people.



9% of all people accessing homeless accommodation were aged between 18 and 21



1,900+

presentations to our Out-of-Hours service, supporting people 24/7 to secure accommodation and support.



“I believe the staff in McGarry House saw in us, things we couldn’t see in ourselves. They believed we were ‘more than just addicts’. I wouldn’t have had the ability to climb out of the hole I had dug so deep, without their support, friendship and trust in me.”

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# MILESTONES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- HOUSING FIRST, CO. KERRY
- OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE, CO. TIPPERARY
- TOPPLE
- THE ABIGAIL CENTRE
- FAMILY HOMELESSNESS
- TEP 2
- VOLUNTEERING



In 2017 there was balanced regional development of Novas services, with the advent of Housing First in Kerry, an Outreach Support Service in Thurles, a Family Hub in Dublin and a new Temporary Emergency Provision service in Limerick. The only region where no new Novas service was opened was West Cork, however the number of families and individuals that were supported by the existing Tenancy Sustainment Service there extended by 61%.

## HOUSING FIRST, KERRY

In February 2017, Novas established its first Housing First service outside of Limerick, in collaboration with Kerry County Council. Initially as a demonstration pilot to support single homeless adults to access and maintain independent accommodation, it soon emerged as a vital means of tackling long-term homelessness in Kerry. The service supports long-term and revolving door clients to secure and maintain independent housing, focusing on those living in emergency and temporary accommodation for long periods of time.

**The service has grown rapidly, with more than 40 individuals already referred.** Accommodation has been secured for programme clients via the private rented market, Novas' own housing stock in the region and units provided by Kerry County Council. Wrap-around support is intensive and ongoing and relates to budgeting and money management, life-skills, addiction and recovery, preventing social isolation and reintegration in local communities.



**The service has enjoyed much success, to the extent that no client in Arlington Lodge (the only STA service in Kerry) is currently living there for longer than the recommended six month period.** This is an impressive return considering the ongoing dearth of accommodation units nationally, particularly for single individuals.

In Limerick, Housing First also extended throughout 2017, with the transfer of 27 units of accommodation to Communal Housing First as per the Finnish model. All residents were formerly homeless individuals, who, due to their complex needs found it extremely difficult to maintain their tenancies without intensive and often infinite support, such as offered by Housing First. The transfer of units was successful in stabilising tenancies through harm reduction intervention and the development of individual care plans. In scattered site units, The Limerick Housing First team worked with 22 clients throughout the year.

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The service has grown rapidly, with more than 40 individuals already referred.

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Plans were also afoot to develop Housing First across Co. Tipperary in 2017. A mere 9% of those referred to our STA in Thurles were able to access accommodation, thus highlighting the need for a new approach. The Tipperary Housing First service began in early 2018.

Throughout 2017 Novas procured six units of accommodation for Housing First clients in Limerick and Kerry and have committed to increasing this number further in 2018.



# ALEC'S STORY

I am 39 years old and this is my first home, the first place I've been able to hold down.

I was raised by my grandmother and I left home at 18. I had it rough growing up. I always got bullied at school. I still get bullied now but I'm learning to walk away. I went to school in St. Ita's and St. Joseph's and then did training in the National Learning Network - I trained in the kitchen and did woodwork.

For the last 20 years I spent most of my time in homeless services. Here in Kerry I lived in Arlington Lodge and Knocklee House and I also spent a couple of years in hostels in Limerick. In between all that I moved into a few different apartments on my own but it never worked. I wasn't able to hold it down, I invited the wrong people into the place. People who I thought were my friends, but they weren't.

With Housing First, they help me with basic things like setting up broadband, arranging for the rubbish to be collected and bits and pieces like that. I don't have any addiction issues so I don't need that kind of support, just the basic living skills, someone to check in on me and see

how I'm doing. I have lots of health problems so it's nice to know there's someone there if I need them. I also get food donations from FoodCloud so I always have something in the press to eat.

The best thing about the flat is knowing I have a roof over my head, a place of my own where I can relax and watch TV. Since moving into my own place I have more contact with my family. My aunty checks in on me once or twice a week. She's helping me decorate the place nice. My brother also calls.

The location of the apartment is good. I can walk everywhere. The odd time I go for a run or lift weights. I find that good for my head.

Before I had problems controlling my temper but not so much anymore. Living on my own helps. Shared accommodation didn't help. It was hard at times. Now I decide who can call and who I spend time with.

The flat is better than anywhere else I've lived. I'm better off living on my own. I'd pick it over anywhere else. I'm nearly 40 and I finally have a place I can call home.





# NOVAS



## OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE, TIPPERARY

In June 2017 Novas opened a regional office in Thurles Co. Tipperary. The service provides outreach support for those living in their own homes who were formally homeless or are at risk of homelessness. While Novas has provided Supported Temporary Accommodation in Thurles for seven years, the new service has enabled us to extend our remit. For the past two years, less than 10% of those referred to our service were able to access accommodation, highlighting the urgent need for extended support to vulnerable households in the community. **The new service provides preventative interventions, tenancy sustainment and outreach support.**

While our services in both Nenagh and Thurles have provided outreach support on an ad-hoc basis for a number of years, the new office space with dedicated staff enables

us to provide co-ordinated and extended support and is part of a wider restructuring and extension of services in Co. Tipperary. In 2016, outreach support was provided to 15 individuals, while for the latter six month period of 2017 (when the service opened), 50 households were supported in an outreach capacity, including seven families. It is also the first year in which we operated a Christmas Toy Appeal in the region, which supported 60 children.

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50 households were supported in an outreach capacity, including seven families.

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## DEBORAH'S STORY

*Deborah, Manager of our Tipperary Services, shares her story.*

My Story with Novas begins in Limerick. I was reluctantly sent on my 3rd year Social Care Work Placement to Brother Russell House. It was 2004 and I was a naive 21-year-old. I did everything to get out of it. I was informed by the college that I would be working three days per week in a 26-bed men's homeless hostel in Limerick City, which at the time was being run by the Alexian Brothers. The thought of this terrified me as I come from a rural part of Tipperary and had very little exposure to the difficulties people were facing in Limerick City at that time.

I still remember the first day I walked through the doors; it was my first lesson in being "non-judgemental". Every perception I had, every opinion I had formed about what and who I would meet, was completely blown out of the water.... I couldn't have been more wrong.

I was met by Brother Luke Polding that day and he has since been a massive inspiration to me over the years. I quickly settled into life in Brother Russell House and before I knew it I was spending every spare hour I had with the clients. I have often described the job as an addiction, it gets into your blood and it is definitely more of a vocation than a means to an end.

Towards the end of my Placement in 2005 I was offered the opportunity to become a project worker. I still had a year left in college but at this point I could not see myself working anywhere else and I graciously accepted.





Towards the end of 2005 Novas took over the running of Brother Russell House. I remained part of the team there until October 2011, at which point I was asked to temporarily move to Mitchel Street in Thurles. This was a relatively new service providing five emergency beds for people from North Tipperary. This was a short-term move which I was glad to accommodate; on the absolute guarantee that I would return to my beloved Brother Russell. I stayed in Mitchel Street until early 2012. After a brief return to Brother Russell House, the opportunity to apply for a Co-ordinator role in Thurles arose. I had some tough decisions to make; although I loved my job in Limerick I now had a young daughter, I needed more stability and I also felt I could genuinely make a difference for people in my own home county. I was fortunate to be appointed to the role in February 2012.

From 2012 to 2017 Mitchel Street was running smoothly, however the lack of expansion and move-on was a constant concern for me. There were more and more people presenting to our service and we had no capacity to support them, which was incredibly frustrating. By January 2017 I felt I was no longer fulfilling my role in Tipperary, I was doubting myself and felt my vision for supporting vulnerable groups in the region was not being fulfilled. I sat down with my Manager Anne Cronin and after a lot of tea

and reassuring words from Anne, we agreed to expand the service in Thurles to allow us to support people in the community.

In May 2017 we launched our Housing First office in Thurles. This allowed us to reach more people and support the wider community. Our aim was to support people in their own homes as a preventative measure and also to assist people living in emergency accommodation.

We have been pleasantly surprised with the support we have received locally and the trusting relationships we have built with our clients in the community, who turn to us for support. The team here in Thurles have been so loyal and flexible in accommodating this new service, we would never have been able to achieve this without them.

If you haven't guessed already I am one of the lucky ones in life. I get up in the morning and look forward to the day ahead. The job is not without its challenges, but every positive day offsets the negative experiences a thousand to one. I have been so fortunate to work with the most amazing people in the last 14 years, I have met characters that you wouldn't find in the best written novels, and I am honoured that they have allowed me to be part of their lives.



## TOPPLE

**TOPPLE is a pioneering overdose prevention programme that was initiated in McGarry House in 2015.** The idea was the brainchild of a research piece commissioned by Novas following a period of significant overdoses in the service. In an 18 month period prior to research, there were 34 overdoses.

The research, entitled HEADS UP: Preventing and Responding to Overdose in McGarry House, examined the levels of overdose among homeless people living in the service. It recommended the development of a peer education programme as one measure to reduce the number of people overdosing within the homeless population.

The programme was designed to identify the signs of overdose, respond in the event of overdose and provide support in the event of non-fatal overdose. Client training includes the skills needed to respond to and support people in crisis, to create partnerships with staff and first responders and to promote self-care. Thereafter, participants volunteer as Peer Overdose Workers for three to six month periods, or longer if they wish.

The first group of students graduated in 2016 and have since made a number of interventions

both within the service and in the wider local community. During 2017, four clients graduated from the TOPPLE programme, bringing the total number of peer overdose workers to 13.

**In September 2017, the McGarry House staff and peer workers hosted two workshops on TOPPLE at the Irish Street Medicine Symposium in UCD. The presentation and the interactive demonstrations were led by the peer workers, who both shared their personal experience of addiction and responding to overdose. This was a hugely empowering experience for the peer workers and is part of our strength-based value system.**

Since inception of TOPPLE, the monthly average number of overdoses in McGarry house has significantly reduced from 1.9 per month to 1.1 per month. We are endeavouring to reduce this number further through the extension of TOPPLE and other harm reduction programmes. We are currently developing a TOPPLE trainer and trainee guidebook in collaboration with programme graduates, Quality Matters and Piquant Media. Once completed the programme will be rolled out to all Novas services and other voluntary bodies working with at-risk groups.

# GER'S STORY

I came to McGarry House in 2013, having battled addiction and homelessness for a number of years. I had been in other hostels previously but had been asked to leave over non-payment of rent...all my money had been going to fund my addiction.

I started taking heroin at the age of 18 and found that it allowed me an escape from the pressures and worries of life and soon fell into addiction, which followed me for 11 years. In that time, I have seen friends and family also fall into addiction as a way to escape their reality. Some of these friends are no longer with me today through suicide and overdose...the drug we started using to make life easier was in turn making everything much worse. The reality we were trying to escape had found us again and every day became a struggle to hide from life through more drug taking.

Having witnessed a friend's overdose, and following an overdose myself, I knew this wasn't the way I wanted to continue my life. But I was in so deep, I couldn't see a way out. Seeing your friend overdose, literally watching them fighting for life and being unable to respond, waiting for emergency services to arrive, is the most helpless situation anyone can be placed in. I didn't like that feeling and I didn't want to be the cause of that feeling for anybody else.

It was soon after that event that the staff in McGarry House approached me with the idea of training residents with the skills to prevent and respond to overdose, the TOPPLE programme. I thought this was a great chance for me to help others, not realising how much this programme would help me.

We were trained in how to prevent overdose by recognising signs of risky behaviour with drug taking, trained in how to respond to overdose with scene safety, CPR and naloxone administration and also how to communicate

properly with emergency services to allow them carry out their job as efficiently as possible. They also taught us how to talk to somebody after they have had an overdose - not being judgemental, offering support and being a shoulder to lean on if needed, as well as pointing them in the direction of services that can help.

Having completed my training my response to overdoses is now a lot calmer as I know I have been given the skills I need. The helplessness I once felt has been replaced with confidence in my own ability to respond. I graduated as a peer overdose worker three years ago and now feel confident that when an overdose might occur that I can put my skills to use and do all I can to help save a life. The TOPPLE programme gave me back hope that I would beat my own addiction and someday help others in the position I found myself in.

I'm now three years clean from heroin, something I could never have imagined before the TOPPLE programme. I am reunited with my partner and children and I am also studying addiction, so I can put my life experience together with academic learning to help people fight their addiction and not fall deeper into it like I did. I had used drugs to run away from all my problems not realising I was creating those same problems for my own kids, what I was trying to escape I was creating.

I believe the staff in McGarry House saw in us, things we couldn't see in ourselves. They believed we were 'more than just addicts'. I wouldn't have had the ability to climb out of the hole I had dug so deep, without their support, friendship and trust in me. Their belief in me made me believe in myself. For that I will always be grateful. They helped me get back my life so one day I can help somebody get back theirs.







## THE ABIGAIL CENTRE

Novas' Abigail Centre is the only dedicated female homeless service in the capital. Located in Finglas, it provides a low-threshold service for women experiencing homelessness with significant and enduring mental health needs, often coupled with addiction. Many of the residents have deeply complex issues, frequently compounded by the trauma of losing children. The facility offers a range of rehabilitation and stabilisation interventions designed to engage residents and create sustainable pathways out of homelessness.

During 2017, the service increased capacity from 26 to 40 individuals as a response to the homeless emergency in the capital. The extensive physical space in the building and the external grounds enabled such expansion and the residents are fortunate to avail of the support and services of a variety of voluntary organisations operating from the site including; the CDET, Finglas Travellers Development Group, The Men's Shed and Pavee Point.

On Friday 22nd September 2017, The Abigail Centre held a Community Fete to mark the end of Finglas Positive Wellness Week and as a means of engaging the local community with the service and the challenges faced by its residents. The occasion was enjoyed by hundreds of members of the local community as well as special guests including Jason Sherlock and George Murphy.

The day began with local school children enjoying a tour of the building, which included exhibitions from all the on-site organisations. The children also enjoyed a falconry exhibition, an observatory beehive and got to explore the issue of homelessness in their local community, through an audio visual interpretation of the lived experience of the women living in the service.

The fete was also enjoyed by elderly citizens in the community who got together for afternoon tea and a ceile. In the evening all members of the local community were invited for a BBQ, live music and children's entertainment.



## BABY SHOES

*This story is taken from a project completed by the residents of The Abigail House entitled 'Our Stories Matter'. The women in the service used storytelling and photography as a means of sharing their experience of homelessness.*

I took this picture because these items represent my son, who I just miss from the bottom of my heart. Sometimes I feel like I'm taking 10 steps forward and 100 steps back, but I'm still moving forward. My son will be two in December and I call him my little prince because he came and rescued me. I used to sing 'Rock a Bye Baby' to him all the time in the hospital. It's very difficult being apart from him. I kept all the sentimental things, like his first pair of shoes, a nappy from his first packet of nappies and his teddy. In the future, I can't wait to live with him again. This is very emotionally difficult for me to write, it's kind of bitter sweet. These bring back beautiful memories but still make me cry.

## FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Novas continued to expand its family services nationally throughout 2017. **During the twelve-month period we extended our support to families living in emergency accommodation in Limerick through the employment of a dedicated B&B worker, we opened our first family hub in Dublin and we provided tenancy sustainment support to 61 families in West Cork and seven in Co. Tipperary. During the year we also procured 27 homes in Limerick and Dublin, of which 24 have been since tenanted by families who were formerly homeless.**

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The unprecedented rise in family homeless demanded an urgent response and Novas procured more long-term properties in this twelve-month period than ever before.

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A central part of our commitment to providing lasting solutions to homelessness is the acquisition and development of long term units of accommodation. **During 2017, Novas procured 30 homes in Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry, Dublin and Kildare. Some 24 of these was dedicated to families.** The unprecedented rise in family homelessness demanded an urgent response and Novas procured more long-term properties in this twelve-month period than ever before.

The acquisition and refurbishment programme was overseen by our Head of Property and

Design and the tenancies were offered and managed by our National Housing Manager, who worked with local authorities across the country in identifying families for their permanent home. Support was provided as required as well as advocacy and linkage to other appropriate services. **We handed over keys to the final property of the year on the 22nd of December, just in time for Christmas. A three bed house in a Limerick suburb became home to a single mom and her three children,** following months of insecurity moving from one hotel to another.

**In the final weeks of the year, we were also requested to open a Family Hub in Ballyfermot by the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.**

This was to accommodate 12 families who were homeless and living in commercial hotels throughout the city and suburbs. While Sarsfield Hub was not opened until the first week of 2018, due to delays with refurbishment, Novas staff and management worked throughout Christmas and the New Year to prepare the property and liaise with families, to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible for those moving in.

The new complex provides families with self-contained living spaces, communal kitchens and laundry facilities and a dedicated playrooms, recreational spaces and outdoor amenities.

As all residents are from the area, they are now within close proximity to their children's schools and creches as well as their families, friends and support networks. Previously, many of the families had long and expensive commutes across the city to bring children to school and get to work themselves. The location of the service, as well as the dedicated onsite amenities, greatly enhances their quality of life, however we are acutely aware that this type of accommodation is merely a temporary arrangement and our focus and commitment is to secure long-term housing for residents.



**On Friday 10th November 2017, Novas hosted a Seminar on Childhood Experiences of Homelessness,** portraying the lived experiences of children in emergency accommodation. The seminar included an exhibition of photos chronicling the life of homeless families, presentations from a range of experts and a moving contribution from a mother, who had experienced homelessness with her four children.

**The speakers: Dr. Sharon Lambert of the Department of Psychology in UCC, Nuala Ward, Director of Investigations with the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Tanya Ward, CEO of the Children's Rights Alliance,** highlighted the profound impact of homelessness on children in terms of their play, education, development, nutrition and their physical and mental well-being.

Kate O Loughlin, who had experienced homelessness with four children described the behavioural changes in her young children while living in B&B accommodation and the utter chaos and insecurity that the family experienced during this time. Her route to homelessness was characteristic of the current crisis; she was evicted from her rented home following her landlady's decision to sell the property and was unable to secure alternative accommodation in the sector, thus leading her to register her family as homeless.

While Kate and her children are now housed by Novas and thriving in their new home, there are thousands of other families throughout the country still living in hotels and B&B. **Last year Novas worked with 716 children throughout the country who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.**

## TEP

As well as being the first fully operational year of our original Temporary Emergency Provision, in the latter weeks of 2017 we opened a separate-site additional TEP service. TEP Two was opened on the 23rd of December in collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, to accommodate the ever-increasing number of homeless individual and couples seeking shelter.

It accommodates up to ten persons per night. Opened from 9pm until 9am each night, it prevents large-scale rough sleeping in Limerick City. Clients of both our TEP services are linked with Housing First programmes and are prioritised for move-on.



## VOLUNTEERING

Throughout 2017, volunteers continued to be the stalwart of the Novas community. They continued to play a pivotal role in the provision of support to some of the most marginalised people in society. They operated our nightly Street Outreach service, providing a hot meal and warm clothing with compassion and kindness. Volunteers also supported our Temporary Emergency Provision on a nightly basis. This is the coalface of the homeless crisis, providing shelter to residents that would otherwise be at serious risk of rough sleeping. Volunteers welcomed clients after a long day on the streets, offering food and friendship.

Our volunteers were also integral to our fundraising endeavours throughout the year. They organised and participated in a range of events, for which we are immensely grateful. Many companies throughout the country provided time, resources and staff to enhance our services and the homes we provide. Too numerous to mention, but the lives of so many clients have been enhanced by your generosity, and for this we thank you.

At Christmas we had two Sleep Outs – Novas' Annual Sleep Out and the GPA Gaelic Voices for Change event. The latter was a new initiative supported by hurling, camogie, football and ladies football players from throughout the Mid-West. It was a wonderful occasion of solidarity and empathy that raised awareness of the issue and vital funds for frontline services.

In May we celebrated our volunteers with our Annual Volunteer Recognition Event, which was held in our beautiful Respite House in Newport, Co. Tipperary. The occasion facilitated an opportunity to meet our volunteers, to share experiences and learning and to foster a deeper sense of community and purpose.




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The GPA Gaelic Voices for Change event ... was a new initiative supported by hurling, camogie, football and ladies football players from throughout the Mid-West.

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We would like to take this opportunity to thank every single individual who supported Novas last year. Your help, kindness and generosity has allowed us to support more people in local communities throughout Ireland.

## ANNEMARIE'S STORY

My introduction to Novas was back in 2014 when returning to education as a mature student. It was while studying for my diploma in Drug and Alcohol studies at University of Limerick that my course research ignited my interest in the possibility of volunteering to help those that may have found themselves in situations that left them requiring some form of assistance.

On completion of my studies and researching various charitable organisations, Novas and the services they provided was the one that piqued my interest. While not fully understanding what volunteering entailed, I contacted the Novas office and spoke to Chris who fully explained the requirements and also set me up with my initial training, and so began my Novas experience.

On completion of training provided by Novas I began my volunteer experience on the Street Outreach Programme or "Soup Run", a completely voluntary driven service. The role involves meeting up at 6.30pm to collect the van from base and then driving to the Greenhills Hotel to collect hot meals donated by the hotel, from there to Hook & Ladder restaurant to collect assorted scones and muffins again kindly donated on a daily basis. Not to forget my own circle of friends who on hearing what we are doing have come forward to donate essentials such as clothing, toiletries, and footwear for distribution. With our van loaded we aim to be set up at our distribution point for 7.00pm.

I have also volunteered as a driver for the food cloud program whereby food donations are collected from the various local branches of Tesco and dropped to Novas services throughout

the city. On occasion I have also assisted at the TEP. But for me the "soup run" has been the real eye opener. It is while on the soup run that you interact directly with those availing of the Novas service, hear their stories and understand that people can get into difficult situations through no fault of their own.

Volunteering for me is a two-way street. It has made me so appreciative of what I have in the sense of being able to go home in the evening to my warm home, a hot meal and the support of my family. The sense of fulfilment when you realise that volunteering a miserly hour and a half once a week of one's time can be the difference of a person eating or not eating on any given day. Thank you Novas.





Novas established its first Housing First service outside of Limerick, in collaboration with Kerry County Council. It soon emerged as a vital means of tackling long-term homelessness in Kerry.

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# GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

## GOVERNANCE

Novas is committed to ensuring and maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance. It has signed up to the standards of best practice for charities including; the Voluntary Governance Code for Irish Charities ([www.governancecode.ie](http://www.governancecode.ie)) and The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments Code for Approved Housing Bodies.

Novas has developed policies and procedures to ensure good governance, which meets the requirements of the

two regulators together, while ensuring best practice as set out by the Director of Corporate Enforcement Office is applied in relation to Board conduct and decision making. Following the enactments of the Company Act 2014 Novas commenced a review of its governing documents.

Such is the significance of quality and health and safety to the organisation, we employ a full-time Health and Safety Advisor and in early 2017 we recruited a new Senior Manager with responsibility for Quality, Compliance and Safety.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Funding for 2017 remained static. We are nearing a decade since receiving funding increases and comparative funding is now 13% lower than it was at that time, without taking inflation into consideration. The talks between the government and Section 39 organisations continue and we are hopeful that this will lead to pay restoration for our staff, who have continued to support our clients and services through these difficult times.

In 2017, the total income generated by Arlington Novas Ireland Limited was €9.105M (an increase of 5.7% from 2016). Revenue based Grants received by our organisation for core homeless funding amounted to €5.526M. This represented 60.7% of our total income.

Non-core funding for 2017 was €2.305M (up 28.2% year on year). This relates primarily to

funding from the Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, HSE (Disabilities, Mental Health, Outreach Services), additional services funded by Limerick City and County Council, and specific support for individual clients on behalf of the state. Diversification and new service development continues to support many of our core services, and has enabled them to remain financially viable.

Other income was €1.272M (a decrease of 2.3%). This other income consists of contributions from our service users, deposit interest, donations, legacies and fundraising.

We remain extremely grateful to all our government funders and our donors, whose continued support and generosity has enabled us to maintain the high standards of services provided to our clients.

We have continued to manage expenditure as prudently as possible, with the support of our staff and suppliers. Client care, staffing and related costs comprised almost 85% of overall expenditure. Other costs continue to rise, particularly insurance.

Set out below is a breakdown of the expenditure for 2017.

In summary, there was a surplus of €61k in income over expenditure. Any surpluses we attain are reinvested in our services.

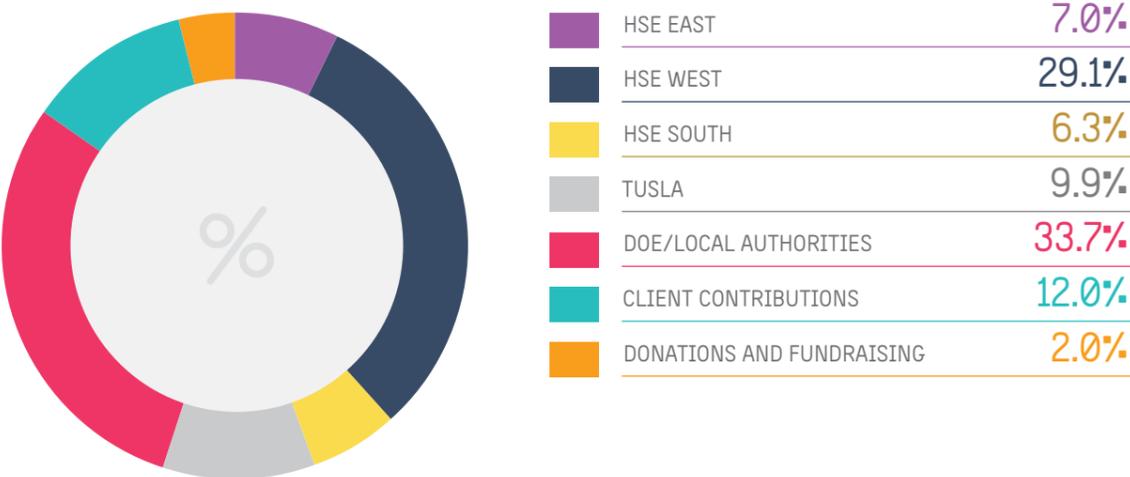
The remuneration of the CEO for the year was €82,357. The company also made contributions at the standard rate to the company pension scheme in respect of the CEO. No employee was paid more than this amount.

We are committed to managing our costs as tightly as possible, and ensuring that the vast majority of our expenditure continues to be spent on providing for our service users.

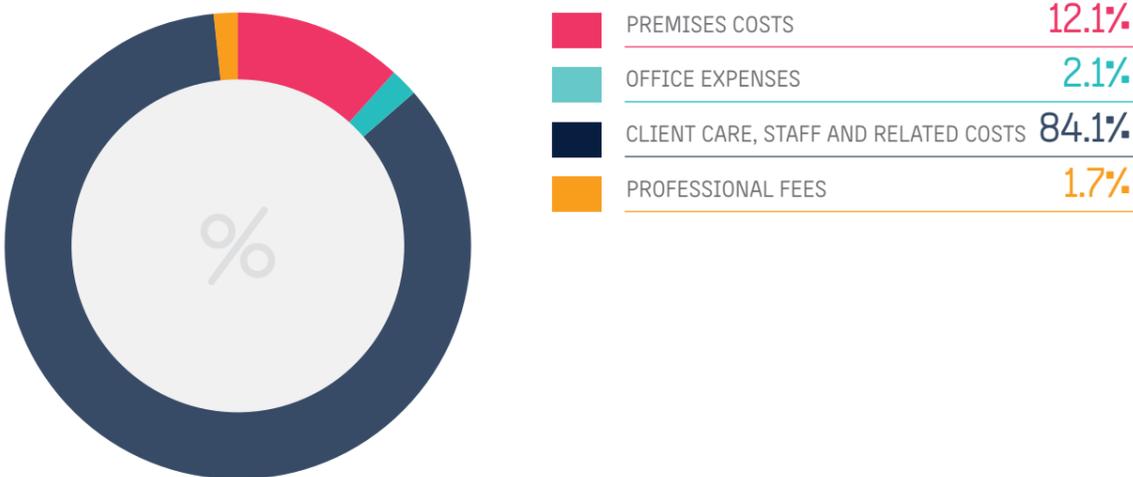
The Finance and Audit Committee met on four occasions during 2017.

In 2018, we will continue to purchase and develop properties to provide long-term housing to individuals and families, as indicated in our strategic plan.

## BREAKDOWN OF INCOME 2017



## BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE 2017



## Arlington Novas Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

## STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

	2017	€	2016	€
TURNOVER	9,103,985		8,607,066	
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	(9,010,913)		(8,179,259)	
OPERATING SURPLUS	93,072		427,807	
INTEREST RECEIVABLE AND SIMILAR INCOME	846		6,780	
INTEREST PAYABLE AND SIMILAR CHARGES	(32,827)		(16,613)	
SURPLUS BEFORE TAX	61,091		417,974	
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	61,091		417,974	
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	61,091		417,974	

All amounts relate to continuing operations

Signed on behalf of the board

**Martina Murphy**  
DIRECTOR

26 July 2018

**Greg Maxwell**  
CHAIRPERSON

26 July 2018

## Arlington Novas Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

	2017	€	2016	€
FIXED ASSETS				
TANGIBLE ASSETS	33,012		66,325	
TANGIBLE ASSETS - HOUSING PROPERTIES	29,001,129		24,247,051	
FINANCIAL ASSETS	499,803		500,000	
	29,533,944		24,813,376	
CURRENT ASSETS				
DEBTORS	504,876		348,147	
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	2,229,981		4,445,076	
	2,734,857		4,793,223	
CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	(891,418)		(804,756)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,843,439		3,988,467	
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	31,377,383		28,801,843	
CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER ONE YEAR	(22,995,845)		(20,459,619)	
GRANTS	(2,202,934)		(2,230,470)	
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	(73,762)		(68,003)	
NET ASSETS	6,104,842		6,043,751	
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
RESTRICTED FUND	411,228		271,161	
DESIGNATED FUND	1,764,262		1,493,794	
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT	3,929,352		4,278,796	
	6,104,842		6,043,751	

The financial statements were approved by the board and signed on its behalf by:

**Greg Maxwell**  
CHAIRPERSON

26 July 2018

**Kieran Walshe**  
DIRECTOR

26 July 2018



## JOE MCGARRY – FOUNDER OF NOVAS IN IRELAND

I left Northern Ireland 40 years ago. I took the Larne to Stranraer Ferry. On the way over I had a few pints of Guinness on board to charge up my courage. Little did I know then that I was on a serious hiding to nothing from 'that auld drink'. I hitched a lift with a Ballycastle lorry driver who took me all the way to the centre of London. I jumped out of his Scammel somewhere in London, dressed in a made to measure three-piece suit and a pair of orange dealer's boots. I left behind my parents, three brothers, four sisters and a silver haired granny.

Arlington House, Camden Town has been known as the big house for over a century. I walked into Arlington to be greeted by 1,100 men milling around. I was dumbstruck by the sheer size of it all and could have done with a confidence bypass there and then. I adapted quickly with the help of a few pints in the pub around the corner.

Arlington was run with ultra strict discipline by staff made up of ex-service men. It had rules that were stuck to with a vengeance. You could not go to your room during the day and were only allowed to go to bed at specific times at night, turnstiles were opened from 7.30pm every half hour, and you could not come down stairs once you went up. Bed wetting was also an offence, punished by £3 for a first offence, £5 for a second, eviction for a third. No alcohol or food was to be brought onto the premises. Your biggest crime would be to wake up while the night staff robbed your room.

I was evicted from Arlington after only a couple of months on a wet Sunday afternoon in winter for drinking a bottle of Olde English cider in my room. My only solution was to get drunk and start getting used to being homeless. I remained homeless for many years, sleeping in derelict buildings that Antrim people wouldn't have stabled a horse in.

I soon began drinking as much as I was earning so something had to go, the accommodation went, the food went, the clothes went. I rapidly slid down into the sewer of chronic alcoholism and homelessness. The bright city lights then were not so attractive to my bloodshot eyes and shaking limbs that were in constant search of more alcohol.

I spent many years homeless and on the hostel circuit of London. Back then hostels did not allow alcohol on their premises. As a chronic alcoholic I couldn't stop drinking, I had become an eye open drunk, when my eyes opened my hand automatically went out to search for a drink.

By the mid 90's, I was back in Arlington. By then you could drink inside London hostels and I was drinking tins of super lager at dangerous levels. Most of my former friends at that time lay buried in paupers' graves in East Finchley cemetery. At that point I knew I had to stop drinking or accept my place in the queue for Finchley.

One morning Alex McDonnell and John Glynn of the Aisling Project, brought some friends and I on a trip to Donegal. This trip was the beginning of the end of my drinking. On this

## THE BOARD

The work of Novas is overseen by a board of eight voluntary, non-executive directors. The Board is appointed annually at AGM by the members. The Directors, in the discharge of their duties to the organisation, endeavour to uphold the value and ethos of Novas. The Board employs a Chief Executive Officer who has responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation. There is a distinct separation between the roles of the Board and the executive (CEO and senior management team). The Board provides support in ensuring that the organisation achieves its objectives, as evidenced in the work of the sub-groups within the management board. Currently there are six sub-groups; Governance, Health and Safety, Finance & Audit, Client Welfare, Communications

and Fundraising and Property and Development. Each sub-group is chaired by a director who in turn reports back to the Board.

During 2017 the Board met on seven occasions and there were 24 sub-group meetings held. At the 2017 AGM the Board welcomed Eoin Gallagher and Eimear Griffin following the retirement of Pat Quaid and Dermot Sadlier.



trip I began to see a bit clearer through the fog of alcoholism. I saw the beauty of Ireland and during a few moments of clarity wondered what I was doing to myself; some might call it an epiphany. That trip changed my life and gave me the return ticket back into recovery. As time went on I volunteered with Aisling and was chair of its management board for 12 years.

Now sober, I started to do life again. I joined the Resident's Association of Arlington House and with Alex McDonnell set up the Arlington Irish Association. As time went on I became chairman of both organisations. I realised that I had a voice that could speak for my still drinking friends in Arlington. I then joined the Management Board of the Housing Association that owned Arlington House, as the tenant's representative. From 1998 to 2001 I became the voluntary Chair of the Management Board. I returned to education mainly to distract me from drinking. By 2005 I was back in full employment and managed Arlington House. I am certain that I would have achieved none of it if I wasn't sober. For me staying sober is the mainstay of my life. I have learned the most important lesson of all for an alcoholic in recovery, don't pick up the first drink and you can't get drunk.

I am the sum total of every day of my life, looking back down the years I am puzzled how I actually survived some of it, but for some reason I did. Some people went to Queens, some people went to Trinity, some to Cambridge, I was privileged to go to Arlington. Arlington I salute and thank you for educating me about life and death.

As I stumbled day by day through my early recovery, I discovered that I had an unsuspected inner resource. Day by day I discovered that I could trust this inner resource more and more. In London this inner resource enabled me to speak on behalf of my fellows, by fellows I mean homeless people who suffered from the same chronic addictions and mental health that I had. As I became more confident in my ability to be a voice for homeless people, more

and more opportunities to represent homeless people appeared. One such opportunity was to return to Ireland and develop services in the Mid-West. Limerick City Council and the Mid-Western Health Board had visited Arlington House in Camden Town and were open to idea of setting up a similar service in Limerick City. Arlington House in Camden Town was probably the first hostel in the world to allow homeless people to drink alcohol on the premises. At the invitation of Limerick City Council and the Mid-Western Health Board, Novas developed a service in Limerick City.

I was a first-class graduate of Arlington House and well-versed in what it took to set up a hostel in which people could drink. So, with a new found mentality of 'I'm your man', I took up the challenge. On the 14th of February 2002, I set forth for Limerick City with the aim of developing a service for the homeless in the home of the Treaty Stone.

By mid-December 2002, Novas, in partnership with Limerick City Council and the MWHB set up its first low-threshold hostel, a hostel where people could drink. This first hostel was modelled on Arlington House and it carried the banner of my Arlington House experience.

My credo was:

I accept you as a human being; I am a human being too. I accept that you have rights, I have rights too. I accept you and your problems, I have problems too. I accept that you may have been disadvantaged, I have been disadvantaged too. I accept that you may have been treated less favourably; I have been treated less favourably too. I accept that you are of a certain race; I am of a certain race too, I accept that you are of a gender; I am of a gender too. I accept that you have a disability, I have a disability too. I accept that you are of an age; I am of an age too. I accept your sexual orientation; I have a sexual orientation too. I accept your religion/belief; I have a religion/belief too.



*In loving memory of Dermot Sadlier,  
former Chair of the Novas Board of Directors.*



## FRIENDS & PARTNERS





87 O'Connell Street, Limerick, Ireland.

Ph. 061-370325 / [info@novas.ie](mailto:info@novas.ie)

[www.novas.ie](http://www.novas.ie)

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