



**Merchants Quay Ireland**  
Homeless & Drugs Services

**ANNUAL REVIEW 2011**



A Community of  
Hospitality, Hope  
and Justice



**Merchants Quay Ireland**  
Homeless & Drugs Services

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**Homeless & Drugs Services**  
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Reg Charity No CHY 10311

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# Chairmans Introduction

Each year the Annual Report of Merchants Quay Ireland gives us a chance to reflect on the effects of the many services MQI provide to our society's most vulnerable members. As the economic crisis pushed more and more people onto the margins of society in 2011, it was again clear that homelessness and addiction are still major challenges to be addressed in the Ireland of today. Yet thanks to the kind support of our funders this past year, MQI continued to welcome the growing numbers of those needing help.

MQI's work has long been inspired by the life and example of Francis of Assisi, the thirteenth century saint who reached out in love to those who were marginalised in his day. American Franciscan friar Hugh Noonan put it best when he wrote:  
*"People are still looking for a definition of love. But it isn't a definition - it's a doing; it's filling the need. It's not talking to the ear, but to the human heart."*

In 2011 MQI staff throughout the country filled this need – speaking to the human heart in their every deed – helping all those who came to us, without judgement. I thank all our staff, full-time, part-time, and volunteers as well as the members of our Board, for your professionalism, your commitment and your enthusiasm.

It's been an exciting twelve months that saw the completion of MQI's new state of the art detoxification facility at St Francis Farm in Tullow. Through the generosity of our donors we were also able to begin renovating the Riverbank theatre on Merchants Quay, soon to be our flagship building and home to MQI's frontline day services in Dublin City Centre.

The Irish people rightly have a reputation for a deep compassion in the face of suffering. Even in the midst of a global recession Merchants Quay Ireland's funders and donors have shown incredible generosity, and I want to thank each of you, both statutory and voluntary. It is because of you that MQI can continue to offer care and support to our clients. Again, thank you for your ongoing trust and support.



**Hugh McKenna, OFM**  
Chair of Merchants Quay Ireland

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CAN CONTINUE TO OFFER CARE  
AND SUPPORT TO OUR CLIENTS  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING  
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## **Our Board of Directors**

Rev Hugh McKenna OFM - Chairman  
Mr Brian Melaugh  
Rev Joseph McMahon OFM  
Rev Kieran Cronin OFM  
Rev Niall O'Connell OFM  
Rev Patrick Lynch OFM  
Mr Mick Price

# Looking Back: 2011



Tony Geoghegan, CEO of Merchants Quay Ireland, Minister Roisin Shorthall and Fr. Hugh McKenna - OFM at last year's Annual Review Launch

As I look back on 2011, it is impossible not to mention the ongoing impact of the economic recession – and the Government's austerity measures – on MQI's services and those who rely on them. For Merchants Quay Ireland, as for so many others, 2011 was a challenging year.

The devastating effects of the economic downturn can clearly be seen in the numbers of men and women turning to MQI's Homeless Services. Our free meals service, especially, increased dramatically – climbing from almost 64,000 meals served in 2010 to over 73,000 in 2011. Similarly, our Primary Healthcare Service reflected the harsh physical realities of homelessness and life on the streets, with a rise of over twenty percent in G.P. interventions that encompassed everything from wound care to chronic illness treatment.

MQI's Drugs Services for 2011 reveals a more complex picture. There was a slight decrease in uptake of our Dublin needle exchange service – but beyond Dublin, in our Midlands services, demand for needle exchange and drug treatment services rose.

In fact, of the 4051 individuals who accessed our needle exchange services in 2011, nearly ten people per week, were first time users of the exchange. In addition, the strong demand for Merchants Quay's stabilisation, detoxification, drug free rehabilitation and aftercare services far outstrips availability. This results in increased waiting times for access – especially detox and rehab.

As the recession continues, history tells us that more people will fall into poverty. In turn, demand for MQI's homeless and drug services will increase. With this in mind Merchants Quay have been working to grow our services accordingly:

- In 2011 renovations began on MQI's new Riverbank Centre to bring all of our frontline, Dublin-based homeless and drug services under one roof. The Centre will allow for a more efficient use of resources while equipping MQI to help the rising number of people who seek our services.

- The new medically supervised detox unit at MQI's St Francis Farm in Co. Carlow was completed in late 2011. Admissions commenced in 2012. Representing a thirty percent increase in beds on the national detox provision, St Francis will help to meet demand and ease waiting times for access to detoxification and drug free rehabilitation.

These new projects, along with MQI's day-to-day services, are only possible with the support of our funders and donors, both statutory and voluntary. At Merchants Quay Ireland we are hugely grateful for your generosity. Your trust, in this tough economy, is remarkable. In this regard, I particularly want to thank the caring individuals, families and companies that give so generously to support our work with those affected by homelessness and drugs.

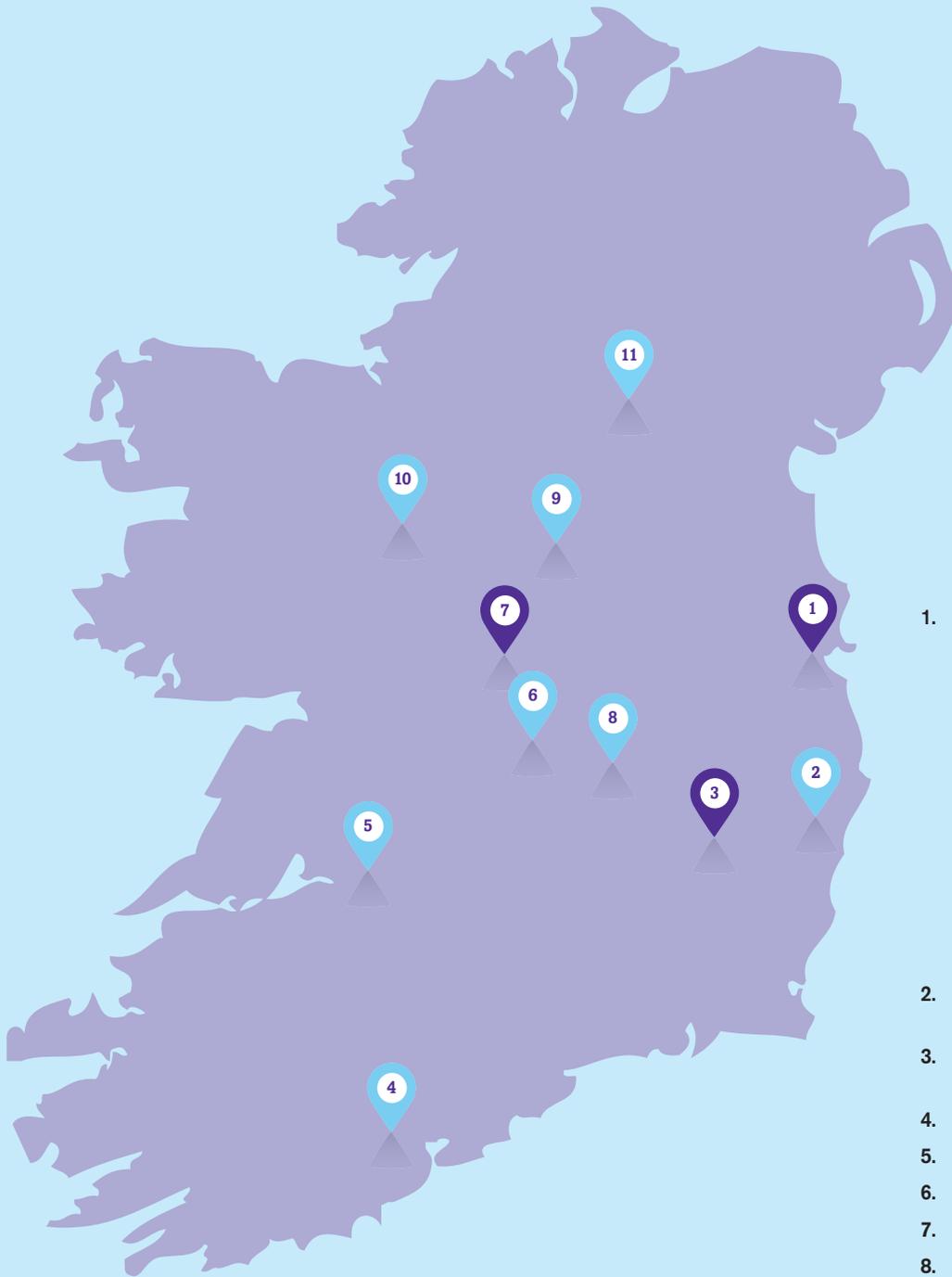
It is my promise to you that Merchants Quay Ireland will continue working to help people out of homelessness, and to assist those who struggle with drug problems. We appreciate the difficult budgetary position the Government must manage but, within this, the protection of the most vulnerable in society must be prioritised. If it is true that the measure of any society lies in how they care for their most vulnerable members, your support and faith in the work of Merchants Quay Ireland speaks volumes. From all of us here, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Geoghegan'.

**Tony Geoghegan**  
Chief Executive

# MERCHANTS QUAY

## LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE



### 1. Dublin

- MQI Open Access – Drugs and Homeless services
- Chapelizod – Stabilisation and Drug-Free programmes
- High Park, Drumcondra – MQI Residential Rehabilitation
- MQI Training
- Leixlip – Aftercare house
- Ballymount – Aftercare House
- Mountjoy Prison Complex – MQI Prison Counselling
- Cloverhill – MQI Prison Counselling
- Wheatfield – MQI Prison Counselling

### 2. Shelton Abbey, Co Wicklow - MQI Prison Counselling

### 3. St Francis Farm, Tullow Co. Carlow - MQI Detox and Rehabilitation

### 4. Cork - MQI Prison Counselling

### 5. Limerick - MQI Prison Counselling

### 6. Birr, Co Offaly, MQI Midlands Outreach

### 7. Athlone, Co Westmeath - MQI Open Door

### 8. Portlaoise - MQI Midlands Services

- Midlands / Portlaoise MQI Prison Counselling

### 9. Longford, Co Longford - MQI Midlands Outreach

### 10. Castlerea, Co Roscommon - MQI Prison Counselling

### 11. Loughran House, Co Cavan - MQI Prison Counselling

**19 Locations 11 Counties**



Merchants Quay Ireland is a national voluntary agency providing services for homeless people and for drug users. We provide creative and innovative responses to the issues of drug use and homelessness in Ireland.

#### VISION

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

#### VALUES

- Providing quality services for drug users and homeless people
- Offering access for the most marginalised
- Promoting positive change
- Working at the cutting edge
- Involving our Service Users
- Valuing our staff
- Managing finances prudently
- Promoting partnership

#### MISSION

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

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



# ADDRESSING CRISIS OPEN ACCESS SERVICES

## OPEN ACCESS HOMELESS SERVICES

During 2011 more and more people came to our homeless services seeking help. Over the course of the year we provided over 73,000 meals for homeless people across our day and evening services. We continue to offer meals at our Day Centre and through our Extended Day (Evening) Service, which is operated in conjunction with Focus Ireland.

### THE DROP-IN CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS (FÁILTÍÚ)

The aim of the Drop-in Service is to provide a "one stop shop" offering a range of interlinked services meeting the key daytime needs of homeless persons with the twin purpose of minimising harm associated with life on the streets and offering clear pathways towards settlement and reintegration. Our drop-in centre is open seven days a week from 7.15a.m. to 4.30p.m. with shorter opening hours at weekends.

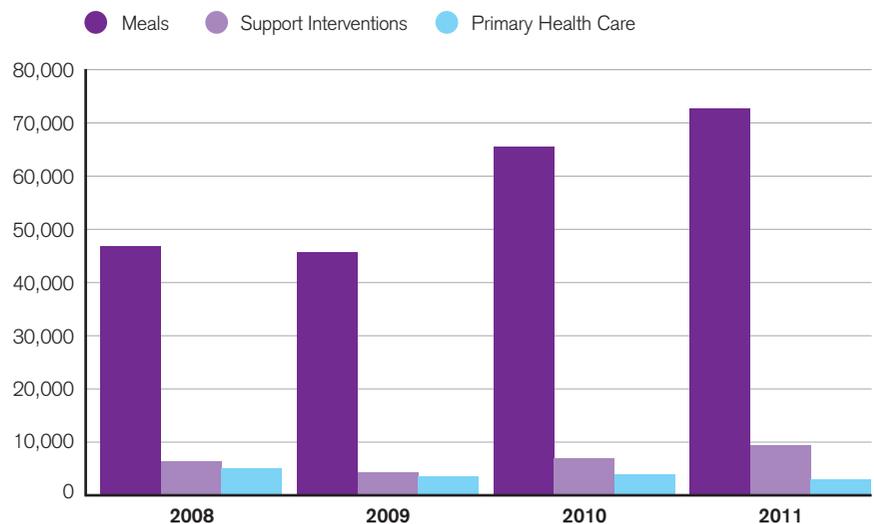
In 2012 the drop in service with the health care centre will move to the new Riverbank building on Merchants Quay near to our current Cook street site.

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

#### Information, Advice and Crisis Support Service:

The drop-in service includes assessment of service users' needs, advice and information on health, social welfare, emergency accommodation, long-term housing and other issues. In 2011 we recorded 9252 supportive interventions with service users of our homeless service, an increase of 17% on 2010. Interventions include key working sessions, referrals to emergency accommodation, social work services, medical services and social welfare services, help in contacting friends or family, access to drug treatment and support in a variety of other matters. The Housing First Outreach Team links in with this service on a weekly basis.

Figure 1. Homeless Services between 2008 and 2011



Project workers help homeless people from a variety of settings - rough sleeping, hostels, B&B's, short-term arrangements with friends/families and transitional and supported accommodation. Our staff aim to assist those who are homeless to link in with short term crisis accommodation, with the eventual goal of helping clients into more stable long term housing.

**Meals Service:** Homeless persons are offered two meals a day (breakfast and lunch). A total of 58,858 meals were provided in 2011 (this figure excludes meals provided by the EDS - Evening Service). Sunday remained our busiest day with more than 350 persons attending for breakfast or lunch each Sunday.

### PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

MQI is working in partnership with the HSE in providing a primary health care service for homeless people. The service has General Practitioners, a Dentist, Nurses and a Counsellor. In total there were 3331 health care interventions during the year.

**Nursing:** In 2011 there were a total of 1728 nursing interventions, or 144 per month. The drop-in nurse led clinic provides a full range of primary health care services such as wound care management, blood testing, sexual health, medication management, and women's and men's health issues.

Mental health presentations range from acutely suicidal clients to those who need to be referred back to services they have lost contact with. Referrals to tertiary services such as A & E and other hospital services and advocacy are a large part of the nursing role.

The citywide SafetyNet Primary Health Care Service, of which the MQI medical unit is part, is still developing and provides for consistency and continuity of care between those homeless services involved.

**Counselling:** Homelessness is often associated with severe stresses and difficulties in life, and it is not surprising that many people find it hard to cope. The Counselling Service for homeless people works at two levels – firstly providing a brief crisis counselling service targeted at service users in distress and secondly offering medium to long-term counselling relating to issues such as relationships and bereavement as well as issues of drugs and homelessness. In addition we provide group support for homeless service users attending our day programmes. We provided 549 counselling sessions in 2011.

**G.P Service:** Our two GPs dealt with in the region of 1054 consultations or 88 per month. An increase of 21% on 2010. The service is used by clients with a variety of acute and chronic illnesses.

### EXTENDED DAY SERVICE

The service established to meet the evening time needs of homeless people and rough sleepers in partnership with Focus Ireland continued throughout 2011. Over 1000 people who are homeless used the service in 2011.

The EDS addresses a significant gap in services whereby there were no services available to homeless people in the evening time from 5pm to 8.30pm. The service provided evening meals, showers, laundry, crisis support, advice and information including assistance arranging overnight accommodation for homeless people. Over 29,000 meals were provided in 2011 (up from 13,559 in 2010).

*as these EDS meals are provided jointly with Focus Ireland, MQI reports on half of the EDS statistics as part of MQI's annual figure.*

### NEW COMMUNITIES SUPPORT SERVICE

By the late 2000's the profile of homeless people attending MQI services had changed substantially – by 2011 more than one third of all visits to the service were made by people from new communities living in Ireland especially from Eastern Europe. MQI received funding from Pobal for the Homeless Measure and New Communities Support Worker to facilitate support for people from the new EU states who have become homeless in Ireland. The New Communities Project worker is fluent in English and a number of Eastern European languages and provides a range of supports including advice and information, referral and advocacy for these service users. As part of this project MQI is developing a range of information materials in a range of languages



MQI Health Centre Reception on Aids Day 2011

about the various services and supports open to people who are homeless in Ireland.

In 2011 the New Communities Outreach Worker provided one to one support to 112 service users – the greatest number were from Poland (53%). In total 77% of new community clients were from Eastern European countries. The services provided to new community clients are:

- 1-1 support sessions
- Accommodation support
- Repatriation
- Provision of clothing
- Referral to other agencies
- Assistance after loss of identity documents
- Revenue & Social Welfare applications & appeals
- Assistance with opening bank accounts

### OPEN ACCESS DRUGS SERVICES

These services can be accessed by drug users simply by walking in from the street. For this reason we are often the first place to which drug users turn for help. Services include:

#### NEEDLE EXCHANGE – HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT

Here we provide drug users with information about the risks associated with drug use and the means to minimise such risks. We also offer drug users a pathway into treatment and the possibility of living life without drugs.

In our needle exchange and health promotion service our main focus is on HIV and hepatitis prevention, promoting safer injecting techniques and safer sex, and on providing information on overdose and other risks. We also offer early referral to drug treatment services.

In 2011 there were 21,819 visits to Drug Services and 18,951 needle exchanges. 4051 individuals used the service of which 492 were new clients. It is of note that there was a heroin drought in the winter of 2010 -2011 as evidenced by the low numbers of visits to the Needle exchange in January 2011 (810 clients), this rose to 2,043 in November 2011, a figure similar to 2009 levels.

**IN 2011 THERE WERE  
21,819 VISITS TO DRUG  
SERVICES AND 18,951  
NEEDLE EXCHANGES.**

As part of our health promotion remit, a total of 1220 safer injecting workshops were undertaken with injecting drug users in 2011.

### CRISIS CONTACT SERVICE

Many of the drug users who come to us are in crisis. Some have become homeless, others have financial problems or are in trouble with the law. Relationship or family breakdown is an issue for many people. We offer drug users practical help in getting through such difficulties by providing counselling, advice and information; through referral to other relevant services; or by providing support to people facing court action and working with people in prison.

### OUTREACH SERVICE

This service aims to make contact with drug users not engaged with services and to make referrals to Merchants Quay Ireland services as well as to other external agencies. In 2011 the outreach team contacted vulnerable drug users on the street, collected used needles and syringes, and also liaised with local community groups, the Gardaí, Dublin City Council and other drugs and homeless service providers.

The geographical area covered by the outreach service was predominantly around the Merchant's Quay area, outreach workers also liaised with a variety of other business, residents, individual tourists and services. 2011 saw an increase in the number of non-nationals coming in contact with the outreach service. Clients were assisted with accommodation, clothing, food, showers and basic services. We also engaged with tourists in the area and made them aware of the risks in the area. The service visited a number of clients in hospitals and nursing homes throughout the year. This involved working with medical staff and social workers to progress care plans. Our work involved locating clients who were not presenting to services. We also accompanied people to doctors, court and other case meetings. The service engaged with over 2,000 clients throughout 2011, the majority of whom were homeless.



“Before Merchants Quay’s Family Support Services, there was nothing for anyone. Parents had nowhere to go – they didn’t know anything about drugs until they discovered their child was using drugs. They were living with the problem and not living with it very well, either”

Celia, Volunteer – Family Support, MQI

### FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

The Family Support Group meets regularly providing a forum where parents and other close relatives and friends of drug users are offered support and advice on a range of issues. The participants provide support for each other and the group is continually open to new members. The Family Support Group is linked to the Citywide Family Support Network which offers an opportunity to raise issues at a national level.

MQI's Family support group in Dublin worked with 20 individuals on a weekly basis throughout 2011. The group met up every Tuesday evening with an average attendance of 10 clients.

### WORK WITH CLIENTS IN CUSTODY

Merchants Quay Ireland endeavours to continue working with service users within the prison system. We offer support, advice and counselling with a particular focus on accessing appropriate post-release options.

This process entails a close working arrangement with the Probation and Welfare Service and with members of the legal profession.

### EASY ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

With the support of Pobal Dormant Accounts Fund, MQI operated a new Educational Initiative for Homeless People in 2010. The initial focus of work has been on developing a range of open access educational initiatives for homeless people availing of a wide range of homeless services in Dublin. Content developed includes:

- Decision Making
- Self-awareness
- Assertive communication
- Budgeting
- Skills tasters – Computers, Gardening, Art,

In 2011, over the course of the year the project worked with a total of 45 individuals, 34 males and 11 females.

# PROMOTING POSITIVE CHANGE

## PROGRESSION PATHWAY PROGRAMMES

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

### STABILISATION SERVICES

#### **Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support:**

Methadone substitution therapy helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use. This programme can only take clients from the Dublin 8 Catchment area. There were 18 service users on this programme in 2011. This programme is delivered in partnership with the HSE.

**Into Education and Employment:** This programme offers therapeutic groups, life skills training, personal development work and pre-employment training to help drug users reintegrate into society. This dual programme contains two strands, a Drug Free strand and a Methadone Stabilisation strand.

This programme has strong links with the City of Dublin VEC and allows us to include a strong educational component for this programme, which is of considerable importance in addressing the educational disadvantage experienced by so many of our service users. In 2011, 10 people completed the Drug Free Programme and 15 completed the stabilisation programme. In terms of progression for drug free – 3 went into employment; 1 transferred to another programme; 3 into further education.

**The Gateway Programme:** offers a bridge between crisis services and stabilisation services. This Programme provides one to one support linked to a range of leisure and learning opportunities. The aim is to encourage service users to examine alternatives to drug use. One of the main features of this program is acupuncture within the Open Access Service. In 2011, there were a total of 795 visits to this service.



Chapelizod Art Room

#### **MQI Equality for Women Programme:**

With Support from the Pobal Equality for Women initiative MQI was able to develop a range of low threshold training opportunities for women as well as a range of other supports (e.g. interview skills training, CV preparation) aimed at assisting marginalised women with a history of drug use to move towards further training and employment. Training inputs provided included information and communications technology, literacy, personal development, personal grooming and presentation, hair care and holistic therapies.

In 2011, a total of 46 women participated in these classes over the course of 2011. MQI commissioned an evaluation of the project in December 2011, the main findings of the report were that uptake on the programmes was strong and that the programme has carved out a distinct niche for female clients within the MQI services. This model may be replicated in other MQI services subject to funding.



MQI St Francis Farm Detox and Rehabilitation centre

### Aftercare Housing - Ballymount

This innovative programme offers transitional accommodation to drug users who find themselves homeless after completing residential drug treatment. The programme aims at assisting the integration of former drug users into mainstream society by providing opportunities for those who had drug or alcohol problems to participate in group and one-to-one therapeutic sessions and activities.

Residents are required to be involved in an appropriate Day Programme (such as the MQI Drug Free Day Programme) and are offered one-to-one support, an aftercare group and a weekly community night with staff. Service users' settlement needs are addressed from the start of their stay. All service users are also offered a one-to-one counselling and support during their stay.

In 2011 Ballymount House operated with an average of 3 people staying in this 3 bed house over the course of the year.

### Aftercare Housing - Leixlip, Co. Kildare

Finding accommodation for the large proportion of clients leaving our residential services who are effectively homeless has been a big issue for MQI in recent years. In 2010 we made a significant breakthrough in this regard in partnership with the Respond! Housing Association, who agreed to provide us with a six bedroom group home in Leixlip, Co. Kildare.

As with our aftercare house in Ballymount, Co. Dublin, residents are required to be involved in an appropriate Day Programme and are offered one-to-one support, an aftercare group and a weekly community night with staff. Service users' settlement needs are addressed from the start of their stay.

In 2011 Leixlip had 9 admissions with 5 clients on average in the house for an average tenancy duration of 5 months.



“Merchants Quay is the first and only place to go at that hour – we open earlier than any other service. If we didn’t open for breakfast the men and women would have nowhere to go. They’re just so happy to come through our doors, to have that bit of welcome. Then the heat hits them and they begin to relax. They get breakfast, and it’s good. All they have is one another, and us. It’s not an awful lot, and they love the things we do here”

Mags – Open Access



MQI High Park Residential Rehabilitation Centre, Dublin

“Merchants Quay has done a hell of a lot. I mean like I know a lot of people that have died from drugs and everything else but I also know a lot of people out there are still clean (drug free) and they have Merchants Quay to thank for it”

Client

### Training and Work Programmes

#### FÁS – Community Employment Services

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

In 2011 a total of 86 persons participated in CE programmes at Merchants Quay Ireland. Of those 35 completed their FAS placement at Merchants Quay during the course of the year. A 34% increase on completion in comparison to 2010. Of these, 2 secured permanent employment and 7 moved into full time further education. In addition 25 completed a MQI residential or community based drugs intervention programme as part of their CE project.

### MIDLANDS SERVICES

With support and funding from the Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force and the HSE Merchants Quay Ireland provides much needed services in the four Midlands counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath.

The MQI Family Support and Community Harm Reduction Team was established in

late 2008 and provides dedicated outreach services for individuals actively using drugs and Family Support Services focused on the needs of the families of active drug users

The team consists of two family support workers and two full-time and two part time Outreach Workers working across the four counties:

#### Athlone Open Door Centre

The Athlone Open Door Centre provides a range of services for drug users in Athlone including a Drop in Centre offering hospitality and crisis support, vocational training initiatives and support towards rehabilitation and reintegration.

The service had been operated by Westmeath Community Development for many years, but following an Evaluation in 2010 it was agreed that MQI would take on responsibility for the service from January 2011 in order to enhance services for clients.

In 2011 the Open Door project recorded 1415 visits and provided 400 meals, with an average number of 44 clients a month.

#### Midlands Traveller Specific Drugs Project

Since October 2010 Merchants Quay Ireland has been delivering a new drugs support service aimed at Travellers living in the four Midlands counties.

The aim of the service is to provide support for Travellers in relation to their individual substance misuse including:

- To respond to the issue of substance use and misuse (alcohol and drugs) through a community development approach within the Traveller community in the Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly in a culturally appropriate manner, with a particular focus on Travellers who are drug users, their families and the wider Traveller community.
- To Increase access to drugs services for travellers who are drug users.
- To Increase awareness of drugs and drug related services within the Travelling Community.
- To Improved supports for Traveller families affected by drug use

By the end of 2011 the Traveller project worked with 38 clients and provided 1187 one to one and phone support sessions throughout the year.

#### Midlands Family Support Service

This involves the provision of services and interventions that support families affected by problem drug use. Such services often concern counselling, guidance and advice. Family support is seen as increasingly important in the areas of drug treatment and prevention.

The Family Support Service assists families to:

- deal with the trauma associated with discovering their loved one is involved in drug use
- work with vulnerable families in the area of drugs prevention
- act as a reliable source of information and advice on drug use and related issues
- deal with the reaction of neighbours and others
- overcome self blaming responses
- create positive coping strategies that will help parents and the drug user make positive decisions
- build their capacity to respond

- set rules of behaviour for those living in their house
- challenge views that they caused it, can control it, or can cure it.

We also provide one to one support by appointment for parents and other close relatives seeking advice and support. We work to proactively link people with other support or treatment services that may be relevant to their needs.

In 2011 our Family Support Service provided 140 group sessions. There were 723 support telephone calls and 505 one to one support sessions.

### Midlands Community Harm Reduction Services

We are aware that most local people and organisations are very concerned about the level of public and community harm associated with drug use in their communities. They are also very worried about the risks that drug users may expose themselves to.

#### Aims

The aims of this service are to:

- Act as a resource for community groups, in the target areas, in their efforts to minimise the impact of problem drug use on their communities.
- Reduce the level of individual and community harm experienced in local communities as a result of drug use in the target areas.
- Reduce the associated level of public health risk experienced in the designated areas.
- Provide harm reduction and crisis support services to local drug users in places and at times where such services are unavailable.
- Ensure that problems associated with drug use are minimised.
- Promote a partnership model between Residents Associations, Estate Management Committees, Community Policing Services and Midlands Outreach Service in tackling the drugs issue at local level.



MQI Open Door Garden, Athlone

Our harm reduction / needle exchange service provided over 4,000 one to one interventions in 2011.

### Midlands Rehabilitation and Aftercare Service

Merchants Quay Ireland, with the support of the Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force established a Rehabilitation and Aftercare Service in September 2010. The purpose of this service is to provide a range of rehabilitation and aftercare supports targeting clients from the region including those exiting drug treatment or exiting prison. This involves assisting clients in the process of regaining their capacity for daily life from the impact of problem drug use and enabling their re-integration into their community.

Our Rehabilitation and Aftercare Worker provides case management for clients with a view to ensuring that all have their needs assessed, and have the opportunity to participate in developing a care plan offering a pathway towards rehabilitation. She also provides psychosocial support for persons leaving drug treatment or released from prison via one to one support and aftercare group work.

By the end of 2011 29 individual clients and 3 groups were accessing this service. There were 607 support interventions and 67 groups ran in 2011.

## NATIONAL PRISON BASED ADDICTION COUNSELLING SERVICE

### Overview of Services

In 2010 Merchants Quay Ireland won our second successive tender completion for the delivery of the national counselling service for prisoners with drugs and alcohol problems. This service operates in 12 prisons across the country.

The service offers structured assessments and evidence-based counselling interventions with clearly defined treatment plans and goals. This occurs within the context of care planning within multidisciplinary teams.

Counselling is available to prisoners who have a history of drug use including opiates, cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines, LSD, anxyolitics, hypnotics, alcohol, cannabis and other illicit and licit drugs.

### Services offered include:

- Brief interventions
- Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement therapy
- 12-step facilitation programme
- Relapse Prevention
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy which would also include problem solving approaches, development of alternative coping strategies, anxiety and stress management and anger management
- Harm Reduction Approaches

“[Merchants Quay Ireland] really helped him. They eased a lot of the pain he was carrying. That was the breaking point for him. Today he has his own home and a job, I’m so proud of him.”

Noreen Volunteer and  
Mother of past MQI client

### Outcomes

In 2011 the Addiction Counselling Service provided in excess of 10,293 counselling sessions plus 2,830 group attendances in the prisons over the course of the year. 26 counsellors are working in the Irish Prison Service, 13 part-time and 13 are full-time.

### Mountjoy Drug Treatment Programme in partnership with Ana Liffey Drug Project, Ballymun Youth Action Project and Coolmine

The Addiction Counselling Service coordinates a structured 8 week drug treatment programme for 9 participants in the medical unit in Mountjoy. The course is aimed at prisoners who are detoxing from methadone or illicit substances. Group work and educational sessions are provided by MQI, Coolmine, Ballymun Youth Action Project and Ana Liffey Drug Project. Other agencies are also invited in to provide inputs on topics relevant to the group. The objective is to help participants to understand the impact of their drug use and to equip them to stay drug free in the future. The course aims to enhance personal learning and help participants to make informed choices.

The counsellors provide one to one support for all participants on the DTP to support the learning and explore the experience of working within the group.

The Counselling Service meets once during each programme with representatives of the other external agencies to discuss how the group was functioning and to look at ways to improve content and delivery.

The course was very successful in 2011, of the 7 courses in the calendar year, only 4 out of 63 selected did not complete. Further work is required to support participants after completion and participants can still continue to attend for one to one counselling with another MQI counsellor if they are moved to the Training Unit or an Open Prison after the course.

## DRUG FREE TREATMENT SERVICES

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

### High Park Residential Programme

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

In 2011 there were 50 admissions to the High Park programme. The proportion of homeless persons accessing the service in 2011 was 66% of all intake. A total of 4 persons were admitted for community assisted detoxification in 2011 and 75% of these successfully completed the detoxification. In 2011, 24 clients completed the full programme, compared to 22 in 2010.

### St. Francis Farm Residential Programme

This is a therapeutic facility which, until September 2011 offered a long-term programme of six months duration for people with a history of problematic drug use. We decided to reduce the programme length to 14 weeks in October 2011 – the decision to reduce the length of the programme relates to the fact that from 2011 we have a new detox facility on site, offering 4-6 weeks treatment for clients many of whom are expected to advance on to the rehabilitation programme, and because we have increased our range of aftercare beds and services. The move is also in line with research evidence showing that the optimal length of time for a residential treatment programme is in the region of three months. This change means that greater numbers of clients seeking drug free treatment used St Francis farm in 2011.

At St. Francis Farm we provide a safe drug free environment where service users can adjust to life without drugs and make positive choices about their future. We also afford service users the opportunity to explore the reasons for their drug use and to learn more effective coping mechanisms. We provide former drug users with access to training and education, as a means to gaining employment and we enable service users to develop their individual, social and interpersonal skills.

The programme covers areas of relapse prevention, one to one counselling, group therapy, self esteem seminars, assertiveness training, anger management, farm training, literacy skills, and computer skills training (ECDL). Service users also receive training in Emergency First Aid and in life skills and budgeting. In addition service users are offered the opportunity to participate in Yoga classes and reflexology and fortnightly spirituality workshops.

What makes St. Francis Farm unique is the fact that our programme is situated in a working farm environment. Service users gain work experience in animal care,

vegetable production, and in general farming. The food produced at the farm is used to supply the kitchens in our various centres, feeding up to three hundred people every day.

The St. Francis Farm Rehab programme had 40 admissions in 2011. A total of 15 clients (38%) were from the South East region. 15 clients completed the full programme in 2011. 23 clients part completed the programme in 2011.

### TRAINING

- In 2011 a total of 1353 people participated in 26 Merchants Quay Training programmes. The courses offered included:
- Clinical Skills Training such as Motivational Interviewing ,Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Mindfulness & Groupwork
- Up-skilling & Development such as Management Training & Supervision Skills

- Health & Safety training including First Aid; Therapeutic Crisis Intervention & Manual Handling
- Client Support skills in areas of bereavement & loss; suicide and self harm & social welfare training.
- MQI/University College Dublin Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory & Intervention Skills delivered in 2 locations ; Dublin & Cork
- MQI/University College Dublin Diploma in Drugs Counselling Theory & Intervention Skills delivered in Dublin
- 139 people participated in our three University Courses.

In February 2011 MQI Training in conjunction with UCD and our other training partners URRUS (Ballymun) and An Cosan (Tallaght) received a STAR award from AONTAS acknowledging our collaborative partnership in promoting adult learning in drugs education and research on a nationwide basis.



Representatives from UCD, MQI, URRUS and An Cosan receive STAR award

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

### Riverbank Centre

Work has at long last finally commenced on the redevelopment of the Riverbank Centre. The purpose designed redevelopment, when completed, will provide a single site location for all our crisis oriented Dublin based services. This fantastic new development could not have been realised without the support of the Franciscan Fraternity and the many donors and benefactors who support our work.

The main redevelopment work on the Riverbank Centre commenced in October 2011, with an anticipated completion date of July/August 2012.

### St Francis Farm Detox

Although Merchants Quay Ireland hoped to open the facility in September 2011, the Detox unit opened later than expected, in November 2011, when it began processing referrals and carrying out assessments of prospective clients. The new 10 bed facility will offer a 30% increase on national detox provision.

There were 21 referrals to the service in November and December 2011, 14 of which attended an assessment.

Clients who were offered admission to the unit in November and December were to commence in January 2012. The unit will initially provide a methadone detox and plans to develop the service to also provide benzodiazepine detox and alcohol detox



Dining Room and Carving in New Riverbank Centre, Merchants Quay

## FINANCE

### Overview

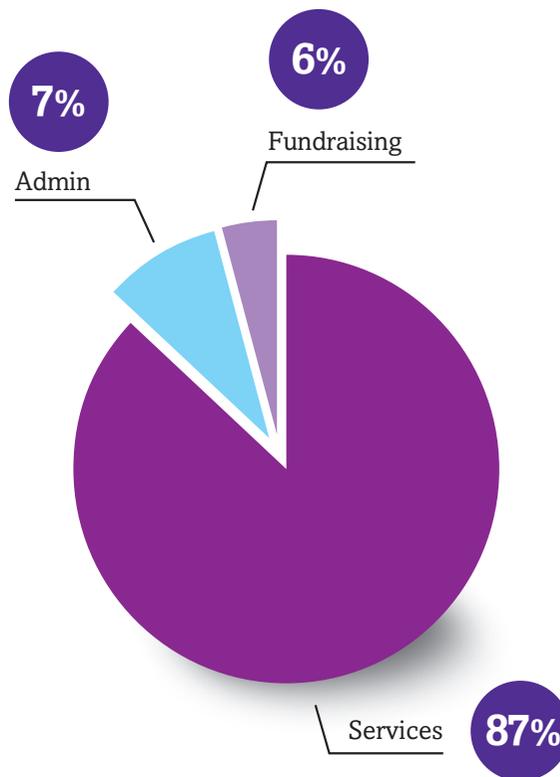
Despite another difficult year financially, MQI not only maintained all existing client services but also opened up several new services during 2011. The highlights of the year are summarised below.

- MQI continued to maximise the resources spent on direct client services in 2011 with €0.87c in each Euro donated going to client services.
- Income and Expenditure for 2011 was €7.4m (compared with €6.9m in 2010) with MQI recording a surplus of €27k (as compared to a €13k surplus in 2010). The main additional income in 2011 related to FÁS, Pobal and Donations offset by reductions of between 2% and 10% in state funding lines.
- Due to a reconfiguration of Homeless Agency funding, the MQI Settlement department closed in 2011 with workers in the Open Access, residential and aftercare services taking on the case load.
- In line with our Mission Statement and with a backdrop of reduced funding, MQI started new projects like the Tullow Detox Centre and secured funding for the renovation of the Riverbank Homeless centre due to open Autumn 2012.

### Cost Savings

MQI continued to implement cost saving measures on all expenditure lines in order to maximise value for money to clients and funders. These measures included the following areas:

- On-going review of service contracts with tendering actioned to achieve cost savings.
- Designing the new Dublin Day Service to maximise staffing, energy and maintenance savings.
- Increasing the numbers of volunteers supporting the services.
- Decisions to consolidate buildings within the Dublin and Midlands locations.



### Outlook for 2012

Further state funding cuts coupled with increased demand for our services will make 2012 another challenging year. The success of our fundraising strategy enabled the 2011 opening of our new Detox Centre in Tullow to go ahead and also has helped fund the on-going building of our new Riverbank Centre for Dublin day services. MQI will place a significantly higher reliance on volunteers and fundraising in 2012 in order to support front line services.

### Governance

The Finance and Audit board sub committee met 3 times in 2011 in order to continue strong financial governance within MQI in line with best practice.

Our auditors PWC reported directly into the Finance and Audit sub committee on the 2011 financial year in line with financial best practice. MQI will continue to implement best practice financial governance taking into account recommendations from Industry, the statutory sector and our auditors.

### Fundraising

The support of those who donate to MQI is vital in the continuity of services to the poorest and most marginalised in our society. In 2011 MQI received €903,874 (12.24% of running costs) from fundraising.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR MQI FOR THE YEAR ENDED DEC 31 2011

	Total 2010	Total 2011	Difference
Income	6,914,399	7,387,428	473,029
Expenditure	-6,905,583	-7,379,648	-474,065
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year before interest	8,816	7,780	-1,036
Interest received / Other finance costs	4,064	18,909	14,845
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	12,880	26,689	13,809

## MERCHANTS QUAY PROJECT LTD BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

	2011 €	2010 €
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	71,005	89,203
Current Assets		
Debtors	895,665	611,895
Cash at bank and in hand	234,203	941,685
	1,129,868	1,553,580
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-1,031,293	-1,417,081
Net Current Assets	98,575	136,499
Total assets less current liabilities	169,580	225,702
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	-200,238	-209,481
Net liabilities/(assets) excluding pension liability	-30,658	16,221
Net Pension Liability	-145,500	-127,845
Net liability including pension liability	-176,158	-111,624
Represented by: accumulated deficit	-176,158	-111,624

#### FRANCISCAN SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES LIMITED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

	2011	2010
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	12,277	37,459
Current Assets		
Debtors	2,685	609
Cash at bank and in hand	782,598	440,073
	785,283	440,682
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	-745,028	-437,790
Net Current Assets	40,255	2,892
Total assets less current liabilities	52,532	40,351
Deferred Grants (Capital Grants)	0	-44,882
Total Net Assets / (liabilities)	52,532	-4,531
Capital and reserves		
Income and expenditure account	52,532	-4,531
Total reserves	52,532	-4,531

#### ST FRANCIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

	2011	2010
	€	€
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	298,536	0
	298,536	0
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	-63,953	0
Total assets less current liabilities	234,583	
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	-234,583	
Total Net Assets / (liabilities)	0	
Capital and reserves		
Income and expenditure account	-	
Represented by Accumulated funds	-	

# Acknowledgements

Merchants Quay Ireland is so grateful for the financial support we receive from individuals, families, religious organisations, businesses, charitable trusts and foundations. Without their steadfast support we would be unable to continue expanding our vital services to those in need in Ireland. To all our supporters we wish to express our immense gratitude.

We would like to acknowledge the following grants received in 2011

- JP McManus
- Newman's Own Foundation
- Bon Secours
- ESB Electric Aid
- O'Reilly Recycling
- OFM – Franciscan Fraternity

We were gratefully supported by the following:

- FÁS
- VEC
- MRDTF
- HSE
- Probation Service
- Dublin City Council
- Irish Prison Service
- Department of Social Protection
- Pobal
- SERDTF
- SICLDTF

Investing in your future

The Equality for Women Measure 2010-2013 is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013 and the Department of Justice and Equality.









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Detail from new  
Riverbank Homeless  
Centre carving - made  
by Derek Williams with  
Clients and Volunteers

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