



NOVAS INITIATIVES
fostering social inclusion

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

THANKS
LIFE
GOOD
KIND
HEARD
FAMILY
WORTH
NICE
SAFE
HOUSE
LOVE
BELONGING
COMFORT
SUPPORT
PEACE
RELIABLE
GOOD
WORTH
HEARD
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LOVE
COMFORT
LIFE
RELIABLE
PEACE
THANKS
FAMILY
WORTH
NICE
VALUE
HOUSE
LOVE
LIFE
KIND
ASSIST
GOOD
COMFORT
SUPPORT
PEACE
RELIABLE
GOOD
WORTH
HEARD
KIND
RESPECT
HELP
NICE
HEARD
WARM
THANKS
EVERYTHING

WHAT DOES NOVAS MEAN TO YOU?

The artwork on the front cover emanated from the question *What does Novas mean to you?* which was put to clients of all Novas services. The words represent our clients' view on our services.

This picture was painted on the back wall of Novas' Arlington Lodge by a former client. It represents the anonymity felt by a family who becomes homeless. The blank faces represent the invisibility felt by a homeless person to mainstream society.





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CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Novas Initiatives delivers innovative services which specifically target the needs of marginalised people in society. During 2012 we provided support and services to more than 1,500 people. This was achieved in an operating environment characterised by increased demand for our services coupled with reduced government funding.

Over the course of the year Novas Initiatives maintained all existing schemes and added three new services. A Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service was established in West Cork in March 2012 to support families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We piloted a Community Detox Programme providing support for outpatients wishing to detoxify from benzodiazepines and methadone throughout the Mid-West region and 2012 also saw the official opening of McGarry House.

The completion of the McGarry House homeless accommodation service in Limerick city, and the opening of long-term supported housing there, was for me one of the highlights of the year. Services previously provided at Bridgeland House, the first direct access hostel in Ireland were relocated to our new facility providing much improved accommodation. We were delighted to welcome Joe McGarry, founding member of Novas Initiatives, home from Australia for the official opening. We were also delighted to have the Minister for State, with responsibility for Housing, Jan O'Sullivan officially open the service.

We continue to enjoy a very good working relationship with our funders, particularly our partner local authorities and the HSE. We have also received support from a variety of other sources, particularly the JP McManus foundation. We are very grateful for this support and we view it as a demonstration of your confidence in the services we provide.

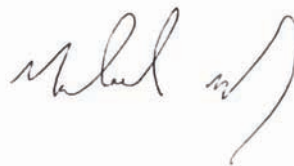
I want to pay particular tribute to our staff and many volunteers – including our Board members -who have given such commitment and energy over the year. The impact of funding reductions have been borne primarily by our

staff. They have endured reductions in pay and terms and conditions during the year, thus minimising the recessionary impact on our services and those depending on them. We are fortunate to have such a committed and caring staff team.

We look forward with confidence and optimism to improving and expanding our services. Plans are at an advanced stage for the re-development of our Brother Russell project in Limerick, our children's service in Tallaght and our Mount Brown accommodation service for female clients in Dublin. We are actively engaged with our funding partners in efforts to provide new innovative services, drawing on the unique skills and experience of our staff team.

We at Novas are at the frontline of the consequences of poverty, addiction and homelessness. Remembering the phrase, 'there but for the grace of god go I', we engage with each person who seeks our help in a non-judgemental manner, respecting the dignity of each individual. As a society we are justifiably proud of our compassion for those in need; we at Novas are passionately committed to improving the lives of those relying on our services. With support from government, the public and local communities we look forward to continuing this work.

Michael Flynn
Chairman





IN 2012, MORE THAN 1,500 PEOPLE ACCESSED OUR SERVICES, MORE THAN 4,000 MEALS WERE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH OUR STREET OUTREACH, 137 FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED OUT OF HOMELESSNESS OR RISK OF HOMELESSNESS AND MORE THAN 900 PEOPLE WERE SUPPORTED IN TEMPORARY AND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION



A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

2012 was a landmark year for Novas Initiatives. In this year, we reached a decade providing services to some of Ireland's most marginalised and impoverished individuals. Ten years had passed since Bridgeland House opened its doors to provide the state's first low-threshold, direct access homeless service. While we have since grown exponentially, with some 18 services now scattered throughout the country, we have remained committed to our ethos of harm reduction, centred unequivocally on client needs. This is something we continue to be very proud of.

2012 was also a noteworthy year in the number of clients we provided services to. In 2002 we supported 150 individuals in Limerick City, this figure has since increased 10 fold to more than 1,500 adults, children and families in counties Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Clare, Tipperary and Dublin. This is the greatest number of people we have supported to date, a reflection of the very challenging times in which we live.

2012 also ushered in the greatest funding cuts to our services at a time when more and more people were in need of support. We, like many others, had to do more with less. While we understand the very difficult economic climate in which the government operates, we wholeheartedly urge central government to maintain existing funding levels. This is essential if long-term homelessness is to be eradicated by 2016. Any further cuts will undoubtedly impact on the services we will be able to provide.

Novas opened three new services this year; a Mid-West Community Detox Programme, a West Cork Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service and 37 units of long-term supported housing in Limerick City. Such initiatives reflect the continuum of care we provide, our commitment to tackling homelessness and isolation in rural Ireland and our irrevocable drive to finding lasting solutions to homelessness, which we believe is rooted in long-term, permanent housing with holistic support mechanisms in place.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to all Novas staff for your commitment through these challenging times. Your dedication has been exceeded only by your energy and innovation in providing services to society's most vulnerable cohort. In 2012, more than 1,500 people accessed our services, more than 4,000 meals were distributed through our Street Outreach, 137 families were supported out of homelessness or were prevented from becoming homeless and 938 people were supported in temporary and long-term accommodation. While these figures are remarkable in themselves, they mask the deeper friendship, non-judgemental support and human kindness that was bestowed on all clients by you. For this I thank you.

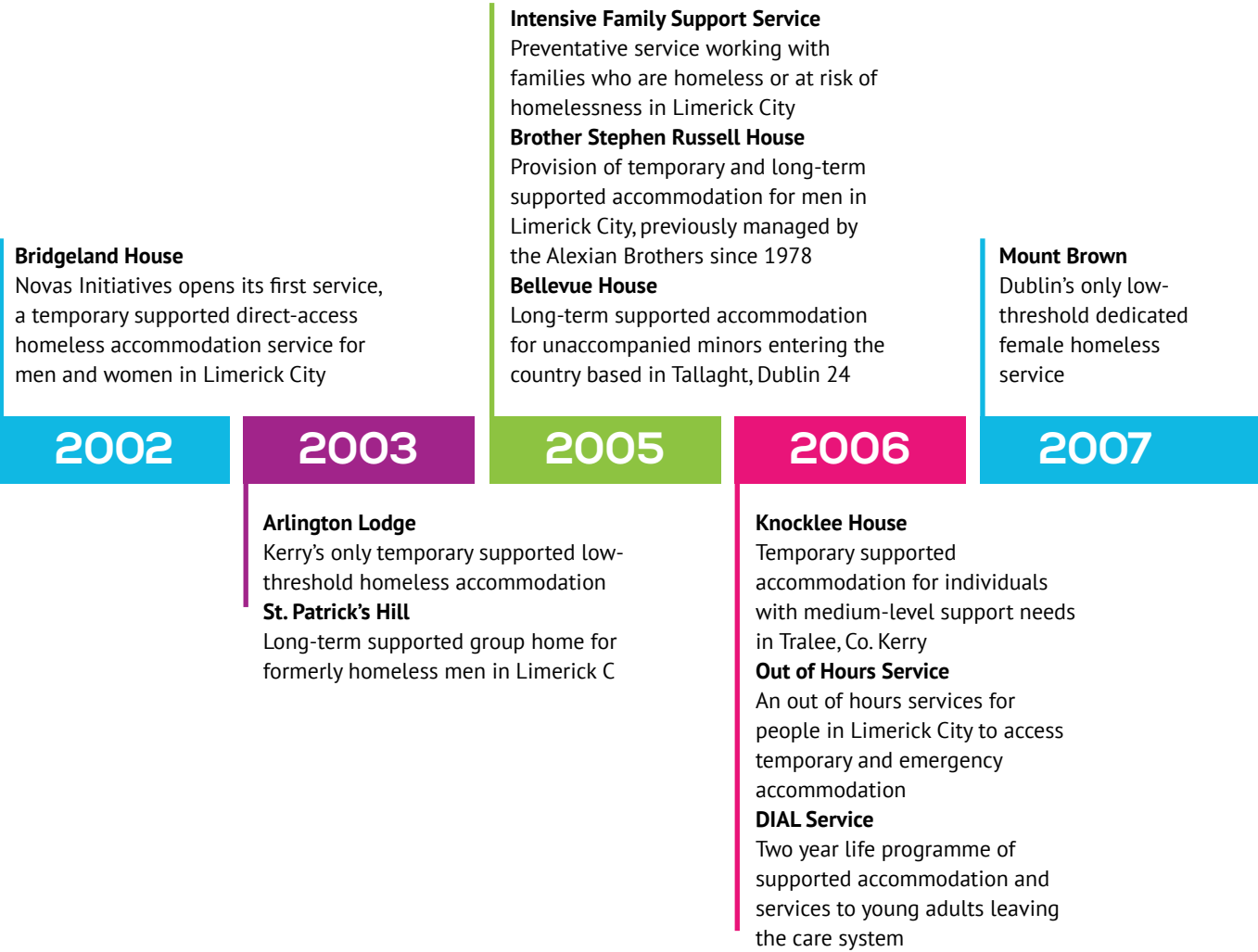
I would also like to acknowledge the deep commitment of all our volunteers and the work you do in improving the lives of Novas clients, particularly those involved in our Street Outreach programme, which is entirely dependent on your goodwill. I would like to thank our Board of Directors who provide leadership and vision in steering the future of our organisation and add real value to the work that we do. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the partnerships we have forged with the HSE, the Department of Environment, the local authorities and the Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, and the importance of such collaborative work in providing the best outcomes for our clients.

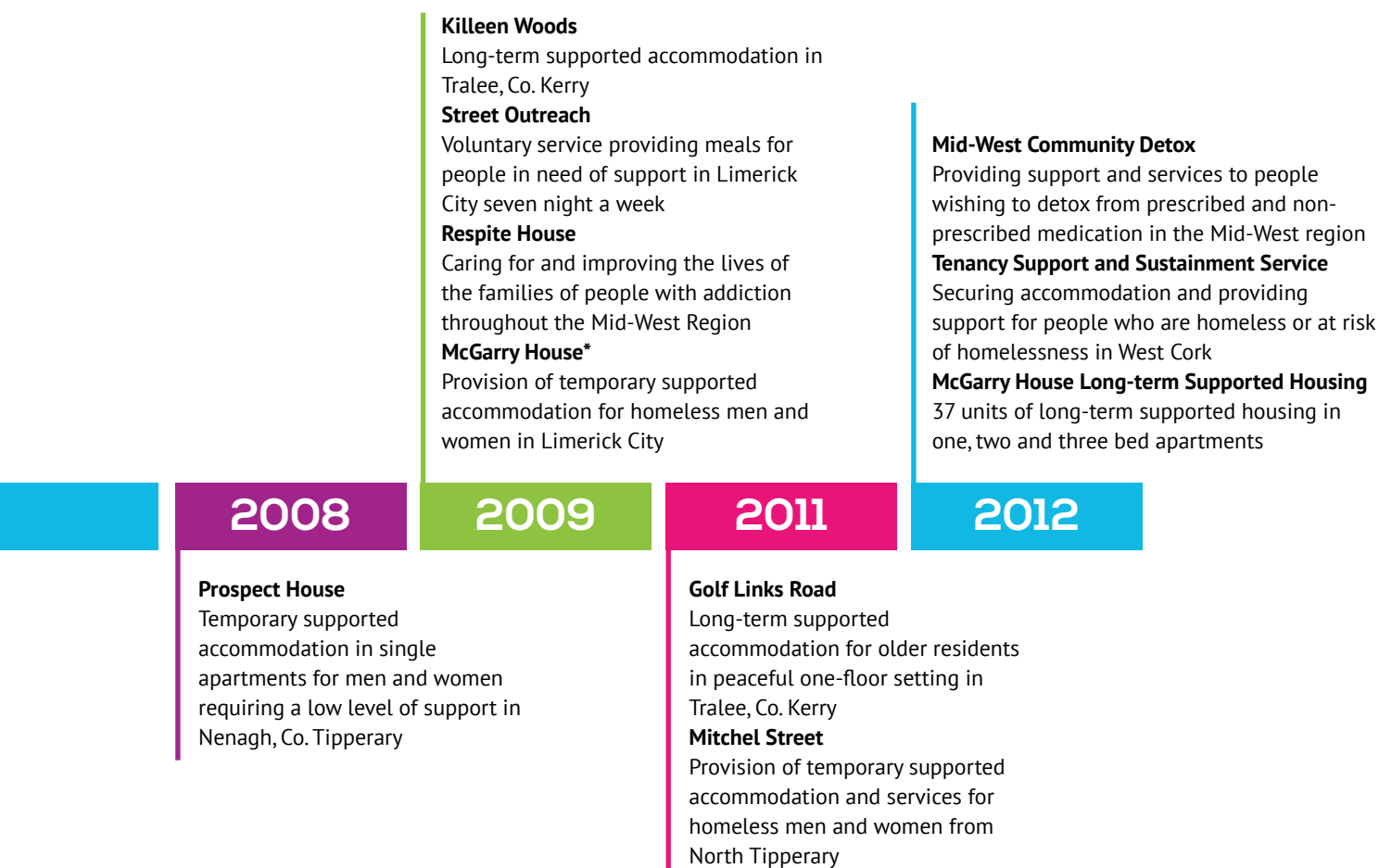
Homelessness did not always exist. As a society and a community, we must believe that homelessness can be no more. We cannot tolerate rough-sleeping in our society as an unfortunate reality, we must deem it as an unacceptable way for people to live. Novas Initiatives is truly committed to the vision and goal of ending long-term homelessness in Ireland.

Michael Goulding
Chief Executive Officer



TIMELINE





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

NOVAS INITIATIVES MAP OF SERVICES

Limerick City

- 01 Street Outreach
- 02 McGarry House
- 03 Intensive Family Support Service
- 04 Brother Stephen Russell House
- 05 DIAL House
- 06 Mid-West Community Detox
- 07 Out-of-Hours Service
- 08 St. Patrick's Hill

Tralee

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

Cork

- 13 Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service

Tipperary

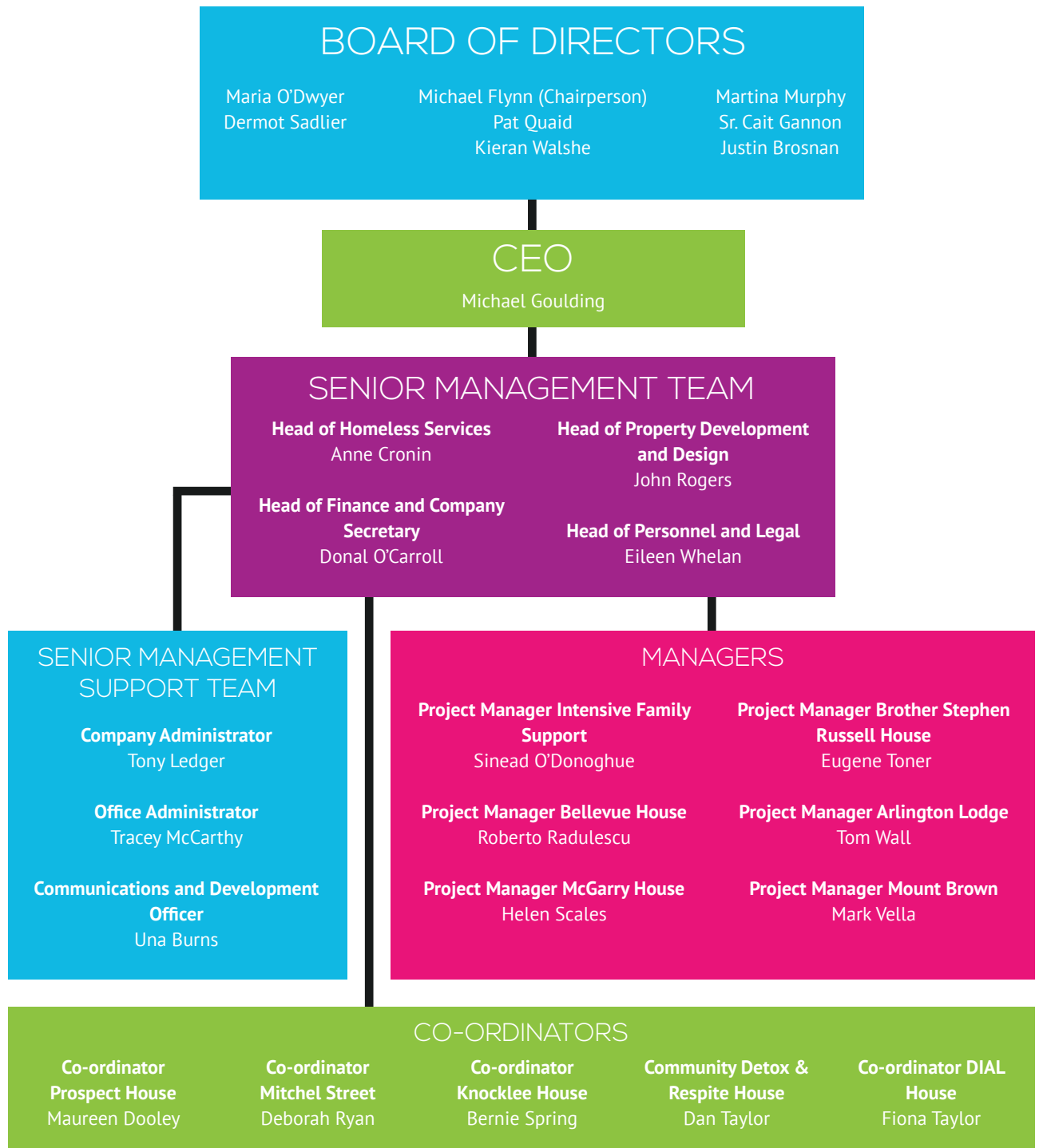
- 14 Novas Respite House
- 15 Prospect House Homeless Accommodation
- 16 Mitchel Street Homeless Accommodation

Dublin

- 17 Mount Brown Homeless Accommodation
- 18 Bellevue House



NOVAS INITIATIVES MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



"Follow your
Heart"



WHO WE ARE

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 maybe in necessitous circumstances, upon terms appropriate to their means.
- To provide training, educational, employment and vocational courses for the unemployed and anyone here before described.
- To provide rehabilitative and supportive holidays for any persons here before 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.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2012 was a continued year of growth for Novas Initiatives, much of which was a reflection of our vision to finding lasting solutions to long-term homelessness. We took a dynamic and proactive approach to combating the scourge of long-term homelessness in Irish society based on prevention, tenancy sustainment and the provision of long-term permanent housing for individuals and families that have been presenting to homeless services for many years.

Three new services were opened - a Mid-West Community Detox Programme, a Long-Term Supported Housing Unit and a Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service. Such additions reflected the continuum of care we strive to provide and affirmed the mission and vision of our organisation. We were proactive in responding to emerging needs of people experiencing homelessness, social isolation and addiction. These new services were developed as a result of collaboration with our colleagues in the Mid-West Regional Drugs Taskforce, Cork County Council, the HSE and the Department of Environment.

MCGARRY HOUSE LONG-TERM SUPPORTED HOUSING

Housing First, as endorsed by Minister Jan O'Sullivan, is a policy much supported by Novas. Indeed, the launch of 37 units of long-term supported housing, as part of our McGarry House service, reflected government policy on this issue.

McGarry House long-term supported housing units were officially opened by Minister O'Sullivan in November 2012. Thirty-seven units of accommodation in one, two and three bed apartments were launched for individuals who have been homeless for many years. The new accommodation provides residents with privacy and independence, a key to their own front door, a place to cook and invite friends and the basic human right of self-determination.

The mixed dwelling types were designed to enhance the sustainability of the community. The two and three bed apartments were developed with older clients in mind, many of whom have been institutionalised for much of their lives, thus finding it extremely difficult to live on their own. A shared apartment affords them the privacy of their own

bedroom combined with communal living space with their housemates.

The success of this project is underpinned by the provision of supports designed to enhance the residents' ability to live independently while sustaining their tenancies. Support and life skills programmes are developed with the individual needs of each client in mind. Issues such as money management, personal hygiene, cooking, cleaning and mental and physical wellbeing are collaboratively improved between clients and a trained and dedicated staff team. Residents are actively supported to engage in the local community and in accessing education and employment opportunities.

This Housing First development is designed in cluster formation rather than scattered throughout the community. It reflects the needs of our clients and enables Novas to provide the degree of support required by them to maintain independent living.

Typical bedroom in McGarry House and the garden of the McGarry House long-term housing complex

I WOULD BE DEAD
TODAY IF IT WASN'T
FOR MCGARRY HOUSE



MICHAEL'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE MICHAEL'S STORY, A TENANT OF
MCGARRY HOUSE'S LONG-TERM SUPPORTED HOUSING:

I would be dead today if it wasn't for McGarry House. The doctor warned me that one more overdose would kill me. I'm now off heroin for more than a year. I came to McGarry House 16 months ago. I stayed in the temporary supported accommodation, and then moved into a supported housing unit. I now have a one-bedroom apartment. The accommodation is brilliant. I have a television, a three-seater sofa, a cooker, microwave and a washing machine. If I want to buy pots and pans or anything like that, the staff help me.

They are now teaching me to cook. I can do mince and steaks and lots of basic things. They give me tips on cleaning the apartment too and encourage me to keep the apartment and myself clean. They praise you when you deserve it. I wouldn't be able to keep an apartment in town anyway as I need someone to collect the rent off me every week.

Máire is brilliant, she's on the ball, nothing gets past her. That's good for me. She keeps an eye on me. She manages the apartments and if you're having a problem, she'll get it sorted ASAP.

I also take part in the community detox programme, which is brilliant. They sit down and have a chat about anything that is making me down. So do all the staff here, they'll always find the time to talk to you. That's really important to me because I sometimes feel down. They tell me to go for walks

and teach me breathing exercises if I feel anxious and that really works too.

My mother and my uncle can't believe the difference in me since moving to the supported housing. Before I came here none of my family were talking to me. The court now says that I can see my children. When I was on heroin I didn't care about them. Now they're on my mind.

Máire kept on at me to go back to education. I went up to the Adult Education Centre on Sexton Street last week and sat a maths and English test which I passed. I am starting there full time in September to do my Junior Cert.

This is all thanks to staff in McGarry House. They believed in me and talked to me about getting clean every day. My own apartment has given me independence and something to be proud of.

WEST CORK TENANCY SUPPORT AND SUSTAINMENT SERVICE

In March 2012, Novas Initiatives opened a Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service in West Cork, which was borne out of a previous piece of research conducted by Novas evidencing the need for such a facility there. This was our first service in Cork and was a new addition to our suite of services in rural Ireland. The geographical remit of this service extends from Bandon to Mizen Head and covers hundreds of miles of rural dwellings and large county towns.

The service offers sensitive and pragmatic supports to families and single persons in the West Cork region who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Novas is the only voluntary housing agency providing a homeless service in the region, emphasising the need for such a service there. From March 2012, when the service was opened, some 42 individuals and families were supported in accessing suitable accommodation to years end. Since opening, referrals have grown exponentially. It accepts referrals from individuals and from local agencies including local mental health services, social work services, the Gardai and the Local Council.

In 2012, some 29% of all clients presented with accommodation and mental health issues. We support the HSE multi-disciplinary team in facilitating patient discharge from acute services into the community. A further 29% of presentations concerned members of the travelling community, highlighting their continued marginalisation from mainstream society and thus their inability to secure

permanent accommodation. Other issues with which clients present include financial strain, domestic abuse, addiction issues and separation.

Considering the hinterland of the region, rural isolation is an additional obstacle we support clients to overcome. The Tenancy Support and Sustainment Officer works with clients to help them engage in their local communities and links them with other community groups and voluntary agencies.

Considering the lack of accommodation support services in the region, and indeed the lack of holistic support for those on the margins of society there, this is a vital advocacy medium for many individuals and families experiencing social isolation and at risk of homelessness.

NOVAS INITIATIVES
IS THE ONLY
VOLUNTARY HOUSING
BODY, PROVIDING A
HOMELESS SERVICE IN
WEST CORK

Issues facing Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service clients



*Habitual Residence Condition

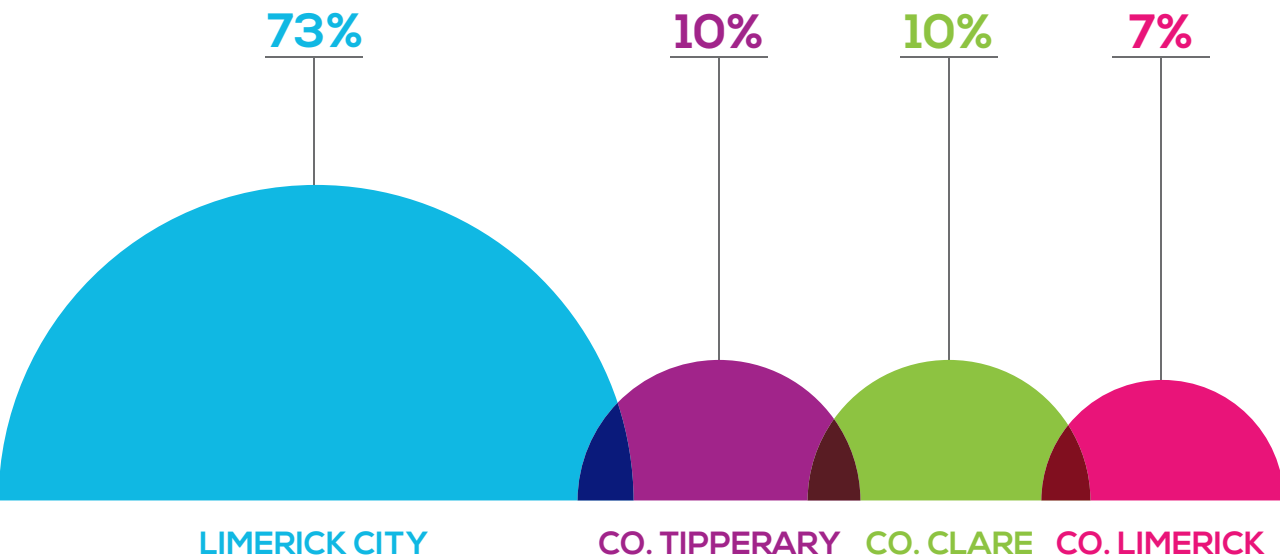
MID-WEST COMMUNITY DETOX

The Mid-West Community Detox Programme was opened by Novas in mid-2012. This service is part of a nationwide initiative supported by the HSE and the Irish College of General Practitioners, developed to assist people wishing to access safer outpatient detoxification from benzodiazepines and/or methadone. It is based in Novas’ Headquarters in McGarry House, and serves Limerick city and county, North Tipperary and County Clare.

Funded by the Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, the programme was established in June 2012, and has since received the highest number of referrals in the country, even more than inner-city Dublin services.¹ These referrals reflect the rising level of drug use outside the capital. Some 109 referrals were made to the service during the pilot programme from GPs, family members, other agencies and from individuals wishing to access the service themselves.

Of those presenting, 43% were female and 57% were male. The Community Detox service is run in conjunction with clients’ GPs, a support worker and community-based partner agencies. Novas staff provide emotional and practical support, and concerns regarding relapse and overdose are addressed through an individual care plan tailored to each client’s needs. Following a successful pilot programme, which prioritised Novas’ clients in temporary and long-term supported accommodation in the city, the service is now available to anyone in the Mid-West seeking help to safely detox. The number of referrals from Limerick City during the pilot reflect the location of the service, the relative population density of the area and the prioritisation of homeless persons, however the wider Mid-West region will be targeted going forward, reaching people in rural communities wishing to detoxify.

Place of residence of persons presenting to Community Detox



¹ This is the only Community Detox Programme that is revenue funded (the rest are voluntary programmes) and highlights the importance of government funding for successful outcomes.

Issues facing clients of the Mid-West Community Detox Programme



The profile of clients was wide-ranging, and reflects the fact that anyone, regardless of age or gender, may experience difficulties with dependence on prescription and non-prescription medications. For example, the service worked with a 57 year old housewife who had been addicted to prescribed benzodiazepines for 28 years and an 18 year old male addicted to street benzodiazepines. However, despite differences in the individual profile of clients, the commonality of benzodiazepine addiction prevailed among the vast majority of those availing of the service.

41% of all clients who accessed the service sought to detox from benzodiazepines only, 10% sought help around benzodiazepines and methadone and 31% presented with poly drug use issues, the vast majority of whom took benzodiazepines in conjunction with other substances, so that a startling 81% of clients presenting to the Mid-West Community Detox were addicted either exclusively or as part of their poly drug use habit to benzodiazepines. This is a reflection of a broader national problem of benzodiazepine use, which as well as administered by prescription is widely available for unlawful purchase on the streets of our towns and cities

81% OF CLIENTS WHO
ACCESSED THE
MID-WEST
COMMUNITY DETOX
PROGRAMME WERE
ADDICTED TO
BENZODIAZEPINES



THERE WAS NOW A
FLICKER OF LIGHT AT THE
END OF THE TUNNELL

SARAH'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE THE STORY OF ONE GIRL'S JOURNEY
THROUGH THE COMMUNITY DETOX PROGRAMME:

I started using tablets when I was 12 or 13, taking anything I could get my hands on. Then, three and a half years ago my father passed away and I started taking more, I was hooked. I took tablets prescribed by my doctor and more with my friends. I was taking about 15 tablets a day, I did not see it as a problem because I was breaking it up throughout the day, 3 or 4 in the morning, the same in the afternoon and a few more at night. I liked the feeling I got from them. I was happy and more confident, I felt normal because I could do things I would not normally do. It came to a stage I felt I could not do anything without them. After about a year and a half I realised I had a serious problem but I could not stop. I started resorting to taking tablets on my own, I dropped my friends when they voiced concern. I started to feel sick if I did not have them. I was completely dependent mentally and physically, my body could not cope without them.

Realisation and desperation kicked in when the supply died up in Limerick. I was in bits with sickness, my body was withdrawn. I was also having panic attacks. The cycle continued. For two years I drove in and out of town every night to get 15 tablets for the day after. I was desperate I used to call to dealers houses and take risks like bringing dealers in my car. I blew my inheritance from my father on tablets. The last eight or nine months before recovery I

was in a desperate state. I lost about two stone in weight, was grey in the face, but still managed to hide my tablet addiction from my family and boyfriend. I had no motivation, tablets were not even working they were just keeping the sickness at bay.

The headaches were unreal. I was wetting the bed, I could feel my organs failing. It was around this time pieces of the



Dan Taylor

Mid-West Community Detox Co-ordinator

jigsaw were coming together for my family, I broke down and admitted everything. I attended a treatment centre for assessment. The counsellor told me I was a chronic addict. It was there I was given the details of the Community Detox programme. I met Wendy and Céline in a hotel. After unburdening my life story they appointed me a key worker.

If I was struggling in any way I could ring them. Julie, my keyworker, helped me with the most basic things. She told me to try and get up out of bed go down stairs and change my scenery. She talked me through the day and phoned me later in the day to talk me through the evening. I relapsed, I phoned the Detox and spoke to Julie, I told her I relapsed and she was so supportive. We started my Detox afresh. Julie would phone me every couple of days to support me, She would take me out of the house for coffee. This kept me on track. She also helped me deal with my family, they also needed reassurance. This prepared me for treatment. While in treatment Julie kept in touch with the counsellors in preparing my aftercare programme, she also visited me.

After I left treatment I started to stay in bed all day again. Julie kept in touch all the time. She would give me a plan for the day and phone the day after to see how the plan went. She would take me walking and my routine started to improve. I started to attend NA meetings. I was learning

new coping skills, and I was becoming self-aware. Julie then suggested that I go to a secondary treatment centre in Cork. I couldn't afford it, the Detox staff helped me access part funding from the Limerick Drug and Alcohol Service Treatment Fund. I was hesitant about this step but Julie continued to work on my coping skills and on relapse prevention. When I started secondary treatment Julie supported me by ringing me and meeting me. I then moved into a transitional house in Cork. Novas Community Detox Programme was with me throughout it all. My key worker Julie was with me through every step of my journey, she saw me from when I was in bits to getting well. I am now 13 months in recovery, living in my own house in Cork, and I have a job. I never imagined this time last year I would be where I am now. My aftercare programme with the Detox is finished but I know they will be there if I ever need them. I feel my future is positive and brighter, and I am excited about what has yet to come

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The landmark moment for the organisation came in late 2012, with the official opening of McGarry House. This is a unique service that provides a system of layered care provision, tailored to the individual and ever-changing needs of the entrenched homeless person. The service provides a range of accommodation from short-stay (directly accessible on a 24 hour basis) to permanent housing, both of which are supported by a dedicated staff team at all times.

The level of support provided depends on the individual needs of each client. A range of therapeutic support services are in place across both accommodation services (the temporary and permanent are based at different locations on the same site) to address the varying needs of those living there - mental health needs, physical and intellectual needs, addiction issues, as well as the promotion of life-skills to enable persons exit homelessness for good.

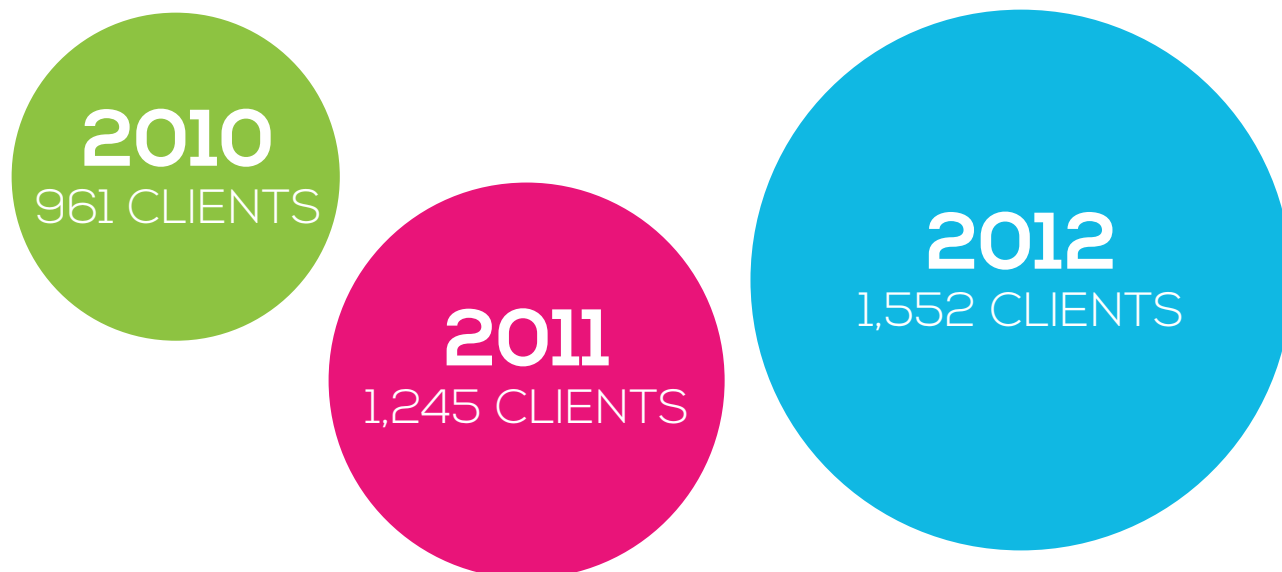
The establishment of the campus in McGarry House in 2012 and the delivery of such a variety of supports from one site (accommodation, Community Detox and Street Outreach Service), is one Novas is very proud of.

On a national level, the number of clients accessing Novas services increased by some 25% from 2011 to 2012, further worrying trends also emerged including a younger age profile of clients and more prolific drug use among those availing of our services.

In 2011, some 1,245 persons accessed Novas services throughout Ireland, in 2012 this figure rose to 1,552, an increase in real terms of 307 persons. This is a reflection of the devastating impact the recession continues to reap on more and more vulnerable people in our society.

THE NUMBER OF
CLIENTS ACCESSING
NOVAS SERVICES
BETWEEN 2011 AND
2012 ROSE BY 25%

No. of clients accessing Novas services from 2010-2012



SUPPORT NEEDS OF NOVAS CLIENTS

The support needs of clients changed little between 2011 and 2012, with issues such as family breakdown, financial strain and legal matters accounting for the same proportion in both years. There was a slight rise in the number of clients presenting with issues relating to alcohol and a more significant rise in those with drug addiction issues. While the number of clients presenting with mental health problems returned as 15% and 11% in 2011 and 2012 respectively, this only represents clients with a diagnosed mental health condition and does not consider individuals with ongoing and often debilitating mental health issues. Most clients accessing Novas are significantly affected by mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, chaotic drug use and withdrawal symptoms.

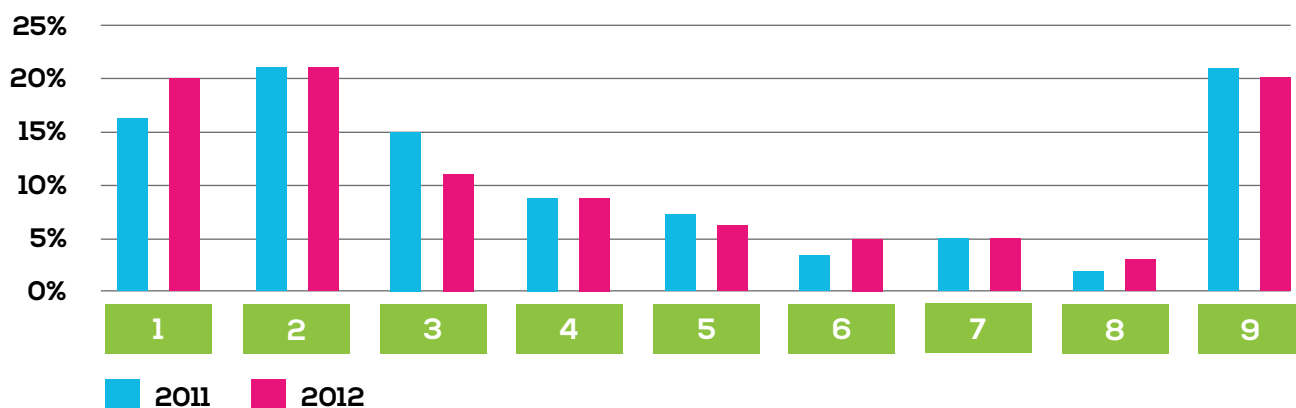
In 2011, some 17% of clients presented to Novas services primarily as a result of their drug addiction issues. By 2012 this had increased to 20%. In real terms, this is a rise of 88 persons presenting with drug addiction issues. This problem is particularly acute in our low-threshold accommodation

services, such as McGarry House, Arlington Lodge and Mount Brown.

When McGarry House Homeless Service is reviewed in isolation the number of clients who presented with issues relating mainly to drug addiction increased to 27%, from a service average of 20%. This is a worrying trend highlighting the increase in drug addiction outside the capital.

THE NUMBER OF CLIENTS PRESENTING WITH DRUG ADDICTION ISSUES ROSE BY 88 PERSONS FROM 2011 TO 2012

Support needs of clients presenting to Novas services 2011 and 2012



1 = Drug Addiction 2 = Alcohol Addiction 3 = Mental Health Needs 4 = Family Breakdown 5 = Legal Issues
6 = Dual diagnosis 7 = Financial difficulties 8 = Young People Leaving Care 9 = Misc.

Miscellaneous includes learning disability, literacy/language problems, physical/sensory disability, serious medical condition, HIV/AIDS/HEP C, domestic violence, homeless family, refugee/asylum seeker and other.

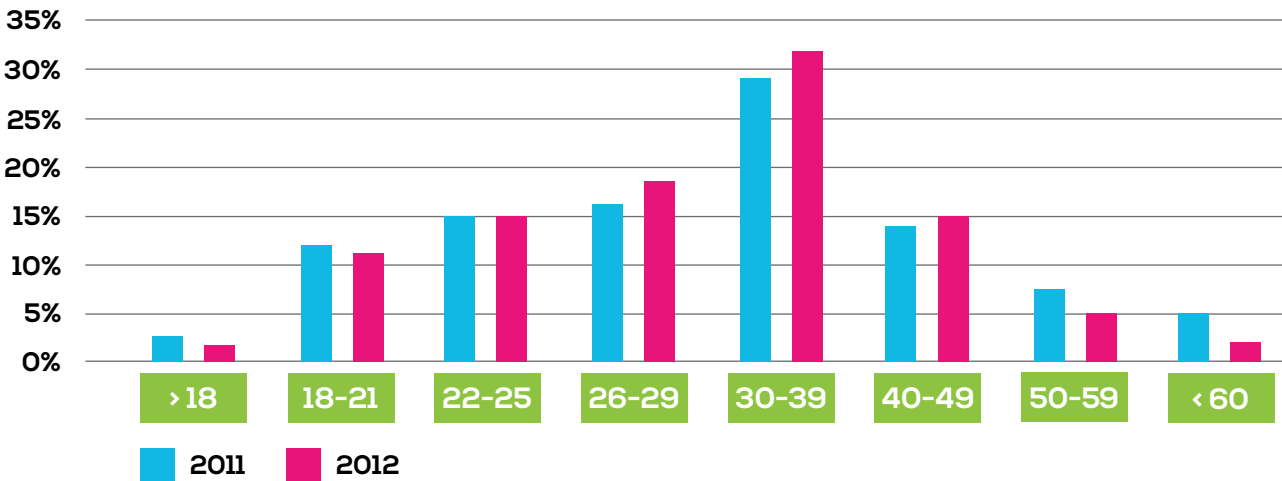
In 2012, Novas Initiatives took a multi-faceted approach to tackling the issue of drug addiction among its residents, particularly in McGarry House. At the end of that year, more than 20 people had experienced non-fatal overdose and individuals identified at 'very high risk of overdose' amounted to 95% of the intravenous drug users in the service at the time.² More startling was the fact that by year end, 40% of female intravenous users in the service were pregnant. Clients were being monitored regularly throughout the day and night. Training was provided to all staff around the issues of overdose, safe injection and poly drug use and clients were encouraged to access a variety of different training programmes and workshops to support them to reduce the harm in their addiction. However the numbers experiencing non-fatal overdose were still very high.

As a result, a multi-agency group was established to explore the issue of overdose and seek solutions to curb the danger in high risk behaviour, particularly among poly-drug users. Following on from this group, a piece of research was conducted to examine the incidences of overdose from the perspective of McGarry House residents and staff and make recommendations on how to minimise risk. The findings

of this research will be published in early 2014 and at this stage is proving significant, not only in an Irish context but also at international level. Novas hopes that this research will provide the mechanism to support those who are homeless and deemed as 'very high risk of overdose' to reduce the harm in their drug use and thus reduce mortality rates among homeless people who die through overdose.³

The Mid-West Community Detox was also piloted in 2012, assisting people to safely detoxify from methadone and benzodiazepines in their own homes. This outreach service is located in McGarry House and homeless persons were prioritised throughout the pilot programme. Such was the success of the pilot, the service continued to be funded in 2013. The Mid West was one of eight different sites throughout the country promoting the Community Detox model, using protocols designed by Ana Liffey. Whilst the initial concept of the service was to provide homeless persons with support to safely detox outside a clinical environment, the vast demand for the service has been from the non-homeless population in the region. The development of this service is one that Novas is very committed to as demand continues to grow.

AGE PROFILE OF NOVAS CLIENTS



² 53% of the overall population of McGarry's Temporary Accommodation.

³ The estimated mortality rate among Irish adults (aged 15-64 years) due to drug-induced deaths is third highest in the EU at almost 70 deaths per million as against an EU average death rate of 21 per million.

The age profile of Novas clients is falling. In 2011 86% of clients accessing our accommodation services were under 50 years of age. In 2012 this figure rose to 92%. In real terms this accounts for 211 persons. Considering all services, there appears to be a link between the decline in client age profile and the rise in the number of clients presenting with issues around drug addiction.

THE AGE PROFILE OF NOVAS CLIENTS HAS DECLINED IN THE TWELVE MONTH PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 2011 TO DECEMBER 2012, WITH SOME 92% OF CLIENTS UNDER 50 YEARS OLD

Of most concern regarding the younger population entering Novas services is the rise in the number of 18 to 21 year olds accessing our accommodation services. From 2010 to 2012, the number of young adults aged 18 to 21 availing of our services increased by some 63%, jumping from 65 to 106 individuals. The greatest increase occurred from 2010 to 2011 when the numbers rose by 40%, to 91 persons. There was a further rise in 2012, when 106 adults aged between 18 and 21 accessed out accommodation services. While the numbers are relatively small, there is nonetheless an evident rise of very young adults entering homeless accommodation.

The increase is due, in some part to the reduced social welfare payment for 18 to 21 year olds to €100 per week.

The sharp rise between 2010 and 2011 coincides with reduced welfare payment made to this group. It is having an unintended consequence of forcing young adults into or inhibiting their exit from homelessness.

Novas will continue to highlight the plight of these vulnerable young adults who find themselves homeless. In 2012 we campaigned earnestly to government in collaboration with Focus Ireland and Cope Galway on this issue and made a presentation to Minister Joan Burton. The overwhelming majority of young people who become homeless have no home to return to. Many have had an episodic history of state care as well as sofa surfing and living with friends, before finally entering homeless services. Novas are advocating that young adults who are homeless and have no family home to return to are exempt from the reduced social welfare payment. These young people need support to exit homeless services and live independently in their communities as quickly as possible, as outlined in the Government's recent Homeless Policy Statement. Vulnerable young adults cannot realistically sustain independence on €100 per week, with a minimum rent contribution of €30.

In 2012, Novas Initiatives provided accommodation for 247 young people under the age of 25. This figure accounted for 27% of all individuals availing of our residential services, highlighting the vulnerability of the group. Of these young adults, 58 were on reduced social welfare payments. Novas will continue to canvass government on this issue until there is a better outcome for these young adults to enable them to exit homelessness.



No. of 18-21 year olds accessing Novas services from 2010 to 2012



BEFORE PRESENTING TO
NOVAS SERVICES I WAS
SLEEPING IN A DISUSED BUS

PAUL'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF ONE NOVAS RESIDENT TRAPPED IN HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION BECAUSE OF THE REDUCED PAYMENT.

I'm 20 years old and live in Mitchel Street homeless service in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. I previously received a scholarship to attend UCC to play rugby, but broke my back playing the sport and was forced to drop out of college. I moved home to recover but due to family difficulties, I was later forced to move out of home. Before presenting to Novas services I was sleeping in a disused bus.

I am in receipt of the reduced social welfare payment of €100 per week. This payment is inhibiting my ability to leave Novas' service and secure private rented accommodation, as I would have to feed myself and pay bills on €70 per week.

Since becoming homeless and following the breakdown of my relationship with my family, my drinking has escalated and my mood has deteriorated. I am stuck in the cycle of homelessness, a cycle that could be avoided if my payment

was reverted to the full amount. I am eager to return to full-time education and have secured a course in Thurles IT.

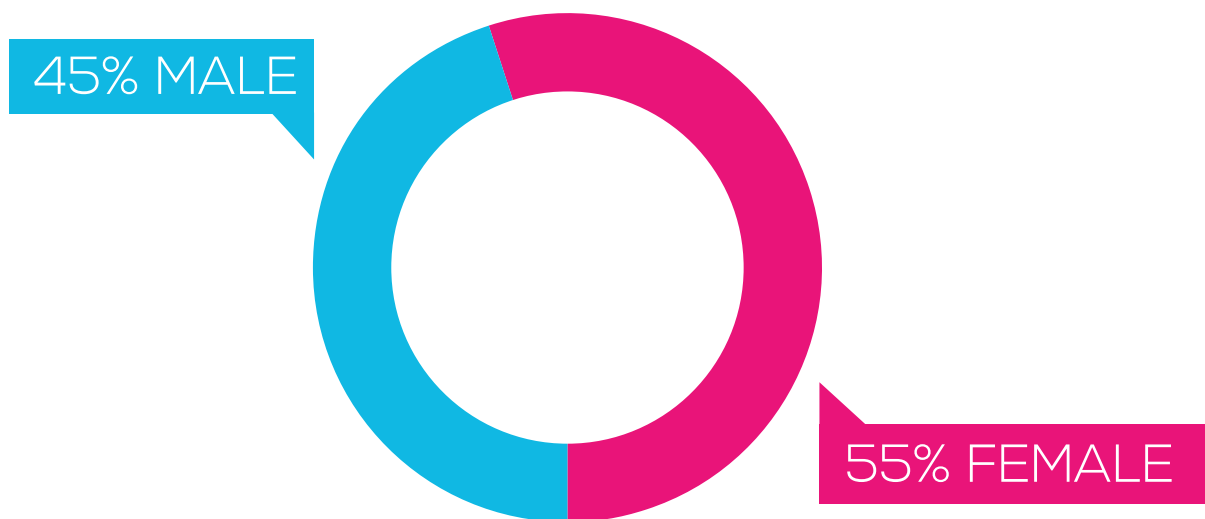
However, if I take up this position, I will not be entitled to any payment as I will be considered ineligible for work due to college attendance. I am stuck and it seems like the current system provides no means of exiting this trap. I am young, I want to work and better educate myself.

GENDER OF NOVAS CLIENTS

While homeless women compose 30% of the national average of the homeless population, some 55% of Novas clients in 2012 were women. This is a startling figure and reveals the increasing number of women entering the cycle of homelessness in recent years.

Of most concern is the number of revolving door female clients availing of our services. As the following graphs indicate, the overall proportion of repeat clients entering our services is 32%. When this figure is broken down by gender, the results are startling. The number of repeat male clients falls to 17%, while the number of repeat female clients rises to 43%, so that while the number of women entering homelessness for the first time is slightly lower than men, as a group they are much less successful in resettling in their community and maintaining their own accommodation.

Proportion of male and female clients accessing Novas services 2012



This is a very worrying trend and highlights the difficulties faced by women once they become homeless. Issues such as the estrangement of their children due to their homelessness, addiction issues, sexual and physical violence and exploitation and poor mental health and medical needs (e.g. pregnancy) seriously affect their ability to re-enter mainstream society.

While there are common strands among homeless men and women, specific issues relating to women such as loss of children and sexual exploitation need to be addressed to secure more positive outcomes for these women. Novas has begun the process of addressing specific issues faced by homeless women particularly in terms of prevention and ending long-term homelessness.

Proportion of clients who are new or had accessed Novas services before



In McGarry House, the specific allocation of six temporary beds to female clients has been removed in favour of a more equitable open access policy, representing an almost even split of men and women accessing the temporary accommodation⁴. Moreover, when the redevelopment of our Brother Russell service in Limerick is complete in early 2015, it will be opened as a male and female homeless service, offering long-term supported housing to long-term homeless men and women. This pledge reiterates our commitment to ending long-term homelessness and to finding solutions to the unique problems faced by homeless women. It is also a reflection of the proportion of women accessing our services.

In 2012 Mount Brown - the only low-threshold, dedicated female homeless service in the state, took part in a research paper prepared by Paula Mayock and Sarah Sheridan titled, 'Womens' Journey's into Homelessness: Key Findings from a Biographical Study of Homeless Women in Ireland'. This research outlines that female homelessness resists easy categorisation and highlights the diversity and complexity of their experience. Repeated episodes of homelessness was a key feature of the research and over 30% of those who took part had become homeless before the age of 18. The report

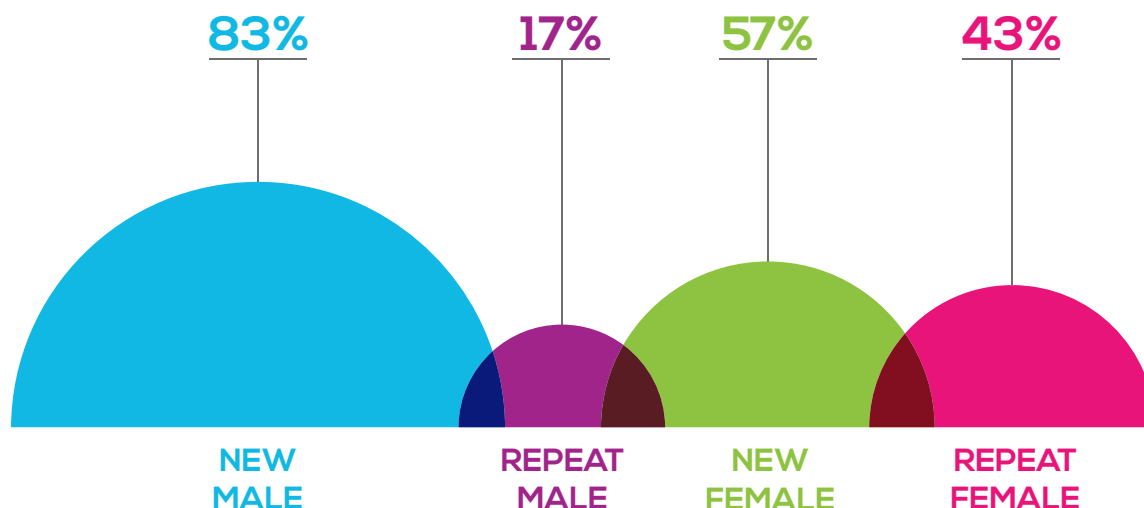
strongly asserts that a failure to adequately appreciate the distinct and sometimes unique situations of homeless women can result in a failure to develop responses that are appropriate to women's needs. Gender perspectives on homelessness are necessary to effectively meet the needs of homeless women⁵.

In an effort to promote gender specific responses, Mount Brown works to resettle women in their local communities in stable, permanent accommodation. There are plans afoot to relocate and extend the service to a new location in 2014, which will continue to provide temporary supported accommodation, with the vision of developing long-term housing and family accommodation in the future. Currently many of those who receive a service in Mount Brown are unable to break the cycle of homelessness due to the distinct lack of suitable move-on accommodation. Novas hopes that this new service, which is being developed in partnership with Dublin City Council, the HSE, the Irish Prison Service and the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, will go some way in alleviating this issue, by providing long-term housing with structured routes out of homelessness for those women who become homeless on an on-going basis.

⁴ It is worth noting however that the figures for homeless women accessing the long-term accommodation in 2012, was as low as 1 woman in every 10 successful applications.

⁵ Mayock, P and Sheridan, S. (2012) Women's Journeys' to Homelessness: Key Findings from a Biographical Study of Homeless Women in Ireland. Women and Homelessness in Ireland, Research Paper 1. Dublin: School of Social Work and Social Policy and Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin.

Proportion of repeat clients by gender 2012



The provision of accommodation is just one strand in our approach to the care of homeless women, which is underpinned by the ethos of prevention. Services such as the Intensive Family Support Service in Limerick, the Respite House in Newport and the Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service in West Cork, are most commonly accessed by women and their children at risk of homelessness.

Some 90% of the Intensive Family Support Service's clients in 2012 were women and their children. This service supports women to keep their family together by securing appropriate accommodation for families at risk of homelessness or for those who have become homeless. In 2012, the service worked with 106 open social work cases. Of this number, only six children, from two families, were taken into care, indicating the high success rate of the service in keeping families together and reducing family breakdown⁶. As well as supporting families in securing and maintaining accommodation, the service advocates on behalf of clients in accessing employment and education opportunities, health and social welfare benefits, money management and around their mental and physical

wellbeing. Some 62% of clients who accessed our West Cork Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service in 2012 were women at risk of homelessness. Of these, some 65% were part of a family unit. This service worked to secure accommodation for women and where relevant, their children, thus keeping the family unit together.

Throughout 2012 Novas worked steadfastly and successfully in preventing family homelessness. We urge greater government resources to be directed into preventative measures. Preventing homelessness is the most cost effective approach for the state and most importantly, the best outcome for those at risk. Prevention, which is at the core of the government's response to tackling homelessness, will continue to be prioritised by Novas going forward. However prevention services have to be innovative and innovation requires thinking outside the box. Successful prevention strategies need to be supported by government in partnership with the voluntary sector, which has to-date provided the most dynamic responses in homeless prevention.

⁶ Family breakdown is considered one of the determining and ever-prevalent factors in a person becoming homeless.



I WILL BE FOREVER
GRATEFUL

NICOLE'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE A STORY FROM NICOLE, A CLIENT OF OUR INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE, WHO WAS SUPPORTED IN SECURING ACCOMMODATION FOR HERSELF AND HER TWO YOUNG CHILDREN.

My name is Nicole Keane. When I first made contact with Novas I was in a very bad place. I had almost given up on everything. I couldn't see any way out of my situation. My house had become infested with rats. I was attempting to catch them myself but I couldn't. I was frightened for my children's safety. We were all living in one room. We couldn't use the kitchen or the kids' bedrooms and barely used the sitting room.

I subsequently became pregnant, but because of the stress and not sleeping, I lost my baby. That day my heart shattered. In trying to care for my children, I ended up losing another. From then my mind became fogged. I didn't think about paying bills or tidying my house. Nothing mattered.

That all changed the day I met Lisa Nolan from Novas' Intensive Family Support Service. Lisa worked hard with me, teaching me things such as paying my bills, managing money and the basic tools I needed to get by. Unfortunately the rodent problem continued in my house and I contracted Weil's disease which was another huge setback. I really felt like the worst mother in the world. My house was subsequently condemned by the HSE and I was told I had to leave my home with just the clothes on my back four weeks before Christmas. In ten minutes we lost everything. Words cannot describe that feeling.

That night Novas put me into emergency accommodation in a hotel. I cried all night, feeling like I had let my children down. Lisa continued to canvass the housing authority on

a daily basis on my behalf. She is one in a million! In just a few weeks she managed to get my kids and I a home, just in time for Christmas! I will be forever grateful. I could finally see light. Lisa and Michelle helped me out with buying a few things for the new home. I was attending counselling, things were looking up, I slept the whole night.

Today I have no bills. My home is spotless. I am on the Parents Council of my son's school and am the Vice-President of the Resident's Association. I now realise the rats were not my fault, they came through the foundation of my home. Novas, especially Lisa, are heroes. If you work with them, what you'll get back is unbelievable.

I am telling my story to let people know that there's no shame in asking for help at some point in your life. We all hit rough patches. Novas provides unbelievable support and has helped me get my life back. For that I will be forever grateful. It only takes one phone call and a bit of effort by you.

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION OUR SERVICES

MID-WEST SERVICES

MCGARRY HOUSE TEMPORARY SUPPORTED HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION

McGarry House in Limerick City (formerly Bridgeland House) was opened in 2002 and became the first low-threshold, direct access homeless accommodation in the state. It now provides 30 units of temporary supported accommodation and 37 units of long-term supported housing to male and female residents. All residents are provided with their own en-suite bedroom. The scheme does not put barriers in place for entry and accepts clients as they are. It offers services on a 24 hour basis.

Considering temporary supported accommodation only, 114 persons were provided somewhere to stay throughout 2012. Some 11% of residents were under 21 years of age and 48% were less than 30 years of age, indicating the young age profile of persons presenting to Novas services. Issues facing McGarry clients included alcohol and substance misuse, mental health issues, extreme poverty and experience of sexual and physical violence.



THE DAY THE
REFURBISHED
MCGARRY HOUSE
WAS OFFICIALLY
OPENED WAS A
DAY OF GREAT
PRIDE FOR US AS
A COMMUNITY



JULIE'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE A STORY FROM A PROJECT
WORKER IN MCGARRY HOUSE:

I first came to Novas in 2007 on a student placement to Brother Russell House. As part of my placement I completed a number of agency visits to the other services within the organisation. Eugene Toner brought me to visit Bridgeland House, I was shocked by the building and the conditions not only the residents lived in, but equally the staff worked in. However I was also struck by the atmosphere of the building and the sense of community and welcoming feeling that was there. It was very evident that a deep respect existed between the management, staff and service users.

Following on from my placement I was interviewed for a locum staff position. I was successful in this interview and very soon started working as a locum in Bridgeland House. At this time I was still learning the skills of a social care practitioner and I gained great experience. The experienced staff members were a massive support to me and really took me under their wings and showed me every aspect of the job. A full time position became available in Bridgeland House in 2008 and I was found to be a suitable candidate. Although the conditions of the premises were poor the service offered to the clients more than substituted for this. Every aspect of their care was considered, in drafting up

their support plans. Over the years I have seen the service and staff change with the needs of the service users.

When I first started to work in the low-threshold service, it was populated with street drinkers. Over the years there has been a change in client presentations and the service now works with drinkers and drug users alike. Over the years we have worked with various service users all unique and talented, and they make Novas what it is.

Some events over the years will be etched in my memory forever such as the day we left St. Johns Square and

moved to McGarry House. The joy and excitement of the staff and service users alike was a sight to be behold. The younger lads exclaiming it was like a hotel and us as a staff team couldn't believe that the long talked about and anticipated move had come to pass. We quickly settled in Alphonsus Street and it was like McGarry House always existed. Likewise the day the refurbished McGarry House was officially opened was a day of great pride for us as a community; there is tremendous credit due to the lads that lived here while the refurb was being completed.

With the change of time comes a new service, such as the street outreach service. This voluntary service started with various staff members from various schemes coming together to provide the service which has gathered momentum and has become one of the cornerstones of homeless services in Limerick over the years. Tremendous time and effort goes into the running of the street outreach which is valued deeply by the service users that avail of it. Some come for food, others for the chat and advice, and others identify with it as a Novas service and see it as a way of keeping a link with the volunteers long after they may have left the hostel services.

Another relatively new service to Novas Initiatives is the Community Detox Programme which seemed like an over ambitious dream a couple of years back, however due to the hard work and commitment of the steering group, is up and running since May 2012. Since the beginning of the Community Detox Programme I have worked part time in McGarry House and part time in the Community Detox. Both positions are extremely different in the nature of the service users we work with. The clients are at opposite ends of the wheel of change which means my role in each service is diverse. However, both roles are equally enjoyable. Although the service users' needs are worlds apart in each role you get a unique insight into the lived experience of the client group. The service users can only be admired for their resilience and coping mechanisms. Community Detox provides clients with the opportunity to address their addiction issues, from their own environment. Treatment barriers can be high for some clients and a facility like Community Detox can provide a much needed support on the road to recovery.

TREMENDOUS TIME
AND EFFORT GOES
INTO THE RUNNING
OF THE STREET
OUTREACH WHICH IS
VALUED DEEPLY BY
THE SERVICE USERS
THAT AVAIL OF IT

DIAL HOUSE

DIAL (Developing Independent Active Living) is a six-bed residential service which accommodates care leavers with learning disabilities (mild to moderate) and mental health issues, at risk of falling into the cycle of homelessness. It provides a safe, home-like environment for residents. It offers a two year life programme, teaching residents skills in cooking, cleaning, paying bills and money management, in a bid to equip them for independent living. Peer led learning is at the core of DIAL's ethos. Personal development of residents is based on holistic care and a relationship with staff based on trust and engagement.

Six adults were supported in DIAL in 2012, indicating the permanent nature of this scheme and the commitment of residents to the programme.

DIAL also offers outreach support to up to 25 young adults living independently. Staff provide practical and emotional supports to ensure clients are maintaining their accommodation and actively engaging in society. It is enabling young adults to maintain their own accommodation, who without it might otherwise not be able to do so.

DIAL HOUSE IS LIKE
FAMILY TO ME



DIAL residents with their project worker Barry (centre) enjoying the surf in Lahinch Co. Clare

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFS) works with families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is largely a preventative service, working to keep the family unit together in their own home. Following an initial needs assessment on each family, staff develop comprehensive support plans with clients in order to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies. Once tenancies are stable, additional needs are identified through a hierarchy of support needs, and families are actively encouraged to address these. Some of the issues facing IFS clients include poor money management, anti-social behaviour, children entering the care system, mental health issues and addiction.

137 families were supported by the Intensive Family Support Service throughout 2012. Only 10% of all those presenting had availed of the service before, indicating the success of this preventative service. The proportion of repeat clients within accommodation services is approximately 32%. Referrals to this service increased by a staggering 236% in 2012.

A child from our IFS Service enjoying a day out at Dublin Zoo



OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

An Out-of-Hours service operates from the premises of the Intensive Family Support Service. It is funded by and works in conjunction with Limerick's Homeless Person's Centre. It provides an out-of-hours service for people who are homeless to access emergency and temporary accommodation in the city. It is the only such service outside Dublin and thus has people presenting from the wider Mid-West region. It co-ordinates the accommodation of all the voluntary agencies in the city and is an essential service in the prevention of rough sleeping in Limerick.

The service operates from 5pm to 9pm Monday to Friday and 2pm to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday. An emergency free phone number is available on a 24-hour basis.

In 2012, 184 persons presented to the service seeking emergency accommodation. Some 68 individuals or 37% presented more than once during the year. Of those presenting, 64% were male and 36% were female.

IN 2012, 184 PERSONS
PRESENTED TO THE
SERVICE SEEKING
EMERGENCY
ACCOMMODATION

STREET OUTREACH

Novas' Street Outreach is an entirely voluntary service which was set up in 2009 by Novas staff in response to an emerging need of impoverished individuals in Limerick City. In September 2012 it extended its service to seven nights a week, following coverage it received on RTE's Secret Millionaire and the generous donation of philanthropist Richard Mulcahy. In this year some 4,000 meals were distributed to those in need of support in Limerick. It supported people who were homeless and also provided sustenance for those living in their own homes, who were struggling to make ends meet. For some, this service was the difference between maintaining their own home and being on the streets.

The Street Outreach Volunteers were awarded Limerick Person of the Month in September 2012 and were subsequently nominated for Limerick Person of the Year 2012. The award was a recognition of the vital nature of the service and the support it provides to marginalised people in Limerick City. The service depends entirely on the goodwill of volunteers and donations from the public. We have been extremely fortunate to have been supported by the Greenhills Hotel for many years, which provides individually portioned hot meals five nights a week.

4,000

4,000 meals were distributed in Limerick City through the Street Outreach Programme during 2012

THE STREET OUTREACH
VOLUNTEERS WERE
NOMINATED FOR LIMERICK
PERSON OF THE YEAR 2012



MAKING A 1.19% DIFFERENCE

My voluntary work began with wanting to give something back. I prepared by checking out and comparing several charities. No other charity made quite the same impression on me as Novas did. It fills in the gaps between the other services and its staff and volunteers are hands-on. Novas meets the basic needs of the most vulnerable - food, shelter and conversation – and meets them daily.

I became a volunteer in April 2011. The first four or five nights on the soup run were spent with a member of Novas' staff or an experienced volunteer. It is an excellent way to settle in, you can observe and learn, as the main responsibility rests with your volunteer partner. Novas also organised a very informative inservice on drugs and a very practical session on Behaviour Management. The advice I remember from the latter was – if you feel threatened, drop everything and leave. Thankfully, I've never had to follow that advice and I haven't met anybody else who had to follow it either. The sessions also gave us the opportunity to meet other volunteers.

I wasn't sure what to expect of our homeless, though I did think that they would look the worse for wear. I expected them to have the same feelings as everyone else, but maybe not as much luck. Our homeless are ordinary people – they give you a hand lifting bags and boxes from the car, they tell you if you're a few minutes late, they show their disappointment if all the hot dinners are gone, they share, they chance their arm to get more, they say thanks and use your name if they know it, they put leftovers in the bin afterwards and help with the clean-up. Sometimes they are demanding, sometimes loud and sometimes high. On the

very rare occasions when one of them is rude or aggressive, you can read the disapproval in the silence and bowed heads of the others.

For the first few months, we served the food and hot drinks from boxes we placed on the ground. Later, we brought a folding table and served from that. Many of our homeless complimented us on bringing the table – "It's very useful", "It's a great idea" and "Why didn't ye think of it before?"

I leave home, generally on a Wednesday or Thursday, around 6:15 and meet a fellow volunteer at the collection point. Initially, we collected flasks of hot water, sandwiches, milk, tea, coffee, soup, sugar, cups, knives, spoons, forks, etc. at Brother Russell House. Recently, when Brother Russell House was being wound down prior to demolition and rebuilding, we began collecting at McGarry House. Both staffs are always welcoming and helpful. After loading up, we drive across town to the Greenhills Hotel and collect the unused dinners which staff have kindly packed for us. It's back into town then for 7:00 outside Ferguson's chemist shop. The shop has a canopy over the entrance and is on the sheltered side of the street, so nobody gets wet or cold. We tidy up and leave when there is no food left. I'm home by 8:15.

Volunteers give two hours of their time to the soup run, that's 1.19% of each week. We believe we're making the "one percent difference" which has helped to ensure that no homeless person has died on the streets of Limerick since Novas was set up here in 2002.


Novas Volunteer

BROTHER STEPHEN RUSSELL HOUSE

Brother Stephen Russell House is the oldest homeless service in Limerick City. Established in the 1970s it has been providing supported accommodation for homeless men for some 35 years. It was initially set up to provide care and accommodation for street drinkers and alcohol addiction continues to be the issue most commonly experienced by residents here, with some 32% presenting with alcohol addiction problems in 2012.

Brother Russell House looks after clients with a complexity of issues. Many of the clients are elderly and require constant care around their diet, hygiene and mobility. Indeed, some 46% of residents were more than 40 years of age in 2012, representing a higher age profile than in other services. This can be explained by the number of long-term residents, some of whom have been living here for more than two decades.

Accommodation here is in the form of dormitories. 2012 was the last full year of such accommodation style as an extensive redevelopment is planned for 2013/2014, during which time residents will continue to be cared for by Brother Russell staff.



THIS IS MY HOME NOW,
THE ONLY HOME I'VE
HAD SINCE I WAS 4
YEARS OLD

FRANK'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE FRANK'S STORY, HE HAS BEEN LIVING IN BROTHER RUSSELL HOUSE FOR MORE THAN A DECADE.

At four years of age I was sent to school in a local convent, which also became my home. Life there was hard and we weren't treated very well. I remained there for 10 years, but would often meet my father in town at the weekends. It was he who introduced me to alcohol when I was about 10 years old, and that's when my drinking started.

At 17 I joined the army, where I started to drink heavily and constantly. I was thrown out of the army after 3 1/2 years because of my drinking habits. From there my life descended into chaos. I lived in a couple of flats but was never able to maintain them due to my alcohol addiction, my relationships failed also.

Things hit rock bottom a couple of years later, when I lived on the streets of Ennis for 1 1/2 years. For most of that period I lived in a tent on the church grounds. There was nothing good about this time. It was so cold and so lonely. I had nowhere to wash or shave. The winters were the hardest of all. There were times I thought I would die like this. It was the worst time of my life. This period ended in a jail sentence, after I broke into an off licence. While prison was hard, it was better than the streets, nothing was worse than being homeless. From prison I went straight to Brother Russell House, and it was there I began to turn my life around.

At the beginning I continued to drink heavily. I was difficult to deal with and my addiction continued to escalate. However, the staff stuck with me, even though there must

have been times they wanted to give up. With their support and care, I began to cut down on my drinking. I drew up a harm reduction contract with Eugene, where I was agreed to only drink cans after 7pm while I watched the soaps. I gave up drinking during the day and I stopped drinking spirits altogether. I have abided by this contract for many years now. I am no longer a danger to myself or to those around me.

Around the same time I started volunteering in the kitchens of Brother Russell. I work there three days a week, helping the chef prepare food and making sure the place is clean. It's a great way to keep me busy during the day, to keep me distracted from drink. The staff have also recently helped me make contact with my daughters in England, and we now exchange letters. I am so grateful for this. I have tried to live independently on a couple of occasions in the last few years, but it always breaks down. I don't think I'm able to live on my own. Brother Russell is where I belong. It has given me dignity and a purpose. I was treated with compassion and patience and I will be forever grateful. This is my home now, the only home I've had since I was 4 years old.

PROSPECT HOUSE HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION

In partnership with Clúid Housing Association, Novas Initiatives developed temporary supported accommodation for four single adults (male and female) in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. The service is also available for a single parent with a baby. Opened in 2009, it was developed to support individuals with basic living skills who required a degree of support in maintaining tenancies and running a household.

From the outset it was considered that this service would support individuals for up to six months, however in reality, due to the lack of move-on accommodation and the continued support needs of clients, residents remain longer.

An outreach service is also provided by staff on a voluntary basis, providing emotional and practical support, ensuring tenancies are maintained and preventing social isolation.

NOVAS RESPITE HOUSE

Opened in 2009, the Novas Respite House cares for the families and loved ones of people with addiction. Funded by the Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, the service seeks to improve the lives of those caring for people struggling with substance misuse.

This was Novas' second service in Co. Tipperary and cemented our efforts to provide support to people experiencing social marginalisation outside of Ireland's main cities. In 2012, 238 people were in receipt of respite in our Newport facility. This included 175 adults and 63 children and was a mix of day, overnight and weekend stays. Therapies offered to clients included massage, reiki, reflexology and meditation. Family outings were also organised and included activities such as horse riding, swimming, beach trips, walking and cycling.



I JUST WANT
TO THANK THE
NOVAS HOUSE
AND STAFF
FOR SHOWING
ME A NEW
WAY OF LIFE,
A SPIRITUAL
WAY OF LIVING
IN ALL THE
CHAOS

A room at the Novas
Respite House

This is my 3rd visit to the Respite House, even the spin here with Caroline was lovely, we chatted about everyday things and the conversation was flowing. In the beginning I didn't know whether I would get anything or any satisfaction from visiting this house but I knew I needed some help with unravelling my past and making it more acceptable so I could get on with the rest of my life. I'm now glad that I can openly talk about my history book of abuse. I was silenced for too long by the abuser. I was totally brainwashed but I survived. I'm slowly but surely coming back to life. 20 years of dealing with a bully was hard going but I'm putting all that to rest now that I have been gifted this peaceful house. I'm allowed to talk here so I'm going to keep on talking. I deserve this!

MITCHEL STREET

This temporary supported accommodation service is the most recent Novas development in Co. Tipperary and strengthened our commitment to providing services to people who are homeless and marginalised in North Tipperary.

Opened in 2011, it provided supported accommodation for 10 people throughout 2012. This is a five bed service located in the heart of Thurles. It supports people with issues around substance and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and care leavers in need of additional support. Many of the clients accessing this service have been marginalised from mainstream society for much of their lives due to their cultural background, challenging behaviour and poor mental health. Staff support residents to engage in their local communities in an empathetic and non-judgemental manner and prepare them for independent living through a life-skills programme.

This service also offers outreach support for individuals and families in the region who are entrenched in poverty. Practical and emotional supports are offered to this client group in an effort to maintain existing tenancies and improve their quality of life in the areas of money management, health and personal care and family relationships. This outreach service was developed as a preventative measure in the cycle of homelessness.

KERRY SERVICES

ARLINGTON LODGE

Opened by Novas in 2003, this is Kerry's only low-threshold direct access homeless accommodation service. It provides supported accommodation for male and female residents on a 24-hour basis.

ARLINGTON LODGE
IS THE ONLY LOW-
THRESHOLD, DIRECT-
ACCESS HOMELESS
SERVICE IN KERRY

In 2012, 84 persons were provided with supported accommodation, highlighting the need for this service in the region. Some 10% of these adults were under 21 years of age and 72% were under 40 years of age, emphasising the young age profile of those presenting to this service. This scheme poses no barriers for entry. Clients are accepted as they are and are key-worked by staff in a non-judgemental and compassionate manner during their stay.

During cold spells in the winter season (the exact temperature is decided in conjunction with local agencies), Arlington Lodge implements a Cold Weather Service. This is a policy that no one is refused entry to the service, even if all beds are full or clients have previously been removed or excluded. Additional residents are accommodated on sofas and armchairs in communal living areas. This Cold Weather Service is also provided by McGarry House and Brother Russell House in Limerick and Mount Brown in Dublin.

KILLEEN WOODS

Killeen Woods is a permanent housing service, with most of the clients coming from Arlington Lodge. It is a five bed property that allows clients to live independently, while receiving low-level support when necessary. While residing in Arlington Lodge, these clients were keyworked by staff and provided with the life-skills to enable them to live with greater independence.

This service has become increasingly important among young people in recovery, striving to live constructive lives within their communities.

GOLF LINKS ROAD

Golf Links Road provides long-term supported housing for Novas' older clientele, many of whom have mobility issues. A five bed, one story home, it provides our elderly clients with an intimate and peaceful home. Many of these clients have very basic needs such as food, heat, personal hygiene and medical attention.

KNOCKLEE HOUSE

This is an eight-bed facility, accommodating clients with varying support level needs. It is a lone-working scheme that encourages residents to live independently.

In 2012, some 34 individuals were provided with supported accommodation in Knocklee House, with 94% of these in a position to move onto more suitable accommodation by the end of the year. Most clients of this scheme do not present again to homeless services upon departure. For example, just 8% of clients here presented to the service more than once during 2012, while the organisational figure is 32%.

This service offers an outreach programme for former clients who are living in private rented accommodation. It also offers respite from rural isolation for some older people in the community.



Knocklee House,
Tralee, Co. Kerry

DUBLIN SERVICES

MOUNT BROWN

Mount Brown is a 22 bed low-threshold facility dedicated to female clients in Dublin, the only such service in the state. This service accommodates some of Dublin's most marginalised women, many of whom have been homeless for years, some even experiencing homelessness as children. Mount Brown operates a harm reduction policy. The women here seek support around their addiction issues and family estrangement.

In 2012, 275 women were provided with temporary supported accommodation, 41% of whom were aged

between 30 and 39 years. Considering the total number of residents, some 65% presented more than once during 2012 and all of them had presented to Mount Brown at some stage since 2007. These are startling returns and highlight the problems faced by homeless women in securing and maintaining their own accommodation and reintegrating into mainstream society. Despite these worrying statistics, the staff of Mount Brown work steadfastly to assist women in overcoming their issues to enable them to live fully independent lives, with success in many cases.



Clients of Novas' Mount Brown enjoying an outing with Project Manager, Mark Vella

THE MORE I TALKED
ABOUT MY ISSUES THE
MORE I OPENED UP AND
STARTED TO ADDRESS
THE ISSUES



SELINA'S STORY

HERE WE SHARE A STORY OF A FORMER CLIENT, SELINA, WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY SETTLED IN LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION.

My story is a familiar one and not unlike what most of us wake up to everyday. I had a house, a partner and three lovely children, I couldn't have asked for anything else. I became pregnant again and gave birth to my fourth child. Soon afterwards the unimaginable happened, I had a breakdown and found myself unable to cope with my new baby and the demands of a young family.

It wasn't long before my relationship broke down and I started to self-medicate to help me cope. I eventually left my home and moved back in with my mam and dad. It wasn't long before I was asked to leave as my drug use was becoming unmanageable.

With nowhere to go I turned to rough sleeping, living in homeless hostels and staying in a tent in the Phoenix Park. It was during this time that I was first introduced to alcohol as a means of keeping warm - it had me hooked. My life soon spiralled out of control, I became oblivious to life and what was going on, the alcohol blocked everything out.

After a number of years of rough sleeping and moving around different hostels, I was referred to Novas Initiatives' Mount Brown service for women. I settled in really well

and felt really at home in a female service. It gave me a bit of dignity. I felt safer. I loved it here, the staff were just brilliant and the food was so good. I began to open up about my past and about my anger, I realised it was the stuff that happened in my life that made me so angry and I'd take it out on the wrong people. The more I talked about my issues with my key-worker, the more I opened up and started to address the issues that had contributed to my homelessness. Thankfully, because of this, I started to have regular contact with my children and it wasn't long before I became a proud grandmother for the third time.

I have since been able to move out of Mount Brown into long term supported housing. I still dream of one day having my own place, somewhere where my children and grandchildren can come and stay with me.

BELLEVUE HOUSE

Situated in South County Dublin, Bellevue House is a six-bed residential service for unaccompanied minors from outside the EU, seeking asylum. It is a long-term specialised children's service, catering for minors between the ages of 12 and 18, and is the only such service in the state. It provides a holistic care programme for young people residing there, meeting fundamental needs such as shelter, heat and food. This support is married with an understanding of and respect for the cultural, religious and ethnic needs of residents. All children are supported in maintaining and completing second level education, and

reaching their full potential as individuals and as citizens.

In 2012, nine children were supported here for the entire year. This is a permanent home until a child turns 18. Thereafter the service operates an outreach programme for young adults who have moved on from the service. Staff seek to accommodate them in suitable housing and support them in assimilating into their new communities. This service is very important in assisting clients in the transition from supported to independent living.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In 2012, Novas completed 'Facing the Future with Confidence - our Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2016. This Plan outlines the priorities for Novas, our service users and our staff in supporting the elimination of homelessness whilst providing responses to long-term issues, which contribute to poverty and social marginalisation. Whilst homelessness is considered a new phenomenon, poverty is quite an old one. In this global age, the eradication of homelessness requires a commitment from society that the homeless voice will be heard. The main areas addressed in our Strategic Plan are:

GOVERNANCE

The Board of Novas initiated a comprehensive review of all governance arrangements, including an objective and critical look at our entire governance structures and roles. This is an on-going piece of work due to be completed by the end of 2014.

EXISTING SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

All services are to compile annual reviews of their individual scheme with a focus on extending provision to those who need it the most.

DEVELOPMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Novas will focus on developing projects and services where gaps continue to exist. A crucial component of this plan going forward will be the development of general needs housing.

PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Novas have an on-going commitment to make personnel management as effective and supportive as possible within the current economic constraints. Staff morale is very important and Novas are committed to making all of our services safe, innovative and supportive environments in which to work.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Novas endeavour to continue to comply with all Health and Safety regulations as well as explore safer practises in low threshold and lone-working environments.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Novas will operate quality assurance to good standards in all aspects of its work; service provision, finance, administration, personnel and health and safety as well as continual auditing of same.

A significant goal within the plan is that each individual will have their own bedroom. All impending developments reflect this goal and our commitment to providing Housing First solutions to the long-term homeless.

MOUNT BROWN

The relocation and redevelopment of this service will enable us to provide 40 units of temporary supported accommodation for homeless women with a long term goal of providing long-term supported housing to women and their children.

HAARLEM COURT

Our six-bed children's home, catering for unaccompanied minors entering the state, will be relocated and purpose built in this new development. On the same campus, eight two-bed apartments will be developed to cater for the needs of the long-term homeless, children exiting the state care system, the elderly and the unaccompanied minors upon their 18th birthday.

BROTHER RUSSELL HOUSE

This will provide 33 units of long-term supported housing for male and female residents in single, en-suite rooms.

We look forward to the next five years with confidence. While there are considerable challenges ahead, the further development of relevant services, supports, social enterprise programmes and accommodation for those who are socially excluded has never been more important. We must remember it is not about charity or hand-outs, but that every citizen has the civic right to appropriate housing, health care, education and employment. Novas Initiatives strives to support people in accessing these services.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2012 was the fourth consecutive year in which core homeless funding to Arlington Novas Ireland Limited was cut. Funding from the HSE, for some services, has declined by more than 21% since 2008. While the funding from the Department of Environment and Local Authorities has remained largely stable, we anticipate cuts in 2013.

In 2012, the total income generated by Arlington Novas Ireland Limited was €6.791m. Revenue based Grants received by our organisation for core homeless funding amounted to €5.284M (a decrease of 1.7% from 2011). This represented 77.8% of our total income.

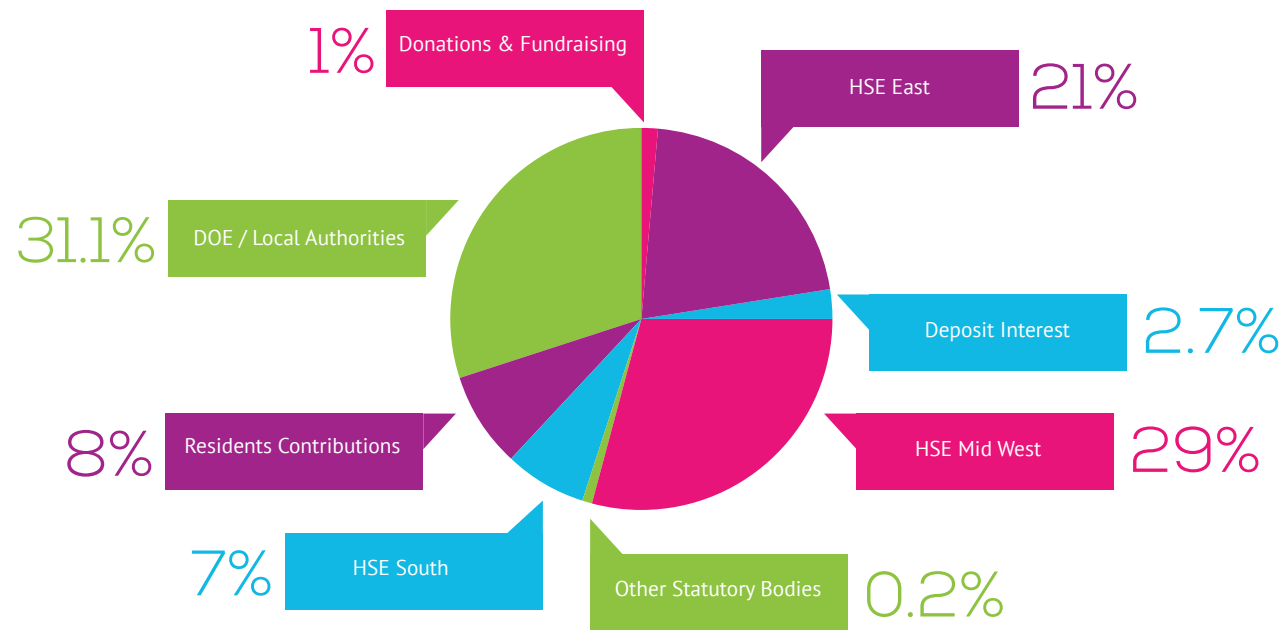
Non-core funding for 2012 was €716k. This relates primarily to funding for our Community Detox Services, clients with disabilities and dealing with specific clients on behalf of the state.

Other income was €791k (an increase of 12.9%). Other income consists of contributions from our service users, deposit interest, donations and fundraising. Novas is making a concerted effort to enhance this stream of funding.

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

Set out below is a breakdown of our income for 2012 by source.

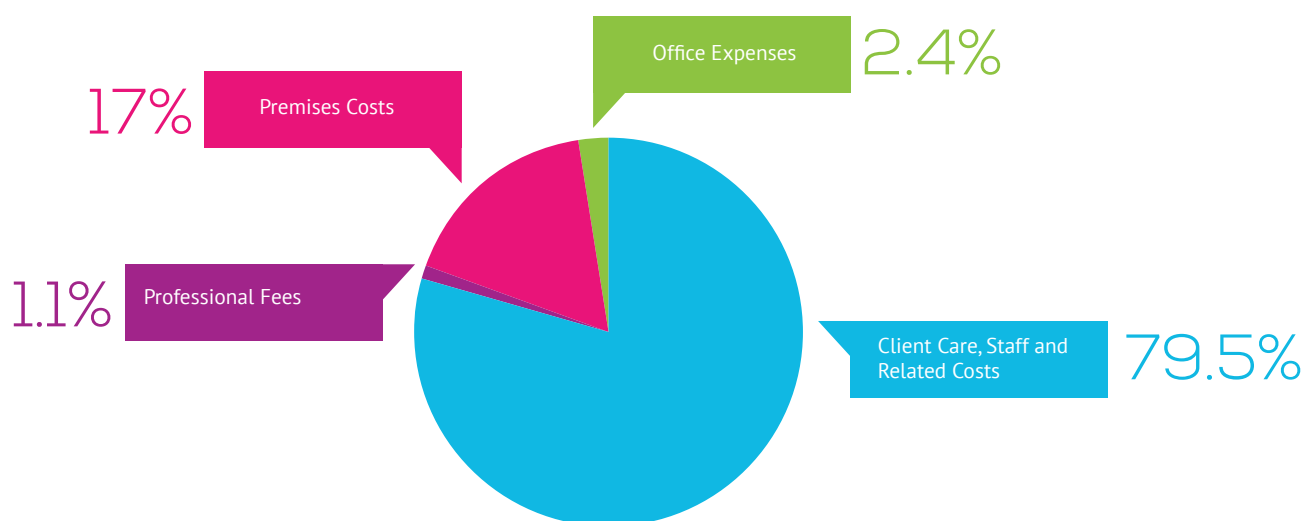
Breakdown of income 2012



The increase in expenditure is largely in line with an increase in income. We have invested in improving our facilities and services, where possible. Client care, staff and related costs to the tune of €5.294M made up more than 79% of our overall expenditure. Other significant areas of expenditure were on the day to day running costs of our services, particularly accommodation services.

Set out below is a breakdown of the expenditure for 2012.

Breakdown of expenditure 2012



2013 is proving to be another challenging year for Arlington Novas Ireland Limited. We anticipate more significant cuts from our statutory funders. In addition, changes to the Rent Supplement Scheme have also impacted on the ability of our clients to contribute to their own care and accommodation.

A significant capital programme will commence in 2013, with the redevelopment of Brother Stephen Russell House, and the building of the new children's home in Dublin.

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 supporting our clients.

The Board have agreed a risk management strategy, and have a risk register in place.

Arlington Novas Ireland Limited

Income and Expenditure Account
Year Ended 31st December 2012

	2012	2011
	€	€
INCOME	6,605,857	6,292,350
Expenditure	(6,461,560)	(5,503,839)
OPERATING SURPLUS	144,297	788,511
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	4,477	-
	148,744	788,511
Interest receivable	184,852	152,825
Interest payable and similar charges	(3,167)	(4,624)
SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	330,459	936,712
BEFORE TAXATION		
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	-	-
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	330,459	936,712
Balance brought forward	2,410,167	2,123,455
Transfer to Designated Fund	(196,400)	(650,000)
Balance carried forward	2,544,226	2,410,167

All of the activities of the company are classed as continuing

These financial statements were approved by the directors on the 19th September 2013 and are signed on their behalf by:

Michael Flynn Director

Kieran Walshe Director

Arlington Novas Ireland LimitedBalance Sheet
31st December 2012

	2012	2011
	€	€
FIXED ASSETS		
Housing Properties	17,772,503	17,248,622
Less Capital Assistance Scheme Loans	(16,628,228)	(16,213,816)
Less Other Capital Grants	(265,001)	-
	879,274	1,034,806
Tangible Assets	8,960	15,375
Financial assets	3,807,569	4,150,000
	4,695,803	5,200,181
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	168,989	112,821
Cash at bank and in hand	1,432,535	2,223,391
	1,601,524	2,336,212
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	(629,395)	(2,183,197)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	972,129	153,015
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT	5,667,932	5,353,196
LIABILITIES		
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after more than one year	103,306	119,029
	5,564,626	5,234,167
RESERVES		
Designated funds	3,020,400	2,824,000
Income and expenditure account	2,544,226	2,410,167
MEMBERS' FUNDS	5,564,626	5,234,167

These financial statements were approved by the directors on the 19th September 2013 and are signed on their behalf by:

Michael Flynn Director

Kieran Walshe Director

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Thanks to all those who supported this publication:

L & M Keating Building & Civil Engineering Contractors

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