



# Merchants Quay Ireland

*A Community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice*

## Annual Review 2003

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The Merchants Quay Project is a company limited by guarantee.

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# Contents

	<i>Page No</i>
<b>Directors Review</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vision and Mission</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Drug Use</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Services for Drug Users</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Open Access Drugs Services</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>Structured Support Services</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Drug Free Treatment Services</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Services for Homeless Persons</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Open Access Homeless Services</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Structured Support Services</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Settlement and Integration Services</i>	<b>13</b>
<b>Shared Services</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Vocational Training &amp; Work Programmes</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>Research, Training, Social Policy and Communications</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>Finance, Fundraising, Administrative &amp; Human Resources</i>	<b>16</b>
<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Thank You</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Publications List</b>	<b>20</b>

# Directors Review

**F**OR MERCHANTS QUAY IRELAND 2003 proved to be yet another very busy year. In our drugs services we saw almost 4,000 individual drug users, of whom over six hundred were new presenters. We also worked more than one thousand homeless people meeting basic needs for food, social support, and basic health care and supporting people to access a bed for the night or permanent accommodation. This level of continued problem drug use and homelessness is a clear indication that the situation is extremely serious. While the development of the National Drug Strategy and the Homeless Action Plans has made an impact on these problems serious deficits in service provision remain to be addressed. In the most recent assessment of homelessness in Dublin (2002) 723 individuals reported being homeless for more than three years, the majority of them single men, and there remain significant gaps in meeting the day time care needs of this group in terms of support and training. In the drugs arena almost seven thousand heroin users remain outside of the treatment net, extensive waiting lists still exist and in particular the promised increase in services targeted at active drug users such as needle exchange at local level have simply not been delivered.

The people coming to Merchants Quay, are real people with real lives who are seeking our assistance and support in dealing with a myriad of issues that impact negatively on their lives.

The National Drugs Strategy promised a substantial expansion of services but development now appears to have ground to a halt. Throughout 2003 the Health Boards had a moratorium on the initiation and development of new projects while voluntary sector budgets were not increased in line with inflation which means we have had to deal with real cutbacks. Against this backdrop questions must be asked about the extent of the Government's commitment to the National Drug Strategy. While the new Homeless Action Plan for Dublin is ambitious and welcome in its scope it remains to be seen whether adequate resources will be made available on an ongoing basis to ensure the elimination of homelessness by 2010 as the plan envisages.

At Merchants Quay Ireland we remain firmly committed to continue working to the best of our ability to help people out of homelessness and to assist people experiencing drug problems. In this regard in 2003 we began the process of developing a new strategic plan for the organisation for the next three years. The overall theme of the plan is one of consolidation and building for the future. One of our key strategic aims is to work in collaboration with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to enhance the range of services for drug users and homeless people. We are particularly aware of the needs of homeless drug users and intend to become involved in the direct provision of supported housing to this group. We are conscious that homelessness and drug problems are now not just a Dublin issue and we are keen to promote the development of innovative and cutting edge services around the country drawing on our experience as one of the largest voluntary drugs and homeless services in Ireland.

We have identified quality management as a clear priority over the next three years. In moving this commitment forward we are going to ensure that we are meeting the standards outlined in Putting People First and Quality in Alcohol and Drugs Services (QuADS) over the course of the next three years. These standards apply not just to direct client services but also in the areas of finance, communications, human resources and administration.

I believe that this plan will help us to continue to make a significant contribution to improving the opportunities and options for homeless people and for drug users. Merchants Quay Ireland is committed to playing its part and working in partnership with other voluntary and statutory agencies to address the issues of homelessness and problem drug use in Ireland. The problems of drug use and homelessness are solvable and preventable. The Government has developed some positive strategies and action plans to address these issues. It is now time for the Government to match its strategies, its promises and its rhetoric with the resources, the imagination and the commitment necessary to transform the lives of drug users and of homeless people.

*Tony Geoghegan*  
Director

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# Merchants Quay Ireland

**M**ERCHANTS QUAY IRELAND IS A NATIONAL VOLUNTARY AGENCY providing services for homeless people and for drug users. Our two companies (Merchants Quay Project and Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives) are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee. Merchants Quay Ireland is an organisation that is to the fore in providing creative and innovative responses to the drugs and homeless problems in Ireland. Our original clients were those who were excluded from and had difficulty fitting into the existing services of the day. It was these clients that provided the impetus for establishing our services and their expression of needs has been instrumental in shaping our programmes.

## Vision

We look forward to a society where nobody is without a place to call home and where the incidence of drug related harm is greatly reduced and the range and quality of drugs services is maximized.

## Our Mission

Merchants Quay Ireland is a community of hospitality, hope and justice. We seek to:

- ◆ Work for justice and opportunity for those who are excluded in partnership with those who share our aims
- ◆ Create a place of safety, compassion and welcome for all who enter our doors and offer high quality services to meet their needs
- ◆ Remain committed to supporting all who work in Merchants Quay to enable us to achieve our full potential in our various roles
- ◆ Believe in and cherish the value of every human being in keeping with our commitment to social justice coming from our origins in the Franciscan Tradition.

## Guiding Principals

- ◆ **Quality services for drug users and homeless people:** We believe that drug users and homeless people should be treated with dignity and respect and this should be manifested in the provision of services of the highest quality.
- ◆ **Emphasis on low threshold services for the most marginalized:** It is our aim to minimise the barriers that people experience in accessing any of our services, and to welcome people who find it hard to fit into services elsewhere.
- ◆ **Providing progression pathways in our services for clients:** We recognise that the needs of drug users and homelessness people occur across a continuum from crisis to settlement and integration and we seek to provide services to assist people across this spectrum.
- ◆ **Cutting edge:** What is accepted as best practice today will very often have been considered radical even five years ago. We are committed to continually exploring new interventions and approaches to address the needs of our service users.
- ◆ **Client involvement:** We seek to acknowledge and engage the experience of service users in the review and development of our programmes. To this end we have initiated client forums which meet regularly to look at client needs and comment on our services.
- ◆ **Valuing our staff:** We are committed to valuing our staff and seek to build a workplace that is both supportive of staff and committed to their professional development.
- ◆ **Prudent financial management:** Merchants Quay Ireland is committed to operating within modern professional and prudent financial principals and practices.
- ◆ **Partnership:** We consistently seek to work in partnership with other bodies and agencies to promote the interests of those who rely on our services.

## Drug Use

*There are an estimated  
14,452 heroin users in Ireland*

**D**RUG USE IS A MAJOR ISSUE IN IRELAND. The most widely used drugs are alcohol, used by 74% of Irish adults and tobacco used by 33% of adults and these drugs are associated with many problems. Illegal drug use in Ireland is dominated by cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin. Without doubt heroin is the drug associated with the greatest acute harm to individuals, communities and families. Heroin is used by an estimated 14,452 persons in Ireland, more than 12,000 of these person are living in the Dublin region and heroin users account for more than 90% of those presenting at our drugs services.

Heroin is a powerful painkiller made from morphine and in its pure form is a white powder, but heroin on sale on the streets of Ireland is usually brown. Heroin is used for its (initially) pleasurable effects. The effect is usually to give a feeling of warmth, relaxation and detachment with a lessening of anxiety. Effects start quickly and can last several hours but this varies with how much is taken and how the drug is taken. In Ireland two thirds of heroin users inject and about one third smoke the drug.

Health Risks associated with heroin use include death by overdose, HIV / hepatitis Infection and damage to veins and arteries as a result of sharing infected injecting equipment. Hepatitis C and HIV occur in high proportions among injecting drug users as a result of unsafe injecting practices and needle sharing. Between 52% and 89% of intravenous drug users are estimated to be hepatitis C positive. It is estimated that injecting heroin users have 20 to 30 times higher risk of death than others of the same age (EMCDDA, 1997) yet drug related deaths are highly preventable.

- ◆ Not all those who use drugs experimentally or recreationally will become problematic drug users. However, those who are already troubled and marginalized are at particular risk.
- ◆ Heroin users often use a range of other drugs including – benzodiazepines, alcohol, methadone...these can cause many additional problems.
- ◆ Heroin use has traditionally been confined to Dublin. This is no longer the case. In the past few years treatment clinics have been established to deal with heroin use in Galway, Waterford, Athlone, Portlaoise, Carlow, Tullamore, Drogheda and many other towns.
- ◆ The link between poverty, social exclusion and drug use has been recognised both in Ireland and abroad. Problem drug use is particularly prevalent in areas with high levels of poverty, unemployment, insecure housing or homelessness, early school leaving, crime and urban neglect. Development of drugs problems in adolescence is also associated with childhood trauma a significant number of drug users in treatment report they were physically or sexually abused as children .
- ◆ Drug use is both cause and effect of homelessness -It is a contributing factor in over 28% of households becoming homeless. Homeless drug users are more likely to use more drugs, more often and less safely than their settled counterparts.
- ◆ Of the estimated 14,000 heroin users in Ireland just over half are on Methadone Treatment Programmes. Another 200 may be involved in drug free treatment programmes at any one time.
- ◆ Almost 7,000 heroin users remain outside of any treatment services.

# Services for Drug Users

## Open Access Drugs Services

As the name implies, these are a range of services that can be accessed by drug users simply by walking in from the street. Because of our city centre location we are often the first place to which drug users' turn for help.

In 2003 our Open Access services for Drug Users and our Faightu service for homeless persons came together under a single manager to ensure greater efficiency and better co-ordination between these two services. Our Open Access Drugs Service include:

**Needle Exchange –Health Promotion Unit:** In an ideal world people would never take drugs. If they did take drugs they would stop using as soon as they realised that drugs could cause harm. In reality many people do use drugs and when they try to stop they find that it's not so easy. Most drug users' worry about the harm their drug use can cause and are keen to do what they can to minimise such harm – we provide drug users with information about the risks associated with drug use and the means to minimise such risks. We also offer drug users a pathway into treatment and the possibility of living life without drugs. In our Needle exchange and health promotion service our main focus is on HIV and hepatitis prevention, promoting safer injecting techniques, promoting safer sex, providing information on polydrug use including overdose risks and offering early referral to drug treatment services.

**Table 1. Attendance at HPU between 2001 and 2003.**

	2001	2002	2003
<b>Total Visits</b>	20,262 M:16,767 F:3,495	24,058 M:19,727 F:4,331	26,181 M:22,596 F:3,585
<b>Regular Clients</b>	2,965 M:2,372 F:593	3,164 M:2,594 F:570	3,331 M:2,698 F:633
<b>New Clients</b>	683 M:550 F:133	678 M:570 F:108	616 M:513 F:103

**Crisis Contact Service:** Many of the drug users who come to us are in crisis. Some have become homeless; others have financial problems or are in trouble with the law. Relationship or family breakdown is an issue for many people. We offer drug users practical help in getting through such difficulties – by providing advice and information, through referral to other relevant services or by simply being there accompanying them to court or visiting people in prison.

**Women's Project:** Since 1998 MQI has been providing a specialised service targeted at vulnerable female drug users. The Women's Project offers one to one support, weekly group support and targeted advice.

**Outreach Service:** The aim of this service is to allow us make contact with drug users not engaged with services and to make referrals to Merchants Quay Ireland services as well as to other external agencies. In 2003 the outreach team contacted vulnerable drug users on the street, collected used needles and syringes and also liased with local community groups, the police, Dublin Corporation and others.

**Family Support Group:** The Family Support Group meets every week and provides a forum where parents, and other close relatives and friends of drug users are offered support and advice on a range of issues. The participants also provide support for each other; the group is continually open to new members joining. The Family Support Group is linked to the Citywide Family Support Network and this forum offers an opportunity to raise issues at a national level.

**Prison Visiting:** Merchants Quay Ireland endeavours to continue working with clients within the prison system. We offer support, advice and counselling with a particular focus on accessing appropriate post-release options. This process entails a close working arrangement with the probation and welfare service and with members of the legal profession.

## Structured Support Services

### *Stabilisation Day Services*

These services offer the first steps away from crisis drug use and towards stability. These are aimed at people who are currently using street drugs, or those recently engaged in treatment and seeking more stability and structure in their lives.

Services include:

***Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support*** - a drug substitution therapy which helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use – The 30 clients on this programme made an average of 160 visits per month

***Supportive Day Programmes*** offering therapeutic groups, life skills training, personal development work and pre-employment training to help drug users to reintegrate into society.

***Links with the City of Dublin VEC*** allow us to include a strong educational component in our stabilisation services, which is of considerable importance in addressing the educational disadvantage experienced by so many of our clients. The 18 participants on this programme made an average of 166 visits per month

***The Gateway Programme*** offers a bridge between crisis services and stabilisation services. This Programme provides one to one support linked to a range of leisure and learning opportunities. The aim is to encourage clients to examine alternatives to drug use. The programme offers access to more structured treatment, education and training.

***One-to-one Counselling*** assists clients availing of the Stabilisation Day Services to deal with emotional and psychological issues relating to their drug use. An average of 35-40 clients received one-to-one counselling each month. Relationship and bereavement support is a key part of this service.

## Drug Free Treatment Services

Our Drug Free Treatment Services aim at providing easily accessible treatment for drug users who wish to become drug free. Clients can be self referred or may be referred from a wide variety of agencies across the country.

### *High Park Residential Programme*

This is a 17 week fully residential programme designed to help participants to become and remain drug free. The programme is a low threshold programme that seeks to attract clients who might not otherwise engage in drug free treatment such as homeless drug users and female drug users. The emphasis is on assisting clients to gain insight into the issues which underpin their drug use and developing realistic measures to prevent relapse. The High Park programme offers individual care plans, which where necessary incorporate in-house detoxification in partnership with community GPs, individual counselling, group therapy, educational groups, work assignments and recreational activities.

A total of 63 people entered the High Park programme in 2003, 31 men and 32 women. The proportion of women attending at 52% is much higher than on other treatment programmes. The service also managed to engage a high number of homeless drug users, 17 (27%) of the 63 admitted were homeless at the time.

Of the 63 participants 16 needed assistance to complete their detox, which were successfully completed by 13 (81%). 20% of all those admitted to High Park managed to successfully complete the full programme.

### *St. Francis Farm*

This is a therapeutic facility which offers a long-term programme of six to twelve months duration for people with a history of problematic drug use. Our objectives are:

- ◆ To provide a safe drug free environment where clients can adjust to life without drugs and make positive choices about their future
- ◆ To afford clients the opportunity to explore the reasons for their drug use and learn more effective coping mechanisms.

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- ◆ To provide former drug users with access to training and education as a means to gaining employment.
  - ◆ To enable clients to develop their individual, social and interpersonal skills.

The programme covers areas of Relapse Prevention, One to One Counselling, Group Therapy, Self Esteem Seminars, Assertiveness Training, Anger Management, Farm Training, Literacy Skills, and Computer Skills Training ( ECDL). Clients also receive training in Emergency First Aid and in Life Skills and Budgeting. In addition clients are offered the opportunity to participate in Yoga classes and reflexology and a fortnightly spirituality workshop

***Farmway Social Economy Project:*** What makes St. Francis Farm unique is the fact that our programme is situated in a working farm environment. Clients gain work experience in animal care, vegetable production, and in general farming. In 2003 with the support of FAS we established the Farm as a Social Economy Project run along business lines. This development allowed our residents to gain practical experience of working as part of a business enterprise.

The St. Francis Farm programme had 27 participants in 2003, 8 women (average age 25) and 19 men (average age 29). Fourteen residents moved on, with support from the staff team, after completing their individual care plan. Three clients self discharged and four were asked to leave. A further six were due to complete the programme in 2004.



# Homelessness

*More than 5,500 people in Ireland have nowhere they can call home*

**T**HE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT estimated that 5,581 individuals were homeless in Ireland during one week in March 2002. This compares to 2,501 homeless during the same period in 1996. 4,060 of these were in Dublin, where 723 had been homeless for more than three years. 312 of those surveyed in Dublin said they were sleeping rough with the remainder staying in emergency or insecure accommodation.

## Why are so many homeless?

- ◆ Housing has become increasingly unaffordable – house prices and rent increased substantially between 1996 and 2003.
- ◆ Local authority housing in the past provided a safety net that prevented poor people from becoming homeless. In 2002 there were a total of 102,000 local authority houses in Ireland. There were 48,000 households on the waiting lists for such housing.
- ◆ A number of people who resided in psychiatric hospitals or other institutions became homeless on discharge.
- ◆ Eviction from housing, in the public and private sector, whether for reasons of anti-social behaviour or non payment of rent is a cause of homelessness for some.
- ◆ Increased incidence of family breakdown also has an impact on levels of homelessness. Between 18% and 40% of homeless people say this was a cause of their homelessness

## Who becomes homeless?

- ◆ In Dublin last year 2,920 adults and 1,140 children were homeless.
- ◆ The numbers of families with children who are homeless had increased to 25% of all homeless households identified.
- ◆ Lone parents account for two-thirds of homeless households with children. 94% of lone parents are women.
- ◆ The number of children who were homeless has increased by almost 15% to 1,140.

## Homelessness and health

Irish and British research shows that homeless people are more likely than their housed counterparts to suffer from arthritis, heart disease, tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, problems with bones and joints, eye and ear complaints, epilepsy, skin problems and injuries from accidents and assaults. In one study it was found that 66% of homeless people experienced at least one physical or psychiatric problem (1997)

The incidence of drug taking among homeless people in Dublin is high with surveys showing figures for drug dependency ranging from 25% to 45% . Drug dependence rises steadily the longer a person remained homeless. Irish research shows that up to 50% of homeless children are at risk of contracting a number of infectious diseases because of incomplete or no immunization and only 50% attended their 9 month check up. Homeless Children are also known to present more often with acute and chronic illness such as respiratory and gastro intestinal problems, hearing problems and skin conditions and often suffer accidental injuries and burns



Neill Jordan poses for photos before the premier of his film "The Good Thief"



Shades of Praise Gospel Choir in action

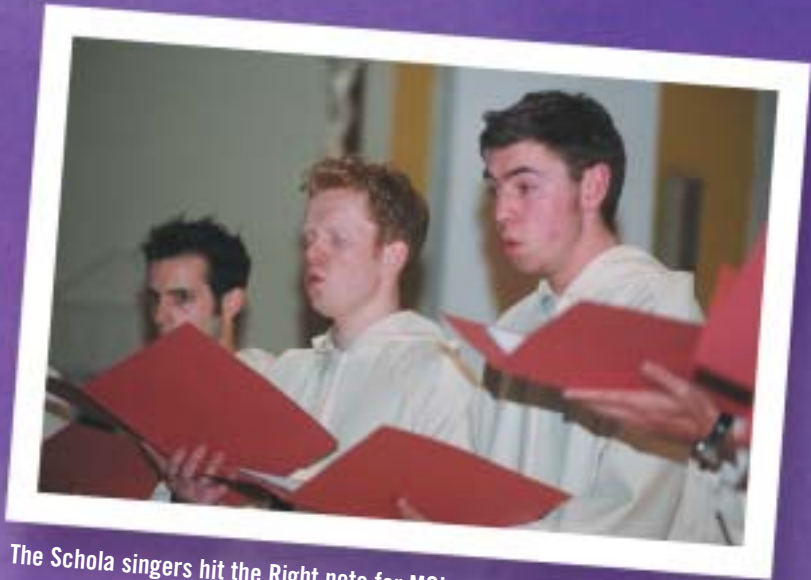


Stephen Rea Shares a joke with Fr. Phillip Forker and Tony Geoghegan



In The Can – A Big Turnout for the Short Film made by users of the Merchants Quay Ireland Homeless Services





The Schola singers hit the Right note for MQI



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, with Tony Geoghegan at the launch of last years Annual Review



Gone to the Dogs – A fundraising night at the Shelbourne Track



Some of the younger Shades of Praise Gospel Choir enthusiasts!



Stars in Their Eyes..Aisling Crawford, Fr. Phillip Forker OFM and Mary O'Shea at the premier of "The Good Thief"

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# Services for Homeless Persons

## Open Access Homeless Services

### *The Drop-in Centre (Faitiu)*

The aim of the Drop-in Service is to provide a “one stop shop” offering a range of interlinked services meeting the key daytime needs of homeless persons with the twin purpose of minimising harm associated with life on the streets and offering clear pathways towards settlement and reintegration. Our Cook Street Centre is open seven days a week from 7a.m. to 5p.m. with shorter hours at weekends. There were 57,698 visits to this centre in 2003 this is an increase of 7% on 2002.

The services we provide for homeless people from this centre are as follows:

**Information, Advice and Crisis Support Service:** This drop-in service includes assessment of clients’ needs, advice and information on health, social welfare, emergency accommodation, long-term housing and other issues. This service provides information for homeless persons. In 2003, 870 people accessed this service and approximately 7,500 supportive interventions with clients of our homeless service took place. 80% of service users were male and 20% were female. Interventions include key working sessions, referrals to emergency accommodation, social work services, medical services and income support services, help in contacting friends or family, access to drug treatment and support in a variety of other matters. Dublin Simon Outreach Team link in with this service on a weekly basis. Of the 870 clients of this service, 235 agreed to have their information shared on the LINKS system – a computerised database that allows co-ordinated working between different homeless services under the auspices of the Homeless Agency.

**Meals Service:** homeless persons are offered two meals a day (breakfast and lunch). 36,241 meals were provided in 2003 – 13,528 breakfasts and 22,713 lunches. Breakfast typically consisted of Cereals, Toast and Tea or Coffee. A cooked breakfast is available from 2004. Lunch consists of Soup, Sandwiches, Tea, Coffee and Cakes (when available). On Sunday a full three course hot meal is provided. 84% of persons using the meals service were male and 16% were female.

**Primary Health Care Service:** MQI is working in partnership with the South Western Area Health Board in providing a primary health care service for homeless people. The service has a dentist, nurses, a counsellor and other health professionals. A general practitioner and a chiropodist begin working with this service in 2004.

**Nursing:** In 2003 there was a total of 2,127 nursing interventions or 177 per month. This is 427 (25%) more than in 2002. Issues dealt with on an ongoing basis included abscesses, leg ulcers, cuts and wounds, skin rashes and burns. As well as providing direct nursing care, the primary health care nurse also makes numerous referrals to hospitals and to other health care professionals.

**Counselling:** Homelessness is often associated with severe stresses and difficulties in life, and it is not surprising that many people find it hard to cope. The Counselling Service for homeless people works at two levels – firstly providing a brief crisis counselling service targeted at clients in distress and secondly offering medium to long-term counselling by appointment. In addition we provide group support for homeless clients attending our day programmes. In 2003 an average of 8 clients per month availed of medium to long term counseling and dozens of others benefited from once off interventions.

## Structured Support Services

### *Personal Development Opportunities*

These are focused on both learning and leisure and incorporate such topics as personal development, holistic therapies, life skills training, gardening and women’s support groups. One-to-one literacy tuition is also provided as is a FETAC/NCVA Foundation Level Communications and Mathematics course. The Catering Training Programme (see below) also offers work training for homeless persons

## Settlement and Integration Services

The aim of this service is to assist homeless people to settle and integrate into local communities.

### *Settlement*

The Settlement Service is delivered to those seeking to move away from being homeless and we actively seek to include those who have a history of drug and alcohol problems. In this regard we find that those participating on a stabilisation programme or a controlled drinking programme or who have become free of problem drug or alcohol use are more likely to settle. We work with homeless people from a variety of settings - rough sleeping, hostels, B&B's, short-term arrangements with friends/families and transitional and supported accommodation.

We use assessment interviews, individual support plans, one-to-one key working sessions, group support, personal development and life skills training, advocacy and pre and post settlement support to assist our service users to find, access, and sustain long-term appropriate accommodation.

During the settlement process the main issues being addressed with clients are accessing interim and long term accommodation, family relationships, money management, counselling, legal matters, and employment.

In 2003 we worked with 180 service users, compared to 108 in 2002. In 2003 84 service users experienced a positive and planned move towards settlement (either long-term or transitional) compared to 72 in 2002. In addition we observed other factors which indicated that service users were moving towards social inclusion - increased use of services such as money advice services and counselling, improved relationships with family members and friends and a return to employment, education or vocational training. The settlement team started using the LINKs system (a computerised database that allows co-ordinated working between different homeless services under the auspices of the Homeless Agency) in the last Quarter of 2003 and to date they have inputted information on 60 service users onto this system.

The settlement team also offered one-to-one support to twenty participants on the catering vocational training programme at Merchants Quay.

### *The Integration Programme*

This innovative programme offers transitional accommodation to drug users who find themselves homeless after completing residential drug treatment. The programme aims at assisting the integration of former drug users into mainstream society by providing opportunities for those who had drug or alcohol problems to participate in group and one-to-one therapeutic sessions and activities. These clients have transitional accommodation in a house in the Dublin suburbs for a period of twelve weeks. During the first six weeks they participate in a programme which includes relapse prevention, life skills, vocational/career choices and group support. During the remaining weeks they are encouraged to access employment, training and longer-term accommodation. Post-integration support is made available to all participants. In 2003 there were 18 residents in the house.

**Pre- and Post -Settlement Support:** Our settlement and integration service includes a pre-settlement support group and a drug free aftercare group particularly targeted at meeting the needs of persons with drug and alcohol problems.

An average of 6-8 people attended the aftercare group each week and 10-12 attended the pre settlement support group on a weekly basis.

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# Shared Services

## Vocational Training and Work Programmes

### *FAS – Community Employment Services*

MQI works in partnership with FAS to provide hands on training for prospective drugs workers and service users. This is done through a number of Community Employment (CE) projects based in our services. CE projects provide participants with skills that enable them to access permanent employment. In many cases our CE projects have often provided service users with their first experience of paid employment.

In 2003 a total of 120 persons participated in CE programmes at Merchants Quay Ireland.

### *Catering Training Programme*

Merchants Quay Ireland, with assistance from FAS, Failte Ireland and the Homeless Agency, began a new programme focused on providing “on the job” training in hygiene, cookery, food service and life-skills at a practical level, primarily aimed at homeless adults and persons in recovery.

The Catering Training Programme services the main kitchen at Merchants Quay Ireland and the Kitchen in our drop in service for Homeless People.

A total of 20 persons participated in the programme in 2003 and 12 of these went on to gain the FETAC National Certificate in Culinary Skills through the auspices of Failte Ireland.

### *The Education Equality Initiative (EEI)*

Appropriate training and educational opportunities are central to the rehabilitation and integration of former and recovering drug users. In 2003 we were able to provide an easy access educational programme for 204 clients participating in our various services. We also recruited 57 participants for our drugs awareness training programme aimed at community activists and health and educational professionals working in areas with high levels of problem drug use.

## Research, Training, Social Policy and Communications

### *Research Department*

The aim of this department is to increase the knowledge available on drug use, homelessness and related issues, to effectively evaluate the work of the organisation, to ensure that appropriate monitoring systems are in place and to take a leading role in developing highest quality standards across all of our services. In 2003:

- ◆ *We won a competitive tender from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs to carry out a major national study into “Drug Use Among Those Who Are Homeless”*
- ◆ *We carried out “An Investigation into the Health Status of Drug Using Men “(supported by the Health Research Board)*
- ◆ *We carried out an investigation into “Patterns of Cocaine Use among 100 Attendees at a Low Threshold Service in Dublin” (supported by the NACD)*
- ◆ *We also carried out an exploratory study of “Drug Use among New Communities in Ireland” (Supported by the NACD)*

We plan to publish findings of these pieces of research during the course of 2004.

### *Training*

The Training Department addresses the training needs of all workers, paid and voluntary, at MQI and offers a high quality training service to other agencies and interested individuals concerned about issues faced by drug users and homeless people.

External training courses included the following: -

- ◆ *MQI / University College Dublin: Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills* - This is a one year course accredited by University College Dublin. A total of 31 persons graduated in 2003.
- ◆ *MQI / University College Dublin: Diploma in Drugs Counselling and Intervention Skills* - 20 students graduated in 2003.
- ◆ *Drugs Awareness Course* - This introductory course assists people working in a variety of different settings to respond effectively to the needs of drug users. More than 200 persons took up this course in 2003.
- ◆ *Drugs Policy in Homeless Services* – This two-day course was delivered as part of the Homeless Agency training programme. It was designed for those with a leadership role in homeless services who wished to explore policy development in relation to drugs and drug use by service users.
- ◆ *Young People and Drugs* – This introductory course, delivered as part of the Homeless Agency Training Programme is designed for staff and volunteers whose work brings them into contact with young drug users at risk of problematic drug use
- ◆ *Drugs Awareness Training for FAS CE Supervisors* – Merchants Quay Ireland was asked by FAS to design, develop and deliver drugs awareness training for their Community Employment supervisors on a nationwide basis.
- ◆ *Methadone Awareness Programme* – delivered to prisoners engaged in methadone treatment at Mountjoy Prison in Dublin.

MQI also provided training for the Donegal Community Partnership, the South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force, St. Vincent's Trust, Community Technical Aid, UCD/St. John of God Psychiatric Nursing Course and others during the course of the year.

**Staff Training:** Staff availed of a range of both accredited and non-accredited training options aimed at assisting them in developing skills for working with homeless people and drug users in a wide variety of areas including Health and Safety in the Workplace, First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, a workshop on Crack Cocaine, Suicide & Self Harm, Issues in the Aftermath of Rape and Sexual Abuse, Anti Racism and Intercultural Training and, of course, Drugs Awareness.

Staff were also supported in accessing external training and education opportunities. These ranged from one-day workshops, international conferences to various Certificate and Diploma options.

Training for Managers in 2003 included Strategic Planning, Employment Equality and Staff Supervision.

### ***Social Policy and Communications***

In 2003 Merchants Quay Ireland supported measures to raise awareness of the issues of homelessness, problem drug use, poverty and social exclusion in a variety of forums most notably in policy oriented networks including the Voluntary Drug Treatment Network and the Voluntary Homeless Services Network. As part of the Community Platform we had a role in national partnership negotiations as part of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. We also have representation, through these networks, on a variety of Drug Task Forces, on the National Advisory Committee on Drugs, the National Aids Strategy Committee, the Homeless Agency and a variety of other similar bodies.

During 2003 we worked on the development and delivery of two national awareness campaigns the *Dealing with Drugs* Campaign in April and the *Dealing with Homelessness* Campaign in November. These campaigns aimed to highlight the damage and dangers associated with problem drug use and homelessness, to showcase the solutions that work and to encourage Government, business and the wider community to play their part in addressing these issues. Both campaigns used an extensive multimedia approach including billboards, posters, direct mail, radio, television, website and other media. The "Quay Issues" newsletter was produced quarterly during 2003 and included up to date news and information relevant to those working in MQI, our supporters and other organisations. The department also worked closely with the Research Department in the compilation of the research book "Pieces of the Jigsaw – Six Reports Addressing Homelessness & Drug Use in Ireland" for publication in 2004.

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## Finance, Fundraising, Administration and Human Resources

### *Finance*

Effective and prudent financial management continues to be a priority at MQI. It is essential that the financial resources of the organisation be managed so as to deliver the greatest level of quality services by achieving the best value for money.

The emphasis is on improving consistency and accountability across the organisation, integrating financial planning into overall strategic planning and providing high quality financial input into decision making at Merchant Quay Ireland.

### *Fundraising*

Merchants Quay Ireland's Fundraising Department responded to the economic downturn by building on ground work laid in the previous year.

In 2003 we saw a huge increase in the number of Fundraising Events which were held by and for MQI. This is a clear indication of the growing support for the work we do here and a growing understanding of the issues surrounding problem drug use and homelessness. Events included

- ◆ Irish Film Premier of "The Good Thief" by Neil Jordan.
- ◆ The "Stirring Stories" Art exhibition
- ◆ Shades of Praise Gospel Choir Concert (with NALA)
- ◆ Harold Cross Night at the Dogs
- ◆ Bank of Ireland Evening Charity Recital
- ◆ The Soroptomists Annual Golf Classic in the K Club
- ◆ 5 Chefs of Fingal Golf Classic in Portmarnock Golf Club
- ◆ Ladies Christmas Lunch in Diep Le Shaker Restaurant

We also had our first ever multi-media awareness campaigns – "Dealing with Drug Campaign" in April which ran for 2 weeks and a "Dealing with Homelessness Campaign" which was a one week long campaign just before Christmas. Both campaigns helped raise the awareness in the public eye of what Merchants Quay is all about and this in turn raised the amounts received through our Direct Mail Campaigns which ran alongside these two awareness campaigns. 2004 will see an increased focus on Direct Mail as a way of reaching our supporters and raising funds.

### *Administration*

Merchants Quay Ireland has a centralised administration office which provides an efficient and comprehensive service to the entire organisation. Services provided include diary management, mail management, typing, photocopying, document production, and a wide variety of other administrative tasks.

### *Human Resources*

In 2003 there were 75 full-time and 79 part-time staff including Community Employment trainees, providing a wide range of services at Merchants Quay Ireland. The HR Department which was established in 2002 works to ensure that the organisation has human resources policies that are in line with existing legislation and that achieve best practice in this area.

**Volunteers:** Volunteers have always been essential in the delivery of our services. In the early days the majority of staff were volunteers. Merchants Quay Ireland values the contribution and commitment that volunteers offer at all levels in the organisation. The organisation appreciates the invaluable contribution made by their experience, knowledge, skills, vitality, diversity and dedication.

Merchants Quay Irelands volunteers work with multi-disciplinary teams providing services to drug users, homeless people and their families. It is fulfilling and challenging work and all volunteers are offered supervision, support and a comprehensive training programme.

In 2003 41 volunteers assisted in the work of Merchants Quay Ireland and their continued support and dedication is greatly appreciated.



# Financial Report

**E**FFECTIVE AND PRUDENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT continues to be a priority at MQI. It is essential that the financial resources of the organisation be managed so as to deliver the greatest level of quality services by achieving the best value for money.

The emphasis is on improving consistency and accountability across the organisation, integrating financial planning into overall strategic planning and providing high quality financial input into decision making at Merchant Quay Ireland.

The accounts of Merchant Quay Ireland are summarised below. These accounts cover the activities of Merchant Quay Project Limited (MQP) and Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives Limited (FSJI). These companies relate broadly to the organisation's drug and homeless services respectively.

## *Income and Expenditure Accounts*

Total income and expenditure for MQP and FSJI for the year ending 31st December 2003 was as follows:

	MQP	FSJI	Total
	€ ,000	€ ,000	€ ,000
<b>Income</b>	3,016	1,505	4,521
<b>Less: Expenditure</b>	2,877	1,514	4,391
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>130</b>

**Income:** Income from statutory agencies represents more than 80% of the income of MQP and FSJI. The remaining income in these companies was raised from grants and donations from charitable trusts, from individuals, from the corporate sector and through other fundraising activities.

**Expenditure:** Wages and salaries represent 72% of total overhead expenditure. Remaining overhead expenditure is broadly in line with that in previous years.

**Balance Sheets:** The Balance Sheets of MQP and FSJI as at 31st December 2003 are set out as follows:

### **MQP — Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2003**

	<b>2003</b> €,000	<b>2002</b> €,000
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	747	651
Cash at Bank and on hand	173	1
	<u>920</u>	<u>652</u>
<i>Less:</i>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	(769)	(627)
	<u>(769)</u>	<u>(627)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>25</b>
Deferred Income	(43)	(122)
	<u>346</u>	<u>207</u>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	<u><b>346</b></u>	<u><b>207</b></u>

### **FSJI — Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2003**

	<b>2003</b> €,000	<b>2002</b> €,000
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	205	372
Cash at Bank and on hand	6	7
	<u>211</u>	<u>379</u>
<i>Less:</i>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	(149)	(235)
	<u>(149)</u>	<u>(235)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>144</b>
Creditors: amt falling due after one year	(92)	(155)
Deferred Income	(195)	(215)
	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	<u><b>3</b></u>	<u><b>12</b></u>

# Thank You

**W**E ACHIEVE OUR AIMS AND GOALS only with the continued support of the many kind persons who have sent us unsolicited and sometimes **anonymous** donations, and who respond to our Direct Mail Appeals. I wish to thank all those businesses who continually support us. Thanks also go to the **Ireland Funds** (particularly the Ireland Fund of Canada), the **Inner City Trust**, **Business in the Community** and **The Prince's Trust**, all of whom gave practical expression to their commitment to play their part in helping us to tackle the problems of drugs and homelessness in Ireland.

I want also to thank those many people who supported our various other fundraising ventures this year. **John Fanning** and **Fiona Scott** from **McConnells Advertising** deserve special thanks for their generosity during our "Dealing with Drugs" campaign at Easter. I wish also to thank **Mary O'Neill**, president of the **Soroptomists of North Kildare** who nominated Merchants Quay Ireland as one of the beneficiaries for their 9th Charity Golf Classic in the **K Club**. Thank you to Terry Keaney of **Keaney Insurance** who held a night at the Dogs in Harold Cross to raise funds for the Adam & Eve Church Roof Appeal. I also wish to thank all of the other contributors to that event especially **Gerry Cruz** of **Westguard Security** for supplying all the raffle prizes and helping to make the evening a success. **Neil Jordan** and all who helped organise the film premiere of "The Good Thief" also deserve our thanks for what turned out to be a marvellous evening. In addition, thank you to **Noel McComish** and **the 5 Chefs of Fingal** who held their Annual Golf Classic at Portmarnock Golf Links and donated half of the proceeds to Merchants Quay. The five chefs are **Aidan McManus** of **The King Scitric**, **Patsy McGuirk** of **Bon Appetit**, **Paul Lewis** of **The Old Schoolhouse**, **Eric Faussurier** of the **Osbourne** at the Portmarnock Hotel & Golf Club and **Terry McCoy** of the **Red Bank** in Swords. Thanks also goes to **Frankie & Harry Thuillier** for their ingoing support and generosity

There are so many people who continue to support us through providing help and services to us **Joe Whitaker**, **McInnes Photography**, **Ray McCann** from **GenPrint**, **Carmel White**, **Ger Nash** of **Montague PR**, **Ellen Lynch** of the **Bank of Ireland Arts Centre**, **Bob Jeffers** from **AIB Bank Tullow**, **Jane Pfeiffer**, **The Brennan Family Foundation**, **Brian Whelan**, **The Rathfarnham Lions Club** and **The Dublin Viking Rotary Club**.

I wish to thank our statutory funders: The Aids and Drugs Services and the Homeless Services of the **South Western Area Health Board**, the staff of **Dublin City Council** and the **Homeless Agency**, the **Blanchardstown**, **South Inner City** and **Clondalkin Local Drugs Task Forces** and the **National Drug Strategy Team**, the **FAS Community Services Section** at Jervis Street, **Faillte Ireland**, the Department of Justice's **Probation and Welfare Service** the **Department of Education**, the **Combat Poverty Agency**, and the **National Advisory Committee on Drugs**.

I wish to thank all of our **staff and volunteers** as well as those on our **Governing Body**, **Management Committee** and the many other groups and committees that ensure that our programme of work moves forward. Finally, and most importantly, a special thanks to **all persons who avail of our services** That so many choose to come to Merchants Quay and show such confidence in our services gives us all great encouragement.

*Tony Geoghegan*  
Director

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