



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

**NOVAS**  
Housing | Health | Recovery



5,701

people Novas worked  
with last year.



▲ 8%

increase from the previous  
12 months and an increase  
of 493% since 2010.



1,136

families with 445 children  
supported by Novas in  
2020.



1,150

children supported through  
our Christmas Toy Appeal.



1

cocooning service  
established in Dublin  
during the pandemic.



24/7

support and accommodation  
replaced our night-by-night  
service in Limerick.



220

women supported by Novas'  
dedicated female residential  
services in the capital.



129

tenancies with 517  
tenants provided by  
years' end.



15,000

meals provided by our Street  
Outreach and our Covid specific  
meal and grocery services.

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THE DEPTH OF THE CRISIS IS REFLECTED BY THE SIMPLE FACT THAT A FAMILY ON THE AVERAGE INCOME CAN'T PLAN TO BUY A HOUSE FOR MANY YEARS.

## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

The challenges facing people who are homeless continued throughout the year. A 'perfect storm' saw the severe risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, combine with a deteriorating housing crisis and the part removal of restrictions to stop evictions. Last year less people were homeless; that has now reversed and more people are becoming homeless especially families with children.

The universal risks of the virus are especially acute for those with compromised health conditions; add to this the poor health status of most people who are homeless and their vulnerability. So into a second year our focus remained to keep the pandemic out of our services.

In the first year management and staff worked wonderfully together; this year these collaborative and mutual efforts continued. Critically, the response of clients and tenants was the key to ensuring outcomes were almost completely positive. Maintaining a 'high alert' becomes more difficult as the abnormal continues to be the normal *modus operandi*. However once again we mark the achievement of staff, clients and tenants in admiration.

Covid interrupted our daily lives and reduced our house building and acquisition programme. The national picture was even worse.

Supply and affordability remain in crisis. The construction industry closed for some months and this will impact completions in the short term. However it is over the next decade that we must realistically look to experience real lasting solutions. The problems are well known. The solution is obvious, build enough housing to meet needs.

For many years politicians have managed to raise the temperature in debating housing. Despite these heated exchanges the situation has worsened. Decent, secure housing is a basic civil right in a modern society. The government has recently launched a new initiative *Housing for All*. In recent years governments have launched a number of 'initiatives'; none achieved their goals. This one has ambition; and ambition is much needed. It acknowledges the need to have social housing play a key role in provision. That is most welcome. Will it succeed? Let us all hope so. We prioritised increased housing provision as a key element in our current strategic plan and are confident we will achieve our targets. It is crucial that over the next 10 years the housing crisis is solved.

The depth of the crisis is reflected by the simple fact that a family on the average income can't plan to buy a house for many years. Coupled with the collapse of local authority house building, many thousands of families, in need, must wait for years to have any chance of buying/ renting a decent house and enjoy a decent lifestyle. And for single people who are homeless? They remain at the end of the queue, an ever lengthening queue.

Who cares? Those of us who believe that housing is a basic right. Is it time for politicians to agree on a housing strategy which will truly take housing out of political wrangling? Is it possible they, and we, can agree on a suitable housing mix and then let everyone get on with that?



“

WHILE THE WORLD WAS STILL ADJUSTING TO THE PANDEMIC, OUR VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND MANAGEMENT SPRANG INTO ACTION TO DEVELOP NEW WAYS TO WORK WITH CLIENTS, MAINTAIN SERVICE DELIVERY AND KEEP EVERYONE SAFE.

## A WELCOME FROM OUR ACTING CEO

Our former CEO Michael Goulding has retired. Mark Vella is acting CEO.

Here Mark reflects on 2020 and the extraordinary changes imposed on our services, staff and clients.

2020 was a year like no other in every respect. The Covid-19 pandemic brought unprecedented change to everyone's lives, none more so than frontline workers and people who were homeless.

Families living in hotels and B&B's had to 'stay at home' in a single room and homeless adults had to live in congregated settings, some sharing rooms with strangers. With schools, childcare, drop-in centres and a range of vital support services closed, vulnerable households were more isolated than ever.

While the world was still adjusting to the pandemic, our volunteers, staff and management sprang into action to develop new ways to work with clients, maintain service delivery and keep everyone safe. All this was being done in

the backdrop of unprecedented national closures. With their own lives being turned upside down (no schools, no childcare!), our staff showed up day and night, going beyond the call of duty. Without complaint, shift patterns were changed, staff were requested to move services to meet needs and new social distancing and disease control measures were implemented. All happening within days. We owe an enormous gratitude to our staff, who put client welfare before their own. They showed compassion and calmness in equal measure, when it was needed most.

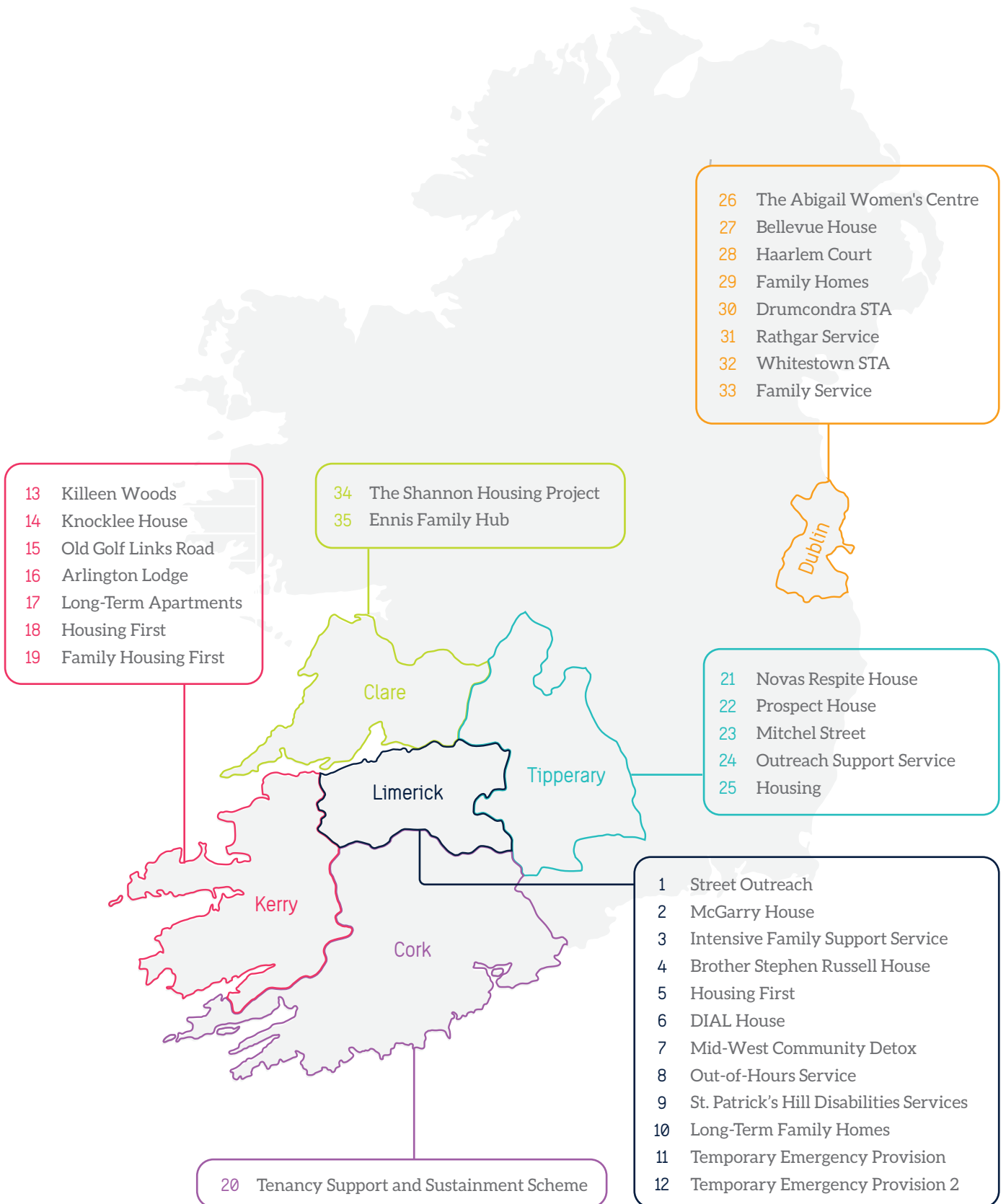
In 2020 Novas was in a position to support more clients than ever before, despite the extraordinary circumstances. We extended service provision in TEP and we opened a cocooning service in Dublin for the most vulnerable. We developed new ways of working with people in the community; phone calls, gate visits and WhatsApp chats. We began hot meal deliveries and grocery drops from our kitchens and organised play and activity packs, nappies, toiletries and other essential items for those who needed it most.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our funders. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks on behalf of all the Novas Senior Management Team for the guidance and collaboration during the most difficult days. Together, we were able to keep clients and staff safe and keep the incidences of Covid-19 in our services extremely low.

Despite the positive impact that technology had in bringing us closer to clients, nothing replaces human connection. We are so pleased to resume some of our normal interactions and look forward to even more contact in the months ahead.

**Mark Vella**  
**Novas Acting CEO**

# MAP OF SERVICES





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Greg Maxwell**  
Chairperson



**Pat Claffey**



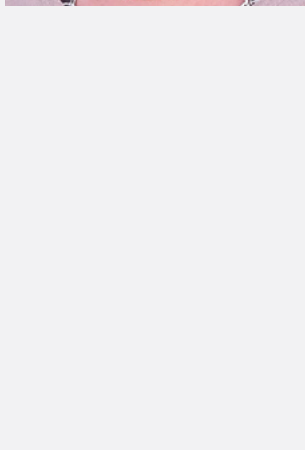
**Justin Brosnan**



**Siobhan Wheeler**



**Tracy Leonard**



**Michael O Connell**



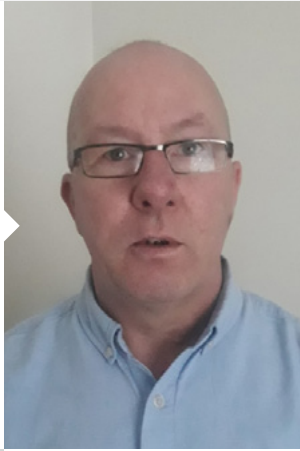
## SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Mark Vella**  
Acting CEO



**Eugene Toner**  
Head of Services,  
Mid-West



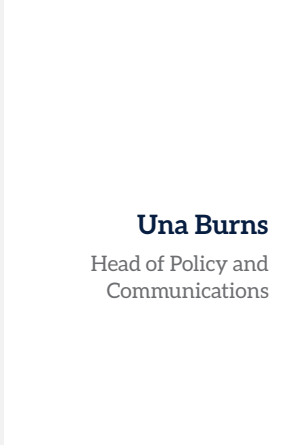
**Donal O'Carroll**  
Head of Finance



**Jenny Doyle**  
Head of Services,  
Dublin, Kerry, Cork



**John Rogers**  
Head of Property



**Una Burns**  
Head of Policy and  
Communications



# VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES & VALUES

VISION

TO PROVIDE  
LASTING SOLUTIONS  
TO HOMELESSNESS.

MISSION STATEMENT

NOVAS PROMOTES  
SOCIAL INCLUSION  
THROUGH HOUSING,  
HEALTH, RECOVERY.



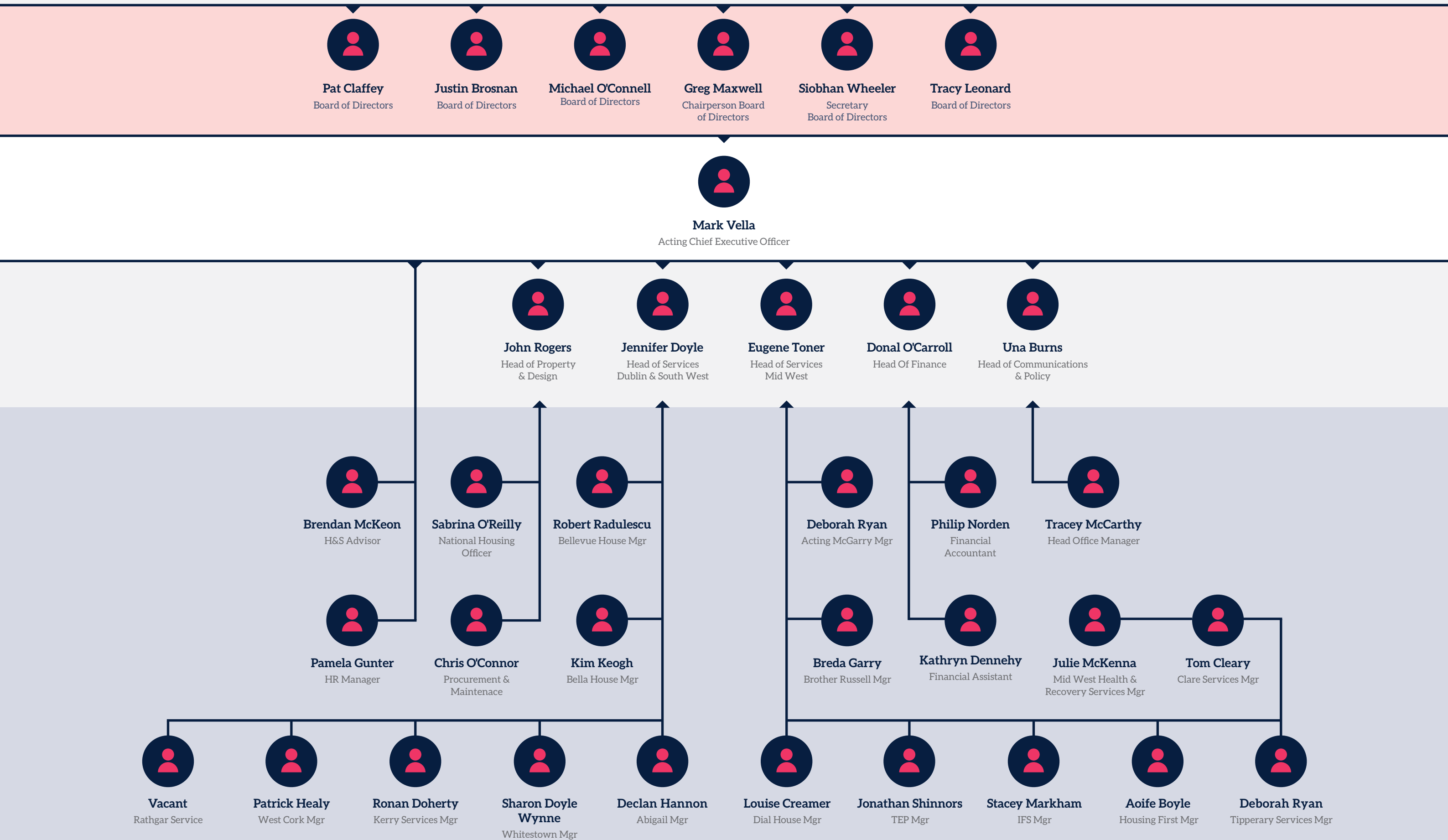
## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- > To provide homes to people who are homeless.
- > To support homeless people to have better health outcomes through interventions in drug use, mental health and disabilities.
- > To provide recovery pathways for homeless people with enduring mental health issues.
- > To empower and promote the independence of those who use our services.
- > To treat all our clients with dignity and respect.
- > To provide client-centred services, rooted in evidence, quality and good practice.
- > To advocate on behalf of people who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, entrenched in addiction or those experiencing social marginalisation through a strengths-based approach.

NOVAS' CORE VALUES ARE

- > Equality
- > Diversity
- > Dignity
- > Self-determination
- > Strengths-based
- > Rights-based

# NOVAS MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



2020:  
A YEAR LIKE  
NO OTHER

Our 20th year as an organisation providing supports and services to people who are homeless, socially excluded and on the margins of society, was an extraordinary one. No one could ever have imagined the disruption and fear that the Covid-19 pandemic would herald. The crisis had a profound impact on homeless services and the people who engaged with them. Our staff and clients lived with huge uncertainty during the period, seeking to navigate the experience of living and working safely in a congregated setting.

The commitment by our staff to continue to deliver safe, compassionate and client centred services was astounding. We owe them an indescribable gratitude. When most of the world were able to retreat to the safety of their own homes to work remotely, they showed up every day and night, to fulfil their shift duties, to support clients and often to deliver personal care and life-saving interventions where maintaining a two-meter distance was not possible.

The continued resilience of our clients, in the face of immense change, was inspiring. Much like our staff, they could not 'stay at home', with the need for safe and appropriate accommodation for everyone coming into sharp focus. Their already small support networks were diminished further as services were paused and usual interactions with staff were scaled back or completed remotely.

The pandemic had a particularly adverse impact on the many families living in B&B's and hubs across the country. With schools and childcare services closed and visits to extended family and friends prohibited, family units were confined to one bedroom for long periods of time. It was extraordinarily difficult.

However, for some people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, their accommodation arrangements improved. Many single people were placed in cocooning services and had a private room for the first time. For others, services were extended, particularly in night-by-night services. There was also greater opportunity for families to access accommodation in the



private rented market as the tourist industry collapsed and many units of accommodation that were previously earmarked for Airbnb were available for long-term lets for the first time.

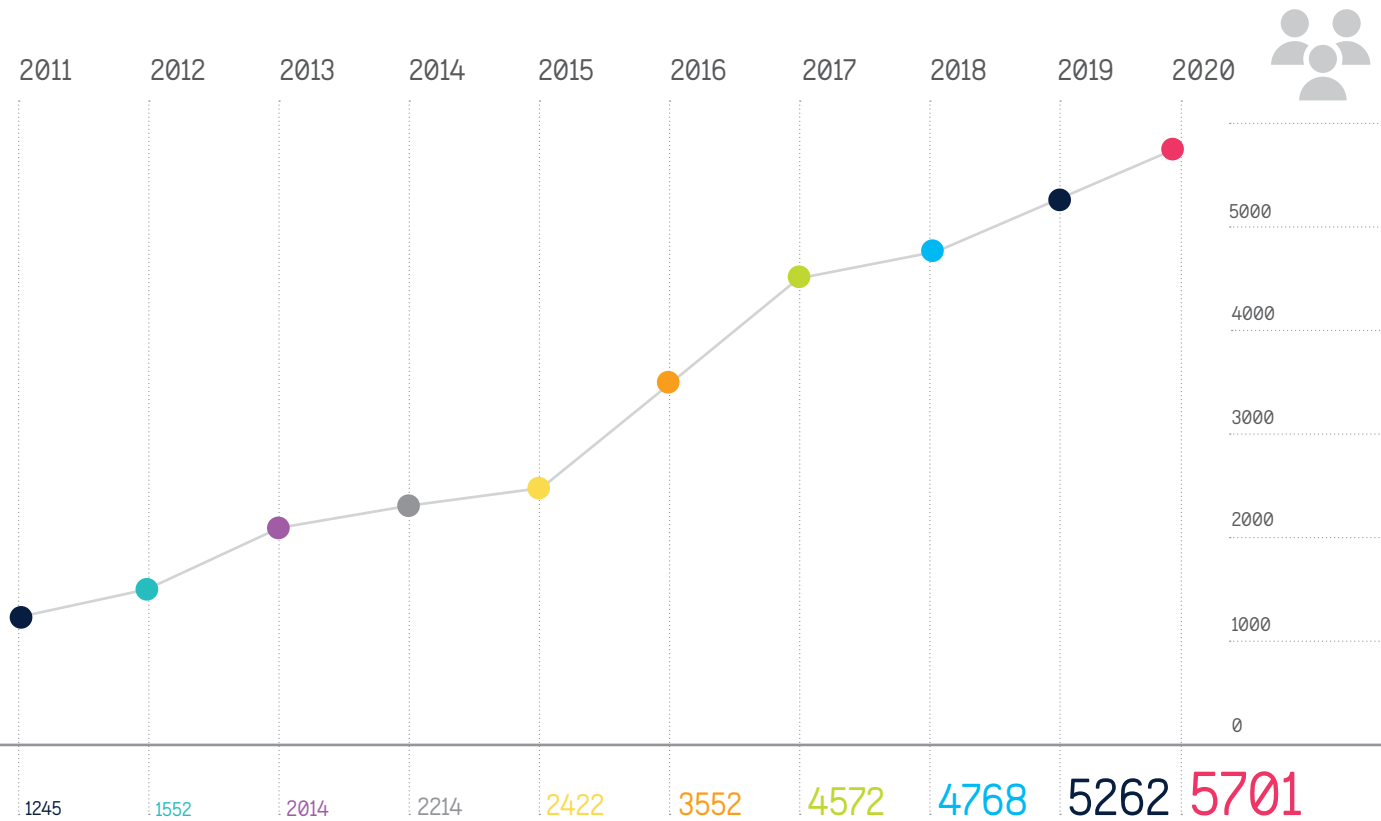
During the pandemic Novas opened a cocooning service in The Paramount Hotel in Dublin in collaboration with the HSE and the DRHE. This service supported the most vulnerable homeless people in single rooms, where clients were supported to restrict their movements while continuing to live with complex needs.

In Limerick, our Temporary Emergency Provision, which previously operated on a nightly basis from 9pm to 9am, was extended to a 24/7 service. Again this was done in collaboration with our statutory partners in the city and required a huge endeavour by all parties involved. Staffing had to double and recruitment was challenging, but through interagency partnership, we were able to meet demand.

Indeed, the extent of interagency collaboration with our statutory funders in all our services throughout the country during the pandemic was unparalleled. With the singular objective of keeping services open and clients and staff safe, the voluntary and statutory services worked hand in glove, with exceptional outcomes. The spread of the virus in services remained low throughout the pandemic, despite the congregated nature of homeless services and the vulnerability of many of the people who live in them.

Despite the challenges wrought by the pandemic, Novas was able to support more people than ever during 2020. In this year we worked with 5,701 people across a variety of services in Limerick, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and Dublin. This was an increase of more than 8% from the previous twelve-month period.

## NUMBER OF CLIENTS 2011-2020

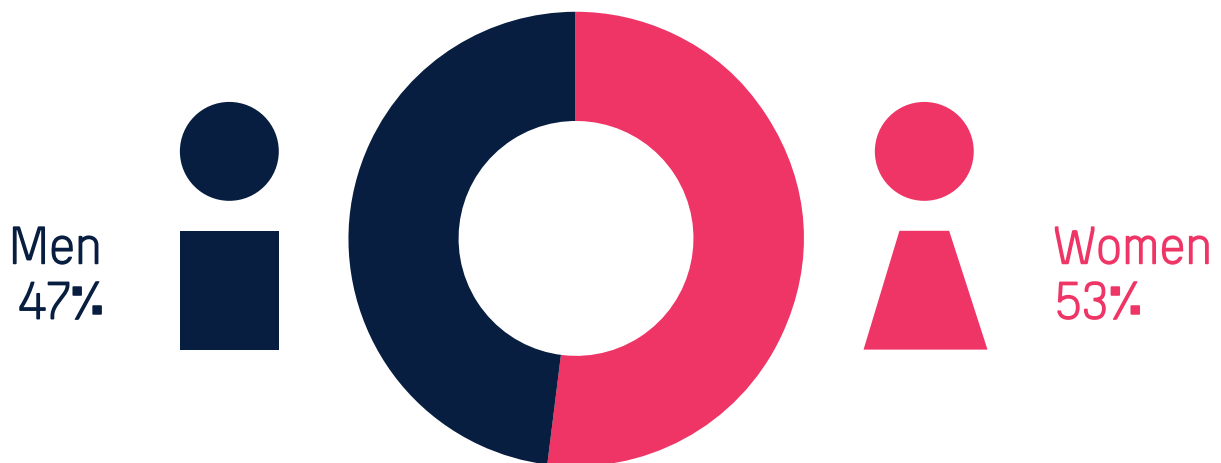


The ways in which we supported people changed. While there was less throughput in our accommodation services, we supported more people in the community. As many people temporarily lost employment and as schools and childcare remained closed, we responded to increased demand for one-off interventions in the community, such as play and activity packs, food hampers, phone support and the delivery of cooked meals.

Food poverty was a significant issue for many, as breakfast and afterschool clubs were closed for children and street outreach and day services were closed for vulnerable adults. It wasn't just our outreach services that responded to need in the community, our accommodation services also offered support to households as required. In McGarry House, food parcels were prepared for local families and hot meals and food hampers were provided to long-term tenants whose usual support structures were closed.

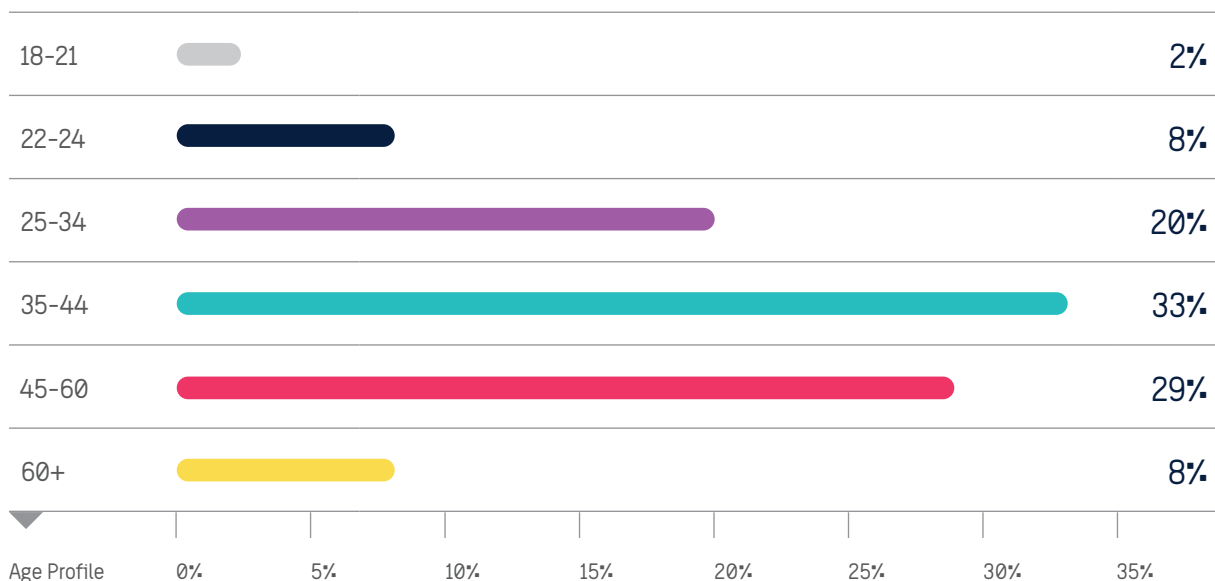
Despite the lack of throughput in temporary and emergency accommodation during the pandemic, Novas' STA services supported 632 people throughout 2020. The majority, 53%, were women, due largely to the provision of dedicated female accommodation in Dublin.

#### NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN LIVING IN NOVAS STA SERVICES IN 2020

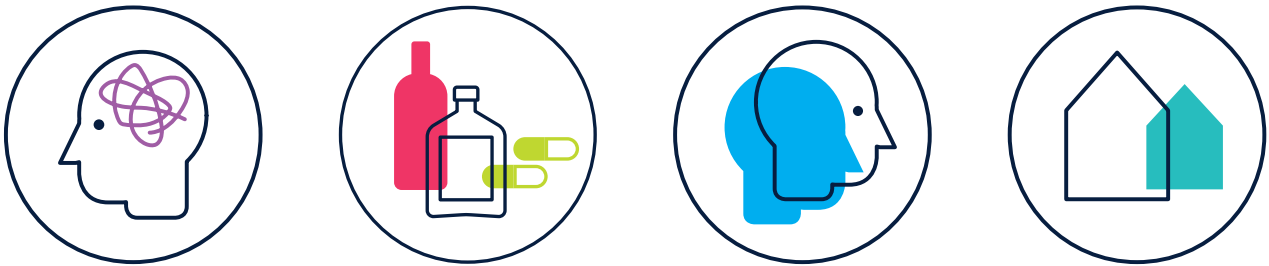


Some 33% of all clients in STA accommodation were aged between 35 and 44 years and 63% of were under 45 years of age.

#### AGE PROFILE OF CLIENTS IN NOVAS STA 2020



The needs of people requiring supported accommodation throughout the year were broad ranging and complex and included mental health, addiction, physical health, dual diagnosis, domestic and sexual violence, life skills & tenancy sustainment support.

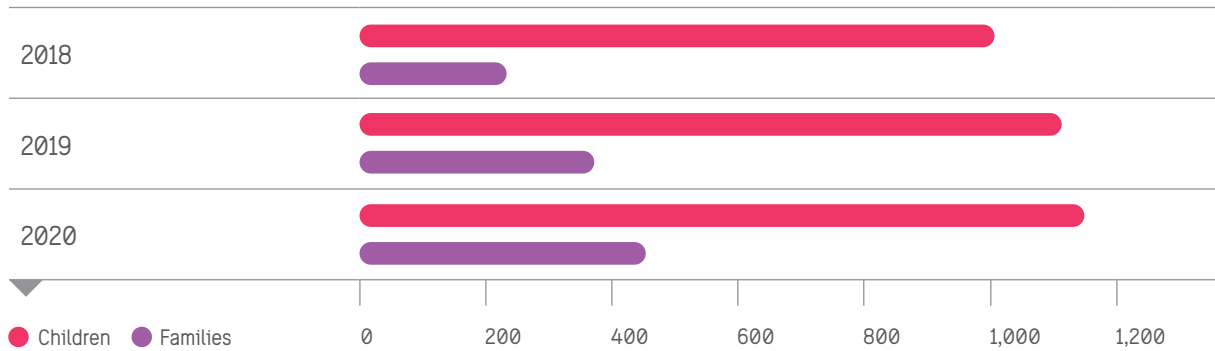


Social isolation was felt more keenly than ever among our client group, due to the general Covid closures. Addiction, overdose and risky drug use were also aggravated by the pandemic. Bi-weekly social welfare payments had the unintended consequence of increased drug use among some people in temporary accommodation. With more disposable income, drug use and the associated risks increased among many of our clients. Staff were subsequently responding to a significant rise in overdoses. For example in McGarry House, Naloxone was administered 42 times throughout the year, compared with 18 times in the previous twelve month period, illustrating the profound impact of the pandemic on already vulnerable and isolated people.

Many of the residents in our STAs have been living in temporary accommodation for years, despite the recommended stay of no more than six months. This is largely due to the lack of move-on accommodation for single adults. The dearth of one-bed units in the private rented market and social housing stock, combined with soaring rents have rendered it unprecedentedly challenging for homeless single adults to secure housing and exit homelessness.

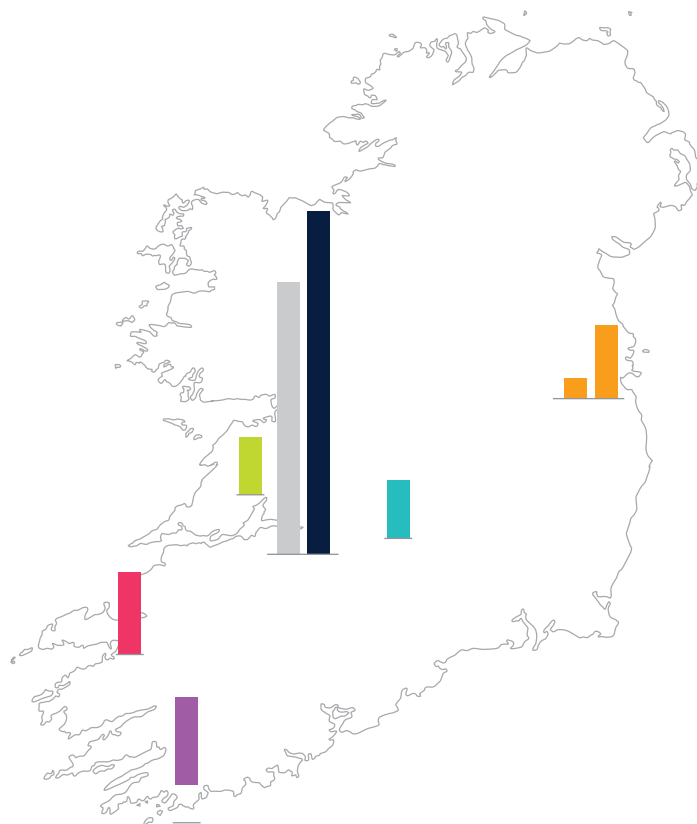
The number of families and children we supported through housing and services also rose. Again, the number of children exceeded 1,000, with more families than ever requiring support during the pandemic. The 1,136 children and 445 families does not include those supported solely through our Christmas Toy Appeal.

## NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY NOVAS IN 2018, 2019 AND 2020

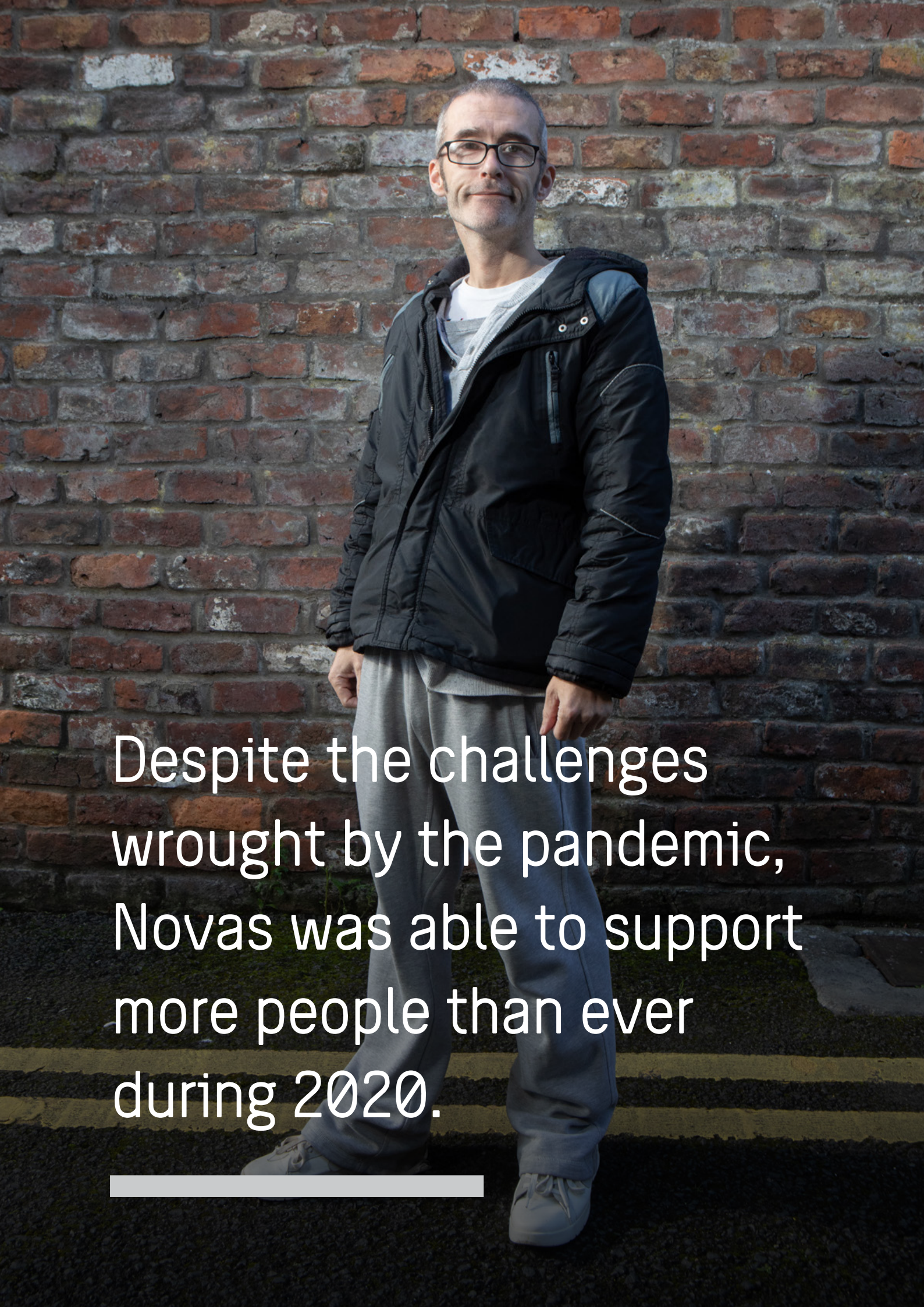


## NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY NOVAS SERVICE 2020

- IFS & St Mary's Park - 397
- Tenancies - 311
- Rathgar Hub - 22  
Whitestown - 83
- West Cork - 99
- Kerry - 93
- Tipperary - 66
- Clare (Hub & Community) - 65





A man with glasses and a slight smile stands in front of a weathered brick wall. He is wearing a black puffer jacket over a grey hoodie and grey sweatpants. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Despite the challenges  
wrought by the pandemic,  
Novas was able to support  
more people than ever  
during 2020.

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## MARK'S STORY

I am a 46yr old male who has been taking drugs most of my adult life. I was always fond of a few pints and took drugs recreationally on weekends when I didn't have work. I didn't realise it at the time because I was able to hold down a steady job, but I couldn't go out without taking something.

In my mid 20s the drinking got heavier. Even while still managing to hold down a job I had to wake up to a drink every morning. Then, when I was 30 I started smoking heroin. This is when I stopped working, due to the sickness from it. Maybe about a year after smoking heroin I started injecting it for a better high. Very soon the sickness became unbearable and I signed on in the methadone clinic. It took some time but I got off the heroin and then the methadone. I was proud of myself for a while and then I relapsed. Back smoking, then injecting; five overdoses later I knew I had to stop. But when I did, the heroin was replaced with a crack addiction.

My brother and I lived together for years and did most drugs together. We were entrenched in addiction and started missing rent payments. After a while the landlord had enough and we became homeless. We were out on the street for a while. Because we had each other it softened the blow some bit. We immediately registered with the homeless services and bounced around in different hotels for a while. It wasn't ideal but it was better than the street. In 2017 we got into the 9 to 9. Because we had to be out of there for 12 hours a day this often lead to more drug use.

We finally got into short term accommodation at McGarry House in 2018 which we were very happy with. It meant regular meals, somewhere to relax all day and the staff couldn't have been nicer. We were still dabbling with different drugs but our usage declined dramatically. Having somewhere safe to stay is so important in recovery.

In 2019 we got placed in a long-term apartment by Novas, with our own kitchen and living room which we were again delighted for and it meant we could have friends visit. We still dabbled in drugs but were more content in ourselves. All this time the staff would continuously check in with us asking if there was anything they could do to help with supports etc. Only for the staff asking I'd have never looked for help myself.

Sadly, this year my brother passed away. I was lost for ages after this but thanks to the continued support of my keyworker Kamila and the rest of the staff here I have weathered the storm better than I thought I would. I had been clean off heroin over two years and decided it was time to come off the methadone. I cannot thank the staff in Slainte enough for their help over the years.

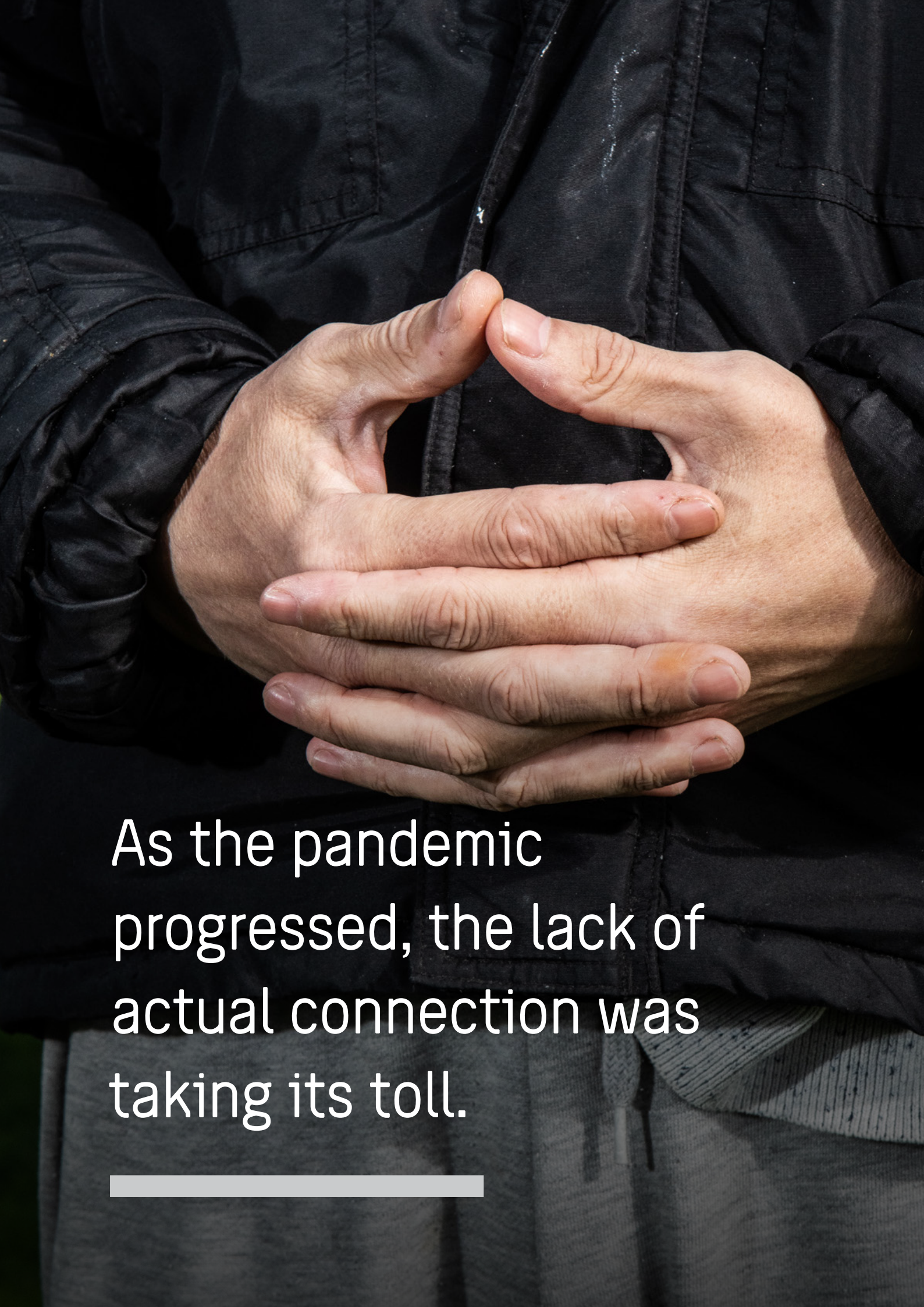
So now I was off the heroin, the methadone and tablets so all that was left to give up was crack cocaine. This was going to be the hardest in my mind because then I wouldn't have a crutch to lean on. After plenty of encouragement from staff here, I decided to give it a go. I am now off everything and the future is looking bright. There has been lots of ups and downs but with the continued support of family, friends and the staff here I think I can stay on the right path.



“

IN 2019 WE GOT PLACED  
IN A LONG-TERM  
APARTMENT BY NOVAS,  
WITH OUR OWN KITCHEN  
AND LIVING ROOM  
WHICH WE WERE AGAIN  
DELIGHTED FOR AND IT  
MEANT WE COULD HAVE  
FRIENDS VISIT.





As the pandemic progressed, the lack of actual connection was taking its toll.

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# HEALTH AND RECOVERY



During the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting our client's health and wellbeing was more important than ever. In the backdrop of a global catastrophe that necessitated physical and social distancing, this was immensely challenging. Our suite of health and recovery services - community detox, residential health and wellbeing, respite support, counselling and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy - had to proceed.

As the world was coming to terms with the pandemic, Novas' staff were already finding new ways of delivering and maintaining supports and interventions for those who needed it most. Clients were supported and appointments and programmes were delivered via phone, WhatsApp video calls and Zoom. Clients embraced the technological challenges to ensure continued access to support, as the pressures placed on their recovery by the pandemic compounded feelings of isolation and loneliness.

As well as the provision of remote support, walk-and-talk appointments were developed, which protected the physical safety of clients and staff while also providing vital face-to-face connections and safeguarding client recovery. Many meetings were held in parks, on popular walking routes and outdoor coffee shops.

In the event of clients presenting in extreme crisis, they were seen in our therapy rooms, with all protocols adhered to. As always, crisis and complex clients were accompanied to medical appointments.

As the pandemic progressed, the lack of actual connection was taking its toll. Social and emotional isolation could not be overcome with technology alone and we are grateful to be able to see clients in a limited capacity again.

#### MIDWEST RECOVERY SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC



##### RESPIRE HOUSE

20 clients supported weekly



##### COMMUNITY DETOX

Phone & remote support, walk-and-talk meetings, crisis intervention



##### GRIEF COUNSELLING SERVICES

16 clients supported weekly

## SANDRA'S STORY

My name is Sandra. I first became aware of Novas a number of years back when my daughter Yasmin was referred to their Community Detox Programme. From the first meeting with Novas Yasmin felt heard and understood. I also felt a sense of security from Novas.

They supported both Yasmin and I on some very good days, but most importantly on the hard and dark days. Simple things meant a lot. If Yasmin missed an appointment they would ring to see where she was and make sure to give her another appointment. They worked with her to get her to treatment, supported her through treatment and encouraged her in her recovery after treatment.

My beautiful daughter always felt safe in Novas. This safety was the reason my Yasmin had 18 months recovery. Novas never stopped providing care and support to Yasmin right until the end.

Since I lost my daughter, I've had endless support from Novas. They are always there at the end of the phone, they understand, they listen, they can identify with me as they knew Yasmin and know my loss. Just as they gave my beautiful daughter time and didn't put a limit on that time, they have never put a limit on the time and support they have given me.

This continued support was one of my main pillars in the pandemic as I was still in the early stages of my grief. To have someone who was there from the beginning to understand what I was feeling on different days was crucial. The safe space and the familiarity allowed me to cry and also laugh when I needed to, as life came to a standstill, I now had the same sense of safety and security from Novas that Yasmin had. When it was safe to do so I met with Novas staff for a socially distant coffee and chat. In these chats I was given a platform to discuss the need for more inclusive Dual Diagnosis services in the Midwest and what they should look like for the service user and their family members also. They arranged for me to meet a member from the National Working group on Dual Diagnosis. I felt this chance to share my experience and highlight my child's story will change the future for another family, and this will be Yasmin's legacy.

The Novas Health and Recovery Services have empowered me to use my voice and advocate for the change that needs to happen in Dual Diagnosis Services. I also feel safe knowing I can reach out to Novas at any time in the future their door is always open.



## TRISH'S STORY

Hi, my name is Patricia Leahy. I am 35 years of age and I'm currently in recovery, since 18th May 2019. I've been two and a half years in recovery, clean from drugs and I suppose I'll share a bit of my story. I was 17 years in active addiction. I was hopeless, on the streets, in tents, in hostels. Just in really, really dark places. I was constantly fighting day to day to feed my addiction and to try and get somewhere warm to stay.

I've been engaged with Novas services for 12 years, on and off, especially with Julie. I'd like to start off by saying how grateful I am for everything they've done. From day one, helping me with homelessness and helping me to get into multiple treatment centers.

I shared my story a few years ago and I talked a lot about growing up and stuff and I don't think that's relevant today, I just know that I was hopeless and quite broken and I thought there was no way out, that using was the only option that I had, cause I didn't know how to cope with life. I had no coping skills. Trauma would have been a part of it and just this void that I always had to fill and I thought drugs were doing that.

The difference this time around was I got the support I needed to move out of where I am from. For me, it was really hard to get well, where I got sick. Moving has changed my life. I now live in Waterford. I'm in college at the moment, I have my own apartment, I have my daughter back living with me permanently.

Even when I'm down here in Waterford, if I need any support or anyone to talk to, I contact Novas. I talk to Julie about anything. Anything new going on for me, I just let her know that I'm doing well. I'm really grateful for that connection.

I guess, the staff in Novas would have seen me at my lowest point. I was just destroyed from drugs, both of my kids were taken off me, I went from toxic relationship to toxic relationship, I had no self-worth and Novas believed in me and showed me love when I wasn't able to believe in myself and show myself love.



They've given me loads of chances! They always told me to come back and not everyone else was telling me to come back at that stage, but they always welcomed me. They didn't judge me. I always judged myself. With drug use, came low self-esteem, which could have been there before I picked up a drug. I thought I wasn't good enough.

Today, I'm in full time education, I'm studying social care. I have good and genuine friends in my life. I have a life beyond my wildest dreams and I don't have loads of materialistic things but I have a good mindset, peace of mind most days, I have a family. I have everything I wanted. I'm getting an education and hopefully going to do work I want to do. I'm really grateful.



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THE DIFFERENCE THIS TIME AROUND WAS I GOT THE SUPPORT I NEEDED TO MOVE OUT OF WHERE I AM FROM. FOR ME, IT WAS REALLY HARD TO GET WELL, WHERE I GOT SICK.



The Covid 19 crisis has brought a lot of unforeseen challenges for all and our service users engaged in recovery found it particularly challenging at times. For those individuals who were actively engaged in recovery based activities at the time, they had to learn to adapt to suddenly being isolated, unable to participate with the tools they had recently learned and disconnect from social connectedness. One of the challenges expressed by many of these individuals was a sense of exclusion and feeling alone. They had spent many months working on coming from a place of isolation to integrating back into society in a healthy positive way before Covid.

For the most part, they initially identified with feelings of calmness in the strange circumstances, however as the pandemic and restriction continued, many became anxious, with old behaviours slowly creeping back in. From feeling excluded and somewhat trapped, the mental health of some was considerably impacted and as a service we recognised that they needed more contact with our clients. At the beginning of Covid this was mainly over the phone. We rang each service user twice weekly to check in and offer support.

Our Recovery Programme based on the skills from Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), had started in-house two weeks before the Covid-19 crisis began. As a result of government regulations and health guidelines, it was decided to move the programme online if possible. Each service user was contacted over the phone to discuss the possibility of moving it to the Zoom platform. Some service users identified proficiency at computer skills but for others this was a challenge. These service users were invited into clinic where they adhered to all infection control measures in place. We then took the time to help them set up an email address, download the Zoom application and do trial runs. This programme is currently running online through Zoom, and as it has shown to be very successful (78% retention rate), we have now also introduced a second online programme, underpinned by the philosophy of harm reduction.

Covid has shown us that our service users did benefit from having more contact, initially over the phone. As the months wore on, we observed the overwhelming need for these individuals to actually connect with others, visually, physically and emotionally. For this reason, we changed our one-day group to run over two days, with fewer participants. We extended the sessions, with more home tasks included. We look forward to more face-to-face interactions with our clients in the coming months, building connections as part of their recovery process.

**James Smyth,**  
**Addiction and DBT Therapist, Novas Services, Kerry**



“

SOME SERVICE  
USERS IDENTIFIED  
PROFICIENCY AT  
COMPUTER SKILLS  
BUT FOR OTHERS  
THIS WAS  
A CHALLENGE.





During the Covid-19  
pandemic, supporting  
our client's health and  
wellbeing was more  
important than ever.

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# HOUSING



Providing long-term housing became more important than ever during the pandemic. Having a safe and secure place to live was at the forefront of minds, as people throughout the world were encouraged to stay at home. Families living in congregated settings and hotel rooms were hugely disadvantaged and the need to find solutions was more pressing than ever.

During the first three months of the pandemic, our housing team, in collaboration with Fingal County Council moved more than 50 families into transitional tenancies, for an 18-month period. While not ideal, it was an immediate response in extraordinary circumstances and our resettlement staff were committed to securing permanent housing for these households in the same neighbourhoods. The families had an opportunity to isolate safely in their new home. They were able to put down roots. They felt safe.

Moving families and all their worldly belonging during a pandemic was trying. Marrying our client centred approach and helping people to move, while simultaneously keeping our staff and tenants safe was a challenge. A challenge staff rose too, as clients continued to be supported from start to finish of the moving process and beyond.

Additional supports were also offered to our permanent tenants throughout the country. We housed families in Limerick and Tipperary during this time, in long-term tenancies. Usually the occasion of handing over a home to a family is joyous. During this period however, it was fraught with challenges and anxiety. Tenants were faced with not being able to purchase white goods, flooring, curtains and other essential household items as most shops were closed. Having to do all the paperwork virtually was alien for many and required additional support from us. At this time, the issue of furniture poverty came to the fore and we began to develop additional ways of supporting clients. In January 2021 we developed our *From Our Home To Yours* campaign, which provides a platform that links people with good quality, used furniture to households that need it.

By years' end we provided 129 tenancies with 517 people living in our homes, 311 children and 206 adults. Unfortunately, our building and acquisition programme during 2020 and into 2021 was severely hampered by the cessation of building works. We continue to try to make up for lost time, so more people can enjoy the security of their own home.

## PATRICIA'S STORY

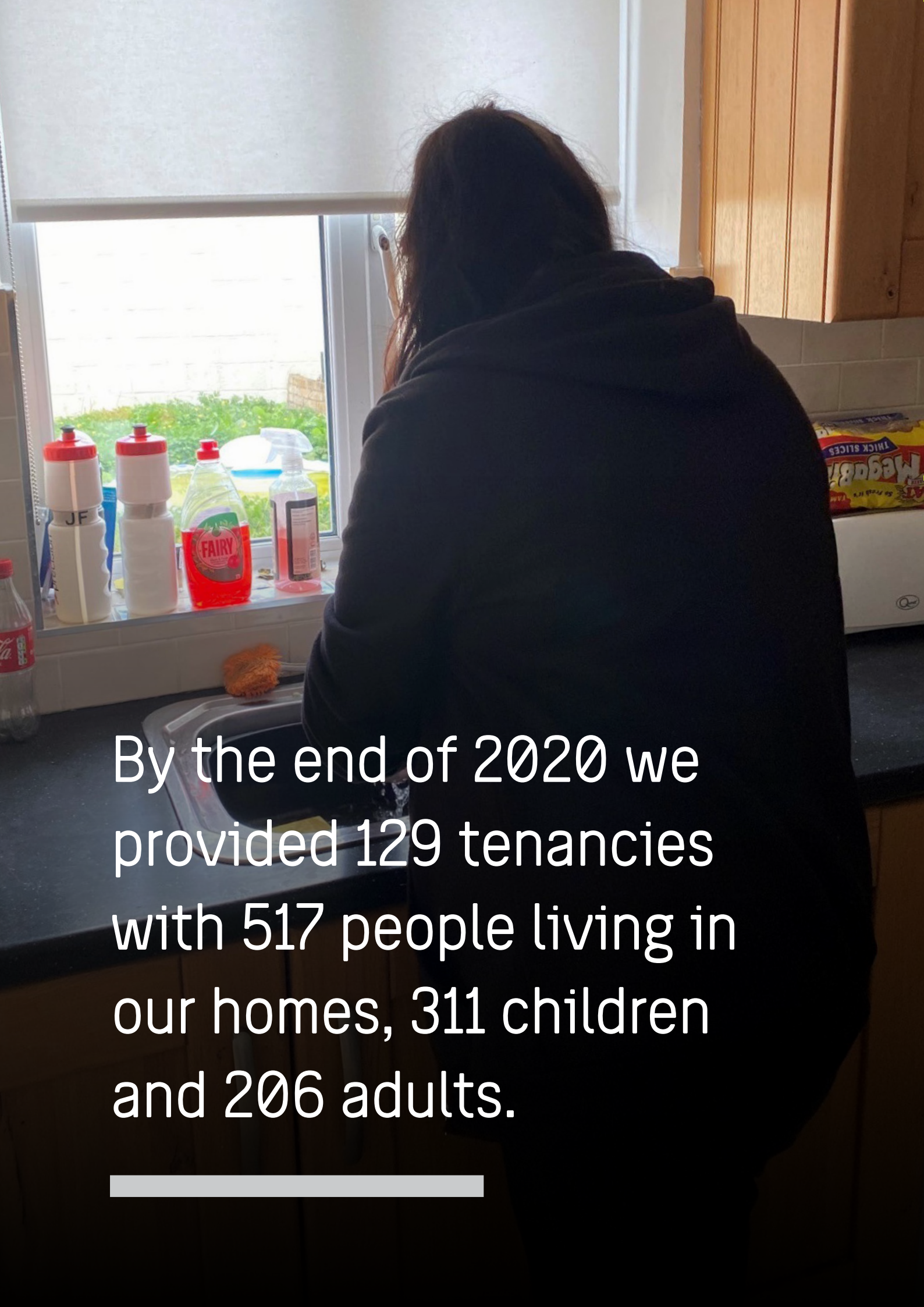
I lived in emergency accommodation with my family for three years. I have three boys and one girl who unfortunately had the experience of living in this type of accommodation. This really effected my family and their mental health. Living in one room, you can't breathe, you can't live. I was afraid for the kids to play in case they made noise. On top of this, the emergency accommodation had mice running around the place. I felt horrible, I could not sleep and the kids were terrified. It caused so much friction between all of us. We were all in one room compared to now. The shops were so far away we started to order takeaways for our dinners which took its toll on all our health.

People in the building came and went, you couldn't build relationships with others. If I was lucky to meet someone positive, I was let down, disappointed when I learned they had left the building to move into their own home. I questioned why not me. Why am I waiting so long? What about my kids? The kids social time was spent playing on an XBOX. They could not play outside as it was too dangerous as we lived in beside a busy dual carriageway. I was full of shame and it affects me to this day. I still feel like I am in a dream. I find it hard to accept that this is my new home.

When Covid came along I thought to myself that I will never get a home at this stage. Everything was closed and I was very doubtful when I got a call from my housing officer to say I have been nominated for a house. My housing officer and my support worker explained the process to me and arranged to collect all my belongings. This took so much stress off me. I think I would not have been able to move out if Novas did not help us. When I was told that I would be helped to move out, I felt that this is too good to be true. Emergency accommodation became a part of my life and I was questioning everything and had very little trust in people.

Slowly my children are getting back to themselves. Novas gave us a donation of a study table for the kids to do their homework. They were delighted with this. Novas then gave us more donations to make our house a real home, comfortable and warm.

I feel a sense of protection but not scared anymore. I worry less about the kids, they have friends and play outside. I have a back garden where they can play. They have joined local clubs to meet other people. I feel I have more of a routine, making my own meals and not depending on takeaways, doing things for my children that I could not have done before.



By the end of 2020 we  
provided 129 tenancies  
with 517 people living in  
our homes, 311 children  
and 206 adults.

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# FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING



We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our volunteers who continued to offer their unwavering support throughout the year. When our Street Outreach service was paused in the early weeks of the pandemic, we were inundated with offers of alternative support from our volunteer team. As we developed new ways to support the most vulnerable, our volunteers delivered grocery parcels and hot meals to services and tenants. They adjusted to new protocols and enhanced safety measures with ease and adapted to new roles and ways to support our clients. They were among the heroes of the pandemic.

THANK YOU.





While fundraising was more difficult than ever before, we are so grateful for the continued support of our donors. We were overwhelmed by the continued support of local communities, companies and individuals in helping us to provide services to the most vulnerable throughout the pandemic.

From mid-March all in-person fundraising was paused and thereafter we relied on virtual campaigns such as #Make&Donate and our virtual Christmas Sleep-Out, which allowed us to engage children and families for the first time. We wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone for their ongoing support through a most difficult year.



# GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

## GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Novas are fully committed to ensuring and maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance. We achieve this by adhering to standards and principles that promote transparency and equity to all our stakeholders and particularly to the people who access our services, which Novas sees as fundamental to the sustainability and performance of our operations.

Novas Board comprises of seven volunteers with backgrounds in, finance, housing, social care, clients rights, advocacy, planning and human resources.

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS OF DECEMBER 2020

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Greg Maxwell (Chairperson)

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Siobhan Wheeler (Secretary)

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Justin Brosnan

---

Patrick Claffey

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Eoin Gallagher

---

Eimear Griffin

---

Tracy Leonard

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### RESIGNATIONS

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Joseph McGarry

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Kieran Walshe

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The board meets a minimum of six times per year and in addition has its AGM in July each year. The board has overall responsibility of ensuring that operational functions are in line with best practice and governance of the organisation meets all its legal and statutory obligations.

The board works closely with the CEO and senior management team to ensure that all policies and procedures are current, reviewed and in line with relevant legislation. In addition, that annual safety statements and risk audits are undertaken and presented for approval.

There are six committees that report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis

There are six committees that report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

- > Client's services
- > Audit and Finance
- > Housing
- > Governance and Personnel
- > Policy, Communication and Fundraising
- > Quality, Safety and Compliance

The **Client's services Committee** meets four times per year and its members are Siobhan Wheeler (Chair), Pat Claffey (Board), Ger Lynch.

The **Audit and Finance Committee** meets four times per year and its members are Owen Gallagher (Chair), Tracy Leonard (Board) and Michael O'Connell.

The **Housing Committee** meets six times per year and its members are Greg Maxwell (Chair), Justin Brosnan (Board).

The **Governance and Personnel Committee** meets four times per year and its members are Greg Maxwell (Chair) and Siobhan Wheeler (Board).

The **Policy, Communication and Fundraising Committee** meets four times per year and its members are Eimear Griffin (Chair), Justin Brosnan (Board) and Jackie Leonard.

The **Quality, Safety and Compliance Committee** meets four times per year and its members are Pat Claffey (Chair), Greg Maxwell (Board), and Mary O'Shea.

Novas publishes its accounts on an annual basis and submits annual returns to the Company Registration Office.

Novas is a company limited by guarantee (CRN 330018) and was incorporated in 2000. In September 2005, it became entirely independent from its founding UK charity company. It is a registered charity (CHY 13390) (RCN 20041533)

and an Approved Housing Body. It is compliant with the standards set out by the Charity Regulator in the Charities Governance Code, which have statutory effect from 2020. In addition, it operates the standards of best practice for Approved Housing Bodies.

The Companies Act 2014 came into effect on 1st June 2015 and from then the requirements for the content and presentation of financial reporting for not-for-profit companies changed. Novas adopted the reporting standards of FRS 102 (FRS; Financial Reporting Council) for charities to report their financial activities.

Novas complies with the requirements set down by the Charity Regulator Authority and the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising created by the organisation Irish Charities Tax Research ICTR.

## OPERATIONAL AND REGULATORY STANDARDS

Novas, Bellevue house is a residential childcare facility that is registered with Tusla, and it is periodically inspected under the National Standards for Children's Residential Centres (HIQA).

Novas Homeless Services are measured against the National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services.

All services that receive state funding have a Service Level Arrangement in place and reviews are carried out on an annual basis.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2020, the total income generated by Arlington Novas Ireland CLG was €14.242M (an increase of 17.7% from 2019). Revenue based Grants received by our organisation from the HSE, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and various local authorities amounted to €12.376M (up 18.9% from last year). This represented 86.9% of our total income. The increase is primarily due to new services in Dublin and additional funding for services related to the Covid 19 pandemic.

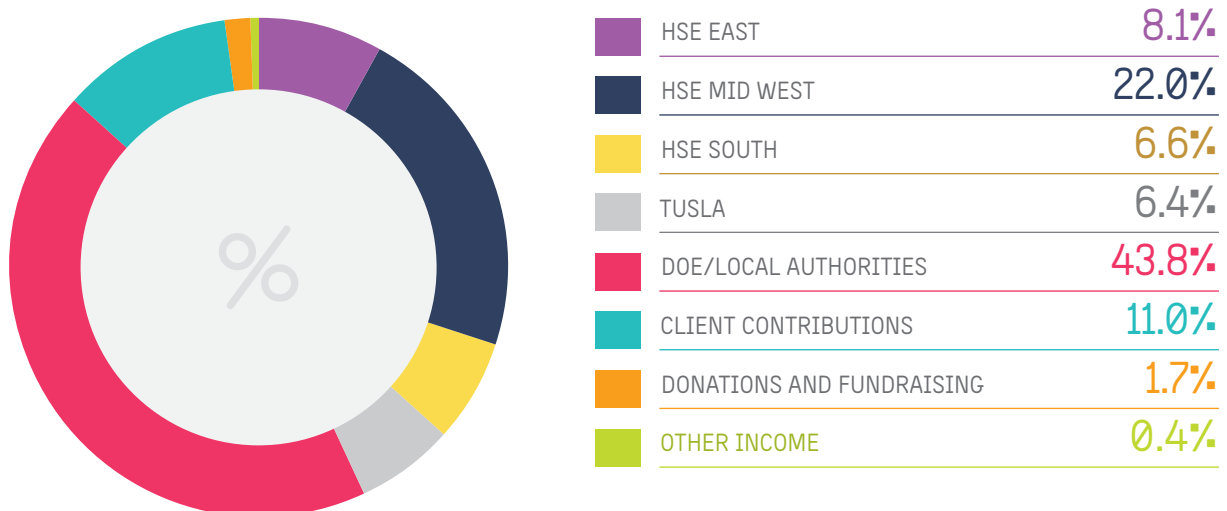
Again, there was no increase in funding during 2020 for our existing services. Funding for these services remains at lower levels than 2008, which continues to be a major issue, particularly in relation to staff retention.

Other income was €1.866M (an increase of 10.6%). This other income consists of contributions from our service users, development levies, donations, legacies and fundraising. These sources of income were also impacted by the pandemic, with some issues with payment of client contributions and the inability to run our normal fundraising events.

We remain extremely 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 2020 by source.

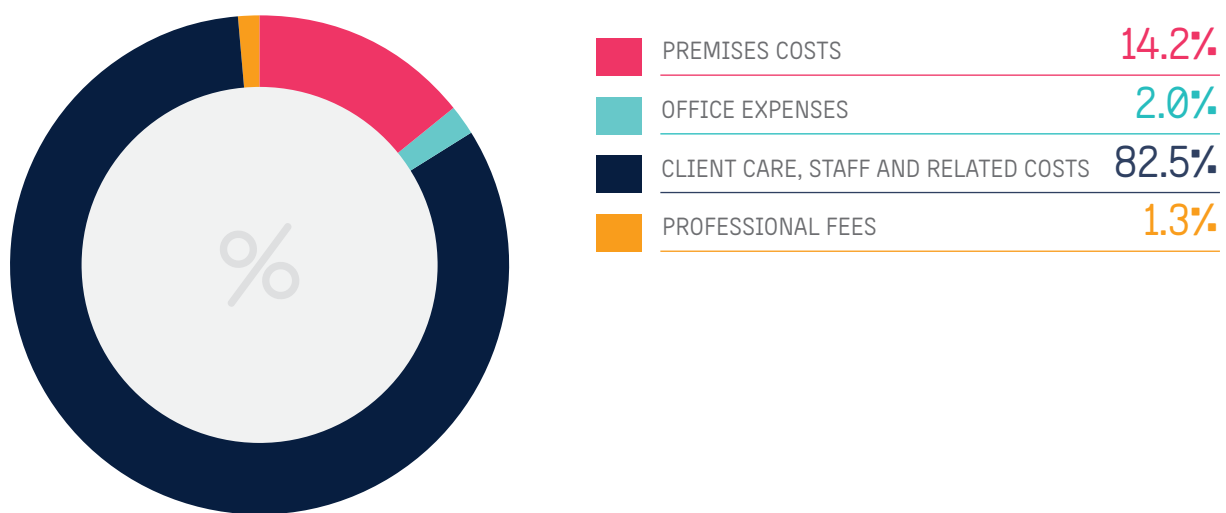
### BREAKDOWN OF INCOME 2020



We continued to manage expenditure prudently, with the support of our staff and suppliers. Client care, staffing and related costs comprised more than 82% of our overall expenditure, while costs associated with housing, both long-term and short-term accounted for 14%. Costs have also been impacted by the pandemic, in particular in the areas of staffing, cleaning and maintenance.

Set out below is a breakdown of the expenditure for 2020.

## BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE 2020



In summary, there was a surplus of €773k in income over expenditure before transfers to the property sinking fund. Any surpluses we attain are reinvested in our services.

The remuneration of the CEO for the year was €85,337. 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.

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 four occasions during 2020.

In 2021, we will continue to purchase and develop properties to provide long-term housing for individuals and families, as indicated in our strategic plan.



## Arlington Novas Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

## STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2020	2019
	€	€
TURNOVER	14,242,360	12,098,119
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	(13,376,784)	(11,247,178)
OPERATING SURPLUS	865,576	850,941
INTEREST RECEIVABLE AND SIMILAR INCOME	5	7
INTEREST PAYABLE AND SIMILAR CHARGES	(92,713)	(91,783)
SURPLUS BEFORE TAX	772,868	759,165
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	772,868	759,165
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	772,868	759,165

There were no recognised gains or losses for 2020 and 2019 other than those included in the statement of comprehensive income.

All amounts relate to continuing operations

Signed on behalf of the board:

**Greg Maxwell**

CHAIRPERSON

22 July 2021

**Siobhan Wheeler**

DIRECTOR

22 July 2021

## Arlington Novas Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2020	2019
	€	€
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
TANGIBLE ASSETS	39,023	42,561
TANGIBLE ASSETS - HOUSING PROPERTIES	37,101,490	35,984,734
FINANCIAL ASSETS	497,843	499,803
	<b>37,638,356</b>	<b>36,527,098</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
DEBTORS	462,207	762,590
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	6,721,113	4,394,057
	<b>7,183,320</b>	<b>5,156,647</b>
CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	(1,272,866)	(1,227,632)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>5,910,454</b>	<b>3,929,015</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>43,548,810</b>	<b>40,456,113</b>
CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	(33,223,587)	(30,961,304)
GRANTS	(2,120,322)	(2,147,859)
<b>PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES</b>		
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	(160,974)	(75,891)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>8,043,927</b>	<b>7,271,059</b>
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>		
RESTRICTED FUND	480,976	514,783
DESIGNATED FUND	2,819,260	2,443,009
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT	4,743,691	4,313,267
	<b>8,043,927</b>	<b>7,271,059</b>

The financial statements were approved by the board and signed on its behalf by:

**Greg Maxwell**

CHAIRPERSON

22 July 2021

**Siobhan Wheeler**

DIRECTOR

22 July 2021

NOVAS  
IS 21



CLIFFORD  
ALARMS

CANON  
FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE  
1849-1902  
Last Rector of St. John's Parish  
Noodle, Poet and Dramatist  
Read here.

24  
631



Novas is 21 years old! In July 2000 our first Articles of Association were drafted and thereafter our founder, Joe McGarry, began to engage in Street Outreach in Limerick. He carried out a needs assessment with people sleeping rough and those most vulnerable in the city, in a bid to create supports and services relevant to the needs of clients at the time.

Following the deaths of a number of people sleeping rough in Limerick city over consecutive winters, the HSE and Limerick City Council travelled to London and Belfast to learn more about how homeless services operated in other jurisdictions. One of the services they visited was Arlington House in London and it was from that visit that the seedlings of Novas in Ireland grew. Joe McGarry, an Irishman who had experienced homelessness in London for more than 30 years, opened Novas' first service in Limerick in 2002, Bridgeland House.

Since then, over the last 21 years, we have established almost 30 services in counties Limerick, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and Dublin. The organisation has evolved and developed in response to the needs of the clients we have served and the housing and homeless crises that have emerged in the interim.

At the outset it was largely street drinkers that required our support and services. Through the succeeding decade, drugs became more prevalent and people entrenched in addiction were presenting for support. Our harm reduction techniques evolved to meet their needs and our service development was targeted at a growing cohort of young men and women with complex needs who required specialised dual diagnosis support and accommodation. During the same period, we also began to expand geographically with new services in Kerry, Dublin and Tipperary.

During this period of growth, when the profile of single people requiring emergency accommodation was changing, Novas was simultaneously developing tenancy sustainment support, family services and housing for at-risk households. These services sought to prevent homelessness among marginalised and vulnerable groups in our local communities. Our Intensive Family Support Service in Limerick was established in 2005 and was our first



outreach service in Ireland. From there, other such services developed in various regions we worked in, as did our geographical development to include west Cork and Co. Clare.

Today we operate 27 services, employ more than 300 staff members, provide long-term housing to 517 people and support more than 5,000 people annually. None of this would have been possible without the vision and dedication of our staff and management along the way and the commitment of our funders, whose unwavering faith allowed us to expand, to be brave in service provision and to reach people who needed support the most.

Here, we share the stories of our earliest employees and volunteers who helped to shape Novas into the organisation it is today.





## SERVICE DEVELOPMENT - LIMERICK

On the 11th of July 2000, Novas was incorporated as a company and our journey to developing services in Ireland began. In the winter of 2001 there had been several deaths on the streets of Limerick among people who were rough sleeping. In response, the HSE and the City Council travelled to London and Northern Ireland to learn from service provision there. They were determined to develop something new, a service that was responsive to the needs of clients, a service that would accept people as they are, without barriers in place.

We joined the Limerick Homeless Forum and to demonstrate need, a street outreach service with two dedicated outreach workers received funding. I managed this service on a voluntary basis and my lived experience as a homeless person for many years helped contribute to easy communication with homeless people. This Service identified at least 40 people in the city that required accommodation and support, 40 people who were living in precarious and unstable arrangements, many of whom were rough sleeping.

We owe so much to the funders, whose support enabled us to open the first low-threshold service in the city in the latter months of 2002. Since 1989 UK hostel staff were familiar with working with people in active addiction, in Ireland less so. The recruitment drive to staff Bridgeland House took time. For the first few months the clients helped us so much. They helped us to cook and clean. We needed their help and they responded with enthusiasm. Of course that practice wouldn't happen today but it's what we needed at the time and it helped us keep the service going at the beginning.

Bridgeland House provided a home for people who never had that before. It accepted people with their challenges, people entrenched in their addiction, with a focus on recovery, respect and compassion. It was wonderful to be part to the set up in the early days. It's what has brought us to where we are today.

**Joe McGarry,**  
**Founder of Novas in Ireland**



The first building in which we ran our first service, was previously a male only service and when we told clients that we were going to allow women to stay, they couldn't believe it. And the fact that I was going to be the manager – a woman that was just 5 feet, came as a big shock!

Lots of things we did and the ways we operated were new. We were so lucky to have the full backing of the HSE and Limerick City Council in developing a low-threshold service, the first in Limerick and I think the first in Ireland. We supported people that previously weren't supported. People, who because of their addiction couldn't access services and spent really long periods of time homeless and rough sleeping. It was a totally new experience for the clients. It felt like home to them.

I'd like to think that their experience living with us was empowering for them. We explained about our complaints procedure and how they could make a suggestion about where they lived. This was something really new for them, having their voice heard in that way.

From the outset we redesigned the building a little and converted an old dining room into single units of accommodation for women, somewhere they could feel safe in a male dominated environment. For the first time ever the hostel hired female staff. There was lots of concern when women started doing night shifts without any male staff, but there were fewer incidences and it became a safer environment to live and work in. The mixed staffing was important to the environment we wanted to create.

Working in Novas at the beginning was busy and exciting. Our services grew quickly and we had the opportunity to support people on the margins, people who weren't used to getting support. We couldn't do this without the commitment and creativity of the HSE and the City Council at the time, who were steadfast to growing services for single people and families that were client-centred and agile in responding to their changing needs.

**Lorna Cahill,**

**First manager of Bridgeland House & the IFS, later Manager South Region**



When I started my very first shift in Bridgeland House I was shocked at how run down the place was. When I look back now, I realise what a fantastic beginning it was. Before then, the clients had nothing, were accepted nowhere and this was home for them. It was something special to them.

I loved working nights. It was then you got to know the clients, when you could dig deep with them and understand their lives. Their stories were awful, just shocking. It was hard to believe people suffered the way they had. Some of them never knew love, weren't held as babies, were hungry, never had a book read to them. When you understood that, you could understand their behaviours. Sometimes I wondered how they were still alive.

The staff office in Bridgeland House was the bedrock of Novas. Having tea there with clients and sharing experiences with staff helped us to develop all our policies and procedures. Everything came out of there. It was Trinity College for us! There was so much learning there. As a learning experience it was better than anything.

There was a perception at the time, because we worked with people with complex needs, that Bridgeland House was like the Wild West. Our reputation wasn't good and beyond our funders there was little understanding of the harm reduction work we did. What happened inside the service was very different from the perceptions though. The clients weren't the boxers or the street fighters that people assumed them to be. The clients were our biggest asset. They showed us what compassion was. They showed us how to support them. By supporting them in their addiction, we kept them safe. We kept the community safe. As an ethos, harm reduction has proved itself.

After a couple of years, I became the manager of Bridgeland House and later oversaw the move to McGarry House. The building was no longer fit for purpose and we couldn't guarantee the safety of our clients or staff. The move was inevitable. We were able to support more clients in the new building and we were able to offer better accommodation. The move happened quickly and was a big change for everyone. I was glad to be there and help our older residents transition.

It was a privilege to work with the clients. They had to fight for survival from the time they were babies. We accepted them as they were. And they accepted us. It was humbling.

**Helen Scales,**  
**Manager of Bridgeland House and later McGarry House**

# TIMELINE 2002 – 2020

- 
- 2002** ▶ **BRIDGELAND HOUSE:** Novas 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.
- \*McGarry House replaced Bridgeland House in the 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.
- ▶ **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.

2015

- **HOUSING FIRST:** Development of a new Housing First programme in collaboration with the Limerick Homeless Action Team.
- **LONG-TERM APARTMENTS:** Procurement of four long-term apartments in Kerry for households with a housing need.
- **FAMILY HOMES:** Procurement of eight family homes in Limerick for families experiencing homeless and engaging with the IFS.

2016

- **TEMPORARY EMERGENCY PROVISION:** Emergency shelter-style accommodation for up to 20 individuals on a nightly basis.
- **FAMILY HOMES:** Procurement of four family homes in Limerick for families experiencing homelessness and engaging with the IFS.

2017

- **TEMPORARY EMERGENCY PROVISION 2:** Additional, separate-site emergency accommodation for up to 10 individuals on a nightly basis.
- **OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICES:** A new office/information centre in Co. Tipperary, supporting people in a preventative and resettlement capacity.
- **SARSFIELD FAMILY HUB:** A hub for 12 small families experiencing homelessness and previously living in emergency accommodation.
- **HOUSING FIRST:** Development of a new Housing First service in Kerry in collaboration with Kerry County Council & the HSE.

- **LONG-TERM HOMES:** Procurement of 30 homes in Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry, Kildare & Dublin for households experiencing homelessness.

2018


- **THE RATHMINES WOMEN'S SERVICE:** A dedicated female STA in Dublin for 21 women.
- **THE SHANNON HOUSING PROJECT:** Community living for six adults with an intellectual disability, who were formerly homeless.
- **FAMILY HOUSING FIRST:** Development of a Family Housing First Service in collaboration with the local authority & the HSE.
- **LONG-TERM HOMES:** 34 new tenancies in 2018, housing 93 people

2019

- **RATHGAR FAMILY HUB:** 10 bed family hub in Dublin 6, supporting families who were formerly living in hotel accommodation.
- **SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICE, DUBLIN:** Dedicated service for a homeless woman with co-occurring mental health, intellectually disability and addiction issues.
- **WHITESTOWN STA:** Eight unit STA for single adults and couples in north Dublin.
- **INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT:** A family support service established in partnership with Fingal County Council, supporting families living in emergency accommodation to move to independent housing.
- **ENNIS FAMILY HUB & OUTREACH SUPPORT:** Five bed family hub in Co. Clare and family support for families living in emergency hotel accommodation.

2020

- **COCOONING SERVICE:** During the pandemic Novas established one cocooning service in Dublin.



Before Arlington opened  
there were a number of  
people who had been  
sleeping rough in Tralee  
or living in squalid  
conditions for some time.

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## SERVICE DEVELOPMENT, KERRY

It was a very exciting time when Arlington Lodge opened. The whole staff team were new and full of energy. We were all very different characters but there was great comradery among us all and good friendships were formed. The building and service were seen as being quite progressive at the time considering that a lot of emergency shelters were dormitory type buildings and often had curfews and didn't allow alcohol to be consumed on the premises.

It was a learning process for all of us. Harm reduction wasn't initially a guiding principal. Our ethos was more to support and promote personal choice and to make Arlington Lodge as homely as possible. This led to some interesting outcomes. Some clients felt that they would like to have parties in their home and invite half of Tralee to these parties and we invited them in as it was the clients' choice.

Obviously that wasn't sustainable and over time we reached a more balanced approach. Bringing Harm Reduction front and centre of what we do was possibly the most significant moment of our evolution. It provided a framework to support client choices and meet them where they're at but also promoted a recovery focus. It also helped appease the helplessness that staff can sometimes feel when a client's choices seem very personally damaging.

Before Arlington opened there were a number of people who had been sleeping rough in Tralee or living in squalid conditions for some time. It took a bit of encouragement to get some of them to stay, but we always had an open door, a hot meal and treated them with compassion and we were rewarded in spades. Arlington also operated as a kind of drop in centre in the early days. A number of people used to drop in for company and food and sometimes for a bit of mayhem too. It was different times and dare I say there was more flexibility in how you might support someone. Bringing people home so as they were safe and warm was a guiding principal. This could lead to some very long slow walks back to the lodge with clients. It even led to the occasional borrowed wheelchair.

All of our first clients have moved on or passed on. I think we were able to provide them with some of the comfort, security and kindness they deserved and helped enhance their lives somewhat. They certainly enhanced mine. I

remember them all well and they hold a special place for me and I'm sure for all the other staff that had the pleasure of getting to know them.

Client move on has always been an issue but some of the staff have proved more difficult to shift. None more so than myself. I'm still here 18 years later as is Annette Murphy. There are also quite a few more still with us who, although they didn't start on 8th December 2003, weren't too far behind. So, it's either a case of we must be doing something right or nobody else will have us.

I'd finally like to give a special mention to Ellen O'Sullivan and Anne Prendiville as they are both retiring this December after many years of excellent service. I wish them all the best on their well-earned rest and would like to thank them for all their hard work.

**Ronan Doherty,**  
**Manager of Kerry services and longest serving current staff member,**  
**joined the staff team of Arlington Lodge in December 2003.**





Our Bellevue service for unaccompanied children opened, in Killinarden, Tallaght. It was our first service in Dublin and transferred from Cluid Housing on 1 Sept 2005. The multi-national staff team led by Lilli Walsh (and included Robert Radulescu now the Manager) ran a service which was later described by the Children's Ombudsman as the model for all Europe. On the same day Novas Ouvertures, a London based charity, who founded Arlington Novas Ireland in 2000, pulled out of Ireland.

By coincidence I started on the same day, our new name was Novas Initiatives, and took on developing the Dublin region. Dublin City Council proposed to transfer a women's day service to a new location and become a residential service. The service was open for tenders. We based our proposal on the research evidence on the very special needs for women who are homeless and were successful. It was pleasing as in my former life at Dublin Simon Community I had started this service and now was able to guide it to the new level. Mount Brown became our first homeless service in Dublin.

The target clients were women homeless and barred from all other residential services. Easy!

Lorna and I, put together a staff team which in Dublin is legend! The new team mixed experienced and new staff; women's rights advocates, drug workers; and various nationalities. I recall the final vacancy went to a social worker interviewed from Germany!

Today many of that team are still with us and in senior roles. Mark Vella interviewed for the Deputy Manager role but was appointed as Manager. It was his first managerial role as also for Karen O'Leary Deputy Manager (young woman with serious experience in inner city shelters). As a team; fabulous. They built a new service and gained the confidence of very sceptical female clients.

Vulnerable women are the most at risk in society. A young client at Mount Brown asked to meet me. I knew her mother from some years earlier, a resident of another service, when this young lady was a child. She wanted to chat about her mum, who had since died. We arranged to meet the following week; a few days later she was dead from an overdose.

An indescribably close bond developed between clients and staff. Illustrated when some years later I was at a meeting with many statutory bodies and voluntary groups; Mount Brown was to move to Finglas. The Governor of



Dochas (women's prison service) announced to everyone she wanted the new service to be managed by Novas as every woman she had met in the prison who had been homeless said in Mount Brown they were always treated with humanity and respect. And so Novas managed the new Abigail Centre.

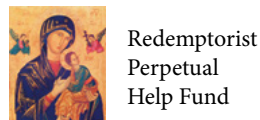
Jenny Doyle as Manager with the staff team have developed something very special. And the unique 'Wall of Words' (I call the 'Wall of Hope'). And the booklet where women wrote their stories in their words. And more... And more. And Marianne Farrelly (another original Mount Brown team) has developed the superb services at Drumcondra. And so many more of our champions for women's rights. My thanks; honoured to know you.

**Greg Maxwell,**  
**Manager Eastern Region, Head of Personnel, Services**  
**and Communications and current Chair of the Board.**





## FRIENDS & PARTNERS



THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT IS DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY OF OUR CLIENTS WHO  
DIED DURING THAT YEAR, WHILE ENGAGED  
IN OUR SERVICES.



87 O'Connell Street, Limerick, Ireland.  
Ph. 061-370325 / [info@novas.ie](mailto:info@novas.ie)  
[www.novas.ie](http://www.novas.ie)

 **NovasInitiatives**

 **@novasireland**