

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018

www.mqi.ie



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services



Company Structure

Three companies operate under the banner name of Merchants Quay Ireland. The projects detailed in this review are interoperable across the three companies.

Merchants Quay Ireland, Homeless & Drugs Services, PO Box 11958, Dublin 8

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24 Merchants Quay
Dublin 8

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Donations: 01 524 0139
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Merchants Quay Ireland Clg
CRO Number: 176421
Revenue CHY Number: 10311
CRA Number: 20026240

**St Francis Housing
Association Clg**
CRO Number: 449783
Revenue CHY Number: 18159
CRA Number: 20069117

**Merchants Quay Project CE
Scheme Clg**
CRO Number: 533762
Revenue CHY Number: 21187
CRA Number: 20084325

Board of Directors

Mr Mick Price
Mr Derek Bell
Rev Kieran Cronin OFM
Dr Joanne Fenton
Dr Siobhán Garrigan
Mrs Margaret Hennessy
Mr Ray Langton
Rev Patrick Lynch OFM
Dr Brian Melaugh
Mr David Kiely

Chief Executive: Paula Byrne

Secretary

L&P Trustee Services
75 St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Auditors

Deloitte
Deloitte & Touche House,
Earlsfort Terrace,
Dublin 2

Solicitors

Marcus A Lynch & Son
12 Lower Ormond Quay
Dublin 1

Bankers

AIB
7/12 Dame Street
Dublin 2

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"You're after being on the street with nothing. Cold, wet, damp, wondering what to do next. In winter, in the rain or snow, nobody to talk to, memories of what you did have. I hope you never experience it. But there's always the door to knock on here. And if you can do that, you've got hope."

Vincent, MQI client

Chairman's Introduction



As Chair of MQI I am delighted to launch our Annual Review for 2018.

It is the responsibility of the Board of MQI to ensure that we have a well-governed, efficient organisation that is fit for purpose to meet client needs. In this regard we are proud to be part of the "triple lock" concept of good governance – our accounts are SORP compliant, we have adopted and comply with the Good Governance Code and we have formally adopted the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. We were particularly delighted this year that our Finance team won the CII national "Finance Team of the Year" award for displaying exceptional financial leadership.

MQI won a tender process in 2018 to pilot a Medically Supervised Safe Injecting Facility in Dublin. The absolutely urgent need for this facility is illustrated by the latest annual figures available which indicate that there were 736 drug deaths in Ireland in 2016. It is therefore imperative that we are supported in delivering this service. It is our intention to run this new service to the highest standards of excellence. All the international evidence indicates that lives will be saved and anti-social behaviour will be reduced significantly. Our Irish Constitution sets as a national baseline a promise to "cherish all our children equally". Hence, we have a moral obligation to deliver this much-needed life-saving service to the most marginalised and indeed vulnerable members of our society.

It is of enormous concern that as the homeless figures continue to rise that we as a society are becoming desensitised to the human cost of this national disgrace. MQI will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of our clients, most of whom, as a result of being single, tend to be forgotten.

Our much-loved Chief Executive, Tony Geoghegan, retired in January and we want again to thank Tony for his extraordinary contribution to MQI and the broader sector, but particularly to our clients. I know Tony will continue to hold MQI in his heart and mind.

Paula Byrne was appointed last year to succeed Tony after a rigorous and robust recruitment process. I want to thank Tony and Paula for the seamless transition they achieved, in the best interest of MQI and our clients. Paula has already begun the next phase of our organisational journey and we all wish her well.

Our donors have continued to respond with incredible generosity to MQI. To all our donors, whether statutory, corporate or personal, we extend our heartfelt thanks. With your extraordinary generosity, many lives have been saved and improved.

The Franciscan Community continues to support MQI with a quiet generosity. On behalf of the executive, staff and clients I want to express our gratitude to them. The Franciscan ethos is a firm anchor in all that we do.

I want to express our deep gratitude also to our executive team, staff and volunteers. All at MQI continue to go the extra mile for our clients.

The Gardaí, Fire and Ambulance services invariably show great sensitivity and compassion in working with us and our clients. This is much appreciated.

We want all who visit our services in any capacity to feel warmly and unconditionally welcome. It is our firm wish that through our work we will continue to improve the lives of our clients.

Mick Price
Mick Price, Chairman

Our Vision, Mission and Values

An inclusive society that supports the integration and well-being of all.

We believe in a just society where no-one has to face homelessness or addiction alone, and where everyone has the support they need to reduce the harm caused by homelessness and addiction and to build a better life; an inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Our Mission

We work as a collaborative community to reduce the harm caused by addiction and homelessness.

Our mission is to offer people dealing with homelessness and addiction in Ireland, accessible, high quality and effective services, which meet their complex needs in a non-judgemental and compassionate way.

Our Values

Passion - We are committed to supporting and empowering all people who use our services.

Openness - We believe in each person's unique potential and welcome all, regardless of circumstances.

Excellence - We continue to develop our service to deliver the highest standards.

Collaboration - We recognize that we are stronger when we work collectively; we are committed to developing partnerships to deliver our vision.

Adaptability - An openness to change allows us to find solutions to emerging challenges.

Integrity - We act with personal responsibility; we treat everyone with dignity and respect.



CEO's Introduction



In 2018, the homeless crisis was rarely away from the headlines. Every month, the figures for people living in emergency accommodation increased, approaching the shocking 10,000 mark with what seemed to be a grim inevitability.

The media was filled with heartbreaking stories of people trapped in homelessness. We saw tents pitched along the canal and people readying their sleeping bags in doorways.

These are the visible signs of the homeless crisis, but there is so much more we do not see, so much hidden tragedy. Homelessness is itself a traumatic experience. For far too many this is a plight that persists, and the longer people are trapped in homelessness, the more their physical and mental health deteriorates. With that comes increased risk of addiction.

Merchants Quay Ireland is at the front line in responding to this homeless crisis. As an organisation, we have always and will always respond to need in a pragmatic, compassionate and non-judgemental way, always affirming the dignity of each human being and remaining conscious too of the response which such recognition demands.

As this crisis continues to grow, so too does the demand for our services. In 2018 we saw an 11% increase in the number of people accessing our Night Café emergency shelter compared to 2017 - an increase from 1,912 to 2,129. This is the highest number since the service opened.

If much of the suffering associated with homelessness is hidden, so too is the suffering stemming from addiction. The latest HRB report from 2016 shows that 736 lives were lost to drugs. These are preventable deaths. In 2018 Merchants Quay Ireland commenced the planning

process to facilitate the opening of Ireland's first Medically Supervised Injecting Facility. This facility will work to save lives and link people in with appropriate treatment services.

It is clear that there is a chronic shortage of spaces in detox and rehabilitation centres across Ireland. At Merchants Quay Ireland, 169 people were admitted to our rehab and detox facilities in 2018. We hired additional mental health workers, put in place more support for young people, and led out on a service in the East Coast. In the Midlands, our drug and alcohol treatment service saw an increase in people who are homeless accessing the addiction services and more people moving from homelessness into rehabilitation.

I would like to pay tribute to our dedicated staff who, day after day, go above and beyond the call of duty to care for clients with skill and compassion. I would also like to thank our funders, both state and private, for their financial support. Without them, our services simply would not exist. We also treasure our association with the Franciscans and are very grateful for their continued support and encouragement.

The greatest risk now facing Ireland is an acceptance of preventable tragedy as a normality. Amid high rates of homelessness and addiction, it is important to remember that we have the capacity to end these crises. To achieve this will take leadership and courage from the State and support from society. It will require a much greater sense of urgency and radical thinking regarding homelessness; and it will incorporate a view of drug use which is based, in the first instance, on health and human need and not on judgement and criminal sanction.

We acknowledge the efforts made by the Government to deal with these crises, but more, much more, is needed. Merchants Quay Ireland will support those people who are most in need in our community – that is what we have always done – but we urge the Government to be brave.

Paula Byrne
Paula Byrne, CEO

Merchants Quay Ireland 2018



17,612
nights safe sleeping in our
Night Café



4,868
visits to the GP



102,658
meals for people who are
homeless and hungry



253
appointments with the dentist



7,949
hot showers for those with
nowhere else to go



2,149
people supported through
In-Prison Counselling



207
young people aged 18 to
25 supported by our Young
Person Support Worker



706
people supported in the
Midlands



389
people supported by our
mental health team



169
people admitted to detox and
rehab



3,329
visits to our nurses



30,068
needle exchange visits,
providing harm reduction and
safer injecting advice to people

Declan's Story



I came from a good family. We had everything we wanted materially, but we were involved in a serious car accident when I was 12. Myself and my siblings were all in the car. My father lost his legs. I remember standing there, looking at him on the ground. Seeing something like that, the trauma of it. Three of us ended up in addiction, and my father an alcoholic.

I was functioning for a long time. I bought houses, built a business. I had kids and sent them to college. I was a respected member of the community. Trained football teams. But my life was a lie. I used to be going down preaching to young fellas, training and playing football, and I'd be out of my head.

It just became a thing that I had to use every day to get through the day. I had a drug for every occasion. I thought for years I had a handle on it, but when I look back now, my life was chaos.

I ended up losing my marriage, my business, my family. My life spiralled out of control. I never thought I'd wake up in emergency accommodation in the middle of Laois, with nobody around me. My life was controlled by drugs.

Addiction is hell. Pure hell. The mental torture of it and the pure despair. At the end, it just became so bad for me that whether I was stoned or not, I'd be sitting on the edge of the bed crying and pulling my hair out. I had disconnected from everyone, I was down to about seven stone. Eventually it was a matter of life and death. I was 30 years in addiction when I got into MQI's St. Francis Farm Residential Detox Centre.

I was clean for two days when I got a call to say my brother died of an overdose.



I'd been numb my whole life. Felt nothing. But at the funeral, that was the first time I was ever able to feel anything, because I had no drugs in me. I remember looking into the grave; that's the first time I wanted to live. It was powerful.

St Francis Farm was hard, but I was treated with respect, and I treated the staff with respect. There was no difference between the staff and the clients. It was very peaceful, and I felt at home.

After going through detox and rehab, I did the MQI aftercare programme in Dolphin's Barn. That gave me the time to get back living. To be able to connect with my family, take on more responsibility. To be able to hug my kids and feel for someone when there's something going on. That's been very important.

Addiction does awful things to a family. I don't know how my parents put up with it. Three of us going through addiction. I don't know how they stuck it. We broke their hearts, really. We were all using when my mother and father died. When I look back on it now, I wish I could just be clean – just for a day – to go to their funerals.

I'm doing better now. I'm going back to education this year, and I've a good relationship with my family. I was down at home recently, we were all sitting in the sitting room. It was nice and peaceful. I felt love.

Homeless Services

From December 2017 to December 2018, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government recorded a 14% increase in the number of people accessing local authority managed emergency accommodation. This figure does not include rough sleepers, people in domestic violence shelters, or the 'hidden homeless' – people forced to stay with family or friends.

At Merchants Quay Ireland, we have sought to respond to this ongoing crisis, expanding services where needed and where possible. Clients can access services ranging from hot meals, clean clothes and showers to professional case work and other supports.

The people who come to Merchants Quay Ireland are often the visible face of homelessness: they are the rough sleepers and single people, who find themselves with nowhere else to turn.

However, it is clear that the homeless crisis is continuing to have a wide impact on society. Our services are seeing people who have become homeless for economic reasons. We are also seeing a wider age group becoming homeless. Historically, our main cohort has been men aged 30-40, and while that continues to be the case, we are seeing more young people - particularly care leavers - and more older people.

In 2018, we had 6,104 people through the doors of our Riverbank centre and their wide-ranging needs reflected the devastating impact of the ongoing homeless crisis. There continued to be substantial demand for basic services like showers, meals, and cups of tea, as well as for our

more specialised support services. In 2018, we provided 102,658 hot and cold meals, and clients availed of hot showers on 7,949 occasions, of which 5,508 were availed of during the day. Our crisis case-management team support people in accessing accommodation, healthcare, drug treatment and training, as well as providing welfare and benefits advice. In 2018, the team provided a total of 8,147 interventions.

The number of clients aged 18-25 who engaged with our Young Person Support Workers (YPSW) increased from 172 in 2017 to 207 in 2018.

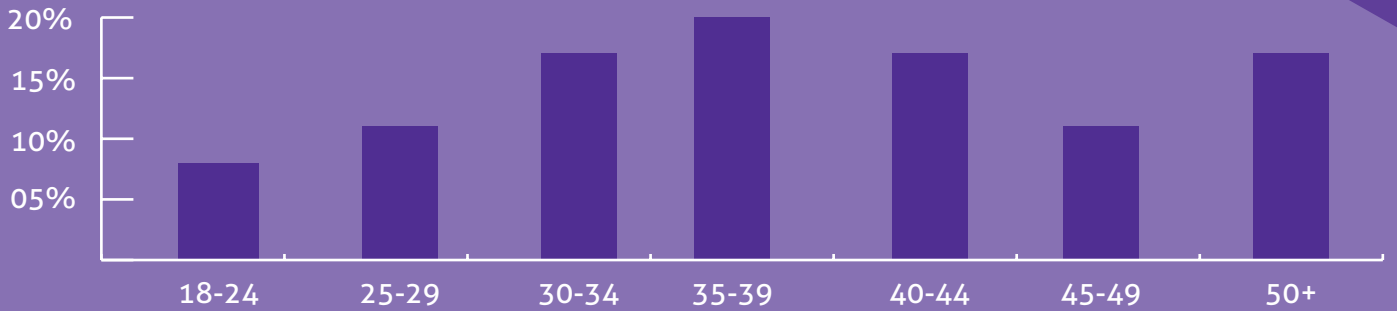
In 2015, in partnership with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), we introduced an emergency shelter in response to the homeless crisis. As well as shelter, the Night Café provides services including hot showers, fresh clothes, information and advice; the facility also offers brief interventions on addiction, mental health, and drug treatment options. That the Night Café is still in operation, with significant demand four years on, is evidence of the deepening homeless crisis. In 2018, we had 2,129 people using this service, the highest number since the service opened, representing an increase of over 11% compared to 2017.

Our help for Dublin's most vulnerable went beyond the doors of Riverbank. Our Assertive Outreach Team linked in with 176 marginalised, hard to reach individuals, in order to encourage contact with services.

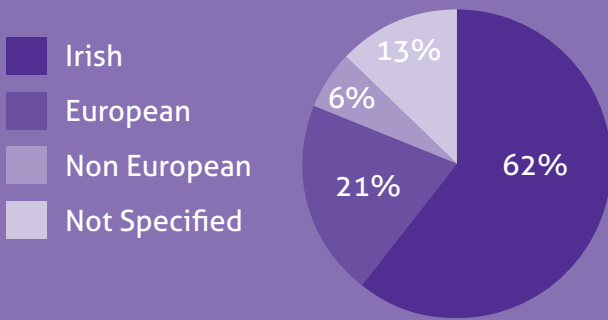
"I became homeless eight years ago and I was introduced to Merchants Quay then. Without it, I wouldn't have had anywhere to go. I'd have had no food, nowhere to shower. There's always an open door for you here, and there's always hope for you".

Anna, MQI client

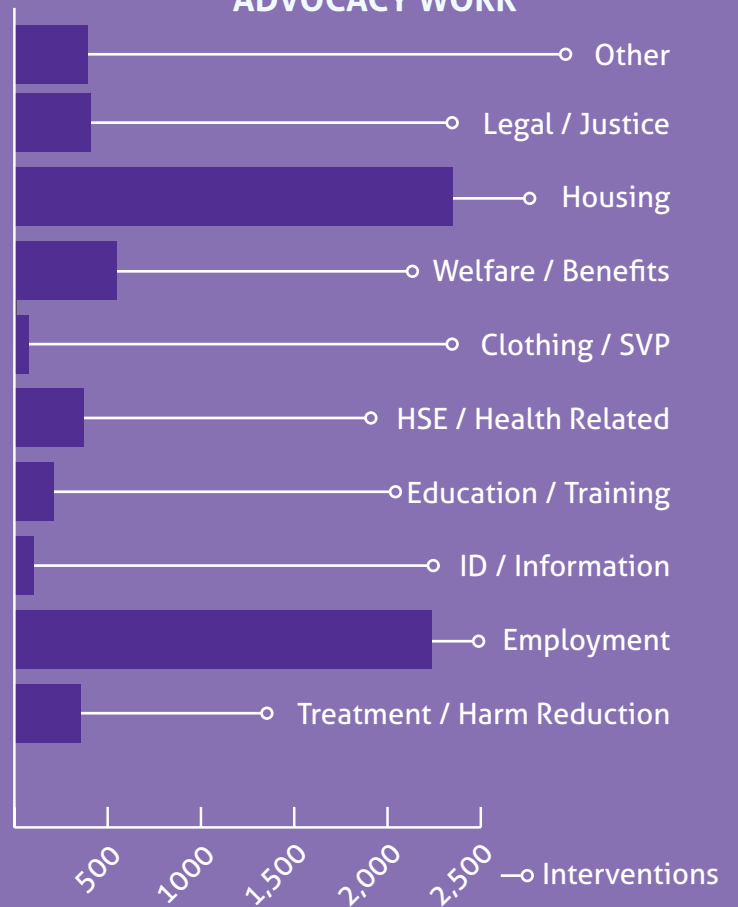
OPEN ACCESS SERVICE, AGE BREAKDOWN



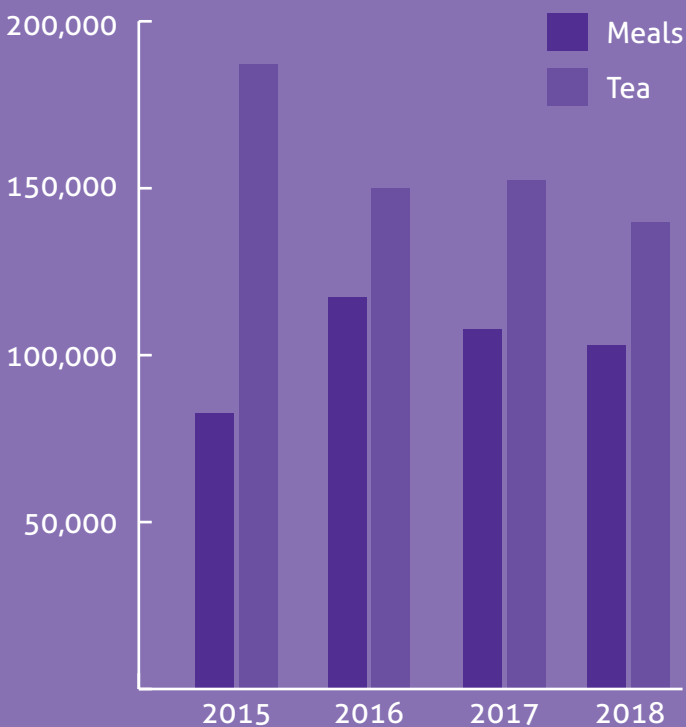
NATIONALITY, OPEN ACCESS CLIENTS



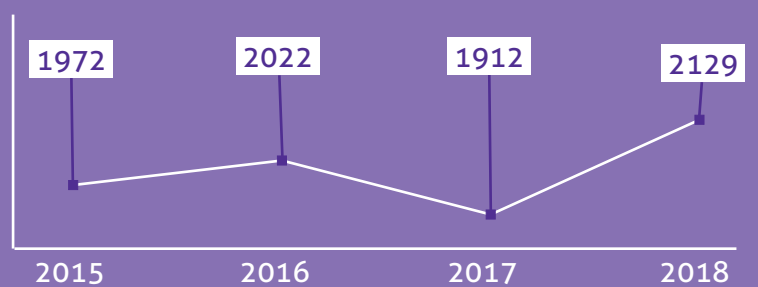
ADVOCACY WORK



MEALS AND TEA - OPEN ACCESS



NIGHT CAFE CLIENT NUMBERS, BY YEAR



Healthcare Services

Homelessness and addiction have a profound and long-lasting impact on health. Someone who is homeless is 30 times more likely to self-harm. The life expectancy is 42 years of age for men and just 38 for women. They have higher rates of mortality, disease and hospitalisation, and the effects of social stress and shame can accelerate the ageing process on the body.

Despite all this, people who are homeless are often excluded from accessing essential health services. This is why at our Riverbank Centre, we provide a range of services to marginalised people who would otherwise struggle to access healthcare, including doctor, nurse, dentist, mental health care, chiropody, and counselling. However, this is about more than providing a primary healthcare service. MQI staff treat both the person's physical ailments and help support them, treating them with kindness and compassion, and linking them with any other supports needed.

Merchants Quay Ireland hosts a multi-disciplinary team in our Riverbank centre on a weekly basis, which includes staff from our own primary healthcare service, St. James Hospital and other statutory and voluntary agencies. The aim of this team is to ensure that the best and most effective health care plan is in place for people with the most complex, wide ranging mental and physical health needs.

Overall in 2018, the number of clients accessing healthcare services at Merchants Quay Ireland increased by 7%. Notable within this was the increase in nursing interventions, which rose to 3,329 following the recruitment of an additional

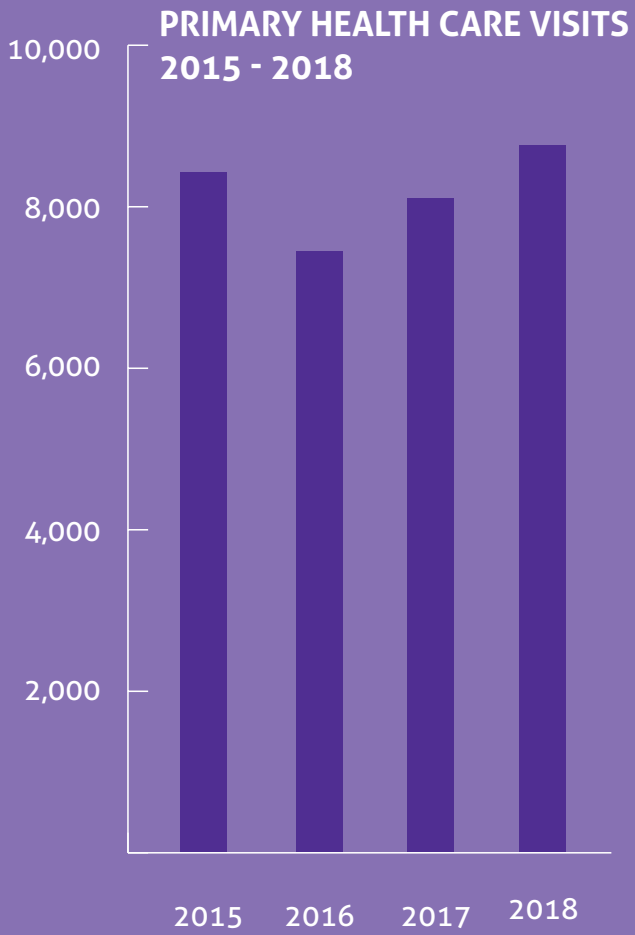
nurse, which extended the service into the evening, providing nursing care from 8am until 8pm. The number of GP visits remained high at 4,868. Clients attended 253 dental appointments.

One of the lesser discussed impacts of homelessness is on mental health. Homelessness is in itself a traumatic experience and can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, fear, depression, and problematic substance use. Homelessness can also exacerbate existing mental and physical health issues.

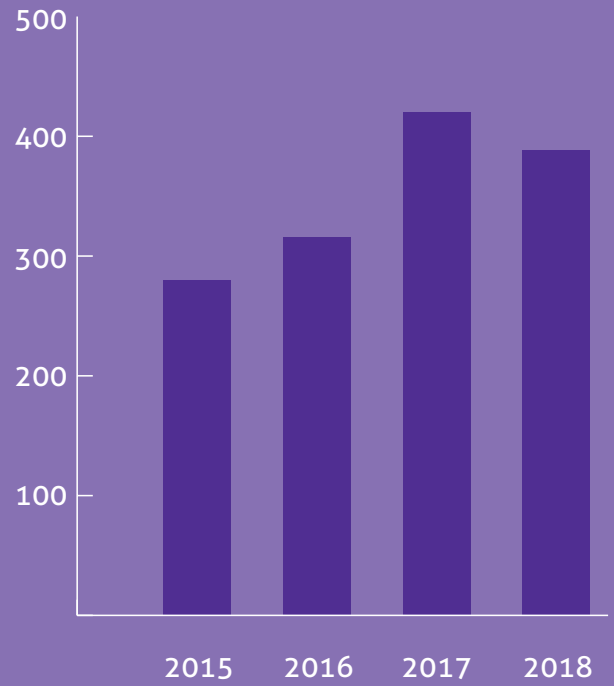
Merchants Quay Ireland remains one of the few places in Dublin where someone who is homeless and suffering poor mental health can access mental health services immediately. In 2018, we delivered 2,625 mental health interventions, a slight increase on 2017. Due to this demand, an additional Mental Health Case Worker has been recruited.

"You go around with a knot in your stomach all day. You have all your bags with you. You're trying to live hour by hour. Physically it makes you very unwell, but mentally, it takes a huge toll. It is soul destroying. You feel small. You feel you're useless to everybody. You start to become a different person".

Dennis, MQI client

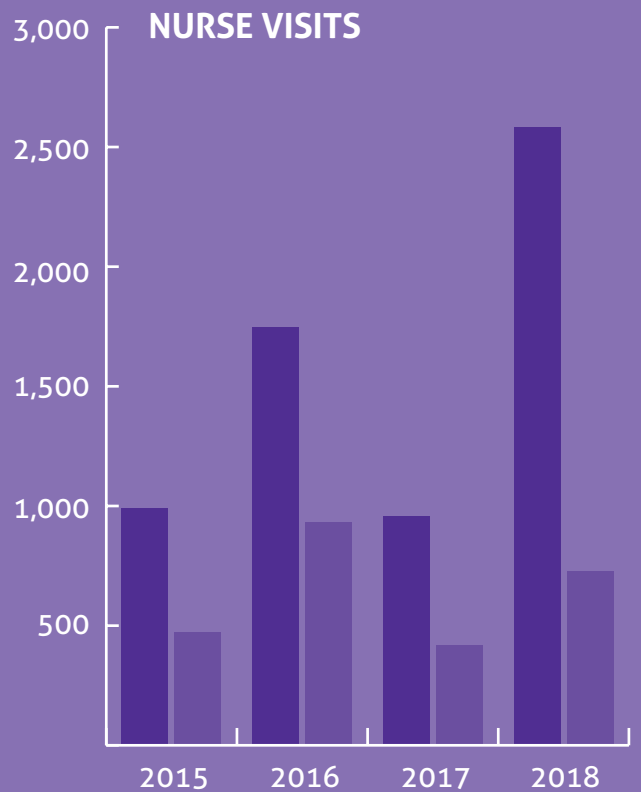
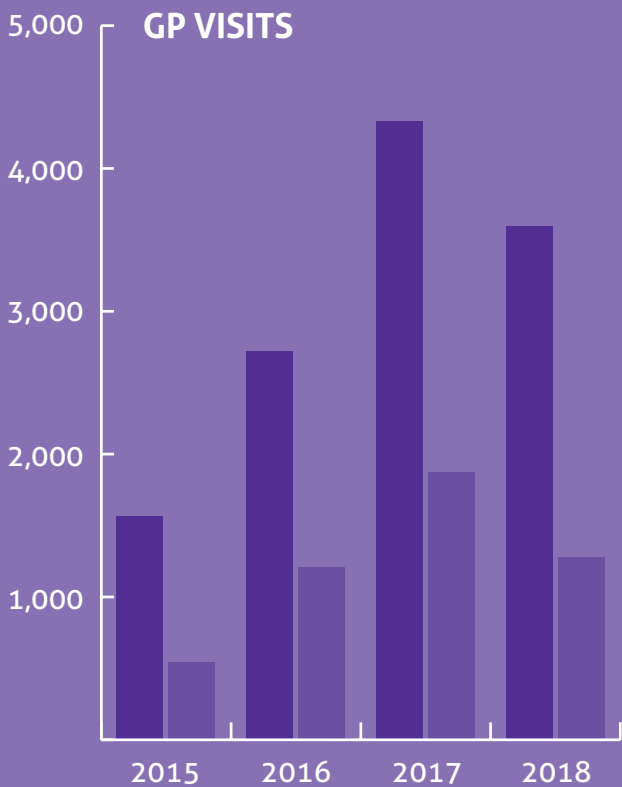


MENTAL HEALTH CLIENT NUMBERS DUBLIN



Male Female

Male Female



Amy's Story



I've been homeless for two years now. Since I was 24.

I came from the Midlands originally, but I've lived in England and now I'm in Dublin. It was a few years ago when Mam got sick, I just couldn't cope. I'd bring her up to James' Hospital for chemo, and I'd be down in town, trying to score. I'll never forgive myself for them times. It eats me up inside, the guilt.

After mam died, my father started drinking heavily, and my brother left the country. Mam had held it all together. Once she was gone, the family fell apart.

It was tough, but I had my partner. We'd been seeing each other on and off for a few years.

He wasn't using drugs and that helped me get myself better. We moved in together. I have a degree in childcare. I was working. We had an apartment, car, holidays abroad. Life was good. Last July, he took his own life. It was me that found him.

He was my best friend, my everything. When I lost my Mam, he had been my crutch. Now two big people in my life are gone.

After he died, I just spiralled. Lost my job, my home. Everything. I'm blanking out the pain of it with drugs to be honest.

Homelessness is frightening. I was sleeping in the city centre one night. A security guard came along to get me up. I asked for a minute to get



myself together and next thing I got a boot into the face telling me to get up off the ground. Some people just treat you like dirt.

It's terrifying rough sleeping. I stay up all night, lying in a doorway. I'd be afraid what would happen if I slept because I was on my own. And then anxiety kicked in so then I was eating any type of tablet to get my anxiety down.

That's what makes it worse for me as well, being out begging. I'm a shy person really so I had to have something in me to go begging, it's just that vicious circle like. The worst thing is begging for money. It's the hardest because it's so degrading.

I think homelessness is a lot harder for women. You get more stick. "Go home and mind your

kids", "get a job", "you're only faking". People will say I don't look homeless, but tell me, what does homeless look like?

Merchants Quay are very good to me and keep on supporting me. MQI was the first service I ever came to. The first time was for the Night Café. I come here for everything now. Clothes, food, to brush my teeth, the doctor, showers. There's nowhere else in Dublin I can shower. Just basic stuff like that makes such a huge difference.

Addiction Services

Since pioneering the needle exchange in the 1980s, delivering a compassionate and pragmatic response to addiction has been at the core of Merchant Quay Ireland's work, and that continues to be the case for our services across the country.

Ireland faces significant challenges when it comes to addiction. We had 736 drug-related deaths in 2016 – the fourth highest in Europe. Existing treatment options are limited. While we strongly support the Government's National Drugs Strategy, there needs to be significant investment in order to fulfil the strategy's promise.

In 2018, there was an increase in people accessing the Health Promotion Unit in our Riverbank centre. We supported 2,742 individuals, representing a 6% increase compared to 2017 in total numbers and a 12% increase in new clients. In 2018, there were 30,068 visits to our needle exchange in Dublin, which is a 31% increase over the last five years. For those using the service, heroin continued to be the most commonly used drug. It is a matter of concern that 2018 saw a rise in individuals reporting crack cocaine as their primary drug.

In 2018, MQI's Community Engagement Team, which operates in the area immediately around Merchants Quay, conducted over 1,700 patrols in order to build a safer community for all. The Community Engagement Team engaged with local businesses, performed client advocacy work, attended community events and collected

and safely disposed of drug paraphernalia.

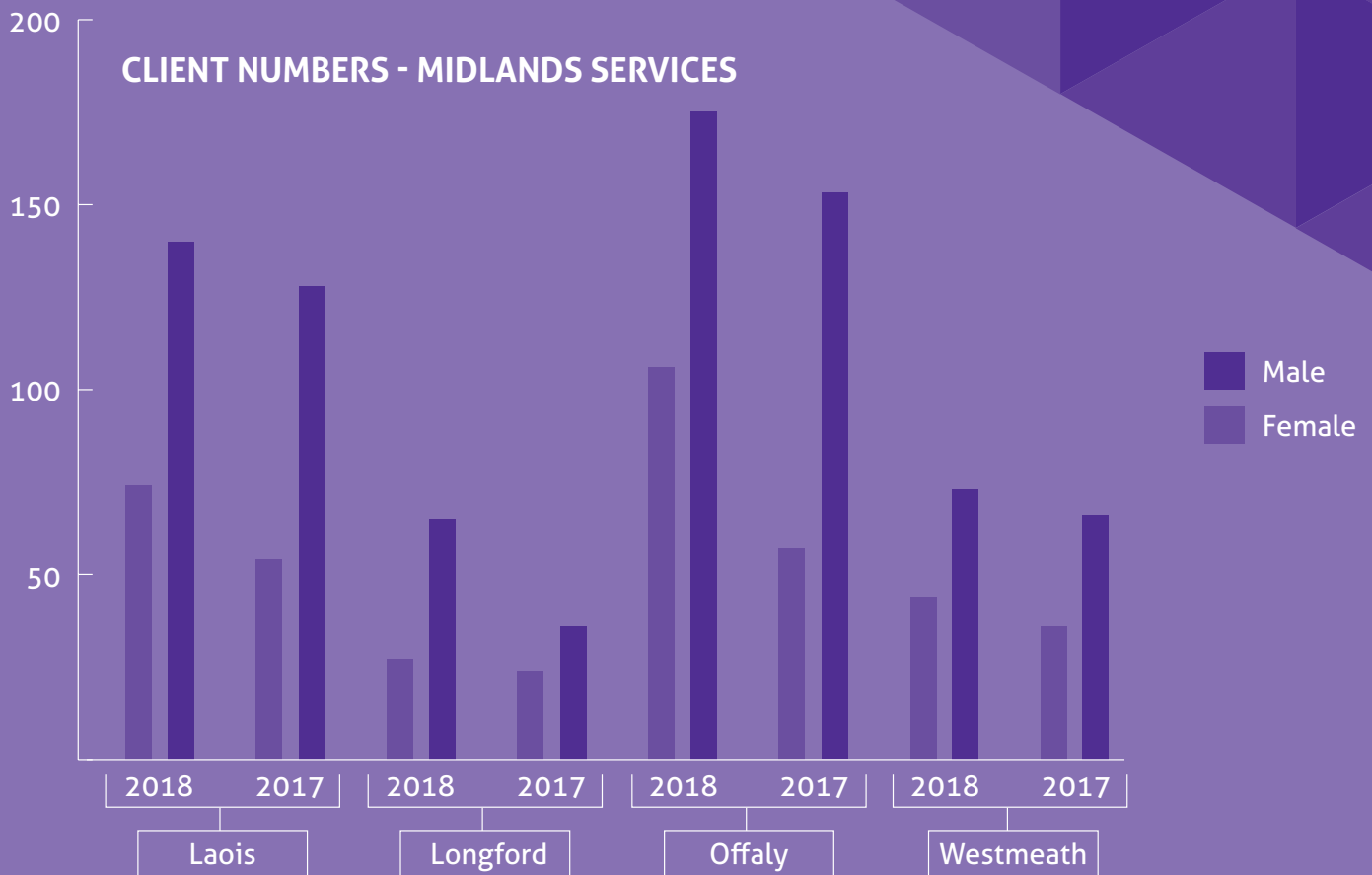
MQI Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supports provides a community-based drug & alcohol treatment support service for individuals over 18 years and their families in the Midlands area (Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly). In this region, we saw a total of 706 clients, a 53% increase on 2017. This increase was represented across all age groups but was particularly evident among the younger cohort aged under 30, where there was a 47% increase. We have also experienced a 47% increase in the number of women accessing our Midlands services.

In terms of drug use in the Midlands, heroin was by far the most common, used by 47% of clients. Within our Midlands needle exchange, the total number of sessions increased by 16%. We are also seeing more people who are homeless using the needle exchange, with a 50% increase.

2018 saw the launch of the East Coast Community Recovery and Integration Supports (CRIS) Service, provided by Merchants Quay Ireland and the East Coast Drug and Alcohol Task Force. The service was formally launched in November 2018 by Minister for Health Simon Harris. CRIS provides supports, including key working, case management, and links with external support, for people experiencing alcohol and/or drug addictions. Demand for this service was immediate after it commenced in September 2018, and by the end of the year we had engaged with 44 clients.

"My first contact with Merchants Quay was through the needle exchange. I was homeless for seven years, and that was when I started using drugs. I was taking speed every day, just to function, and then heroin to sleep. The needle exchange kept me safer while I was in addiction, it was how I learned about MQI. It was from there that I went into detox, and then on to High Park."

John, MQI client



PRIMARY DRUG USE IN THE DUBLIN NEEDLE EXCHANGE & THE MIDLANDS DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SERVICE

DRUG	DUBLIN	MIDLANDS
Alcohol	1 %	11 %
Cannabis	1 %	6 %
Cocaine Powder	2 %	4 %
Crack Cocaine	5 %	0.5 %
Crystal Meth	1 %	0 %
Drug Free	0 %	11 %
Heroin	73 %	47 %
Other / Not Specified	6 %	13.5 %
Prescribed Methadone	3 %	2 %
Steroids	6 %	2 %
Tablets: Benzodiazepines	2 %	3 %

GENDER	DUBLIN	MIDLANDS
Male	82 %	60 %
Female	18 %	40 %

AGE	DUBLIN	MIDLANDS
18 - 20	1 %	2 %
21 - 30	23 %	29 %
31 - 40	46 %	38 %
41 - 50	26 %	18 %
51+	5 %	13 %

INDIVIDUALS	DUBLIN	MIDLANDS
Total Individuals	2736	706
% of which new clients	559 (20%)	310 (44%)

Recovery Services

MQI's recovery services provide people with pathways out of chaotic drug use and support them in becoming drug free.

At St. Francis Farm, Co. Carlow, we operate a 10-bed residential detoxification programme and a 13-bed residential rehabilitation programme. Located on a working farm, our Tullow facility offers programmes which provide detox and drug-free rehabilitation through a blend of individual and group therapy, education and practical skills training.

At High Park, Drumcondra, Co. Dublin, we operate a 14-week residential programme in a 13-bed facility. The emphasis is on assisting clients to gain insight into the issues that underpin their problematic drug use and developing practical measures to prevent relapse, remain drug-free and sustain recovery.

For more than a decade, we have operated an addiction based counselling service in 11 prisons across Ireland. This offers prisoners the opportunity to benefit from counselling interventions with clearly defined treatment plans and goals.

In the Irish Prison Services, a total of 2,149 unique clients were seen in 2018. Of particular concern in this area is the drop in residential admissions from prison to treatment from 83 in 2017 to 53 in 2018 – a reflection of the increasing difficulty in accessing treatment beds across the country. We have seen a strong demand across all of our

recovery services this year with bed occupancy numbers high and demand outstripping availability. The total number of admissions across High Park and St. Francis Farm was 169, with 110 completing the treatment.

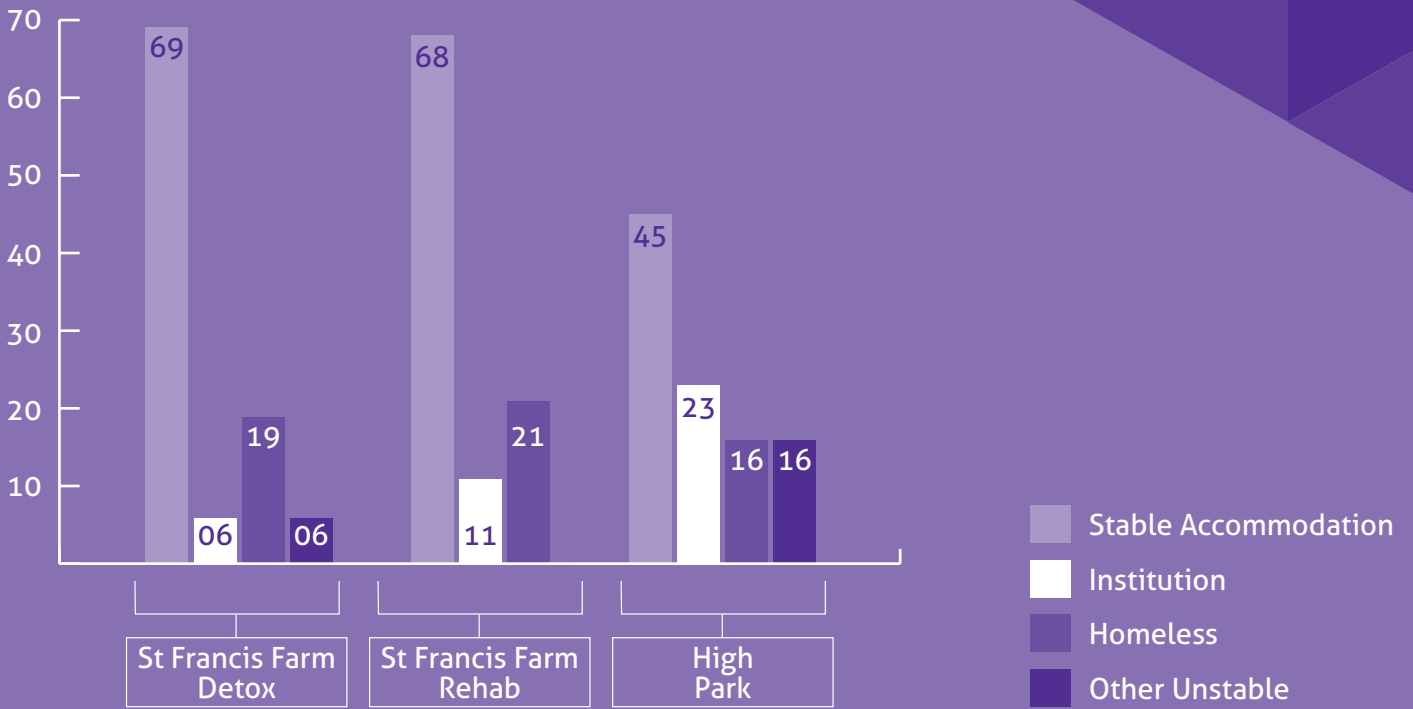
We have sought to respond to the changing needs regarding treatment and recovery, by introducing new programmes to cater for the emotional needs of clients, including a therapeutic horticulture programme and a new art therapy programme. We have also introduced a nursing clinic in High Park Rehab to assist with complex medical admissions.

Securing accommodation for people who are leaving detox and residential treatment continues to be very challenging. Registration with a local council to secure accommodation is an administrative burden and the constant insecurity and worry about living arrangements after completion of the rehabilitation programme often detracts from the individual's focus on treatment.

"The way staff work you at High Park, I never expected it. I never expected the things they pulled out of me. Things that I never spoke to anyone about, that were keeping me in addiction. With the staff and with the trust you have in them, you really dig deep. My littlest one is back in my life again. She said to me one day 'I love you Daddy, I'm so proud of you'. It makes me feel good that I'm there for them now".

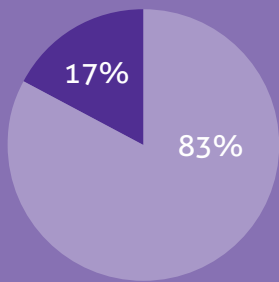
Pat, MQI client

ACCOMMODATION STATUS ON ADMISSION, AS A %

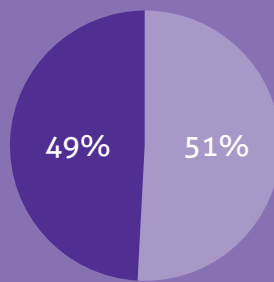


DETOX AND REHAB COMPLETION RATES

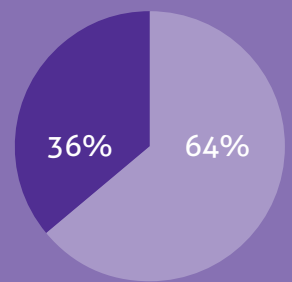
Admissions Completed



St. Francis Farm Detox



St. Francis Farm Rehab



High Park

CLIENT GENDER BREAKDOWN



High Park
Male 82% | Female 18%



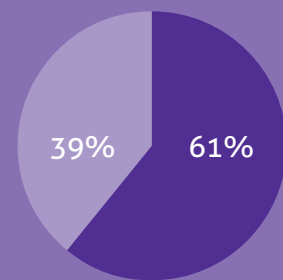
St. Francis Farm
Male 74% | Female 26%



St. Francis Farm Detox
Male 74% | Female 26%

Male Female

ACCOMMODATION STATUS UPON ADMISSION



Stable accommodation
Unstable accommodation or homeless

Joseph's Story



I grew up in Dublin city, in the seventies. My father got ten years in prison when I was a very young, my Ma had to work two jobs, Lord have mercy on her.

Because of who my father was, even when I was 5 or 6 years old, I'd hear mothers telling their sons not to play with me. You'd hear whispers about the place, and kids pick up on that. I was uncomfortable in myself. My mother was working all the time and as kids we were left to ourselves a lot.

When I was growing up, it was a fearful place. If you cried, it was "I'll give you something to cry about", if you laughed, you were told to shut up laughing, that laughing leads to crying. Everything was suppressed. Everything had to

be bottled. So you were throwing trauma upon trauma upon emotional neglect.

I went down a road of crime first, before drugs. Crime wasn't just about stealing money. That filled a power vacuum in me. The self-esteem and acceptance I craved, I found it in crime.

I was 18 the first time I took heroin. It filled something in me. It filled an empty space I had. It was like a key entering a lock, that's the only way I can describe it. It took all the fear away, all the pain. It's an escape from yourself.

I got into crazy stuff. Crime and ripping people, hurting people. I was gone, just gone. I did years in prison. It was terrible.



I'd had rock bottoms, financial rock bottoms, nowhere to go, dying sick. The drugs had stopped working, but I was still using. I was the loneliest person in the world. Emotionally bankrupt, spiritually bankrupt.

Addiction isn't a criminal issue. It's a health issue. Sending someone to prison for taking drugs is pointless. Addiction is stronger than anybody knows unless they have been in addiction.

A friend of the family had been in MQI's rehab in High Park. That's how I heard about it. I was at the end of the road. I tried everything else to get off the drugs. It was either get busy living or get busy dying. That was the choice.

High Park was a very new environment for me. It was frightening at first, but it was like a lighthouse. It gave me a way back. By the time I got to High Park, I'd been 27 years in addiction. I was willing, and I was committed from day one.

High Park gave me emotional tools. It wasn't like I woke up and there was a big flash of lighting and I was fixed. There were a lot of behaviours that were just so ingrained. It was having a safe environment to explore those behaviours. I think that's the thing about High Park. If you're ready, the connection can be made.

I used to hurt myself – emotionally and physically – through drugs. Today is different. Today there's something. You could say my spirit is awake.

Aftercare

In the context of the housing crisis, finding accommodation for the large proportion of clients leaving our residential rehab services who are effectively homeless has been an increasing challenge.

The reality is that many people who are recovering from addiction have lost contact with family and friends and face unaffordable rent as well as discrimination against people in recovery. A return to homelessness following rehabilitation jeopardises the recovery for which people fight so hard.

Merchants Quay Ireland offers supportive aftercare housing to people in recovery who find themselves homeless after completing residential rehabilitation treatment.

MQI operates two short-term transitional housing services; one in Dublin, developed with the support of one of the organisation's donors, the other in Kildare, developed in partnership with Respond Housing Association.

Finding accommodation is difficult for the predominantly single male client group in the context of a homeless crisis. To this end, MQI has been forging links with housing associations and peer networks.

MQI also runs a Drug-Free Day Programme based in Dolphin's Barn, Dublin, targeted at clients exiting our residential rehabilitation services at High Park and St. Francis Farm. The day programme is six months in duration and provides one-to-one care in the areas of planning, support groups and education sessions aimed at assisting clients reintegrate into their community.

A review of those people who completed our Aftercare programme between 2010 and 2018 revealed that 60% are drug free. These statistics are broadly similar for both male and female clients; however, female clients are significantly more likely to leave the programme early. Females presenting to drug services have higher incidences of trauma, abuse, mental health and childcare issues. Locating this demographic within a predominantly male client group is problematic from a retention perspective, and this is something we are seeking to examine and address in 2019.

"I had been in rehab six weeks when I cried for the first time. I didn't want to show emotion because my life had taught me that if I show emotion or I show weakness, I'll be picked on. I was in a group session, and I got real with myself. I talked about it and I shed a tear. Afterwards lads came up and gave me hugs. So it was alright, and that was huge for me. It helped me understand why I was hurting. From then on, it got easier."

Cillian, MQI client

Family Support Services

For twenty years, Merchants Quay Ireland has run a support group for families affected by addiction. The MQI family support service provides family members with support, advice and guidance to deal with the trauma and issues associated with having a loved one caught in addiction.

In Dublin, the weekly family support group is where participants share their experiences and offer peer support on how best to navigate the challenges presented by addiction. In 2018, our weekly Family Support Group engaged with 60 individuals. We also offered individual support and drug awareness workshops.

In the Midlands, in addition to the support provided by the Drugs and Alcohol Workers, in partnership with the Midlands Regional Drugs Taskforce and HSE Community and Alcohol Drugs Service, a family support specialist joined the team to offer further support to families. In 2018, we had over 300 interventions with families across four counties.

Our goal is to try and help the families of those in addiction to cope with the impact of addiction and its many facets. Families are isolated and often very stigmatised by drug use. Within our family support group, they are listened to and understood in a non-judgemental way, often for the first time after years of silence. Peer support is at the core of the group.

"Before I came to MQI's Family Support Services, I actually was afraid of addicts, to be honest with you. Before I knew my child was a drug user, if I saw an addict on the ground I'd just walk around. But then when I came to Merchants Quay I realised, they're someone's children! My son, he's my son, and I reared him, and I saw the good side of him."

Frank, MQI client

Little data exists about the number of Irish families with a family member or loved one who is or has been in addiction. Within the UK, 19% of people say they are related or connected to someone with personal experience of addiction, with this figure rising to 46% for the USA.

The families of our clients are never far from MQI's work. Within Riverbank, we pass on messages left for clients by their families. For clients in High Park and St. Francis Farm, we are looking at how we can increase the level of participation that family members can have in their loved one's recovery.

It is encouraging that support for families is a core goal of the current National Drugs Strategy, however, MQI believes that great effort needs to be made across society to reduce the stigma felt by people who have a loved one in addiction.

Finances

Our achievements would not have been possible without the continued support from our state funders and the generous donations and commitment of thousands of individuals, groups and organisations from all around Ireland. We are extremely grateful for this support, set as it is against a backdrop of difficult economic times.

MQI raised a total income of €13.16m in 2018, up from €11.4m in 2017. Included in this figure is a once off gift of €1.12m received from Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives CLG "FSJI" on 1st January 2018 as part of the transfer of assets agreement. Government grants, mainly from the HSE, accounted for 55% of income. We received €4.58m in voluntary income from donations and legacies, up 3% from €4.44m in 2017. This voluntary income, which comprises donations from individuals, corporate donors, trusts and foundations, amounted to 35% of our income in 2018. The remaining 10% of income was made up of training, other small income and the once off gift from FSJI.

In 2018, 82% of all expenditure went directly on delivering core services to our clients. The organisation benefits greatly from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers. The total headcount in Merchants Quay Ireland at the close of 2018 was 293. This number includes employees, community employment, volunteers, student placements, graduate interns and relief workers. In 2018, 8% of all roles were held by volunteers, contributing significantly to our success.

Volunteer roles include activities such as catering, counselling and project working. One of our longest serving volunteers, Michael Costello, works as part of our High Park team and has been with us since 2008.

This strong financial performance in 2018 enabled MQI to deliver critical expansion of its services nationwide, providing the best care possible to our clients. This was further recognised by Charities Institute Ireland, who awarded MQI 'Finance Team of the Year' at its annual awards.

Governance

Merchants Quay Ireland is dedicated to achieving the highest standards in corporate governance. This process involved a thorough review of our policies, procedures, structures and values to ensure MQI is run as effectively as possible, with a focus on increasing transparency and a reassurance to all stakeholders that funds and donations are well managed. MQI is fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Good Governance, our accounts are SORP compliant and we are fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations Fundraising from the Public.



Best Practice in Transparency and Accountability

"I see so much homelessness on the streets of Dublin. Giving to Merchants Quay Ireland is my way of helping to make sure our most vulnerable citizens are cared for."

Eamon, MQI donor

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2018	Total 2017
INCOME				
Charitable Activities	•	7,284,950	7,284,950	6,820,895
Donations and Legacies	4,333,002	243,655	4,576,657	4,421,203
Other	865,790	435,722	1,301,512*	207,259
Total Income	5,198,792	7,964,327	13,163,119	11,449,357
EXPENDITURE				
Charitable Activities	2,625,124	7,573,977	10,199,101	9,350,798
Generating Funds**	1,267,345	•	1,267,345	1,252,067
Total Expenditure	3,892,469	7,573,977	11,466,446	10,602,865
Net Income for the year	1,306,323	390,350	1,696,673	846,492
Net movement in funds	1,306,323	390,350	1,696,673	84,060
Pension Liability	109,574	•	109,574	20,800
Total funds carried forward	4,997,177	749,738	5,746,916	5,059,841

* Included in Other Income is a once off gift of 1.12m received from Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives CLG on 1st January 2018 as part of the transfer of assets agreement

** Generating Funds includes Communication & Advocacy

*** Of which 4,642,214 is designated

SERVICE PROVISION AS A % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE



Visit www.mqi.ie to review our fully audited financial accounts

MQI Nationwide



In response to the needs of those caught up in homelessness and addiction, Merchants Quay Ireland has, over the years, expanded from being Dublin-based to providing services nationwide.

Dublin

- Open Access Drugs, Homeless & Health Services, Riverbank Centre, Dublin 8
- Head Office, 24 Merchants Court, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8
- Drug-Free Day Programme, Dolphin's Barn, Rialto, Dublin 8
- Community Detox, High Park, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
- Residential Drug Free Rehabilitation Centre, High Park, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
- Aftercare Housing, Ballymount, Dublin 22
- Mountjoy Prison Complex, Dublin 7
- Dóchas Prison Centre, Dublin 7
- Cloverhill (Remand) Prison, Dublin 22
- Wheatfield Prison, Dublin 22

Wicklow

- Shelton Abbey, Co. Wicklow
- Community Recovery & Integration Supports (CRIS) Project, Co. Wicklow

Carlow

- Residential Detox & Rehabilitation Centre, St. Francis Farm, Tullow, Co. Carlow

Cork

- Cork Prison, Co. Cork

Limerick

- Limerick Prison, Co. Limerick

Offaly

- MQI Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supports (DATS), Co. Offaly

Westmeath

- MQI Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supports (DATS), Co. Westmeath
- Open Door, Payne's Lane/Irishtown, Athlone

Laois

- MQI Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supports (DATS), Co. Laois
- Portlaoise Prison, Co. Laois
- Midlands Prison, Co. Laois

Longford

- MQI Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supports (DATS), Co. Longford

Roscommon

- Castlerea Prison, Co. Roscommon

Cavan

- Loughan House, Co. Cavan

Kildare

- Aftercare Housing, Leixlip, Co. Kildare



Thank You

Merchants Quay Ireland is so grateful for the financial support we receive from individuals, families, religious organisations, businesses, voluntary and statutory agencies, charitable trusts and foundations. Without their steadfast support, we would be unable to deliver our vital services to those in need in Ireland. To all our supporters – to you – we extend our enduring gratitude.

Thank you for caring about Ireland's most vulnerable.



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Get in touch.



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Merchants Court,
24 Merchants Quay,
Dublin 8

Merchants Quay Ireland,
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Queries & Donations : 01 524 0139
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