



EXCHANGE HOUSE IRELAND
National Travellers Service

Annual Review 2014

Chairperson's Report

On behalf of Exchange House Ireland Ireland National Traveller Service it gives me great pleasure to present our 2014 report.

2014 proved to be another outstanding year for Exchange House Ireland National Traveller Service.

This year we were sorry to see the departure of Heydi Foster who served as CEO of Exchange House for 7 years. In those 7 years Heydi worked tirelessly to develop and sustain the services of Exchange House. It is with sadness that we see her depart but wish her well in her future endeavours.

We also welcome our new CEO, Catherine Morley. Catherine comes with a wealth of experience in our sector. In her first few months she has made a positive impact on Exchange House Ireland, or now Exchange House Ireland!

Indeed, to really reflect our national brief we are rebranding ourselves as Exchange House Ireland National Travellers Service. This exciting development will come into effect in 2015.

We are now on twitter so why no follow us @ExchangeHouseIr

This report will give you a taste of all the achievements the management and staff of Exchange House Ireland have accomplished in 2014.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those same managers and staff for their tireless dedication to Exchange House Ireland and the people we serve.

I'd also like to thank all our funders without whom such vital services would not exist.



Carmel Terry
Chairperson

Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service

Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service

The Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service deliver front-line services to some of the most marginalised Traveller clients in Dublin and beyond if called upon. The service is the largest for Travellers in the country. The aim of the service is to offer wide-ranging holistic approaches to Travellers who are at risk/in a crisis and in need of help so as to empower them to make decisions and act independently. The Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service Team runs a Duty/Drop in Service which is open daily (Monday to Friday). The cases that come through are attended to within 48 hours. The Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service does not have a waiting list.

Addiction Service

The Addiction Service continues to address substance misuse in line with the National Drug Strategy. The service aims to support Travellers with addictions and target those who are at risk of becoming involved in substance misuse, applying new knowledge to help improve the lives of those affected by addiction. The Addiction Counsellors take a multi-disciplinary approach and work closely with the social workers, Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service workers, education and youth departments, in an effort to help address immediate and long term needs of services users. The service is offered on an outreach and on an in-house basis.

The counsellors work closely with probation, prison, statutory services, local community and

voluntary services. The addiction counsellors work from a bio-psycho-social perspective using care and case management protocols. Clients are regularly referred to other services for treatments such as methadone maintenance, detoxification, residential treatment, needle exchange, primary healthcare treatment, sexual health treatment, mental health support, welfare support, or other alternative treatments. In cases where clients are stable and ready to pursue education or gain access to the workforce they are referred to the Community Employment Scheme or the Local Training Initiative in the Education & Training Service at Exchange House Ireland. Where clients are not at an appropriate stage of stability they are referred to addiction specific education or stabilization programmes to provide a structure for recovery. They continue to receive support throughout this process.

The addiction counsellors visit prisons regularly. Interagency work and case management with the Prison Service has ensured that our clients receive the best aftercare programmes as possible such as access to methadone clinics in the relevant areas, assisting with accommodation for the men and women upon release, support after release, access to the Local Training Initiative at Exchange House Ireland, access to CE schemes, access to Community Addiction Programmes and Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service. In order to maintain our client base within the prisons we visit weekly so we can provide the required level of support.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

AA meetings take place every Monday at 6pm in Exchange House Ireland and are open to Travellers and non-Travellers experiencing Alcohol addiction.

Home Visits / Outreach

Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service staff are rostered both on and off-site to meet client needs. Off-site visits encompass private rented accommodation, council accommodation, halting sites (official and unofficial), hostels, transitional accommodation, homeless agency, hospitals, schools, crèches, HSE Social Work Offices, courts, Garda stations, local authority offices, Drug Treatment Centres, social welfare offices, residential centres, refuges or any other venue that the client chooses and deems safe to meet.

Travelling to Wellbeing

The Travelling to Wellbeing service, T2WB, aims to reduce the stigma around mental health and suicide in the Traveller community.

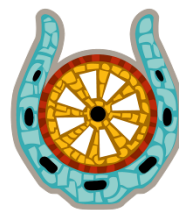
T2WB was developed to support individualised recovery plans/programmes with Travellers experiencing mental health issues. The service will develop a culturally appropriate recovery model

using a community development approach. In developing the service we will address inequalities by working with Travellers and service providers to deepen their understanding, improve referral pathways and aid recovery.

The benefits:



Offaly Traveller Movement



West Cork Travellers

- Travellers will get the support they need to aid their recovery from mental health issues.
- We will work with at a maximum of 40 people, (10 in each area), offering them the time and dedication required to support them.
- Travellers will become more informed, confident and supported in their recovery and in using other services.
- Services will be better informed, supported, effective and confident in responding to the needs of Travellers.
- Stronger and more responsive pathways will be forged with services.
- Culturally appropriate personal recovery plans will be developed which will be a resource for other services.

We are a team of 4 professionals. 3 Mental Health Social Workers and 1 Mental Health Family Support Worker with expertise in Art Therapy:

How we do it:

- We work with Travellers on a one-to-one basis to support their journey in recovery.
- Each person's recovery plan is unique to them and they are the "expert" in how they travel their journey.
- We work with a range of other agencies and value partnership working.
- We work within a framework of human rights and equality.

Travelling to Wellbeing is a partnership of Exchange House Ireland, Offaly Traveller Movement and West Cork Travellers.



National Traveller Suicide Prevention Service



In 2014 the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Programme became the National Traveller Suicide Prevention Service (NTSPS) - in line with the HSE and Government's national strategy on suicide.

The NTSPS have been all over Ireland with various activities and holding various events, such as:

- Training in mental health and suicide awareness to local Traveller groups
- Developing partnerships with local and national bodies
- Setting up ASSIST and SafeTalk training for local Traveller groups
- Working with men, young and old, through sport events and specific sport programmes
- Working with young people in relation to mental health and mindfulness
- Holding various events in Offaly, Cork and Dublin on World Suicide Prevention Day
- A cross-boarder cultural event with young Travellers, An Garda Síochána and the PSNI
- And many other activities directed to promote awareness of suicide and prevention within the Traveller community

Prison Service

Exchange House Ireland offers outreach work to Mountjoy, Wheatfield, St Patrick's, Cloverhill, Castlereagh and Portlaoise Prisons. There is a good collaboration between Exchange House Ireland and the Medical and Training Unit within Mountjoy prison. A large number of referrals are received from the Probation and Irish Prison Services to address the clients' needs. A 12 Step Programme was facilitated in Mountjoy Medical and Training Unit.

Every Friday the team facilitates a clinic at the Dochas for Traveller women. They are offered practical and/ or emotional support with issues arising within and outside of the prison. The team works with the Probation Officers to develop pre-release plans for clients who will need a lot of support when they leave prison.

Some of the clients we work with have been given TR or did not receive a prison sentence on condition they link with Exchange House Ireland. The Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service Team has facilitated the Domestic Violence group work with women as well as Auricular Acupuncture at the Dochas.

Domestic Violence Service

Exchange House Ireland Domestic Violence Response for children and young people continues to be at the forefront. The team responds to Domestic Violence through counselling, practical and emotional support, group work with women, young people and men. We also provide a court accompaniment service to clients.

Children & Young People's Service

Service Overview

Exchange House Ireland Children and Young People's Service is the main provider of Youth Services to the Traveller Community in the greater Dublin Area.

Using the Critical Social Education Model the Youth Service respects, encourages and supports the young people we work with, most of whom are at

Stay-in-School Programme

The Stay-In-Schools Programme works with young people, their parents and their schools to promote attendance and progression through the education system. The Children & Young Peoples' works directly with the young person, liaising with schools

to check attendance figures and maintains contact with parents to "check in" and offer support. Last year the Children & Young Peoples' worked with 13 schools including St Joseph's, Ballymun, St John's College, Ballyfermot and St. Dominic's, Ballyfermot. Statistics have shown attendance has risen to 90% and all of the young people who were due to sit state exams completed them. As a part of the Stay in Schools Programme we

nominated our young people who successfully completed their exams for the Exchange House Ireland National Educational Achievement Award



risk of early school leaving, drugs, poverty and social exclusion. Through social and personal education Exchange House Youth Service aims to ensure that as many young Travellers as possible are able to participate in youth activities.

We run programmes that create opportunities for the youths we work with, challenging them to take responsibility, use their talents and increase their chances to stay in the education system. The ultimate goal is to enable them to take a greater control of their own life and participate in their own community and the wider society. The primary target age group is 10-25 years, both male and female.

Comhairle na nóg

Another ongoing and very positive output is the participation of our young people in Comhairle na nÓg. This is done on a voluntary basis and the young people attend meetings and training every two weeks. These meetings are held in Dublin City Hall council chambers. Comhairle na nÓg gives

young people a voice and we feel this is vital in the lives of our young people. Not only does it benefit them but it benefits their schools and communities.

work with in the previous year are offered places on the programmes. The programmes provide fun and educational visits. The projects were a huge success and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

AfterSchool Programmes

The After Schools programmes based in St. Oliver's Park, Clondalkin and Labre Park, Ballyfermot continues to run on a daily basis offering essential support to over 50 young people ages 4-16. They offer

homework assistance, literacy support and I.T. skills. Personal development is achieved by programmes such as healthy eating programmes, music and creative arts. The co-ordinators also link in with the local schools and acts as liaison

for parents and teachers.



Education Away Programme

The Educational Away Programme aims to develop a positive and proactive working relationship with the young people who are selected to take part in these programmes. The selection process to

identify the young people who take part in these programmes is done in consultation with Youth Workers, parents, Social Workers, teachers and other relevant agencies who work with young people. The activities such as outdoor adventure, leadership training and team building are designed to encourage and support the young person in

Summer 2014

Our Summer Programmes run for 6 weeks in July and August. Young people from all the sites we

their personal development through the Critical Social Education Model. These programmes are specifically designed to suit the target group.

National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF)

The Children & Young Peoples' became involved in the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF) which has been implemented by the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The aim of the NQSF is to establish standards in the practice and provision of youth work in Ireland. The NQSF has given the Children & Young Peoples' a chance to review, reflect and assess all the programmes we provide. It also gave us a chance to review our work on a more formal basis through one to one supervision.



Education & Training Service

Service Overview

The Education & Training Service operates as a QQI accredited centre of education and training for members of the Traveller community. The ethos of the service is to promote the value of formal education and provide a service of quality. People come with diverse educational needs to avail of our service. We provide opportunities for adults in basic education, IT training and accessing further education and employment. We are working with increasing numbers of people, who are returning to education to improve their literacy skills. Some learners want to be more involved in their children's education, some for their own personal enrichment and are seeking employment & further education. We also worked with people who wish to access further education or training. We offer guidance and support to any member of the Traveller community who is seeking advice in relation to education. We are supported in this department by the City of Dublin Educational Training Board (CDETB), who provides us with tutor hours.

City of Dublin Education Training Baord Local Training Initiative

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) has both male and female learners. All are engaged in Education programmes. The programme provides a safe learning environment for many people who have previously had negative experiences of formal education; some, indeed, have had no experience of formal education. The success of the course is

reflected by educational achievements attained by the learners. The LTI learners have gained FETAC certification in a range of subjects including Communications, Maths, Computers/IT, Food & Nutrition, Manual Handling and First Aid. The majority of the learners go on to further education and training. The LTI programme provides learners with educational opportunities they previously missed out on. The programme ranges from pre-literate to Level 4.

Department of Social Protection Community Employment Scheme

There are two distinct strands that the Community Employment Scheme offers to the learners. Firstly, the learners on the project have, many for the first time, the opportunity to access formal education. They engage in literacy programmes, training and work experience. They have achieved FETAC certification in many subjects including Communications, Maths, Art & Design, Computers/IT, Personal Effectiveness, First Aid, Food & Nutrition and Work Experience. The second strand focuses on work experience. This provides support to the core staff of Exchange House Ireland in delivering front line services to the community in the areas of Family Support & Crisis Intervention Service (including accommodation, domestic violence and addiction), Children & Young Peoples' and Education services. People on work experience in Education Service also provide literacy support to their lower skilled peers.

Adult Basic Education Service

We provide a one-to-one literacy service for people who are not engaged in programmes and need to develop their skills in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. We take referrals and requests for literacy from individuals and from external services such as other Traveller organisations, homeless agencies, the Irish Prison & Probation Services, and other educational organisations. Each of the learners who we work with on a one to one basis needs a lot of support. We design individual learning plans for them based on their needs and their strengths. This has been found to encourage people and provide them with a strong foundation for moving forwards with personal or academic goals.

Information Service & Third Level Access

The Education & Training Service provided an information service nationally to individuals and organisations who wish to identify progression routes to further education and employment. This information & support service will facilitate school leavers and mature students.

Intercultural Education

We also offer intercultural education and information on the Traveller community in general and the issues they experience, to various interested groups and service providers. This has proven to be a positive learning experience for the groups who have received the information training.

The Exchange House Ireland National Educational Achievement Award

Exchange House Ireland National Educational Achievement Award has been presented to over 500 people since it began in 2008. The award is presented to members of the Traveller community who had completed the Junior Certificate, G.C.S.E.s, the Leaving Certificate, A-Levels or a Third Level course. This is a national event which is held annually. The award acknowledges the achievement of the recipients highlights role models from the Traveller community in the area of formal education and is proactive in acknowledging the benefits that education brings to the lives of people, the community and society in general.

European Union Projects

Sunia Geel 2

This project, continued to run in 2014.

Sunia Geel derives from the Irish Traveller language, Cant. It translates "take care of yourself",

for themselves and their children. The incidence of domestic violence and intra-family violence will be reduced by promoting a zero tolerance approach within marginalised communities and amongst those delivering social services to ethnic minorities. The main objectives of the project are:

1. To develop a deeper more evidenced based understanding of the needs of service users from minority groups in relation to professional service provision;
2. To empower women and children by increasing their skills base to help them make informed choices for a better future;
3. To build the capacity of marginalised communities and service providers to initiate and promote change within their own environments that will enable them to address the issue of domestic violence and uphold the rights of women and children;

To respond to women and children experiencing domestic violence by providing emotional and practical support in a culturally appropriate way.

There was much activity in the project by the partners. One highlight was the international Domestic Violence Conference held in Dublin in May 2014. Over 70 people attended, with presentations by An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service, Women's Aid, and the National University of Ireland Galway.



SUNIA GEEL 2

and is viewed as an apt name for what *Sunia Geel 2* aims to achieve: families being valued and supported.

The goal of this project is to provide a framework to reduce violence against women and children of marginalised ethnic communities and ensure that their needs for safety and support are met.

Target groups include:

- Sinti and Roma in Romania and Italy;
- Muslim migrants in Germany, Austria, Italy and Romania;
- And Travellers in Ireland

The Project will provide an increased understanding of the needs of service users, thus creating the possibility of an improved response. It is critical that women are empowered to make informed and safe choices





Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with training, support, information, and guidance on their chosen career path.

The training is focused on blended mentoring which encompasses both face-to-face and online sessions. *Tandem Now* promotes technological developments in mentoring and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve career opportunities for ethnic minority groups.

This project includes partner countries from Austria, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Ireland. The partners will have a total of three meetings together throughout the project's life span where they will plan, share information, design training, and evaluate the progress of the work.



As partner 6, Exchange House Ireland are working on the evaluation section of the project and

will gather feedback from all of the other partners. This feedback shows partners what aspects of the project are going well and what areas may need improvement in order for the project to be a success. The feedback is presented in the form of a report and provided to all partners after each meeting. Tandem Now finished in 2014.

LeaCoMM

LeaCoMM Learning Community Migration and Minorities: Platform for Teachers and Teacher Educators

The aim of LeaCoMM is the establishment of a platform for teachers in Europe who work with multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multireligious learners in their classroom or school



environment.

LeaCoMM

aims to offer

tools for teachers to develop their skills in this area as well as create a network for teachers across Europe to exchange good learning practice, methods and learning materials.

LeaCoMM's platform for teachers will be an online intercultural environment through a dedicated website and social networking media. On the website there will be a number of areas for teachers, including:

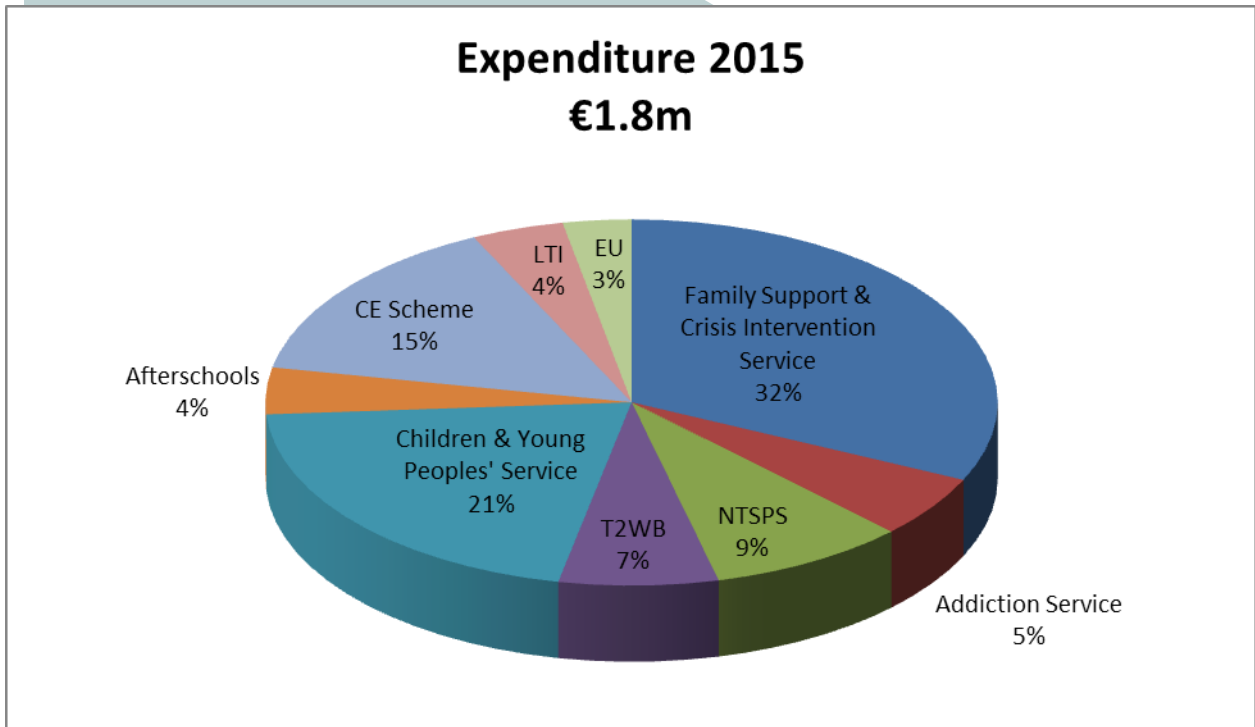
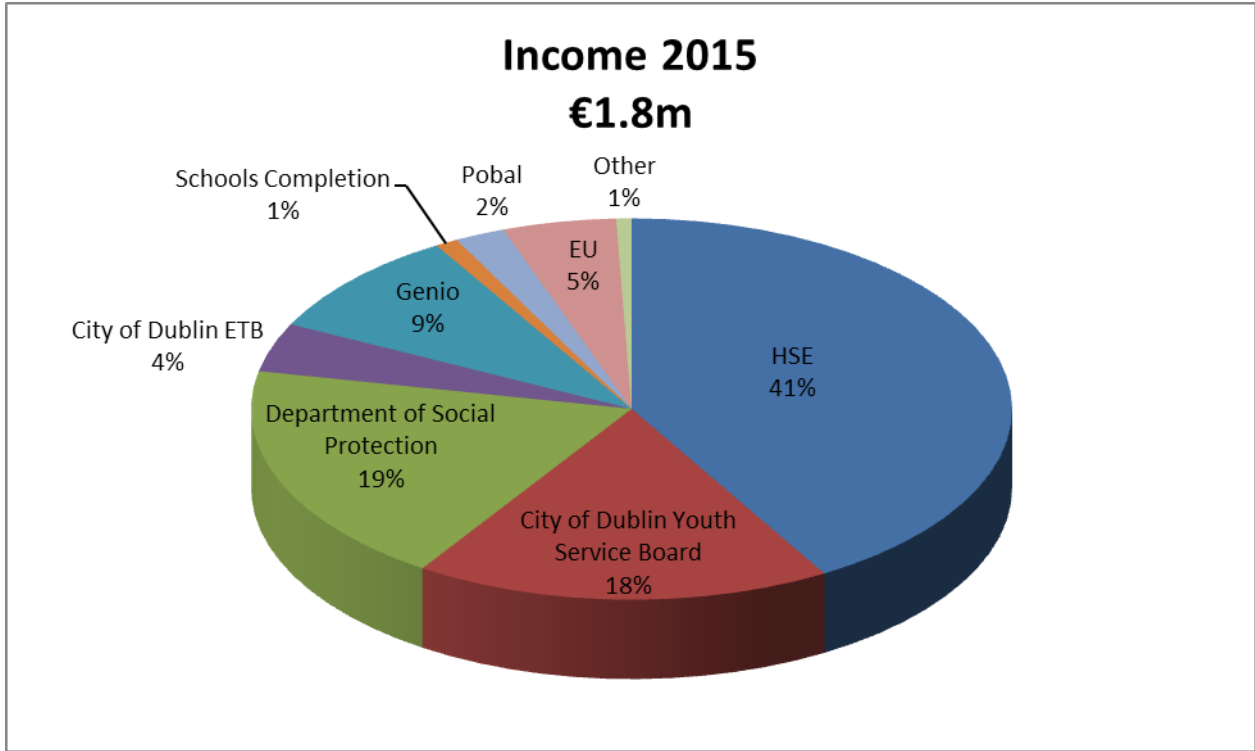
- a general library and research area with the latest academic research, studies and policy
- a resource materials area where teachers can exchange relevant materials - created by teachers for teachers
- an area offering modules for teachers to improve their own inter and trans-cultural skills
- a forum for teachers across Europe to directly communicate with each other, list questions, make recommendations and other points of educational interest – the actual Learning Community of Teachers and Teacher Educators

The importance of the involvement of immigrants and ethnic minorities in schools and education is still insufficiently reflected in the education and training of teachers. Therefore, LeaCoMM aims to also look at the qualification of teachers in teacher education systems and those with responsibility for this area in school administration. Of course with some extremely limited resources in the various EU countries making these changes may prove a challenge. To ensure success in this area the need for up-to-date, practical and science-based instruments is essential.

Partners in LeaCoMM are:

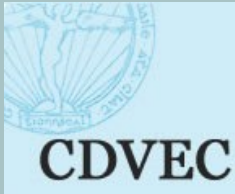
- Soros International House – Vilnius, Lithuania (lead)
- Federal School Board Stuttgart – Stuttgart, Germany
- Desmos NGO – Katerini, Greece
- Exchange House Ireland – Dublin, Ireland
- Anton Martin Slomšek Institute (ZAMS) – Maribor, Slovenia
- Bilkent University – Ankara, Turkey

Income and Expenditure









Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



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