



DEPAUL

Homelessness has no place

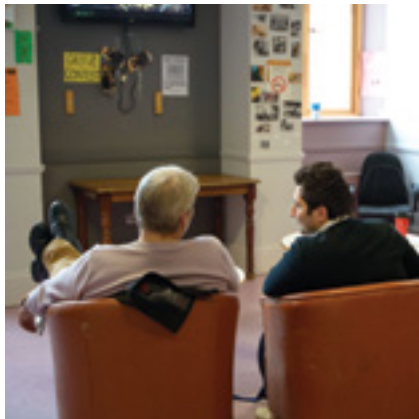
ANNUAL REPORT



2019

ie.depaulcharity.org

**LAYING
FOUNDATIONS**



**STEPPING
UP**



**PERMANENT
SOLUTIONS**



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

I am delighted to share the Depaul 2019 Annual Report; my first as CEO. Having moved from my role as Director of Services into the CEO position mid-way through 2019 I am proud to say Depaul remains strong in our determination to see a better future for those experiencing homelessness.

The issue of homelessness continues to challenge us as a society. In the Republic of Ireland figures continued to grow throughout the course of the year and while the numbers experiencing homelessness in Northern Ireland did not rise, throughout 2019 the changing nature of homelessness and the complex needs of those who need our services became evident.

Across the island, there remains far too many individuals and families accessing homeless accommodation. The role of Depaul has never felt more vital.

We supported 4,806 men, women and children, a rise of 10.9% in one year. Within that number, we supported over 1,000 children, up 23.5% on the previous year's total. We welcomed 15 new-born babies into our services and provided 569 warm beds each night for those who needed them most.



Our 462 staff members worked tirelessly with dedication, commitment and empathy to ensure those experiencing homelessness were given the support they needed.

Depaul is committed to supporting people through a range of accommodation. In 2019 we continued to work with our statutory partners to minimise the over reliance on emergency, one night only beds, and move to provide more supported and long term accommodation options.

In 2019 alone two of our accommodation services, Mount Brown and Spire, transitioned to provide individuals with 24-hour access, six-month placements and most importantly a dedicated key worker to aid them in their move away from homelessness.

'OUR SERVICE USERS CONTINUE TO BE A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR US ALL. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR TIME OF NEED.'

Throughout the year, Depaul played a huge part in preventing homelessness and responded to the needs of the migrant population in the Republic of Ireland. In partnership with the Department of Justice and Equality in Ireland, we expanded our work to seven counties and helped those living in Direct Provision who had been granted Permission to Remain (PTR) in Ireland to transition into independent living and become part of their local community.

I am proud to say last year we helped source accommodation for 328 people, including 168 adults and 160 children through our Cosán Nua or 'New Path' service.

Depaul plays a key role in supporting people, right through their experience, from creating the foundations of stable living environments, to building permanent solutions for people. I am delighted to say Depaul Housing became fully operational at the end of 2019. Into the future we will start delivering vital tenancies for those moving on from homeless services.

In Northern Ireland we continue to deliver our Housing First services in Belfast and Derry/L'Derry.

Our family accommodation services in Belfast supported 56 families experiencing homelessness.

During 2019 Depaul continued to work in collaboration with our partner agencies. We recognise the value in partnership and in maintaining strong relationships.

I would like to recognise the importance of our volunteers in helping us to care for others. Your time and commitment is a valuable resource as we work to end homelessness. I would also like to thank our donors for their continued support throughout 2019. Without your endorsement, we would not be able to deliver vital services.

Most importantly, I would like to commend all of our service users. It is a privilege to support you all and to be there for you in your time of need. The bravery and courage you have shown in the face of such adversity is a source of inspiration to all of us.

Our commitment to you remains as strong as ever as we continue to work towards a society in which everyone has a place to call home.

2019 IN NUMBERS



4,806
men, women and children were supported by Depaul during 2019

▲ UP 10.9%
on 2018



545
families came through our services

▲ UP 6.2%
on 2018




1,088
children facing homelessness were helped

▲ UP 23.5%
on 2018



15
new babies were born to our services



391
service users moved on from our services and found a suitable home



478
volunteers gave their time to help those most in need




29
services were provided across the island of Ireland



569
warm beds provided each night to those who needed them most



2,118
direct nursing and GP consultations were provided

OUR IDENTITY

VISION Our Vision is of a society in which everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

MISSION Our Mission is to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it.

VALUES We celebrate the potential in people;
We put our words in to action;
We aim to take a wider role in civil society;
We believe in rights and responsibilities.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK

- 1 PREVENTION
- 2 FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE
- 3 HIGH SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION
- 4 HEALTH AND REHABILITATION
- 5 HOUSING



A GLOBAL EFFORT

Depaul Slovakia, Photographer Stanci Markovicová

DEPAUL INTERNATIONAL

Depaul in Ireland is not alone in our efforts to protect the most marginalised. We are part of a much wider, global effort to combat homelessness and to protect and support those on the fringes of society. The Depaul family is spread far and wide through the work of Depaul International.

The vital work of Depaul is felt in communities and towns

across the UK, France, Ukraine, Slovakia, Croatia and the USA. Taking inspiration from the spirit and values of Saint Vincent de Paul, a major social reformer in 17th century France, Depaul operates with a collective set of values. Treating people where they are at in life and free of any judgement.

The services provided in each of these countries range

from providing safe shelter and accommodation, helping people to access education and employment, ensuring people have the social services they require and access to food and vital health services. We carry with us the important words and wisdom of Saint Vincent de Paul, *"I will always welcome joyfully any opportunity that comes my way to be of service to you."*



'I AM GRATEFUL THAT I CAN GIVE BACK A LITTLE OF WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME DURING MY LIFE. IT HAS MADE ME FEEL USEFUL, VALUED AND PART OF A TEAM.'

VALUE IN VOLUNTEERING

AILEEN'S STORY

Aileen's volunteer journey with Depaul began in 2010. Having initially volunteered with Depaul Aileen became a project worker. However, shortly after becoming a project worker Aileen was forced to retire due to medical reasons.

"It was time to retire but not time to hang up my boots. I volunteer at reception, it is as if I am completing the circle, I started my volunteering at reception in Backlane and after a hiatus I am back to continue with that role for as long as possible."

Speaking of the impact that volunteering with Depaul has had on her Aileen says, "Personally, the impact it has had on me is to be grateful that I can give back a little of what has been given to me during my life. It has made me feel useful, valued and part of a team."

Aileen goes on to describe her experience volunteering at reception..."Reception is a lovely area to work in as it is the place where there is a lot of interaction with the residents and gives me an opportunity to really get to know them. There is never a dull moment and every day is different. The days are a mixture of fun, laughter and hope while at other times there is frustration, sadness and feeling of helplessness."

Values play an integral part in Aileen's beliefs and in the way she works and supports others. "Values are very important to me; they are like a compass that gives direction and meaning to life. Inherent in these values are social justice, equality and human dignity and I believe these are all essential attitudes and values both for individuals and organisations."

When asked what she would say to encourage others to volunteer Aileen's attitude is 'go for it'. She says, "For young people it opens a whole new world, helps give them a sense of worth, gives them experiences that will help them throughout their lives. For middle aged people it gives them a platform to share their talents, it broadens horizons and gives them a sense of contributing to others and organisations devoted to social change or practical help to those in need."

"For us older people it is a wonderful way of sharing all the experience, wisdom and practical abilities we have accumulated over a lifetime. It gives us a strong feeling that we 'are not over the hill' that we are still useful members of society with a voice that can be heard, hands that can help and a heart that is willing and able to serve."

LAYING FOUNDATIONS

THE BEGINNING OF SPECIALIST CARE

When Depaul was invited to the Republic of Ireland in 2002, the task was clear; build specialist services which support the vulnerable, the most marginalised, and the forgotten. So we opened our very first service in Dublin, to support those who otherwise had nowhere to turn, and our journey began.

We soon found that Depaul's specialised, low threshold approach to supporting people was needed on a much larger scale. Putting faith in our values we pioneered, opening many innovative services, many of which were the first of their kind in Ireland.

However, the Republic of Ireland was not the only place that lacked specialised, low threshold services. In 2005 Depaul expanded and set up its first service in Northern Ireland, Stella Maris. In the process it became one of the only all-island homeless charities. Taking with us our values and a unified approach we began to deliver services never imagined before in Northern Ireland.

Working on the dual principles of harm reduction and low threshold many of our specialised services work to encourage residents to manage their addiction through tailored support and planning. Each resident is assigned a key-worker

who works to help residents attain the life-skills required to move on from homelessness.

Since its inception Depaul has expanded greatly, to the point that we delivered 29 services across the island of Ireland in 2019. Throughout 2019 we carried with us this specialised approach and continued to provide vital interventions and care. For example, in our Suaimhneas service, a service designed to support women who are transitioning from drug treatment programmes, we supported 11 women. In our Tus Nua service we provided support to 40 women who were leaving Dochas prison and at risk of homelessness. These two unique services are run in partnership with the Probation Service and the European Social Fund as well as the Health Service Executive.

In Orchid House we provided temporary supported accommodation to 101 individuals, helping them map their way out of homelessness through support and advocacy. Our Peter's Place service for vulnerable young men and women helped 49 individuals experiencing homelessness by providing vital accommodation. This, coupled with key-work support, allowed them to gain certainty and stability in their lives at a difficult time.



PROVIDING ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE

We believe in providing more than just shelter. For those living with dependency, homelessness can have a devastating impact on their health. Engaging with essential health services can prove difficult for many. That is why we continue to deliver and promote our Depaul Health Initiative.

Through collaboration with a number of hospitals and other health organisations we strive to see better health outcomes for those experiencing homelessness. Depaul's Inclusion Health Model Initiative works in five key areas:

1. Primary Care and Care Provision
2. Complex Care Management
3. Referral and Specialist Pathways
4. Resettlement and Advocacy
5. Homeless Health Peer Advocacy

Across a number of our services in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland we provide vital, on-site health support. In the Republic of Ireland our Back Lane and Sundial House services have a dedicated nurse who delivers treatment and care to those most in need. We continue to plot pathways through the health care system, working in tandem with St. James's Hospital and The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital. In the process alleviating the need for hospital admissions and ensuring appropriate discharge protocols are in place for those leaving hospital.

In Northern Ireland our Stella Maris and Foyle Haven Day Centre ensured service users had access to the basic health supports they required by providing onsite medical interventions. We also

built strong links with local GP's and the newly established Belfast Health Hub. We continue to push for a similar Health Hub to be established in the Derry/L'Derry area.

HOMELESS PEER ADVOCACY

In 2019 we developed a first of its kind, pilot-programme in the Republic of Ireland to help Depaul service user's access vital health care appointments and treatments. In partnership with other organisations, we trained 9 of our service users to become Homeless Health Peer Advocates.

Our peers now accompany others to their medical appointments including hospital visits, GP appointments and visits to the dentist. They are there to listen, support and act as an advocate on behalf of those they are attending appointments with.

In 2019 our peers attended 46 appointments and supported 24 service users ensuring they felt fully supported and had someone on their side.

'WHEN YOU MEET PEOPLE AT THE DOORWAY, MEET THEM AS YOU WOULD MEET YOUR SISTER, YOUR BROTHER, YOUR UNCLE. EVERYONE DESERVES TO BE MET LIKE THIS!'

Amanda Jane - Depaul staff member





STEPPING UP

In recent years' homelessness in Ireland has grown rapidly. The rising cost in rental prices, coupled with a lack of housing supply has impacted people's lives in a very profound way.

As the figures grew, Depaul stepped in, playing an important role to ensure people were not left without shelter in their time of need. The need for one night only, emergency accommodation to meet this demand grew too. Depaul have had to play an integral role in providing emergency accommodation over the last number of years. At one point Depaul was providing over 200 emergency beds to meet people's needs.

However, we have always believed that this model is not sufficient to meet the specific needs of each individual. Over the last number of years, we have advocated strongly for a move away from the Emergency Accommodation model to a Supported Temporary Accommodation model where service users could avail of 24 hour access and six month placements. This, alongside the assignment of a dedicated key worker for each individual, would provide people with greater stability and a better chance of exiting homelessness as soon as they were ready.

Our beliefs and advocacy have enabled us to transition what were once emergency services to a better model of care and support. For example, our Little Britain Street service, which was set up in 2016 to meet the growing need, was an emergency service. Now it operates as a fully Supported Temporary Accommodation service, offering more intensive, longer-term support and last year helped 318 individuals.

Likewise, our Mount Brown service was opened as an emergency service in 2015. At the beginning of 2019 Mount Brown transitioned to a fully

Supported Temporary Accommodation service which helped 256 men and women.

July 2019 saw the closure of the largest emergency accommodation service in Ireland, the Depaul managed Brú Aimsir service. This service provided 100 emergency beds each night, reaching 113 beds at times when demand increased. Again, advocating for a better way of supporting those experiencing homelessness, a new service was opened in its place. Our Spire service now supports 70 people each night and operates on a Supported Temporary Accommodation basis. Between both Brú Aimsir and Spire, Depaul supported 1,291 men and women throughout 2019.

Depaul currently operates one emergency service, Blessington Street, which last year provided vital shelter to 405 individuals. While the need for emergency interventions persist we feel there is a better way of providing support beyond one night only assistance.

We will continue to advocate for the right type of services to be put in place to meet people where they are at and support them in a way that makes most sense. Homelessness can have a deeply traumatic effect on people's lives and brings with it uncertainty. That is why we will keep advocating for a move away from emergency services to a model that provides more stability for those experiencing homelessness.

DELIVERING IN THE COMMUNITY

In recent years there has been a move to provide services in the community, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Depaul have been at the forefront of this shift in service delivery in both jurisdictions. In 2019 Depaul supported over 2,000 people in their communities, providing vital interventions which helped people to maintain their tenancies and avoid homelessness.

Our floating support services in Derry/L'Derry and Belfast played a big part in our work in local communities. These two services together supported 93 people with one-to-one professional support and helped those experiencing difficulties in sustaining their tenancies due to addiction or substance misuse.

Our Foyle Haven Day Centre continues to play a vital role in helping people in the Derry/L'Derry region who are street drinkers. This service has been in operation since 2001 and has been managed by Depaul since 2011. It provides both practical supports and health supports too. Last year this service supported 285 individuals.

In the Republic of Ireland our Ballymun Case Management Team supported 65 adults in the community throughout 2019. Our Migrant

Homeless Action Team helped 75 adults. This service is focused on resettlement and community engagement and integration. It also acts as a referral agent for people to access specialised support relating to housing, health, addiction, training and employment. Last year this service helped 14 individuals find a positive move away from homelessness.

Even when service users find their way out of homelessness there is always a threat of loneliness and isolation. Sometimes when people move away from busy, accommodation-based settings and into their own home they can find things difficult. The daily interactions with others may not be there anymore and their support group may have narrowed considerably.

Our Community Befriending service continues to play an important role in preventing loneliness and isolation. Each participant is assigned a befriending volunteer who they organise weekly outings and catch ups with. The service also provides monthly group outings for all those involved. Last year this service supported 35 individuals.



'I HAVE FELT PRIVILEGED TO SPEND TIME WITH SERVICE USERS, TO BE A SMALL PART OF THEIR LIVES AND TRUSTED WITH THEIR STORIES.'

Una - Depaul volunteer

A FAMILY SETTING

Being there for families has always been part of Depaul's history. Our family services have become of vital importance, especially in recent years where we have seen the number of families experiencing homelessness grow rapidly. By the end of 2019 there were 1,548 families homeless in Ireland, this included 3,422 children (Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government Homeless Report, Dec 2019). In Northern Ireland almost 6,000 families presented as homeless in 2018/19 (Dept. for Communities, Northern Ireland Homeless Stastics, 2018-19).

Throughout the year, Depaul provided essential accommodation to 152 families, including 210 children. Homelessness can have a detrimental impact on a child's life. It can leave them feeling confused, lost and uncertain. It can also have an impact on their growth and development.

Mater Dei was Depaul's first accommodation based family service, having tranfered from Atlantic House, opened its doors in 2006. Since then it has been providing vital accommodation to families in the Belfast region. Last year Mater Dei helped 29 families and provided vital accommodation for 44 children.

In our Cloverhill family service, which is run in partnership with Radius Housing in Belfast, we

supported 27 families, including 68 children throughout 2019. This service also provides a dedicated Child Support Worker who is there to support children through what can be a traumatic period in their young lives.

In the Republic of Ireland our Rendu service, which provides 19 self-contained apartments, supported 96 families, including 98 children. In recent years, with the growth in family homelessness in Ireland, a large number of family hubs have been created to meet the demand for accommodation. Rendu is in essence a precursor to what has widely become commonplace in terms of emergency measures for families caught in it.

Our Ballymun Case Management Team, a support service for families who are stuck in hotel accommodation, supported 83 families in 2019, including 142 children. This service helped 18 families find their way out of homelessness in what continues to be a difficult time in terms of housing options.

Across all of our services in 2019 we supported 545 families, a rise of 6.2% on the previous year. During the same time we also helped 1,088 children, a rise of 23.5%.



BUILDING PERMANENT SOLUTIONS

'WE ARE HERE TO END HOMELESSNESS, WE WON'T STOP UNTIL WE DO'

Depaul regional office team



For some people experiencing homelessness and addiction, independent living may not be an option. The support they need may be multifaceted and require long term residency. A number of our services provide vital, long-term accommodation and support to individuals who need it most.

Our Sundial House service, opened in 2008, provides long term support for men and women who have experienced long periods of street homelessness and who have entrenched alcohol addiction. The service is run in partnership with Túath Housing and the Health Service Executive (HSE) and provides individual rooms for 30 people. It also operates on a Harm Reduction Model where residents are encouraged to sign up to an Alcohol Management Programme to help reduce the harmful effects of alcohol. The service also has an onsite nurse and each resident is appointed a key-worker. Last year this service provided support to 40 people.

As well as providing emergency and short-term accommodation, Depaul managed the 105 year old, Back Lane service which provides some residents with long-term care and support. Of the 62 beds provided in 2019, 24 of these offered long-term accommodation to some residents. The service supports people experiencing addiction and those with acute mental health needs. There is a dedicated Mental Health Support Worker on site and an onsite nurse. Meals are also provided on a daily basis. In 2019 Back Lane supported 281 men.

In Northern Ireland we continue to further the Housing First model, a model which Depaul pioneered on the island of Ireland back in 2013. We believe strongly in this model and over the

years it has positively changed people's lives. With intensive wrap-around supports the model has shown that people living with complex needs can live and thrive independently within their own communities.

At present we operate two Housing First services in Derry/L'Derry and Belfast. Last year these two important services enabled 73 people to live within their own communities and feel like they truly belong. We continue to push for a further roll-out of this model across Northern Ireland and feel it is the best way of ending long-term homelessness among those with complex addiction and health needs.

As we look to the future we believe building and sustaining long-term solutions are key if we are to truly realise an end to homelessness. For some, a way out of homelessness can be straight forward, for others specialist care and support is required. It is important that multiple options exist for people so they can exit homelessness when they are ready. That is why in 2019 we continued to further the development of our Housing Association, Depaul Housing. The addition of Depaul Housing will allow Depaul to directly move people out of homelessness and into their own tenancies. It will ensure we are not only aiding people in their move out of homelessness but also providing the vital accommodation they need to do so. Depaul Housing will help us to realise our mission of ending homelessness and changing lives.



'I FEEL I AM BACK IN CONTROL AND I CAN LOOK AFTER THINGS. THERE IS ALWAYS SUPPORT AND HOPE THERE.'

FINDING HOPE

BOBBY'S STORY

When Bobby lost his home he felt alone and confused, "I would describe being homeless as a feeling of shame and a huge blow to your ego and self-confidence. It's an emotional blow. It does affect your psyche, your thinking and your self-worth."

Before finding Depaul, Bobby was referred to a hostel with limited access. "During the day you had nothing else to do but walk around the town. Go and get drunk if you had the money or sit in a television room which was totally overcrowded and you could only watch one channel. It was pretty strict with times and you had to be back at nine o'clock at night."

He was then placed in Depaul's Stella Maris service where the team put him in touch with Depaul's Housing First service. "From the minute I first went to Housing First it was a lifeline. I could feel it, that it was genuine. I could feel all the staff cared and they weren't just going through the motions. I could feel that there was genuine empathy there."

Depaul's Housing First support worker Darren says, "Stella referred Bobby to Housing First and then we worked with Bobby from then. We looked at areas that would be suitable for him and

we secured this single let where Bobby is living now."

Speaking about the help he continues to receive from the Housing First team Bobby says, "They help me tremendously. They are always supportive. Anything I ask about or I am unsure of I contact Depaul. They are always willing to help me with everything. They ask after my welfare, how am I doing, do I need anything. They check on prescriptions so they know when it is due. They ask how I am doing for shopping, they are really, really good."

Since securing his home Bobby describes what life is like now, "I feel a million per cent better. I've got my own privacy; I feel a lot better in myself. Mentally and morally. You can get really down when thinking 'what's happened to me, look at my life, have I done this to myself? It's a guilt that really isn't your fault but you can make it your fault. It's low self-worth."

"Now that's gone and I feel confident in myself again and I feel more self-aware and adjusted. I feel I'm back in control and I can look after things. I can function a lot better and I know I have the support of Housing First. There's always support and hope there."

OUR FINANCES

As a charity Depaul receives funding from a number of sources. It is our duty to ensure the monies we receive are spent in a prudent and cost effective manner. Our aim is to make sure funding is spent in a way as to have the best outcome for our service users and those accessing Depaul services. Depaul has three key sources of funding:

- Funding from Statutory Bodies
- Rental Income from our services
- Fundraising Income

In the Republic of Ireland our main funders include the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, the Health Service Executive, the Department of Justice and Equality and the European Social Fund.

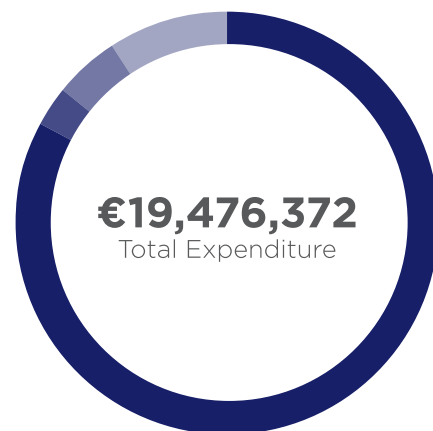
Our main funders in Northern Ireland include the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Public Health Agency.

INCOME



- 81%** Statutory
- 7%** Rent/Housing Benefit
- 9%** Fundraising
- 3%** Other

EXPENDITURE



- 83%** Homeless Services
- 3%** HR/Services Support
- 5%** Fundraising
- 9%** Admin/IT/Audit /Governance

SUPPORTER PROMISE



Without vital funding from the public we would simply not be able to deliver on our mission to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it. We operate with a very high level of service provision to ensure the best outcomes for the people we support each day.

Our supporters give us more than just money; they give us hope and belief. Hope in the fact that we know there are people out there who care just as much as we do and who want to change the world for the better. A belief that they share and support our values and are

right behind us as we go about supporting the most vulnerable in our society.

We are always available to answer any questions that our donors, and potential donors, may have and to talk about the work we do and what your support means.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good Governance is at the heart of all that we do. We strive to be open and transparent in our work and in how we operate. Depaul operates as one charity but is registered as two legal entities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. We have registered charity status in both jurisdictions.

Our accounts and financial reports comply with the principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP). We are also subject to periodic and random audits by external organisations such as local authorities and other state agencies.



We have a number of service level agreements with several Government Departments, and we are required to make quarterly and annual returns for funding received. Depaul's Board of Trustees play a vital role in ensuring that we are adhering to best practice at all times, ensuring the organisation is achieving its goals and objectives while at the same time being managed in a transparent, accountable and effective way.

In addition, Depaul adheres to the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public and the UK Code of Fundraising Practice. We are registered with the Charities Regulator in Ireland as well as the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

OUR TEAM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Murphy, Chair

Paul Stanley, Treasurer

Laurence J Tuomey, Secretary

David Lane
(Appointed 3 December 2019)

Mary Leonard
(Appointed 16 September 2019)

Jennifer Lee
(Appointed 26 June 2019)

Cormac O'Tighearnaigh
(Resigned 15 January 2019)

Fr. Paschal Scallon

Michael Murphy

John Dominic Patrick Burke

Paul White

Patricia Blaney

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Kerry Anthony
(Resigned 5 July 2019)

David Carroll
(Interim CEO 8 July 2019,
Appointed 2 August 2019)

David Carroll, Director of
Services and Development
(Resigned 5 July 2019)

Dermot Murphy, Director of
Services and Development
(Interim 8 July 2019, Appointed
3 December 2019)

Deirdre Canavan, Acting
Director of Services and
Development (Interim 8 July
2019 - 2 December 2019)

Denis Mahoney, Director of
Finance and Risk

Mairéad McGinn, Director
of Fundraising and
Communications

Sarah Reeves, Director of People
and Organisation

REGISTERED OFFICES (2019)

Dublin
Depaul
Holy Cross College
Clonliffe Road
Dublin 3
D03P2E7

Belfast
Depaul
449 Antrim Road
Belfast
BT15 3BJ

AUDITOR

Walsh O'Brien Harrett

SOLICITOR

Kilcullen Associates

FORGING A NEW PATH

SIBUSISO'S STORY

Sibusiso came to Ireland with her daughters Patricia (9) and Innocent (15) in February 2016. The threat of violence, civil unrest and the death of her Mother left Sibusiso and her young family vulnerable so she made the decision to search for a better life.

Upon arrival Sibusiso and her family's application for asylum was processed and they were sent to Baleskin in Dublin where those who have applied for asylum are sent before being placed in accommodation centres across the country.

Her young children found the adjustment to living in direct provision difficult, "My kids were telling me 'Mammy, let's go back'. This is painful. I told them you need to be patient, one day things will change. But they couldn't understand. Especially about eating and the set times. The times in-between when there was nothing, these are kids and it was hard."

When they moved to Athlone Sibusiso's children were placed into school and she found that a relief, not only for her children but herself, "When they were in school, from my side, it was relief as I could go out and express myself." While staying in Direct Provision the family were dealt a cruel blow when Sibusiso's youngest daughter Patricia was

diagnosed with synovial sarcoma, a rare form of cancer, in her foot.

As a result, Patricia had to have her foot amputated and she now wears a prosthetic foot, "She's still grieving for her leg, sometimes she's angry. When we lived in Mosney a lot of kids would ask what happened to you and that made her not want to engage with other kids. But since we moved she goes outside and she plays in the garden with her dolly's, she is happy. In school she talks to everyone and she is very active."

As a result of her daughter's medical condition Sibusiso took up a carers course and now works nights as a carer, "I did a course as I felt like I have to help the community. In terms of my daughter's situation I realised other people need help too."

In September 2019 Sibusiso received notice that she had been granted asylum in Ireland and that is where Depaul came in. "I met with Depaul staff then and they said 'any help that you need, you are in the right place.'" Depaul helped Sibusiso with a number of things including getting on the social housing list, applying for benefits for her children and helping source accommodation.

After a string of viewings, she received news that she had secured a house, Sibusiso explains

**'I KNOW THAT HERE
IN IRELAND, MY
KIDS ARE FREE'**

her emotions, "I jumped. The first thing I did is I called Depaul and said I found a house. I think the support they gave me, they showed me I can still do more than what I was expecting."

She goes on to explain how her daughter Patricia reacted to the news that they had found a new home, "When she found out we were moving she was very happy. She told me that from today our life is going to change. I asked her why and she said 'Now, we are living in the community. I'm able to do everything other people do and she's changing and starting to adapt to life outside.'"

"I just want the best life for my kids. To go to school and have their own families and not to live the life that I live. I know that they are here (Ireland) and they are free."

Dublin Office

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