

Merchants Quay Ireland Annual Review 2023



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

mqi.ie

Company Structure

Merchants Quay Ireland CLG ("MQI") is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having share capital. It was registered on 12 July 1991 with Company number 176421. MQI is registered for the charitable purpose of promoting health and to provide the stepping-stones for every point of a man or woman's journey out of homelessness and addiction, and toward a drug free life. MQI provides services ranging from crisis intervention and health promotion services to day-support programmes, residential detox and rehabilitation, and prison-based counselling.

MQI is governed by its Constitution (comprising the Memorandum and Articles of Association) updated 26th June 2019. The Company is a public benefit entity and is registered with the Charities Regulator, charity registration number 20026240, and is granted charitable tax exemption, charity tax reference number CHY 10311 with the Revenue Commissioners.

Merchants Quay Ireland CLG is one of three companies operating under the banner name of Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) carrying out activities for social justice for homeless persons and drug users on a nationwide basis. The other companies are St. Francis Housing Association CLG (SFHA) and Merchants Quay Project CE Scheme CLG (MQPCE).



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Merchants Quay Ireland

Merchants Court
24 Merchants Quay
PO Box 11958
Dublin 8

Services 01 524 0160

Donations 01 524 0139

Email info@mqi.ie

Web www.mqi.ie

Facebook

Merchants Quay Ireland

Twitter

@MerchantsQuayIR

Instagram

@MerchantsQuayIR

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

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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.

Amy, MQI Client

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At MQI we respect everyone who turns to us for help – and many are just beginning their fresh start in life. So while client stories are genuine and true, names are changed and stock photographs of models are used for illustrative purposes and to protect client privacy. Thank you for your understanding.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

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

Collaboration

We work together

Professionalism, Teamwork, Adaptability

Compassion

We meet people where they are

Acceptance, Commitment, Support

Courage

We speak up, challenge & advocate

Integrity, Respect, Diversity

“
















I was homeless when I started coming to MQI. It was amazing to see that there are people willing to help. And to talk nicely to you and try to help you. It means a lot.

Alice, MQI Client

”



Our Work at a Glance

<div>136,850</div> <div>overall engagements with clients</div> <div></div>	<div>13,212</div> <div>primary healthcare interventions</div> <div></div>	<div>1,167</div> <div>interventions by MQI DATS in the Midlands</div> <div></div>
<div>13,516</div> <div>total individual clients</div> <div></div>	<div>66,126</div> <div>meals for people who are homeless and hungry</div> <div></div>	<div>3,928</div> <div>crisis contact team interventions</div> <div></div>
<div>327</div> <div>families supported nationwide</div> <div></div>	<div>123</div> <div>people admitted to detox and rehab</div> <div></div>	<div>2,613</div> <div>interventions by MQI CAMDAS</div> <div></div>
<div>290</div> <div>interventions for young people between 18 -24 years of age</div> <div></div>	<div>14,947</div> <div>in-prison counselling interventions</div> <div></div>	<div>2,079</div> <div>interventions by our mental health team</div> <div></div>
<div>25,905</div> <div>interventions by our harm reduction team</div> <div></div>	<div>361</div> <div>people supported by MQI CRIS in the East</div> <div></div>	<div>692</div> <div>over 55 year olds supported</div> <div></div>

Chairman's Introduction

As Chair of MQI, I am delighted to launch our Annual Review for 2023.

As always, we are proud to say that our services rose to the new challenges and the achievements of the year are notable, both for the number of clients we supported and the increased number of engagements across all our services.

Our core purpose at MQI is to promote health, reduce the harm caused by addiction and homelessness and support recovery. For many of the people we support, homelessness, addiction, and mental health difficulties go hand in hand. This is why we strive to provide a full range of integrated support services. In partnership with our funders, MQI expanded services and introduced improvements to enhance the quality of service and quality of outcomes for our clients.

At MQI, we are committed to ensuring that we have a well-governed, efficient organisation, that is fit for purpose to meet evolving client needs.

In 2023, we further enhanced our internal controls, focused on our commitment to the Charities Governance Code and the HSE's Annual Compliance Statement. MQI has invested in systems and procedures to ensure that there are internal controls in place to manage presenting risks. This involves oversight by our five Board sub-committees. To further advance effectiveness, we upskilled internal staff in GDPR, financial controls, and project management.

Ray Langton, MQI Board Chairman



Our core purpose at MQI is to promote health, reduce the harm caused by addiction and homelessness and support recovery.

Ray Langton, Chairman

Board succession planning was also reviewed during the year to ensure that gaps in skills, knowledge, and experience are constructively addressed at the Board of Director level. MQI embedded a structure where principles are in place to operate an environment of continuous improvement, identification of gaps, prevention and working to best practice.

I am confident to say that MQI has delivered on its Strategic Plan (2021-2024), as we now embark on identifying our strategic priority areas and goals for 2025-2027. We will continue to innovate, develop, and improve services, whilst being committed to addressing our environmental, social and governance responsibilities.

Acknowledgments

I have the deepest respect for our clients – their courage, resilience, and determination to move forward is truly remarkable. Our clients are at the forefront of all our work and, as an organisation, we are always looking for new ways to enhance the care we give.

On behalf of the Board, I want to acknowledge the work and commitment of all MQI staff and volunteers whose commitment to our goals is making an enormous difference in the lives of so many people.

I want to thank all our stakeholders, funders and strategic partners for their trust in us and their continuing support and engagement with the work of MQI. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our donors, without whom we would not be in a position to support all our clients.



On behalf of the Board, I want to acknowledge the work and commitment of all MQI staff and volunteers whose commitment to our goals is making an enormous difference in the lives of so many people.

Ray Langton, Chairman



During the year the Irish Franciscan Fraternity made the decision to step back as members of MQI, supported by the trust and confidence they have in the people and structures running MQI today. The Board would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the Order of Friars Minor in Ireland in establishing the service and the core values of MQI. Their compassion and guidance continue to inspire how we work today, a testament to the enduring legacy of the Order, especially evident at our Riverbank site in Dublin.

Finally, I want to thank Paula Byrne who moved on from MQI in 2023 after fifteen years of excellent service including five years as Chief Executive. I am grateful for the leadership of our new Chief Executive, Eddie Mullins, and our Executive Team whose expertise, advice and direction have been invaluable. I feel fortunate to continue to work with MQI to deliver on our mission to provide accessible, high-quality, and effective services.

Ray Langton
Chairman

Message from the CEO

As a low threshold service provider, everything we do is about reducing the impact of harm on our clients. We see the day-to-day impacts drug use, homelessness and mental health have on our clients and it's heartbreaking. Our clients are at the heart of everything we do at MQI and everything we stand for. Substance misuse has a detrimental effect on people's health and wellbeing. MQI's services provide the consistent support that clients need and deserve.

2023 has proven to be a very busy year for the services across Dublin, the Regions, and the Irish Prison Service. Each service ensured that clients received support within a safe environment.

“

No single organisation can end the cycle of homelessness, mental health, or addiction alone, but by collaborating and working in partnership, we believe it can be achieved.

Eddie Mullins, CEO

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Our staff and volunteers have time and time again demonstrated their ability to mediate and advocate on behalf of our clients.

Our staff, volunteers and voluntary Board of Directors helped to ensure that our service delivery and strategic direction are focused on the needs of the people we support. At a strategic level, we have continued to work with the government, stakeholders, and others in the voluntary sector to advocate for system change.

No single organisation can end the cycle of homelessness, mental health, or addiction alone, but by collaborating and working in partnership, we believe it can be achieved. We strongly advocate for a just society where stigma and shame are no longer levelled at people in addiction, homelessness or those struggling with their mental health.



MQI Focus for 2024

- To review MQI's Strategy for 2024-2027 by setting strategic goals that we believe are ambitious, innovative, and impactful for those we serve.
- To continue to work on building a positive culture in times of growth, transition, and change. We will be persistent in ensuring our culture and growth aligns across the entire organisation.
- We will carry on celebrating the unique journey each client takes, as each one creates a world of opportunities and possibilities.
- To build on the work that established our female specific service in our new dedicated city centre location, Jane's Place.
- The opening of the Medically Supervised Injection Facility (MSIF) is a key element of the National Drug Strategy and is also a commitment in the Programme for Government. I am delighted that significant progress was achieved in 2023 in our work to advance the establishment of Ireland's first MSIF. We are determined to open its doors for the first time in Q4 of 2024. MQI's vision is to support clients out of drug addiction, whilst also helping people who overdose. MQI is committed to saving people's lives, reducing the spread of infectious diseases, reducing the number of people injecting on the streets, and alleviating the burden on frontline health workers.

We are very proud of the outcomes that our amazing staff and volunteers have achieved, often under challenging circumstances.

Eddie Mullins, CEO

Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire team here at MQI for their expertise, dedication, and passion for improving, promoting and protecting the health of our clients. We are very proud of the outcomes that our amazing staff and volunteers have achieved, often under challenging circumstances. To the many people who use our services, you inspire us every day with your courage and resilience.

We have much to be proud of, primarily our ability to reach and engage with those who are the most marginalised and vulnerable. MQI has always shown flexibility and innovation in how we respond to the needs of the people who use our services.

I would like to thank our voluntary Board of Directors, who come from a wide range of backgrounds, for their passion, time, skills and professionalism. Under their leadership, MQI continues to extend the reach of our services to people who are at their most vulnerable stage in life.

I would like to thank and acknowledge my predecessor, Paula Byrne, for her vision and stellar leadership and commitment to our clients. The Jane's Place service in particular is a legacy she can be proud of. In addition, I would like to thank our Executive and senior leadership team for their dedication to MQI.

I wish to thank our many state funders, the Department of Health and HSE, the Drug and Alcohol Task Forces across the country, Dublin City Council and the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service.

Lastly, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to our many donors who support MQI and our work every day. Their continued support for our clients is incredibly important to us. Without their generosity we simply could not do the work we do.

Eddie Mullins,
CEO

Patrick's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Patrick shares his experiences of addiction and the support he received from MQI when he was a patient in James's Hospital.

“ I spent 35 years in addiction. When I was 11 years of age, I was taken out of my family home, away from my brothers and sisters and put into care. I was robbing out of the house, causing trouble, going on the mitch all the time and what have you. My ma reached out for help. She brought me to hospitals and social workers to try deal with my behaviour. She did everything to get me help. And The State convinced me ma to put me into care. And what can I say, it was one big paedophile ring. I was there for a year and then I ran away. I did try and tell my parents, but they just didn't believe me. For years I hated them. But I don't anymore. I try and put myself into their shoes. I was an annoying little git. I would lie about anything and everything. It was a different time, a different world. But it wasn't safe where I was, so I went over on the boat to London. I was just 14.

Initially I went from squat to squat and then ended up living on the streets. It's a hard city, especially for a child and when I think back now, I can't believe I survived. I done whatever I had to do to survive and that's when I was first introduced to drugs.

Everybody else around me was taking drugs, so I started off just to fit in because of all the peer pressure. So many people around me were doing it and I wanted to belong. I never wanted to be an addict – I didn't know what I was getting into.

I stole to feed my addiction, and I spent more than 25 years in prison. I'd be in jail for five or six years, and then I'd get out for a few months and end up back in again, I was completely institutionalised. I got deported from the UK back to Ireland, and that's when my health really started to deteriorate. I didn't know whether to turn left, right or whatever. I wasn't in contact with any of my family. I knew no one back here, bar drug dealers or people in addiction. I was in my early 20's but I was a heavy intravenous drug user at that stage.

I'd get out of prison and within weeks I would end up in hospital with a blood clot in my leg or something. Then, I'd get out of hospital and end up in back in prison. I would get healthy again, but every time I'd come out of jail, I'd end up in hospital within weeks and I'd be in a worse state every time.

Two years ago, I was homeless, and I was worse than ever. Then, I ended up at St. James's hospital with sepsis and a blood clot. That's when I first came in contact with the MQI project worker. He came and introduced himself and began chatting to me every day and bringing me off for a cup of tea and to talk. That kindness was the start of my recovery.

I graduated college. I'm a facilitator in mental health and trauma and I'm doing level five addiction studies.

Patrick, MQI Client

It felt like a proper friendship to me. It was love and care – that's what it was – simple as that.

MQI put me on the right track, they didn't tell me what to do, they just put me in the right places, gave me the right supports – it was down to me at the end of the day, and I put the work in. I didn't believe that was possible for me, I had just written myself off. Without MQI I wouldn't be here.

Today... well I graduated college. I'm a facilitator in mental health and trauma and I'm doing level five addiction studies.

People used to say to me for years, 'you'd be good at it', and I used to say, 'sure I can't even look after myself'. But here I am – doing it. I'm still getting counselling, I'm still healing, but I have been free from drugs for a year, a tough year but a good year.

I know it's still early days, but I hope I can help someone like me some day.

I wake up every morning now and I am grateful. I thought I lost faith, many, many moons ago but now, I'm grateful for the people I have in my life. Grateful for MQI and the people who gave me a chance when nobody else would.

A few years ago my mum made contact with me, and me and her made up. Not too long after that, she passed away. I'm 41 and proud of who I am today. I just wish with all my heart she was here to see it.

“

I never wanted to be an addict – I didn't know what I was getting into.

Patrick, MQI Client

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Key Goals of our Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024

Goal 1

Deliver high impact, high quality services

Priority: To develop and enhance the range and reach of services that respond to the needs of our service users and the community.

Goal 2

Play a leading role in influencing policy makers and the public

Priority: Build the organisations' capacity through research, innovation, collaboration, advocacy & engagement.

Goal 3

Ensure the organisation has the capacity, skills and knowledge to deliver the strategic goals

Priority: Empower our people, develop our culture and strengthen our systems to achieve organisational excellence and maximise our impact.

Goal 4

Develop a funding strategy to ensure our sustainability, and support our future direction

Priority: To diversify our funding streams, and maintain our reputation for strong financial management and governance.



Homeless Services

Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE) figures for the final quarter of 2023 saw record numbers of people presenting as homeless. A shortage of move-on accommodation, rising rents and the cost-of-living crisis have particularly impacted the people who use Merchants Quay homeless services. This has been reflected in the increased demand for our services throughout 2023.

Riverbank – Dublin Services

For people experiencing homelessness, our drop-in services at our Riverbank Centre continue to meet their immediate physiological needs of a safe space, hot food, showers, and opportunities for social interaction. Provision of these basic services enables our expert team to build relationships with clients and provide information and advocacy supports in relation to issues such as housing advice, tenancy sustainment, assistance with social welfare benefits, financial budgeting, and access to health services.

“

I lost people around me, my job and my girlfriend. All those things vanished. I was in my early thirties when I first became homeless. It's very hard out there. I slept in doorways all around the city centre. Twice I woke up and a person was dead beside me.”

David, MQI Client

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Sunday Dinner Service

The Merchants Quay Sunday service is fully funded by donations from the public. The Service operates on Sundays up to 2pm, offering breakfast and dinner to clients. The service is one of the few spaces open on Sunday in Dublin City where clients can access a free, hot, sit-down dinner. The service also provides showers and a change of clothes to clients who require this, as well as providing support around access to emergency accommodation. In 2023, our Sunday service supported 1,978 people, 51% of whom were registered on the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS), the online shared system utilised by homeless service providers and local authorities in Ireland.

66,126

meals
provided
to Riverbank clients



4,357

hot showers
provided
in Riverbank



Meals

In 2023, a total of 66,126 hot and cold meals were provided to 5,837 unique people in our Riverbank Service in Dublin. This is an increase of 54% on the number of meals provided in 2022. The meal service is often a first point of contact for many people experiencing homelessness and can create opportunities for clients to engage with staff and receive support addressing their homelessness and other related health and welfare issues.

Showers

Last year, 1,103 clients availed of hot showers in Riverbank, an increase of 99% on 2022. This equated to 4,357 showers in total. Fresh clothing and a hot meal was offered after every shower.

A client sitting down for a hot meal during Sunday Service at our Riverbank Centre in Dublin





The Crisis Contact team provided 3,928 interventions in 2023

Crisis Contact Team

When people in crisis present to our Riverbank Centre, they can access practical support. The Crisis Contact team provide information, advice, and advocacy to clients around housing supports. This could include support with registration on the PASS system, access to the Local Authority Housing Waiting List and the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP) applications. The Crisis Contact team also support clients to resolve issues with social welfare payments, identification, and PPS numbers, language barriers and access to medical and harm reduction services. The team also provide a vital signposting and referral service for clients to specialist support agencies. In 2023, the team supported 1,670 clients, an increase of almost 15% on the previous year. The team provided 3,928 interventions for these clients.

The Crisis Contact team continued to support clients to engage positively with the criminal justice system. Representatives of the Homeless Probation Team and the local Community Gardaí held bi-weekly clinics in the Riverbank Centre. MQI also entered a partnership arrangement with the Irish Refugee Council to provide support to people who arrived in Ireland seeking international protection.

Assertive In-Reach Service

In 2023, the Assertive In-Reach worker was redirected to focus on young people who become homeless after leaving care. This role provides support to empower clients to access different services that are appropriate and responsive to their needs. In 2023, the Assertive In-reach worker supported 53 unique clients and provided 197 interventions.

Peter's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Peter shares his story of living on the streets as a teenager and how he believes Merchants Quay Ireland helped him turn his life around.

“ As a teenager, I ended up sleeping rough. I was homeless for over 10 years. All I had was my sleeping bag. I slept at the back of train stations and begged outside shops. There's no running away from drugs in town, they're everywhere. When I fell into addiction, I had a beard, long hair and a scruffy face. I didn't even have shoes to put on my feet.

I thought I was going to die on the streets. My legs swelled out. I was in so much pain, I had to drag one leg behind me. I didn't want to go to hospital. When the team at MQI saw me, they brought me inside and called an ambulance. They saved my leg. Without that call, the doctors said I would have lost my leg.

My addiction was so bad that when I got out of hospital, I would end up the same again. Every couple of months I'd be back in, being treated for blood clots. Eventually I got blood clots in my lungs. This was a wakeup call because I could've died. So, I got drug free for the first time since I was 13. I really didn't think it was possible for me.

Then I started missing meetings. I was isolating, sitting with my thoughts. I ended up relapsing and going to prison.

In jail, you've got to put on a false image. Act like nothing bothers you because you're around other criminals. You have to act the way they act. If they see your weakness, they pounce on it. You're in survival mode. But when the door gets banged shut, that's when everything hits you. No one wants to be in prison, but they'd try make out that it doesn't bother them. It bothered me, so I'm sure it bothers some of them.

I was offered temporary release from prison, but I refused it. I knew I was going straight back on the streets. So, they said 'look if you want to complete your sentence, we'll try and get you treatment'. That's how I ended up at St. Francis Farm. I was very nervous at the start, coming back into society. On the streets and in prison, I knew how I was supposed to act. But the staff were brilliant and made me feel right at home.

The work done at St. Francis Farm is different, we did seminars and stuff like that. It was so good because I needed to learn more about myself. I needed to learn more about addiction and recovery as well. I also enjoyed the work, everything was new to me. I liked helping around the house and on the farm. I felt like I was doing something good for a change. We worked as a group and helped each other out. If one of us was having a bad day, the other lads were there to pull you out of it.

I class addiction like a form of cancer. You have to try and treat it. But, there's no end to it, there's no finish line. Now, it's up to me. I got myself drug free. I am responsible for my actions and what I've done. I've done a lot of bad things over the years that I'm not proud of. But I believe I'm not that person now.

“ *Thanks to MQI, now I know what to do. I know what will keep me drug free.*

Peter, MQI Client

MQI is a powerful place. The work they do, you couldn't put a price on it. It's helped me get my life together. Merchant's Quay has and is playing a big part of my life. The team have done an awful lot for me over the years. Every winter they gave me hats and gloves to keep warm on the streets. When I came in for a hot meal at Riverbank, they would always ask if I was alright. No matter what state I was in, they'd still bring me in. They'd still treat me as a human being. They'd still talk to me and see what I needed.

I couldn't see it at the time, but now I believe relapsing was part of my recovery journey. Thanks to MQI, now I know what to do. I know what will keep me drug free."

“

When I came in for a hot meal at Riverbank, they would always ask if I was alright. No matter what state I was in, they'd still bring me in. They'd still treat me as a human being. They'd still talk to me and see what I needed.

Peter, MQI Client

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Primary Healthcare



Covid 19 pandemic impacts continued into early 2023 for health services and individuals, however with the lifting of restrictions by the end of 2023, increased access to health services by our client group was evident. The impact on physical and mental health is widely acknowledged and services are stretched with the increased demand. This environment has been particularly difficult for clients who use Merchants Quay Ireland services, and this can be found throughout our primary care and addiction services.

At our Riverbank Centre, the MQI clinical team continued to work with and address the complex medical and psychosocial needs of our clients following the lifting of lockdown measures. Unfortunately, our socially excluded population frequently experience multiple adverse events and have a mortality rate eight times higher than the average for men, and nearly 12 times higher for women.

In 2023, MQI completed 11,902 interventions for clients supporting them with their primary care needs. This was an increase of 2,844 care interventions from 2022. This was achieved through the GP, nurse, dentist, mental health team, Hep C worker, inclusion health workers and counsellor. Due to the success of the hepatitis C program within our client group, and a significantly reduced uptake and positivity rate within MQI, funding for this program was handed back to the national Hepatitis C treatment program in June of 2023. This was a hugely successful program. Routine screening is continuing with clients who may be at risk of contracting hepatitis.

MQI and St James's Hospital collaborated in a pilot programme which placed a social inclusion link worker into the Inclusion Health team. This is an interdisciplinary team working with patients who have complex needs due to addiction and homelessness. The success of the pilot has resulted in an expansion of the programme to the Mater Hospital Dublin in 2023. The social inclusion link worker provides assertive support and advocacy to Inclusion Health patients experiencing homelessness with complex health and/or addiction needs. This was hugely successful in supporting our client group to navigate and have positive interactions with mainstream healthcare and ensuring that clients were supported into accommodation on discharge.



**Primary
health care:**

13,212
interventions

GP Service

The GP service in Riverbank is accessible to all clients accessing homeless services, who are unable to manage mainstream services due to social circumstances. The GP provides a full range of medical services and works with the extended MQI clinical team to facilitate onward referral to additional support healthcare services where appropriate. This service had seen a reduction in GP hours in the year previous, however through collaboration between MQI, the HSE and Safetynet, the service is now providing 10 clinics per week, Monday – Friday. During 2023, this service provided consultations for clients ranging from addiction support to primary care. MQI also facilitates applications for medical cards for homeless clients to support their access to mainstream medical services.


Our GP service also provides our clients with access to addiction support and treatment. In 2023, an average of 152 clients were accessing Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) for their addiction at any given time, with 122 new clients started on OST during 2023, and 117 clients disengaging from the OST program. Individuals finish OST therapy for a variety of reasons including moving to other clinics which are in their locality, disengagement from the programme or successful detox from OST to begin their recovery journey, with the help and support of our addiction case worker.

Doctor Kieran Harkin
GP at Riverbank
Centre.



Nursing Service

The MQI nursing service continues to provide primary care interventions for our client between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. The service carried out 2,401 individual consultations during 2023, ranging from wound care, physical health checks, blood testing, psychological support, and onward referral to support additional healthcare needs. Due to constraints in terms of nursing staff, extended hours to this service have not been available to clients. However, many of the clients attending the service do so due to the relationship that they have with MQI staff, and as such, do access healthcare in a timely fashion. However, the nursing service has noted an increase in chronic disease management during 2023, which may be attributed to reduced accessibility to care over the period of the Covid pandemic.



People who are homeless can find accessing healthcare appointments difficult as they often can't afford bus fare

Mental Health Service

Mental health issues continue to impact people who are homeless and in addiction. Our Mental Health team offer one to one support for individuals with mental ill health as well as support to access the HSE's Homeless community mental health teams.

The MQI Mental Health team works with clients to carry out risk assessments and create a client centred care plan to manage symptoms of mental ill health. The team also works closely with clients in a step-by-step approach to support them to alleviate the issues resulting in poor mental health, such as working with them around accommodation, medication management, and other needs. The team has provided support to 338 unique individuals, with 2,079 tailored mental health interventions. The team also provide education and support to all staff in our Riverbank Centre to further support clients. The Mental Health team have introduced a referral pathway to support the most vulnerable clients at the most vulnerable time and equipped the team on the floor to provide support to clients also particularly in areas of suicidality and general behaviour management.

MQI continued its partnership with Dublin City University offering clinical placements to student nurses completing their mental health nurse training. MQI also partnered with St James's Hospital through our health link case worker, facilitating students from Trinity College Dublin completing their general nursing, to spend time in Riverbank to understand the services on offer and client needs. Nurses and mental health case workers provided these nursing students with an opportunity to work with our client cohort in the service who need an array of physical and psychological supports in an empathetic environment.

Dental Service

The dental team provide ongoing screening and treatment for clients and 2023 saw an increase to 549 visits, up from 216 in 2022. This increase was due to the dental team implementing new initiatives to ensure greater access to the service. These included extended opening hours on one day a week, and a walk-in clinic for clients who struggle to keep appointments one morning per week. The team provides oral health promotion and education to clients and created pathways that enable patients with multiple co-morbidities to access dentistry and oral surgery in the appropriate setting.

Hepatitis C Worker

Our Hepatitis C Worker, in conjunction with St James Hospital and the National Hepatitis C Treatment Programme, worked with clients who inject drugs to screen for blood borne viruses. A programme of antibody testing for Hepatitis C was introduced in our Riverbank Centre in 2023. This allowed clients to receive test results within 10 minutes of testing, and only needing to send bloods to the hospital in the case of a positive antibody test. Between January and June 2023, the hepatitis case worker worked with 108 unique clients to carry out testing.

However, due to significantly reduced uptake of this service, and low positivity rate, it was decided in collaboration with the National Hepatitis C Treatment Program, to return the funding for this role and reintegrate the system of screening back into the regular nursing role in MQI.



Tara's Story: MQI Client

MQI client Tara shares her story and the support she has received in her recovery journey through MQI's High Park and Aftercare service.

“Something happened to me when I was 12. I didn't tell anyone. Our family didn't encourage talking about feelings. I was told to 'cop on' growing up. So, I kept that secret inside.

One day, I was playing outdoors with a friend. We went exploring in an abandoned building. We stumbled across people there using drugs. I recognised one of them, a neighbour. That's when my drug use started. When other girls my age were still playing with dolls. When I was just a kid.

I was in addiction for eight years. I wasn't picky about what I used. I just didn't want to be sober because of the secret. Then it started getting really bad and I tried to kill myself. I ended up in hospital on a feeding tube because I wasn't eating. I was in and out of hospital. I was passing out every day. I was only 42kg – just six and a half stone. The doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. I kept telling them I wasn't doing drugs, but I was.

My parents hadn't a clue what was going on. Then one day, I passed out in the bathroom and banged my head. My parents got a shock. They searched my room, found everything, and confronted me about it. I was still at the point where I didn't want to stop taking drugs, but I started going to NA to get them off my back. While I was in NA, my addiction officer referred me to High Park, which is run by Merchant's Quay Ireland.

When I arrived, I wouldn't talk for the first while. For about three, four weeks, they couldn't get anything out of me. I had a hard time trusting people. There was a lot of stuff that I never thought I was going to talk about.

But High Park gave me people who not only were willing to listen to me, but people who wanted to listen to me. I felt comfortable talking to them. That's huge for someone like me. Someone who kept a secret for eight years, and never wanted to talk about it. Someone who didn't trust her own parents. To be able to trust a stranger, to be able to talk about everything to them. It gave me confidence in myself. Gave me the feeling that I was worth something. By the end of it, I told them I'd been assaulted by a family member when I was 12. I'd never told anyone before.

I realised I had to do a lot of work with my family. The staff at High Park encouraged me to tell my parents about the way I was feeling. So, I had a few good phone calls with my parents where I would tell them what I needed to tell them. Because of the situation, they had to listen to me. They wanted to hear what I had to say. It made them realise what they were doing wasn't working. And what I was doing wasn't working. We both needed to change. I had to make them realise that things would not be going back to the way they were.

Now I am in the aftercare programme. I have the support of all the people in the house who are going through the same stuff as me. We do art therapy here, that's helped me a lot. We also do yoga and meditation. I could barely sit still for five seconds, let alone meditate for 15 minutes. But now, we do that every day. I am proud of how far I've come. I talk to my family now. I've got a good relationship with them. That's probably what I'm the proudest of.

When I finish the Aftercare Day Programme, I want to go to college and put all of myself into it. Since I've come into recovery everyone's been complimenting me on how smart I am. I never properly tried before, I used to sit at the back of the class, not really there. Now I'm excited to go to college and just do it! I want to work with people in addiction, but in the legal field. Helping them with their legal issues.

I look back at photos and videos of me, and I don't even know who that is. MQI pretty much saved my life. Without the people who donate, none of this would be here – and I'd be still stuck in addiction. I don't even know how to express enough gratitude for that.

”

“

I look back at photos and videos, and I don't even know who that is. MQI pretty much saved my life. Without the people who donate, none of this would be here – and I'd be still stuck in addiction. I don't even know how to express enough gratitude for that.

Tara, MQI Client

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Addiction Services



“

I want people to be able to have the same thing that I have today, and that's absolute freedom from drug addiction and the trauma of it. I want to give them a bit of hope that there is a way out of that horrible hell that you've been living in for years. You can come out of it and you can be successful.”

Jill, MQI Client

”

We welcome the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use. Our experience tells us that a health-led response will lead to better outcomes for people coping with addiction. We were privileged to be given the opportunity to participate in the assembly. The MQI Head of Clinical Services, Elaine Kehoe, presented from the perspective of front-line services. Elaine outlined the range of interventions offered by MQI, and the complex needs of service users. A delegation from the Assembly later visited our Riverbank Centre, where they could see first-hand the services available to clients.

Counselling Service

Our addiction counselling service in our Riverbank Centre offers holistic support to individuals who are dealing with substance misuse and homelessness. Our counsellor offers one to one assistance for many mental health and life issues such as depression, anxiety, low mood, bereavement, mental ill-health and family and relationship issues. In 2023 a total of 360 counselling sessions were provided to clients.

Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team operate in the neighbourhood around Riverbank to strengthen relationships with the local community and stakeholders and proactively engage with clients and people sleeping rough in the area. The team also respond to calls and queries from the public in the locality as well as collecting drug litter discarded in the area. The team carried out 816 patrols in 2023, engaged with 525 residents and local businesses while collecting 4,809 items of drug litter.



816 patrols carried out in 2023

Harm Reduction Service

MQI's harm reduction service aim to minimise the negative health and social impact associated with drug use focusing on positive change and working with people without judgement or discrimination. In 2023, a total of 3,156 people were provided with 25,905 health led interventions. This number includes our needle exchange, in our Riverbank Centre. In the year under review, 522 safer injection training sessions were provided for clients, which helps to reduce the physical harm caused by unsafe practices.

Irish Prison-based Addiction Counselling Service (IPS)

MQI work in partnership with the Irish Prison Service to provide addiction-based counselling services in 12 prisons across the prison estate. This service gives prisoners access to one-to-one counselling enabling them to develop clear treatment plans to assist them to maintain stability and abstinence from alcohol and/or other drugs. In 2023, counselling supports were provided to 2,035 people, these individuals were provided with a total of 14,947 interventions.

In 2023, MQI relaunched the Treatment and Recovery Programme (TARP) in Mountjoy prison. This programme aims to support people who have become drug-free in prison. In 2023, there were five programmes delivered with a completion rate of 85%.



CAMDAS (Cavan and Monaghan Drug and Alcohol Service)

MQI CAMDAS offers a range of education, information, advocacy and support services to individuals, families, and the wider community in the counties of Cavan and Monaghan. The services CAMDAS offers include Key Working, Family Support Information, Education, Advocacy and Support, and a Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment Scheme. In 2023, CAMDAS facilitated 2,613 interventions and worked with 314 individuals.

To mark International Overdose Awareness Day 2023, Cavan Courthouse was lit up with purple light. The initiative was a collaboration with Cavan County Council & MQI CAMDAS. The annual campaign remembers, without stigma, those who have died and acknowledges the grief of their family and friends left behind.

MIDLANDS DATS (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Supports)

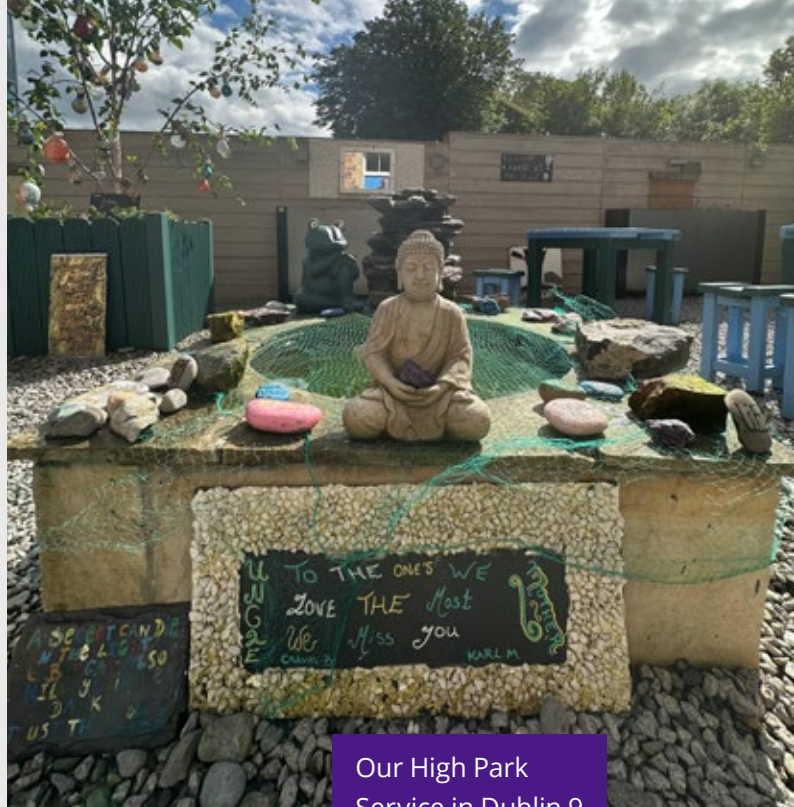
This service provides a range of supports to individuals with substance misuse issues, and families impacted by addiction, in the Midlands counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford, and Westmeath. This service offers mobile harm reduction and needle exchange in each county, a dedicated family support specialist and rehabilitation and aftercare support. In 2023, this service provided 4,791 interventions to 415 individuals. In addition, 13,954 needles were distributed as part of the mobile needle exchange programme. Seventy new clients were referred to the family support specialist last year.

The Tanyard Building in Tullamore operated as a base for the running of groups and programmes for service users, including aftercare, family support, recovery focused interventions. It was also used for one-to-one client and case management sessions.

Residential Rehabilitation, High Park

The residential programme operating from High Park, Drumcondra, Co. Dublin runs for 14 weeks. The facility has capacity for 13 clients at any given time. The programme assists clients to explore the issues that underpin their drug use and to develop individual plans that will support them to remain drug free and prevent relapse.

The programme operates on a therapeutic basis offering one-to-one counselling, group therapy, fitness, horticulture, and life skills development. In 2023, the service received 303 referrals, of these 294 people completed assessments, 49 were admitted and 31 completed treatment.



Our High Park Service in Dublin 9

EAST COAST CRIS (Community and Recovery Integration Supports Project)

The East Coast CRIS service provides community-based drug and alcohol treatment to individuals suffering from addiction, including dedicated family support services and peer support programmes to over 18's. The service covers Co. Wicklow and South Dublin (excluding Dun Laoghaire, Bray and Blessington), and has support centres in Greystones, Arklow, Wicklow town and operates outreach support.

Community based treatment is delivered through one-to-one interventions and group work. In 2023 the service expanded by adding two additional Community Integration Workers which increased the capacity of the service by 66%. In 2023, this service carried out 4,291 interventions and supported 361 clients, an increase of 30% on the previous year.

Residential detox unit – St Francis Farm

A key issue for MQI is to ensure clients are safe for admission to the unit. This is due to the complexities of a medical detox programme and the fact that St Francis Farm is a distance from acute hospital services. However, these same challenges led to an agile response to client needs, resulting in broadening the criteria for admission under the guidance of the Clinical Governance Committee.

There were 319 referrals to the detox unit, an increase of 35% on 2022. The number invited for assessment was 239 and out of these 195 clients attended for assessment. Overall, during 2023, there were 49 admissions to the detox unit, which again represented an increase from 2022 of 37%. These admissions were a combination of clients detoxing from the following substances: methadone and benzodiazepine, methadone only, benzodiazepines only, and suboxone.

Completion rates from the detox unit were extremely strong in 2023, at 84% (41 clients). This was a very positive outcome for the unit, the first full year without service interruption since Covid. Out of this group, 27 participants progressed to the St Francis Farm rehabilitation facility.

In quarter four 2023, the team in the detox unit carried out an exercise to analyse the calls for support received by our team on the farm. In a four-month period with 363 phone calls received, 149 were enquiries looking for addiction supports for individuals who did not meet the criteria for St Francis Farm. This highlights the high level of demand for residential detox beds nationally and the access challenges faced by clients.

Detox and rehab: (across all MQI services)

98 people
admitted

72 people
completed
treatment

St. Francis Farm Residential
Rehabilitation Centre, Tullow,
Co. Carlow



Residential rehabilitation unit – St Francis Farm

There were 177 referrals into the rehabilitation program during 2023 that met the criteria of the programme. A total of 85 people were invited for assessment and 80 people took up the offer. Overall, there were 49 admissions to the rehab unit (a 23% increase on 2022), 27 of whom were admitted directly from the detox unit. The unit achieved an overall bed occupancy rate of 77% during the year. Of the 48 clients discharged during 2023, 33 successfully completed the entire program (69%, which was consistent with 2022 achievement of 67.5%). Of the clients who did not complete the program, 12 left early for personal reasons, and 3 clients were discharged for other reasons.

Within the MQI residential detox and rehabilitation programmes, the teams supported 117 individuals into recovery across the services. This was done through a trauma informed and holistic approach which allowed clients to progress at their own pace and according to their individual needs.



The signs that lead into St. Francis Farm in Tullow, Carlow

Community Detox and addiction support

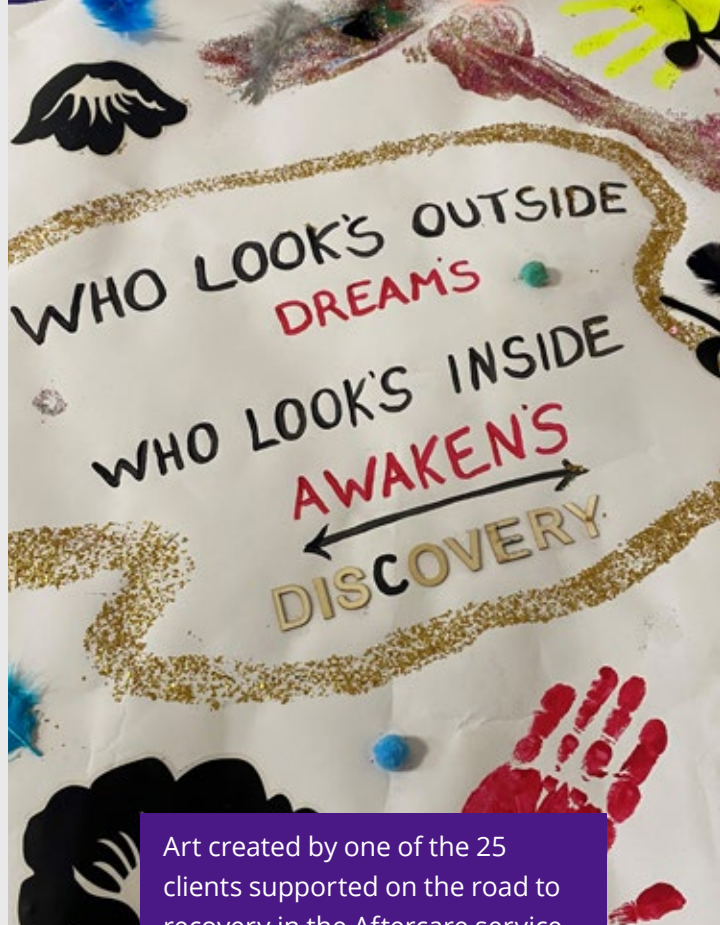
In 2023, MQI increased the number of addiction case workers from one to three at our Riverbank Centre. These work closely with the mental health team to provide a dual diagnosis support structure for clients facing both addiction and mental health problems. This team is further supported by an addiction councillor.

In 2023, the addiction team carried out 1,197 addiction interventions with clients, ranging from offering support to clients on OST and ensuring robust care planning, to community detoxes. 18 alcohol detoxes were completed with clients in the community, and 14 benzodiazepine detoxes were completed during 2023. Three detoxes were also carried out with clients who self-reported poly substance misuse. The addiction team support clients to reduce or stabilise their drug use, supporting them to find day programmes that might work to support them, or work to get them into residential treatment services. All clients on OST through the Riverbank service are seen by an addiction case worker on a quarterly basis to ensure that options are being discussed with the clients, and naloxone is being offered. Our services aim to reduce the harm associated with drug use for our clients. We offer onsite needle exchange services in addition to providing information and guidance on safer drug use, overdose prevention and pathways to recovery via residential and community-based treatment and support services.

Aftercare Service

This service offers supports to clients who have completed primary residential treatment in the MQI High Park or St. Francis Farm services. The aftercare programme consists of a drug free transitional housing project in Kildare, developed in partnership with Respond Housing Association. The programme supports service users to maintain and develop the skills required to sustain a healthy and productive lifestyle. The programme also supports those interested in returning to education or employment. In 2023, MQI supported 25 clients in the Aftercare service.

The aftercare program also incorporates a 'life-after' group which supports clients to maintain their recovery journey; to connect with others who share their experiences; including a LGBTQI+ recovery group. All these groups meet monthly.



Art created by one of the 25 clients supported on the road to recovery in the Aftercare service.

Northeast Family Support Service

This service covers the counties of Louth and Meath and provides a specialized family support service which caters for adult family members of people impacted by addiction. The service focuses on personal well-being, self-care, knowledge and understanding of addiction and awareness of their ways of coping and responding to their loved one's addiction. In 2023, the service received 102 referrals and completed 1,150 interventions.

Community Employment Schemes

Merchants Quay Project CE Scheme CLG operates dedicated drug rehabilitation Community Employment Schemes in Athlone and Cavan. The schemes assist participants to access training, education and work experience opportunities, with a view to potentially entering or re-entering the labour market. The scheme also supports participants through their recovery by facilitating relapse prevention and stabilisation groups, mindfulness, and motivational interviewing.

The scheme works closely with the local Community Drug and Alcohol Services (CADS), local addiction support practitioners and Tier 4 residential treatment centres who refer individuals who may be suitable for the scheme. MQI currently has a total of 25 CE Scheme participants with 28 available places across the two schemes.

New Developments



Jane's Place – Female Specific Service

Jane's Place is an all-female service that offers one-to-one, and group supports to women who are dealing with homelessness, addiction and mental health issues. For the women who access Jane's Place, it is a safe warm and welcoming environment that provides holistic, trauma-informed services such as, one-to-one case management, psycho-educational health and wellbeing groups, and holistic therapies.

In 2023, this was accessed by 40 women with a total of 402 interventions. During 2023, MQI embarked on a refurbishment project for a new dedicated building, kindly donated to MQI, to host Jane's Place in Dublin 2. In addition to the supports currently offered by Jane's Place, the new building will host women's primary health care services.

Medically Supervised Injecting Facility – (MSIF)

Following a tendering process, MQI was selected by the HSE as the preferred provider to operate Ireland's first MSIF. This will initially run as an 18-month pilot, subject to independent evaluations at 6 months and 18 months.

The facility will be in our Riverbank building on Merchant's Quay in Dublin, where other healthcare and harm reduction services are currently provided. Having these services in a single location is key to the success of an MSIF.

Evidence from other countries shows that MSIF services are cost-effective in the long term. By reducing the harm of injecting drugs use, the facility will have a range of benefits for MQI clients, and for the local community. The MSIF is scheduled to commence operation in Q4 of 2024.

Research *and* Advocacy



Irish Syringe Analysis Project

In 2023, the findings of the second Irish Syringe Analysis Project were published as part of the European Syringe Collection and Analysis Enterprise 'ESCAPE' research project. This followed up on the findings of the 2022 project. This project is a partnership between MQI, the HSE National Social Inclusion Office and the HSE Drug Treatment Centre Laboratory. The project analyses used syringes collected by MQI staff in both Dublin and the Midlands. This is a European wide project that tracks local, national, and European wide drug use trends and behaviours.

MQI Participation in Research

In 2023, findings of the study 'Disrupting Premature Ageing Trajectories in Non-Communicable Disease; Feasibility of a frailty-focused intervention in a Population Experiencing Homelessness' carried out by Dr Julie Broderick, Assistant Professor, Discipline of Physiotherapy, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin were published. MQI was a research partner in this project.

MQI, in partnership with Dr Sarah Morton, published research exploring the lived experiences of women who are dealing with multiple issues which contributed to their substance use and how these relate to factors such as motherhood, poverty, social exclusion, trauma, domestic violence, transactional sex, homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system "You can't fix this in six months': Understanding the intersectionality of women's substance use in the Irish context". This report was launched in the Mansion house in the summer of 2023.

Our People



Ray Dowdall, Homeless and Crises Project Worker at Riverbank.

Our Staff

MQI is supported by a talented pool of committed staff, with a broad range of skills and life experiences. These include: project workers, kitchen staff, councillors, nurses, doctors, dentists, administrators, fund raisers, donor contact staff, and managers.

The dedication of our staff, enacting our values of compassion, courage and collaboration through their work and focus on clients, results in numerous life-changing outcomes for people coping with homelessness and addiction. 84% of our staff are employed in front-line services, working directly with clients.

Volunteers and Student Placements

In 2023, MQI recommenced its volunteer and student placement programmes, after a lull during Covid. MQI availed of the services of eight volunteers who provided support to staff and clients across our services. Student placements provide important work experience opportunities for those who are considering working in social care organisations such as MQI in the future.

Results for the Financial Year at 31 December 2023

The directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements of the company for the financial year ended 31 December 2023. The Statement of Financial Activities is set out on page 35.

In line with our Strategic Plan, MQI is committed to protecting and developing our sustainable income. We are constantly seeking new opportunities and funding lines to maintain and grow our service offerings to meet client needs.

MQI is financed by a mix of statutory and voluntary funding. 2023 was another exceptional year for MQI raising a total income of €15.5m. (2022 €14.5m). Included in 2023 income is a donation-in-kind of €1m, of a building to house our female only service – Jane’s Place.

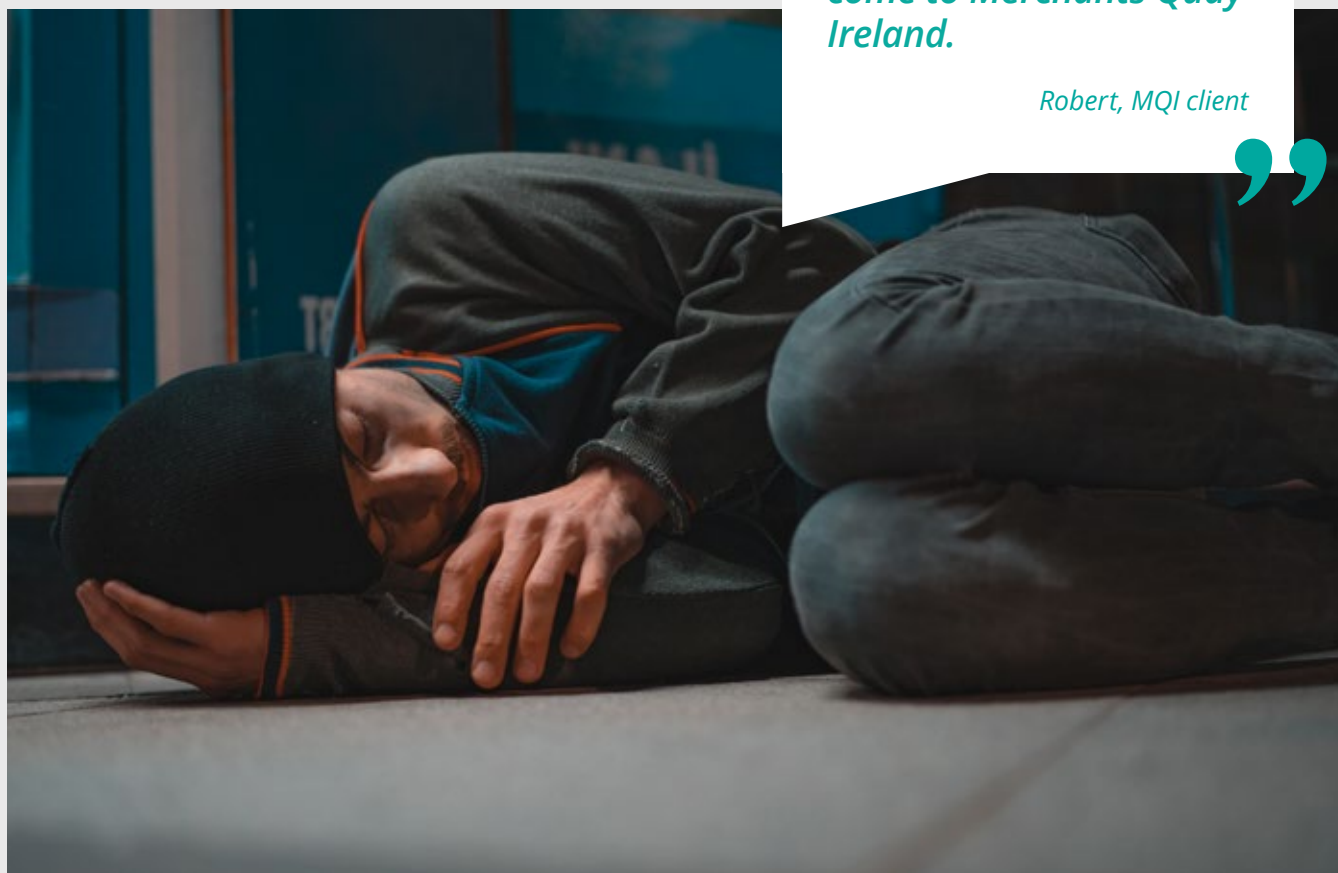
Other income includes €400k (€800k 2022) from the Immigrant Investment Programme (IIP), operated by the Department of Justice Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, which to date has supported our goal to purchase the building known as Riverbank, the main hub of our Dublin based services, and other capital refurbishment projects to be completed during 2024.

“

It doesn't matter what you've been through, MQI are really there, at the frontline. If there's anybody in my situation, I hope and pray they come to Merchants Quay Ireland.

Robert, MQI client

”



The remainder of income was generated from various sources, with 45% from Statutory Government funding mainly from the HSE and Dublin Regional Homeless Executive, and the balance raised through our fundraising activities and other small income streams. Fundraising generated €7.8m, making up 51% of our income for 2023.

Our work would not have been possible without the continued support from our state funders and voluntary funders. We and all those we support would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors in what was a difficult year. As a result of our fundraising income and expenditure management, 2023 was a positive year financially; this will allow MQI to focus on the implementation of our other strategic priorities and to ensure we give the best of care and service to our clients whilst operating a sustainable and compliant organisation.

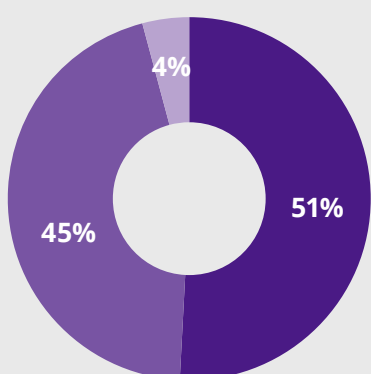
The Board of Directors also consider the need to provide against any future income shortfall and allow funds to be available to support service developments. The reserves are reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee as part of a review and assessment of the organisation's risks.

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.



Income

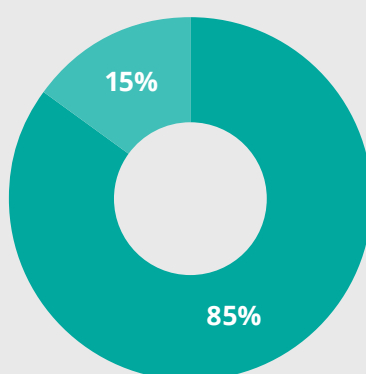


Donations & Legacies -- **51%**

State Funding ----- **45%**

Other ----- **4%**

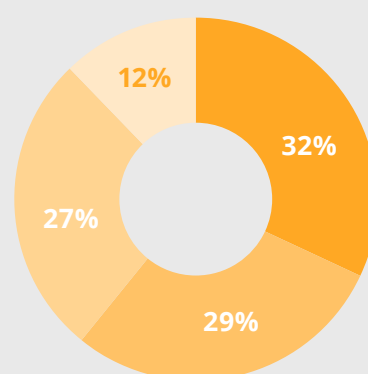
Expenditure



Charitable Activities -- **85%**

Raising Funds & Advocacy ----- **15%**

Services Expenditure



Addiction Services --- **32%**

Homeless Services --- **29%**

Primary Health Care -- **27%**

Counselling ----- **12%**

Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of financial activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Designated Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Designated Funds 2022 €	Unrestricted Funds 2022 €	Restricted Funds 2022 €	Total Funds 2022 €
Income from:									
Charitable activities	4	-	-	6,897,342	6,897,342	-	-	5,939,657	5,939,657
Donations and legacies	5	-	5,687,698	2,199,296	7,886,994	-	6,798,344	844,753	7,643,097
Other incoming resources	6	-	216,837	523,031	739,868	-	160,310	801,715	962,025
Total Income		-	5,904,535	9,619,669	15,524,204	-	6,958,654	7,586,125	14,544,779
Expenditure on:									
Charitable activities	7	395,327	2,669,239	7,718,916	10,783,481	53,808	2,570,606	6,333,425	8,957,839
Raising funds and Advocacy	8	78,812	1,861,116	-	1,939,928	-	1,801,892	-	1,801,892
Total Expenditure		474,139	4,530,355	7,718,916	12,723,409	53,808	4,372,498	6,333,425	10,759,731
Net income/ (expenditure) before taxation and transfers	10	(474,139)	1,374,180	1,900,753	2,800,794	(53,808)	2,586,156	1,252,700	3,785,048
Taxation	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer between funds	18	(545,272)	-	545,272	-	2,417,298	(2,417,298)	-	-
Net income/ (expenditure) Other recognised gains		(1,019,411)	1,374,180	2,446,025	2,800,794	2,363,490	168,858	1,252,700	3,785,048
Actuarial gain in respect of the pension scheme	17	-	(5,644)	-	(5,644)	-	(2,051)	-	(2,051)
Net movement in funds		(1,019,411)	1,368,536	2,446,025	2,795,150	2,363,490	166,807	1,252,700	3,782,997
Reconciliation of funds									
Total funds brought forward	18	13,190,230	899,527	6,692,222	20,781,980	10,826,740	732,720	5,439,523	16,998,983
Total funds carried forward	18	12,170,819	2,268,064	9,138,247	23,577,130	13,190,230	899,527	6,692,223	20,781,980

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year.

Molly's Story: MQI Client

MQI client Molly shares her experience and expresses how thankful she is for the support she received in Jane's Place, MQI's women's only service. Molly wrote the following letter detailing how Jane's place gave her back her confidence and her voice.

“ To everyone who's helped Jane's Place, thank you. Sitting down to write this to you, I can't help but think of the first day I came to Jane's Place. I was a complete wreck, a shadow of myself. My confidence had been shattered, my voice had been taken from me. I was so scared, I couldn't even speak about what had happened to me, I certainly wouldn't have been able to write this to you, but everything changed when I walked through that door into Jane's Place. The first person I met; she made me feel so welcome. She was warm and kind and caring. Her smile just lifted me.

I knew I was safe at last because Jane's Place is for women only, there was no chance of bumping into my ex. I didn't have to keep looking over my shoulder. Just being there, in peace and safety was a break from the constant worry.

My key worker has been absolutely amazing, I tell you. She's supported me in every way you could think of. I've found my voice again, I've done things I never thought I'd be able to do.

Like speaking up in court, against my abuser. That was huge for me, or having the confidence to make a housing claim with the council, so now I have a little place of my own.

I've got friends here too, such a supportive and loving group of women. I know what I'm worth now and my ex will never be able to take that away from me. I've even started playing music again and singing.

I feel like I can live again and think about the future. I'm looking forward to what the next day brings, not dreading it.

It's a long way from that day when I first came to Jane's Place. For all the kindness and help I've got over the last year, I'll be forever grateful to you.

Thank you for supporting Jane's Place and thank you for helping me. I really don't know what I would've done without you.

Molly

”



MQI Nationwide

MQI operates across multiple locations throughout the Republic of Ireland.

Dublin Based Services

Head Office,
Merchants Court,
24 Merchants Quay,
Dublin 8

Riverbank Open Access Service,
13/14 Merchants Quay,
Dublin 8

Jane's Place Women's Service,
28 Denzille Lane,
Dublin 2

Residential Rehab,
High Park, Drumcondra,
Dublin 9

Aftercare & Drug-Free Day Programme,
St. John Bosco Youth Centre,
Davitt Road, Dublin 12

Regional Services

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

Aftercare Housing,
Leixlip,
Co. Kildare

Northeast Family Support Service,
Dundalk Co. Louth
(Louth and Meath services)

Community Recovery & Integration Supports (CRIS) Project,
Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow

Open Door,
Payne's Lane, Athlone,
Co. Westmeath

Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service,
The Tanyard, Tullamore,
Co Offaly (Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath)

CAMDAS Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services,
Farnham Road, Drumnavanagh,
Co. Cavan

Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services,
Mullaghmatt, Co. Monaghan

Irish Prisons Addiction Support Services:

Mountjoy Prison,
Dublin 7

Dóchas Prison Centre,
Dublin 7

Cloverhill Remand Prison,
Dublin 22

Wheatfield Prison,
Dublin 22

Cork Prison,
Co. Cork

Limerick Prison,
Co. Limerick

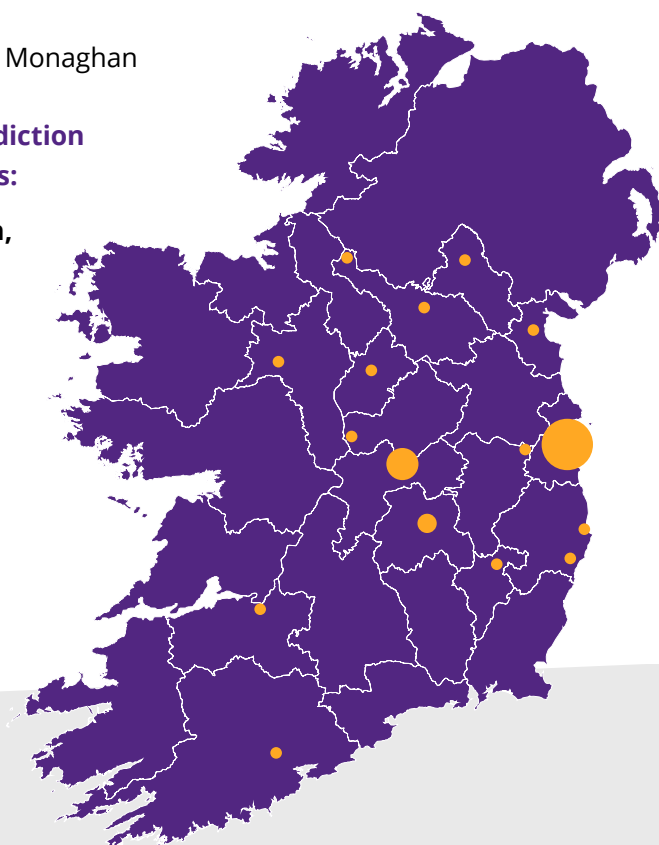
Portlaoise Prison,
Co. Laois

Midlands Prison,
Co. Laois

Castlerea Prison,
Co. Roscommon

Shelton Abbey,
Co. Wicklow

Loughan House,
Cavan



Jim's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Jim shares his experiences of addiction, and the support he received from MQI's St. Francis Farm, on his journey to recovery.

“ Just before I came to MQI, my life was over. Genuinely, that's the truth. Then I said to myself, 'Stop this now. You're pushing 40, and you've a young fella who needs you.'

I missed so many of my son's birthdays and I really didn't know how to talk to him. When I first came to MQI, I couldn't talk, I just didn't know how to. I wasn't myself. The drugs had taken a hold of me.

I tried to get drug free before, but I didn't finish the programme. I was going to leave again. But one of the counsellors sat me down. He asked me to think back to where I was a couple of months ago. Then, to think about where I would be if I left. What I will lose out on, like my son. I wouldn't have my ma or my sister back in my life. I felt better after telling him. I realised; I was just having a few bad days. I learned that talking about the things that are bothering you, makes you feel so much better. I'm so glad I stayed; it could have been a disaster.

When I first came here to the Farm from the detox unit, I felt awkward and uncomfortable. At the start of the group sessions, I wondered, 'Jeez what are these people thinking?' I wasn't comfortable at all and the voice inside my head was telling me not to say certain things, to hold back. But once I got going, I realised I'm not on my own. We all gave each other feedback.

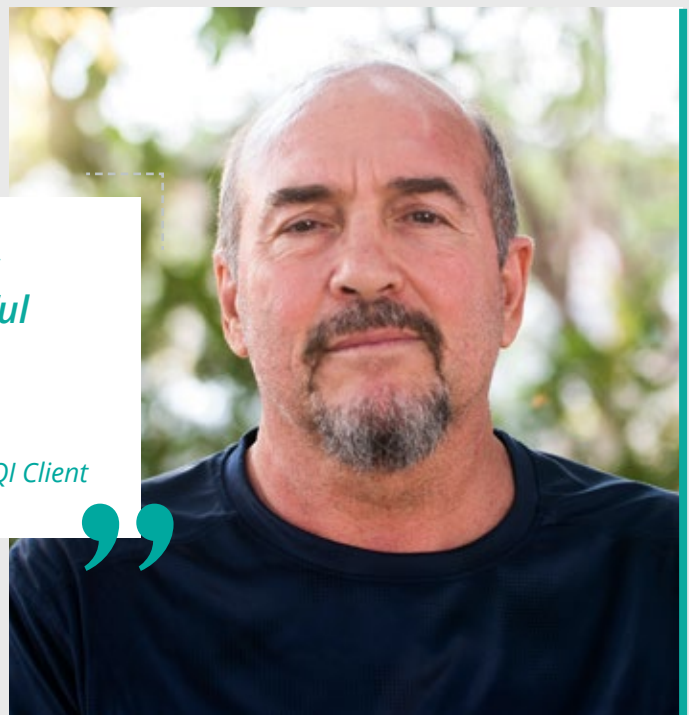
It's all about exploring your emotions and feeling part of the group. So, you learn how to get along with people, and you learn how to sit with yourself. I liked working on the farm. I found that I could just sit sowing plants and my head wouldn't run away with me.

When I was in St. Francis Farm, I would Facetime him, once every two weeks. I would stay on the phone to him for half an hour and just listen and let him talk. I didn't have a relationship with him before I came to the farm. He said 'Dad, I just want you to focus on yourself and keep well. No matter how long it takes. We will have lots of other birthdays.' That really touched me. I felt bad, but as time goes on, I can see that he just wants the best for me. I want to make all those missed birthdays up to him. In fact, I made something for him for his 18th birthday. I burned a message onto wood, drilled a hole and put a little clock in it. It's another new skill I learned at MQI and he really liked it.

MQI has helped me so much, I see things clearly now, and I have a lot to be grateful for. I don't want the life I had anymore, I want a different life now.

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Jim, MQI Client





Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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.

Get in touch



info@mqi.ie



Services: 01 524 0160

Donations: 01 524 0139



24 Merchants Court,
Merchants Quay, Dublin 8



www.mqi.ie



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I am looking forward to the rest of my life and I want to thank everyone in MQI, and everyone who supports MQI, for what they've done for me.

Thomas, MQI Client

