

# Sligo Social Services



Annual Report 2018



# 2018

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Mr. Barry MacMahon

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Ms Mary Harkin

Mr Liam McGurrin

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# Chairpersons Foreword

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Throughout 2018 we continued to provide targeted services through our dedicated team of Volunteers and Staff. 2018 also saw us publish our Strategic Plan 2018-2022, which restated our vision of achieving long-term sustainable improvements, in the quality of life of those needing our services and support in the Sligo region. I wish to thank most sincerely all who contributed to our Strategic Plan in 2018.

2018 saw the passing of our founder and father figure Most Reverend Dr. Christy Jones, Bishop of Elphin. On behalf of all in Sligo Social Services Council, I can only say it was indeed a privilege to work with him and observe at first hand his special gifts of engaging with, and advocating on behalf of people on the margins of society in Sligo and indeed nationally - may his gentle soul rest in heaven.

To our statutory funders, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection , H.S.E., Tusla, Sligo Co. Council, thank you for your continued support. Our thanks to Schools, local groups and individuals who contributed in any way during 2018.

Without our volunteers we would not be able to provide the many services we offer, you are, and remain the bedrock of our organisation, thank you, most sincerely for your valued contributions in 2018.

Our ongoing partnership with the Diocese of Elphin is valued and most welcome.

Thank you to our staff team, and Board members for your support and contributions in 2018.

As we enter our fiftieth birthday, Sligo Social Services will continue the challenge of bringing together our vision, and mission to deliver the four objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan – service development, continuous improvement and transparency, raise awareness and influence Policy and building a sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Jordan", is written in a cursive style.

# The Year in Numbers

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**1071** people benefited from services provided by Sligo Social Services

**87** children attended the Childcare Services

**160** contacts to the Homeless Accommodation Service

**702** Visits to Open Access

**190** Children provided with school packs

**23,290** Meals delivered

# A Word from the CEO

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2018 was another busy year for Sligo Social Services. It was a year which saw both endings and new beginnings. We said a sad farewell to Bishop Christy Jones the founder and first Director of Sligo Social Services, who passed away this year. Bishop Christy laid the foundations not only of Sligo Social Services but to many of the services for people in need, we see in Sligo today. Bishop Christy remained involved and interested in the work of the organisation to the end and he will be sadly missed.

2018 saw many service changes with the closure of our ABC Family Support service due to withdrawal of Tula funding. This service had done great work supporting children and families for a number of years. 2018 also saw the opening of our new afterschool in Ballytivnan, Sligo. New Ballytivnan is a designated 'disadvantaged' area with one particular street designated as 'very disadvantaged' on the Pobal Deprivation Scale. Sligo Social Services also committed to supporting a 2 year Pilot Project to establish a Community Hub in the New Ballytivnan area. The aim of this Hub will be to provide a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and bring residents, and other service providers in the area together to improve the quality of life in their area.

Sligo Social Services has for many years offered a counselling service to adults. The organisation identified the need for counselling services to also be available to young people and with the agreement of Tusla our existing service was reconfigured to respond to this need in 2018. We began seeing young people in March 2018. The response to the service has been phenomenal and within five months 50 young people had been referred to the service. The feedback from young people and referral agents has been overwhelmingly positive with young people always endeavouring to make their appointments. Unfortunately this is a very limited service with only 12.5 hrs available per week and is unable to respond to the level of demand we have seen. However Tusla were unable to provide additional funding to expand the service beyond this.

The Syrian Refugee Resettlement Support Project continued in 2018 and by the end of the year had resettled 20 Families, in County Sligo. An interagency approach has ensured that all individuals are provided with access to practical supports and universal services in order to help their transition into their new home. The aims of the project could not have been achieved without the commitment and dedication of a team of voluntary befrienders who over the course of the last 15 months have played a crucial role in empowering families to achieve their identified goals.

Like elsewhere in the country Sligo experienced significant shortages in affordable housing in 2018. The availability of rented accommodation decreased while rents increased. The net result being greater difficulty for people using our homeless services and accessing move on accommodation. On many occasions during the year the emergency hostel was full to capacity. Ballytivnan Short – term accommodation benefited from a complete refurbishment in 2018. The extensive refurbishment work was funded and carried out by the HSE. The building is greatly improved and has been very positively received by residents. In December 2018 Sligo Social Services began to oversee the delivery of an advice and assessment service for people who are in acute medical services and are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Our work in 2018 could not have been achieved without the skill and commitment of staff teams in the organisation. Volunteering and the spirit of volunteerism are at the core of the work of Sligo Social Services and we are very grateful for the commitment and valuable contributions made by our volunteers. Sligo Social Services would not be the same without them. I would like to thank Sligo Social Services Board of Directors, all our staff, CE workers and volunteers for their commitment and dedication throughout 2018.

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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, the Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Sligo Borough Council, The Office of the Minister for Children, The EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund via Department of Justice and Equality, Irish Refugee Protection Programme, Tusla Child and Family Agency, and the North West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, Also a special word of thanks to the Friends of Sligo Social Services and the Diocese of Elphin for their ongoing support.

As I write this we have already began celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We are honoured to have been able to serve the people of Sligo for 50 years. We have played a historical role in the co-ordination of the work of voluntary organisations and in the mobilisation of resources from all sectors to meet the needs of the community. When we first commenced work in 1969, significant amounts of disadvantage, poverty and social need existed across Sligo town and county, and despite the economic growth and social development seen in the past 50 years many of these problems remain with us today. That said, we recognise that society is very different today – people generally are more affluent, living standards are better.

While public services now are also generally much more professionally delivered and better resourced than they were 50 years ago, there are still important areas of need where statutory service providers have not achieved the desired impact. There remain many people in Sligo and the adjoining areas who suffer from social disadvantage, people at the margins of our society who need help.

Irish society continues to change with an increasing population that is ageing and it is estimated that within a decade there will be around one million people aged over 65 living here. The country is also changing, with very many more nationalities represented in our population. Our work has and will continue to be influenced by these changes. What has not changed however is the vital need for civil society's active engagement and mobilisation. This is essential if we are to successfully face the challenges of our times, find solutions and create opportunities to meet these challenges. There has never been a greater need for all to work in collaboration; to make the best use of diminished resources and ensure the best outcomes for those most in need.

Our work has over time become more varied and sometimes challenging. Such as the challenge to staff to focus principally on the delivery of a quality service to those in need, while simultaneously adhering to regulatory standards set by professional bodies and agencies. A constant challenge is to maintain the heart of the organisation that has, as its primary focus, the care of those perhaps less fortunate than ourselves, in a world of rapid technological and regulatory change.

While we will take time this year to reflect on the achievements of the past fifty years and think of all the people who have contributed to the work of the organisation during that time we also look forward to the future and all it may bring. We will continue to build an organisation of excellence that supports social and economic development and promotes active citizenship. We thank all who have contributed to our work over the years and hope we will continue to have the support of so many into the future.

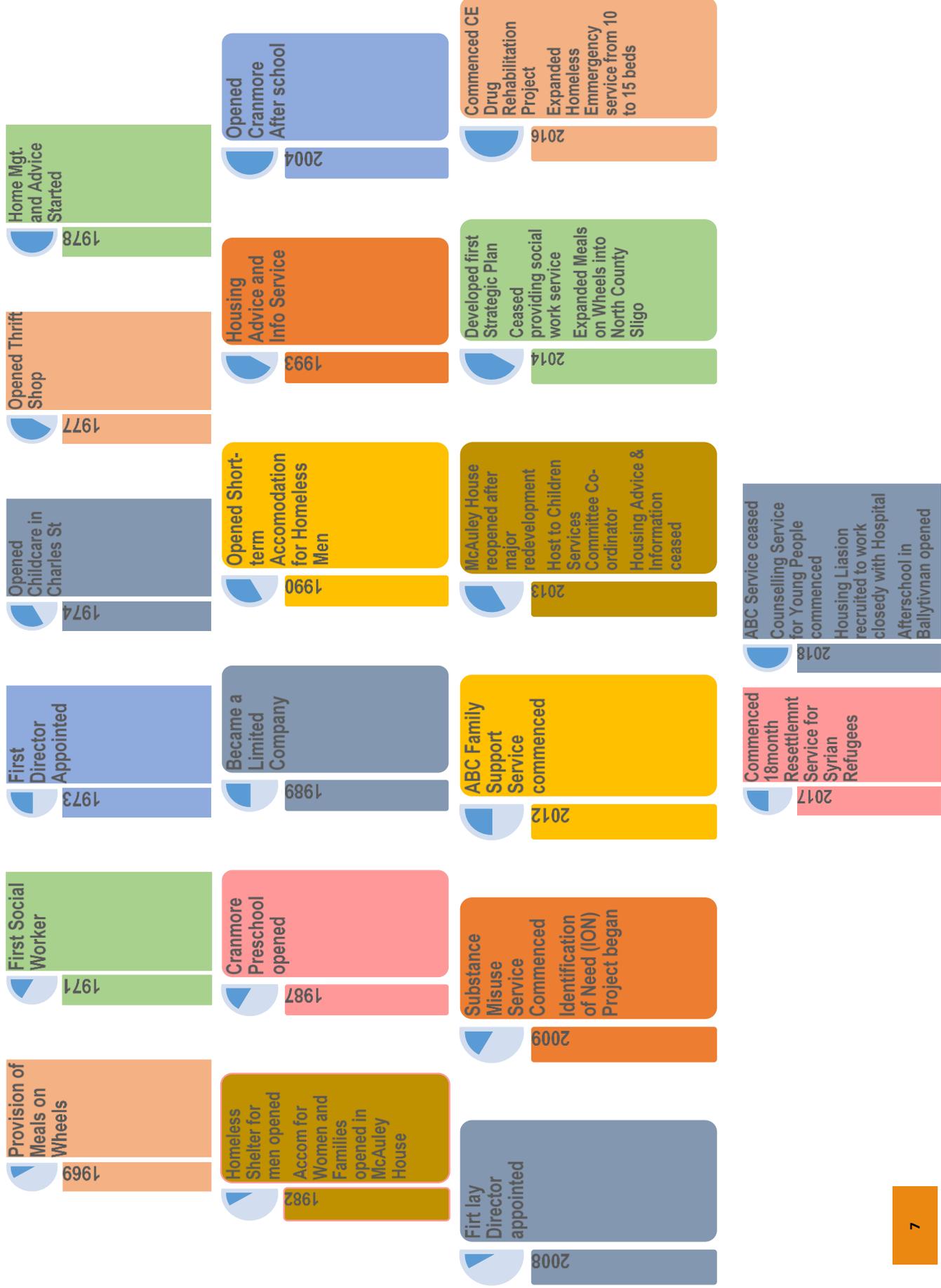
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christina McFadden", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Fifty years ago a small number of people came together who wanted to make life better for those most in need in Sligo. This led to the creation of Sligo Social Services. Fifty years later Sligo Social Services has been responsible for providing over one million hot meals through our Meals on Wheels service and more than 1,500 children have passed through our childcare services.



Sligo Social Services provided the first ever service to people who were homeless in Sligo and continue to do so today. We have supported hundreds of families throughout Sligo and helped to establish many services for families and young people which are today run by other organisations.

**Sligo Social Services: Timeline from 1969 to the Present**



## Children and Families

### Charles Street Childcare Service

Sligo Social Services offers a community-based childcare service for up 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 childcare service operates a targeted approach to the allocation of places.

The Early Years Inspectorate of Tusla has full responsibility of inspecting preschools and this in turn promotes a very high standard/quality of practice within the service. We are guided by Aistear (The National Curriculum framework for Early Childhood Education) and Siolta (The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education) in our practice re: learning and development of the child.

The service works with children from diverse backgrounds and places are allocated on the basis of need.

Where a need is identified, staff make referrals to outside agencies such as speech and language therapists, PHN's and Child Protection.



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As is often the case a small number of children leave the service due to changes in family circumstances e.g. relocated during the school year. A number of children left the service in the earlier part of the year however new children registered and by the summer holidays the service was full with 20 children, many of whom transition to primary school.

## **Cranmore Abbeyquarter Afterschool**

Sligo Social Services, in partnership with Cranmore/Abbeyquarter Community Centre, run an afterschool service for the area. The service can cater for up to 33 primary school children aged between 4 and 13 years and was full all year in 2018. At the service the children receive support and encouragement in doing their homework, within a safe and friendly environment. The children receive a meal and have a wide range of activities to take part in once their homework is complete. These activities are based around sport, music, arts and crafts and play outside. The afterschool also runs activities during out of school periods within the academic year and offers Summer Activities in July.

## **New Ballytivnan**

The New Ballytivnan Area of Sligo comprises 165 Social Housing Units, with a further 11 under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme. In addition there is a large number of Houses in the Rathbroughan Estate many of which are believed to be privately owned but rented to low income families. 16% of Households are made up of Non Irish persons and 11% are from the Travelling Community. There are high levels of welfare dependency, with unemployment running at 42%, and the rate of Lone Parent Households at 35%. High levels of early school leaving have also been noted.

The area is designated 'disadvantaged' and one particular street as 'very disadvantaged' on the Pobal Deprivation Scale. There is an absence of youth facilities, childcare facilities and sport & recreation facilities, all of which leads to increased levels of anti-social behaviour, petty crime and conflict between neighbours.

In 2017 Sligo Social Services began investigating this issue further with organisations such as:

- Sligo County Council
- Northside Community Centre
- St. Edwards School
- St. Josephs Parish Priest
- Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Resident representatives of various estates in New Ballytivnan

All reported significant lack of service provision in the community including

- Lack of childcare or Afterschool service
- Lack of youth facilities
- No community centre
- Lack of sport and recreation facilities
- Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and crime
- Concerns regarding community safety
- Lack of engagement or connectivity with town based services
- Lack of sense of community with little or no positive interaction between the various estates.

*We concluded that there was a need to develop services which were based in the local community and as such could be owned by the community. Our vision, to create opportunities for children, young people and their families by providing services, education and information, in order for them to grow and connect with their community.*

Initially Sligo Social Services created a strategic partnership with St. Edwards School with a view to delivering an Afterschool Service from within St, Edwards School. An application for approval for the service was submitted to Pobal through Sligo County Childcare Committee and approval for the service to proceed was received.

With the support of St. Edwards School staff and management, Sligo Social Services established an afterschool in May 2018, on the grounds of St Edwards Primary School. Funding received through the Sligo County Council Rapid Capital Grant Scheme allowed us to install the necessary security access equipment in the building. The service began in May with eight children and carried out summer activities during the school holidays. This allowed staff of the afterschool, the school and parents to become familiar with the service and deal with any practical issues which might arise.

The Afterschool Room benefited from considerable refurbishment as part of an overall refurbishment project between St, Edwards School and AbbVie Ballytivnan.

The service reopened in September 2018 with 16 children between the ages of 4 and 12years; this is the maximum number of children which can be catered to in the space available The afterschool provides assistance, support and encouragement with homework and then has a wide variety of activities for the children to take part in.

The service works from a holistic point of view, doing pieces of work with the young people on emotions, health and wellbeing. The play and activities are based on sports, music, arts and crafts, and outside play, weather permitting. The afterschool will be running a month of summer activities in July also.

## **ABC Child & Family Support Service**

The ABC Child and Family Support Service offered supports to children and families in their own homes. In December 2017 Tusla made the decision to no longer fund this service and it was wound up in the beginning of 2018

## **Counselling Service**

Sligo Social Services has for many years offered a counselling service to adults. In 2017 the organisation identified the need to counselling services to also be available to young people and with the agreement of Tusla the service was reconfigured to respond to this need in 2018. The service is supported by Foroige who provide a space for the counsellor to see young people. Following the recruitment of a counsellor the reconfigured service began seeing young people in March 2018 and also was made available to a small number of adults.

This is a very limited service with 12.5hrs per week available. At present the counselling service is delivered entirely through one: one counselling sessions.

In 2018 the service worked with 20 clients; 17 young people and 3 adults. The number of young people referred to the service had reached 50 after only five months. In the latter part of 2018 an application to Tusla regarding the possibility of extending the service was unsuccessful and the waiting list for the service had to be closed.

## Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

Since its commencement in September 2017 the Sligo Refugee Resettlement Support Project has resettled 20 Families, 103 Individuals, in County Sligo. An interagency approach has ensured that all individuals are provided with access to practical supports and universal services in order to assist their transition into their new home. Following this a focus is placed on opportunities for pro-social integration in their local area with the aim of empowering project participants to live independent and fulfilled lives in County Sligo.

The aims of the project could not be achieved without the commitment and dedication of a team of voluntary befrienders who over the course of the last 15 months have played a crucial role in empowering families to achieve their identified goals.



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais**  
Department of Justice  
and Equality



**SLIGO**  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE SHLIGIGH



The project also provides English Language Support to children and young people in both primary and secondary schools in order to support their educational development and success. The Resettlement Worker is continuously informed by teaching professionals of the children’s enthusiasm for learning and their dedication to positive engagement in all aspects of school life.

While the resettlement project was scheduled to end in December 2018, as some families did not arrive in Sligo until the latter part of the year the project was extended to March 2019.

As the Project draws to a close it is imperative to note the achievements of many of the Adult Syrian Refugees who have gained increased command of the English Language by attending classes provided by the Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education Board, have volunteered in their local community and have provided spectacular food for Sligo events such as the Cairde Festival.

## 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

3. Housing Liaison Worker

Maryville Emergency Accommodation

Maryville Hostel provides emergency accommodation to single adults, men and women, 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.

2018 saw the service catering for a similar number of individual service users as last year with 94 adults; 77 men and 17 women presented as homeless. In total there were 160 contacts with the service in 2018. Like elsewhere in the country Sligo experienced significant shortages in affordable housing in 2018.



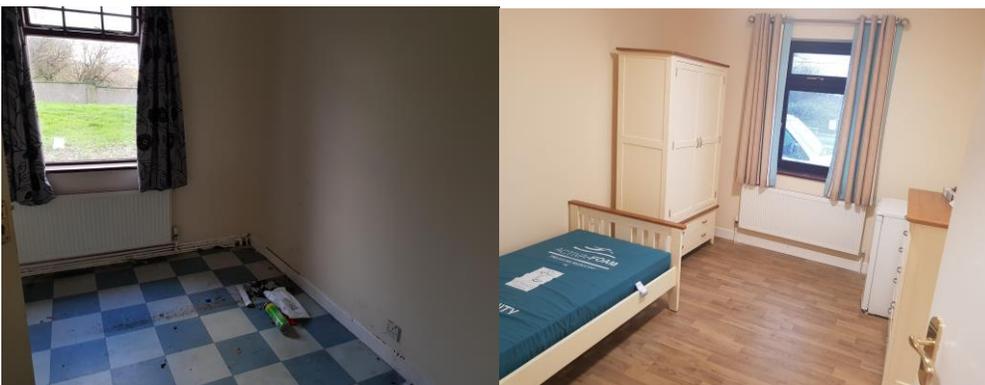
The availability of rented accommodation decreased while rents increased. The net result being greater difficulty for service users accessing move on accommodation. On many occasions the emergency hostel was full to capacity and all services had to work in partnership to ensure that resources were maximised to ensure emergency beds continued to be available.

With the expanded provision within Maryville in recent years, increasing from 10 to 15 beds and the increased length of time service users remain in residence, there has been additional strain on the facility. This is particularly challenging given that Maryville is an older building. One of the practical difficulties was the lack of adequate kitchen facilities for residents to cook and eat. With the support of ESB – Energy for Generations Fund we were able to completely refurbish the kitchen in Maryville in 2018. This provided a much improved kitchen with additional sitting room which was greatly appreciated by residents. The HSE also funding the replacement of the oil boilers in the service which will make the heating more energy efficient.

## 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 2018, 8 individual clients accessed Ballytivnan including 5 new residents.

Ballytivnan has been in use since the early 1980's and up to 2010 was the emergency homeless hostel for men. The building required extensive improvements and benefited from a complete refurbishment which began in November 2018. During this period residents were relocated to alternative accommodation. The refurbishment work was funded and carried out by the HSE and included new plumbing, heating, electrics, windows, insulation, flooring, kitchen and bathrooms. The building is greatly improved both in terms of its comfort and energy saving and been very positively received by residents.



Before and after: bedrooms in Ballytivnan Short-term accommodation

## 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.

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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 2018, a total of 6 families, comprising of 7 adults and eight children, accessed the service of which 2 were new in 2018. Securing move on housing has become extremely difficult with only two families rehoused in 2018.

## Substance Misuse Service

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery sets out the Government's strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in the Republic of Ireland up to 2025. Substance misuse affects people from all walks of life, from different backgrounds and communities. The 2014/15 drugs prevalence survey 6 found that one in four Irish adults (26.4%) has tried an illegal drug at least once in their lifetime. There is a well-established link between the experience of homelessness and addiction. The report produced by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs, M. Lawless and C. Corr (2005) of 355 individuals experiencing homelessness the prevalence of drug use within the homeless population was high, with lifetime (74%), recent (64%) and current (52%) usage rates substantially higher than those found in the general population (19%, 6% and 3% respectively); The majority (87%) first used drugs prior to homelessness.

For a number of years SSSC have been providing a Substance Misuse Service to people who are homeless in Sligo. As the supports to people in emergency have been enhanced in recent years with the support of the NWRDATF and the HSE, Sligo Social Services redirected their focus from clients accessing emergency accommodation to focus on clients with addiction issues in the community; addiction issues which if not addressed may lead to their becoming homeless.

The service aims to improve the individual's overall health and help clients to engage in and sustain rehabilitation, by supporting them in accessing mainstream services and specialist rehabilitation services and by focusing on contributory factors that impact on personal health status such as mental health, diet and nutrition, stress management, employment status and living conditions.

The service operates in Sligo town 4 days per week and provides a satellite clinic in Tubbercurry one day per week. The reconfigured service commenced in May and engaged with 19 service users, 11 male and 8 female in 2018.

## Housing Liaison Worker

In December 2018 Sligo Social Services began to oversee the delivery of an advice and assessment service for people who are in acute medical services and are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This role is funded by the HSE and the worker engages with service users to ensure the housing needs of people in acute medical services are identified and met.

The Housing Liaison Worker works closely with hospital services, homeless service providers, housing providers and support agencies ensuring that service users housing and support needs are assessed and met in line with the homelessness legislation and statutory guidance. The Housing Liaison worker works with patients who are resident in Sligo, Leitrim and other catchment areas who are hospital patients and are at risk of becoming homeless.

## Open Access

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 2018, 351 individuals availed of the Open Access Service, in total this resulted in 702 contacts with the service. This was a considerable increase on last year.

A very high percentage (92%) of the 702 contacts were seeking material aid, be that a food bag or a voucher or both, throughout the year including 185 individuals seeking support regarding material aid at Christmas.



The FEAD Program has given us the opportunity to distribute nonperishable goods such as cereals, tinned items, pasta, rice etc. Service users have voiced ongoing pressures with increases in rent and general living expenses as being the reason for them struggling financially. Managing finances and exploring budget plans is an area staff are continuously working on with service users in order for them to manage their finances better.

Some of the other issues service users also presented with included difficulties relating to their rights and entitlements, mental health, addiction and domestic abuse issues. Advice, information and signposting to other services was also provided by the Open Access team regarding these issues.



## New Ballytivnan Community Hub

As mentioned earlier, Sligo Social Services identified the need to provide services in the New Ballytivnan area of Sligo. In May 2018 we opened an Afterschool in St. Edwards School. In addition Sligo Social Services committed to supporting a 2 year Pilot Project to establish a Community Hub in the New Ballytivnan area.

The Aim of this Hub will be to provide a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and bring residents, and other service providers in the area together to improve the quality of life in their areas. A part time community worker was employed in June 2018 to commence building the relationships with organisations and residents with a view to progressing to having an onsite presence when a suitable premises becomes available. While some work with young people and the community has been possible the biggest challenge is finding a premises in the area to deliver services from. Unfortunately there is no community centre and no space available in other buildings in the area.

## Meals on Wheels Service

Over the past fifty years Sligo Social Services has delivered well over a million meals to people in Sligo. 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.

In 2018, 177 individual recipients availed of the service, this was a small reduction of ten recipients on last year. 104 recipients were female and 73 were male. The majority (90%) of clients were over 65yrs of age with a small number under 65yrs. Of the recipients over 65yrs 30 of these were over 90yrs, with one over 100 yrs. of age.



A total of 23,290 meals were provided in 2018, this is an increase of 302 on 2017. While this is positive over the past number of years the service has had a drastic reduction in the total number of meals being provided per year. In addition there has been a significant reduction in the clients whose meals are in receipt of a HSE subvention, These factors have contributed to the service becoming less self sufficient in recent years. See Below

	Average no. of service users per month	No. meals served	No of meals in receipt of HSE Subvention
2015	140	27,402	24,513
2016	136	24,243	21,701
2017	126	22,988	17,907
2018	125	23,290	15,638

## Befriending Service

Loneliness and isolation in older adults leads to numerous health issues and impacts physical and mental health. In response to this, Sligo Social Services have developed a Befriending Service. The service is for older people, aged 65 and over, who are experiencing social isolation. The service began in late 2017 training a group of eight volunteers with the support of ALONE.

Much work was done advertising the service out in the community and in 2018 the first group of volunteers visited eight service users. Volunteers visited older people in their own homes on a weekly basis providing company and conversation. Where appropriate volunteers encouraged service users to get involved in other activities. In the latter part of 2018 work began on the recruitment of a second group of volunteers who could work as befrienders.

# Community Employment

## Community Employment Project

Sligo Social Services is the sponsor of a large Community Employment (CE) Project which employs 34 participants. Community Employment is an employment programme funded by the Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection .

CE aims to enhance the employability of people who are long-term unemployed by providing work experience and training opportunities. CE participants employed by Sligo Social Services Community Employment Project are employed to work in areas such as administration, carers, hostel assistants, thrift shop assistants, meals on wheels assistants and cleaning and caretaking.

Sligo Social Service 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.

The 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 the 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 Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection programme designed to assist those recovering from addiction to return to work through Training and Work Experience.

In 2018 the number of places available on this strand of the CE Project increased from 10 to 15 participants. In addition the project has 2 CE Support Worker participants and a Supervisor. The project had 18 individuals on the scheme this year. We continued to provide support to other organisations including painting for the North West Hospice, The Avalon Centre, The Volunteer Centre and MS North West Therapy. Two participants also worked as tour guides in Dolly's Cottage in Strandhill during the summer.

All participants took part in training which included job specific training such as Manual Handling, Fire Safety, First Aid, Children First and Conflict Resolution Training. Participants also took part in training specific to their own development plan, this included Computer Literacy Classes, Cookery Classes, Horticulture Classes, Pesticide Training, Carpentry Classes, Safe Pass training, Home Repair and maintenance course.

As self care is an important aspect of the recovery process, the project also organised sessions in this area including a Health and Wellbeing Workshop, Yoga, Nutrition and Dietary workshop, Belief System – Believe in yourself Workshop and a Health and Exercise Programme.

Social isolation is a significant issue for many participants and as such the project also organised activities to encourage participants to build up new interests and reduce their isolation including, fishing trip, mountain walking, beach walking and meeting for a tea or coffee.

In 2018 both support workers participants completed modules in Social Care through the scheme process of getting their qualifications.

# Fundraising

Every year Sligo Social Services and their supporters fundraise in a variety of ways to help finance the various services provided. In 2018, we raised a total of €134,307. €119,175 of this income came from our Thrift Shops and Recycling.

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.

Schools, individuals, local business and their staff continued to give very generously donating food and toys at Christmas. This allowed us to assist many families and ensure a better Christmas for many children.

We have benefitted greatly from the support of the people of Sligo over the years, support which we continue to rely greatly on.

Our annual golf classic also took place during the year as did our second Up Cycle Fashion show which showcased the talent of secondary school students in Sligo.



In 2018 we benefited from a football tournament organised by Lotus Works, Sligo which raised €3,000.

Other fundraising events organised by Sligo Social Services included our annual Flag Days, Bag Packs and Christmas Carol Singing to name but a few. These events raised a total of €15,132. 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, and an envelope collection on the 8th December raising €5,472.

Donations received from various businesses, community groups and individuals towards our work. In 2018 Sligo Social Services received €32,607 in this way.



Elaine Kearins (l) from Lotus Works presents cheque to staff of Sligo Social Services Homeless Services.

## Volunteering

Sligo Social Services promotes active citizenship and invites volunteers to become involved in its activities.

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. The time dedicated by individuals ranges from new volunteers to those who 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 2018 volunteers worked in the following services:

- Meals on Wheels
- Open Access
- Maryville Emergency Accommodation
- Befriending Service
- Refugee Resettlement
- 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. Each year we take some time out to recognise and thank all our very committed volunteers for the contribution they make to Sligo Social Services.

## Strategic Planning

In 2018 Sligo Social Services launched our new Strategic Plan which aims to further develop our services both in terms of quantity, quality and sustainability, responding to the needs of people seeking our support and being accountable and transparent to the people who fund us. The effect we have in helping our service users make the changes they want in their lives is the ultimate measure of our work.

There remain many people in Sligo and adjoining areas who suffer from social disadvantage, people at the margins of our society who need help. The economic crisis which commenced in 2008, and the cutbacks in statutory services which resulted from it, have created a situation where the voluntary sector must play an enhanced and more active role in working with State agencies to meet the needs of these vulnerable people.

We also recognise that there are people in our society whose needs are not being met by the State, and we will continue to work to raise funds and thereby ensure that these people are not forgotten

- something which has always been at the heart of our mission since Sligo Social Services was originally founded. This is where we see the role of Sligo Social Services over the next four years and beyond. These improvements will be delivered in partnership with statutory agencies and other non-profit organisations, and through the support of our local communities.



Taking into account our key challenges for the next five years, we have identified a number of key objectives on which the organisation will focus.

## Objectives



Work towards these objectives began in 2018, with new services being developed in partnership with the HSE and also commitments made by the Board of Sligo Social Services to funding work where statutory funding is currently unavailable.

In 2018 Sligo Social Services put together a concise policy statement regarding the Data Protection obligations of the organisation. This includes obligations in dealing with personal data, in order to ensure that Sligo Social Services complies with the requirements of the relevant Irish legislation, namely the Irish Data Protection Act (1988), the Irish Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003), and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016).

Now more than ever the public expect to be able to find out information about Sligo Social Services on-line. In 2018 we developed our new user friendly website tailored to the information needs of the public. This website allows us to make changes on-site and keep information current. We have included our Facebook page on the website adding an extra window of communication. Our new brochures designed in 2018 and strategically placed in a number of locations allows us to relay accurate information at a glance. Our aim has always been to ensure that those in need of our services know where we are and how to contact us.

Sligo Social Service Council (CLG)

Income and expenditure account  
Financial year ended 31 December 2018

		<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>Note</b>	€	€
<b>State Grants and Services income</b>	<b>5</b>	1,271,429	1,175,565
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1,271,429	1,175,565
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administrative expenses		1,627,021	1,433,627
Community employment scheme		7,027	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		(1,634,048)	(1,433,627)
<b>Operating deficit</b>	<b>6</b>	(362,619)	(258,062)
Fundraising and Donations Income		175,386	340,888
Loss on financial assets at fair value through Income and expenditure		(172)	(1)
Other interest receivable and similar income		12,708	7,897
		<hr/>	<hr/>
(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year and Total comprehensive income		(174,697)	90,722
<b>Retained earnings at the start of the financial year</b>		161,058	70,336
<b>Retained earnings at the end of the financial year</b>		(13,639)	151,058

Sligo Social Service Council (CLG)

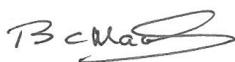
Balance sheet  
As at 31 December 2018

	Note	2018		2017	
		€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible assets	9	4,888			
Tangible assets	10	526,300		520,758	
			531,188		520,758
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	59,514		116,720	
Investments	12	679,636		673,161	
Cash at bank and in hand		570,051		683,663	
		1,309,201		1,473,544	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due Within one year</b>	13	(265,207)		(270,064)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			1,043,994		1,203,480
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			1,575,182		1,724,238
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	14	(48,439)		(22,796)	
<b>Net assets</b>			1,526,743		1,701,440
<b>Capital contributions</b>	16	940,382		940,382	
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Designated Reserves	18	600,000		600,000	
Income and expenditure account	18	(13,639)		161,058	
		1,526,743		1,701,440	

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

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Barry MacMahon



Director

Pat Forde



Director

Sligo Social Services wish to acknowledge all our funders including:

- Health Service Executive
- Office for the Minister for Children and Department of Justice and Equality, administered by Pobal
- 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
- EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund via Department of Justice and Equality, Irish Refugee Protection Programme
- Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
- Tusla Child and Family Agency
- ESB – Energy for Generations Fund
- Mercy Ministry Support Fund
- Sligo County Council Rapid Fund
- Friends of Sligo Social Services
- Diocese of Elphin
- Revenue Generated by Thrift Shops
- Income from Services
- Benefactors