



**Merchants Quay Ireland**  
Homeless & Drugs Services

# **MQI Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027**

# Our Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

To create an inclusive society that supports the integration and wellbeing of all. An inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

## Our Mission

To offer people dealing with homelessness and addiction, accessible, high-quality and effective services, which meet their complex needs in a non-judgemental and compassionate way.

## Our Values

### Collaboration

**We work together**

*Professionalism, Teamwork, Adaptability*

### Compassion

**We meet people where they are**

*Acceptance, Commitment, Support*

### Courage

**We speak up, challenge & advocate**

*Integrity, Respect, Diversity*



Our team welcoming a client at our open-access service

## An Ethos Rooted in Kindness

MQI was founded in the late 1980s as a response to growing need for support services among people experiencing homelessness and addiction in Dublin city centre. MQI's origin is in the Tea Rooms set up by the Franciscans in the 1960s and '70s, serving tea and sandwiches to homeless men. Today, a simple cup of tea can mean so much to someone who comes through our doors. It's a warm welcome, a conversation, a bit of hope for the future. It's not just a cup of tea, it's a cup of kindness and this a vital part of who we are.

# Forging Ahead: Learning from the Past, Shaping the Future

**Over the past 40 years, Ireland has faced the accelerating crises of homelessness and addiction. These crises are often interlinked, and this is the tragic, lived reality for thousands of people and their families across the country today.**

People are experiencing homelessness for longer, a trauma which has a devastating impact on mental health. Existing addictions are often being deepened, and addiction is taking hold where it did not exist previously. This is compounded by a lack of affordable housing as thousands of people are effectively being locked out of the certainty of a secure roof over their head.

Every day, the frontline teams here at MQI witness the harmful impact of drug use on individuals, families, and communities. Emerging drug trends have made the situation considerably more challenging. The availability of new drugs, along with changing behaviours such as poly-drug use, have increased the level of complexity. Addiction and drug-use are pervasive throughout Irish society, regardless of age, gender and socio-economic status, and our clients often experience significant stigma - a huge barrier to asking for help.

MQI is evolving and adapting to address this complex and shifting reality. Our recent response recognises the pervasiveness of drug-use and addiction throughout the country. We have expanded our services regionally, to the Northeast, Cavan and Monaghan, the East and Midlands. Access to these services is critical for people to move on and start to rebuild their lives.

Sector trends, combined with our experience meant we could identify gaps in service provision, particularly for women facing homelessness and addiction, who also endure additional stigma. In response, MQI launched Jane's Place, our first gender-specific service. This state-of-the-art, purpose-built facility is open-access and offers holistic support for women seeking help.

The last three years have involved the expansion of our services while dealing with increased demand in a challenging post-pandemic context. Like many organisations, we have experienced a significant turnover in staff, which has presented operational challenges for service delivery. To shape the future, we are rebuilding our resilient team and working to ensure they have the fortitude and expertise to deal with the challenges on the horizon.

Our ambition is to evolve and develop our existing services to ensure they are best in class. This year, we will open Ireland's first Medically Supervised Injecting Facility (MSIF) - a vital service that will save lives and help create safer communities for all. Successful delivery of the MSIF will open the door to an Ireland where similar health-led, harm-reduction services are available throughout the country.

The needs of our clients are at the forefront of all our work, and our vision for the future is consistently growing and enhancing the care we give, to create a more inclusive society and to empower our clients to rebuild their lives.

A cup of tea, a sincere welcome, and kindness, can open the door to a brighter future





# A message from our CEO and Chairman

**Our core mission is to promote health, reduce harm caused by addiction and homelessness, and support recovery. What started in the 1980s as a welcome and a cup of tea for everyone who crossed our threshold, is now expressed in our mission to offer people accessible, high-quality and effective homeless and addiction services in a non-judgmental and compassionate way.**

Through the experiences of our clients, many of whom have experienced trauma and loss, our team understand the harsh realities of addiction, homelessness and poor mental health. Our vision is for better outcomes through improved health and wellbeing, lasting recovery, and hopeful and promising futures for our clients.

This Strategic Plan sets out MQI's priorities for the next three years – and our vision is for all our staff, and clients to be a part of making this a reality. Our plan focuses on four strategic areas; Client Services, Innovation, People & Culture and Governance and Reputation, setting out the key actions and outcomes we want to see by 2027. The backbone of our strategy is an unwavering commitment to our clients and ensuring their voices and lived experience are at the heart of everything we do. Together, we will be a unified voice to positively shape the future of the sector, to benefit our clients, and to advocate on their behalf for a society that sees both homelessness and addiction from an informed and compassionate perspective.

*This strategy prioritises providing and improving essential services to meet growing demand and ensuring these services are in-line with the changing needs of our clients.*

Eddie Mullins, MQI CEO and  
Ray Langton, MQI Board Chairman



CEO Eddie Mullins and Chairman Ray Langton

This strategy prioritises providing and improving essential services to meet growing demand and ensuring these services are in-line with the changing needs of our clients. In the period of this strategy, we will see the successful delivery of the MSIF, Jane's Place will be established as a beacon of hope and healing for women with complex needs, and our role in addiction service provision regionally will be solidified.

Continued investment in our people is crucial to attract and retain a talented and experienced team with the resilience and expertise to deliver high-quality services. We will work to maintain our good governance record and continue to build on our reputation as a highly trusted organisation within the sector.

Our shared ambition and vision for MQI is to be the foremost client-focused organisation providing excellent and high-quality homeless and addiction services, with an empowered team, and best-in-class governance. In 2027, we will be a trusted voice of authority in the addiction and homeless sector and at the forefront of policy development.



# Tanya's story

**Tanya\* shares her experience of addiction and the support she received from MQI as a client of St. Francis Farm's detox, rehab and then MQI's Aftercare Service.**

“ Just before my Confirmation, when I was 12, I was raped. After that, I didn't feel like a child anymore. I started hanging around with an older group and that's when I started drinking alcohol and taking tablets. Drugs were an escape; they helped to numb the pain of what happened.

I got pregnant when I was 15. I felt pressure to have an abortion, and the experience traumatised me even further. My niece was born on the day I had the procedure. I was coming home to a new baby in the house when I didn't even want the abortion in the first place. I couldn't stay. I left and moved out with my boyfriend as soon as I could.

I had my son when I was nearly 19. I wanted him so much. My family really helped me with him by giving him things I couldn't afford.

When I was 29, my best friend Orla, was nearly a year into recovery when she relapsed and died. That's when I started taking heroin. I took it, and I felt at peace, and happy and whole.

Very quickly it wasn't so nice anymore. I was seriously struggling. My mental health was gone, and I wanted to kill myself. I remember waking up sick and desperate every morning.

My son saw it all. One time, I found him crying. I said, 'What's wrong with you son?', he said, 'What if I go up to school and I come back and you're dead?'

That's when I realised, I can't do this anymore. So I asked for help that day. Because my son was in Transition Year, I was less afraid they might take him from me. I went to my doctor and he put me in touch with Merchants Quay.

St Francis Farm saved my life, literally. I don't even have words for how special that place is. It's magical... the care, the love, the wisdom, everything they put into you down in that farm... you couldn't pay for it. They really give people a second chance in life.

Recovery is overwhelming. Being sober is hard, I wanted to hide away at the start. It's so much. I was trying to learn how to deal with everyday life. It's overwhelming.

After St. Francis Farm detox and rehab, I went to MQI's Aftercare programme. Having the support of the staff, people who understand what it's like to be in early recovery, it's incredible. There's no judgement, and I could be myself. It's exactly what I needed, that structure around me. It's another stepping stone on my recovery journey.

I want to give my family a chance. I want to be able to live outside the world of addiction. I want to give this to my son as well because he deserves it. He is my driving force. I am going to do this and I'm going to stay at it for both of us. I'm going to do it and give him the best mam he deserves.

Stories like Tanya's are harrowing. For 17 years Tanya needed help, wanted help but was afraid to ask for help. Jane's Place will be a life-line for women like Tanya.

**\*Name has been changed to protect privacy**



# Strategy Overview

These are the four strategic areas of our plan.

## Client Services

Deliver effective, trauma-informed supports that empower the people who use our services

### Goals

- Offer services that are of the highest standard and relevant for our clients
- Drive positive change in our communities
- Put the voice of service users at the heart of our decision-making
- Use data and insights to achieve better outcomes for our clients

### Outcome

Our services are adaptive and able to respond to changing needs of our clients. There are quality standards in place to ensure ongoing and continued improvement of our services. Our client's voice is at the heart of our work.

## Innovation

Continually innovate to the benefit of people using our services, influence public policy and develop our expertise in addiction and homelessness.

### Goals

- Establish MQI as a leader and expert in addiction and homelessness
- Develop innovative approaches to tackling issues affecting our clients

### Outcome

Public understanding of homelessness and addiction has significantly improved, resulting in less stigma experienced by people who come to us for help. MQI is a strong, unified voice and thought-leader who is actively shaping the future of drug addiction services in Ireland and internationally, with impactful and authoritative research that influences public policy.

## People & Culture

Empower and support our people so we can focus on helping our clients.

### Goals

- Invest in our people
- Develop our culture of inclusion, collaboration and interconnection
- Ensure our organisation is fit for purpose
- Support staff through learning and development

### Outcome

Our values are at the centre of how we all work, behave and collaborate. We are an employer of choice - our staff are committed to MQI and are supported and nurtured in their roles. Our staff understand how they contribute to MQI's success and deliver best-in-class services for our clients.

## Governance & Reputation

We will maintain our good governance record to support our core mission.

### Goals

- Maintain our best-in-class governance
- Secure sustainable funding to support our work

### Outcome

Our already strong reputation has been strengthened and we are seen by the public and our clients as a transparent, well-managed and trustworthy organisation. Sustainable funding has been secured to allow us to plan for future challenges and opportunities.

# Client Services

Our strategic focus is to deliver effective, trauma-informed supports that empower the people who use our services.

## Goal 1

**We will offer services that are of the highest standard and relevant for our clients today and tomorrow**

### Key actions

1. Adopt a recognised quality standard framework across all services
2. Carry out internal and external service reviews to ensure continuous service improvement
3. Carry out research to identify changing trends and develop effective service responses
4. Open and evaluate the pilot of Ireland's first Medically Supervised Injection Facility

## Goal 2

**We will put the voice of clients at the heart of our decision-making**

### Key actions

1. Engage with clients individually and collectively to ensure their active participation in service development and delivery
2. Develop partnerships with peer representative groups
3. Develop mechanisms for client engagement to support the client's voice, choice and empowerment

*The service made a big difference to me. It was somewhere to sit down, somewhere to have a cup of tea and a chat. I would have been lost without it.*

*Darragh, MQI Client*



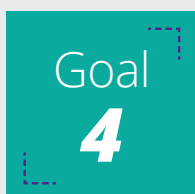




## We will drive positive change in our communities

### Key actions

1. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to promote education in the areas of prevention and stigma
2. Secure representation and have an active voice in relevant local, regional and national forums
3. Work with community stakeholders to enhance the local streetscape outside our public-facing services
4. Collaborate with partner agencies to develop multi-agency responses to complex needs



## We will use data to achieve better outcomes for our clients

### Key actions

1. Review and improve our systems to demonstrate impact and inform quality services
2. Develop common recording and reporting templates at all levels of operations
3. Use data to produce evidence-informed MQI position papers and responsible lobbying in key areas

## Outcome

In line with our vision, mission and values, MQI is safeguarding the low-threshold nature of our services, ensuring they are accessible for people who need them most.

MQI is using a data-led approach to rapidly respond to evolving needs of our service users. The voice of our clients is core to our decision making. People with lived experience of addiction and homelessness have greater opportunities to work and volunteer with MQI.

By 2027, we are a prominent voice advocating for people who use our services and raising awareness about the barriers facing people in addiction and homelessness, including stigma around drug use and the impact on the lives of our clients.

# Innovation

Our strategic focus is to continually innovate to positively influence public policy, and the public, to benefit people using our services.

## Goal 5

### We will establish MQI as a leader and expert in addiction and homelessness

#### Key actions

1. Grow our Public Affairs and Advocacy capacity
2. Invest in MQI-led research and increase our contribution to external research
3. Deliver advocacy campaigns to drive policy change
4. Build academic partnerships to inform policy development
5. Deliver an MQI symposium
6. We will grow our national and international stakeholder relations to support knowledge transfer
7. Build our brand profile through improved media engagement and digital presence

## Goal 6

### We will develop innovative approaches to tackling issues affecting our clients

#### Key actions

1. Leverage service data, client insights and research findings to identify service gaps and emerging trends
2. Pilot new interventions in drug addiction treatment and prevention and homeless services
3. Explore new technologies to improve service delivery
4. Deliver a comprehensive, school-based drug prevention programme
5. Explore the creation of an MQI social enterprise to support our service users
6. Enhance our culture of innovation and collaboration within MQI

## Outcome

We are driving policy change to positively impact our clients in transforming their lives. Our impactful research is actively influencing public policy. Our thought leadership influences the development of the national drug strategy, and we are shaping the future of drug and addiction services in Ireland and internationally. Relationships have been established both nationally and at EU level with addiction and homeless organisations to support knowledge sharing.

We have integrated communications and increased brand awareness, creating engaging, effective messaging for greater public understanding of addiction and homelessness, to reduce stigma.



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*MQI loved me back to health. That's the best way I can describe it. I never knew people would invest in me again. I didn't feel worthy of investment. They showed me love that I just didn't think was out there in the world anymore.*

*Fintan, MQI Client*

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# People & Culture

Our strategic focus is empowering and supporting our people, to enable us to focus on helping our clients, and delivering our strategy.

## Goal 7

### We will invest in our people

#### Key actions

1. Develop a compelling employee value proposition to help attract and retain the best people
2. Introduce more opportunities for staff feedback to aid continuous improvement
3. Embrace Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Team at Riverbank marking International Overdose Awareness Day



Ireland has one of the worst records in Europe for overdose related deaths. 354 people died from overdose-related deaths in 2021 according to the Health Research Board. This is a stark reminder that more lives are being lost to overdose than to deaths on our roads. While the opening of the MSIF this year will play a vital part in saving lives, it is also essential that people have access to detox and rehabilitation services when they need them.

## Goal 8

### We will develop our culture of inclusion, collaboration and interconnection

#### Key actions

1. Deliver initiatives to enhance connection across MQI
2. Implement an employee engagement strategy and plan
3. Create an environment that prioritises the wellbeing of everyone

## Goal 9

### We will ensure our organisation is fit for purpose

#### Key actions

1. Enhance our systems, structures, processes and procedures
2. Embed continuous improvement into everything we do
3. Maintain a learning and growth mindset
4. Grow our strategic capability

## Goal 10

### We will support all our people through ongoing learning and development

#### Key actions

1. Develop programmes to address skills gaps and enhance expertise
2. Support people in their career development
3. Enhance how we welcome and integrate people into MQI
4. Create a robust succession plan
5. Support our people to perform to the best of their abilities

## Outcome

MQI is regarded as an Employer of Choice, with a diverse workforce and improved staff retention. Our people feel supported and appreciated, are connected to MQI's mission and values, and understand how they contribute to our collective success.

This is reflected in our employee engagement scores – demonstrating that our people trust and are committed to MQI.

Our people leaders are supported to manage, motivate and nurture their teams. Clear career pathways and progression plans are in place for critical roles and we deliver learning programmes that address skills and capability gaps.

# Governance & Reputation

Our strategic focus is ensuring we are renowned for our good governance record, and have a trusted reputation.

## Goal 11

### We will maintain our best-in-class governance

#### Key actions

1. Continue to strengthen our governance structures and internal audit capability
2. Regularly test our business continuity
3. Establish effective ESG reporting
4. Conduct an independent board evaluation
5. Promote our governance best practices
6. Continue to deliver strong clinical governance

## Goal 12

### We will secure sustainable funding to support our work

#### Key actions

1. Deepen our relationships with state agencies, funders and donors
2. Seek new partnerships to support our future growth
3. Diversify our voluntary income streams
4. Build a pipeline of funding proposals
5. Strive to achieve the required levels of state funding for each service
6. Improve impact reporting for funders and donors

“

*I am looking forward to the rest of my life and I want to thank everyone in MQI, and everyone who supports MQI, for what they've done for me.*

*Thomas, MQI Client*

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## Outcome

We have established excellent relationships with new and existing state funders and donors to support our strategic initiatives. Strong impact reporting is further strengthening our relationships with stakeholders by demonstrating the importance of our work.

We have a sustainable financial model that reflects the needs of the organisation. We are balancing state and voluntary income and building new partnerships for future growth.

Our reputation as a transparent, well-managed organisation with good governance is strengthened. We continue to improve our risk management processes and capabilities. This helps ensure we retain and build donor and public trust.



“

*Merchants Quay saved my life; they gave me the keys to unlock my future. I've processed a lot of traumas. I've learnt about my behaviours and how to ground myself. The services are brilliant, they've been fantastic to me. Now, I have my goal, I have my five-year plan.*

*Graham, MQI Client*

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# MQI Services Nationwide

MQI operates across multiple locations throughout the Republic of Ireland.

## Dublin Based Services

**Head Office,**  
Merchants Court,  
24 Merchants Quay,  
Dublin 8

**Riverbank Open Access Service,**  
13/14 Merchants Quay,  
Dublin 8

**Jane's Place Women's Service,**  
28 Denzille Lane,  
Dublin 2

**Residential Rehab,**  
High Park, Drumcondra,  
Dublin 9

**Aftercare & Drug-Free Day Programme,**  
St. John Bosco Youth Centre,  
Davitt Road, Dublin 12

## Regional Services

**Residential Detox & Rehabilitation Centre,**  
St. Francis Farm,  
Tullow, Co. Carlow

**Aftercare Housing,**  
Leixlip,  
Co. Kildare

**Northeast Family Support Service,**  
Dundalk Co. Louth  
(Louth and Meath services)

**Community Recovery & Integration Supports (CRIS) Project,**  
Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow

**Open Door,**  
Payne's Lane, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath

**Midlands Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service,**  
The Tanyard, Tullamore,  
Co Offaly (Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath)

**CAMDAS Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services,**  
Farnham Road, Drumnahanagh,  
Co. Cavan

**Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services,**  
Mullaghmatt, Co. Monaghan

## Irish Prisons Addiction Support Services:

**Mountjoy Prison,**  
Dublin 7

**Dóchas Prison Centre,**  
Dublin 7

**Cloverhill Remand Prison,**  
Dublin 22

**Wheatfield Prison,**  
Dublin 22

**Cork Prison,**  
Co. Cork

**Limerick Prison,**  
Co. Limerick

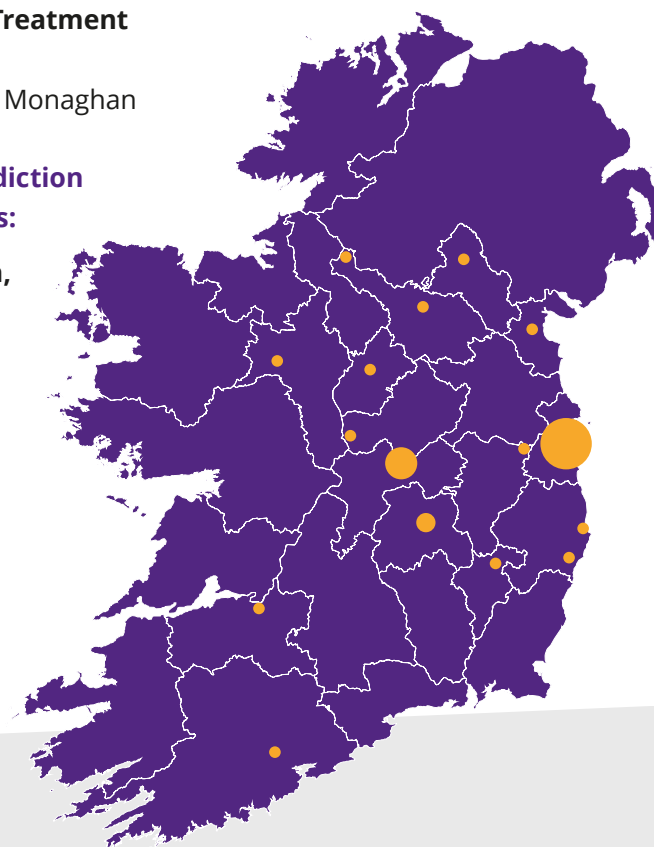
**Portlaoise Prison,**  
Co. Laois

**Midlands Prison,**  
Co. Laois

**Castlerea Prison,**  
Co. Roscommon

**Shelton Abbey,**  
Co. Wicklow

**Loughan House,**  
Cavan



## Get in touch



24 Merchants Court,  
Merchants Quay, Dublin 8



**Services:** 01 524 0160  
**Donations:** 01 524 0139



[www.mqi.ie](http://www.mqi.ie)



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