

NOVAS

Housing | Health | Recovery

ANNUAL
REPORT
2014

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MICHAEL FLYNN,
Chairman

After a tenure of ten years sitting on Novas' Board of Directors and three as chair of the Board, it is now time resign this position.

In that period, Novas has expanded and evolved at an extraordinary rate to coincide with the changing landscape of homelessness in Ireland. From modest beginnings in Bridgeland House - an emergency accommodation service to support street drinkers in Limerick City - the organisation now has more than 20 services across six counties - Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Cork, Kerry and Dublin. The organisation has extended its remit from accommodation provision to holistic client support based on the three pillars of Housing, Health and Recovery. Providing accommodation alone is simply not enough. Homeless people require emotional and practical supports to recover from being homeless, to recover from physical and mental health issues and very often to recover from entrenched drug and alcohol addiction. However, providing a home for somebody makes the latter endeavours much easier. Recovery cannot happen without hope.

The management and staff of Novas has enabled the development of services through their vision, dedication and boundless energy to provide innovative and proactive services to the homeless population. For the last time, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the staff team for their commitment and passion. In five years, the number of people accessing our services has increased by more than 130%, this is possible because of you. You continue to give more so that the organisation can support more and more people on the margins of Irish society. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the volunteer team, including the Board of Directors, who give their time freely to support and enhance the work of the staff team.

THE ORGANISATION HAS EXTENDED ITS REMIT FROM ACCOMMODATION PROVISION TO HOLISTIC CLIENT SUPPORT BASED ON THE THREE PILLARS OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND RECOVERY.

2014 was another year of growth for the organisation. It was fantastic to witness the redevelopment of Brother Russell House and observe how the physical transformation ushered a deeper transformation among the residents, who were no longer considered homeless. The relocation of Bellevue House and the development of Haarlem Court apartments on the same site was also a wonderful occasion and highlighted the diversity of the organisation.

It is with a heavy heart that I hand over the seat of Chair, in the face of such a staggering crisis, as more and more families and single people than ever before face homelessness. However, I trust that my successor, the Board of Directors and the Senior Management Team, supported by the trusted staff team, will continue to lead the organisation in the development of innovative responses to the prevailing homeless crisis.



A NOTE FROM THE CEO

2014, although challenging in many ways, has been another progressive year for Novas and we are delighted that our services continued to expand.

From a capital perspective, Novas oversaw the development and completion of three major projects during the year; Brother Russell House in Limerick, Bellevue House and Haarlem Court in South County Dublin and The Abigail Women's Centre in North County Dublin. The combined capital cost of these three projects was €8.6m, completed within budget by years end.

MICHAEL GOULDING, Chief Executive Officer

Having moved from Mount Brown in December 2014, the 24 female residents could finally enjoy the privacy of their own room in the new Abigail Women's Centre. While there were some difficulties to begin with, the service has now bedded into the local Finglas community and as the only dedicated female service in the capital, provides a vital service for extremely marginalised women. In 2014, we also consolidated Bellevue Children's Home for unaccompanied minors. A bespoke service, we anticipate that it will support many young unaccompanied refugees entering the country in the coming months and years. On the same site we launched eight two-bed apartments for individuals and families with special needs including the elderly, formerly homeless families and children with disabilities. Finally, the clients of Brother Russell House moved into their new home in October 2014 and were overjoyed with this new purpose-built facility. I visited the scheme soon after it opened and a resident remarked that 'they promised us a home and they gave us a palace'. This is a memory that will stay with me for a long time and reinforces why we strive to improve the lives of homeless people.

From a financial perspective, 2014 brought a levelling of the harsh financial cuts of the previous half decade. While we experienced cuts for the sixth successive year, they were not excessive. We welcome the stabilisation of the sector in terms of funding, but considering the current demand on homeless services, we hope that funding will increase.

2014 was the second year when Approved Housing Bodies were formally regulated. While this posed some challenges, we broadly welcome the regulation as a means of instilling public confidence in our operation. We have a rigorous process of self-regulation, overseen by our Board of Directors. In 2012, the Board convened subgroups to support the increasing workload of the organisation. Each sub-group is steered by a board member and recommendations are brought back to the board for consideration. The five subgroups are; Governance, Health and Safety, Finance, Client Welfare and Property and Development. These have helped the organisation from a governance perspective, as they have enabled board members to gain a deeper insight into the operations of the organisation.

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR EXCELLENT STAFF WHO OFTEN WORK IN VERY DIFFICULT AND STRENUOUS ENVIRONMENTS.

I would like to pay tribute to our excellent staff who often work in very difficult and strenuous environments. It is ultimately our staff that make the organisation what it is and without their dedication and effort little would be achieved. They provide a service over a seven day period, 24 hours a day, to ensure our clients are in receipt of the best possible care. I wish to extend my deepest thanks to the staff team and to acknowledge that without their indomitable spirit and dedication, we could not do what we do. We could not have opened three new services during 2014 and made the transition a positive experience for clients. I would also like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers, for enhancing the work done by staff, none more so than our Board of Directors, who ensure that important fiduciary duties are carried out to the best of their ability.

Finally, as our report reveals, the number of clients availing of our services increased again in 2014. Novas put significant emphasis on the provision of long-term housing as a solution to this issue and during the year provided 41 long-term units of accommodation. We are very proud of this achievement and are working to continue this trend into the future.

TIMELINE

2002

BRIDGELAND HOUSE

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

2003

ARLINGTON LODGE

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

ST. PATRICK'S HILL

Long-term supported group home for formerly homeless men in Limerick City.

2005

BELLEVUE HOUSE

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

BROTHER STEPHEN RUSSELL HOUSE

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

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Preventative service working with families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Limerick City.

2006

KNOCKLEE HOUSE

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

OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

An out of hours service for people in Limerick City to access temporary and emergency accommodation.

DIAL SERVICE

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

2007

MOUNT BROWN

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

2008

PROSPECT HOUSE

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

2009

KILLEEN WOODS

Long-term supported accommodation in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

STREET OUTREACH

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

RESPIRE HOUSE

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

MCGARRY HOUSE*

Provision of temporary supported accommodation for homeless men and women in Limerick City.

2011

OLD GOLF LINKS ROAD

Long-term supported accommodation for older residents in peaceful one-floor setting in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

MITCHEL STREET

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

2012

MID-WEST COMMUNITY DETOX

Providing support and services to people wishing to detox from prescribed and non-prescribed medication in the Mid-West Region.

TENANCY SUPPORT AND SUSTAINMENT SERVICE

Securing accommodation and providing support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in West Cork.

MCGARRY HOUSE LONG-TERM SUPPORTED HOUSING

37 units of long-term supported housing in one, two and three-bed apartments.

2013

HOUSING FIRST LIMERICK

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

MILK MARKET LANE

Long-term unit of supported accommodation in Tralee.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

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

2014

HAARLEM COURT

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

BELLEVUE HOUSE

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

BROTHER RUSSELL HOUSE

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

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Development of an outreach mental health service under the auspice of Brother Russell House.

THE ABIGAIL WOMEN'S CENTRE

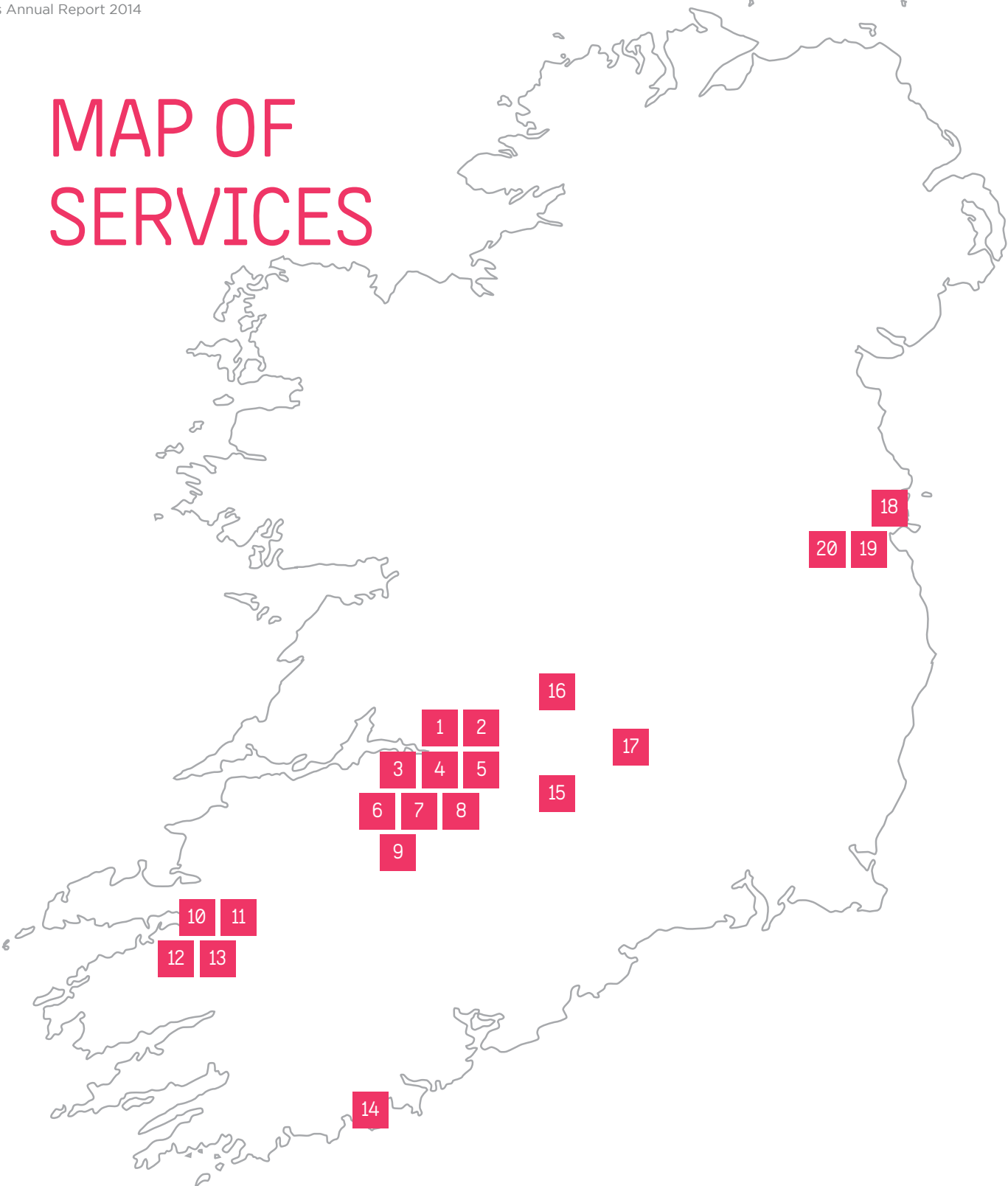
Relocation and redevelopment of our women's service (formerly Mount Brown) to accommodation up to 40 homeless women.

RESEARCH

Publication of HEADS UP – Preventing and Responding to Overdose in McGarry House.

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

MAP OF SERVICES



LIMERICK CITY

- 1 Street Outreach
- 2 McGarry House
- 3 Intensive Family Support Service
- 4 Brother Stephen Russell House
- 5 Housing First
- 6 DIAL House
- 7 Mid-West Community Detox
- 8 Out-of-Hours Service
- 9 St. Patrick's Hill Mental Health Services

TRALEE

- 10 Killeen Woods Homeless Accommodation
- 11 Knocklee House
- 12 Old Golf Links Road Homeless Accommodation
- 13 Arlington Lodge Homeless Accommodation

CORK

- 14 Tenancy Support and Sustainment Scheme

TIPPERARY

- 15 Novas Respite House
- 16 Prospect House Homeless Accommodation
- 17 Mitchel Street Homeless Accommodation

DUBLIN

- 18 Mount Brown Homeless Accommodation
- 19 Bellevue House
- 20 Haarlem Court

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Maria O'Dwyer | Pat Quaid |
| Dermot Sadlier | Martina Murphy |
| Kieran Walshe | Sr. Cait Gannon |
| Michael Flynn (Chairperson) | Justin Brosnan |

CEO

Michael Goulding

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Head of Homeless Services | Head of Personnel and Legal |
| Anne Cronin | Eileen Whelan |
| Head of Finance and Company Secretary | Head of Property Development |
| Donal O'Carroll | John Rogers |

SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

- Company Administrator
- Tony Ledger
- Office Administrator
- Tracy McCarthy
- Communications and Development Officer
- Una Burns
- Health and Safety Advisor
- Paudie O'Mahony

CO-ORDINATORS

- Co-ordinator Prospect House
- Maureen Dooley
- Co-ordinator Mitchel Street
- Deborah Ryan
- Co-ordinator Knocklee House
- Bernie Spring
- Community Detox & Respite House
- Dan Taylor
- Co-ordinator DIAL House
- Fiona Taylor

MANAGERS

- Project Manager Intensive Family Support
- Sinead O'Donoghue
- Project Manager Bellevue House
- Roberto Radulescu
- Project Manager McGarry House
- Helen Scales
- Project Manager Brother Stephen Russell House
- Eugene Toner
- Project Manager Arlington Lodge
- Tom Wall
- Project Manager Mount Brown
- Mark Vella

OUR VISION & MISSION

Novas Initiatives is a national charity providing support and services to people who are disadvantaged and socially excluded; primarily those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

VISION STATEMENT

Novas Initiatives seeks to find lasting solutions to Homelessness.

MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to provide, arrange and co-ordinate the provision of housing, hostels, support services, care services and any associated amenities for aged, disabled and chronically sick persons, for the homeless or poorly housed, for travellers and their families and for any other persons who may be in necessitous circumstances, upon terms appropriate to their means.

To provide training, educational, employment and vocational courses for the unemployed and anyone heretofore described.

To provide rehabilitative and supportive holidays for any persons heretofore described.

OUR CORE VALUES

Dignity.

Non-judgemental approach.

Rights based society.

Fulfilment of the person.

OUR CORE OBJECTIVES

To alleviate poverty.

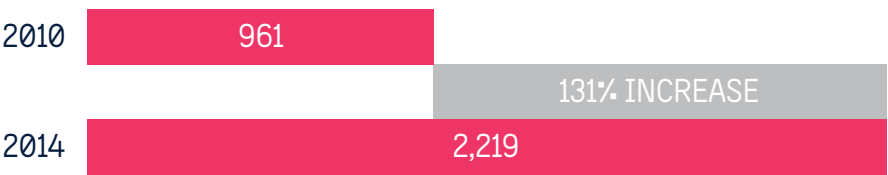
To promote equality and diversity, advocacy, participation and needs led services.

To champion social justice, inclusion, economic equality, right to meaningful work, self-determination and cultural expression.



SERVICES OVERVIEW 2014

NOVAS SERVICE USERS

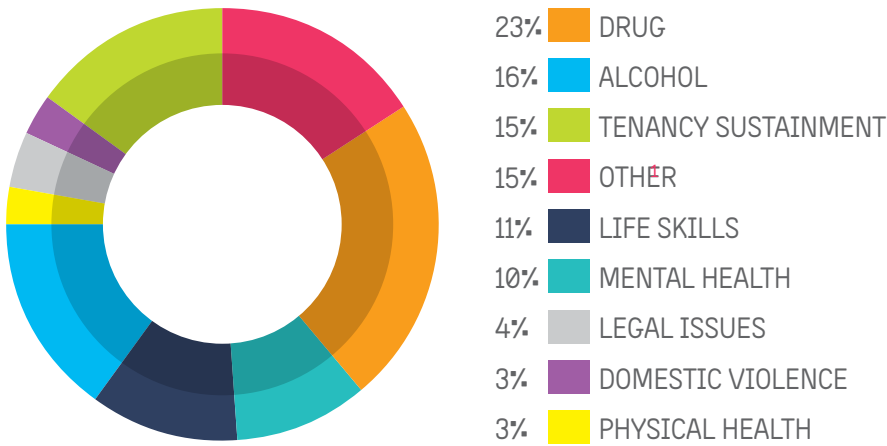


In 2014, Novas supported 2,219 people. This figure reflects a 131% increase over a five year period. The level of growth is unprecedented, and while we have extended our remit, increased our number of housing units and provided considerable tenancy sustainment support, it is still not enough. 2,219 people was just 77% of all those who were referred to our services during 2014. Indeed in our temporary accommodation schemes, just 42% accessed a service.

All our services throughout the year were over-subscribed, with the greatest burden being felt by the supported temporary accommodation services (STA), our Intensive Family Support service (IFS) in Limerick City and our Respite House for the families and loved ones of people in addiction.

The support needs of Novas clients were broad-ranging and complex and included issues relating to substance and alcohol abuse, mental health, tenancy sustainment, life-skills, family breakdown and social isolation.

NOVAS SERVICES USED



Some 72% of all Novas clients during 2014 were under 40 years of age. Some 60% were women. In 2013, this figure was 53%, highlighting the rise in female homelessness and in turn, family homelessness. 56% of all those accessing a Novas facility, were doing so for the first time, while 44% were repeat clients.



Novas worked steadfastly to evolve its services and extend its capacity and remit to cater for the changing homeless environment. During the year, a general needs apartment complex was launched in Dublin, Brother Russell House in Limerick was redeveloped and Bellevue Children’s Home in Dublin was relocated. In addition, we also extended our Housing First Programme and added a mental health service to our suite of programmes, in an effort to extend our continuum of care and to cater for the unprecedented demand for homeless services.

¹ Other includes learning disability, acquired brain injury, foreign nationals without income, pregnancy, street working.

/HOUSING/

Novas supports its clients around their Housing, Health and Recovery.

Of these, Housing was the first type of support provided by Novas, with the opening of Bridgeland House in 2002. Since then, our housing services have expanded and evolved in response to the changing landscape of homelessness in Ireland. We now provide 207 units of accommodation in Limerick, Tipperary, Dublin and Kerry through a range of housing options such as supported temporary accommodation, long-term supported units and independent housing. In addition to this, we provide innovative and proactive programmes to support people living in the community to maintain their accommodation, such as an Intensive Family Support Service, Tenancy Sustainment Services and a Housing First programme.

WE NOW PROVIDE 207 UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION IN LIMERICK, TIPPERARY, DUBLIN AND KERRY

2014 was a continued year of growth and development for Novas Homeless Services. During the year we opened one new service and redeveloped and extended two existing services, namely Haarlem Court apartments, Bellevue House and Brother Russell House. The former two are co-located in Dublin 24, while the latter is in Limerick City.

Such development was a consequence of the unfettered demand for homeless accommodation nationwide, with unprecedented growth in the number of families becoming homeless. The crisis demanded an urgent, multi-factorial response. Through our own range of housing options and our proactive approach in sourcing accommodation elsewhere, we were in a position to help more and more families and individuals who were homeless or at risk of becoming so.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

BROTHER RUSSELL HOUSE

It is our strategic objective to provide every homeless person accessing a Novas facility, a single unit of accommodation. With this in mind, Novas set about the complete redevelopment of Brother Russell House in late 2013. Many of its residents had been living there for more than a decade and during that period had shared dormitory-style accommodation with up to five other men with various support needs.

While the process to secure the redevelopment was a protracted one, it has proved very worthwhile. The former building was knocked and a new development constructed on the existing site. With demand for homeless accommodation rising, and the service exceeding capacity on a regular basis, it brought to the fore the need for an upgraded service. The building, despite the keen effort of staff, was

outdated, substandard and unsuitable to the requirements of many of its residents, particularly those presenting with an intellectual, physical or sensory disability.

The new building now comprises of 33 high-quality, long-term apartments, in the formation of four five-beds, three four-beds and one single apartment. They are permanent in nature and are considered homes for life for most of those who live there. Brother Russell residents are no longer considered homeless.

The ground floor of the service is universally designed, so that it can cater

for the needs of clients with physical and sensory disabilities. They receive tailored care, specifically for their needs, provided on a 24-hour basis. The upgrade was made possible through a generous donation by the JP McManus Foundation and the sigma of homelessness, long carried, has been removed.

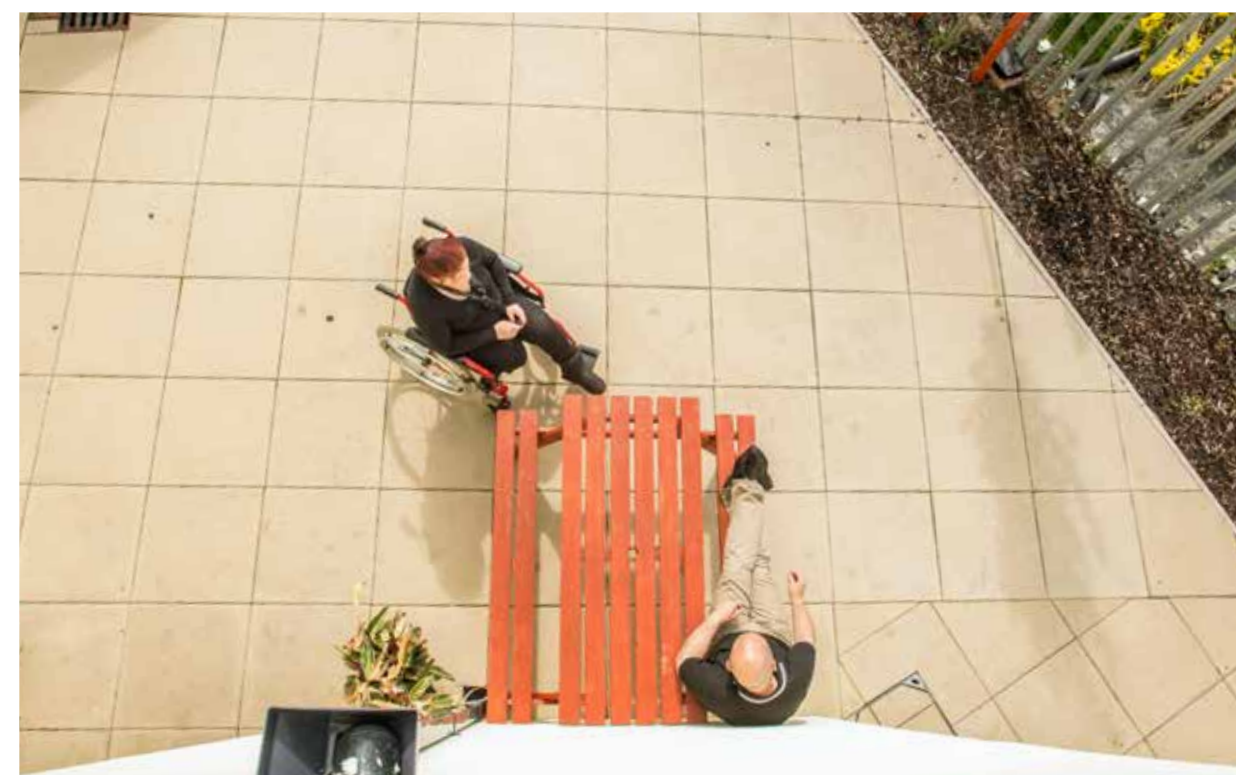
During 2014, Brother Russell supported more than 100 male clients. While this is a large number, it only represents 39% of all those who sought access. Some 61% were unable to access a service here due to capacity issues. This high figure represents the long-term nature of the service, with less move-on than supported temporary services.

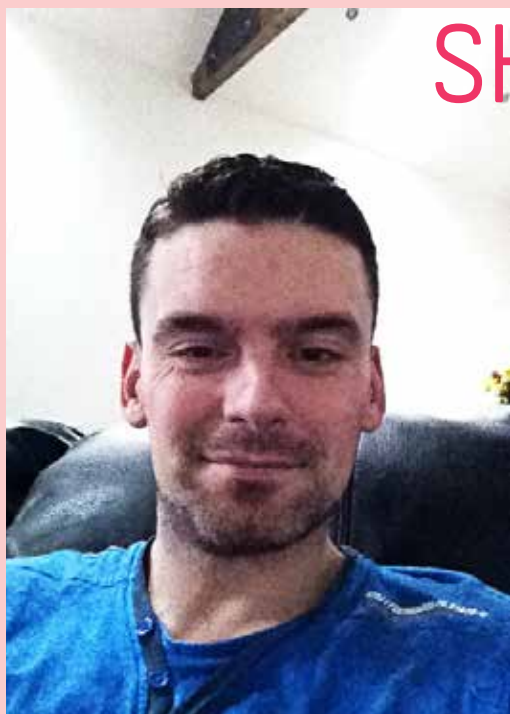


The older age profile of residents here also highlights the long-term nature of Brother Russell House. More than 45% of its residents were over the age of 40, higher than any other Novas accommodation service.

SUCH IS THE STANDARD OF THE NEW SERVICE, IT WON BEST HOMELESS PROJECT AT THE IRISH COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING AWARDS THIS YEAR, IN TERMS OF EXCELLENCE OF DESIGN, MANAGEMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY.

We are proud of the newly developed Brother Russell service, in terms of the standard of accommodation it provides and how this enhances the marvellous work being done by its staff and management team. The new building has also allowed us to develop new services operated from there, including our Housing First programme, a new mental health service and outreach support to former residents. Such is the standard of the new service, it won best Homeless Project at the Irish Council for Social Housing Awards this year, in terms of excellence of design, management, community development and sustainability.





SHANE MASON, Project Worker

SHANE'S STORY

Brother Stephen Russell House, to be honest a place I never really heard of until it came to choosing a place for student placement. This would all change in 2012 when I was accepted as a student for fifteen weeks. This time would turn out to be one of the best experiences of not only my college life, but life in general. From the first moment I walked into BSRH I felt something special, it felt like a home where people were family amongst friends. The staff and management were very welcoming and I felt like I was part of the team from the outset. This time as a student would be essential in my future as a locum worker, tenancy sustainment worker and project worker for Novas Initiatives.

Starting as a locum worker was a difficult transition at the start. As a student there was probably less pressure as I had no experience and was there to learn. This position gave me a real chance to become a full time project worker, something I have always wanted. The work as a locum was challenging but rewarding. I began to understand the difficulties that residents faced on a daily basis. This included addiction, disability and mental health. I felt real support from my colleagues at this time and they seemed to be understanding as they too were once students and Locum Workers. Although the residents had issues, they also had character, respect, life experience and a lot to offer. This was perhaps the hardest hitting thing to accept, the fact that these men have so much to offer but ended up homeless. These 18 months as a locum worker gave me a clear understanding of the area I wanted to work in.

The position of tenancy sustainment worker was a big step towards the goal of becoming a project worker. This role involved working on a one to one basis with a client with an acquired brain injury. This was my most challenging role to date but was also rewarding in terms of experience and insight into disability and the challenges people with acquired brain injury face on a daily basis. The life skills programme in place was something I took to immediately. Throughout this role I learnt that patience and understanding were key to working one to one.

In 2015, the opportunity to apply for project worker within BSRH came up. This was a great opportunity and I was lucky enough to get the position. Once again I immediately felt part of the team. Also it was great to have a good relationship built up with the residents of BSRH before starting in this role. My time with Novas and in particular BSRH has giving me the experience and confidence to work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



ONE YEAR ON: RICHARD'S STORY

I wrote a story in May, about my life since I was a child and the ups and downs I have had. As you can see I said "had", a small word but it means a lot to me. I am now writing about the life I have NOW and what has changed in my life in one year and wow it is just amazing.

This time last year I was in a very, very black hole with absolutely no light at the end of it. It felt like absolute hell on earth if that's what you can call it. All I wanted to do was die, I just wanted my life to end no matter what.

You might ask, how did it all change for me? Well, one day Eugene Toner (Brother Russell House Manager), a very clever man, asked me had I ever considered that maybe it's a psychological issue I had and not an issue with alcohol. At the time I just laughed but he was actually right.

I ended up asking myself why not give it a go and try and stay away from drink and spend some time working on the psychological side of things and see if that worked for me. I started partaking in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions with Louise (another Novas staff member). I gave 100% to these sessions and I found it actually started to work for

me. I also started focusing on doing some meditation to help me relax. Now don't get me wrong it was very, very hard but I always knew in the back of my mind that I had the full support of staff in Brother Russell House, who I think of as my family.

I also started to get involved in other activities around the house such as the gazebo project which involved residents from Brother Russell House and PALLS coming together to build a gazebo for the house. I started gardening and going to the gym. I was open to doing anything that took my mind off the demon that is drink.

I started telling myself that there is a life for me and I stopped thinking about ending mine. This is something I never thought I would be writing.

My keyworker Keira Fitzpatrick mentioned going back to college. Again I laughed. I never went to an ordinary school, never mind college. Now after months of going through hell, constantly fighting a battle of suicidal thoughts going on inside my head and having no drink to help me cope it really felt like I was swimming against the tide and drowning.

So one day I said to myself “go for it”, it meaning college. It was then I decided to swim with the tide and by God everything in my life started to change. People were showing me respect and this respect was not out of fear as I felt it was before. This time it felt like genuine respect, man that is a great feeling.



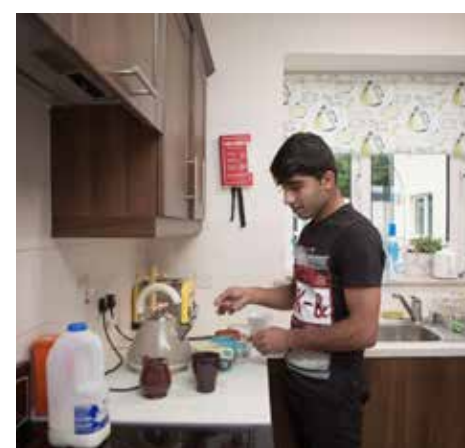
Before I go any further, I just want to say that all this change never would have happened without the support of Novas and the staff in Brother Stephen Russell House, this is something I want to emphasise.

Now I am nearly a year into my sobriety and I have now taken what is hopefully the final twist in my life (Ha!). I participated in a sleep out for the homeless on the 10th October and met a wonderful girl and we hit it off straight away. We became the best of friends and now thank God, you can see how this is bringing out the child in me, we are boyfriend and girlfriend!

The moral of this story is strange. I have come from living on the streets, being in institutions, being in prison and having so many ups and downs to finding Novas' Brother Stephen Russell House and I can honestly say my life is finally coming together. I have actually found peace of mind, happiness, have had the experience of doors opening for me and most of all I can say I have actually found love. Angie is her name by the way.

I still have demons going on inside my head but thankfully I have people who actually care about me, i.e. Novas and my family in Brother Stephen Russell House. It is onward, upward and positive thinking for me from here. This past year is the first time in my life I feel I have had closure and feel it is a new beginning for me. So for now I say bring on the next year (Yes, Yes, Yes!!).

I have always wondered what the word normal meant and now I know it is just being myself.



BELLEVUE HOUSE

Bellevue House, a six-bed children's home for unaccompanied minors entering the country, was Novas' second service to undergo extensive redevelopment during 2014. In fact, the service was moved entirely to a purpose-built new development in the Firhouse area of Dublin. It is part of a mixed-development that also includes eight two-bed apartments, providing general and special needs housing to single people and families.

The new service is located in a residential area with excellent transport networks and in close proximity to local amenities and schools. The previous home was outdated and as a rented property, Novas was subject to the capital's ongoing rent hikes. In addition to this, the premises and location were unsuitable due to the lack of transport facilities in the region and the extent of upgrade that was required to the house, thus a new development was initiated.

The purpose built service meets all the needs of its residents. With generous communal living quarters including a study and tutorial room combined with individual bedrooms, it provides the teenagers with space, independence, security and comfort within a home-like environment, while being separated from their families.

In 2014, all residents were refugees seeking asylum. They were minors who had entered the country without the care of their parents and referred to our service through social workers. Staff supported clients in terms of schooling, integration into the local community, access to English tutors whilst enabling them to live fulfilling lives.

We anticipate significant demand for the service in the coming twelve months due to the protracted violence in Syria and other African and Middle-Eastern nations and will rely on our experienced staff and management team to continue to respond to the demand of supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

A BOY, HIS FATHER, A DONKEY....AND A HOUSE IN A RAINY COUNTRY

In existence since 2002, Bellevue House provides safe accommodation in a residential setting, looking after the needs of young people coming from all corners of the world. For most of the young people who have resided here, the house and the dedicated staff team have had a massive impact on their lives and in return the residents have impacted on ours. These are stories about lives that have turned around, the stories of Bellevue House, if only the walls could speak...but they can't. Instead we can, but we can only tell fragments of stories as those young people would only tell us fragments of their lives and their experiences.

The young people arrived in this house with their emotional baggage, and some have never opened it, not to us. But now and again you'd get one young person who'd be eager to share their story, at least some of it. They were eager to share it because they owned it and they were proud of it. What you will read now is not a work of fiction, neither is it inspired by some novelist, but jiffs of true stories amalgamated in a couple of pages. I wrote this with upmost respect to the dignity of those who shared their experiences with us. For obvious reasons the names of these young people have been changed.

I could have picked many stories that moved me. However I decided to gravitate around one due to its' intense content and also due to similarities with many other stories of other young people. This story begins somewhere in north east Iran, close to the Turkish border,

sometime ago. It was there and then where this young boy, Yousef was growing up living a hard but simple life. However, nothing would be simple for a young boy who'd work hard alongside his parents and younger siblings on a bit of farming land that they didn't even own. And then, to try to make an earning from this hard work Yousef and his old man had to cross the mountains on a donkey all the way into Turkey to try to sell their produce for a better price. Yousef even showed me photos of him, his father and the donkey, photos in vibrant colours, portraying amazing scenery but these were no ordinary places, these were not photos from a holiday resort, but from places filled with dangers. I could not help it and had to ask, what these dangers were? Yousef explained in detail as if for me not to miss a thing. He heard his father telling him about his people, the Kurdish people, standing proud but with no country of their own. He thought as a young boy that the Kurds must be the luckiest of people in the world, being able to share so many countries. He then learnt that the truth was so much different, they weren't desired in most of these countries and in some places they weren't even wanted. So the picture began to take contour and although having some knowledge about the political situation of the Kurds, it was now that I could associate emotions with it. It was thanks to Yousef who'd automatically passed his own emotions to me while talking about these things. So what were the dangers? For one, just crossing a border illegally, smuggling goods into a country perhaps most unloving

of Kurds. Then having to walk for countless miles via the harsh terrain of high mountains. One can only imagine how it would feel to run into the Turkish military patrolling these lands. It happened, Yousef said, many times in fact, but everything has a price. They had to bribe their way in and even out. But the border patrols were not the worse, he explained. The real menace was coming from muggers who'd demand twice as much than the Turkish soldiers. Sometimes they had to give everything they earned just to make it out alive. Imagine a young boy, his father and a donkey held at gunpoint in the middle of a canyon with no way to escape. It made my skin crawl.

This was routine for a boy who knew no different. And it all was routine until one morning when he saw his father packing more food than usual, but more bizarre he was packing stuff that Yousef found most unusual, such as family photos. His mother hugged him dearly that morning and told him 'Go with Allah now, He'll look after you!' Later on, after a few days journey Yousef came to understand why his father took family photos with him. He came to understand that when he saw his old man speaking to this stranger and giving lots of money to the stranger, perhaps their life time savings. From that moment onwards everything happened at amazing speed. Next Yousef was stashed in the back of a lorry among strangers smelling bad, laying on top of big boxes filled with god knows what. He got used to the bad smell, he said, and then ironically they came across soap which they opened only to mix its' aroma with the bad smell. It made it worse. He could not recall precisely how many days he spent in that particular lorry and it didn't even matter because after that lorry there was another and then another, about twelve in total. It must have been weeks, Yousef recalled experiencing severe thirst, starvation, fear and ultimately the horrible smell. All that until one day when the lorry's doors opened

and they were asked to step outside. They were told by a man with a funny tongue that they were near Dublin. It was a wet and cold day, Yousef recalls. How ironic, the one thing he was most starved of was now pouring all around him. But that didn't seem to matter much because the one question sticking in Yousef's mind was that of his safety. From that question derived a million others such as where was Dublin, what place was this and most importantly what was he supposed to do now?

So what happened to Yousef? Well eventually he made it to Bellevue House. Was it a good thing? Perhaps I should not judge because only Yousef knows that. What I can tell though is that he quickly learnt the language, he adapted well, he pursued his education, he became a friend and wherever he is now he no longer has to bribe soldiers, cross mountains and fear for his life. On behalf of my colleagues, the people who worked with Yousef, I want to say it was a privilege to have met you and listen to your story. I also want to apologise for only giving the space of a few lines to tell your story, and that of others just like you, young people that we were also privileged to have come across. It would perhaps need countless pages for your story to be told properly so that the reader can get a real sense of what it was that happened to you all, but for now I and my colleagues can only wish the very best of luck to you all.

Written By:

Robert Radulescu, Manager, Bellevue House

With much appreciation to our past and current residents

HAARLEM COURT

Haarlem Court located in South Dublin is Novas’ first general needs housing development. Planned since 2009, the service was completed at a cost of €1.5 million in 2014. It is universally designed and built to a very high specification with triple glaze windows, super insulation and a A3 BER rating. All apartments are wheelchair accessible with wet rooms, accessible light switches and ample space. The complex is home to children with special needs, the elderly and formerly homeless families who were previously living in unsuitable emergency accommodation. All tenants are supported by Novas’ National Housing Co-ordinator.



MARGARET’S STORY

My name is Margaret and I have been a resident of Haarlem Court Apartments in Firhouse since last November. Previously I had been living in private accommodation for twelve years on the R.A.S. scheme.

I became ill four years ago and my accommodation was becoming unsuitable to my needs. I was struggling to get up and down the stairs and as there was no bathroom downstairs it was restricting me a lot. Soon afterwards my landlady informed me that

she was going to sell the house and my two daughters and I were given notice.

I contacted the council and was told to make an application for accommodation based on medical grounds. I got the relevant information, made an application and was accepted. All I had to do was wait for something to come up. As I had to go back into hospital my family had to try deal with the issue of accommodation. As it stood we had nowhere to go when I was discharged from hospital which was very upsetting. Then out of the blue Haarlem Court was offered to us. After viewing it I was amazed at the size of it, the decor and how well it was finished. It had everything I needed on one floor and an outside garden which was a bonus.

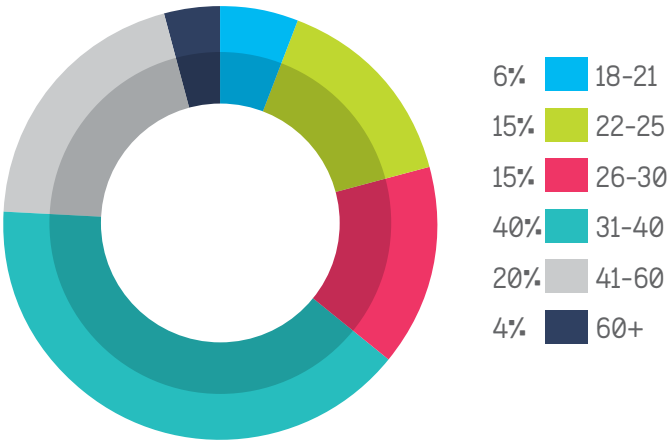
Sabrina and Michael came to the hospital for me to sign the contract which was great. To have somewhere I will not be put out of and is mine gives me peace of mind and security.

I love living here, it’s quiet the neighbours are nice and Sabrina is at the other end of the phone if I have any problems. I consider myself very lucky to have this apartment and look forward to spending a long, happy life in it.

STA TRENDS 2014

The age profile of clients accessing our accommodation services is similar throughout the country. With the exception of Brother Russell House, the single most common age profile in all our supported temporary services is 31-40 years. Of great concern, however, is the number of individuals presenting to our STA’s that are under 30 years of age. This group accounts for 36% of all residents. Some 76% were under 40 years of age.

AGE PROFILE OF CLIENTS IN STA



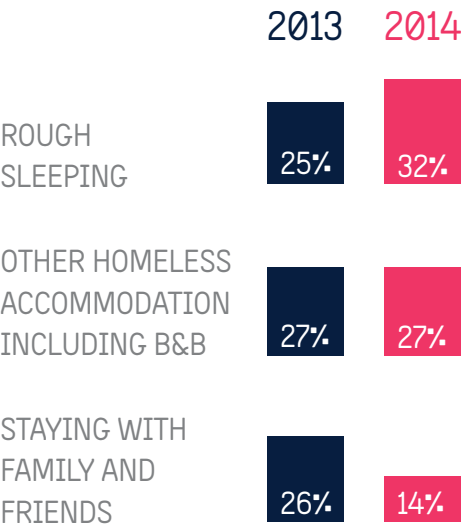
The declining age profile of homeless clients is a persistent feature of the last half decade, as people are becoming entrenched in the cycle of homelessness at a very young age. In an effort to tackle this issue, Novas engaged in a multi-dimensional response including the induction of a Housing First programme in 2013, the acquisition and development of a range of long-term supported options since 2008 (McGarry House in Limerick, Killeen Woods and Old Golf Links Road in Kerry and Haarlem Court in Dublin) and an extension of our outreach support. We also advocated to Minister Burton in the Dáil that those who are homeless and under 25 years should have their social welfare payment reviewed due to their limited circumstances and lack of family support to fall back on.

LAST YEAR, SOME 32% OF ALL CLIENTS THAT RESIDED IN OUR SUPPORTED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION WERE, BY THEIR OWN ADMISSION, ON THE NIGHT BEFORE ACCESS, SLEEPING ROUGH.

Moreover, in 2015 an additional suite of independent units will come on stream in Limerick and Kerry with further plans afoot to develop a long-term apartment complex in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service in Dublin and the acquisition of independent units in Co. Tipperary.

Another worrying trend that emerged in 2014, was the number of people presenting to temporary accommodation who, immediately prior to access, declared themselves to have been rough sleeping. Last year, some 32% of all clients that resided in our supported temporary accommodation were, by their own admission, on the night before access, sleeping rough (including squats). This represents an increase of 7% from the previous year.

PRIOR TO ACCESS



Interestingly, more clients presenting to temporary accommodation in Limerick were previously rough-sleeping than in Dublin. For those who accessed accommodation in McGarry House, some 40% stated to have been rough-sleeping on the previous night,

in Brother Russell House the figure was 38% and in our Abigail Women’s centre in Dublin the figure was 19%². These figures also reveal the decline in the number of people who were staying with family and friends from 26% in 2013 to 14% in 2014, indicating the unstable and short-term nature of this arrangement.

While clients accessing accommodation services had a range of support needs, the single biggest issue was substance misuse, with 27% of all residents seeking support around this. Novas has observed an increase in substance misuse every year since 2002 and has taken a number of proactive steps to address this issue. Among these was the commissioning of a piece of award-winning research relating to preventing and responding to overdose, following an 18 month period in which there were 36 overdoses in McGarry. A subsequent overdose prevention programme, TOPPLE, is currently in development with an anticipated roll-out date of December 2015³.

A further 24% of our STA clients faced issues around their alcohol addiction. The issue of mental health affected 13%, this figure however only represents clients with a diagnosed mental health condition and does not consider those with often debilitating issues around stress, anxiety, depression, chaotic drug use and recovery, all of which are compounded by their homeless state. Indeed, a recent publication by the partnership for Health Equity highlighted the extent of mental health issues among the homeless population. Over half of its sample (601 adults) had been diagnosed with depression and more than one-third had attempted suicide at some point on their lives⁴.



MCGARRY HOUSE

McGarry House, with supported temporary and long-term accommodation is Novas’ largest residential service, offering 67 units of mixed accommodation. Located in Limerick city, the campus provides a suite of on-site services, including a Community Detox programme, a cold-weather service and a 24-hour emergency help-line.

During 2014, the supported temporary service of McGarry House provided accommodation for 206 individuals. While this is a significant number, it only represents 55% of all referrals throughout the year. In the previous twelve-month period, the service was in a position to support some 70% of all referrals. The widening gap between referrals and access is due to a number of factors, notably the increasing number of homeless people, the difficulty in moving existing residents on due to the lack of affordable housing in the private-rented market and the complex support needs of such clients who, if accommodation was available, find it extremely difficult to live independently without support. While our long-term apartments go some way in meeting demand, the numbers presenting continues to exceed capacity.

32% OF ALL CLIENTS WERE ENTRENCHED IN DRUG ADDICTION

Clients availing of the temporary accommodation service presented with very complex issues relating to their mental health and substance and alcohol misuse. Here, some 32% of all clients were entrenched in drug addiction, some 9% higher than the organisational average. Moreover, more than 60% were actively taking drugs (but not considered entrenched users). It is because of this fact that Novas inducted research in the service regarding drug use and the prevalence of overdose.

² These figures do not include those who availed of our crash or cold weather facilities as information on such clients is not accurate.
³ The research, ‘HEADS UP: Preventing and Responding to Overdose and the TOPPLE programme will be discussed in greater detail in the Health chapter of this report.
⁴ O’Reilly, F., Barroe, S., Hannigan, A., Scriver, S., Ruane, L., MacFarlane, A. and O’Carroll, A. (2015), Homelessness: An Unhealthy State. Health status, risk behaviours and service utilisation among homeless people in two Irish cities. Dublin: The Partnership for Health Equity.

A further 25% presented with issues relating to alcohol consumption and 14% required support around their mental health. Other support needs included life-skills, contact with the criminal justice system, street-working and tenancy sustainment.

Almost 40% of all clients in McGarry House were under 30 years of age. This is a remarkably young age profile and goes some way in explaining the high level of drug use among residents there.

22% of those accessing accommodation were female, while the majority were male. More than 20% of clients in both the temporary and long-term accommodation units were in the care system as children. This reflects a national over-representation of care leavers among the homeless population.

In its third year in operation, McGarry House long-term apartments continued to operate at capacity. While the service is principally different to the original Housing First model based in New York, it is closely aligned to some European adaptations, notable the Finnish model, in that accommodation is provided in cluster formation with layered and individually-targeted support offered on-site. It has proved a very practical response to the housing crisis of recent years.

ALMOST 40% OF ALL CLIENTS IN MCGARRY HOUSE WERE UNDER 30 YEARS OF AGE

There were just three new tenants throughout the year, reflecting the long-term nature of the service. All the tenants here are provided with support to enable them to maintain their tenancies and improve their quality of life. While such care and support is developed with the specific needs of individual clients in mind, it very often revolves around the issues of budgeting, money management, cooking, cleaning, a return to education and social inclusion. A volunteer befriending service was developed with the latter issue in mind. It has proved immensely successful in supporting clients, many of whom have lost their family and friends throughout their years of homelessness, to integrate into society and re-engage in hobbies and pastimes.

It is encouraging to observe that some 33% of all residents of the long-term apartments have lived there since the service opened almost three years ago. A further 10% have maintained their tenancies for more than two years. These are very promising returns, considering that all residents were long-term homeless who hitherto found it extremely difficult to maintain their own accommodation for even short periods of time. Such success is due to the range of support mechanisms provided to tenants, which are at no extra cost to the taxpayer as Novas employ the same number of staff now for a campus of 67 as we did five years ago for just 24 clients.

ARLINGTON LODGE

Opened in 2003, Arlington Lodge is Kerry's only low-threshold, direct access homeless accommodation service. It provides supported accommodation for male and female residents from throughout the county, on a 24-hour basis.

The presenting needs of clients there are similar to Novas' other STA services, however unlike McGarry House and Mount Brown, alcohol (rather than drugs) was the single largest support need of clients, at 34%. This was followed by drug use (14%), tenancy sustainment issues (14%), mental health (11%), domestic violence (8%) and physical health (6%).

During 2014, just 27% of referrals, 56 people were able to access accommodation in Arlington Lodge, due to a number of factors including the lack of affordable move-on accommodation and the increasingly chaotic nature of clients, many of whom find it difficult to live independently without support.

There are, however, some promising signs. The number of repeat clients accessing accommodation at Arlington Lodge has declined by 30% since 2010. This, in part, is due to the development of long-term supported accommodation services in Tralee town by Novas. Killeen Woods in a five-bed service for formerly homeless individuals with low-support needs and Old Golf Links Road is a five-bed unit for elderly homeless individuals. The latter is staffed throughout the day to support clients with basic life skills and in accessing the medical treatment they require.

Next year, Arlington will continue to grow its suite of long-term accommodation units with the acquisition of four family homes and a single apartment for an individual with a learning disability, located in close proximity to the parent service.

PROSPECT HOUSE

Opened in 2009, Prospect House provides temporary supported accommodation, in the form of single apartments, for four adults in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. The service was developed in collaboration with Cluid Housing Association to support people with basic living skills who find it difficult to maintain private rented accommodation.

The support needs of clients here are in contrast to our larger temporary services with life-skills and tenancy sustainment proving to be the greatest barrier to independent living, followed by issues relating to mental health and addiction. Due to the lack of suitable accommodation in the region, all existing residents have been living there for longer than six months and move-on from the service is extremely slow.

MITCHEL STREET

Mitchel Street is the largest of Novas’ two North Tipperary residential services. It is a six-bed house providing supported temporary accommodation to single men and women from Thurles and the surrounding areas.

During the twelve-month period of 2014, just 32% (13 people) of all those referred to the service were able to access accommodation. This is almost a mirror image of the landscape during the previous year, with demand considerably outstripping capacity.

A pattern emerged in all our STA’s throughout the country during 2014. A lack of move-on accommodation thwarted efforts to move people into independent living. In many cases, beds are being blocked due to this issue, rather than a resident’s capacity to live independently.

In response to the crisis, the service in Thurles has provided outreach support to 13 individuals throughout the year. Support was provided to individuals and families through a range of channels such as tenancy sustainment, the provision of meals, social integration and emotional support.

Novas Senior Managers are currently engaged in a proposal to acquire long-term units in the region to alleviate the crisis of bed-blockers so that temporary accommodation can be made available for those who need it while people ready to move, can do so.



LEFT

Luke in 2012 before he arrived at Mitchel Street.

BELOW

Luke in 2014 after 2 years substance free.

LUKE’S STORY

My Name is Luke and I’m writing to tell you how the service that is Novas changed my life. For many years of my life I was lost, I spent the time drinking excessively and drug taking... looking for acceptance in all the wrong places. My addiction took me to a very lonely place in my life, completely breaking me; mentally, physically and emotionally. Eventually my addiction left me homeless and it was around this time that I got in contact with Novas in Thurles. I didn’t know it at the time but it would turn out to be the best thing I have ever done, and the beginning of the rest of my life. Novas helped me to get a place in residential treatment to deal with my issues, it was a long hard road to even get in the door but they supported me every step of the way, even coming to visit me during my programme.

Over two years on now and after a lot of help from Novas and some hard work from myself I have completely turned my life around. I’ve been substance free for two years, I have a full time job, I’m living in a three bedroom house and have a great relationship with my family again. Life couldn’t be better. I will be forever grateful to the staff in Mitchel Street who showed me there was hope when I thought there was none, for pushing me to always be the best I can be and for their continued support to this day. Life will never be the same again.

Thank you Novas!



THE ABIGAIL WOMEN’S CENTRE

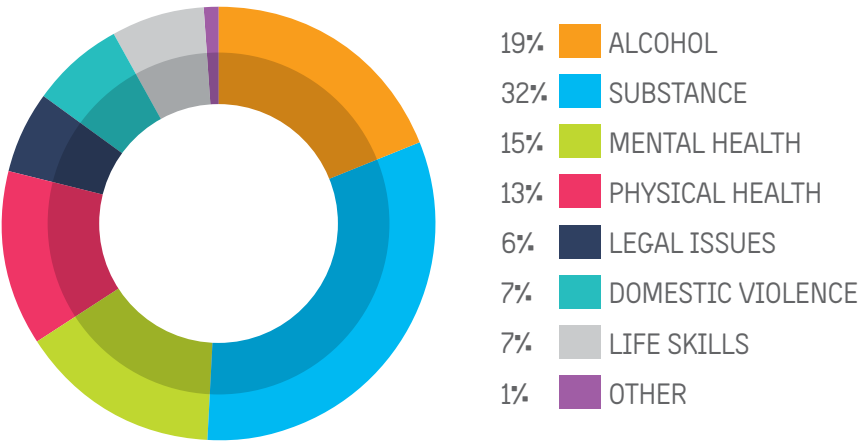
The Abigail Women’s Centre provides supported temporary accommodation for women in Dublin. Previously situated in Dublin’s inner-city, it moved premises at the end of 2014, to a larger, more suitable site, with the potential development of extensive on-site services. It was subsequently renamed The Abigail Women’s Centre (formerly Mount Brown). While the transition was difficult for the local community, the residents and the staff, the service is being slowly embedded into the Finglas community.

During 2014, some 333 women accessed accommodation in Abigail. This figure comprises largely of crashers, who made up 79% of the total⁵.

32% OF WOMEN HERE WERE ALSO ENTRENCHED IN DRUG ADDICTION

The returns for this service mirror those of McGarry House in Limerick. 32% of women here were also entrenched in drug addiction, with more than 60% active in their addiction. Support was also required around alcohol, mental and physical health, life-skills and domestic violence.

NOVAS SERVICES USED



Some 19% of women were sleeping rough on the night prior to access, while 60% were in other homeless accommodations⁶.

⁵ A crasher is a person who avails of a temporary night bed. It does not provide security, the bed is made available nightly via the Central Placement Unit.

⁶ This figure does not include crashers as the information of these is not reliable. If they were included, we could assume the percentage of rough sleepers would increase significantly.

OTHER ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

DIAL

Dial (Developing Independent Active Living) House, is a six-bed residential service which accommodates care leavers with a mild to moderate learning disability and/or mental health issues, who are at risk of becoming homeless. The service was developed in 2006 to prevent vulnerable adults becoming entrenched in the cycle of homelessness at a very young age. It embodies the proactive spirit of Novas; identifying a need and developing a service around that need.

The service is designed to provide a secure, home-like environment to residents, many of whom had never experienced this as children. It offers a two year life-skills programme, to prepare these young adults for independent living. The life-skills modules include budgeting, money management, self-care and skills in managing your own home. Through utilising individual care plans, life-skills programmes and extracurricular activities, DIAL supports residents to fully participate in their community and eventually sustain independent living.

Further education is at the core of the DIAL ethos, with all residents actively encouraged and supported to engage in education. During 2014 two residents in the service completed their Leaving Cert, with both currently pursuing third-level education.

During 2014 just 12% of all those referred to DIAL were in receipt of a service, reflecting the longer-term nature of the house and the residents’ commitment to the life-skills programme. In addition to the in-house residents, the staff of DIAL also supported 21 clients through outreach during 2014, many of whom were unfunded. Many of these were former residents, who continued to require a degree of support to live independently. DIAL is a place that these clients can always come home to, the door is always open.

KNOCKLEE HOUSE

This is an eight-bed facility, accommodating clients with varying support needs, who do not require 24-hour care. Situated in a peaceful setting on the outskirts of Tralee Town, it offers residents the opportunity to progress their recovery while preparing for independent living. All clients, when ready, are actively supported to secure suitable accommodation and outreach care is offered to ease the transition.

During 2014, 18 individuals were accommodated in Knocklee House representing just 28% of all referrals, reflecting the need for more community-based, small home services to allow people the space to move forward to living independently. The number unable to access Knocklee was in some part, due to the longer-term nature of the service. The support needs of residents included issues relating to alcohol abuse (28%), mental health (17%), learning disabilities (10%), legal issues (10%) and acquired brain injuries (7%).

During this year, 11 clients were provided with outreach support. The majority were former residents needing continued support to maintain accommodation.



TENANCY SUSTAINMENT SERVICES

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE (IFS)

For the last 9 years, our Intensive Family Support service has supported in the region of 900 families who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Since the downturn in the economy in 2008 and the more recent national housing crisis, referrals to the service have increased by more than 300%. In addition, more and more families accessing support have already become homeless; living temporarily with family and friends, on notice to quit or living in B&B accommodation. During 2014, some 30% of families accessing the service were already homeless.

During 2014, the IFS supported 134 families in Limerick who were homeless or at risk. These families required support largely around their tenancy sustainment and life-skills, with alcohol and substance abuse less prevalent than in other services.

60% OF PARENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 30 YEARS

The twelve month return reveals that young families were at the greatest risk of becoming homeless, with 60% of parents under the age of 30 years. Furthermore, single parents were at far greater risk of homelessness than two parent families. Some 92% of all families who accessed the service during 2014 were headed by single parents. Such statistics highlight the need to provide additional support for this group.

Sourcing secure, family accommodation is the key objective of the IFS. Where tenancies have already broken down and the family has become homeless, or where accommodation is deemed substandard, securing accommodation is of paramount concern. Unfortunately, this has become increasingly difficult in recent years due to the lack of accommodation in the private rented sector, particularly for those in receipt of a rent supplement or a HAP payment.

In an effort to address this issue, the IFS was fortunate to secure a €300,000 donation from the JP McManus Benevolent Fund for the purpose of acquiring eight new properties for homeless families during 2014. These properties were secured through a combination of the donation, CALF funding and Novas' own reserves. The properties will be coming on stream in 2015 and the allocations process is currently underway. While this is a proactive response to the crisis, it is not enough. Novas intends to identify and secure additional funding streams in an effort to purchase more family properties in the region.

FAMILY HOUSING

I first presented to Novas' family service in June after struggling for several months to find accommodation. I found myself walking around with my 10 year old daughter not knowing where we were going to stay that night. It was very stressful and depressing, especially as I was heavily pregnant and my relationship had broken down. I have good support from friends and family who would put us up for a few nights at a time but it was very hard and very embarrassing to keep asking.

As soon as my second daughter was born, I knew I couldn't keep going the way I had been so I presented to the family service. Since then, my key-worker Lisa has been a great help, advising me on what to do. She immediately sorted out B&B accommodation, I was delighted to know where I was going to be sleeping that night. It was somewhere warm and comfortable with my kids. However, it was hard trying to wash, sterilise and make bottles. I couldn't cook hot meals, we were depending on take-aways or being invited to someone's house for dinner. I also have a very active 10 year old that couldn't go out to play and was bored all the time. We had to walk 35 minutes to school every morning with bags of washing and the baby in the buggy.

After more than three weeks like this I got a call from Lisa to say that one of Novas' apartments had become available. Although it is still temporary accommodation, it is a home we can stay in without having to check in and out. I can cook and clean and most importantly I can get the kids back in a routine. A huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I don't have as much stress and worry. I am so thankful for all the support that Novas have given me. I honestly don't know where I would be without them.

I am now settled in the apartment. The staff check in every day to make sure everything is OK. They helped me buy some kitchen appliances and a mattress for the baby's cot and they also helped me move my things in. I call to the office at least once a week and they support me to source permanent accommodation.

Every member of staff is so nice and helpful. I never feel judged... just helped.

OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

Novas' Out-of-Hours service operates from the premises of the Intensive Family Support service. It is funded by and works in conjunction with the Limerick Homeless Action Team. It provides an out-of-hours service for homeless people in the city to access temporary accommodation from 5pm to 9pm each evening and from 12pm to 4pm at the weekends. Furthermore, a 24-hour emergency free phone number is available outside of these hours. The service is vital to eliminating rough-sleeping in the city.

During 2014 there were 378 referrals made to the service. More than 70% were in receipt of support. Of the remainder, 17% were under 18 years so could not be supported, while others were referred but did not present. Some 57% of those who accessed the service had done so before.

WEST CORK TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

Opened in March 2012, Novas' West Cork Tenancy Support and Sustainment service was our first service in the county and added to our suite of programmes in rural Ireland. The service covers an extensive geographical remit, stretching from Bandon to Mizen Head and includes large county towns and rural dwellings.

The service offers sensitive and pragmatic supports to families and individuals living in West Cork who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or need to be supported to move from mental health services to independent living. It works closely with the local mental health services, hospitals and the local authority. It accepts self-referrals and referrals from statutory and non-statutory bodies.

In 2014, some 70% of all referrals were able to access support, accounting for more than 50 families and single adults. The age profile of this service was much higher than of other Novas services, with 33% between the ages of 41 and 60 years. While the sample is too small to be conclusive, there is some evidence to suggest that the age profile among those experiencing rural homelessness is higher than in urban centres and warrants further investigation.

The reasons for client access were complex and varied with 14% having been evicted from their accommodation and a further 14% asked to leave the family home. A further 21% of clients were at risk of becoming homeless, while a significant portion were living in sub-standard accommodation.

Tenancy sustainment was the single greatest support need of clients (28%), followed by mental health (13%), life skills (12%) and alcohol abuse (8%). Some 10% of all those who received support through the service had been in the care system as children.

CULTURAL BARRIERS AND FAMILY REPUTATION WERE SOME OF THE OBSTACLES FACED BY CLIENTS IN ACCESSING ACCOMMODATION IN THE WEST CORK AREA.

Cultural barriers and family reputation were some of the obstacles faced by clients in accessing accommodation in the West Cork area. Considering the lack of homeless services and the extent of rural isolation in the region, this is a vital advocacy medium for such vulnerable and marginalised people in West Cork.

LINDA'S STORY

My name is Linda and the service came into my life at a time when everything else had failed and I was hanging on by a thread. Emotionally, physically and mentally I had been at the lowest point of my life. I was in a place where there was no light whatsoever and everyday was a struggle to be alive. I was given the number of Novas' Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service and I thought 'here we go again. This would just lead to another road to nowhere.' However, how wrong was I?

I contacted the service and met up with a tenancy sustainment co-ordinator. I listened to them and got to know them. They are genuine people who care about the lives of others. Without their help and concern I would not be in a place that I can now call home. I have found a happiness that I can't even explain or describe; one that I have never felt before. Revived from the shell of a woman that I had been to a more happy, peaceful, active and alive person. I feel that I'm a 'whole new me'. I can now look forward to a new brighter future with endless possibilities. From a dark, damp, dusty dustbin I came to a bright, sunny, airy heaven of my own where I am now the true captain of my destiny. I feel that I am now in control of my life.

It was a struggle to keep afloat. But I am proud. I survived and stayed strong. The good people make up for the bad people in life and Novas are in a class of their own. They sincerely aim to improve the quality of life and happiness of those who have struggled - the homeless, the broken, the beaten, the damaged and the victims. Novas supported me in being a survivor and a believer in humanity.

Life is precious and for me right now it is a wonderful life thanks to Novas.

HEALTH

Novas recognises that the difficulties experienced by people who are homeless can often be complex and wide-ranging. In addition to a housing need, our clients may experience physical and mental health problems, difficulties arising from substance misuse, or the effects of having experienced trauma. This means that, to provide the best possible support, a 'multi-dimensional' response may be required, often involving a number of different agencies. This approach is sometimes referred to as 'Biopsychosocial'. While traditional biomedical approaches have focused solely on the medical and clinical needs of the person, the Biopsychosocial

THE BEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT, A 'MULTI-DIMENSIONAL' RESPONSE ... REFERRED TO AS 'BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL'

approach looks beyond this to see all aspects of the client's circumstances, including their relationships with others, as equally important to improving their well-being. Novas is committed to working with its statutory partners in the HSE, in mental health and disability services and others to provide a range of tailored supports appropriate to an individual client's needs. For our clients this means that they are not seen through a single lens or a narrow perspective, but that they are given the treatment and the opportunities that every person deserves, in a way which values their individual strengths and humanistic qualities, and will allow them to move on, from homelessness to health.

RESEARCH AND AWARDS

Novas is committed to an evidence-based approach to informing its policies and practices in improving the health of all its clients and residents. During 2014, it published a piece of research entitled 'HEADS UP; Preventing and Responding to Overdose there. McGarry House was chosen as the research site due to the extent of overdose and addiction among the residents there. The research followed an 18 month period in which there were 36 incidences of overdose in McGarry House. It was conducted by Quality Matters and the Graduate Entry Medical School in UL and included interviews and surveys with residents and staff who were directly affected by overdose. Twelve recommendations emerged including; a peer education programme for overdose risk and prevention, enhancing existing harm reduction and low-threshold approaches, developing inter-agency responses and staff supports and potentially developing a naloxone distribution programme, when permitted by law⁷.

In late 2014 the quality of research was recognised when the report was awarded Best Patient Lifestyle Award at the Irish Healthcare Awards in the Shelbourne Hotel. This prestigious recognition has reinforced our commitment to providing the highest quality care and support in improving health standards among our clients.

IN LATE 2014 THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH WAS RECOGNISED WHEN THE REPORT WAS AWARDED BEST PATIENT LIFESTYLE AWARD AT THE IRISH HEALTHCARE AWARDS IN THE SHELBOURNE HOTEL.

From this research, our TOPPLE programme is being developed. This is a peer overdose prevention programme, targeting homeless people in Ireland. The programme is unique in content and delivery, in that it addresses events preceding, during and after the event of overdose and seeks to empower those directly affected. It trains participants (initially clients of our McGarry House service) to recognise signs of potential overdose among vulnerable individuals, how to respond in the event of overdose and how to support those who experienced non-fatal overdose after the occasion.

In addition to the development of the peer education programme, Novas' McGarry House is also one of the first sites in the country to pilot the distribution of Naloxone, which has recently saved the lives of two clients.

There are further plans afoot to engage in research during 2015, examining the pathways to homelessness and the link between early school leavers and the pathways to prison.

NOVAS HEALTH SERVICES

In conjunction with the provision of housing, Novas has developed services aimed at improving the health of its clients. While some of these are stand-alone health services, others are intertwined in the realms of housing and recovery, in an effort to provide holistic support and an exit from homelessness for all our clients.

COMMUNITY DETOX

Funded by the Mid West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Forum, Novas' Community Detox is part of a national initiative supported by the HSE and the ICGP, whose aim is to support people to access safer out-patient detoxification from methadone and benzodiazepines. The process is defined in written protocols developed by an expert group which identifies specific roles for GPs, key-workers, and brokers. The broker's role is to raise awareness of the initiative and to support engagement of doctors and key-workers throughout in the Mid-West.

Some 94 clients engaged in the service throughout 2014, 57 of these were new and the remainder were ongoing in their recovery and treatment. While the service covers the Mid-West region, the majority of clients emanate from Limerick City. Just over 60% of new clients came from Limerick city, 18% from Clare, 18% from North Tipperary and 3% from Limerick county. While persons from Limerick city still comprise the largest portion (which is to be expected considering it is an urban centre with the biggest population), the staff and management of the service have been very successful in widening the service's remit to rural locations. In 2012, just 27% of referrals came from outside Limerick City, which increased to 39% by 2014. This was a result of an active awareness campaign by the service broker as well as the growing recognition of the value of the service by external agencies in the region.

While the type of drugs people sought detoxification from varied little since the service opened in 2012 (as protocols refer to methadone and benzodiazepine detox), the number of people engaged in poly-drug use increased significantly, accounting for more than 60% of all clients during the last twelve-month period, compared to 31% in 2012. Benzodiazepines were the single largest category at more than 40%, followed by cannabis, methadone and heroin.

Two-thirds of all clients were male and one-third female. The largest age profile was 31 to 40 years, but a considerable minority were aged between 18 and 21 years and between 41 and 60 years, 11% and 14% respectively. The variances in age, location and gender highlights that addiction transcends social, economic, age and class boundaries.

⁷ Limerick was one of the chosen locations for the National Naloxone Pilot and has begun a demonstration in McGarry House, with much initial success.

STREET OUTREACH

Novas' Street Outreach is an entirely unfunded service, established by a group of Novas staff six years ago. It has since grown exponentially due to the recent housing crisis and the number of people subsequently entrenched in poverty.

In 2014 the service provided more than 10,500 meals to vulnerable individuals on the streets of Limerick City. Up to 30 individuals per night access the service, many of whom have no other means of being fed. For others, it provides respite from social isolation often experienced by this marginalised group. While some clients are potentially homeless, sleeping rough and in squats, the majority are living in their own accommodation but struggling to make ends meet. This service is the difference between paying their rent and becoming homeless.

IN 2014 THE SERVICE PROVIDED MORE THAN 10,500 MEALS

The street outreach is run by our highly committed volunteer team, who work in pairs each evening. It is entirely dependent on donations and costs in the region of €12,500 per annum to run. It would not be possible to continue the work of the service without the sustained support and generosity of The Greenhills Hotel, who have been donating hot meals for clients each evening, since the service was established. We are also fortunate to be supported by Foodcloud, which not only provides foodstuffs to our Street Outreach Service but also to many of our accommodation services.

From 2015, the Street Outreach will be operated from a van, equipped to provide the service. This will enable volunteers to move location easily, as demand requires.



THE SOUP RUN

Rose & I decided to get involved with the 'Soup Run' having watched the television programme 'Secret Millionaire' with Richard Mulcahy. We were both discussing the programme in the office and decided we would look into getting involved with the project. We rang Sinead, who was the co-ordinator at the time. She agreed to meet with us during our lunch break and gave us a summary of what was involved and told us we would have training on same. So we started in October 2012 along with a volunteer who was experienced and would drive the van. We didn't really have a clue what was involved but we learnt very quickly. Initially we collected our van and supplies in the Old Brother Russell Home before it was demolished but this was changed to McGarry House during the renovations. We set up a table and give out the dinners, sandwiches, tea, coffee and soups from a designated spot on O'Connell Street.

We meet every Monday evening at Brother Russell at 6.30pm along with our driver. We load up our van and head for the Greenhills to collect the hot dinners, and then we go to Hook & Ladder restaurant where we collect some more really nice scones and muffins. We aim to get to our distribution point at about 7.00pm where people will have started congregating. We give out dinners initially, then a sandwich and tea/coffee/soup and maybe some scones and muffins if people would like them.

I think we both agree that during the course of the two years we have been involved with Novas and the 'Soup Run' we have met really nice people along the way who tell us how much they appreciate what we are doing. It is easy for us, the volunteers, to give a very small bit of our time each Monday evening, we can then go back to our homes, have a nice dinner and a warm bed at the end of the night.

Some of the people we meet tell us they are living on the streets or in very cold, dreary flats. Some are just bedding down on couches with friends and others are waiting and waiting to try and get a roof over their heads. We feel it is a very good service that Novas are providing. Some of the clients we know feel embarrassed to be queuing up for food but we reassure them and we never question why they are there and that we are here if they want to have a chat or need not if they so wish.

We both enjoy doing the 'Soup Run' and hope to be there for the long haul! We feel the Greenhills Hotel and Hook & Ladder are to be commended for supplying really nice food to such a worthy cause. Who knows the day when any one of us could be in that position and would be in need of a hand. I am glad we are able to help in some small way and hopefully the service will continue for as long as it is needed.



RECOVERY

'Recovery' is a concept familiar to many in the context of finding sobriety after a period of drug or alcohol addiction. In recent years, recovery has been increasingly adopted as a concept central in mental health policy in many countries including the USA, the UK and Ireland. This movement began in the 1970's and was led by people who had themselves experienced mental health problems and had gone on to find recovery and work within the mental health industry. While there is no single definition of recovery for people with mental health problems, the guiding principle is hope - this means that recovery begins with the belief that it is possible to find a path back from being merely a 'patient', to living a self-determined, full, and meaningful life. Many people who are successfully recovering from mental health problems have said that the help of others was crucial to them. Novas staff work closely with our clients to facilitate and enhance their path to recovery; this means bolstering hope, increasing resilience, gaining new coping skills, and planning for a future in which they can live life to its fullest.

WHILE THERE IS NO SINGLE DEFINITION OF RECOVERY FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE IS HOPE

Novas staff support clients through recovery in terms of their mental health, homelessness and addiction and is a vital element of key-working sessions since our first service was opened in 2002. We also support clients through research and development, links with external agencies and staff training. The latter is immensely important in providing clients with professional and good practice support in addressing their issues and seeking recovery. Some of the training provided to staff, to support clients in this ways includes harm reduction and dual diagnosis. Other training included opiate and overdose training, cognitive behaviour training and safer injecting. In addition, bespoke training, especially designed for Novas staff, to support traumatised clients was provided.

RESPITE HOUSE

Funded by the Mid West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Forum, Novas' Respite House recognises the impact of alcohol and drug misuse and its effect on the family's ability to cope with the challenges they face in their lives. It offers individuals and families opportunities in short term respite care to relax in a safe and peaceful environment, be heard, develop new coping skills, receive therapies such as reiki, reflexology, massage and acupuncture and gain the necessary skills to feel empowered

During 2014 the Respite House provided a service to 227 clients. Of these clients, 188 attended individually, in pairs, or as a family unit and a further 39 attended as part of a group.

The profile of clients, in terms of where they are from, changed significantly from the previous twelve-month period. In 2013, the majority of clients were from Limerick City (54%), while in 2014 the greatest portion of clients were from North Tipperary, accounting for 39%. This is due to the geographical location of the service, situated in the latter region as well as the endeavours of staff to actively widen the remit of the service to include people from throughout the Mid-West. The county of origin of clients reveals the pervasive nature of drug and alcohol addiction in the region, which is not confined to urban areas.



To enhance the experience of clients, during 2014 the service began offering existing clients the opportunity to participate in shared respite days, in small numbers of two or three. This opportunity enables clients to access the support of peers, to make steps towards developing the skills to engage in group processes, as well as having the effect of extending the capacity of the service.

Next year, in 2015, a peer-led Respite Aftercare Group will be established to support clients who have accessed the Respite House.

RESPITE HOUSE

Where I come from, a small parish, it's not common to leave your husband because of alcohol abuse. Where I came from, women just get on with it and sweep it all under the carpet. I couldn't stay with my husband and it was getting worse. I thought I was the one with the problem so I literally just ran. I was blessed to have a supportive family but they couldn't really understand everything and to be honest, I didn't understand everything either, except that I wasn't happy in the house.

Things didn't get any better and my family support worker referred me to the Respite House. I was sceptical but it sounded like what I needed. I felt nervous when I first met Martina, but from the time we chatted, from that day on, things got better. I was blessed to meet her and she gave me great hope and positivity. From then on she has always been there. I often rang her at times I needed advice and guidance and she has always been there.

I then went to the Respite House itself. That was such a spiritual place, the treatment I received was fantastic, the chats and meeting people whom went through the same thing I did and seeing how well they have progressed gave me great hope. Most of all it made me feel safe. It gave me great time to reflect and think and it is a sense of security to know I have this place to go too and look forward to.

I always feel refreshed, energized and relaxed when I leave there and it is great to know you're not on your own. I was matched up with another girl in the Respite and we have become good friends. We have been there and listened to each other and joined groups together. The Respite House has given me courage, hope, faith in myself, self-care, worth and value.

The Respite House has been a light to me and I have accomplished so much since arriving here. I have accomplished so much and have much more to come. I would not like to think about if I did not have this house to come too. It brings so much light to me and I am so grateful for this.

HOUSING FIRST

Novas has been very supportive of the Housing First model since it was first referenced in the Government's 2008 Homeless Strategy. We have participated in many forums on the model, at both national and European level since then, so that we were ideally placed to establish our own pilot in Limerick two years ago.

Novas piloted its first Housing First programme in October 2013 in response to one individual's complex needs following his departure from an accommodation services in Limerick. Since then, the model has been rolled out to include other service users, with various levels of care and types of accommodation provided, depending on the needs of each client. In 2014, six persons were supported through Housing First; some in private rented accommodation and others in Novas' long-term housing. All six ended the year having successfully maintained their accommodation, facilitated in part by the bespoke care and support from the Housing First team. This is a remarkable achievement considering the support needs of these clients and the difficulties they previously experienced in maintaining independent accommodation for any length of time.

All Housing First clients are case managed and risk assessed in accordance with Novas' guidelines. A multi-disciplinary case-management team is charged with the development of outreach support tailored around the individual client. Care plans are drafted and followed in collaboration with the client. An open and pragmatic approach is taken by staff at all times, respecting the client's right to dignity and autonomy in their own home. Harm reduction principles are employed where a client is unable to address addiction.

Novas recognises that for some homeless individuals, temporary supported accommodation is not suitable to their needs, rather individually tailored support is key to unlocking the barriers that have prevented them from sustaining private accommodation. Communal accommodation, for some people entrenched in addiction and with serious mental and physical needs, does not assist their recovery. In starting a Housing First service (fully funded to-date by Novas), Novas was attempting to provide more solutions to the homeless population by increasing the avenues open to them to exit their homeless state. This exit needs to be regardless of their addiction, health status or perceived ability to sustain accommodation. Housing First is particularly suited to 'revolving door' clients who find it difficult to maintain their own accommodation upon leaving homeless services and end up re-entering supported temporary accommodation.

Housing First is an attractive solution on a number of levels. The potential for cost savings is naturally a consideration but more importantly, the opportunity to de-institutionalise a person and re-integrate them into their community is significant. The opportunity to assist a person in developing life-skills in their own home is the most important facet of the model combined with the security it affords tenants. There is also an opportunity for potential rehabilitation to occur when the immediate access to substances and a peer group deeply entrenched in substance misuse is removed. Finally, one cannot under-estimate the peace and autonomy that comes with a key to one's own front door.

BROTHER RUSSELL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

In 2014 Novas designed and implemented two bespoke services for persons with complex needs, following instruction from the HSE. Novas had considerable experience in this sector, having previously worked with the disability section of the HSE in relation to the care of vulnerable patients exiting institutional care. Vulnerabilities included serious physical disabilities, learning disabilities and acquired brain injuries. Very often, these conditions were exacerbated by an addiction or mental health issue.

On the foot of such experience, Novas set up a community service to support vulnerable individuals in 2014. It was developed specifically for one young man who was considered extremely vulnerable. He was unable to live independently or to reside in his family home. This service has enjoyed much success and has provided the client with the life-skills to maintain his own accommodation. The service now supports three individuals in this capacity. The house is similar to DIAL in that the focus is on young people, however clinical involvement is paramount here. The combination of clinical support provided by the HSE and psychotherapy services and the psycho-social support provided by Novas has meant that these clients have the best possible opportunity to maintain their own accommodation and live meaningful lives.

In late 2014, Novas were approached by the Mental Health Services within the HSE to develop an additional service for a person being referred from an acute setting. Having spent a significant period of time in an institutional environment, it was a considerable transition for this individual. Under the watchful eye of the Mental Health Commission and in partnership with the clinical team in Limerick and Clare, the care and support package for this client was moved to Brother Russell House. This service will be examined in greater detail in next year's report, however preliminary indicators suggest that the new service is providing very powerful outcomes for the client.

Novas is committed to developing these specific health and recovery services for marginalised persons. We are committed to engaging in multi-dimensional responses when designing services, to enhance the outcomes for clients. Securing a service and home for someone with severe and enduring mental health issues should not solely rest on the shoulders of the mental health services and equally, supporting someone who is homeless and has an addiction, a disability or a mental health issue should not fall to homeless and housing services alone – a multi-agency approach is necessary if enduring solutions are to be found.

Finally Brother Russell House, DIAL and our services in North Tipperary continue to extend their support services through the provision of outreach to former clients and other vulnerable people in the community. This outreach is largely unfunded.

BEFRIENDING

Our befriending programme is delivered by a team of dedicated volunteers with varied skills. The programme was developed to enhance the lives of Novas clients, promote social inclusion and progress recovery. Very often, people entrenched in addiction and homelessness and those with serious mental health issues have, throughout the years, lost their family support networks. Moreover, many of those engaged in recovery and detox have had to forego close relationships to preserve their recovery. Social isolation is thus a very prevalent issue for many of our clients, particularly those living in our long-term independent units. Evidence shows that social isolation is one of the biggest identifiers of the high rate of suicide in the country.

In a bid to support clients overcome social exclusion and enhance their ability to integrate into their local communities, Novas developed a befriending programme. Residents are paired with befrienders, at their request. All volunteers are trained for this role and peer support groups are thereafter facilitated by Novas staff, aimed at enhancing the experience of the client and the expertise of the volunteer. Activities with befrienders are regularly planned and vary from going for a cup of coffee, to supporting someone to do their weekly shopping, go on cinema trips and sporting occasions.

The programme has been very successful and continues to grow and our training has been taken up by other organisations. It enhances the self-confidence of residents and tenants to engage in everyday activities, many of which were lost through years of homelessness and addiction.





VOLUNTEERING AND FUNDRAISING

We are hugely thankful to all the individuals, companies, schools and local community groups that have contributed to our services throughout 2014. Every mile you have run, cup of coffee you have poured and donation you have made has enabled us to extend our services and support more marginalised families and individuals. The organisation of such events is integral to both raising awareness of the issue of homelessness and raising funds for the cause of ending homelessness.

Your imagination, energy and spirit knows no bounds! From carol singing, to bag packing, coffee mornings to song recordings, you have enhanced our services and the lives of our clients. All donations and monies raised through fundraising go directly to supporting our frontline services.

Each Christmas Novas' Intensive Family Support service operates its Annual Toy Appeal for the families it works with throughout the year, approximately 140 in total. Christmas is often a difficult time for those engaged in our services, particularly for people with children. In an effort to make it a little easier, the IFS, through the appeal, seeks to provide gifts for every child engaged in the service. Each year we hope that every child will have a present to open on Christmas morning thanks to the overwhelming generosity of those who participate.

Last year toys with a value of more than €10,000 were donated to the appeal by individuals and companies throughout Limerick city and county. We wish to extend a hearty thank you to every person who donated to this very special cause.

Last Christmas was our second year in which local businesses in the regions we work in, kindly participated in our appeal to make a donation to Novas Homeless Services in lieu of Christmas cards. We were very fortunate to raise approximately €18,000 for this appeal and are extremely grateful for all the generous donations from companies throughout Ireland.

Finally, we would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who made a donation to Novas services throughout 2014. From children organising events, to our regular donors, we are indebted to you all. All of these donations go directly to supporting our clients and enable us to help more marginalised people seeking our support. We would particularly like to acknowledge the hugely generous donation of the JP McManus Benevolent Fund, who contributed €300,000 towards the purchase of eight houses for our Intensive Family Support Service. In 2015, these houses will become home to eight formerly homeless families.

GOVERNANCE, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND FINANCE

GOVERNANCE

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

Novas welcomes the function of the Housing Agency and the new Charities Regulator. It does not view the bodies as a watchdog rather a guiding light in enabling approved housing bodies and charities to function with transparency and enabling public confidence in our endeavours.

Since the formation of Novas, the organisation, with the supports of its Board of Directors, has developed policies and protocols to ensure good governance. With the formation of the Housing Agency and the Charities Regulator and complying with the standards set down therein, we have enhanced our well-laid foundations.

As a result of the introduction of the Companies Act 2014 we are undertaking further legal review to ensure compliance with same and recommendations identified in that review will be examined at board level with a view to implementation.





PICTURED ABOVE

Staff from Novas Homeless Services, Quality Matters and UL Graduate Entry Medical School receiving their award for Best Patient Lifestyle Education Project at the Irish Healthcare Awards

OUR BOARD

The work of Novas is overseen by a Board of eight voluntary non-executive Directors. The Board are appointed annually at AGM by the members. The Directors, in the discharge of their duties to the organisation, endeavour to uphold the values and ethos of Novas.

The Board employs a Chief Executive Officer who has responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation. There is a distinct separation between the roles of the Board and the executive (CEO and Senior Management Team).

The Board provides support in ensuring that the organisation achieves its objectives, this is particularly evidenced in the work of the sub-groups within the management board. Currently there are five sub-groups; Governance, Health and Safety, Finance, Client Welfare and Property and Development. Each sub-group is chaired by a director who in turn reports back to the Board.

During 2014 the Board met on four occasions and there were 34 sub-group meetings held.

In respect of significant achievements overseen by the various subgroups in 2014, it is noted that the Property and Development sub-group was involved in the following developments:

- The demolition and reconstruction of our Brother Russell House service
- The transfer of our womens facility from Dublin City Centre to Finglas, doubling the capacity of the project, which like the development at Brother Russell House, saw a move away from shared rooms.
- The construction of our Bellevue House Children's Home, which provides a safe, secure, energy efficient home for unaccompanied minors.
- The development of apartments at Haarlem Court to provide independent living to homeless persons/families at risk of homelessness and those with special needs.

The Client Welfare subgroup achievements include:

- The undertaking of an overdose research piece in McGarry House, in partnership with the Graduate Entry Medical School in the University of Limerick and Quality Matters, entitled Heads Up; Preventing and Responding to Overdose in McGarry House. This research was recommended by our Client Subgroup and went onto be published and receive an award at the 2014 Irish Healthcare Awards.
- The Chair of our Client Subgroup Dr. Maria O'Dwyer carried out a survey and chaired a client focus group on how we could improve our services to clients and based on those findings made recommendations which were implemented.
- Ensuring every service (with the exception of Arlington Lodge) provides a single unit of accommodation to clients.

- Recommending and ensuring that our Street Outreach service increase to seven nights per week, thus providing more than 10,000 meals to vulnerable people in Limerick City during the year.
- Employing a Volunteers Coordinator to ensure appropriate volunteer training was carried out thus ensuring risks were minimized.

Health and Safety Subgroup achievements include:

- Engaging a Health and Safety advisor in 2013 and assigning specific targets which were met in 2014, most particularly completing a Health and Safety feasibility study of every project and implementation of same.

Governance Sub Group achievements include:

- Ongoing review of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Governance Code.
- Completing the Housing Agency Annual Return 2014 which received very positive feedback from the regulator.
- Devising and implementing a Risk Management Strategy.
- Advising the Board of their statutory obligations as codified in the Companies Act 2014.

Finance and Audit Sub Group achievements include:

- Delivering services on budget despite continuing cuts.
- Discussing and implementing cost saving measures.
- Despite budgetary cuts, approving the development of a new disabilities services.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

2014 was a busy year in Novas from a health and safety perspective. A detailed and comprehensive review of the safety management system within the organisation took place. The purpose of this review was to identify areas of compliance with the existing arrangements for safety, health and welfare, which forms the basis of our compliance with the 2005 Act and other statutory provisions.

An integral part of this process was a planned and systematic programme of audits carried out by our Safety Advisor on all services, which provided a structured process of collecting information on the efficiency, effectiveness and reliability of the overall safety and health management system within the organisation and drawing up plans for corrective actions where required. Robust audit protocols and procedures were established, documented and maintained to ensure the continued effectiveness of the safety and health management system.

It is recognised that our safety statements are live documents which will continue to evolve over time and be subject to review in the event of changes to our organisational structure or where other statutory requirements dictate. Working closely with service managers, site specific safety statements and risk assessments were reviewed and updated for each service to reflect their current safety management programme.

A Corporate Safety Statement was developed, the aim of which was to formally declare the means by which the management of Novas Initiatives intends to comply with its statutory duty in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and associated regulations. This Corporate Safety Statement was endorsed by our CEO as an illustration of his commitment to the statement's objectives and plans.

Scheduled health and safety committee meetings took place as part of our consultation and communication programme which forms a vital part of any safety management programme. Monthly safety briefings on relevant health and safety topics were also disseminated to each service, to be communicated to all staff.

Our health and safety systems improved substantially during 2014, with such improvement being built upon during 2015, making Novas a safer and healthier place for everyone to work. We are committed that our Safety Management Programme will be subject to continual review. This will ensure that the work environment and systems of work continue to be safe and that they contribute to quality improvement of our services for all our employees and all others affected by our activities.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2014 was again a challenging year for funding. While the cuts to statutory funding were not as significant as in recent years, we were at levels not seen since the early part of the century, at a time of unprecedented demand for our services. We now hope that we have reached the low point in terms of statutory funding, and that the economic recovery will lead to an increase.

In 2014, the total income generated by Arlington Novas Ireland Limited was €7.309M. Revenue based grants received by our organisation for core homeless funding amounted to €5.299M. This represented 72.5% of our total income. The additional amount related primarily to the enhanced service in our women’s service in Dublin.

Non-core funding for 2014 was €1.111M. This relates primarily to funding from the Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, Disabilities, Outreach Services and dealing with specific individual clients on behalf of the state.

Other income was €899k (an increase of 10.2%). This other income consists of contributions from our service users, deposit interest, donations and fundraising.

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

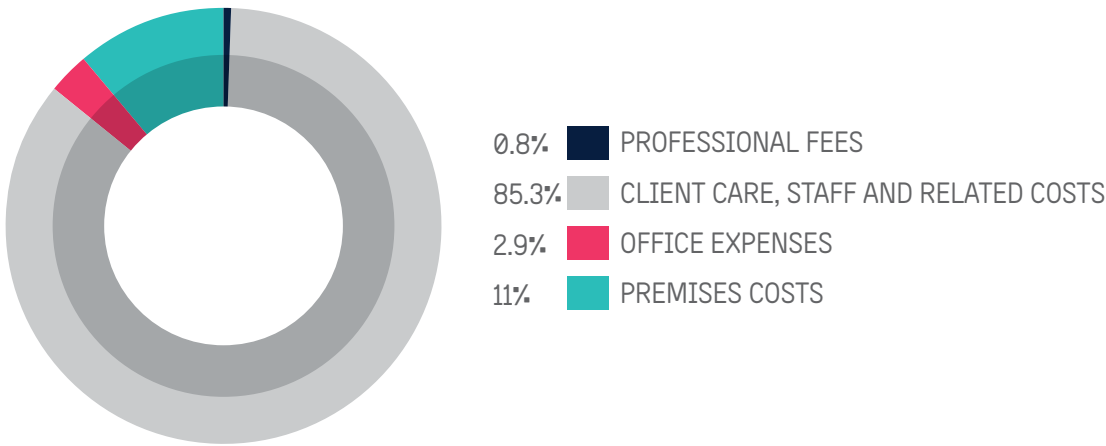
Set out below is a breakdown of our income for 2014 by source.

We have maintained expenditure at a similar level to last year. We continue

to invest in improving our facilities and services, where possible. Client care, staff and related costs of €5.951m made up more than of 85% of our overall expenditure. Other significant areas of expenditure were on the day to day running costs of the services.

Set out below is a breakdown of the expenditure for 2014.

EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN 2014



In summary, there was a surplus of €337k in income over expenditure. Any surpluses we attain are reinvested in our services.

The remuneration of the CEO for the year was €72,518. The company also made contributions at the standard rate to the company pension scheme in respect of the CEO. No employee was paid more than this amount.

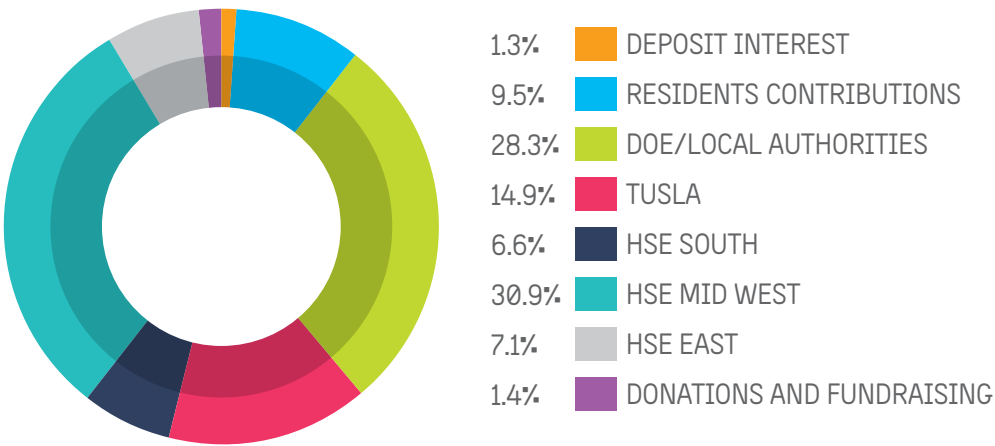
2015 will prove to be another challenging year for Arlington Novas Ireland Limited. We will continue to manage our costs as prudently as possible.

The capital programme will continue in 2015, with the purchase of long term housing in Limerick and Tralee being prioritised.

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

The Finance and Audit Committee met on three occasions during 2014.

INCOME BREAKDOWN 2014



ARLINGTON NOVAS IRELAND LIMITED

(A company limited by guarantee)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
	€	€
INCOME	7,210,020	6,785,899
Expenditure	(6,761,575)	(6,474,928)
OPERATING SURPLUS	448,445	310,971
Interest Receivable	99,327	126,180
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	(2,148)	(2,444)
SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	545,624	434,707
Tax on Surplus on Ordinary Activities	-	-
SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER TAXATION	545,624	434,707
SURPLUS BROUGHT FORWARD	2,773,667	2,544,226
Transfer to designated fund	(208,466)	(205,266)
RETAINED SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD	3,110,825	2,773,667

All amounts relate to continuing operations

There were no recognised gains and losses for 2014 or 2013 other than those included in the Income and expenditure account.

Signed on behalf of the board

Michael Flynn

DIRECTOR

Date: 29 May 2015

Martina Murphy

DIRECTOR

Date: 29 May 2015

ARLINGTON NOVAS IRELAND LIMITED

(A company limited by guarantee)

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
	€	€
FIXED ASSETS		
Housing Properties	24,029,486	18,317,473
Less Capital Assistance Scheme Loans	(19,262,839)	(16,903,252)
Less Other Capital Grants	(1,765,001)	(265,001)
	3,001,646	1,149,220
Tangible Assets	33,524	2,998
Financial Assets	3,689,370	4,550,000
	6,724,540	5,702,218
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	177,794	109,364
Cash at Bank and in Hand	1,013,211	727,250
	1,191,005	836,614
Creditors : amounts falling due within one year	(931,701)	(452,639)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	259,305	383,975
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,983,845	6,086,193
Creditors : amounts falling due after one year	(438,888)	(86,860)
NET ASSETS	6,544,957	5,999,333
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Designated Fund	3,434,132	3,225,666
Income and Expenditure Account	3,110,825	2,773,667
	6,544,957	5,999,333

Signed on behalf of the board

Michael Flynn

DIRECTOR

Date: 29 May 2015

Martina Murphy

DIRECTOR

Date: 29 May 2015



FRIENDS & PARTNERS





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