

Ana Liffey Drug Project
Annual Report
2021



ANA LIFFEY
DRUG PROJECT

Chairperson's Report

Welcome to Ana Liffey Drug Project's Annual Report for 2021

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone involved with Ana Liffey Drug Project for another year of outstanding work – the resilience of the staff and management really was extraordinary. I would also like to thank all of our funders and partners for the trust they continue to place in us.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, overnight our Low Threshold ethos and Harm Reduction approach was in even higher demand; and the response to COVID-19 saw our pragmatic approach expand further into the arenas of homelessness and public health.

While some NGOs were forced to scale back their operations, we substantially expanded ours, often in response to requests made by our main funder, the HSE.

Emergency decisions had to be made and risks, albeit calculated ones, taken, that paid immediate dividends for the people we serve. We reinvented ourselves and the COVID-19 related challenges were met head on, which is something the whole organisation can be immensely proud of.

As Chair of the Ana Liffey Board, I'm in the enviable position of having complete faith and confidence in my fellow board members, the Senior Management Team and, in turn, our wider team of people.

The Board's role is to support the executive in the work it does rather than micromanaging it. A major achievement in 2021 was Ana Liffey becoming fully compliant under the terms of the Charities Governance Code. We were therefore able to answer "Yes" to such important questions as, "Is the skill mix of your board right?"; "Are they elected?"; "Do you train them?"; "Is there a set tenure for them?"; "Do you have an action plan?"; etc.

In every area of the Charities Governance Code we measured up – and often exceeded what was being asked of us by the Charity Commissioner.

I've always said, "Anna Liffey's not a business – but we have to behave like one in that every aspect of our organisation must be run as efficiently as possible."

It is not enough to respond at the 'speed of trust' alone; trust and accountability dictate the pace we work at. Our innovative practices, good governance and transparency has made Ana Liffey Drug Project the well run, fast-responding, socially aware organisation that it is today.

Eddie Matthews

Chairperson

"Having come across a young male overdosing in a public toilet in Limerick City, I had no naloxone in my possession the only option I had was to perform CPR. A couple of weeks later I came across a young women overdosing in a park, this time I had naloxone with me. I administered the naloxone which resulted in the young girl coming out of the overdose. The difference I felt, the confidence I had knowing I had naloxone on me, it made all the difference, naloxone saves lives."

Pat, Team Member

Treasurer's Report

In 2021, Ana Liffey Drug Project had an income of €2,421,430 (2020 - €1,862,135). It had expenditure of €2,437,371 (2020 - €1,852,946). At the end of the year the company had fixed assets of €843,993 (2020: €843,993), current assets of €1,472,564 (2020 €703,487) and current liabilities of €1,060,558 (2020: €275,586). The net funds of the company amounted to €1,255,999 (2020: €1,271,894) and the directors are satisfied with the level of retained reserves at the year end. As we had done in 2020, our 2021 company financial statements were prepared in accordance with the FRS 102 Charities SORP, which we have adopted voluntarily as a matter of good practice. In addition to reporting in compliance with the charities SORP, the board keep a view on financial matters with a financial update at every board meeting as well as quarterly meetings of the Finance Sub-Committee. Ana Liffey Drug Project receives funding throughout the year from a number of statutory and non-statutory funders, as well as from public donations. We're very grateful to everyone who contributes to the running of the organisation. I'd also like to express my thanks to the management team of the organisation, and in particular to Leonie Blyth and her team – it's important to note the flexibility, resourcefulness and diligence of all our back-office staff throughout the pandemic. Also, my thanks to our auditors, Donal Ryan and Associates, for their work during the year in ensuring the company monitors and reports accurately on financial matters. Finally, the company's full financial statements are publicly available on our website at aldp.ie

Greg Ward

Treasurer

"Somebody had overdosed in a flat near our office on the Dock Road in Limerick," Rachel recalls. "One of their friends rushed over to us looking for help. I grabbed some of the Naloxone we have here, went down and found this person completely unresponsive in a stairwell and starting to turn blue. I administered it to them intramuscularly and immediately they sat up. We then called for medical assistance, which is standard practice with an overdose. It was incredible."

Rachel, Team Member

CEO's Report

Twenty twenty-one started as 2020 had ended with Ana Liffey having to respond to the many challenges and changes imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before we go into detail about the vital work carried out over the course of last year, I'd like to thank our teams in Dublin and the Midwest region for their extraordinary dedication towards our service users, and their general willingness to do whatever is required of them in what are often very difficult circumstances. Because of that drive and determination, we were able to adapt our operations during the pandemic whilst remaining true to Ana Liffey's ethos of providing low-threshold services to all those who require them. Simply put, no one gets turned away and nobody gets barred.

Our service users are equally worthy of recognition for how they adapted to life during the pandemic and the positive manner in which they continued to engage with our teams.

More so than ever it's the relationships between Ana Liffey staff and service users which help achieve positive outcomes.

The necessary closure of Ana Liffey's Dublin and Limerick drop-in services during lockdown resulted in a substantial ramping up of our outreach services; including clinics and visiting supports provided to twenty private emergency accommodation providers by the end of 2021.

The team worked hard to keep people safe and alive throughout 2021. In this regard, I would like to highlight one particular piece of work that we are all proud of – training people who use drugs, their families, peers, staff and other healthcare professionals how to administer Naloxone. This is a medication that blocks and reverses the effects of heroin and other opioids. Indeed throughout this report you will notice we have included feedback from staff service users and family members in support of Naloxone.

Our activities in 2021:

Dublin Services

In 2021 the Dublin Services Team was made up of 19 team members who worked with a total of 1,301 individuals across multiple projects - including Private Emergency Accommodation Inreach; Granby Clinic Inreach; Outreach Overdose Prevention Programme; Low Threshold Stabilization Programme; and Dual Diagnosis support work. Upon assessment by team members the presenting needs were identified as, but not limited to - housing; drug use; social welfare; alcohol use; mental health ; physical health; meaningful use of time; and legal issues. In addition to all of the above, and prior to the development of a dedicated Homeless COVID Response Team (see below), the Dublin Services Team continued to provide COVID-19 supports.

In 2021, the Ana Liffey management team, based locally in Dublin, continued to provide specialist COVID-19 supports to the homeless sector across Dublin city and county. In quarter three of 2021, a standalone team of five staff was hired to take over and continue this work within the Ana Liffey, in close collaboration with the HSE Clinical and Operational Leads for COVID-19 in Dublin. Notably, as part of this work throughout 2021, Ana Liffey managed and coordinated service user transportation in relation to the COVID-19 response for the homeless population in the HSE CHO9 area.

The Dublin city based Assertive Case Management Team, made up of 5 team members, worked intensively with 127 individuals in 2021. Of these 64 people availed of key working or case

management supports; 63 availed of harm reduction interventions, signposting and brief supports; 35 individuals were identified and assessed through assertive outreach; and 29 were direct referrals from the Gardaí.

Midwest Services

In 2021 the team of 5 staff in the Midwest registered 145 new service users and worked with 352 people across the region – providing key working, case management and harm reduction interventions.

During 2021, the team provided 2,908 Needle and Syringe Programme interventions – which includes overdose prevention interventions; the provision of sterile crack pipes; and the provision of Naloxone training & product. Significantly the team provided over 17,000 syringes during the course of the year.

Policy and Participation

The Drug-Related Intimidation Initiative came to its conclusion on 26th January 2021 with the launch of a substantial report, 'Debts, Threats, Distress and Hope: Towards Understanding Drug-Related Intimidation in Dublin's North East Inner City' which was launched by Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe, TD.

On 16th March 2021 Ana Liffey published the report 'Decriminalisation Insights for Advocates'. With a peer-to-peer focus, this paper provides some key insights from a group of advocates for the decriminalisation of personal drug use.

We continued our work on relevant fora, including the Civil Society Forum on Drugs; the National Voluntary Drug and Alcohol Sector; the Correlation - European Harm Reduction Network; and more.

In 2021, Ana Liffey bid a fond farewell to our Head of Policy, Marcus Keane. During his twelve-year tenure with us, Marcus worked with us on such major policy papers as Not Criminals; Ireland And The Human Rights Of People Who Use Drugs, and Debts, Threats, Distress and Hope – Towards Understanding Drug-Related Intimidation in Dublin's North East Inner City. We're grateful to Marcus for his insights and wish him well for the future.

Our Sole Patron

In May, I was honoured to be one of the first people post-lockdown to be welcomed to Áras an Uachtaráin by our longstanding Sole Patron, President Michael D. Higgins.

As we discussed the adaptations and expansion of Ana Liffey's work during the pandemic, the President once again demonstrated his deep understanding of addiction, the plight of Irish people who are affected by drugs and homelessness, and other associated complex issues.

Twenty twenty-one was also notable for the high-level of intra-agency cooperation throughout the sector. I'd like to thank the Health Service Executive and, in particular, CHO9 in Dublin and CHO3 in Limerick; the Dublin Homeless Executive; Austin Carroll who was the HSE Clinical Lead for the Dublin COVID-19 Homeless Response; Depaul Ireland; Dublin Simon; the Peter McVerry Trust and many, many more for their support.

FINALLY, I'm hugely proud of the fact that we were able to maintain our frontline presence in Dublin and the Midwest throughout the pandemic by providing face-to-face Covid-19 and addiction supports with our teams out on the streets throughout the year.

Tony Duffin

CEO

"I have never used naloxone on anyone before, but having been the person who overdosed and my friend using it on me, shows naloxone works. I do believe had the person not given me naloxone I would not be able to say this piece today. I am forever grateful for what that person has done and I now carry naloxone with me"

Female, Service User

Head of Services

The pandemic was once again the dominant factor in 2021, but didn't prevent Ana Liffey from delivering our services where they were most needed. Ana Liffey's cooperation with the HSE, Dublin City Council, the Gardaí and other first responders was closer than ever, bringing about hundreds of positive outcomes.

The pressures on our frontline staff were at times immense, but day-in-and-day-out they kept turning up for work and gave their all, regardless of what might have been going on in their own lives at the time.

They were redeployed to work in accommodation centres and COVID-19 positive units: and they staffed the COVID-19 vaccine unit we opened ourselves.

The HSE quickly recognised the strong relationships we have on the ground with people who use drugs and people who are homeless, and that we were very fast-acting, adaptable and dynamic.

At the HSE's behest, the emphasis had shifted away from our frontline staff doing drug and alcohol work on the street to educating people about COVID-19, minimising the associated risk, and carrying out rapid testing. We were going round to the hostels testing and symptom checking, and if somebody was positive helping them get to a safe isolation place - if they couldn't isolate where they were. We were also carrying out bespoke contact tracing on the ground in the hostels.

It was a challenge: for example some of the people Ana Liffey work with sell sex, some share crack pipes, needles and other drug paraphernalia. They have small social circles, but have a high impact physically on one another. The HSE recognised all of this and entrusted us with keeping this cohort of people as safe as we possibly could.

To give you just one scenario:

We were working with two Trans women in a hostel who were prolific sex workers. They were COVID-19 positive and opened up their phones to us so that we could contact their regular clients. That's the trust our staff have with those women and all of our service users.

In total, during 2021, Ana Liffey engaged on site with 1,658 people living in emergency private accommodation. A phenomenal number of people during the pandemic. Don't forget that nobody was vaccinated until May 2021, so it was genuinely a matter of life and death.

Talking of life or death, it's worth stressing that in relation to people living in hostels - due to covid-19, room checks were less frequent and less in-depth, and the risk of overdose was much higher. With regards to the life-saving drug Naloxone, we ran socially-distanced training classes for staff, family members and peers all the way through 2021. It could have been done online, but wouldn't have been nearly as effective. We went to all the privately run emergency accommodation in Dublin and provided them with Naloxone.

Dawn Russell

Head of Services

"I came across a person overdosing, I was terrified but remembered the training I had got and I always carried naloxone in my bag. I got over the fear and used it, I felt brilliant saving someone's life. 100% everybody should carry naloxone on them"

Male, Service User

Head of Finance and Administration

For the second year in a row, COVID-19 was the dominant factor in driving activity throughout the Ana Liffey organisation. In order to be able to operate at a time when shops and other businesses were refusing cash, we set up an online managed system and rolled out cashless cards to our staff who were trained in their use. These cards allow frontline team members, in particular, greater flexibility when on outreach and can be topped up as necessary.

At the same time, we upgraded our accounts to a new Cloud-based system and also introduced a Cloud-based leave recording system. Further expansions of both are possible.

Towards the end of 2021, we formalised our Covid Response Team comprising of five nurses and a dual diagnosis worker who this has been rebranded as the Health Equity Action Team.

In total, thirteen new members of Ana Liffey staff joined our teams in 2021.

Elsewhere within Ana Liffey, we welcomed two new DRHE-funded members to our Southside Assertive Case Management Team; three additional Dublin Services PEA Project Workers to carry out in reach, again funded by the DRHE; and two full-time and one part-time member to our North Inner City Support Team.

In early 2021, CHO9 HSE funding enabled us to rent a space and fully equip it as a clinic in St. Dominic's Road, Tallaght.

Later in the year, the HSE provided us with the use of 56 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1 for Ana Liffey's previously mentioned Health Equity Action Team.

In August 2021, a new mobile harm reduction unit, dubbed the 'VanaLiffey', was donated to us by the Lifeline Ambulance Project and now actively links people to treatment and support services.

We successfully managed to find competitively priced new suppliers of the items needed to carry out needle exchange, which were also in worldwide demand for vaccinations.

The switch to a more competitive provider also allowed us to purchase data phones, which enable frontline staff to work with service users effectively and be more contactable.

Although initially brought about as a response to COVID-19, all of these actions are of lasting benefit to the Ana Liffey Drug Project, which administratively is now in a far stronger position than it was pre-pandemic.

Leonie Blyth

Head of Finance and Administration

Who We Are

For more information about who we are, visit aldp.ie/about-us/who-we-are/

Our Services

For more information about Our Services, visit aldp.ie/services/

Audited Financial Statement 2021

To view our audited financial statement for 2021, visit aldp.ie/content/uploads/2022/05/Ana-Liffey-Drug-Project-Annual-Report-and-Audited-Financial-Statements-2021.pdf



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