

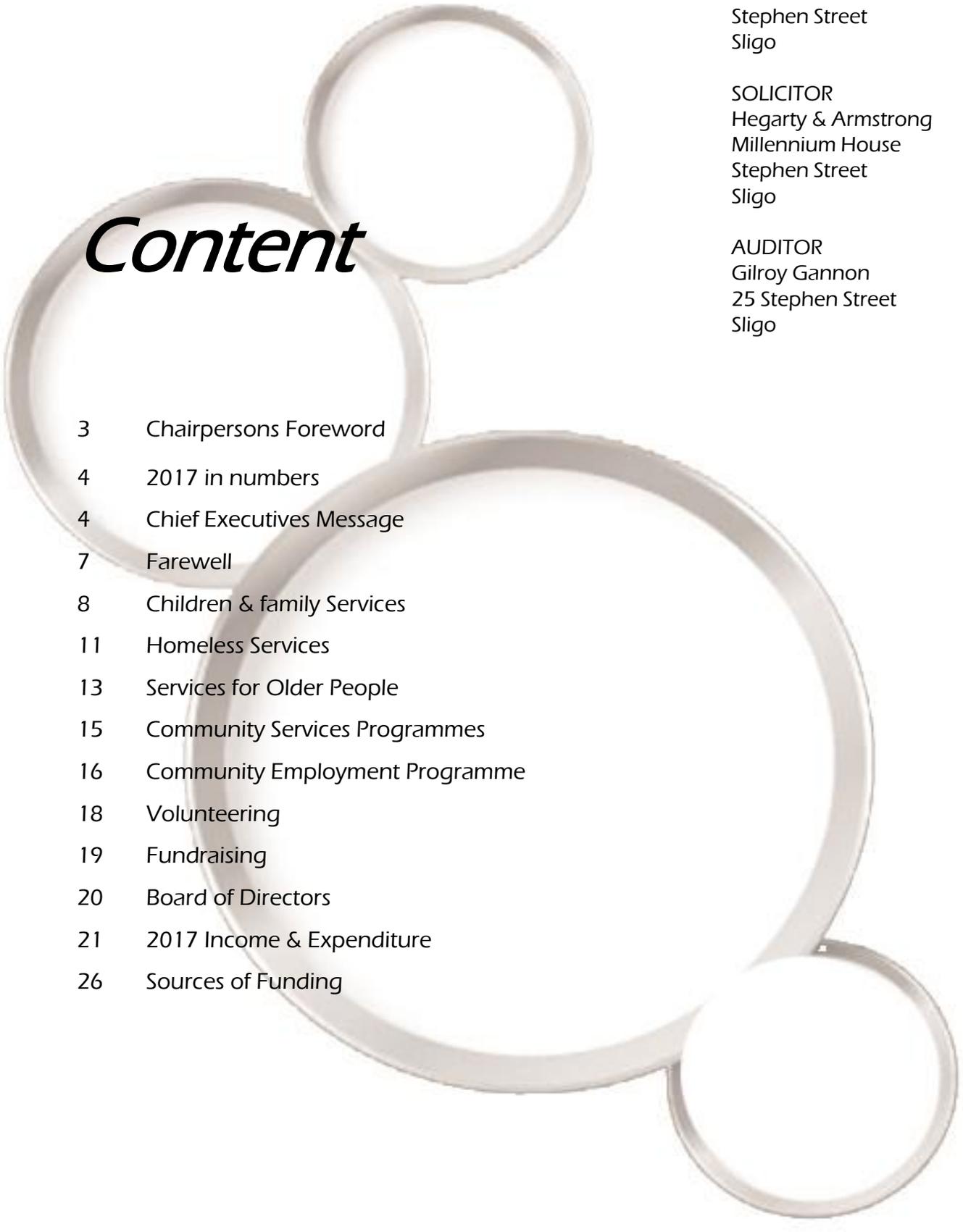
Annual Report 2017



sligo social
services

assistance support
families welcome
others home needs
help elderly
homeless children
people volunteers
communities
relationships



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MAIN BANK
AIB
Stephen Street
Sligo

SOLICITOR
Hegarty & Armstrong
Millennium House
Stephen Street
Sligo

AUDITOR
Gilroy Gannon
25 Stephen Street
Sligo



Chairperson's Foreword

2017 presented continued challenges adopting, and in some instances, conforming to requirements from our statutory funders. Being challenged we saw it as an opportunity in line with our mission statement to develop new initiatives in 2018 and beyond.

To the people of Sligo and its environs, we extend a massive thank you for your continued support to our collections and fundraising events during 2017. Thank you to our statutory funders, HSE, Sligo County Council, Department of Social Protection and Tusla. To the groups, schools and individuals who contributed in any way during 2017, thank you most sincerely.

Volunteers as ever continue to be the cornerstone of our services; your ongoing support is greatly appreciated. To our staff, team and fellow Board members, thank you for your support and work throughout 2017. A particular tribute to Cannon Tom Hever who resigned as a Director in 2017, wishing him every success in his future endeavours and a genuine thank you from all associated with Sligo Social Services.

The ongoing support of the Diocese of Elphin is greatly appreciated, acknowledged and welcomed. As ever Sligo Social Services Council will continue to remain focused on its mission; in response to the identified needs of individuals, families and communities in Sligo and its environs.

**606 Visits to
Open Access**

**105 Children
in Family
Support**

**160 contacts in
Emergency
Homeless
Accommodation**

**881 People
Availed Of
Services In
2017**

**22,988 Meals
delivered**

**78 children
in
Childcare
Services**

Chief Executives Message



In 2017 Sligo Social Services we provided services to 881 people here in Sligo. Like elsewhere in the country we saw a significant increase in the number of people who were homeless and in need of emergency accommodation. We also saw a considerable increase in the number of people looking for assistance in providing basics such as food for themselves and their families. We began working with families being resettled in Sligo through the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. 2017 also saw the transfer of the Meitheal project from Sligo Social Services into TUSLA while the expected transfer of the CYPSC Co-ordinator into TUSLA did not occur in 2017.

Our annual report outlines the wide range of issues we seek to address and will provide you with an insight into how we work on behalf of the Sligo community. There are examples of the really positive impact of our work, and you will also see that the effects of the economic crisis are still being felt by many in our community. We are particularly concerned about the continuing rise in homelessness in Sligo with 30% more individuals seeking Sligo Social Services assistance in 2017 than in 2016.

The primary challenge for organisations like Sligo Social Services over the past 8 years has been surviving the effects of relentless annual cuts in statutory funding while also struggling to maintain services to vulnerable people.

While securing funding to continue sustainable activities and services is still a major issue, equally challenging for the sector is managing the changes taking place in areas of governance, commissioning, regulation, data protection and ensuring that public trust and confidence are maintained. Commissioning or tendering for future service contracts is becoming the norm. The future is one of competition for funding and Sligo Social Services needs to be equipped to take on that challenge. We should not be afraid nor should we be complacent having successfully tendered in 2017 for the delivery of The Refugee Resettlement Programme.

In order to be the chosen provider of services, Sligo Social Services must have the public's trust and must be associated with professionalism, reliability and value for money. It is incumbent on Sligo Social Services to ensure this message is communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Sligo Social Services must also satisfy the requirements of Revenue, the Companies Registration Office (CRO), the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) and the individual demands of the various Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with the statutory bodies.

Securing the resources to fund the diversity of skills required to adequately address the above is a huge challenge for all organisations in the sector even more so for smaller organisations such as ourselves and indeed recent years has seen resources in this area being cut substantially by statutory funders.

The increased regulation of the sector we work in has brought greater demands on resources and personnel. While Sligo Social Services acknowledges the importance of regulation in this sector it is also evident that the demands of regulation need to be streamlined by government or they will inevitably mean the end of many organisations. More government support is required in order to assist organisations to meet their requirements whilst still meeting the ever increasing demand for much needed services.

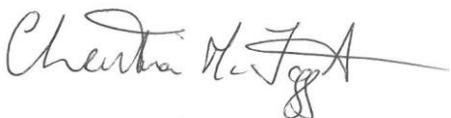
The support and generosity we receive from the people of Sligo is one of the most rewarding aspects of our work. Whilst our volunteers and staff focus on providing assistance to those in need of our service, it gives us great encouragement to know that there are so many people across all sectors of the community who share our goals. Their commitment by way of time, financial support and donations is inspiring and we are extremely grateful.

Every year Sligo Social Services and our supporters fundraise in a variety of ways to help finance the various services provided by the organisation. Sligo Social Services needs to generate a substantial amount of our own income every year. We can only do this with the help of our supporters and volunteers. Individual donors continued to provide support by donating directly to the organisation in 2017. We also benefited from the support of local schools and businesses who raised money through a wide variety of events, the proceeds of which they donated to Sligo Social Services. As always the people of Sligo continued to give generously on flag days and during Christmas collections in 2017. Local churches continued to support the work of Sligo Social Services with a Church gate collection, an envelope collection on the 8th December and individual donations towards our work.

I would like to thank our statutory funders who supported our work over the course of the year. In particular, the H.S.E. West, Tusla Child and Family Agency, the Department of Social Protection, Sligo Borough Council, The North West Regional Drugs Task Force, The Office of the Minister for Children, The EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund via Department of Justice and Equality, Irish Refugee Protection Programme and Department of Social Protection

Also a special word of thanks to the Friends of Sligo Social Services and the Diocese of Elphin for their ongoing support. I would like to add that we remain extremely grateful to all our volunteers. It is your support that makes all our work possible.

We must continue in our aim to ensure best practice across all services and full accountability and transparency in all our work, nothing less will suffice. In spite of the challenging environment, we will continue to deliver a diversity of services of the highest standards to vulnerable families and individuals in Sligo. Sligo Social Services is a local Sligo organisation.



Farewell

Eithne Kiely, the longest service staff member of Sligo Social Services retired in May 2017. Eithne was part of the organisation from its very earliest days and worked in many guises in her 43 years with Sligo Social Services. She manned the phones covering reception and administration. She was instrumental in the setting up of the Thrift Shop in 1994 and managed it for many years thereafter. But the thing Eithne was most synonymous with in Sligo Social Services was the Meals on Wheels Service.

The Meals on Wheels Service was one of the first services provided by the organisation and initially meals were made in the Mercy and Ursuline convents. As demand grew the Garden Hill convent and the Bonne Chere, Caffolla and Café Cairo restaurants also were involved in cooking meals. From the outset volunteers delivered the meals. It then moved into a kitchen in Charles St. Over the years the service has expanded and in recent years Eithne led out on its expansion into North County Sligo.

Eithne saw the organisation grow and change immensely over the course of the 43 years she worked in it. What started as the coming together of likeminded people to address social issues in Sligo grew into an organisation providing a wide range of different services. Over the years the work of organisations such as Sligo Social Services have become more formal, with more and more regulation.

Eithne has journeyed through this massive change within Sligo Social Services. She was always willing to give something a go and it is a testament to the type of person she is that not only would she not complain about it she would be the first to acknowledge it if she saw where a change meant it could bring a benefit or improvement to the client or the organisation.

More importantly she has been able to hold on to the part which we most fear will get lost in this more formal, regulated environment we now work and that

is that our first and foremost concern should always be for the client and there was never any doubt about that with Eithne.

I think it is fair to say that Eithne's great passion is for people – in particular the people we provide a service to and the people who volunteer to help us provide that service. That great passion could be seen not just in her work on a daily basis but in the sheer vastness of her knowledge of the people of Sligo and the connections between people. Eithne would always know when a family connected to the organisation had an important event; birth, marriage or death and she would always make the effort to acknowledge that event with a family particularly in sad times.

As a colleague Eithne would always offer her support and most especially if she knew you might be having difficulties.



Eithne and Pat Forde, Chairperson, Board of Directors

Eithne has always been and continues to be self-effacing in seeking recognition for her contribution and achievements. However her great contribution was recognised in her being awarded the National Volunteer Manager Award in December 2017, a prize she richly deserved.

Using your talents and leaving a legacy is something we would all aspire to do and Eithne has succeeded in doing this. Sligo Social Services is a better place to be because of Eithne's efforts. Let's hope we can all say that when our time comes. We wish Eithne the very best in her Retirement.

Children and Family Services

Charles Street Childcare Service

Sligo Social Services offers a community-based childcare service to 20 children each year. The service is provided by fully qualified and experienced staff and offers a range of activities, opportunities and experiences that will enable all children who attend, to develop skills, confidence and independence, ensuring a positive transition to Primary School.

It offers both pre-school and a longer childcare service to children between the ages of 3 to 5 years of age. Charles Street child care service operates a targeted approach to the allocation of places. In September 2017, 15 children registered for the service.

In July 2017, three members of staff, completed training in the "Incredible Years Parenting Programme" This has increased the capacity of staff to effectively engage with parents in supporting them to respond to their children's needs. A monthly 'Breakfast Meeting' for parents was introduced in September 2017. This informal gathering offers support to parents in relation to their parenting role, delivered in line with the principles of the Incredible Years Parenting Programme.

The Breakfast Meetings have provided support and information in areas such as

- Helping your child settle into pre-school
- Playing with your child
- Developing positive bedtime routines

- Healthy eating
- Dealing with tantrums

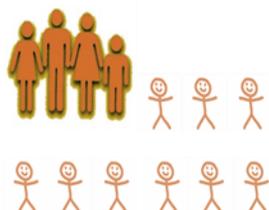
Feedback from parents has been positive, and this informal approach to supporting parents has proved to be an effective way of imparting advice and information to them.

Better Start is an initiative that supports Early Years Services in promoting the quality of their service. In 2017 the service continued to engage with Better Start, looking at ways to improve the quality of the service. The service also became a member of Early Childhood Ireland in 2017. Prior to the commencement of the academic year 2017/2018, a representative from Early Childhood Ireland visited the Service and advised on where improvements could be implemented in terms of the layout of the environment, to promote child led activities.

ABC Child & Family Support Service

The ABC Child and Family Support Service offers supports to children and families in their own homes. It is an outcomes based service which aims to prevent or reverse the risk factors which may lead to serious welfare concerns, abuse and/or neglect of children. Support provided is tailored to meet the needs of individual children and their families in their own home on a one to one basis (with the child/parents/joint) in one or more of the following areas:

- Parenting supports
- Behavioural issues
- Communication issues
- Relationships & attachments
- Nutrition
- Living environment



A monthly 'Breakfast Meeting' for parents introduced offering support to parents in relation to their parenting role

In 2017 the service worked with 55 children within 26 families. While previously the service had been made available to a broad range of referral agents, in mid 2016 at the request of TUSLA who fund the service, ABC began working exclusively with children and families in receipt of a Tusla Social Work service. When reviewed with TUSLA in February 2017 the feedback on the service was very positive.

However as 2017 progressed there was a notable reduction in the number of referrals to the service. 4 new families (5 children) engaged with the service in 2017, compared with 14 new families (24 children) in 2016. TUSLA indicated that this was due to the overall restructuring of the TUSLA social work service, and the significant reduction of the TUSLA social work waiting list. At the end of 2017 TUSLA made the decision to discontinue funding for the ABC Child & Family Support Service, stating that they felt that there was no further demand for it.

Cranmore/Abbeyquarter Afterschool Project

Sligo Social Services in collaboration with Cranmore/Abbeyquarter Community Centre is involved in the provision of the After School Project. The service can cater for 33 primary school children aged between 4 and 13 years. While engaged with the service, the children receive support and encouragement in doing their homework, within a safe and friendly environment where they can also take part in a wide range of fun and creative activities.

The Afterschool Project runs activities during out of school periods within the academic year and offers a Summer Camp in July. In 2017 this service worked with 33 children.

Activities in 2017 included:

- **Games & skills in the woods** - how to - stay safe, light a fire & toast marshmallows/pancakes, build a hut, treasure hunt
- **Horse riding at Island View** – also learning about equipment, seeing a horse get shod, getting to groom a horse.

- **The Model Art Center** - art workshop
- **Skate Park** – children learned to do tricks on scooters
- **Bike trails** – children learned about bike & road safety when cycling
- **Ballyshannon Castle Farm** – children got to hold, feed, see lots of animals
- **Football Training** - 2x sessions of 4 week programs
- **Drama Workshop** – play games, acting out stories
- **Respecting each other workshop** – children had to take turns and listen to one another, storytelling, art, music and instruments, outing to the beach.

Meitheal

Following the roll out of Meitheal under TUSLA nationally, 2017 saw Meitheal transfer from Sligo Social Services into TUSLA between April and July 2017. Staff in Sligo Social Services worked hard, in collaboration with TUSLA, to ensure a smooth transition for the families who were engaged in Meitheal at that time, and who wished to continue to engage in the Meitheal process, following the transfer to TUSLA.

Counselling Service

Sligo Social Services has been offering a counselling service for many years. Initially the service was funded by the Family Support Agency, and the work of the service focussed on adults experiencing difficulties in relation to a couple relationship, or the bereavement of a family member. In due course, the Family Support Agency became part of TUSLA Child & Family Agency, and with this change the work began to focus more on the needs of families and young people.

In 2017 following networking with our colleagues in other services, Sligo Social Services identified a need for professional counselling for young people experiencing emotional difficulties e.g. anxiety, low mood, or family related difficulties such as illness,

bereavement or relationship breakdown. Analysis of the use of the Sligo Leitrim Directory was also indicative of a demand for youth counselling services.

Towards the end of 2017, in consultation with TUSLA, a decision was taken to re-orientate the counselling service primarily to respond to the counselling needs of young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years. From 2018, the service will be available primarily to young people, with a small number of hours available for adults, who are themselves parents of children under the age of 18 years.

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

In mid 2017, following a tendering process, Sligo County Council awarded the contract for the delivery of the Refugee Support & Resettlement Service to Sligo Social Services. In all a total of 20 Syrian Families, who have been forced to flee their country because of the war there, are to move to Sligo under the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Programme.

By the end of 2017, a total of 7 families had been relocated to Sligo, comprising 14 adult (parents) 5 young adults (residing with their parents) and 20 children who range in age from 15 years to 6 months old. A further 13 families are to be relocated to Sligo in 2018, bringing to 20 the number of families settled here under the programme. Sligo Social Services has recruited a Support & Resettlement Worker and an Interpreter/Translator/ Intercultural Worker to support the families as they begin their new lives in Sligo.

The work involves ensuring that the families have access to the various services they may require, and that they are linked to various networks locally, to maximise their integration into their communities. The work also involves linking in with local services and communities, where necessary, to support them to promote the inclusion of Syrian families.



Homeless Services

Sligo Social Services provides a number of services for people who are homeless or in housing need including:

1. Accommodation Services including short-term and emergency accommodation services

- Maryville Emergency Hostel
- Ballytivnan Short-term Accommodation
- McAuley House Short-term

Accommodation

2. Substance Misuse Support Worker

Maryville Emergency Accommodation

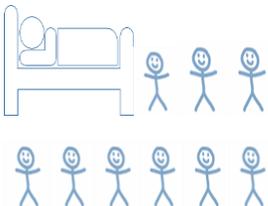
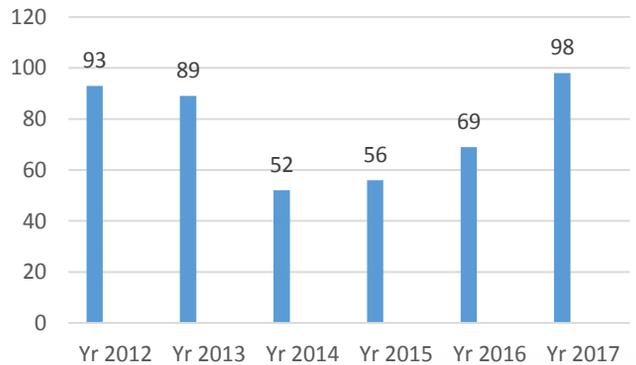
Maryville Hostel provides emergency accommodation to single adults who have been assessed by Sligo County Council as homeless. Every service user is allocated a keyworker to support them to identify and address issues which have contributed to their becoming homeless. Each person is helped to link with other services they may need in order to improve their quality of life, such as addiction counselling, mental health supports, health related services, resettlement, and education & training courses.

2017 saw the service catering for an increased demand for emergency accommodation with 98 adults; 75 men and 23 women presented as homeless. In total there were 143 contacts with the service in 2017, and while this was a slight reduction in contacts from the previous year there was an increase of 29 individuals who availed of this service. Service users stayed for longer

periods of time and the number of times clients re-presenting to the service reduced.

For a number of years the number of individual clients accessing the emergency accommodation had declined however this changed in 2015 which saw a small increase in both 2015/16. However, this grew significantly in 2017 with an increase of 29 individuals which equates to a 30% increase in homeless individuals accessing the service in 2017. This is a cause of significant concern and one which we have raised with the local authority and other service providers. We are of the view that unless there is a greater effort to provide affordable and sustainable housing options for people presenting as homeless this upward trend is likely to continue. Housing First is a solution model which if rolled out in Sligo could have a very positive impact. However the lack of supply of affordable housing throughout the County is an issue which also needs to be addressed urgently.

No. Accessed SSSC Emergency Accommodation



Provided an additional five emergency beds each night for single men and women who were homeless

Ballytivnan Short-term Accommodation

This service provides short-term accommodation with support for five single men who have been identified as needing more intensive support before they move on to live independently in the community. Staff are not on site all the time rather staff visit the project daily to meet with clients for informal contact and to carry out key-working sessions and group work sessions. In 2017, 14 individual clients accessed Ballytivnan including 9 new residents.

McAuley House Short-term Housing

McAuley House offers four self-contained apartments, one and two bedroom units, which provide excellent quality short-term accommodation for up to four families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The service also provided one: one support to families to help them to build their capacity in areas which are likely to cause difficulties in their family and their future accommodation.

Staff support families to access the services they or their children may need and also work with families to identify and move on to permanent housing in the community. Families remain in the service for up to a maximum of twelve months. During 2017, a total of 8 families accessed the service.

Substance Misuse Service

The experience of homelessness is often associated with an escalation in drug use and the use of emergency accommodation can contribute to chaotic patterns of drug use among those who are trying to maintain some control over their use. Due to their transient nature, this group are particularly hard to reach. While treatment and rehabilitation address the addiction in the individual the substance misuse support worker, works with individuals not only to help

them access treatment and rehabilitation but also to identify and address other issues such as accessing mainstream health services, housing and employment. The substance misuse project offers individual support to service users and a range of group work activities. In 2017, the Substance Misuse Worker worked with 74 individuals.

As part of our ongoing review of services in 2017 we identified the need to refocus the Substance Misuse Service. At the time of the projects inception emergency homeless services were very poorly resourced with little support available to work with clients whilst in emergency accommodation. In addition in previous years there was a cohort of clients all of whom had long-term addictions who did not engage with homeless services, sleeping rough in the main. In recent years homeless services have developed considerably with a significant improvement in the co-ordination of services to homeless people and a reorientation of Sligo Social Services homeless service provision to allow much higher levels of support to those who access emergency homeless accommodation. There has also been a reduction in rough sleeping with clients with long term addictions more likely to access services than in the past.

Whilst the Substance Misuse Project always had the potential to work with people at risk of becoming homeless this area of prevention has not developed significantly in the past with few referrals received and the majority of the energy of the service focussed on those who were already experiencing homelessness. As a result of the positive changes in homeless service provision both within SSSC and in Sligo we felt that the resource of the Substance Misuse Worker should be deployed differently into the future.

While the number of people accessing emergency homeless accommodation in SSSC had declined over the past two years we have seen these numbers slowly increase once again. Despite improvements in other areas of homelessness the increased demand for emergency beds highlights the fact that the area of preventing people at risk from losing their home is an area which requires more attention from service providers.

In consultation with the HSE and the NWRDATF we decided that from 2018 onwards the Substance Misuse Project should make its primary focus clients with addiction issues in the community; addiction issues which if not addressed may lead to their becoming homeless.

Services for Older People

Meals on Wheels Service

Sligo Social Service has provided a Meals on Wheels service in Sligo town since 1969 and has delivered well over a million meals in that time. The service is need rather than demand based and is available to elderly people, housebound people, disabled people and to people who are unable to provide a hot meal for themselves.

Meals are prepared in the kitchen at the Sligo Social Services centre in Charles Street by qualified chefs and staff and with the input of CE participants and volunteers. The meals are collected from Charles Street by volunteers on a rota system and then delivered hot to clients in and around Sligo town in the middle of the day. Workers on a Community Employment Scheme deliver meals to locations in the more rural areas in the north of the county and are equipped with special ovens in their vehicles to keep meals warm.

There are over 150 volunteers involved in either delivering meals or assisting in our meals on wheels kitchen. The primary source of referrals to the service has been Public Health Nurses.

In 2017, 189 individuals availed of the service, an average 126 people per month. There is a significant turnover of recipients during the year as the length of time people remain in receipt of the services reduces. During 2017, 97 new recipients availed of the service, while 88 recipients left or were removed from the service.

There are natural fluctuations in the numbers availing of the service from year to year.

The table below details the numbers of clients and meals served in the years between 2015 and 2017.

	Average no. of service users per month	No. meals served
2015	140	27,402
2016	136	24,243
2017	126	22,988

Average no. of service users per month and no. of meals served

The second half of 2016 saw a significant decrease in referrals being made by PHNs to the service and also in the number of referrals being approved for funding from the HSE for the service. The net result being that more and more clients now have to bear the cost of the service personally and overall there has been a stark decrease in number of meals being provided; in 2016 there was a total of 24,243 meals provided, a decrease of 3159 meals compared with 2015, this decreased further in 2017 with a total of 22,988 meals provided. This situation is of significant concern as it affect the overall sustainability of the service and as such the organisation have begun to consider how the service can develop to become more sustainable.

Befriending service

The 2016 evaluation of Meals on Wheels identified isolation and loneliness as an issue which negatively effects older person’s quality of life. Additional feedback from others working in the community

in Sligo such as Lend a Hand, Parish Priests, and other service providers such as the HSE also confirmed this to be the case.

Evidence based research has also shown that loneliness and isolation in older adults leads to numerous health issues and impacts physical and mental health. In response to this, the Board of Sligo Social Services made the decision to develop a Befriending Service. The service is for older people, age 65 and over, who are experiencing social isolation.

Policies and procedures were developed and put in place. Befriending volunteers were recruited and underwent training by Sligo Social Services and ALONE. Extensive efforts were made to advertise the service to relevant statutory services, community groups, and the general public. At the end of 2017 the service had begun befriending for 5 service users and had trained a total of 9 volunteers.

Some of our service users and volunteers had this to say:

“ I really feel my befriender benefits from my visit and I also feel great after the visits”

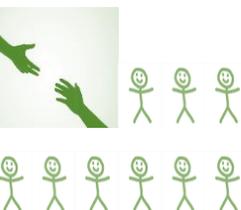
Volunteer

“ I’d like more frequent visits. I enjoy the chat and the company”

Service user

“ I look forward to the visits and have become friends with my Befriender”

Volunteer



Befriending Service started after extensive training of volunteers with the support of ALONE

Community Services

Programmes

Open Access Service

Sligo Social Services provides an Open Access service which assists families and individuals with advice, information regarding entitlements and welfare issues. This service operates on a walk in basis four afternoons per week and offers:

- Crisis intervention to service users, undertaking initial assessment, offering support and taking appropriate action in response to their immediate circumstances/difficulties
- Advice, information and advocacy, assist in accessing rights, entitlements and services if necessary
- Assistance to service users in identifying and addressing contributory causes of their difficulties and obstacles to addressing these difficulties and assists them in finding appropriate solutions
- Supporting service users in accessing and integrating into the facilities and services of their local community.

The service is provided by a team of volunteers. In 2017, 325 individuals availed of the Open Access Service, in total this resulted in 606 contacts with the service. The majority of clients (213) were female, with 112 men seeking assistance from the Open Access Service.

Of the 606 contacts with the service in 2017, the majority of contacts 85%, were in relation to peoples seeking material aid assistance throughout the year (including 188 households who received support regarding material aid at Christmas), 5% were experiencing difficulties with housing or were homeless.

In late 2017 Sligo Social Services was approved to participate in the FEAD - Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived Programme. This programme provides healthy and nutritious foodstuffs and Open Access service users can avail of free food parcels.



Sligo Social Services was approved to participate in the FEAD - Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived Programme



Community Employment Project

Sligo Social Service Council (CLG) is the sponsor of a large Community Employment (CE) Project which employs 34 participants. Community Employment is an employment programme funded by the Department of Social Protection. CE aims to enhance the employability of people who are long-term unemployed by providing work experience and training opportunities to CE participants employed by Sligo Social Services.

Community Employment Participants work in areas such as administration, carers/hostel assistants, thrift shop assistants, meals on wheels assistants and cleaning and caretaking. Sligo Social Service Council (CLG) under the auspices of its CE Project also employ CE participants to work with other local community based organisations such as Sligo Family Support, MS Therapy Centre, Sligo County Childcare and Saint Mary's Presbytery.

This employment programme works with each participant to develop their own individual training plan, which involves both training and work experience, supporting each individual in gaining employment. Gaining valuable work experience and participating in active training enhances their existing skills, while developing a broad range of transferrable skills which can be used in today's workplace.

It was another busy year for Sligo Social Services Community Employment Project, with participants availing of a wide range of training courses and work experiences. The training courses included horticulture, art classes, health care, applied social studies, bakery, computer application modules, photography and a physiotherapy assistant course to name but a few. Work experience included both educational and social care settings, with the participants gaining valuable knowledge, which will enhance their future employment opportunities.

The Community Employment Rehabilitation Programme

The Community Employment Rehabilitation Programme is a Department of Social Protection programme designed to assist those recovering from addiction to return to work through Training and Work Experience. In 2017 there were 10 places for participants and 2 for support.

When joining the project initially participants become part of a team who carry out maintenance work involving painting and decorating, garden maintenance or cleaning. The service is open to all Charitable and Voluntary organisations around Sligo town.

To date we have worked with several organisations such as:

- The North West Hospice
- Sligo Volunteer Centre
- MS Therapy Centre
- Woodhaven Supported Holiday Facility
- Sligo Rowing club
- The Cathedral
- Focus Ireland
- Dolly's Cottage Strandhill
- Shalomar Hostel.

The team provide the labour while individual organisations provide the materials required for the work. This service has provided a much needed resource for all of these organisations. The feedback we have received from the various organisations has been excellent.

"your team of painters to North West Hospice really brightened up the environment for Christmas. The painters were very professional, courteous and respectful of the environment".

Manager of the North West Hospice



Dolly's Cottage Strandhill

Once participants have an opportunity to become accustomed to being in a work environment and have had the opportunity to consider if they wished to pursue a particular area of work we look to secure placements for them within individual services either within Sligo Social Services or another voluntary organisations. Workplaces include the Sligo Social Services Thrift Shop, The Peace Park and the Ms Therapy Centre in Ballytivnan.

Within the project participants are taking part in various HETAC level 4 and 5 Training including Administration, Literacy, Music, Art, Web Design and Social Media, Train the Trainer, Horticulture, Social Care and Addiction Studies. Non-Accredited Training is scheduled for three hours every second week and facilitated by the CE Rehabilitation Programme staff. The schedule takes into consideration three themes:

- Health and Fitness
- Recovery and Addiction
- Social Inclusion/Activities.

The CE staff team work with feedback from all participants on what they feel would be of particular interest in personal development.

This has included:

- Yoga
- Cooking Classes
- Mindfulness Workshop
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy workshop
- Exercise programme.



Sligo Social Services provided assistance to nine community and voluntary organisations in Sligo

Volunteering

Volunteers continue to be central to the work of Sligo Social Services. Volunteers work alongside professional staff to deliver vital services to those in need. Some volunteers have newly come to Sligo Social Services while some have been involved in various services for almost all of the life of the organisation.

There are more than 250 volunteers at present in the organisation. They have and continue to be involved in many specific aspects of the organisation. In 2017 volunteers worked in the following services:

- Meals on Wheels
- Open Access
- Maryville Emergency Accommodation
- Meitheal
- Befriending Service
- Thrift Shop
- Fundraising
- Board of Directors

Sligo Social Services also benefits from the support of professional services, who often give advice and guidance on a voluntary basis.

All of our volunteers are dedicated to providing a caring and professional service and continue to receive support and guidance from staff and Management. In 2017 all volunteers were invited to participate in training delivered by Sligo Social Services on key organisational policies and procedures.

Sligo was named as European Volunteering Capital for 2017 and as part of this celebrations of all the volunteering effort in Sligo took place throughout the year. This included St. Patricks Day with many organisations including Sligo Social Services taking part

in the St. Patricks Day Parade. This was our first ever appearance in the St Patrick's Day Parade and the opportunity was also used to raise awareness of the work of the organisation.



Sligo Social Services St. Patricks Day Float

Another event which took place in Sligo as part of the Volunteering Capital celebration was the annual Volunteering Awards. In recognition of her great work Eithne Kiely our Meals on Wheels Co-ordinator was nominated by Sligo Social Services for the national Volunteer Manager Award. Much to our delight Eithne won the award on the night.

FUNDRAISING

2017 kicked off with the Play 'Betwixt and Between' in the Hawks Well Theatre. This was the third year running that the Skreen/Dromard Drama Group put on a one night show in Aid of Sligo Social Services. It was a great night and played to a packed audience. Later in the year we had our annual Golf Classic organised by the Friends of Sligo Social Services.

Every year Sligo Social Services and their supporters fundraise in a variety of ways to help finance the various services provided. In 2017, we raised a total of €195,728. €130,355 of this income came from our Thrift Shops and Recycling. We also received very generous bequests of €145,160.76 in 2017.

Sligo Social Services continues to benefit from donations from people in Sligo of good quality clothing, household goods and bric-a-brac to sell in our Thrift Shops. Funds generated are used to support the running of our various services. The running of the Thrift Shop is undertaken by a team of over 45 volunteers with the support of a small team of Community Employment participants and one staff member. Clothes which we are unable to sell can be recycled and this also generates an income for the organisation.

We have benefitted greatly from the support of the people of Sligo over the years, support which we continue to rely greatly on. Fundraising events organised by Sligo Social Services such as our annual Flag Days, Bag Packs and Christmas Carol Singing to name but a few. These events raised a total of €18,836. As always the people of Sligo continue to give generously.

Local churches continued to support the work of Sligo Social Services with a church gate collection, an envelope collection on the 8th December and donations received from various religious orders and individuals towards our work. In 2017 Sligo Social Services received €40,306 in this way.

While it is not possible to name all our supporters, we are extremely grateful to you for all the donations no matter how big or small.



Sligo Social Services began work on the development of a new Strategic Plan



Board Meeting Attendance Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Aug	Sep	Oct	Dec
Barry O	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x
Forde P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harkin M	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Hever T Rev	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓			
MacMahon B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
McCaffrey P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
McGurrin L	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Murphy F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scannell D	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Watters J	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drumm M Rev								✓	x	✓

Directors and other Information

Mr Pat Forde (Chairperson)

Rev Tom Hever (Company Secretary) Resigned Sept 2017

Mr Pat McCaffrey (Treasurer)

Mr Barry MacMahon (appointed Company Secretary Oct 2017)

Ms Mary Harkin

Mr Liam McGurrin

Mr Frank Murphy

Ms Orla Barry

Mr Dan Scannell

Mr Johnny Watters

Rev. Michael Drumm (appointed October 2017)

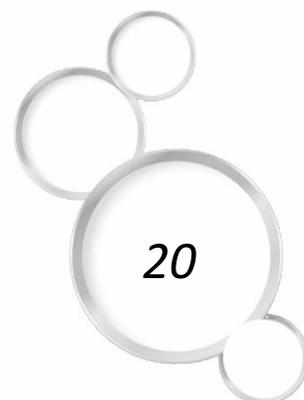
Secretary and Registered Office

Rev. Tom Hever / Mr Barry MacMahon

Retreat House

Charles Street

Sligo



Sligo Social Service Council (CLG)

**Income and expenditure account
Financial year ended 31 December 2017**

	Note	2017 €	2016 €
State Grants and Services Income	5	1,175,565	1,258,519
		<u>1,175,565</u>	<u>1,258,519</u>
Expenditure			
Administrative expenses		1,433,627	1,494,433
		<u>(1,433,627)</u>	<u>(1,494,433)</u>
Operating deficit	6	(258,062)	(235,914)
Fundraising and Donations Income		340,888	202,914
(Loss) / gain on financial assets at fair value through income and expenditure		(1)	61
Other interest receivable and similar income		<u>7,897</u>	<u>4,694</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year and total comprehensive income		90,722	(28,245)
Retained earnings at the start of the financial year		<u>70,336</u>	<u>98,581</u>
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year		<u><u>161,058</u></u>	<u><u>70,336</u></u>

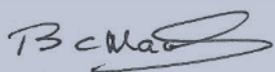
Sligo Social Service Council (CLG)

Balance sheet
As at 31 December 2017

	Note	2017 €	€	2016 €	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9	520,758		549,685	
			520,758		549,685
Current assets					
Debtors	10	116,720		65,347	
Investments	11	673,161		515,454	
Cash at bank and in hand		683,663		747,847	
		1,473,544		1,328,648	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(270,064)		(245,597)	
Net current assets			1,203,480		1,083,051
Total assets less current liabilities			1,724,238		1,632,736
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	13		(22,798)		(22,018)
Net assets			1,701,440		1,610,718
Capital Contributions	15		940,382		940,382
Capital and reserves					
Contingency Reserve			600,000		600,000
Income and expenditure account			161,058		70,336
			1,701,440		1,610,718

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Small Companies' Regime.

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 13 March 2018 and signed on behalf of the board by:



Barry McMahon
Director



Pat Forde
Director



Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sligo Social Service Council (CLG) for the year ended 31 December 2017, which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2017 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We have relied on the exemption provided by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority's Ethical Standard - Section 6 - Provisions Available for Audits of Small Entities in the circumstances as outlined in note 18 to the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate;
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of
Sligo Social Service Council (CLG) (continued)**

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 5, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Independent auditor's report to the members of
Sligo Social Service Council (CLG) (continued)**

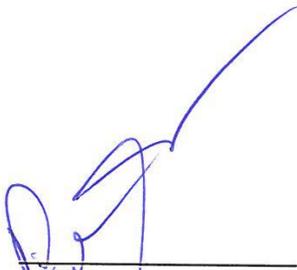
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Paul G. Horan
For and on behalf of
Gilkoy Gannon
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Stephen Street
Sligo

13 March 2018

Sources of Funding

- HSE West
- Tusla Child and Family Agency
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government via Sligo County Council
- Northwest Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force
- Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Office for the Minister for Children and Department of Justice and Equality, administered by Pobal
- EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund via Department of Justice and Equality, Irish Refugee Protection Programme
- Department of Social Protection
- Friends of Sligo Social Services
- Diocese of Elphin
- Mercy Ministry Support Fund
- Loretta Sisters
- Revenue Generated by Thrift Shops
- Income from Services
- Benefactors