

Merchants Quay Ireland Annual Review 2024



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

mqi.ie

Merchants Quay Ireland CLG ("MQI") is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having share capital. MQI is registered for the charitable purpose of promoting health and to provide the stepping-stones for every point of a man or woman's journey out of homelessness and addiction, and toward a drug free life.

MQI provides services ranging from crisis intervention and health promotion services to day-support programmes, residential detox and rehabilitation, a Medically Supervised Injection Facility (MSIF), and prison-based counselling.

MQI is governed by its Constitution (comprising the Memorandum and Articles of Association) updated 26th June 2019. The Company is a public benefit entity, is registered with the Charities Regulator, and is granted charitable tax exemption.

Merchants Quay Ireland CLG is one of three companies operating under the banner name of Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) carrying out activities for social justice for homeless persons and drug users on a nationwide basis. The other companies are: -

- St. Francis Housing Association CLG (SFHA)
- Merchants Quay Project CE Scheme CLG (MQPCE)



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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Merchants Quay Ireland CLG

CRO Number: 176421

Revenue CHY Number: 10311

CRA Number: 20026240

St Francis Housing Association CLG

CRO Number: 449783

Revenue CHY Number: 18159

CRA Number: 20069117

Merchants Quay Project CE Scheme CLG

CRO Number: 533762

Revenue CHY Number: 21187

CRA Number: 20084325

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I got food, I got everything, and I can't read or write – they read me letters and they get the post here for me. They're just better than a family they are to me. Every one of them.

Ronan, MQI Client

”



At MQI we respect everyone who turns to us for help – and many are just beginning their fresh start in life. So while client stories are genuine and true, names are changed and stock photographs of models are used for illustrative purposes and to protect client privacy. Thank you for your understanding.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

We want to create an inclusive society that supports the integration and well-being 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

Compassion
We meet people where they are

Courage
We speak up, challenge & advocate

An ethos rooted in kindness

MQI was founded in the late 1980s as a response to the 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 1970s, 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.

“

I have such a void in me some days, I can't describe how lonely it feels. To come into MQI, to be warm, to be among people who are kind, it keeps me going. There are a lot of good people in MQI.

Edward, MQI client

”



Our Work at a Glance

141,730

overall engagements
with clients



14,122

primary healthcare
interventions



420

people supported by
MQI CRIS in the East



14,086

total clients
supported



81,878

meals for people who
are homeless and
hungry



4,027

crisis contact team
interventions



327

families supported
nationwide



155

people admitted to
detox and rehab



2,890

interventions by MQI
CAMDAS



887

over 55 year olds
supported



1,224

interventions by MQI
North East



2,362

interventions by our
mental health team



1,132

interventions by MQI
Jane's Place



15,364

in-prison counselling
interventions



606

interventions by MQI DATS
in the Midlands



275

interventions for young
people between 18-24
years of age



22,896

interventions by our harm
reduction team



4,027

showers in Riverbank



Chairperson and CEO Welcome

In a year marked by rising needs and increasing complexity, Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) served as a vital source of care, connection, and hope for individuals facing homelessness, addiction, and mental health challenges. We are proud to present MQI's Annual Report for 2024, which reflects a year characterised by resilience, innovation, and meaningful progress.

Addiction continues to be one of Ireland's most pressing public health crises. In 2024, national data indicated a significant rise in drug-related harm, particularly involving cocaine and synthetic opioids. Treatment waiting lists remained long, and drug-related deaths continued to rank among the highest in Europe. Against this backdrop, MQI's role as a low-threshold, health-led service provider has never been more essential.

Throughout the year, MQI recorded over 141,000 client engagements, a 3% increase from 2023. This growth not only reflects rising demand but also demonstrates the enduring relevance of our services. Each of these interactions represents a person met with empathy, supported in crisis, and offered a pathway toward recovery and stability.

A landmark achievement in 2024 was the opening of Ireland's first Medically Supervised Injection Facility (MSIF) at MQI's Riverbank Centre. This milestone was made possible through close collaboration with the Department of Health, the HSE, and other key stakeholders. It marks

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We are proud to present MQI's Annual Report for 2024, which reflects a year characterised by resilience, innovation, and meaningful progress.

”



a significant advancement in compassionate, evidence-based responses to drug use, providing a safe, hygienic space for people who inject drugs and serving as a critical gateway to health and recovery supports.

We welcomed the continued emphasis on health-led responses in the National Drugs Strategy and the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use, both of which align with the core principles guiding our work. In 2024, we also deepened our commitment to innovation and research across our services, ensuring our work remains data-informed, responsive, and impactful.

Additionally, we proudly expanded Jane's Place, our trauma-informed, gender-specific service designed with and for women. Now operating from a newly refurbished centre in Dublin 2, it offers holistic care in a safe and welcoming environment. This achievement is a testament to the generosity of our supporters and to the strength and vision of the women who contributed to its development.

None of this progress would be possible without the collective effort of a dedicated and compassionate community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

- Our incredible staff for their skill, resilience, and empathy
- Our volunteers for their generous time and care
- Our Board of Directors for their principled leadership and governance
- Our partners and funders including the Department of Health, HSE, Irish Prison Service, DRHE, and local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces; for their ongoing collaboration
- Our donors and supporters, whose belief in our mission fuels our work

“

At MQI, we base our work on trust, guided by integrity and driven by compassion. We are dedicated to good governance, transparency, and accountability as we progress together in our shared mission.

”

Above all, we thank our clients, those who walk through our doors each day in search of support, dignity, and connection. Your courage is why we do what we do. Your strength inspires our commitment to delivering services rooted in compassion, evidence, and respect.

As we conclude our 2021–2024 Strategic Plan, we reflect with gratitude on a transformative period of growth, challenge, and achievement. Looking ahead, our new Strategic Plan (2025–2027) sets out an ambitious vision: to expand client-focused services, champion innovation, invest in our people, and advocate for health-led responses to addiction and homelessness. It is built around four strategic priorities: Client Services, People and Culture, Innovation, Governance and Reputation. Each is designed to strengthen our organisation and deepen our impact over the next three years.

At MQI, we base our work on trust, guided by integrity and driven by compassion. We are dedicated to good governance, transparency, and accountability as we progress together in our shared mission. Our focus is on upholding dignity, fostering human connections, and supporting those on the path to lasting recovery.

Ray Langton
Chairperson

Eddie Mullins
Chief Executive Officer

Damien's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Damien shares his experience of becoming homeless for the first time in his 60's and the support he received from MQI at a time when he needed it most.

“ I grew up in a small seaside town, just outside Dublin. My father had a bad problem with drink, and he used to give my mother a very hard time. There was constant shouting, and he would beat up my mother regularly. I don't know how many times I tried to protect her and got a whack myself. I was only 15 when this was happening.

I was always worrying and wondering what was going to annoy my father. I felt we were always walking on eggshells in that house. He was also unfaithful to my mother. I remember sitting with her for hours as she cried about it. It was just all terrible. It was hell. So that's why I ran off to America in my early twenties.

I didn't go to America to find fame and fortune; I just knew I couldn't survive at home. My father never sent so much as a kind word in my direction. He constantly knocked me; told me I was useless. I remember thinking if I didn't get out of there, I'd start to believe him.

In the States, I saw many lonely Irish lads, just sitting at bars drinking on their own, full of anger and bitterness. That motivated me to work hard, I didn't want that for myself.

I worked all over the place, and I loved America. Sure, I was there more than 25 years. When Americans see you're willing to work hard, they respect you. I was always seen as a good worker; I was proud of that. America was good to me; I loved it there and I found love there. I was in an amazing relationship for 12 years. It was the first loving relationship I'd ever had.

When I first came home from America, I stayed with my parents for a few months while I looked for my own place. My mother got sick, and so I stayed on to help until she passed away. Then my father got sick, and I stayed on for that. I was a carer for them both for over 3 years.

“ *It's very hard for people over 40 to rent a place. So, at 60, out looking for a place, it's impossible.*

Damien, MQI Client



My father got so sick he needed a professional carer in the house. It was the right decision of course. But suddenly, he didn't want me anymore and I felt the same as I did when I was a child. I came home thinking that things would change but they didn't. He was the same and he looked at me the same way. No matter what I did, I was useless. No matter what age you are; you want your parents' approval. You want to believe they'll be there for you. Or at least not put you down. He didn't need me anymore – so I was out on the street.

When I came home first, I was converting everything back to dollars. I figured out quickly that Ireland is a very expensive place to live. I had nowhere to go, and rent was just out of my grasp.

Becoming homeless in your 60's is very hard. I had some savings, so I stayed in a cheap hotel at first, but I could see my money running out very fast. So, I decided I'd just go there once a week to get proper sleep. The rest of the week I was outside sleeping on the streets. I was still searching for a place to rent that I could afford. People were asking for €600 to share a room. It's all wrong. And I didn't have it. It's very hard for people over 40 to rent a place. So, at 60, out looking for a place, it's impossible. I can only guess they think I might die soon or something. Everything is stacked against you.

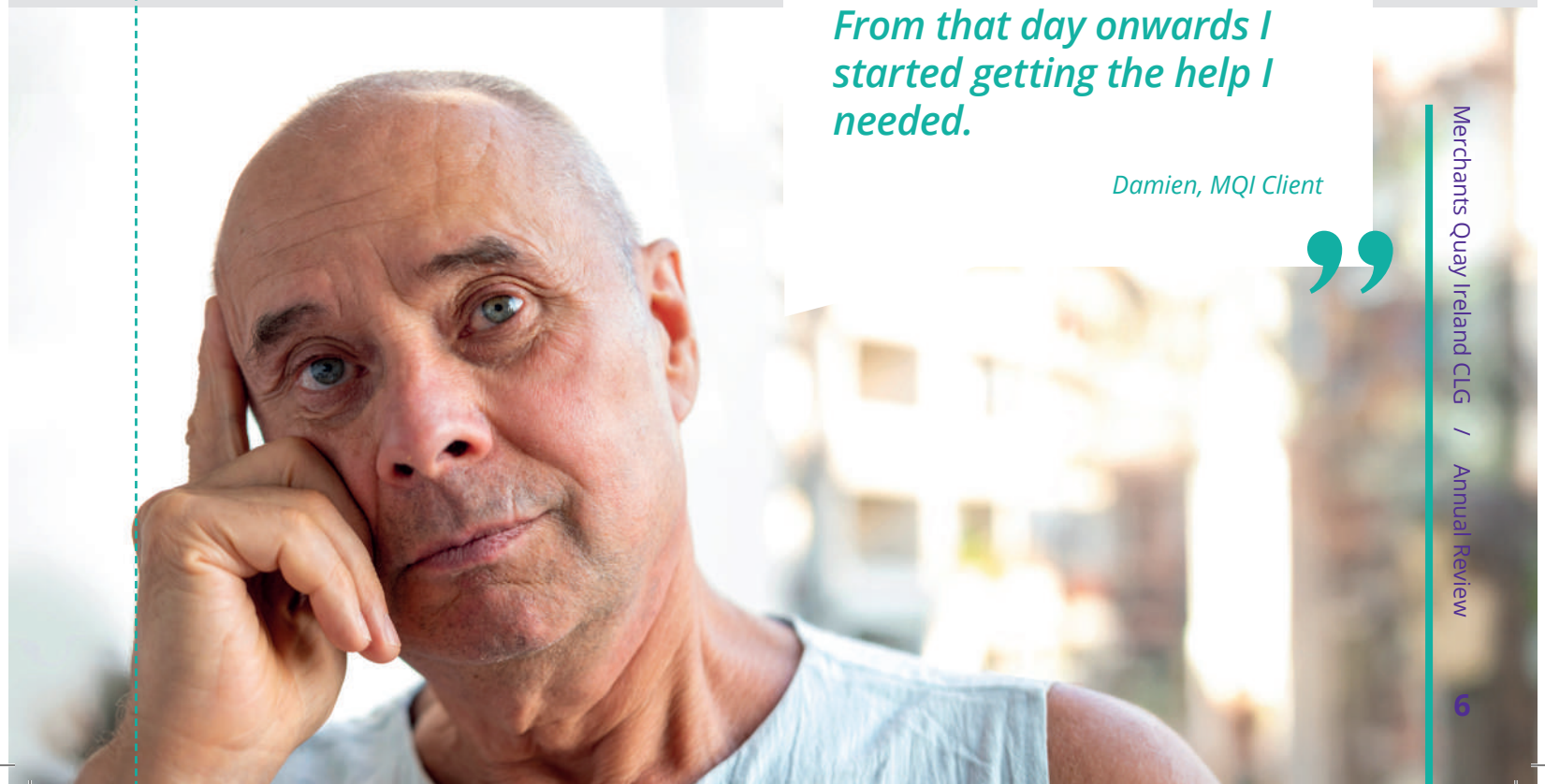
It's a long day when you're homeless, you end up walking around or reading a lot. I play chess on my phone sometimes. I figured out where all the food lines were, and I started to know what places I could go to for help. It was in a food line where someone suggested I try Merchants Quay, that's how I ended up in Riverbank. I didn't know what I was doing except that maybe someone there might help me. I just said who I was and what was happening with me. That was the first time I spoke to Martin; a Crisis Support Project Worker in Riverbank.

I found myself in a hard situation and with Martin's help, I'm working my way out of it. I'm very grateful to have somewhere to lay my head and a small bit of money to keep me going. It's all thanks to Merchants Quay and the people who support them.

I hope that I won't always have to be just surviving. I don't know how much time I've left. It would be nice to have a place of my own someday, but I try to take one day at a time."

"I feel so lucky to have gone to MQI and met Martin, because he's a good man and really good at his job. From that day onwards I started getting the help I needed."

Damien, MQI Client



Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

The Strategic Plan sets out our priorities for the next three years. Our vision is for our staff, and clients to be central contributors to achieving our goals. Our plan focuses on four strategic areas; Client Services, Innovation, People & Culture and Governance & Reputation. 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.

The 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.



Homeless Services

“

Riverbank was the only place in my life where anybody knew my name. When you're homeless, Riverbank is a lifeline. And when you are sick, the team at Riverbank can literally save your life. That's what happened to me...

Peter, MQI Client

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Riverbank – Dublin Services

For people experiencing homelessness, our drop-in services at Riverbank Centre continue to meet their immediate physiological needs of a safe space. We also provide hot food, showers, and opportunities for social interaction. Provision of these basic services enables our expert team to build relationships with clients and provide information, and advocacy supports in relation to issues such as housing advice, tenancy sustainment, assistance with social welfare benefits, financial budgeting, and access to health services.

Meals

In 2024 a total of 81,878 meals were provided in our Riverbank Centre in Dublin. This is an increase of 23% on the number of meals provided in 2023. The meal service is often a first point of contact for many people experiencing homelessness and can create opportunities for clients to engage with staff and receive support addressing their homelessness and other related health and welfare issues.

Showers

In 2024 1,189 unique clients availed of hot showers in Riverbank. This equated to 4,027 showers in total. Fresh clothing and a hot meal was offered after every shower. This was an increase of 8% despite the shower block being out of commission for quarter four of 2024, due to construction work to establish the Medically Supervised Injecting Facility (MSIF).

81,878

meals
provided
to Riverbank clients



4,027

hot showers
provided
in Riverbank



Sunday Dinner Service

The MQI Sunday service is fully funded by donations from the public. The service operates on Sundays up to 2pm, offering breakfast and dinner to clients. The service is one of the few spaces open on Sunday in Dublin City where clients can access a free hot dinner. The service also provides showers and a change of clothes to clients as well as support around access to emergency accommodation. In 2024, our Sunday service provided 10,530 meals to 2,345 unique clients, an increase of 19% from the previous year.

Assertive In-Reach Service

The Assertive In-Reach worker focused on young people who become homeless after leaving care. This role provides support to empower clients to access different services to meet their needs. They supported 73 unique clients and provided 269 interventions. This enabled clients to access public services, navigate housing applications, and apply for work.

The MQI Sunday service provides clients with a hot, nourishing meal and is fully funded by donations from the public.



Crisis Contact Team

When people in crisis present to our Riverbank Centre, they can access practical support through our expert Crisis Contact Team. The team provide information, advice, and advocacy to clients around housing supports including registration on the PASS system, access to the Local Authority Housing Waiting List and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) applications. The team support clients in areas such as social welfare payments, identification documents, and PPS numbers, language barriers and access to medical and harm reduction services and signposting and referral service for clients to specialist support agencies. In 2024 the team supported 1,679 unique clients. In total 4,027 interventions were provided for these clients.

Community Engagement Team

Central to our partnership work in the Dublin 8 area is the MQI Community Engagement Team. The team carry out high visibility patrols in the neighbourhood around Riverbank to strengthen relationships with the local community and stakeholders. The team collect discarded drug paraphernalia and proactively engage with people who use drugs or are rough sleeping in the local area supporting them to access services, including the newly opened MSIF.

The team also respond to calls and queries from the public and carry out regular check-ins with local businesses. They carried out 751 patrols in the year, engaged with 504 residents and local businesses while collecting 2,289 needles and 748 crack pipes.

Our drop-in services at Riverbank meet immediate needs like meals, warmth, and daily hygiene.

Primary Healthcare Services



Orla Condren, Deputy Head of Clinical Services at MSIF.

Medically Supervised Injection Facility (MSIF)

MQI developed and opened the first MSIF in Ireland, in our Riverbank Centre delivering a key element in Ireland's National Drugs policy. The year was dominated with the construction, recruitment and training of staff, and set up of the clinical service. This was the culmination of an incredible effort over many years by many individuals. The MSIF opened its doors to clients on the 22nd December 2024, on time and within budget

GP Service

The GP service in Riverbank is accessible to clients accessing homeless services, who are unable to manage mainstream services due to social circumstances. The GP provides a full range of medical services and works with the extended MQI clinical team to facilitate onward referral to additional support where appropriate. This service is being provided through collaboration between MQI, the HSE, Safetynet and independent General Practice providers. During 2024, this service provided 6,488 consultations for clients ranging from addiction support to primary care, an increase of 14% on the previous year. MQI also facilitates applications for medical cards for homeless clients to support their access to mainstream medical services.

Our GP service provides our clients with access to addiction support and treatment. This service had an average of 135 clients accessing Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) for their addiction at any given time.

Nursing Services

The MQI nursing service continued to provide primary care interventions for our clients between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday. Furthermore, due to the successful recruitment of a second registered general nurse (RGN), these hours have now been extended to 8am – 7pm Monday through to Friday, with a nurse on site every second Sunday. The service carried out 2,251 individual consultations during 2024, ranging from wound care, physical health checks, blood testing, psychological support, and onward referral to support additional healthcare needs.

Mental Health Team

Mental health issues continue to disproportionately impact people who are homeless and in addiction. Our Mental Health Team offer one-to-one support for individuals with mental ill-health, as well as support to access the HSE's Homeless community mental health services.

The Mental Health Team works with clients to carry out risk assessments and create a client centred care plan to manage symptoms of mental ill-health. The team also works closely with clients in a step-by-step approach to help alleviate the issues resulting in poor mental health, including accommodation supports and medication management. Supports were provided to 443 unique individuals, with 2,362 tailored mental health interventions – an increase of 12% from the previous year. The team provide education and support to their colleagues in Riverbank to further support clients, providing a referral pathway to support the most vulnerable clients, particularly in the areas of suicidality and general behaviour management.

Community Detox and Addiction Support

The MQI addiction team, in partnership with the mental health team, provide a dual diagnosis support structure for clients facing both addiction and mental health problems. This team is further supported by an addiction councillor.

In 2024, the addiction team carried out 2,670 addiction interventions with clients, ranging from offering support to clients on Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST), ensuring robust care planning, to supporting clients through community detox. This was a 55% increase on 2023 with 1,197 addiction interventions provided that year. The addiction team support clients to reduce or stabilise their drug use, supporting them to find suitable day programmes and access residential treatment services. All clients who access OST through the Riverbank GP services are encouraged to see an addiction case worker regularly. Our services aim to reduce the harm associated with drug use for our clients.

Riverbank Healthcare Service

The MQI clinical team continued to treat the complex medical and psychosocial needs of our clients throughout 2024. Our socially excluded population frequently experience multiple adverse events through both social exclusion and addiction and have a mortality rate eight times higher than the average for men, and twelve times higher for women.

MQI completed 14,122 interventions for clients supporting them with their primary care needs. This was an increase of 2,220 interventions from 2023. This was achieved through the GP, nurse, dentist, mental health team and substance use case workers.

Dental Service

The dental team provide ongoing screening and treatment for clients. The team provides oral health promotion and education to clients and create pathways to enable patients with multiple co-morbidities to access dentistry and oral surgery in the appropriate setting.

Residential Rehabilitation Unit – St Francis Farm

There were 164 referrals, aligned to the programme criteria during the year. Overall, there were 48 admissions to the rehab unit. The unit achieved an overall bed occupancy rate of 81% during the year up from 77% in 2023.

Within the MQI residential detox and rehabilitation programmes, the teams supported 183 individuals into recovery across the services. This was done through a trauma informed and holistic approach which allowed clients to progress at their own pace and according to their individual needs.

Residential Detox Unit – St Francis Farm

With the changing demographic in drug use among clients, a key issue for MQI is to ensure clients are safe for admission to the unit. This is due to the complex nature of a medical detox programme, and the distance from St Francis Farm to the nearest acute hospital services. However, these same challenges led to an agile response to client needs, resulting in broadening the criteria for admission under the guidance of the Clinical Governance Committee.

There were 318 referrals to the detox unit, which was similar to 2023. Overall, there were 54 admissions to the detox unit, which represents a 10% increase from 49 in 2023. These admissions were a combination of clients detoxing from the following substances: methadone and benzodiazepine, methadone only, benzodiazepines only, and suboxone.

Completion rates from the detox unit were extremely strong in 2024, at 100%. This was a very positive outcome for the unit. Out of this group, 27 participants progressed to the St Francis Farm rehabilitation facility.

St. Francis Farm Residential Rehabilitation Centre, Tullow, Co. Carlow.



Addiction Support Services



Harm Reduction Service

MQI's harm reduction service aims to minimise the negative health and social impacts associated with drug use, focusing on positive change and working with people without judgement or discrimination. In 2024, a total of 2,956 unique clients were provided with 22,896 health-led, harm reduction interventions including needle exchange, in MQI's Riverbank Centre. A total of 433 safer injection training sessions were provided for clients, helping to reduce the physical harm caused by unsafe practices. Last year, 139 clients were trained in the use of the lifesaving overdose reversal medicine Naloxone.

Irish Prison-based Addiction Counselling Service (IPS)

MQI work in partnership with the IPS to provide addiction-based counselling services in 11 prisons across Ireland. This service gives prisoners access to one-to-one counselling, enabling them to develop clear treatment plans to assist in maintaining stability and abstinence from alcohol and/or other drugs. Counselling supports were provided to 1,283 unique individuals; these individuals were provided with a total of 15,364 interventions.

Residential Rehabilitation, High Park

This residential programme operates from High Park, Dublin and runs for 14 weeks. It offers clients a period of rehabilitation treatment in a drug and alcohol-free environment. The facility has capacity for 13 clients at any given time.

The programme operates on an ethos of being open to all, regardless of circumstance. The emphasis is on assisting service users to gain insight into the issues that underpin their drug use, developing realistic measures to prevent relapse and remain drug-free. The programme offers individual care plans, one-to-one work, group work, psycho-educational groups, fitness-gym activities, outdoor pursuits, and recreational activities. The facility also offers weekly Narcotics Anonymous meetings online.

In 2024, the service received 288 referrals, 264 people completed assessments, 53 were admitted, and 36 completed treatment.



The garden at High Park.

Addiction Counselling Service

Our addiction counselling service offers holistic support to individuals who are dealing with substance misuse and homelessness. Counsellors offer one-to-one assistance for many mental health and life issues such as depression, anxiety, low mood, bereavement, mental ill-health and relationship issues.

North East Family Support Service

This service has operated in counties Louth and Meath since 2022. The team of three provides a specialised family support service, which caters for adult family members of people impacted by addiction. The service focuses on personal well-being, self-care, knowledge and understanding of addiction, and awareness of ways of coping and responding to their loved one's addiction. In 2024, the service worked with 166 people in both group and one-to-one settings, a 39% increase on the previous year.



Cavan and Monaghan Drug and Alcohol Service (CAMDAS)

CAMDAS provides community-based drug and alcohol services in Cavan and Monaghan, offering trauma-informed, person-centred support to individuals, families, and the wider community. Alongside addiction services, there is a Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment (CE) Scheme, funded by the DSP, supporting people in recovery through education, training, and employment pathways.

In 2024, CAMDAS supported 402 individuals, marking a 21% increase in referrals from the previous year. This rise reflects growing demand and increased awareness of our services. Notably, we saw:

- A 51% increase in cocaine referrals
- A 56% rise in street tablet (benzodiazepine) referrals
- Additional referrals for cannabis, crack cocaine, pregabalin, crystal meth, and codeine, highlighting evolving substance use trends.

A standout success in 2024 was the Circle Programme, a peer-led overdose prevention and education initiative. This programme equips Peer Overdose Prevention Workers with essential skills and knowledge to: recognise overdose risks; take proactive steps to prevent overdose; respond effectively in emergency situations. Funded by HSE Social Inclusion, the programme had a meaningful impact, empowering people who use drugs with life-saving skills and peer support networks. During the year, five Peer Overdose Prevention Workers graduated, strengthening community-led harm reduction efforts. The programme will continue to be delivered into 2025.

5 Peer Overdose Prevention Workers graduate with NE Regional Manager Zoë Wells, Keelan Smith, Simone Galligan, Tony Roche, Conor Kavanagh, Niamh McCullagh, and Project Worker/Family Support Worker Sean Poutch (L-R).

Aftercare Service

This service supports clients who have completed primary residential treatment in MQI's High Park or St. Francis Farm. The Aftercare Programme offers drug-free transitional housing in Kildare, developed in partnership with Respond Housing Association.

Running five mornings a week from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm, it helps clients sustain a healthy lifestyle, build recovery capital, and access education, training, or employment. The programme includes individual care planning, one-to-one support, group work, life skills, and wellbeing activities such as art therapy and yoga. In 2024, MQI supported 28 clients through the Aftercare Programme.

The programme also incorporates a 'Life After' group, supporting clients in maintaining their recovery journey and building peer connections, including through a dedicated LGBTQI+ recovery group. These groups meet monthly.

East Coast Community and Recovery Integration Supports Project (CRIS)

The CRIS service provides community-based drug and alcohol treatment to individuals suffering from addiction, including dedicated family support services and peer support programmes to over 18's. The Service covers Co. Wicklow and parts of south Dublin. The service has support centres in Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow town, and five satellite clinics in Baltinglass, Carnew, Loughlinstown, Rathdrum & Balally Primary Health Centres. Outreach support services were also provided to those unable to travel to the clinics. Community based treatment is delivered through one-to-one interventions and group work. In 2024, due to funding from the Drug Task Force, the CRIS service increased its capacity supporting 420 unique clients and carrying out 5,967 engagements with service users. This was an increase of 28% on the previous year.

Beautiful woodwork, created by clients at St Francis Farm.



Midlands Drug and Alcohol Treatment Supports (MDATS)

MDATS delivers a community-based drug and alcohol prevention and treatment support service to those over 18 and their families. The service is provided across four midland counties: Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, and Longford. The team provides mobile harm reduction and needle exchange in each county, a dedicated family support service, and rehabilitation and aftercare support. In 2024, MDATS supported 603 individuals via 4,447 interventions. A total of 88 new clients were referred to the family support specialist, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

A Community Employment Drug Rehabilitation Scheme, funded by the Department of Social Protection (DSP), operates from its base in Tullamore, the Tanyard Building. It also operates as a base for group work and other programmes for service users, including aftercare, family support, recovery focused interventions and one-to-one client and case management sessions.

Cocaine use in the Midlands continued to rise in 2024, both powder and crack cocaine, which highlighted the need for more access to detox and rehab treatment services. This year, also saw the development of groups such as Relapse Prevention in Longford, Community Information in Granard and Longford FRC.

I've learned so much about myself in the process of recovery. I remembered what it was like to be a kid, and who I was before anything happened to me.

Niamh, MQI Client

Amber's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Amber shares her experience of living with addiction today in Dublin, and the importance of the MSIF (Medically Supervised Injecting Facility) to her.

“ Drugs have blighted my whole life. I grew up in a quiet rural area, but my childhood was scarred by chaos, violence and sexual abuse, so in my teens, I escaped to Dublin. I knew nothing about normal life and got into a series of bad relationships with violent men. I got into heroin pretty young and it's still my main drug.

I'm in my early 30's now and I feel already dead. It's unspeakable being in addiction, I don't wish it on anyone. Before the MSIF opened, I was reminded every time I had to inject in public that I am disgusting. No level of stigma or public hatred is going to get people like me free from drugs. I already hate myself. I know I have hurt people, and I deeply regret most of my life. There is so much I wish I could change but I just can't.

My whole life is about addiction, and I don't want it to be, I'm a fully qualified dance instructor. I've done worthwhile things in my life and many people I know who are in addiction have amazing gifts, skills, talent and personality and they're warm, genuine, interesting people with so much to give back, except they're consumed by addiction.

Hours of my day were spent not even using but travelling to and from train station toilets and shopping centres, hiding and being hounded by society. The shame just drives you further down the hole of addiction. I've often woken up down alleyways with my shoes gone and I've been raped and robbed so many times.

As somebody who has been using drugs on the streets, the MSIF means everything to me. I just can't imagine how different my life would've been if this facility had been available sooner. There are a few different reasons; from a practical point of view, people who inject drugs are persecuted on the streets. There was nowhere safe to use. I've been so terrified; I've had a needle break off in my arm because I have been so tense and paranoid while injecting. I never wanted to be down alleyways injecting, it's scary, filthy and disgusting.

“ *As somebody who has been using drugs on the streets, the MSIF means everything to me. I just can't imagine how different my life would've been if this facility had been available sooner.*

Amber, MQI Client



The number of abscesses and necrosis I've gone through. The number of bouts of cellulitis I've been hospitalized for because I was using unsterile equipment in unsanitary conditions. There was no dignity, I felt that I was denied basic healthcare because of something that's now acknowledged to be a disease and caused by trauma and environment.

The treatment of people in addiction hasn't caught up with the science. It's not our fault. We can't be hounded and persecuted out of being addicts. In fact, the more miserable people make our lives, the more you push us to seek solace in addiction.

Now, we finally have somewhere safe with respectful medical supervision. The opening of the MSIF means fewer people will die from infection as well as overdoses.

As a woman, who has run out of veins in my arms, I have to inject into my groin now. Having to do that in public is diabolical, there's no dignity in that and no privacy. I have literally been hiding down side streets, sweating and shaking, dying sick, trying to time it so 'that' person over there is not walking by me directly when I have rolled down my underwear to inject. It's horrible, then you miss the vein.

There's so much that can go wrong with your health when you're in an unsafe, unsanitary environment where people react towards you with disgust. Apart from that, it's how you internalize that message.

The MSIF is a legitimate healthcare facility that's reaching out to the drug using community and saying – you're people as well, you deserve basic healthcare. This is something we've needed for so

long and the only reason we hadn't gotten it until now, is pure stigma and prejudice. Like we don't deserve it, long after we established that people need help, that addiction is an illness. Judging people and the whole 'pull yourself up by the bootstraps narrative' does absolutely nothing. How many more people must die before we change the way we look at addiction?

Equally importantly, the MSIF is helping how people in addiction view themselves. When you're denied the most basic dignity and healthcare for so long, you internalize that. You think you're scum, you feel you're vermin.

I think the half hour people spend in the MSIF makes a way bigger difference than people not in addiction can understand. Again, it's safety where previously there was none. It's dignity where none was given. It's handing us back that bit of humanity and safety. It might only be half an hour but in that time, we have medical supervision, compassion. We are viewed as human beings, despite doing something that has become one of the most stigmatized, shameful things you can do; yet it rules your life.

Even when you're begging you have to lie, when people ask if you are on drugs, you have to say 'no, no, I'd never do that'. All you ever hear on the news is that it's disgusting that there're needles near where a child fell. We were all children once. Our humanity has been taken away. We don't get to be cared about, and I think the MSIF changes that. It's only a first step but it's a big first step!

The MSIF offers me the space to evaluate a bit and maybe start thinking about reducing. I'm doing that at the moment, going through the process of 'what can I do to maybe change things and make steps forward'. I really hope and expect it will be like that for a lot more people. I am not saying I will instantly become drug free. I won't. I am in too deep. But it will give me space to think, plan ahead and maybe cut down. I can't even explain what all this means to me. There aren't really words for it, the difference of having the most intensely stigmatised, shameful thing to be accepted. It is new, it is revolutionary."

The MSIF offers me the space to evaluate and maybe start thinking about reducing. I'm doing that at the moment.

Amber, MQI Client

New Services



Dr Eamon Keenan, HSE National Clinical Lead for Addiction Services, with Eddie Mullins, MQI CEO.

Medically Supervised Injecting Facility – (MSIF)

Thanks to the combined efforts of a dedicated design, construction, and project implementation team, the MSIF opened its doors in December 2024. This marks a significant milestone in the country's health-led approach to drug addiction. The facility, which is supported by the HSE and Department of Health is located at MQI's Riverbank centre in Dublin city centre. The facility will initially run as an 18-month pilot, subject to independent evaluations at 6 months and 18 months.

The MSIF offers a clean, supervised space where individuals can inject pre-obtained drugs, under the care of trained medical professionals. The facility is designed to reduce the health risks associated with intravenous drug use, including overdose and the transmission of infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. It serves as an important point of contact for those seeking help, by offering referrals to addiction treatment, mental health support, primary healthcare and social services.

The opening of the MSIF aligns with the Irish Government's National Drugs Strategy; "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery" which seeks to minimise harm from drug use, promote recovery, and address the social determinants of addiction. This initiative is supported by public health experts, addiction specialists, and community organisations, as well as successful models seen in other countries such as Portugal, Luxemburg and Australia.

Prof Eamon Keenan, HSE National Clinical Lead, Addiction Services, said: "I welcome the opening of the Medically Supervised Injecting Facility (MSIF) at MQI's Riverbank Centre. This is the result of many years of hard work by a variety of stakeholders including the HSE, MQI, Department of Health, An Garda Síochána, Dublin City Council, community groups and service user representative organisations. The benefits of MSIFs can be seen in different contexts worldwide, and considering the emergence of new, and more potent synthetic opioids on the Irish heroin market, it is more important than ever to progress such a facility to support people who inject drugs. This facility will enhance the harm reduction response for people who inject drugs, in line with 'Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery' our national strategy of health-led responses to drug use in Ireland. This could be the first step on the road to recovery for someone presenting to the service."

In addition to providing a safe space for drug use, the MSIF will play a key role in addressing the issue of drug-related litter in public spaces and reducing the pressure on emergency services through preventing overdose deaths with access to medical intervention in the management of emergencies.



Jane's Place is a lifeline for women in crisis.

Jane's Place – Female Specific Service

Jane's Place is an all-female service supporting women who are dealing with homelessness and addiction issues. For the women who access Jane's Place, it is a safe warm and welcoming environment that provides holistic, trauma-informed services such as, one-to-one case management, psycho-educational health and wellbeing groups, and holistic therapies.

In February 2024, the Jane's Place Service moved to its newly renovated facility in Dublin 2, which was generously donated to MQI. The new facility was designed in close collaboration with the women who use the service, to ensure a warm, trauma-informed environment that provides a sense of safety and support to participants. The building includes a fully furnished doctor's surgery, nursing room, counselling rooms, group room, kitchen, beauty room, showers and laundry facilities.

This service also offers programmes focusing on recovery and healing from trauma, art therapy, mindfulness, maintaining physical and mental wellbeing, and understanding trauma. In 2024 the service was accessed by 165 women with a total of 1,132 engagements.



Collaboration *and* Partnership

Homeless Probation Team

The Riverbank Crisis Contact Team continued to support clients to engage positively with the criminal justice system, whereby representatives of the Homeless Probation Team and the local Community Gardaí held monthly clinics in the Riverbank Centre.

Irish Refugee Council

Due to an increase in the numbers of International Protection Applicants who presented to the Riverbank Centre in early 2024, MQI and other day service providers entered a partnership arrangement with the Irish Refugee Council, to provide specialist support to applicants. This partnership involved MQI hosting expert staff from the Irish Refugee Council on a weekly basis to provide information clinics.

Dublin City University

MQI continued its partnership with Dublin City University, offering clinical placements to student nurses completing their mental health nurse training.

St James's Hospital, Trinity College Dublin

MQI partnered with St James's Hospital through our health link case worker, facilitating students from Trinity College Dublin completing their general nursing degree, to spend time in Riverbank and understand the needs of clients. Nurses and mental health case workers provided these nursing students with an opportunity to work with clients, who need an array of physical and psychological supports in an empathetic environment.

Hospital based link workers

During 2024, MQI collaborated with the Mater and St James's Hospitals in a pilot programme, which placed a social inclusion link worker into the interdisciplinary social inclusion team, managing patients dealing with addiction. The social inclusion link workers, provided assertive support and advocacy for patients experiencing homelessness with complex health and/or addiction needs. This was hugely successful in supporting our client group to navigate and have positive interactions with mainstream healthcare. It also ensured clients were supported into accommodation on discharge. As a result of the success of this pilot, the HSE has taken a decision to include these staff directly in HSE teams, and MQI will continue to support the HSE social inclusion teams directly from our centralised services in Riverbank.

Mountjoy Prison

MQI continue to implement the Treatment and Recovery Programme (TARP) in Mountjoy prison. This programme aims to support people who have become drug-free in prison. In 2024, there were 5 programmes run with a total of 45 participants. MQI, in partnership with the IPS, engaged independent researchers to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the programme. This evaluation will be completed in 2025. The TARP is supported by a range of external agencies who deliver specialist elements of the programme.

Community Support Groups

In 2024 our MQI DATS project in the Midlands partnered with Ruhama, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous to provide additional services in the Tanyard building in Tullamore.

Community Employment Schemes

Merchants Quay Project CE Scheme CLG operates dedicated drug rehabilitation Community Employment Schemes in Tullamore and Cavan Town. The schemes assist participants to access training, education, and work experience opportunities, with a view to potentially entering or re-entering the labour market. The scheme supports participants through their recovery, by facilitating relapse prevention and stabilisation groups, mindfulness, and motivational interviewing.

We work closely with the local community drug and alcohol services, local addiction support practitioners, and residential treatment centres who refer individuals, who may be suitable for the scheme. MQI currently has a total of 25 CE Scheme participants with 28 available places across the two schemes.

Peer engagement with UISCE

During the year, MQI entered a partnership with UISCE, the National Advocacy Service for People who use Drugs in Ireland. The aim of this partnership is to ensure that people who use MQI's services have a mechanism to provide feedback and have an input into the design and delivery of our services. This partnership involved our Riverbank service, with UISCE hosting open group sessions, where clients could discuss issues they faced.



Brendan's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Brendan shares his journey from living in a tent to playing for Ireland in The Homeless World Cup and the support he received in MQI's Aftercare Service.

“ I'm the eldest of seven, so there was never a dull moment in our house. My mam and dad were the best, but it was Ireland in the '70's and '80's and with seven of us to feed and clothe, it wasn't easy.

I was 10 when I started with drugs, then at 18, I tried heroin. At first it was just a habit but soon it changed to a necessity. When I was 25, I realised it was a problem, and I needed to do something about it. So, I went to my first treatment centre. As soon as I left, I went and used. They tried to equip me with all the tools, but I was so naïve to what addiction was. I didn't think I suffered with the disease of addiction. I just thought once I cut the drugs down, I'd be grand. So, I continued that pattern for a lot of years, in and out of treatment centres, in and out of jail.

Then I found crack cocaine. I just wanted more, more, more, more. So, I ended up living on the streets, in doorways on O'Connell Street and up laneways. I went back to Tallaght where I grew up. I was living in a tent in the middle of a field. Crying myself to sleep at night. I'd given up. I had. I actually did give up. I used to pray to my brother who passed 'please just get me, just take me'.

I'll never forget one night in the tent when I was sticking my head down, my two sisters walked into the park with flashlamps calling me. I heard my name, Bren, Bren. I thought I was hearing things. I got up and there they were, the two flashlamps and I brought them in and showed them the tent. They brought me back to their house. That was on a Thursday night. And on the Monday, the treatment centre rang and said bring him down.

It was my 14th time in treatment. I didn't even know if I wanted to go. I just knew I had to get out of where I was. I only weighed eight stone and

at six feet tall, you can imagine how I looked. I've gone into treatment centres and left within an hour, left within the day, once the sickness kicked in. This time, there wasn't once in the six weeks that I thought of leaving. I think because I was broken; I was physically and mentally broken. At the time, I literally had nothing. The only thing left was my life. But even though I'd given up, my family never gave up, so I needed to repay them for their faith in me.

I went to MQI's Aftercare Service. I had this connection with the house, it's outside Dublin and I felt comfortable in it. The support I got was second to none. Then I got back into playing football and I heard they were doing the homeless street league. I started going down to them every week, I wouldn't miss it. Then we started doing trials and they picked four of us to go to The Homeless World Cup in South Korea!

Today, I have a lot of life experience; I have a support network. Now, I know what to do in difficult times. Anything's possible. My life is good, I'm enjoying it. It's a far cry from where I was. Once you stay drug free, anything is achievable in life. I'm living proof of that. I've completed a CE Scheme, and I recently started a full-time position, working in emergency accommodation.”



Research *and* Advocacy

A black and white photograph showing the silhouette of a woman with her hair in a ponytail, looking out of a window. The light from the window creates a bright, hazy background, while the woman's profile is dark against it.

I want people to be able to have the same thing that I have today, and that's absolute freedom from drug addiction and the trauma of it. I want to give people still in addiction a bit of hope that there is a way out of that horrible hell that you've been living in for years. You can come out of it and you can be successful."

Jill, MQI Client

Health-led response to drug use

In October, the CEO and Head of Operations presented to the Oireachtas Committee on Drug Use. The Committee was established to consider the recommendation of the Citizens Assembly on Drug Use and make a reasoned response to each recommendation. MQI had the opportunity to present directly to legislators and explain the effectiveness of a health-led approach and the positive impact of such change in policy.

We welcome the findings of the Citizens Assembly on Drug Use. MQI participated in the debates in 2023, advocating for a change in how the agencies of the state approach drug use in society. A health-led approach will be more effective to significantly reduce the harmful impact of illicit drugs on individuals, families, communities, and the wider society. MQI endorse the conclusions of the Citizens Assembly, which made 36 recommendations to the Government, enabling the State to take a more innovative, ambitious, comprehensive and coherent approach to drug use in Ireland. MQI will continue to advocate for a health-led response to drug use, at every opportunity.

LEAP-W

MQI, in partnership with Trinity College Dublin, participated in an evaluation of the Low Threshold Exercise and Protein supplementation intervention for Women experiencing homelessness and addiction (LEAP -W). The evaluation involved a 10-week exercise intervention, for women experiencing homelessness, addiction and mental health challenges who access Jane's Place. The trial was carried out by Fiona Kennedy and the study highlighted the positive impacts of regular low impact exercise for the women who participated. The Jane's Place team continued to run the programme for women, who accessed the service when the trial was complete.

Health Research Board (HRB)

MQI contributes to national research and policy development through regular data submissions to the HRB. The HRB is Ireland's lead agency supporting and funding health research, with a focus on improving health service delivery and outcomes. MQI provide anonymised data on service user demographics, patterns of drug use, treatment outcomes, and engagement levels. This information helps the HRB track national trends in substance use and informs evidence-based policy decisions aimed at improving addiction services across the country.

Anti-Stigma Research Report

MQI played a key role in this collaborative anti-stigma initiative alongside UISCE and the HSE National Drug Treatment Centre. Clients from MQI were actively involved in co-producing a digital storytelling campaign that captured and communicated the lived experiences of People Who Use Drugs. MQI provided a trauma-informed, supportive environment that enabled meaningful participation in the creative research process, including photography, focus groups, and storyboarding. This commitment to inclusion and empowerment helped amplify the voices of participants and contributed to a powerful, peer-led narrative. This collaboration significantly enhanced the project's impact and informed actionable recommendations to reduce stigma and improve service response.

Irish Syringe Analysis Project

MQI continued our partnership with the National Social Inclusion Office and the HSE Drug Treatment Centre Laboratory, to analyse used syringes collected by MQI staff in Dublin. This is a European wide project that analyses and tracks local, national, and European wide drug use trends and behaviours. This project has been running on an annual basis since 2022, and results are published as part of the European Syringe Collection and Analysis Project Enterprise 'Escape' Research Project.

Fundraising *and* Communications

In 2024, MQI's Fundraising and Communications team played a pivotal role in deepening the connection between our supporters and the people we serve. Our campaigns succeeded in raising vital funds, building awareness, and keeping the voices and stories of our clients at the forefront of our work.

Transforming Lives Together

One of the year's most significant milestones came in February, when Jane's Place, MQI's dedicated space for women in crisis, opened its doors in a new, purpose-built facility. This important service was made possible entirely thanks to the generosity of our donors. Their support has created a sanctuary for vulnerable women who experience devastating trauma, homelessness and addiction. Jane's Place provides safety, dignity, and a path toward recovery.

Stepping Forward for Recovery

Recovery Month in September brought staff and supporters together through a virtual challenge, encouraging participants to walk, run, cycle, swim, or move 80km over the course of the month. The initiative symbolised the journey from detox to aftercare that many MQI clients undertake. Recovery Month was anchored by our Direct Mail appeal as well as digital and PR campaigns, to raise both awareness and funds. The campaign exceeded expectations thanks to the enthusiasm of MQI staff, clients, and supporters, reflecting the shared commitment to long-term recovery.

Staff across MQI mark Recovery Month.



Corporate & Community Champions

Our work was bolstered by the continued support of generous corporate partners and community groups. Amazon Web Services delivered 200 winter care kits, providing essential items and warm clothes to clients who need them. Through Benevity's employee matching scheme, AWS staff in Ireland also raised over €5,000.

We were humbled by the continued support of Focolare, whose annual Backpack Appeal provided 125 backpacks filled with essential items. Our deepest thanks go to all our corporate partners and community allies who stood with us throughout the year.

Spreading Awareness & Advocacy

In 2024, MQI strengthened its national voice on issues of addiction and homelessness. We secured widespread coverage including the launch of Ireland's first MSIF in December.

Through digital campaigns, social media, and press engagement, MQI's stories reached more people than ever, driving awareness of homelessness and addiction. Advocacy remained a core focus, with significant contributions made to national discourse, including a written submission and CEO presentation to the Citizens' Assembly on Drugs, and our Pre-Budget Submission 2025.

A Season of Kindness

Our 2024 Christmas Fundraising Appeal saw strong engagement, supported by our 'Cup of Kindness' TV campaign, which began airing in October. The advert struck a chord with audiences, highlighting the warmth and compassion at the heart of our mission.

In December, we hosted our much-loved Christmas Gratitude Concert at Adam & Eve Church beside Riverbank. Featuring the Dublin Concert Band, the evening was a heartfelt celebration of our supporters; a moment to say thank you for their unwavering commitment during a year that saw increasing need across all our services.

MQI's Christmas Gratitude Concert takes place annually at Adam & Eve Church, featuring the Dublin Concert Band.



Our People



Team at Riverbank marking International Overdose Awareness Day.

Our Staff

The MQI workforce is made up of a diverse pool of talented people who demonstrate a unique blend of skills, knowledge and experience. Collectively, we are addiction support experts, clinicians, accredited counsellors, operational managers, chefs, fundraisers, HR & Finance professionals and family support workers to name but a few. A Farm Manager and Dual Diagnosis Specialists are also included as key members of our team.

Another defining characteristic of our workforce is the mix of experienced long serving staff, some of whom have been with the organisation for over 20 years, working alongside a large cohort of employees who have joined the MQI Team in recent years.

In 2024, we ran our first formal Employee Recognition Awards, recognising 28 employees for dedicated service to the organisation through acknowledging those who had reached tenures of 10, 15 and 20 years. In addition to this, awards were presented to employees who were nominated by their peers for demonstrating excellence in teamwork, client service and collaboration - one of our core MQI values. Recognising the dedication, commitment, and everyday contributions of our people is key to MQI.

In March 2024, we conducted the Great Place to Work survey. This was the first time we carried out a formal organisation-wide employee listening activity, to assess organisation culture and employee experience. The development of the People & Culture goals and actions in the MQI 2025 - 2027 strategy, were informed by the

valuable information collected via this survey. This survey will be repeated in May 2025, to measure progress of initiatives implemented since the first survey.

As the services that MQI provide continue to evolve, we are continually working to both develop our existing workforce and attract new people. The recruitment drive to fully staff the new MSIF in 2024 was very successful and we welcomed a new team of nurses and project workers to deliver this innovative service. Recruitment will continue to be a priority in 2025, aiming to minimise vacancies and in turn operational impact.

The dedication of our staff, enacting our values of compassion, courage and collaboration through their work and focus on clients, results in numerous life-changing outcomes for people coping with homelessness and addiction. 80% of our staff are employed in front-line services, working directly with clients.

Volunteers and Student Placements

We are fortunate to have support from individuals who provide their time and experience on a voluntary basis. Our volunteers support the day-to-day running of our services, providing specialist skill sets such as catering and hairdressing. Volunteers provide a valuable enhancement to our services which benefit our clients. The organisation regularly hosts student placements, providing an opportunity for those pursuing social care or addiction related studies to gain valuable practical experience, which can be applied in their coursework.

Our Board of Directors, and members of the board sub-committees, are all volunteers. Their knowledge and experience add significant value to the governance of MQI.

In 2024, Our community engagement team carried out 751 patrols.



Staff Stories

Alan Dooley, Community Engagement Coordinator, has been with MQI for 28 years.

“ My journey with MQI began in 1996, when I started as a volunteer. Prior to that I was working in the Civil Service, so I didn't have a background in social or addiction studies, but it was a cause I felt passionate about. The ethos of kindness, of compassion and openness were clear from the beginning, and I had a feeling at that point that MQI would be a big part of my future. A year later I became a full-time project worker.

In the mid to late 90s, most people using the homeless service were also people who were using the drug treatment service. There would have been some older people using the homeless service but nothing in comparison to now. With escalating rents, many people are at the mercy of private landlords. People have presented to us saying their rent increase has been so much that it's been the tipping point for them. They've ended up on the streets. So, we have men in their 50's, 60's and sometimes 70's, who are now sleeping rough who come into us.

A lot of our clients feel they don't have the right to a normal existence. They're treated differently for the most part when they are on the street, and they feel nearly obligated to talk about the darker side of things that are going on. We have clients coming in and they wear it like a cloak. They wear this mistrust, fear and wariness like a cloak. And it would be foolish to think that just by walking through the doors of MQI that they let go of that. But they do over time, because they realise, they're in a place where they are treated with respect. What we're saying to them is 'come in and if you want to talk about your drug use or your homelessness, we're happy to do that. If you want to come in and talk to me about your family and how things are going well or not so well, then that's okay too'. I ask anybody how long it would take, if they lived on the streets, before they



Alan Dooley has been working with MQI since 1996.

realise that to protect themselves, they have to close up, and become very guarded, very insular. And I ask how long it would take for that to have an impact on their mental health.

A lot of the client group in the lead-up to Christmas especially, become very withdrawn, because Christmas is just opening the blinds to what they are missing out on. What they see around them is people out shopping, people out celebrating, people out with their kids. For a lot of our clients, it's a stark reminder of what they have lost. Hopefully temporarily, but not always. Fractured relationships with their parents, with siblings, with children, are particularly difficult.

My role as Community Engagement Coordinator is to work with the local community, to talk to them, help them understand our work at MQI, and to understand the experience of our clients. My favourite part of my day at MQI is the breakfast service at Riverbank. When we open the doors at 8 o'clock on a winter's morning, and sometimes earlier if it is pelting with rain, we get the doors open that bit earlier, just to get people in. When people come in soaking wet, freezing cold, distressed, sad, worried, you name it, to be able to come in and to have fresh clothes available. To have a bit of humanity available. To have hot

food, hot tea and coffee available, it has a brilliant impact. The impact on the individual, even for that short amount of time, is quite astonishing. Instilling that bit of hope for people is just incredible.

It is a credit to the clients that they express how they are feeling. In my experience, either when the Outreach Team meet them or when the Community Engagement Team meet them, or even in Riverbank, they are not slow about expressing their gratitude to the staff. I mean it is remarkable that people live such difficult existences sometimes. And yet the first thing that comes to mind when they come into Riverbank

Susan Diffney, Women's Services Coordinator has been with MQI for two years.

“I studied a degree in social care after school. During one of my placements, I worked in a drug rehabilitation day programme in Ballyfermot, and that's when I discovered that this was the area of work for me. I then went on and studied addiction counselling part time, while I worked full time in another charity. During Covid, I went back to college to get my degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Outside of working in retail to get me through college, I have always worked in homeless and addiction services. I worked in an under 18's residential service, then in housing first, and in a community addiction service in Ballymun. I love working with people who continue to surprise, amaze and inspire me 17 years on.

I joined MQI in 2023 to get involved with the establishment of Jane's Place as the concept really grabbed my attention. A one stop shop for women, based on trauma-informed principles and providing holistic therapies, as well as psycho-social, therapeutic and physical health supports. It sounded so client centred, and for me that is the only way to work.

There is so much trauma, hurt and pain in the clients we deal with, that I don't know how to begin to explain my role. To be honest here, what

is to thank the staff. I have lost count, and I am working here a long time, the number of people who have said to me and genuinely meant it, 'I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for this place.'

Reflecting on my time with MQI, it's difficult to pin-point one moment of pride. There are many examples over the years; clients that I've met that made a huge impact on me. People I meet often experience such stigma, and often cannot be their true selves, and MQI and the team here have a big part in helping to give hope in what is often the darkest time in our clients' lives. So, I would say it's more of a state of pride, something I feel every day when I come to work.

Susan Diffney is Service Coordinator at Jane's Place.



I do is try to instil hope, self-worth and self-compassion. My friends would ask "what do you mean?" if I said that was my job! What they don't understand is that people who use substances or those who have found themselves homeless (for a variety of reasons) are hurting. They are carrying an inexplicable amount of pain that most people will never know. Being able to help with, what to us might seem like the tiniest of things, can go such a long way in someone else's world. Supporting someone to believe they are worth it can be the start of a long and hard journey for them, but one that could change their life."

Lisa's Story: MQI Client

MQI Client Lisa shares her story of addiction and recovery in the hope of helping other women.

“ When I was about two, my mam left my dad. He was a gambler. She took all six kids and moved us to a house in a different area. I was the youngest. Then my mother met another guy.

That's when things changed. I was abused. I was terrorised in that house. Terrorised. I felt so unsafe. I couldn't even count on my hands all of the different traumatic incidents.

There was no freedom. There was no being a kid anymore. I felt so lonely. I felt like I wasn't important. There have been times where, I was in so much pain, I couldn't see a way out. I didn't know how to get out. There was no one to talk to. There were no supports, not like there is now. There was no one.

Drugs took me away from the trauma. Drugs took me away from myself.

I started taking tablets when I was 11. I was in sixth class in primary school. I overdosed. When we got home from the hospital, life just went on like nothing ever happened. No one spoke about it. Nothing. I felt so abandoned. I felt so alone.

Addiction is painful. Dark. It is like a form of self-harm. You are in so much pain, and you don't know how to get out of it.

Lisa, MQI Client

I was given heroin when I was 14. At the time, I didn't know it was heroin.

I was 15 when I had my baby daughter. I got pregnant by my abuser. It was one of the hardest things I ever did. No one knew what happened and why I had a child at that age. I was judged. People just assumed I had a boyfriend or something, but it wasn't like that for me.

And the trauma didn't stop when my daughter came along. It happened for years. She actually gave my life meaning. She gave me a reason to go on. If I didn't have her, I wouldn't be here.

I left school in sixth year and I moved out when I was 17. Then a few years later I went back to school and I did my Leaving Cert. I went to college and studied photography for two years. I worked in photography, doing weddings and all of that.

But eventually drugs took over my life. Addiction is painful. Dark. It is like a form of self-harm. You are in so much pain, and you don't know how to get out of it. It's a very hard life.

I would have horrific nightmares about my childhood. I hurt myself in my sleep. I would really hurt myself, just so I would wake myself up out of my nightmares. I've been told its severe PTSD. That's why I still don't like people standing behind me. I would panic.

But now, for the first time in my life, I'm beginning to recover from my addiction. Because now I feel safe. I wasn't even able to say his name until I felt safe.

We have the groups here where it's women-only. That helps me to build enough trust to feel able to talk. I had lots of toxic shame for years. But finally talking about my childhood trauma kind of took the power out of it. There was great healing in doing that.

I have learned so much about myself here. I have built up my self-worth and worked on my confidence. The most important thing for me was the relationship I had with myself and how I see myself.

One day, I would like to go back to college. I want to work with women. I want to be a strong woman that will help guide them. To show them about boundaries. That you can build your self-worth, that they are important.

I have shared my story in the hope that it helps other women. Maybe it will help raise money to keep Jane's Place open. Maybe there's a woman out there who will read my story and feel less alone. The thing is all of us need compassion and understanding. We all just want to be heard.

You know, the life beyond my wildest dreams is peace of mind and to be content in myself. That's all I am looking for.

“

I have shared my story in the hope that it helps other women. Maybe it will help raise money to keep Jane's Place open. Maybe there's a woman out there who will read my story and feel less alone.

Lisa, MQI Client

”



2024 Financial Summary

MQI present the annual review and the extract from the audited financial statements of the company for the financial year ended 31 December 2024. The Statement of Financial Activities is set out on page 39. The full set of audited financial statements are available on the company's website.

In line with our Strategic Plan, MQI is committed to protecting and developing our sustainable income. We are constantly seeking new opportunities and funding lines to maintain and grow our service offerings to meet client needs. MQI is financed by a mix of statutory and voluntary funding and in 2024, MQI raised a total income of €15.7m. (2023 €15.5m).

Statutory Government funding generated 52% of all income raised in 2024, mainly from the HSE and Dublin Regional Homeless Executive. The balance was raised through our fundraising activities and other small income streams. Fundraising generated almost €7.1m, making up 45% of our income for 2024.

Our work would not have been possible without the continued support from our state funders and voluntary funders. We and all those we support would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors. As a result of our fundraising income and expenditure management, 2024 was a positive year financially; this will allow MQI to focus on the implementation of our strategic priorities and to ensure we give the best of care and service to our clients whilst operating a sustainable and compliant organisation.

Commitment to Best Practice in Corporate Governance

MQI is dedicated to upholding the highest standards in corporate governance. MQI is fully compliance with the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland.

The primary compliance areas include:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Companies Acts, including required filings with the Companies Registration Office
- Charities Acts, including required filings with the Charities Regulator
- Financial Reporting in accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP
- Regulation of Lobbying Acts
- Charities Institute Ireland Triple Lock Standards
- General Data Protection Regulations



Commitment to Standards in Fundraising Practice

The Board of MQI pledges full implementation of the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations Fundraising from the Public, ensuring that our fundraising is responsible, compliant and mission driven.

The core fundraising principles MQI adhere to are:

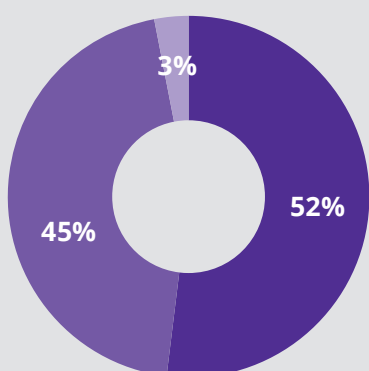
- Respect: ensuring dignity and consideration for supporters and beneficiaries
- Honesty and integrity: MQI commits to ensure all communications and activities are conducted truthfully and ethically
- Transparency and accountability: providing clear reporting on fundraising and all the organisations expenditure.

In addition, MQI holds the Charities Institute Ireland Triple Lock Certification, signifying excellence in governance, ethical fundraising and financial reporting.

Reserves Management

The organisation reserves policy is to hold adequate reserves to deliver continuity of services to clients through times of economic challenge. It also facilitates the investment in opportunities to provide innovative services to improve the outcomes for clients. The Board has reviewed its reserves policy and is satisfied that the funds held align with the organisations reserve policy.

Income

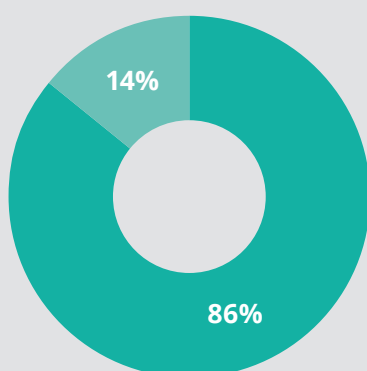


State Funding ----- 52%

Donations & Legacies - 45%

Other ----- 3%

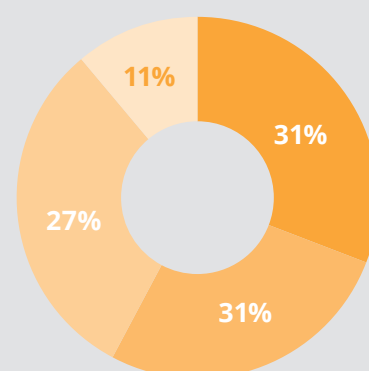
Expenditure



Charitable Activities -- 86%

Raising Funds
& Advocacy ----- 14%

Services Expenditure



Addiction Services --- 31%

Primary Health Care -- 31%

Homeless Services --- 27%

Counselling ----- 11%

Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of financial activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	Designated Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Income from:						
Charitable activities	4	-	-	8,236,664	8,236,664	6,897,342
Donations and legacies	5	-	6,407,064	686,995	7,094,059	7,886,994
Other incoming resources	6	-	179,209	229,010	408,219	739,868
Total Income		-	6,586,273	9,152,669	15,738,942	15,524,204
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	7	318,138	3,983,355	9,237,343	13,538,836	10,783,482
Raising funds	8	-	2,239,891	-	2,239,891	1,939,928
Total Expenditure		318,138	6,223,246	9,237,343	15,778,727	12,723,410
Net income/ (expenditure) before taxation and transfers	10	(318,138)	363,027	(84,674)	(39,785)	2,800,794
Taxation	19	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer between funds	18	(579,112)	(50,797)	629,909	-	-
Net income/ (expenditure) Other recognised gains		(897,250)	312,230	545,235	(39,785)	2,800,794
Actuarial gain in respect of the pension scheme	17	-	(26,327)	-	(26,327)	(5,644)
Net movement in funds		(897,250)	285,903	545,235	(66,112)	2,795,150
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	18	12,170,819	2,268,064	9,138,247	23,577,130	20,781,980
Total funds carried forward	18	11,273,569	2,553,967	9,683,482	23,511,018	23,577,130

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year.

MQI 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
including MSIF,**
13/14 Merchants Quay,
Dublin 8

**Jane's Place
Women's Services,**
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,**
Co. Wicklow

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

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

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

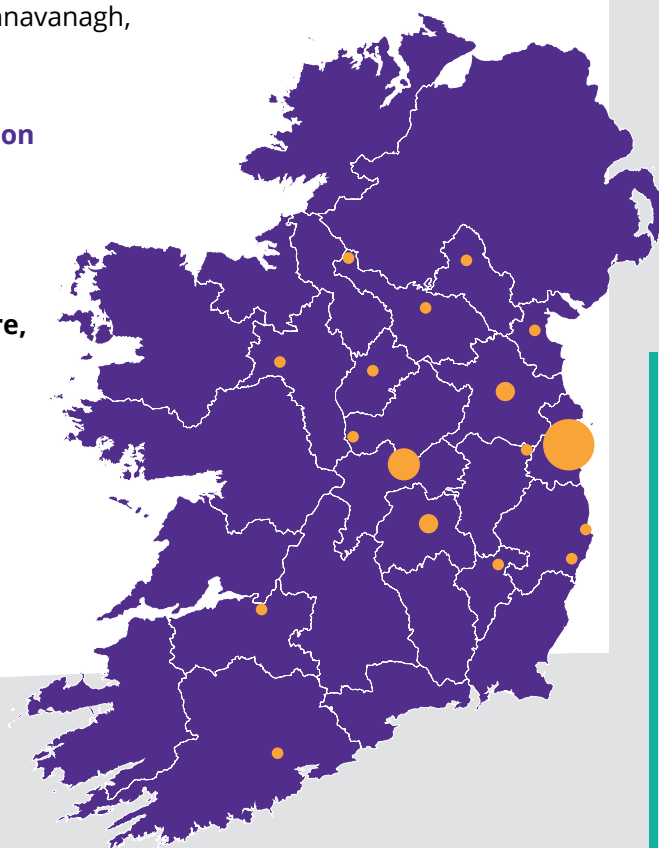
Portlaoise Prison,
Co. Laois

Midlands Prison,
Co. Laois

Castlereagh Prison,
Co. Roscommon

Shelton Abbey,
Co. Wicklow

Loughan House,
Cavan





Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Thank you

Merchants Quay Ireland is so grateful for the financial support we receive from individuals, families, religious organisations, businesses, voluntary and statutory agencies, charitable trusts and foundations. Without their steadfast support, we would be unable to deliver our vital services to those in need in Ireland. To all our supporters – to you – we extend our enduring gratitude. Thank you for caring about Ireland’s most vulnerable.

Get in touch



info@mqi.ie



Services: 01 524 0160

Donations: 01 524 0139



Merchants Court, 24 Merchants
Quay, Dublin 8, D08X7YK



www.mqi.ie



@MerchantsQuayIR



@MerchantsQuayIR



@merchantsquayir



@merchants-quay-ireland



*When you've had nothing,
having somewhere you can
wash your face and sit and
have a cup of tea makes you
feel human again.*

Mary, MQI Client

