



**We supported over  
11,500 people in 2014**

# **Focus Ireland** Annual Report 2014


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CHY 7220





# Focus Ireland Annual Report 2014

**More than one family lost  
their home every day in 2014**

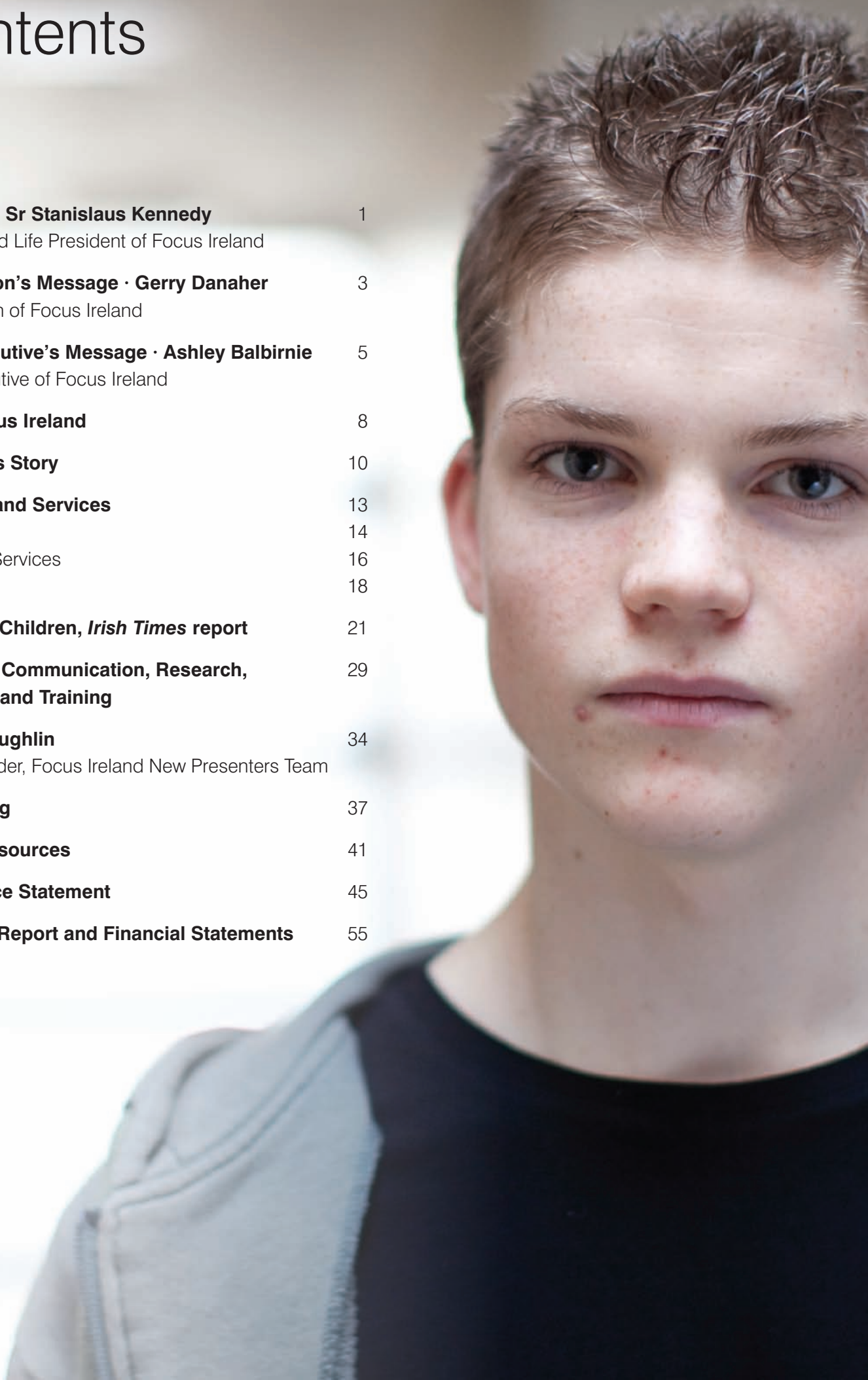


**'I can't draw my house.  
I don't remember what it looks like.'**  
**Lucy, 5**

**'Homeless Children', *Irish Times* report  
(see pages 21–27 for full story)**

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# Foreword

## Sr Stanislaus Kennedy

Founder and Life President of Focus Ireland

Next year is the centenary of the 1916 Proclamation of Independence, which promised to cherish 'all the children of the nation equally'.



There is talk by the government and in the media about the end of austerity, and the economy is improving in some ways, which is positive news. However, over 450 families became homeless last year, including over 1,000 children. This is happening every day. Families lose their home as they can't afford to pay the rent or mortgage. In 2013, a total of 20 families a month became homeless in Dublin; in 2014, this doubled to 40 families.

As you will read in this Annual Report, staff at Focus Ireland are working with many households in these situations. In 2014, we supported over 11,500 people who were homeless or at risk of losing their home. And the harsh fact is that they have not seen any green shoots of recovery; things are actually getting worse for them. Rent supplement payments

are too low, with national rent increases of 11% in 2013 and nearly 10% in 2014.

It is vital that the government takes firm action to cut the growing number of households becoming homeless by supporting them to keep a roof over their heads. A first step is to increase rent supplement and to freeze rents until the current housing and homeless crisis is over. It is shameful that the government has refused to do this so far. There are some measures in place that have helped to prevent some families from becoming homeless, which are welcome, but clearly not enough.

Urgent steps need to be taken to improve access to affordable accommodation. The government must introduce tax changes for landlords to make it feasible for them to rent their properties and to



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**Despite all of the good work by Focus Ireland and other organisations, the situation continues to deteriorate as there is a critical shortage of affordable accommodation.**

encourage more to enter the market to increase the supply of rented accommodation to meet the growing demand. We also need to see urgent progress and delivery of housing under the government's very welcome Social Housing Strategy.

There are also many people struggling to pay their mortgages, and the government must take a firm hand with the banks and financial institutions to ensure that we do not see the avalanche of repossessions of family homes that many have warned of.

As you read this, some families who are homeless are squeezed into hotel rooms – five or six people in one room, with nowhere to cook or for children to play. Focus Ireland is the lead agency working to support families who are homeless in Dublin. We do this on behalf of Dublin City Council. We also work with families around the country, including Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Sligo. Despite all of the good work by Focus Ireland and other organisations, the situation continues to deteriorate as there is a critical shortage of affordable accommodation.

I still hear terrible stories from people with young children who come into Focus Ireland looking for someone to listen and to tell them that they matter, to help them to find and keep a home. Every day I encounter families with small children who are harassed, broken, their self-esteem trampled on, the parents distraught and the children traumatised. Often, the best that we as a society can offer them is a hotel room.

This was intended as a stop-gap response but has become a way of life for some families confined to living in one room for up to nine months or more. Now, even this inadequate accommodation is in short supply. The Taoiseach accepted last year that homelessness is at a crisis point. But we have not yet seen a crisis response. State-subsidised rents are too low to be attractive to landlords. People in financial distress have made huge sacrifices to top up their rent supplement but this is not sustainable. When they run into arrears, they lose their homes.

If the government tells people who can't afford a home (and there is no social housing) that they must find their homes in the private rented market, it must ensure that it is possible to obtain a secure and long-term home. There also needs to be a clear and effective short-term strategy to tackle the current crisis in family homelessness and to facilitate access to affordable housing for single people.

The government must show real leadership on this issue and not just play the political game of saying the right things in the media but not following up with the specific actions required now. They must offer hope to families living in fear and provide them with a place to call home. This would be a true and fitting way to ensure that we really do cherish all of our children equally.

**Sr Stanislaus Kennedy**  
Founder and Life President

# Chairperson's Message

**Gerry Danaher**

Chairperson of Focus Ireland

This Annual Report tells the story of an organisation making extraordinary efforts to respond to a rapidly escalating homelessness crisis.



This crisis had the most dramatic impact on hundreds of families who lost their homes, resulting in far too many children living in single hotel rooms and struggling to maintain places in schools that are located significant distances from the hotels where they are staying. The end of the year brought us the tragic death of Jonathan Corrie, which reminded us again of the terrible human vulnerability that people who are homeless experience every day. This report sets out how Focus Ireland responded to these challenges and to all of the other individual crises that never made it to the newspapers.

My first task is to thank Joyce Loughnan who was CEO of the organisation from 2009 until her resignation in October 2014 on health grounds. Joyce was a powerhouse of energy and innovation for the organisation and was hugely important in leading the organisation successfully through the challenges created during the first phase of the financial crisis and the recession. Joyce's commitment to ensuring that every resource available to Focus Ireland was deployed most effectively to achieve our goals has meant that we have weathered the storms of the recession with very few services facing reductions and growth in most of them. It was with great regret that the Board accepted Joyce's resignation and, in particular, it was a great personal regret for me to see such an inspirational leader depart the organisation.

One of the measures of a strong CEO is the strength of the teams which they build, so it was heartening that the Director of Finance, Mark Byrne, was able to assume the role of Acting CEO so readily. Mark operated in that capacity for two periods over approximately 18 months, and the major achievements set out in this report are a testament to his effectiveness in this role and the support he received from the executive team and staff during this period. On behalf of the Board, I wish to record our appreciation to Mark for leading the organisation so successfully during this period.

Following a comprehensive recruitment process, the Board appointed Ashley Balbirnie as the new CEO in January 2015. Ashley comes to us with a wealth of managerial experience in the private and charitable sector, and I look forward to Ashley bringing that experience to the homeless sector and to Focus Ireland.

In last year's report I emphasised the important responsibilities to which all charity boards must rise. While media attention comes and goes, there is much less media scrutiny of charities than there was in 2014. This is regrettable, as a more sustained and professional reporting on these issues would result in a stronger and more credible sector and a more informed public. Nevertheless, we must continue to improve the clarity and transparency of our reporting



**It is likely that 2015 will be an even more difficult year. Trends in homelessness tend to lag behind other indicators in the economy, and people are currently on the point of losing their homes as a result of things that happened several years ago.**

and I believe that this Annual Report takes further such steps through the adoption of the new SORP guidelines and the reorganisation of material to make it more accessible. We have also launched a new 'transparency' section on our website.

Last year we identified the delivery of affordable housing as the most important task facing the government and one on which its homelessness strategy should eventually be judged. The intervening period has seen the publication of both 'Construction 2020' and the more specific 'Social Housing Strategy', both of which Focus Ireland has welcomed. However, the difficulties that will be faced in delivering the promised homes should not be underestimated. From the problems of providing the finance in a sustainable way and working through the labyrinths of the planning process, there are many steps between the fine words and the new homes. Over the course of 2014, the Board approved a number of changes to our structure and accounts to allow us to more effectively access the Housing Finance Agency and private funding so that we can make our own contribution to this project.

It is likely that 2015 will be an even more difficult year. Trends in homelessness tend to lag behind other indicators in the economy, and people are currently on the point of losing their homes as a result of things that happened several years ago. The long-term effects of the economic crisis will continue to be seen in homelessness for several years to come. However, I am confident that Focus Ireland goes forward into this period as a strong organisation capable of speaking out for people who are facing homelessness by holding public policy up to scrutiny, finding practical solutions and providing the hope that is so desperately needed.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank staff most sincerely for their continuing unstinting efforts on behalf of people who are homeless or at risk. I would also like to thank Board members for their dedication to Focus Ireland and its objectives over the past year and for their support to me as Chairperson.

**Gerry Danaher**  
Chairperson

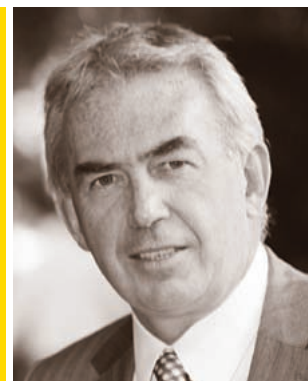
# Chief Executive's Message

## Ashley Balbirnie

Chief Executive of Focus Ireland

Dear friends,

I was delighted to join Focus Ireland as CEO in March 2015.



It is a very special organisation and I am honoured to have the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing work of achieving Focus Ireland's vision that everyone has a place they can call home. I believe this vision is as important today as it was when Sr Stan first founded Focus Ireland 30 years ago. The horribly sad death of Jonathan Corrie, together with the growing crisis of family homelessness, clearly showed us all that we must not give up on achieving this vision.

The demand on our services continued to grow in 2014 as several years of consistent austerity, unemployment, rising rents and a severe shortage of access to affordable housing took their toll. As ever, Focus Ireland worked to respond in a meaningful way to this growing need for support from households.

Focus Ireland supported over 11,500 customers in 2014, providing vital support for many families and individuals who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This was an increase of 15% from the 10,000 we supported in 2013. I am glad to say that, with our support during 2014, over 360 households were successfully settled after a period of homelessness or prevented from losing their home.

### **Providing homes – changing lives**

Focus Ireland also provided support to over 650 households to live independently in homes we own or lease around the country. Our organisation has

significant experience directly providing housing and support for families and individuals within their local communities. As the economic environment improves, we intend to use this experience to help deliver more homes for those most in need in society.

Focus Ireland has long recognised the importance of the prevention of homelessness. A central strand of our current organisational strategy has been to increase the proportion of our resources used to prevent people from losing their homes in the first place. In recent years we have added advice and information centres in Cork, Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford and Sligo to our long-established services in Dublin, and these play a central part in this work. We are currently looking at the next stage of development of this service and how we can make it more effective.

The numbers tell their own story, but visiting Focus Ireland services over my first few months in the post has brought home to me the depth and importance of the services we provide. Speaking to our staff and customers brings out the human experiences behind each of these numbers, and this Annual Report brings a few of those experiences to life for you.

It is clear that the real difference we can make to so many people's lives is only possible because of the skill, flexibility and dedication of our staff and volunteers, who have all helped us to make such an impact.



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### **Campaigning for change**

Another key part of our strategy is working to combat the root causes of homelessness, through research, communications and lobbying for policy change. During 2014, there were some significant developments in our work across this area.

Focus Ireland's long-running 'Right to a Home' campaign took another step forward in February 2014 as members of the Constitutional Convention supported the recommendation that Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – including the right to a home – should be included in the Irish Constitution. We will now focus our attention on encouraging the government to take steps to ensure that this important right is enshrined in the constitution.

During the local elections in 2014, Focus Ireland ran a successful lobbying campaign, targeting all candidates and the public. This work included an online campaign, with our supporters sending nearly 20,000 emails to their local candidates to help ensure that housing and homelessness was a central issue of the elections. Our work will continue to inform and influence the debate, particularly in the area of housing and homelessness policy, to ensure that the issues affecting those experiencing homelessness are kept on the agenda.

As some parts of our economy begin to benefit from the upturn, we must remember that there are members of our society who are still coming to terms

with the crushing impact of the recession. If we want a more just and vibrant society to emerge from our recent experiences, we have a continued responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. Focus Ireland will, as ever, be at the forefront of this work in the area of housing and homelessness and we will endeavour to make a balanced and constructive contribution, while continuing to hold the government to account.

### **Track record of transparency**

To continue to carry out our work, Focus Ireland relies on the great support we get from the public and business community. This support relies on trust. I am glad to say that Focus Ireland has a proud track record of transparency and that our Annual Report has won awards for excellence in financial reporting on many previous occasions. I would highlight that 89% of every Euro received in 2014 was spent directly on our services to combat and prevent homelessness.

I would like to conclude by saying a sincere thanks to all of our faithful supporters, our Board, corporates and statutory funders, without whom we would not be able to do the important work we do. Special thanks also to everyone who took the time to tell their own stories published in this year's report.

**Ashley Balbirnie**

Chief Executive



In 2014,



**1 in 7**

using homeless services  
was a child.

# About Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland is a housing and homelessness charity that works to prevent people becoming, remaining or returning to homelessness through the provision of quality services, supported housing, research and advocacy.

Founded in 1985 by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, it works with single adults, families and young people, believing that everyone has a right to a place they can call home, which is safe, secure, affordable and appropriate to their needs.

## **Mission**

Focus Ireland aims to advance the rights of people out-of-home to live in a place they can call home through quality services, research and advocacy.

## **Vision**

Focus Ireland believes that everyone has the right to a place they can call home.

## **Objectives**

Focus Ireland's objectives are to:

- › respond to the needs of people out-of-home and those at risk of becoming homeless, through a range of appropriate high-quality services
- › provide emergency, transitional and long-term accommodation for people out-of-home
- › campaign and lobby for the rights of people out-of-home and the prevention of homelessness.

## **Values**

Focus Ireland's models of service provision are dictated by the needs of our customers. We believe that the quality of service delivery is as important as the kind of service we provide. There are eight primary values that underpin our models of service delivery, both for our staff and for our customers:

- › respect
- › accessibility
- › stewardship
- › partnership
- › safety
- › empowerment
- › quality
- › integration

# Directors and other Information

## Chief Executive

Ms Joyce Loughnan  
(resigned 3 October 2014)  
Mr Mark Byrne (Acting CEO from  
March 2014–March 2015)  
Mr Ashley Balbirnie  
(appointed 18 March 2015)

## Current Directors

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy  
(Founder and Life President)  
Mr Gerry Danaher  
(Chairperson)  
Ms Helen Kilroy  
Mr David Martin  
Ms Mary O'Shea  
Mr Sean Carey  
Mr Declan O'Flaherty  
Mr Ronan Harris

Dr Nessa Winston  
Ms Pauline Burke  
(appointed 29 May 2014)  
Mr John Moloney  
(appointed 31 January 2014)

## Trustees

Sr Sheila Wall  
Dr Helen Burke  
Mr Tim Bouchier Hayes

## Secretary and Registered Office

Mr Mark Byrne  
(resigned 7 October 2014)  
Mr Pat Dennigan  
(appointed 7 October 2014)  
9–12 High Street  
Christchurch  
Dublin 8

**Registered No:** 106149

**Registered Charity No:** CHY 7220

## Auditors

Deloitte & Touche  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory  
Audit Firm, Deloitte & Touche House,  
Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

## Solicitors

Arthur Cox, Ferrys Solicitors,  
McCann FitzGerald,  
Mason Hayes & Curran

## Bankers

Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Banks plc,  
Permanent tsb, Rabobank Ireland plc,  
Ulster Bank Ireland Limited

**Thanks to our  
supporters in 2014 ...**

**... we made a difference in the  
lives of over 11,500 people**



**Nobody knows what it's like when you've been in state care; it's so lonely.**

# Chantelle's Story

When children in care reach the age of 18 they must leave state care and often have nobody to turn to for help or guidance.

Our research shows that some of these young people can be particularly vulnerable to homelessness as they are often unprepared for independent life. Focus Ireland provides a range of aftercare supports and accommodation for these young people to help them to move on to independent living. This is Chantelle's story.

During her five years in state care Chantelle found it very difficult to continue her education. She had over 20 different housing placements during this time and did not secure an appropriate long-term foster home. This constant upheaval was very traumatic and made it extremely difficult for Chantelle to keep up with her studies, despite her wish to get a good Leaving Certificate so she could get into college.

At 18, she found herself with no Leaving Certificate and very few educational options. On top of this, Chantelle did not have many life skills due to the damaging instability she had experienced and was not ready to face the world alone.

**'All I knew was that I was going to be out on my own and I was scared. Everyone else had parents to teach them things, take care of them, and prepare them for life. I had no one.'**

The few safety nets Chantelle had depended on throughout her life were suddenly stripped away when she left care. That little help and stability she had been able to find were gone. She spent eight months with no place to call home, having to move between friends and family to keep a roof over her head, each time moving everything she owned in black bags. This was an incredibly stressful time for her. She was overwhelmed by her situation and felt completely alone.

Thankfully, Chantelle was put in touch with Focus Ireland's Aftercare programme and was able to get the support and help she needed.

**'My Key Worker, Anthony, really supported me and even helped me find an apartment of my own. When I had a home it made such a difference. I was able to finish my Post-Leaving Cert course and apply to my local college. I just never could have done any of that without Anthony and Focus Ireland.'**

After years of uncertainty, Chantelle finally had a place where she could feel safe. Today Chantelle is in the first year of a degree in social studies and working part-time to support herself through college.

**'Nobody knows what it's like when you've been in care; it's so lonely. You're on your own. I've seen so many of the kids I was in care with get caught up in drugs, or have to go back to living with the parents they were taken off when they were kids because they have nowhere else to go. Some of them are even homeless on the streets now.'**

With the support of Focus Ireland, Chantelle is now looking forward to a positive future. She plans to continue her education and hopes to one day help other young children who have been in state care.

**'As part of my college training I'm working with young people who have been in care. This is what I want to do with my life. I know what they've been through and I know I can help.'**



“

All I knew was that I was going to be out on my own and I was scared. Everyone else had parents to teach them things, take care of them, and prepare them for life. I had no one.



In 2014, over

**50,000**

hot meals were served  
by Focus Ireland.

# Focus Ireland Services

Focus Ireland worked directly with over 11,500 customers in 2014, a 15% rise from the 10,000 people we worked with in 2013.

Our work provided vital support for many families and individuals who are homeless and also helped to prevent many from losing their existing accommodation and becoming homeless.

Sadly, 2014 saw a continued increase in demand for our services as more people became homeless or were at risk of losing their home. The good news is that our tenancy support and sustainment services successfully supported over 360 households to either maintain a home they were at risk of losing or to move out of homelessness and settle into a new home. Our current strategy is called 'Holding on to a Place You Can Call Home' and has seen us strategically shift our work to focus more on prevention in recent years. This strategy was reviewed during the year, which allowed Focus Ireland to respond to the changing needs of those requiring our support.

The vital role that prevention plays has been widely recognised, both internationally and here in Ireland. Effective prevention work requires contact with at-risk households early on in their crisis and can involve intensive engagement to achieve lasting outcomes. Awareness-raising is increasingly important as the effects of the economic crisis continue to unfold, so that people contact us when they first get into difficulty. However, while prevention is vital, we must stress that certain government actions, such as refusing to raise rent supplement to match market rents, have resulted in many families and individuals becoming homeless in 2014.

During the year, Focus Ireland continued to respond in some way to all experiences of homelessness or the risk of becoming homeless.

Our organisation and staff have developed specialised skills and competencies to support young people and families. These particularly vulnerable groups often require a complex range of interventions to assist them in sustaining a place they can call home.

Focus Ireland has worked very hard to provide and develop these specialised services and has extended them throughout the country where they are needed. It was clear in 2014 that services for people who have become homeless were stretched to capacity, with rising numbers of people forced to sleep rough. Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust worked with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) to set up a new partnership, Housing First, to tackle rough sleeping in Dublin. This service is outlined briefly below.

In 2014, rising rents, a shortage of suitable housing and the unwillingness of many landlords to accept rent supplement all continued to contribute to a very difficult environment, in which many of the people we support are trapped in homeless accommodation even though they are ready to move on. This lack of affordable housing presents a major challenge to the housing-led approach which Focus Ireland has espoused and which has become the cornerstone of the government's social housing policy. Focus Ireland is determined to continue to be at the forefront in bringing about this change in how we tackle the problem of homelessness.

Our services span the whole 'Homeless Pathway' through Prevention, Homeless Services and Housing. The main outcomes of our work are set out below under these broad headings.

# Prevention

The significant rise in the number of people we worked with in 2014 was partly due to the opening of new services across the country, but also due to more people than ever seeking the support of existing services. We continued to adapt our services to meet these needs. In particular, we expanded our advice and information services in key areas nationwide to help prevent struggling families and individuals from losing their homes.

## The key prevention outcomes delivered in 2014 were:

- › Our **Advice and Information Services** in Wexford, Kilkenny, Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Waterford and Sligo offered advice and information to over 5,000 people who were homeless or in danger of losing their home. Our experience indicates that early access to advice and information is crucial in preventing homelessness and supporting people out of homelessness.
  - › Our **Aftercare Service** is a partnership with the HSE, providing a residential and a support and settlement service to young people in Dublin, Limerick and Waterford. The residential service provided short-term accommodation for 90 young people who were leaving state care in 2014, while our support and settlement service supported 200 young people to live independently for the first time.
  - › Our **Prison In-Reach Programme** works to prevent people becoming homeless or returning to homelessness after leaving prison. The programme aims to provide a seamless transition between prison services and permanent housing in order to prevent people moving into homeless services. In 2014, 107 customers engaged with the three Prison In-Reach projects in Limerick, Dublin and Cork.
  - › As part of Focus Ireland's strategy towards developing more prevention-centred services we continued to deliver individualised, person-centred support in 2014 to people with mental health issues who are living with their families or in HSE-funded accommodation but who want to live independently and require support to do so.
- The **Genio Mental Health Projects** in Dublin, Kildare and Limerick work closely with multi-disciplinary mental health teams, providing a flexible, person-centred, home-visiting service to support these individuals to settle into their new home and to sustain it successfully into the future. Forty-four people were supported in 2014.
- › Our **Preventative Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service** works in three of the four Dublin local authorities – Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin. Staff support single and family households who are at risk of losing their homes to develop the necessary skills and take the necessary actions to maintain their homes. Child support workers also engage with parents, supporting and facilitating them in improving their parenting skills and taking an active part in their children's emotional, physical and educational development and, in the process, reducing the risk of the family experiencing or returning to homelessness in the long-term. Two hundred households were supported in 2014.
  - › Focus Ireland's **Preparation for Training and Education Programme (PETE)** operates in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick, supporting people aged over 18 in preparing for education or training. In 2014, we supported nearly 300 participants in gaining the skills and confidence necessary to take the first steps in accessing mainstream training, education and employment.

# Advice & Information

Mon - Fri

10.00 am - 4.00 pm

• Housing

• Health

• Social Work

• Entitlement

• Referral

In 2014, over

5, *i* *i* *i*

people were supported by our advice and information services.

# Homeless Services

Focus Ireland's frontline services work to support people who are homeless. Staff assist them in dealing with the experience of homelessness, advocate on their behalf and support them in dealing with any issues which may have caused them to become homeless. In Dublin, our New Presenters Team for families worked flat out to deal with the escalating crisis of family homelessness in Dublin. Our services around the country also highlighted and responded to this growing problem.

## The key support services provided in 2014 were:

- › Focus Ireland's **National Family Case Management Service** engages with families living in private emergency accommodation who have been entrenched in long-term homelessness, the objective being to move these families into long-term accommodation. Child support workers also conduct detailed childcare assessments of children living in these families and liaise with the relevant statutory and non-statutory support and clinical services. The service engaged directly with 74 families and 63 children during the year. In addition, 234 new cases were supported in the same period as part of our New Presenters Team, including 208 families.
- › The **Coffee Shop** in Temple Bar provides quality and affordable meals for adults, families and children who are homeless. The Coffee Shop is open seven days a week and is operated by Focus Ireland. We also partner with Merchant's Quay Ireland in delivering the **Extended Day Service** from Monday to Friday. This service provides free food for the most marginalised in a safe and warm environment. Over 7,000 customers engaged with the Coffee Shop and Extended Day Service in 2014. **Advice and Information** is also important for people who are experiencing homelessness and is available in both locations.
- › In Dublin, our **Off-the-Streets** short-term residential programme, in partnership with the HSE, provided a short-term home for 21 young people between the ages of 16 and 18 with high-support and complex needs.
- › Our **Supported Temporary Accommodation** for families in **Aylward Green**, Dublin, which provides a safe, supportive and secure environment where families can explore and address the factors that contribute to homelessness, supported 26 families in 2014. In addition, the childcare centre, which is linked to the service, provided a place of learning, development and fun for 24 young children living in emergency accommodation.
- › Our **Supported Temporary Accommodation Service** in **George's Hill**, Dublin, meets the needs of single people and couples aged 18–25 years who are homeless and have support needs. The service offers a six-month key-working and case management service to support customers in accessing services and progressing towards long-term accommodation. Support staff are available throughout the day. A total of 27 young people engaged with the service in 2014.
- › Our **Childcare Centres** in Dublin and Waterford worked with 44 children in 2014.
- › The **Regional Contact and Outreach Service**, a jointly-led partnership between Focus Ireland and the Dublin Simon Community, provided a single, integrated service covering the greater Dublin area, with staff proactively engaging with service users, building relationships and assessing their needs.

The service engaged with nearly 1,000 individuals on the streets up to the end of September 2014, when it was replaced by the Dublin Region 'Housing First' service. **Housing First**, a joint partnership between Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust, incorporates three elements. The Intake Team, which replaces the Outreach Team, continues to work with and source accommodation for rough sleepers.

The second element of Housing First involves targeting individuals who are suitable for

moving directly into long-term supported housing. With the support of the Intensive Case Management Team, these individuals are supported in settling into their homes, sustaining their tenancy and learning to live independently. The Housing First team is also supported by a third element, the Multi-disciplinary Team. This team addresses all issues that arise for these individuals, providing medical, mental, counselling, and harm reduction supports directly to the service.



**Families are being made homeless every day and many are forced to live in a hotel room for months at a time. It places terrible stress on the parents and impacts on the children very badly. Focus Ireland staff are doing all they can to support them and keep them going until they get a place to call home.**

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy



# Housing

Focus Ireland provided homes for over 650 households in long-term and short-term properties in Dublin, Waterford, Kilkenny, Limerick, Clare, Sligo and Cork in 2014. These homes, which are managed, leased or owned by Focus Ireland, give families, couples and individuals a fresh start and a place to call home. It means a lot for them to have a home once again where they can live independently, getting support when they need it.

## The key support services provided in 2014 were:

- › Focus Ireland provides **Long-term Supported Housing** in Dublin, Kildare, Cork, Waterford, Sligo and Limerick, targeting single people, families and couples who have identified support needs. Our long-term housing supports people who are in vulnerable situations or living with issues such as mental health or other difficulties and who may not otherwise be able to sustain their tenancy.
- › In 2014, Focus Ireland supported over 460 households to sustain their homes in our long-term supported accommodation throughout the country, and added 45 housing units to our own stock. Continued shortage of investment capital, a falling supply of suitable housing and rising housing prices in our cities all contributed to substantial obstacles to our **Housing Development Programme**. We continued to commit substantial resources and efforts to exploring innovative approaches to accessing capital and to exploring options such as housing bonds, leasing, stock transfers, void management and private investment as possible ways of securing the homes we need for our customers in the future.
- › During 2013, Focus Ireland, along with a financial services partner, explored the potential of establishing a Social Housing Fund to attract private sector finance to purchase houses for social housing use. Considerable progress was made in setting up the legal and regulatory structure for the fund and obtaining Department of Environment protocols to facilitate the work. Meetings with potential investors in the fund were ongoing in 2014.
- › The redevelopment of our **Stanhope Green Housing Project**, which involves the extensive redevelopment of all units of accommodation, within Stanhope Green, with the creation of larger, better-quality accommodation with increased energy efficiency, continued in 2014. The project is expected to be completed by the end of



Getting a home just before Christmas was really the best present ever for me as a mother and my two children. Focus Ireland helped end months of hell for me worrying about my kids. I'll be crying tears of joy when I see their happy faces on Christmas morning.

Gillian, 31, Dublin

August 2015 and will provide 51 long-term units and 19 short-term units for our customers.

- › Focus Ireland is committed to the ongoing maintenance and upgrade of our existing housing stock to ensure that our accommodation meets the desired standard and is suitable for the needs of our customers. A ten-year property maintenance plan for all Focus Ireland stock is currently in operation and is reviewed annually to take into account the needs of our customers, the changing number of homes, works completed and survey information.
- › Focus Ireland also works through our **Tenancy Support and Sustainment Services** to provide

support for households moving out of homelessness and for those at risk of becoming homeless. This service straddles both prevention and housing, and Focus Ireland provided tenancy support and sustainment services for almost 1,100 households in Dublin, Kildare, Cork, Sligo, Limerick, Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan in 2014. This included over 200 young people in aftercare. In partnership with The Peter McVerry Trust, we also operate the **Support to Live Independently (SLI)** service for households living in the Dublin region, facilitating these households to access mainstream services and supports.

These are just some of the services Focus Ireland provides. To read more about all of our services, please go to [www.focusireland.ie](http://www.focusireland.ie).



Focus Ireland Waterford Manager David Niblock with former Minister for Housing Jan O'Sullivan and Waterford TD Ciara Conway when they visited the charity's housing development at Grange Cohan in Waterford in May 2014.



**In 2014, a large majority of families became homeless in Dublin as a direct result of their rent supplement payment not covering their rising rents. Nearly 90% of these families had never been homeless before.**



# Homeless Children

## ***Irish Times* report**

In 2014, Focus Ireland worked with the award-winning *Irish Times* journalist Kitty Holland on a ground-breaking project which gave a voice to children who were homeless within families staying in hotels and emergency accommodation in Dublin.

For over two months, Kitty worked with our family services and communications team on the article, which was published in November. The article detailed what it's like for children living in homelessness and outlined Focus Ireland's moves to highlight the issue as a serious child welfare problem. The conditions in which the children are living have a serious impact on them across a number of areas, including their development, happiness, and mental and physical health. The article had a huge impact on the public and highlighted Focus Ireland's call for action to deliver solutions and also the charity's on-going services response to the crisis. The article and the issues raised by Focus Ireland were discussed in the Dáil.

Focus Ireland is the agency that supports families who are homeless in Dublin. The organisation works with local authorities and other NGOs and managed to support some families to secure accommodation and move-on options during the year. However, many families remained homeless due to the critical housing shortage. We have called on the Government to take urgent action as homelessness has become a serious child welfare issue due to conditions families are being forced to live in. This problem is sadly now raising its head in other cities, including Cork and Galway.

Focus Ireland staff continuously work to support families and children who are homeless. However, many families are forced to live in shocking conditions, often spending months at a time packed into tiny hotel rooms. In 2014, a large majority of families became homeless in Dublin as a direct result of their rent supplement payment not covering their rising rents. Significantly, nearly 90% of these families had never been homeless before.

Focus Ireland has repeatedly warned that the government's continued refusal to raise rent supplement and to freeze rents is forcing more families into homelessness. In Dublin alone, over 450 families became homeless in 2014, and within these families there were up to 1,000 children. Focus Ireland helped some of these children to talk about the experience of losing their home. The organisation worked closely with the children and their parents, along with Kitty Holland, to help bring these stories to the nation's attention.

Thanks to the Ombudsman for Children's Office for the use of their premises for this article. All names and place names have been changed to protect the children's identities. Content and photos reproduced with kind permission by the *Irish Times*.

*Irish Times*, 15 November 2014

# Homeless children

**‘I was depressed because most of the time I was late for school.’ – Brendan, 8**

Brendan lived in emergency accommodation for ten months with his mother and younger brother. They moved into an apartment in September 2014 with support from Focus Ireland.

**‘The B&B was bad. It was only a room with a bed, a wardrobe and a bathroom. I’d rather live on the Liffey than live there. There were other kids, but they were barely out. We had to stay in the rooms. You just watched TV.’**

Along with these cramped conditions, Brendan described how being homeless was having a huge impact on his education.

**‘I was depressed because most of the time I was late for school. It was annoying getting up at six o’clock in the morning. I had to get two buses and then walk.’**

Living in emergency accommodation had a huge emotional and physical impact on Brendan. As well as disrupting his education and daily routine, Brendan also lost out on the chance to play with his friends.

**‘I had all my friends down in my nanny’s. My best friend is called Brian. Well, he was, he still is, I just don’t see him so much. I used to play with him every day. When I was playing with my friends [at my grandparents’ house], and had to go back [to the B&B], I felt all sad. I didn’t want to leave.’**

Fortunately, after spending ten months in emergency accommodation, Brendan and his family were able to move into an apartment with the support of Focus Ireland. Brendan is now looking forward to a more positive future and is excited to finally have somewhere to call home.

**‘Now that I’m out of the B&B I can play with my friends and play my PlayStation. (It was in my nanny’s house.) I’m getting my bedroom done with all the walls for Liverpool.’**

Photograph by Dara Mac Dónaill, courtesy of *The Irish Times*.



**The B&B was bad. It was only a room with a bed, a wardrobe and a bathroom. I'd rather live on the Liffey than live there. There were other kids, but they were barely out. We had to stay in the rooms. You just watched TV.**

What are important to me.

A house is important to me because I would be able to sleep in my own room and we all would have more space even a garden for lots of things and more friends.



Photograph by Dara Mac Dónaill, courtesy of *The Irish Times*.

# Homeless children

**'I can't draw my house. I don't remember what it looks like.' – Lucy, 5**

Lucy has been living in a hotel with her parents, younger sister and infant brother for six months.

'I like drawing flowers. I can't draw my house. I don't remember what it looks like.' Sadly, Lucy can't remember what it's like to have a home. The little girl has spent over six months living in a hotel. She describes what it's like living in emergency accommodation without any cooking facilities and how sharing a small space with her family is affecting her life.

**'I have Rice Krispies for breakfast, on my bed. I walk to school. It's a long walk, ages, and on the bus. I have to get up early, and sometimes I am tired. When I come home I eat dinner on my bed. I have a new little brother and he**

**keeps me awake. In my room there is a bed and a big bed and a cot for my brother. There is a telly and a fridge, and a cupboard in my bedroom too. It's a small room.'**

Although Lucy struggles with the challenges she faces in emergency accommodation, she's looking forward to one day moving out of the hotel and finally being able to cook a proper meal.

**'If I had a kitchen I would go there on my own and make the dinner. I could make soup and a Barbie cake for my mammy.'**

**In 2013, a total of 20 families a month became homeless in Dublin; in 2014, this doubled to 40 families.**



# Homeless children

**'If I had my own room I could listen to Justin Bieber.'** – Sinéad, 12

Sinéad, her mother and her four siblings have been in emergency accommodation for ten months.

**'Am I happy? No. I live in a bedroom with my mum, two brothers and two sisters. That's six of us in one bedroom. My clothes are in a bag under the bed and I can't arrange things the way I'd like. I'm not allowed to have friends come and visit, or family. I miss them coming around. It's important to have friends over, to talk to them.'**

Life in emergency accommodation has been difficult for Sinéad. The 12-year-old can't play with her friends or enjoy simple things like listening to music.

**'If I had my own room I could listen to Justin Bieber. I can't put up my Justin Bieber posters or listen to my music.'**

Sinéad gets little respite from her cramped living conditions; she explains why she rarely leaves her emergency accommodation.

**'We don't go out in the area, because there's a park but it's full of junkies, people drinking, so we stay in the room. It's not healthy, just lying on the bed.'**

For now, Sinéad and her four siblings can only dream of living in a house. Sinéad knows that although her family have been homeless for over ten months, it is likely to be several more months until they will be able to leave emergency accommodation.

**'I think about how long it might take to get a house. In a year I want us to be in a house.'**



**Am I happy? No. I live in a bedroom with my mum, two brothers and two sisters. That's six of us in one bedroom.**



Rachel Murphy, who works in Fundraising for Focus Ireland, and her son Billy helped to launch our Christmas appeal in November 2014.

# Advocacy, Communication, Research, Education and Training

Over the course of 2014, an increasing number of families and individuals lost their homes for purely economic reasons.

Many could not afford to pay their rent or, in some cases, their mortgage, or their landlord was forced to sell the property where they were living.

The word 'crisis' is over-used at times, but this is exactly what Ireland is facing in the area of housing and homelessness. In 2014, more people were at risk of losing their homes and more families remained trapped in homelessness due to a severe shortage of affordable housing. Pressure on our services increased on all fronts. In 2014, for the first time, homelessness figures were published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and these confirm the experience of our front-line services – in the nine months for which figures were collected (April–Dec), homelessness among over 18's rose by 15%.

## Advocacy

### Family homelessness crisis deepens

While Focus Ireland services respond directly to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, it is the role of advocacy to draw attention to what is causing the problem and to propose solutions to it. Over the last 15 years, government policy has resulted in a doubling in the number of households living in private rented accommodation. However, the government has refused to raise rent supplement levels for almost two

years, despite the fact that Focus Ireland has continuously highlighted that rent supplement is falling behind rising rents. Many reforms are needed to make the private rented sector secure for people in need of housing, but the gap between rents and rent supplement is the single largest reason for people losing their homes and becoming homeless. Similarly, young people on the reduced rate of social welfare can remain trapped because of the failure of the Minister for Social Protection to meet commitments made to Focus Ireland and in the Oireachtas.

The key areas of our advocacy work are as follows:

### Influencing housing and homeless policy

Focus Ireland continued to highlight the changes needed in homeless prevention and housing policy. This work included making submissions on a range of issues, including Aftercare legislation, the Government Social Housing Plan, Rent Supplement Rates and our annual Pre-Budget Submission. Focus Ireland's submission in 2013 to the new Homeless Oversight Group resulted in some key points being included in the group's report in 2014. We continued to meet with department officials, ministers, TDs and Senators, as appropriate, to help progress action and change on a wide range of issues. Copies of these submissions are on our website.



**Over the last 15 years, government policy has resulted in a doubling in the number of households living in private rented accommodation. However, the government has refused to raise rent supplement levels for almost two years, despite the fact that Focus Ireland has continuously highlighted that rent supplement is falling behind rising rents.**

### **Budget 2015**

Our annual Pre-Budget Submission is an opportunity to set out a broader analysis of where policies and resources are required and, in 2014, we warned that Ireland had reached the limits of austerity. The submission highlighted that one family per day was losing their home in Dublin alone due to problems with Rent Supplement, yet the government is still dragging its feet and failing to take action to prevent this from happening. Our submission called for Budget 2015 to start a process of reform to implement policies and deliver services to prevent people from losing their home and to support others to move on from homelessness. We also included a strong focus on the need to build sufficient affordable housing in communities where people would want to live. The government's Social Housing Strategy responded to some of these concerns, and our attention then shifted to ensuring that the strategy is implemented and the resources made available.

### **Protecting vulnerable young people**

Focus Ireland also continued its campaign to secure a right to aftercare. The heads of a new Aftercare Bill was published in 2014, and Focus Ireland was asked to respond to this by the Oireachtas Committee on the Family. We continued to lobby the Minister for Social Protection and her department to find ways of supporting young people on the reduced rate of social welfare.

### **Local and European elections**

Focus Ireland ran a very successful online campaign, with our supporters sending over 17,600 emails to ensure that housing and homelessness was a central issue of the 2014 Local and European elections.

### **Right to a home**

Since 2003, we have been arguing that there should be a constitutional right to a home. In February, the Constitutional Convention offered us an opportunity to progress this campaign by inviting us to address them on the issue. Following this debate, the Convention recommended to government that economic, social and cultural rights – including the right to a home – be inserted in the Irish Constitution. We will now focus our attention on securing a commitment to hold a referendum on this issue.

### **Conference 2014**

The Focus Ireland annual policy conference on 25 September, 'Where Do We Go From Here?', was opened by the new Housing Minister, Alan Kelly TD. The conference featured a range of national and international speakers and explored the issues of de-institutionalisation and the Housing First model, the challenges facing young people who grow up in institutional care, prison release and how the state could prevent crisis situations by the provision of specific supports. The conference papers are published on our website.

## Communication

### Media overview 2014

Focus Ireland's media programme is targeted at continuing to raise our profile and influence as the leading housing and homeless agency, while also strategically supporting our advocacy, fundraising and campaigning work. We continued to build our profile in the media in 2014 as we issued over 60 press releases, which resulted in significant coverage across both national and regional media. A total of over 1,000 articles appeared in national and local media. There was also a significant increase in coverage across media sites on the internet.

We also significantly built our broadcast profile during the year, with regular appearances on RTÉ TV news, Morning Ireland and many Dublin and regional stations across Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Sligo. This media work communicated the core issues to the general public and complemented and reinforced our lobbying work. Other highlights included blanket coverage across all media of the launch of the Christmas fundraising appeal.

## Customer engagement

We ensured that Focus Ireland provided a voice for its customers. One of our tenants spoke on TV news at the launch of our Annual Report, and a family who are homeless spoke when President Higgins visited our housing development in George's Hill in September. A mother also spoke movingly on the RTÉ 1 Sean O'Rourke show about the terrible impact of homelessness. We also arranged many print media interviews with customers. This included the landmark *Irish Times* piece on 'Dublin's Homeless Children', carried out in partnership with the award-winning reporter Kitty Holland (see Homeless Children, *Irish Times* report).

## Social media and website

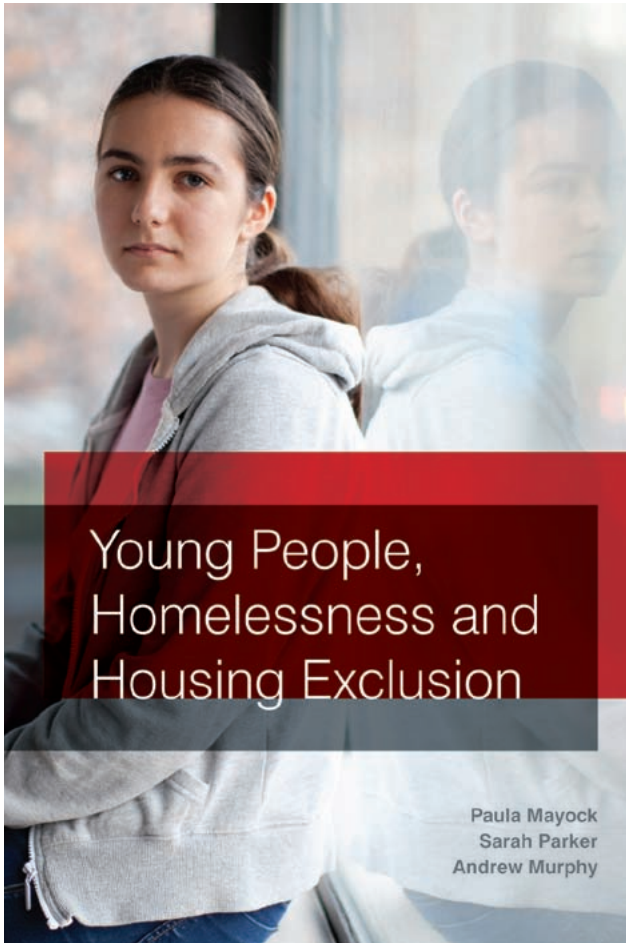
Our social media profile continued to grow, and over 182,000 people 'liked' us on Facebook at the end of the year. After winning the prestigious Bord Gáis award for the best NGO Facebook page in 2013, we received a further nomination in 2014. We had over 26,000 followers on Twitter as of the year end.



In June we launched *Pride and Joy*, a wooden boat built using traditional techniques by the people who use our services in Limerick. The project, in partnership with the Ilen Boat Building School, took place as part of our PETE Education programme.



A major piece of innovative research, entitled ‘Young People, Homelessness and Housing Exclusion’, by Dr Paula Mayock et al. (Children’s Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin) was published in late 2014.



## Research and evaluation

Effective responses to homelessness must be based on evidence and sound research. Focus Ireland keeps abreast of emerging research and also makes a specific contribution through its own research work.

A major piece of innovative research, entitled ‘Young People, Homelessness and Housing Exclusion’, by Dr Paula Mayock et al. (Children’s Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin) was

published in late 2014. This research was funded from Focus Ireland’s own resources and is Phase 1 of a qualitative longitudinal study that tracks the experiences of 40 homeless young people over time. The perspectives of the families of some of the young participants are also captured in this report, and this integration of views sheds new light on the complex and under-researched family dynamics that may propel young people to leave home prematurely, as well as on the family processes that facilitate a resolution to their homelessness.

As part of Focus Ireland’s commitment to developing and delivering services of the highest standard, the advocacy team undertakes an annual programme of evaluations to assess the quality and outcomes of Focus Ireland services. During 2014, the following evaluation work was undertaken:

- › An evaluation of the Therapeutic Service was completed by Mark Ward, Trinity College Dublin.
- › An evaluation of Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust’s ‘Support to Home’ service was conducted by TSA Consultancy.
- › Evaluations of the Cork and Limerick Prison In-Reach services were completed by Dr Kiran Sarma, NUI Galway.
- › Work on the Advice and Information Services by Ciara Murray and Sandra Velthuis was completed in 2014, and this report will be published in 2015.
- › An internal review of Focus Ireland’s Housing Management Pilot Project in Dublin and Waterford was conducted.
- › An Annual Report on Services Statistics for 2013 was presented to the Board.
- › A number of papers based on this work were published in the *European Journal of Homelessness*.

## Partnerships / External representation

Focus Ireland has always recognised the value of working in partnership with other voluntary and statutory bodies to tackle homelessness. The advocacy team represents Focus Ireland on a range of networks, including the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), Make Room, Action for Aftercare, Mental Health Reform, the Habitual Residency Condition group, the European Anti-Poverty Network, the Community Platform, and Claiming our Future. The Advocacy Initiative, in which Focus Ireland played a leading role, finished its work during the year and launched a valuable 'legacy site'.

We also support services staff in their representative roles on bodies, including the Board of the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Dublin Homeless Network, the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and regional homeless forums in the South, Mid-West, South East, East and North West.

At a European level, we continued to be active in FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless). We presented a paper at the Annual Policy Conference in Bergamo, Italy, and participated in the Migration

and Data Collection working groups. The Director of Advocacy currently holds the position of FEANTSA President. We also presented a paper on our aftercare campaign at the 18th World Conference of the International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO), held in Waterford.

## Education and training

We continued to provide a service to encourage an understanding of homelessness among school pupils. This included:

- › schools-based resources: two education modules targeted at primary (No Place Like Home) and secondary (Without your home, your life develops differently) school students
- › responses to over 300 information requests from the general public, school students, teachers and third-level students
- › school talks: delivery of school talks to secondary schools by a team of specially trained School Talks Ambassadors to raise awareness and understanding of the issues associated with homelessness.



‘...I have witnessed the negative impact that homelessness can have on families and, in particular, the children of those families.’

# Aine McLaughlin

## Project Leader, Focus Ireland New Presenters Team

The Focus Ireland New Presenters Team is a multidisciplinary team that comprises a Child Support Worker, Accommodation Finder and Case Managers. This team works in partnership with families to empower them to move out of homelessness and into a place they can call home. Staff on the team work with families and children to support them while they are homeless.

Having worked in Focus Ireland for the past eight years, I have witnessed the negative impact that homelessness can have on families and, in particular, the children of those families. My knowledge in this area has been supplemented by the recent research I undertook as part of my course in Counselling and Psychotherapy (Level 9) on the relationship between trauma and the loss of home. I am now the Acting Project Leader of the New Presenters Team.

Losing one's home can be one of the most traumatic events that anyone can experience. In April 2013, we witnessed eight families becoming homeless for the first time. Now, the Focus Ireland New Presenters Team sees upwards of 50 families per month becoming homeless for the first time. This massive increase in families being forced to live in hotel and private emergency accommodation requires a response that balances working towards the long-term goal of securing appropriate housing and supporting families to sustain a sense of normality, however small, while living in cramped conditions, with nowhere to cook or wash clothes and nowhere for children to do their homework or play.

One mother, Ruth, became homeless because she was unable to afford her rent. She had worked as a

hairdresser for a number of years but when her employer went into liquidation, she lost her job. Her relationship with her partner broke down and within months, the lives of Ruth and her three children, aged 14 months and 5 and 6 years, were turned upside down.

When staff from Focus Ireland met Ruth for the first time she and her three children had been in a single hotel room for more than two months. Ruth's Case Manager immediately began to help her to look for private rented accommodation. However, due to the low level of rent supplement payments this proved very difficult. Our staff work hard to provide families with vital support while they are trapped living in terrible circumstances, such as being squashed into one hotel room for months at a time. This work helps to keep the family going and to reduce the terrible impact of their circumstances.

In Ruth's case, the Child Support Worker worked closely with her children and tried to establish a sense of routine and an awareness of nutritional and low-cost food that did not require cooking. During the initial stages of engaging with the service Ruth felt hopeless and totally powerless. However, with the support of her Case Manager and Child Support Worker, Ruth and her children were able to build a

level of resilience and positivity that enabled them to survive this traumatic event in their lives. This work can make all the difference and means that families are ready to move on when housing becomes available for them. It is great to see that Ruth and her children are now living in social housing.

Another parent we worked with last year was Annabel and her two sons who became homeless due to an increase in rent. Annabel stayed with friends for a number of months but eventually had no other option but to move into emergency accommodation. Again, Annabelle's Focus Ireland Case Manager worked with her to support her in securing long-term off-site supported housing where she and her two sons are getting on with their lives.

As I write this in 2015, Focus Ireland is currently celebrating 30 years of making voices heard. On behalf of the families we work with, we are calling for the introduction of rent control and adequate rent caps and also the accessibility of affordable social housing in order to safeguard their needs and the needs of our children. We also need to continue paying attention to preventing more families from becoming homeless. The New Presenters Team are dealing with a challenge that far surpasses the capacity of any single individual to overcome. However, through the commitment of every individual on this team we continue to listen to the voices of these families and represent them in a way that offers them hope in the face of despair and, ultimately, a place they can call home.



**Our staff work hard to provide families with vital support while they are trapped living in terrible circumstances, such as being squashed into one hotel room for months at a time.**





**In 2014, we raised €6,635,863, 17% more than in 2013. On behalf of our customers, whose lives you have changed, we want to thank you.**



# Fundraising

## Thanks to all our supporters

Thanks to the generous support of over 10,000 individuals and over 400 companies, Focus Ireland was able to reach out to over 11,500 people in 2014.

People all over Ireland have committed a regular gift, supported our appeals with generous donations, scaled mountains, baked cakes, ran marathons, recorded CDs and much, much more.

In 2014, we raised €6,635,863. On behalf of our customers, whose lives you have changed, we want to thank you.

### Why public, corporate and philanthropic gifts are essential to the way we work

Our services work to prevent and end homelessness. Meanwhile our in-house advocacy team work hard to lobby the government for real legislative change. The team also works with our services department to identify the root causes of homelessness. This allows us to set up new and innovative services in response to the changing needs of society in order to prevent homelessness.

Donations are vital to this effort as they allow us to respond quickly and efficiently and to set up these vital prevention services with no requirement for state support from the outset. A case in point is our innovative Aftercare Programme. This was set up as a pilot thanks to public donations and support. Now, having demonstrated the importance of the service, it has been rolled out and is partially funded by the state and generously supported by our donors. There are many examples of this pioneering approach to service development in Focus Ireland and we are dependent on public donations to allow us to continue to work in this way.

### Thanks to the public for their support

An unprecedented rise in demand for our services resulted in an increased need for funding. We are grateful that the public responded with such generosity in 2014.

- › The response to our Christmas appeal was unprecedented, with more than €1,500,000 raised.
- › People climbed mountains, held sleep outs, organised school events, ran marathons, baked cakes, recorded CDs and helped us to raise over €400,000 in the community.
- › We continue to be grateful to people who have left a lifetime gift of a legacy, from whom we received over €415,000.

For every €1 spent on fundraising, we raise €4 more.

### Thanks for supporting our new retail outlet

We opened our first Beloved shop in Malahide and have received more support than we had imagined from clothes donors and shoppers. We'd like to thank our amazing volunteers who worked tirelessly to help us set up the shop and make it the success that it is. We hope to open a further two stores in 2015, again, thanks to your support.

## Thanks for philanthropic support

In 2014, we raised over €600,000 through philanthropy from trusts, foundations and individual major gifts. A special thanks to the Human Dignity Foundation who again supported our work for families and children in 2014.

We have successfully launched our women's business network and are grateful for the support of the Focus Ireland Women's Philanthropy Circle, who work with us by funding youth projects and raising our profile.

We have also launched our major donor initiative, Focus Ireland's Key Circle, and want to thank everyone who has supported this important programme for families.

## Thanks to our valued corporates for their support

Our corporate team works hard to establish long-term, high-value partnerships with key companies. We offer a tiered approach to partnerships, with different values corresponding to different opportunities. We launched our new bunker and brown bag events this year.

- › In 2014, we enjoyed the generous support of 481 companies through both long-term partnerships and support for Focus Ireland Sponsor a Star and

Focus Ireland Shine a Light Night. Thanks to them we have raised over €1,300,000.

- › Once again, Aviva proved to be an important and valued partner. The partnership has raised over €600,000 over the past five years, with over €150,000 raised in 2014 alone.
- › Focus Ireland's Shine a Light Night, our annual corporate sleep out, entered its third year in 2014. The event has raised over €1,000,000 over the three years. In 2014, the event was held in both Cork and Dublin, with over 80 business leaders giving their support, time and donations. It raised more than €350,000.
- › Focus Ireland Sponsor a Star campaign had its best year ever in 2014, with over €260,000 raised from companies all over Ireland.

Special thanks to all of the following supporters who have given their valuable time and expertise to make our work more efficient and effective: Beacon Studios, Javelin, Zenith, Fastforward Productions, Tyrone Productions, David Brophy, RTÉ, Roisin Savage, Niall Crowley.

Finally, we'd like to thank the members of the High Hopes Choir who worked so hard to help us to raise awareness of homelessness and Focus Ireland.



The High Hopes Choir pictured with Ryan Tubridy on the *Late Late Show* in October.



Miriam O'Callaghan kindly launched our annual 'Sponsor a Star' campaign, which calls on businesses to sponsor a star on the Focus Ireland Christmas tree at the top of Grafton Street, dedicated to people who are homeless.



“

Volunteering is a key part of the Focus Ireland strategy because we believe that the achievement of the organisation's strategy and values is best served by the active participation of the wider community.

Focus Ireland Triathlon 2019  
#wantofanincident  
from the correct route  
Share of your  
#focusireland

# Human Resources

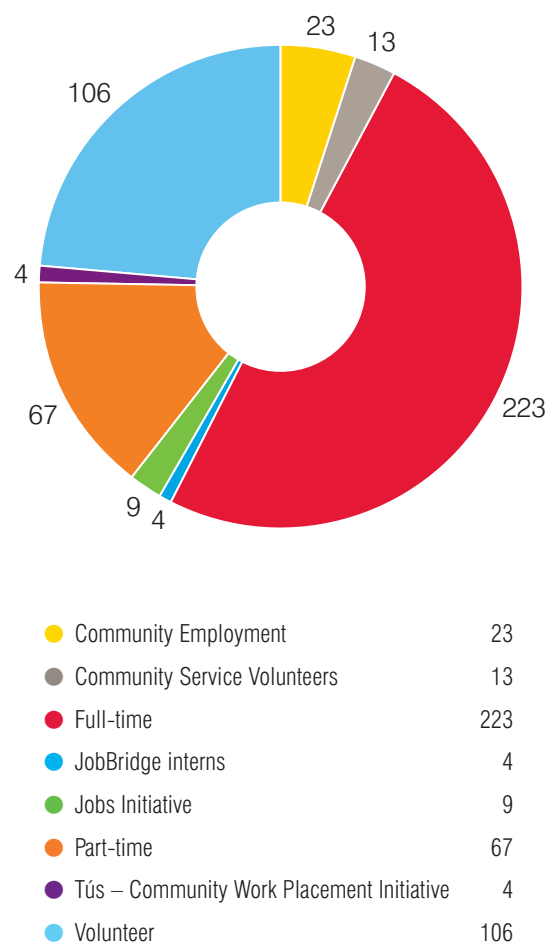
## Supporting staff in working to end homelessness

Focus Ireland seeks to attract and retain high-calibre employees with excellent employment standards and to ensure that they can continue to develop and enhance their skills throughout their career while maintaining the highest level of service delivery to the customer. The HR team plays a vital role in the recruitment and development of all employees as well as ensuring that everyone works in a healthy, safe and positive environment.

In 2014, the ongoing difficult economic climate and the changing nature of homelessness, particularly with the increase in homeless families, presented major challenges for the organisation and its employees. Throughout the year, employees remained committed to their work, adapting their roles, practices and working hours in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for services.

We remain committed to the provision of a high standard of professional service through supporting staff and their managers in ensuring that best-practice procedures are maintained throughout the organisation to deliver quality services and successful outcomes for our customers.

At year end, the total headcount across Focus Ireland was 343 employees and 106 volunteers, which include Community Employment/Jobs Initiative employees, JobBridge interns, Tús and the Community Service Volunteers (CSVs). The breakdown of staff, including long-term volunteers at year end, can be seen in the chart above.



## Volunteering

Volunteering is a key part of the Focus Ireland strategy because we believe that the achievement of the organisation's strategy and values is best served by the active participation of the wider community. We believe that involving volunteers is a way of furthering active citizenship and community involvement and that volunteering with Focus Ireland will help to change public perceptions of our customers and will also engage the public in our advocacy and fundraising campaigns. Volunteer roles included activities such as befriending, cookery, tutors for adults and children, career guidance and also roles as schools ambassadors, gardeners and administrators. We introduced a new role of Shop Assistant to assist us in our new fundraising and awareness-building initiative with the opening of the Beloved boutique in Malahide. At year end, we had 106 long-term volunteers and a further 252 volunteers assisted us in once-off events and fundraising activities throughout the year.

## Learning and development

The Learning and Development Programme facilitated 128 training courses for employees, ensuring that learning and development needs were met and continuous learning encouraged and supported. The average attendance rate overall was 4.3 days for this annual programme. Courses included: Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), Child Protection, Occupational First Aid, Fire Marshal, Volunteer Management, Parents Plus, Motivational Interviewing, Innovation Workshops, Mental Health, Stress Management and Dignity in the Workplace, all in line with our commitment to health and safety and continuous learning.

All employees are encouraged and supported to up-skill by seeking further qualifications and to apply continuous learning and growth in their areas of expertise through our education policy. Educational support was provided for 12 employees who applied for financial assistance in 2014, and this programme resulted in three employees gaining qualifications.

## Health and safety

Health and safety continues to be of high importance for employees and managers in the organisation. Annual inspections were conducted by the Health and Safety Committee during 2014 in all Focus Ireland locations, and no serious concerns were identified.

The first organisation-wide health and safety survey was conducted by the Health and Safety Committee in 2014, with a participation rate of 62% or 214 employees and an overall result of 90% of participants stating that Focus Ireland is a safe place to work.

Focus Ireland was named as the national winner of the 'European Good Practice Award' in 2014. The competition sought innovative solutions to the management of psycho-social risks in the workplace and the enhancement of employees' health and well-being. This was a great achievement for all staff, particularly the Health and Safety Officer, the committee and the Health and Safety Champions, and is a reflection of the value that everyone in Focus Ireland puts on health and safety, and staff well-being.

The Health and Safety Champion role has been a successful initiative within the organisation, whereby different members of staff assumed responsibilities for awareness-raising and compliance with health and safety procedures and policies for their locations. Feedback continues to be very positive.

The Health and Safety Committee, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Champions, ran an awareness week for 'European Health and Safety at Work' in October, 2014. Themes varied across the projects, with the majority of teams opting to run self-care programmes as their chosen theme. This took various forms such as healthy eating days, lunch-time walks, stress management training and mindfulness sessions. Feedback was very positive, and the intention is to continue generating self-care awareness with various programmes during 2015.



**Focus Ireland was named as the national winner of the 'European Good Practice Award' in 2014.**

## Employee engagement

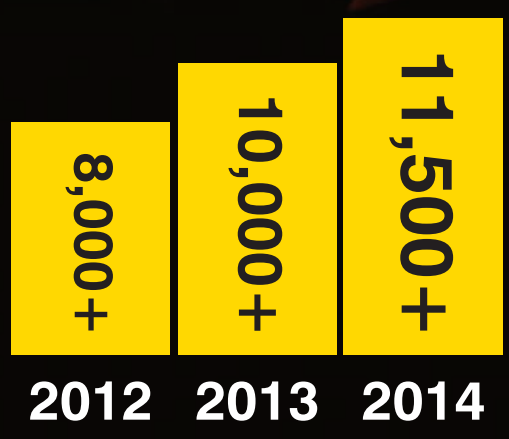
We achieved a significant 10% increase in participation for our annual Employee Survey, with 227 staff responding to the questionnaire in 2014. Employee engagement was measured for the first time through the annual survey, with a 63% overall satisfaction rating for employees demonstrating their understanding of the concept and their role in employee engagement. We have a team of 18 Engagement Champions throughout the organisation whose role with managers is to help create greater awareness of the Engagement Initiative among their colleagues. The Engagement Champions Team also acts as guardians and partners with managers to

drive and oversee the implementation of people engagement activities.

In response to survey feedback from staff, we increased communication sessions and content, organised summer events, endorsed a proposal for a staff social club and provided refresher performance management training for all line managers to create better understanding of Focus Ireland strategy and decision-making processes.

The HR team will continue to work in partnership with all our colleagues to achieve Focus Ireland objectives and strategy in line with our core values of delivering quality services and successful outcomes for our customers.





**In 2014, we supported over 11,500 people who were homeless or at risk of losing their home.**

# Governance Statement

Focus Ireland has been a long-term advocate for rigorous statutory regulation of governance and fundraising in registered charities and approved housing bodies.

In response to Government delays in enacting such codes, Focus Ireland has worked with other sector leaders to establish and adhere to voluntary governance codes that draw on best international standards.

We have a proud track record of governance, and Focus Ireland signed up to and is compliant with the full range of best practice codes in the Irish Charity sector, as follows:

- ▶ The voluntary Governance Code for Irish charities; we are a Type C organisation and are fully compliant with this standard; you can read the governance statement in full, adopted by our Board on 30 March 2012, on our website.
- ▶ The voluntary ICTR 'Guiding Principles of Fundraising', which are reflected in our own 'Donor's Charter'
- ▶ The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's Voluntary Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies
- ▶ As part of our ongoing governance reviews, the Board retained Prospectus Limited to carry out an independent evaluation of the Board. The Board also retained solicitors Mason, Hayes and Curran (MHC) to undertake a legal review of our operations and processes during 2013. The recommendations of this review are being implemented in 2014 and 2015.

## The Board

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It comprises 11 Non-Executive Directors, including one employee Director. The Board's Non-Executive Directors are drawn from diverse backgrounds in business and other professions. They bring to the Board deliberations their significant business and decision-making skills achieved in their respective fields, together with a broad range of experience and views.

There is a clear division of responsibility in the company, with the Board retaining control of major decisions under a formal schedule of matters reserved to the Board for decision, with the Chief Executive responsible for devising strategy and policy within the authorities delegated to him / her by the Board.

The company has a comprehensive process for reporting management information to the Board. The Board is provided with regular information, which includes key performance and risk indicators for all aspects of the organisation. The Board meets regularly, as required, and met six times during 2014 (six in 2013).

On appointment, Directors go through an induction process, with briefing sessions and comprehensive briefing documents designed to familiarise them with the company's operations, management and governance structures. All Non-Executive Directors are appointed for an initial three-year term, which may be renewed for two further three-year periods, giving a maximum of nine continuous years for any Director.

One-third of Directors are required to retire annually by rotation and, if eligible, may offer themselves for re-election. The roles of Chairperson and Chief Executive are separate, as are the roles of Chief Executive and Company Secretary, and all Directors are independent of the management of the company.

The Board of Directors retains overall responsibility for the strategic development of the company in close liaison with the executive officers.

Our board members are as follows:

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### **Sister Stanislaus Kennedy**

Sister Stanislaus Kennedy is an Irish Sister of Charity and one of Ireland's best-known social innovators. Sister Stan founded Focus Ireland in 1985 and is Life President of the organisation.

- › Research Advisory Committee
- › Remuneration and Nomination Sub-Committee
- › Services Sub-Committee

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### **Gerry Danaher**

Current Chairperson of Focus Ireland's Board of Directors. Gerry joined the Board in January 2007 and became Chairperson in 2008. Following a career in the public sector, in a variety of roles with the National Economic and Social Council, and in the corporate world, Gerry brings a range of experience to the Board.

- › Finance Sub-Committee
- › Remuneration and Nomination Sub-Committee

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### **Helen Kilroy**

Helen is a qualified solicitor and accredited mediator who joined the Board in March 2006. She is the current Head of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Department in McCann FitzGerald Solicitors and lectures in the Incorporated Law Society on discovery and mediation. She is a member of the Irish Sports Council Disciplinary Committee. In her role as a Director of Focus Ireland and Focus Housing, Helen brings her legal qualification and experience to the Board's discussions.

- › Audit Sub-Committee
- › Remuneration and Nomination Sub-Committee

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### **David Martin**

David Martin FCMA joined the Board in July 2006. He was previously Financial Director of IAWS Group PLC. He is currently a Non-Executive Director of FBD Insurance plc and a number of private companies.

- › Finance Sub-Committee
- › Remuneration and Nomination Sub-Committee

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### **Mary O'Shea**

Mary joined the Board in January 2009. She is Executive Director of the Dublin Aids Alliance and previously worked as Assistant Director in Merchant's Quay Ireland and with the Probation Services, Welfare Services and the Drug Treatment Centre Board.

- › Services Sub-Committee

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### **Deirdre Connolly**

Deirdre joined the Focus Ireland Board as Worker Director in May 2008 and retired by rotation in May 2014. She has worked with Focus Ireland since March 2002 and has worked as a front-line staff member and a project leader in housing, outreach and the services divisions of the agency. She has been Services Standards Officer with Focus Ireland since December 2008.

- › Services Sub-Committee

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### **Pauline Burke**

Pauline joined the Focus Ireland Board as replacement Worker Director after the retirement of Deirdre Connolly in June 2014, following an internal staff election process. Pauline has been working in the area of social care since 1995 and is currently working as the team leader on the National Family Case Management Service.

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## Sean Carey

Sean joined the Focus Ireland Board as Director in May 2011. He was educated at St Flannan's, Ennis, and the Institute of Public Administration. Sean retired from the post of Deputy City Manager from Dublin City Council in 2007.

- › Property Sub-Committee
  - › Finance Sub-Committee
- 

## Declan O'Flaherty

Declan joined the Focus Ireland Board as Director in September 2011. Educated at Ard Scoil Ris, Griffith Avenue, and Bolton Street College, Declan is the third generation to operate the family business of O'Flaherty Motor Body Repairers.

- › Audit Sub-Committee
  - › Finance Sub-Committee
- 

## Ronan Harris

Ronan joined the board of Focus Ireland in March 2012. As Vice-President of Sales and Operations in Europe, Ronan drives Google's online sales and account management for advertisers across EMEA. Ronan is an electronic engineering graduate of UCD.

- › Funding Sub-Committee
- 

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## Dr Nessa Winston

Dr Nessa Winston is a college lecturer in Social Policy in the School of Applied Social Science UCD who joined the Board in September 2013. Her main research interests relate to housing and community issues. In 2007, she was awarded a Government of Ireland Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences for research on urban regeneration. She is a co-founder and member of the Irish Social Policy Association and a member of the European Network for Housing Researchers.

- › Research Advisory Committee
- 

## John Moloney

John joined the Focus Ireland Board as Director in March 2014. He was educated at Summerhill College, Sligo; UCD; NUI Galway and the University of Navarra, Barcelona. He was previously Group Managing Director at Glanbia. He is a Non-Executive Director of a number of companies and a former council member of the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC).

- › Funding Sub-Committee
-

Meeting and sub-committee attendance:

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Research Advisory</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Remuneration and Nominations</b>	<b>Finance</b>	<b>Audit</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Joined Board</b>
Sister Stanislaus Kennedy	5/6	1/2		2/2				2/2	Sept 1985
Gerry Danaher – Chairperson	6/6		4/6	2/2	4/6				Jan 2007
Helen Kilroy – Vice-Chairperson	6/6			2/2		2/2			March 2006
David Martin	4/6			1/2	5/6				Jan 2006
Mary O’Shea	4/6							2/2	Jan 2009
Deirdre Connolly	2/3								May 2008
Pauline Burke	3/3								June 2014
Sean Carey	1/6		2/6		1/6				May 2011
Declan O’Flaherty	6/6				6/6	2/2			Sept 2011
Ronan Harris	5/6						3/3		March 2012
Dr Nessa Winston	4/6	2/2							Sept 2013
John Moloney	3/5						0/3		Jan 2014

### **Sub-Committee Volunteer Members**

Sonya Flynn	N/A						3/3		N/A
Niall Gibbons	N/A						3/3		N/A
Conor Jones	N/A						2/3		N/A
Bill Nowlan	N/A		6/6						N/A
Patricia Crisp	N/A		4/6						N/A
Gloria Kirwan	N/A							1/2	N/A
Dermot McCarthy	N/A							2/2	N/A
Dr Mary Murphy		1/2							
Dr Ronni Greenwood		1/2							
Dr Eoin O’Sullivan		2/2							
Dr Marie-Claire Van Hout	N/A	1/2							N/A

During 2014, Joyce Loughnan, our Chief Executive, resigned following an illness. In her absence, our Finance Director Mark Byrne operated as Chief Executive in an acting capacity. The Chief Executive manages the operation of the company, with delegated divisional responsibility to the following:

Services	Catherine Maher
Finance, Administration and IT – Acting	Pat Dennigan
Advocacy Research, Policy, Communication and Education	Mike Allen
Human Resources	Madeleine Clarke
Fundraising	Lisa-Nicole Dunne
Property and Development – Acting	Mark Byrne

## Board committees

Committees of the Board are established for good governance under the code of practice, as follows:

### 1 Finance committee

Monitors and reviews financial performance; should meet six times per year (2014:6, 2013:6) and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

#### Functions of the committee:

- › To monitor and review financial performance
- › To review internal financial controls and risk management processes
- › To offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland's Executive to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation
- › To provide specialist financial expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland to carry out its work effectively
- › To report the findings and recommendations from its review directly to the Board
- › To devise and monitor finance procedures suited to the agency's activities
- › To authorise expenditure greater than €100K
- › To act as a point of escalation for the Focus Ireland Executive
- › To provide a forum where relevant issues / controls and financial or sustainability concerns can be discussed and appropriate solutions devised.

### 2 Audit Committee

Reviews internal financial controls and risk management; liaises with auditors and reports to the Board; should meet twice yearly (2014:2, 2013:2) and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

#### Functions of the committee:

- › To monitor the integrity of the financial statements of Focus Ireland and any formal announcements about the organisation's financial performance
- › To review internal financial controls and risk management processes
- › To liaise directly, and independently of the Focus Ireland Executive, with internal and external auditors
- › To meet the external auditors at least once a year without any employees of Focus Ireland present to ensure there are no unresolved issues or concerns
- › To report findings and recommendations from its review directly to the Board
- › To review and advise on choice of external and internal auditors, as appointed every five years
- › To review and amend as appropriate the terms of reference for auditors and these to be ratified by the main Board of Focus Ireland every five years
- › To offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland's Executive team on the development of robust processes and on the protection of Focus Ireland's reputation
- › To devise and monitor procurement procedures suited to the agency's purchasing profile
- › To act as a point of escalation for the Focus Ireland Executive and to undertake actions agreed at the Audit Sub-Committee meetings
- › To provide a forum where relevant issues and audit concerns can be discussed and appropriate solutions devised
- › To allow Board members or employees to raise, in confidence, concerns about potential irregularities regarding financial reporting; the Audit Sub-Committee will investigate the matters raised
- › To communicate to the Board any audit items that relate to the Board's areas of responsibilities as soon as they are identified
- › To provide specialist financial and audit expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland to carry out its work effectively
- › To contribute to a think tank every three years on audit and risk management.

### 3 Remuneration and Nomination Committee

During 2014, the remuneration committee and the nominations committee were combined. The function of this committee is to ensure successional planning, to approve and determine remuneration for Executive Management and to ensure that the Board has the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to carry out its duties. The committee should meet twice yearly (2014:2, 2013:1) or when required and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

#### Functions of the committee – nomination:

- › To ensure that the Board has the appropriate skills, knowledge, diversity and experience to perform its duties at all times
- › To ensure that Directors have the skills, experience, expertise and time to fulfil their role and responsibility on the Board, as detailed in the Terms of Reference for the Board
- › To ensure that there are certain Board Directors with the necessary experience to chair and / or participate in the Sub-Committees of the Board, e.g. Research, Funding, Audit, Finance, Services, Housing Development and Maintenance, Remuneration and Regions
- › Board Directors are appointed initially for a three-year term. In general, they will be asked to continue for a second three-year term by the Chairperson of the Board, and the decision will be endorsed by the full Board. The Chairperson will decide whether a Director should stand down from the Board, and the decision will be endorsed by the full Board.
- › To ensure that there is sufficient rotation of Directors to allow new perspectives to be brought in, whilst balancing the continuity of the Board and recognising the knowledge and experience of Focus Ireland built up over time
- › To ensure that the nominees chosen are integrated into the Board seamlessly and assist in the induction of new Directors
- › To ensure that all Directors chosen will:
  - › be key individuals who act at a senior level in their area of expertise
  - › act as champions for Focus Ireland and be able to influence key stakeholders in the statutory, business and community sector
  - › operate in the interests of Focus Ireland and in line with its mission, vision and values.

#### Functions of the committee – remuneration:

- › The committee was formed to appoint the CEO and to determine and approve the remuneration of the CEO and changes to the remuneration of the Executive team reporting directly to the CEO.
- › The Chairperson of the Board will be Chairperson of this committee.
- › The Life President and Vice-Chairperson will be members of this committee and one other Board Director (e.g. person who brings HR / finance / business experience to the Board.)
- › The CEO will be responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of the Executive team.
- › The CEO will make recommendations to the Remuneration and Nomination Committee for endorsement.
  - › Performance will be judged on achievements / outcomes delivered against expected annual objectives agreed for the role.
  - › Remuneration will be adjusted depending on the following factors:
    - › performance rating, i.e. excellent, very good or good
    - › level of significance and responsibility associated with the role, including any changes to these in the period
    - › additional skills / experience gained.
  - › Typically, the remuneration adjustment will be paid as a one-off payment in June; however, the CEO has the discretion to recommend it as an adjustment to base pay. The CEO will give consideration to the following factors in determining this:
    - › remuneration level for the role relative to the current value in the sector and the external environment
    - › remuneration level of the CEO, Executive team members and management scales
    - › salary adjustments being applied within Focus Ireland to staff on service-related pay scheme
    - › general practice being adopted by organisations in the sector and external environment
    - › Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- › The Chairperson of the Board will be responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of the CEO in accordance with Focus Ireland's performance management policy and procedures.

- › Meetings will aim to reach consensus decision but, if necessary, a vote will be taken. The Chairperson will hold the deciding vote.
- › The Chairperson will be responsible for the administration and management of the committee, including scheduling meetings, agenda and minutes.
- › The committee will meet at least once a year and more often by exception if necessary.

#### 4 Research Advisory Committee

Provides advice and guidance and oversees research on housing and social inclusion; should meet twice each year (2014: 2, 2013: 2) and consists of Non-Executive Directors, volunteer experts and Focus Ireland Executives.

##### Functions of the committee:

- › To advise Focus Ireland on programmes of research within the context of the company's strategic plan
- › To contribute to and advise Focus Ireland on the development of its research strategy
- › To consider research proposals
- › To monitor research progress and continue to advise the Director of the Research, Development and Communications (RD&C) Unit and / or the Research Officer on the processes for the duration of a particular research project
- › To review, critically analyse and advise on short-listed tender submissions relating to research and evaluation projects prior to awarding contracts
- › To review, critically analyse and advise on all draft reports relating to research prior to finalisation
- › To contribute to discussions on issues of dissemination of research outputs, and lobbying and campaigning using research outputs
- › To advise on the ethical conduct of all research
- › To be responsible for maintaining Focus Ireland's research ethics guidelines
- › To advise on and contribute to a think tank every three to five years on the organisation's research programme and any future research / policy issues to be considered in the next five to ten years; to advise on external experts to invite to the think tank event.

#### 5 Services Committee

Provides advice and guidance on models of services available and good practices associated with service delivery; should meet twice each year (2014: 2, 2013: 2) and consists of Non-Executive Directors, volunteer experts and Focus Ireland Executives.

##### Functions of the committee:

- › To advise Focus Ireland on models of services available and good practices associated with service delivery within the context of the agency's strategic plan
- › To contribute to and advise Focus Ireland on the development of its services strategy
- › To participate in a think tank on current services every three to five years and consider future demand and policy over the next five to ten years
- › To provide a forum where relevant issues / challenges relating to services can be discussed and to present and provide recommendations
- › To advise on external experts to invite to join the Services Sub-Committee
- › To introduce Focus Ireland Executive and Management to key influencers and decision makers in statutory, business and community sectors to improve policies, services and strategy aimed at eliminating long-term homelessness in Ireland.

## 6 Property Committee

Considers key policy decisions relating to acquisition, management and the use of property by the company; should meet six times each year (2014:6, 2013: 5) and consists of Non-Executive Directors, volunteer experts and Focus Ireland Executives.

### Functions of the committee:

- › To offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland on housing development and property maintenance within the context of Focus Ireland's strategic plan
- › To assist the Board in making the most appropriate and efficient use of Focus Ireland's property resources
- › To contribute to and provide advice on the development of Focus Ireland's housing development and property maintenance strategy every three to five years to ensure that the use of property is fully aligned with the strategies of Focus Ireland for service delivery to its staff, clients and other stakeholders
- › To advise the Board on the purchase, sale, construction, maintenance or other application of funds on properties owned or to be acquired by Focus Ireland
- › The day-to-day operation of the property affairs of Focus Ireland is the responsibility of management; however, management will consult with the Property Sub-Committee on a regular basis; in particular, any acquisitions, disposals, leasing or construction projects involving combined expenditure over €100K will be first approved by the Property Sub-Committee
- › To provide a forum where relevant issues can be discussed and to deliver solutions appropriate to Housing Development and Property Management
- › To provide specialist expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland to carry out its work effectively
- › To introduce the Focus Ireland Executive and Housing Management to key stakeholders, influencers and decision makers.

## 7 Funding Committee

Offers advice and assistance on raising funds; this new committee was formed at the end of 2013 and met three times during 2014; it consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

### Functions of the committee:

- › To offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland on brand development and to raise funds within the context of Focus Ireland's strategic plan.
- › To contribute to, and provide advice on, the development of Focus Ireland's sustainable growth and investment strategy, including development of partnerships, channels and strategies that will help raise awareness and double fundraised income by 2016
- › To consider proposals made and approaches adopted, to contribute to discussions on lobbying, campaigning, fundraising and on how to overcome challenges
- › To provide a forum where relevant issues can be discussed and solutions appropriate for specific regions devised
- › To introduce the Focus Ireland Executive, fundraising staff and regional managers to key high-worth individuals, philanthropists, corporate stakeholders, media and branding specialists, influencers and decision makers
- › To actively engage stakeholders in the statutory, business and community sectors to improve policy and services to eliminate homelessness in the region
- › To provide specialist expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland to raise funds to carry out its work effectively
- › To contribute to and provide advice on the development of Focus Ireland's funding strategy every three to five years
- › To provide a strong voice for Focus Ireland within its own community / region and to provide specialist expertise and perspective to help Focus Ireland to carry out its work and fundraising effectively.

## Internal controls

The Directors acknowledge their overall responsibility for the group's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. They have delegated responsibility for the implementation of this system to the Executive Management. This system includes financial controls, which enable the Board to meet its responsibilities for the integrity and accuracy of the group's accounting records.

The Board has also established a process of compliance which addresses the Board's wider responsibility to maintain, review and report on all internal controls, including financial, operation and compliance risk management.

## The key elements of internal control systems

- 1 The group has strict policies and procedures in place for the receipt, recording and control of donations received from private individuals and the corporate sector. These procedures are regularly reviewed and independently audited.
- 2 The group has an established risk management programme. Quarterly workshops are held to review the risk register and each risk is owned and monitored by an Executive who reports on their areas of risk fortnightly at the executive meeting. Risks are reviewed by the Board twice annually.
- 3 An independent internal audit is conducted periodically to evaluate the internal financial controls and assessment of business risk. The most recent audit report from 2012 was positive, stating that the internal controls of the organisation were well-documented and sufficiently robust to safeguard the assets of the company. An Audit Committee reports independently to the Board on all aspects of controls and risks.
- 4 Procedures and control systems are formally documented in a series of Service Level Agreements, within all departments of the group. These were implemented in 2003 and are reviewed regularly.
- 5 There is a formal organisational structure in place with clearly defined lines of responsibility, division of duties and delegation of authority.
- 6 Detailed budgets are prepared annually and, in line with the strategic plan, these are reviewed by the finance sub-committee and further reviewed and approved by the Board. Actual results and service outcomes are compared regularly against these budgets to ensure alignment with plan, tight budgetary control and value for money.
- 7 As part of the Reserve policy, we will endeavour to maintain reserve levels to mitigate risks and to ensure the sustainability of our services.



In 2014,

**89%** of every Euro received



was spent directly on our services to  
combat and prevent homelessness.

# Focus Ireland Limited and Subsidiaries

## Directors' Report and Financial Statements

**Year Ended 31 December 2014**

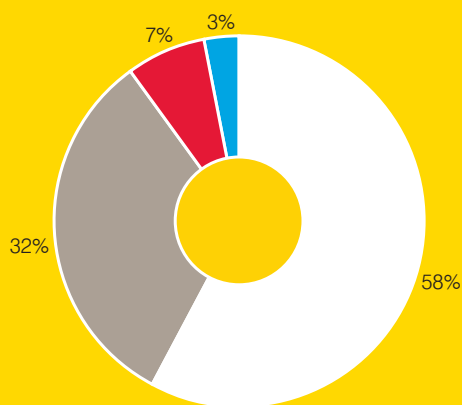
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## Financial Review

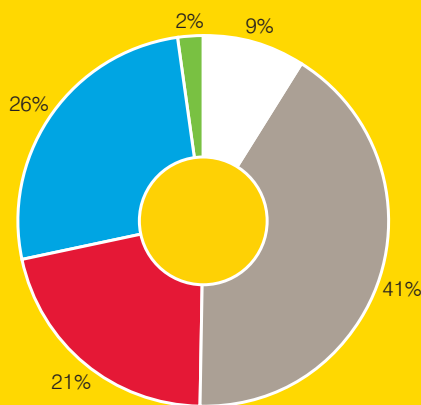
	2014	
	€m	%
<b>Mix of income</b>		
Grant income	11.38	58%
Fundraising income	6.37	32%
Rental income	1.34	7%
Other income	0.51	3%
	<u>19.60</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Mix of expenditure</b>		
Direct charitable activities costs	17.10	89%
Governance and support costs	0.32	2%
Fundraising and events costs	1.88	9%
Operational expenditure	<u>19.30</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Fundraising cost to income ratio</b>		
Fundraising income	6.37	
Fundraising costs	1.88	
	<u>4.49</u>	<u>70%</u>

## Analysis of Income and Expenditure



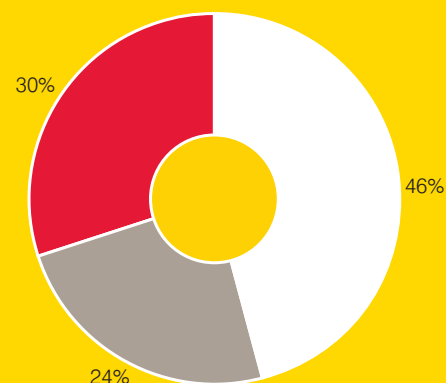
### Breakdown of income

Grants	58%
Fundraising	32%
Rental income	7%
Other	3%



### Breakdown of expenditure

Fundraising	9%
Homeless Services	41%
Housing support	21%
Prevention	26%
Support services	2%



### Breakdown of services costs by service type

Homeless Services	46%
Housing support	24%
Prevention	30%

# Directors' Report

The Directors present their Annual Report together with the audited financial statements of the company and of the group for the year ended 31 December 2014.

## Organisational structure

The group includes the holding company, its wholly owned subsidiary – Focus Housing Association Limited (Registered Charity No: CHY 9040) – and its joint venture undertaking – The Caretakers Project Limited (Registered Charity No: CHY 15489). The holding company is principally concerned with the provision of support services to homeless people and the conduct of research and advocacy. The subsidiary company provides accommodation in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Cork, Sligo and Kilkenny, and the joint venture undertaking provides overnight accommodation and support to young people in Dublin.

## Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986

The reporting requirements of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 1986, relating to financial statements do not apply to the company, as it is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital and not trading for the acquisition of gain by its members.

## Relationships with other charities

Focus Ireland actively promotes partnership, working with statutory bodies and other charitable organisations in the provision of services and the pursuit of its advocacy goals. Examples of this work include participation in the Dublin Homeless Network and partnership work with local authorities and health services around the country in the Regional Homeless Forums. In addition, Focus Ireland has progressed its objectives through partnerships with other voluntary organisations, including the 'Make Room' campaign (a joint initiative between Focus Ireland, the Simon Communities of Ireland, the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Threshold), the Advocacy Initiative and Claiming our

Future campaign. Focus Ireland is also a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Irish Charities Tax Reform Group and FEANTSA (European network of organisations working with homeless people).

## Principal activities

Focus Ireland is a registered charity that works to prevent people becoming, remaining or returning to homelessness through the provision of quality services, supported housing, research and advocacy. We offer individuals and families advice, support, education and housing to help them to have and keep a home. We believe that everyone has a right to a place they can call home, and we campaign to address the causes of homelessness.

The organisation was founded in 1985 by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy in response to the needs of a group of homeless women. Focus Ireland's vision is that 'everyone has a right to a place they can call home', and the organisation works to make this vision a reality for thousands of people every year.

The company is a registered charity as a company limited by guarantee without share capital. The report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013, and although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), as issued by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales in October 2005, the group has implemented many of its recommendations in these financial statements.

The objectives of the company and of the group are charitable in nature, with established charitable status (Registered Charity No: CHY 7220). All income is applied solely towards the promotion of the charitable objectives of the group.

The services provided by the company are set out in more detail in the Focus Ireland Services section of our Annual Report.

## 1 Homeless Support: Day Services

- The Coffee Shop
- Extended Day Services – John’s Lane West
- Extension Day Services
- South Dublin Day Services
- Regional Contact Outreach Service / Housing First
- Open Access Case Management
- The Caretakers Project Limited
- The Caretakers Hostel
- Caretakers Case Management
- Aylward Green Supported Temporary Accommodation for Families
- Crisis Intervention Service Partnership (CISP)
- Off-the-Streets
- Childcare
- Short-term Accommodation

## 2 Housing and Housing Support Services

- Long-term Housing
- Tenancy Support and Settlement Service

## 3 Prevention Services

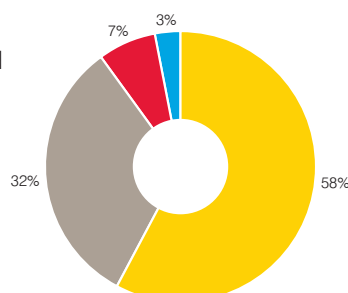
- Advice and Information
- The Prison In-Reach Programme
- The Preparation for Training and Education Programme (PETE)
- In-Reach Housing Programme
- Focus Ireland’s Aftercare Service
- The Step-Down Programme
- George’s Hill Supported Temporary Accommodation for Young People aged 18 to 26
- Preventative Tenancy Sustainment Service
- The Genio Mental Health Projects
- National Family Case Management Service
- New Presenters Case Management Service
- Research, Policy, Communication and Education

## Results for the year and review of operations

The results for the year as set out below are considered satisfactory by the Board.

### Summary of income

- Grant income
- Fundraising
- Rental income
- Other income



Grant funding represents 58% (2013: 62%) of total income, while fundraising income represented 32% of total income (2013: 30%).

In 2014, Focus Ireland continued to provide services to our customers. We have continued to develop our services in Dublin, Waterford, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick, Kildare and Sligo to deliver our housing programme. We also expanded into the North East, securing funding to provide visiting support for households with low to high support needs, in order to assist them to occupy (or continue to occupy) their housing and to progress from homelessness, or risk of same, towards independent living.

## Dividends and retention

The group is precluded by its Memorandum of Association from paying dividends, either as part of normal operations or on a distribution of its assets in the event of a winding-up.

## Designated funds and strategy 2011–2016

Focus Ireland holds a bank position of approximately €3.3m as at 31 December 2014. The cash position of the company has depleted over the last 12 months as funds are ear-marked by the organisation for certain strategic initiatives and housing developments.

## Pensions

Focus Ireland operates a defined contribution scheme, open to all permanent staff. The company contributions are 7% of pensionable salary, while employee contributions are 5% of pensionable salary.

## Corporate governance

Focus Ireland is committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance. From its foundation in 1985, ‘stewardship’ has been one of the eight key values that underpin the work of the organisation. Full details are to be found in the Governance Statement section of this report.

## Staff and volunteers

Focus Ireland continues to attract the best people into the organisation by establishing high employment standards and ensuring that all employees are qualified, experienced and professional in their delivery of service to our customers. We are committed to the continuing development of all our staff and we allocate resources annually towards a comprehensive training and development programme. In addition, we provide opportunities and support for those wishing to up-skill, through the attainment of further qualifications; this is managed through the organisation’s education policy.

Focus Ireland recognises that the goals and values of the organisation are best achieved through the active participation of those in the wider community. Therefore, volunteering has become a key part of the Focus Ireland strategy. We believe that involving volunteers is a way of furthering active citizenship and community involvement and

that it will help to change the public's perception of our customers. The type of volunteer roles vary and have included activities with customers, such as befriending, drama and literacy tutors, career guidance and also roles as schools ambassadors, gardeners, archivists and administrators.

Focus Ireland also benefits from voluntary work under corporate social responsibility; whilst we do not recognise the monetary value of this volunteer work (under SORP 2005 guidelines), we greatly appreciate the breadth of experience this brings to the organisation.

## Health and safety

As in other years, health and safety has remained a core function and value of the work of Focus Ireland. During 2014, we continued to ensure that our workplaces, practices and procedures were in compliance with the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. Our Health and Safety Officer provided support and advice to line management and their teams in relation to best practice and legislative compliance. Our Health and Safety Committee completed safety inspections of all sites as a monitoring mechanism, during the year, in line with the Health and Safety policy.

## Environment

The group has a proactive approach to assisting all personnel in conducting our business in a manner that protects the environment of our customers, employees and the community.

During 2014, the group continued to look at new ways of reducing its impact on the environment. The volume of office waste that was recycled increased in 2014 compared to previous years. In addition to office waste recovery according to Repak regulations, the group is now recycling its domestic waste through DCC.

## Post balance sheet events

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year end.

## Directors and Company Secretary

The Directors and Secretary who currently hold office are listed at the beginning of the report. Ms Pauline Burke was appointed Director on 29 May 2014 to replace Ms Deirdre Connolly who resigned on 28 May 2014. During the year, our Chief Executive, Joyce Loughnan, took a leave of absence due to illness and subsequently resigned from her position. Mark Byrne was appointed Acting Chief Executive.

A new Chief Executive, Ashley Balbirnie, was appointed on 18 March 2015.

In addition, Pat Dennigan was appointed Company Secretary during the year, following Mark Byrne's resignation.

## Statement of Directors' responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- › select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- › make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- › prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for preparing books of accounts, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company, and for ensuring that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and comply with the Irish Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps in the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## Books of account

The measures taken by the Directors to secure compliance with the company's obligation to keep proper books of account are the use of appropriate systems and procedures and the employment of competent persons. The books of account are kept at 9-12 High Street, Dublin 8.

## Auditors

The auditors, Deloitte & Touche Chartered Accounts and Statutory Audit Firm, continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 160 of the Companies Act, 1963.

On behalf of the Board



Gerry Danaher, Director · 27 March 2015



Helen Kilroy, Director · 27 March 2015

# Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Focus Ireland Limited

We have audited the financial statements of Focus Ireland Limited for the year ended 31 December 2014 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, Consolidated Balance Sheet, Company Balance Sheet, Consolidated Cash Flow Statement, Statement of Accounting Policies and the related notes 1 to 22.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and the accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

## **Respective responsibilities of Directors and Auditors**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities, the Directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, giving a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's (APB's) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

## **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Directors; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all of the financial and non-financial information in the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, we consider the implications for our report.

## Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- › give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the affairs of the company as at 31 December 2014 and of the net incoming resources of the group for the year then ended; and
- › have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013.

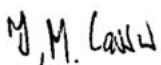
## Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013

- › We have obtained all of the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

- › In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the company.
- › The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.
- › In our opinion, the information given in the Directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.

## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2013, which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of Directors' remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.



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**Thomas Cassin**

For and on behalf of **Deloitte & Touche**

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm, Dublin

27 March 2015

# Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

(including Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

for the year ended 31 December 2014

		2014 Restricted funds €	2014 Unrestricted funds €	2014 Total €	2013 Total €
	Notes				
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
<b>Voluntary income</b>					
Donations and fundraising income	2	162,392	6,203,530	6,365,922	5,440,720
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>					
Revenue-based grants	3	11,382,434	–	11,382,434	11,351,256
Rents and charges to residents		–	1,335,642	1,335,642	1,316,846
Other income	4	–	487,635	487,635	140,061
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>					
Investment income	5	–	24,785	24,785	62,254
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<u>11,544,826</u>	<u>8,051,592</u>	<u>19,596,418</u>	<u>18,311,137</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Homeless services		5,700,141	1,895,974	7,596,115	8,104,955
Housing support		2,418,305	1,582,551	4,000,856	3,853,961
Prevention services		3,282,277	1,651,703	4,933,980	4,586,360
Advocacy		–	770,229	770,229	957,796
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>					
Fundraising and events costs	2	–	1,883,201	1,883,201	1,477,839
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Governance costs		–	109,367	109,367	120,351
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>11,400,723</u>	<u>7,893,025</u>	<u>19,293,748</u>	<u>19,101,262</u>
<b>Net incoming / (outgoing) resources before pension gain</b>	22	144,103	158,567	302,670	(790,125)
<b>Pension gain</b>		–	–	–	<u>2,000,601</u>
<b>Net incoming resources</b>	18	<u>144,103</u>	<u>158,567</u>	<u>302,670</u>	<u>1,210,476</u>

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (continued)

(including Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Notes	2014 Restricted funds €	2014 Unrestricted funds €	2014 Total €	2013 Total €
<b>Net incoming resources</b>		144,103	158,567	302,670	1,210,476
Actuarial gain in respect of pension scheme	22	–	–	–	814,200
Net movement in funds	18	144,103	158,567	302,670	2,024,676

There is no difference between the net incoming resources for the period and the surplus retained for the period and their historical cost equivalents.

Incoming resources arose solely from continuing operations.

On behalf of the Board



Gerry Danaher, Director · 27 March 2015



Helen Kilroy, Director · 27 March 2015

# Consolidated Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2014

	Notes	2014 €	2013 €
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Properties	10	61,294,517	57,563,728
Less Capital Assistance Scheme loans	10	(53,032,692)	(50,804,098)
		8,261,825	6,759,630
Other tangible assets	11	343,678	421,526
		8,605,503	7,181,156
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		3,286,645	5,052,824
Debtors	12	1,103,397	504,129
Grants receivable		1,322,440	1,040,396
		5,712,482	6,597,349
<b>Creditors</b> (amounts falling due within one year)			
Creditors, accruals and deferred income	13	(2,414,975)	(2,396,560)
<b>Net current assets</b>		3,297,507	4,200,789
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		11,903,010	11,381,945
<b>Net assets</b>		11,903,010	11,381,945
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Capital grants and donations	14	3,490,968	3,272,573
Unrestricted capital reserve	15	2,590,266	2,590,266
Accumulated funds – restricted	18	1,678,883	1,534,780
Accumulated funds – unrestricted	18	4,142,893	3,984,326
	21	11,903,010	11,381,945

On behalf of the Board




Gerry Danaher, Director · 27 March 2015

Helen Kilroy, Director · 27 March 2015

# Company Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2014

	Notes	2014 €	2013 €
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Other tangible assets	11	337,624	421,526
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		3,125,757	4,961,865
Debtors	12	543,365	327,569
Grants receivable		1,230,939	960,506
		4,900,061	6,249,940
<b>Creditors</b> (amounts falling due within one year)			
Creditors, accruals and deferred income	13	(2,152,736)	(3,237,052)
<b>Net current assets</b>		2,747,325	3,012,888
<b>Net assets</b>		3,084,949	3,434,414
<b>Reserves</b>			
Capital grants and donations	14	469,540	483,845
Accumulated funds – restricted	19	1,509,397	1,367,321
Accumulated funds – unrestricted	19	1,106,012	1,583,248
		3,084,949	3,434,414

On behalf of the Board




Gerry Danaher, Director · 27 March 2015

Helen Kilroy, Director · 27 March 2015

# Consolidated Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Notes	2014 €	2013 €
<b>Net cash outflow from charitable activities</b>	16	(468,596)	(1,357,460)
<b>Return on investments and servicing of finance</b>			
Pension settlement payment	22	–	(1,490,000)
<b>Capital expenditure and financial investment</b>			
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(3,764,643)	(1,034,825)
<b>Financing</b>			
CAS loans received		2,228,594	602,449
Capital grant received		238,466	140,000
		2,467,060	742,449
<b>Decrease in cash</b>		(1,766,179)	(3,139,836)
<b>Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds</b>			
Decrease in cash in the year		(1,766,179)	(3,139,836)
Net funds at 1 January 2014		5,052,824	8,192,660
<b>Net funds at 31 December 2014</b>	17	3,286,645	5,052,824

# Statement of Accounting Policies

The significant accounting policies and estimation techniques adopted by the company are as follows.

## Accounting convention

The financial statements are presented in Euro (€) under the historical cost convention.

## Basis of consolidation

Focus Housing Association Limited became a subsidiary by alteration of its Memorandum and Articles of Association on 5 March 1998. These Articles provide that Focus Ireland Limited shall at all times hold voting control of the subsidiary company.

The Caretakers Project Limited is treated as a subsidiary, and the full financial results of the company are incorporated in the group accounts, as the group has control of the management and administration of all the financial activities of the entity.

## Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under Irish GAAP, and the group has implemented many of the recommendations of the Charities SORP 2005. The financial statements do, however, depart from the Charities SORP 2005 in regard to the accounting for Capital Assistance Scheme Loans and Capital Grants and Donations, as detailed under the relevant heading below.

## Recognition of income including revenue grants

Revenue grants received from state bodies are recorded as income on a receivable basis. In the main, grants are received for a specific time period and purpose and are subject to Service Level Agreements. In such cases, grants are released to the SOFA in accordance with the period to

which they relate. Other grants can be received in advance and are recorded in, or deferred to, the period in which the related expenditure is charged.

Grants and assistance due but not yet received are included as 'Grants receivable' in the balance sheet. Grants and assistance received which relate to the funding of expenditure not yet incurred are deferred and included under 'Grants received in advance' in the balance sheet.

Rental income is recorded on a receivable basis.

Other income includes parents' contributions towards childcare centres, restaurant sales, capital management income for properties, payment and availability income (PAA) and other miscellaneous income.

Fundraising income represents the gross money raised, including all gross income from events held. In accordance with best practice, fundraising income is shown gross, without deduction of any overhead costs involved in raising such funds. Fundraising and event costs, shown separately in the financial statements, include staff, direct and indirect overheads, and event costs. Costs are recorded on a receipts basis.

Legacy income is recognised in either the period in which it is received or where the group is reasonably certain that the legacy will be received and the value of the legacy can be measured with sufficient accuracy. In this case, legacy income must have been received post year end, and the personal representatives must have agreed to the amount thereof prior to the year end.

Gifts in kind, for use by the group, are included as incoming resources when received. Gifts are valued at open market value or at a reasonable estimate of the gross value to the group. Donated goods received for resale in our retail store are recorded as income when sold.

## Governance cost policy

The resources expended on charitable activities have been classified to comply with SORP 2005. Such costs include the direct costs of the charitable activities together with those support costs (finance and administration cost) incurred that enable these activities to be undertaken. These support costs have been allocated across the activities, based on headcount and floor space occupied.

## Leases

All operating lease rentals are charged to the SOFA on a straight line basis.

## Fixed assets

Fixed assets are accounted for as follows;

- 1 Housing properties: All initial expenditure to ensure that the property is fit for purpose is capitalised at cost. Depreciation is not provided on housing properties on the grounds that the estimated useful life of these properties exceeds 50 years.

In addition, under the terms of our loan agreements with respective local authorities, the group is required to keep the mortgaged properties in good structural order, repair and condition and not to permit the mortgaged properties to depreciate by neglect or mismanagement. Detailed reviews for impairment are therefore only carried out if the Directors are satisfied that there are definite indications that impairment has occurred. The Directors are satisfied that an annual charge for depreciation would be inappropriate.

- 2 Other tangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Low value items are charged to the SOFA, in full, in the period the cost is incurred.

Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis to write off the cost of the assets over their estimated useful lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold land	<b>0%</b>
Leasehold improvements	<b>5%</b>
Office furniture and equipment	<b>25%</b>
Housing furniture and equipment	<b>10%</b>
Motor vehicles	<b>20%</b>

## Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans

The company adopts the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Registered Social Landlords, updated in 2010, instead of the Charities SORP, by recognising the loans as a deduction from the properties in the Balance Sheet rather than as incoming resources in the Statements of Financial Activity (SOFA). The Directors of Focus Ireland believe it to be the most appropriate method of accounting for the loans.

If Focus Ireland were to adopt the Charities SORP to account for the loans, the financial impact on the accounts would result in the cumulative restricted reserves and net assets of the charity increasing by the loans recognised in the year.

The majority of housing properties acquired by Focus Ireland Limited have been financed by way of Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans, which are repayable in full in 20 (purchases prior to 2002) or 30 years (purchases post-2002). Loans under CAS have not been amortised on the basis that the loans remain repayable in full, for the terms noted above, if certain conditions are not met during the loan term.

On completion of the loan period, provided certain conditions are met, the loans and interest, if applicable, are relieved in full and will be released to unrestricted capital reserves and not amortised.

## Capital grants and donations

Capital grants and donations, received in relation to housing properties, are taken directly to Capital Reserves and Donations and are not recognised as income in the SOFA. The group recognises capital grants and donations in accordance with SSAP 4 – Accounting for Government Grants, which the Directors of Focus Ireland believe to be the most appropriate method of accounting for Capital Grants and Donations.

The Charities SORP recognises such grants as restricted income in the SOFA. If the Charities SORP was adopted instead of SSAP 4, the financial impact on the accounts would result in the cumulative restricted income increasing by the amount of Capital Grants and Donations received in the year and in increased cumulative restricted reserves with a commensurate reduction in capital grants and donations.

Capital Grants and Donations received in relation to housing properties are not amortised to the SOFA, as depreciation is not charged on the corresponding property.

Grants received to fund other capital expenditure are taken to Capital Grants and Donations and amortised to income over the estimated useful lives of the related fixed assets.

## Unrestricted capital reserve

Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans received for the acquisition of property are released to the Unrestricted Capital Reserve when the term of the CAS mortgage is completed.

On completion of the loan period, the loans and interest, if applicable, are relieved in full and are released to Unrestricted Capital Reserves.

## Reserves policy

Focus Ireland needs reserves to:

- › ensure that the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service to those who need it
- › meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close; this includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases
- › meet unexpected costs like the breakdown of essential office machinery, staff cover for illness, maternity leave, parental leave, and legal costs defending the charity's interests
- › provide working capital when funding is paid in arrears and place the charity in a position where it could bid for funding which can be paid in arrears
- › meet the costs of winding up the organisation in the event that this was necessary
- › adequately cover three months of current expenditure.

## Restricted funds

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific trusts, which may be declared by the donor(s) or with their authority or created through legal process, but still within the wider objectives of the charity. Restricted funds may be restricted income funds, which are expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of some particular aspect(s) of the objectives of the charity, or they may be capital funds, where the assets are required to be invested, or retained for actual use, rather than expended.

## Unrestricted and designated funds

Unrestricted funds are expendable at the discretion of the Board in furtherance of the charity's objectives. The Directors can designate part or all of the Unrestricted Funds for specific purposes. These designations have an administrative purpose only and do not legally restrict the Board's discretion to apply the fund.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

## 1 Ownership and operations

The company and each of its subsidiaries are limited by guarantee and do not have a share capital.

The company and each of its subsidiaries are precluded by its Memorandum of Association from paying a dividend, either as part of normal operations or on distribution of the company's assets in the event of it being wound up.

All income must be applied solely towards the promotion of the charitable objectives of the company.

## 2 Fundraising income and costs

Focus Ireland generally adheres to a principle that the costs of generating fundraising income should not exceed 20% of the amount raised. For the duration of the strategic initiatives and while investment is being made to grow our fundraising, the organisation will deviate from the above principle, as appropriate, in 2014. In 2014, these costs were 30% (2013: 27%) of funds raised.

## 3 Revenue-based grants

	2014	2013
	€	€
<b>Revenue-based grants</b>		
DRHE – Local Authority	4,399,711	4,373,992
– HSE	1,243,633	1,243,621
HSE – Childcare	2,447,358	2,522,787
– Other area	587,281	642,471
– Mid-Leinster	482,671	513,867
– South East	106,633	110,000
City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB)	375,198	389,815
Waterford City Council	373,965	370,067
FÁS	335,050	337,716
Limerick City Council	131,307	122,557
Louth County Council	280,441	142,693
Mid-Western Health Board	91,000	91,000
Sligo County Council	68,390	69,500
Pobal	20,000	67,644
Dublin City Council	113,130	65,534
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	57,210	65,009
Genio	174,562	60,912
Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	–	45,000
Kilkenny County Council	33,269	35,020
Office of Minister for Children	14,090	33,599
Cork County Council	8,687	18,506
City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee (CDVEC)	26,171	14,896
Limerick County Council	7,867	10,050
DLR County Council	1,250	5,000
Miscellaneous	3,560	–
	11,382,434	11,351,256

## 4 Other income

Other income includes parents' contributions towards childcare centres, restaurant sales, capital management income for properties, Payment and Availability Agreement (PAA) income and other miscellaneous income.

## 5 Investment income

	2014	2013
	€	€
Deposit interest earned	24,785	62,254

## 6 Salaries and wages

	2014	2013
	€	€
Included in resources expended are wages, salaries and pension costs comprising:		
Wages and salaries – Direct Services	11,260,034	11,324,396
Wages and salaries – Administration	338,738	330,751
Wages and salaries – Fundraising	730,829	657,458
Social welfare costs	1,263,320	1,248,102
Restructuring costs	–	171,569
Pension costs	233,053	239,994
	<u>13,825,974</u>	<u>13,972,270</u>

The average number of persons employed by the group during the year was 328 (2013: 330). In addition to this, we have relief staff which equates to 26 full-time equivalents (2013: 26).

The company operates a defined contribution scheme. Company contributions are 7% and employee contributions are 5% of pensionable salary.

Amounts outstanding at year end were €34,043 (2013: €34,045) and were paid within 30 days of the year end.

No salaries are payable to the Directors or Trustees of the company. An employees' representative to the Board is remunerated for employment only.

During the year, our Chief Executive, Joyce Loughnan took a leave of absence due to illness and subsequently resigned from her position. Mark Byrne was appointed Acting Chief Executive from March 2014 to March 2015. A new Chief Executive, Ashley Balbirnie, was appointed on 18 March 2015 on an annual salary of €115,000 plus €5,000 medical insurance. The total remuneration package provided to the company's Chief Executive, Joyce Loughnan and Acting Chief Executive, Mark Byrne made by the employer is broken down as follows:

	2014	2013
	€	€
Joyce Loughnan		
Salary	125,000	125,000
Medical insurance	9,497	4,559
Employer pension contribution	8,189	7,493
	<u>142,686</u>	<u>137,052</u>
Mark Byrne		
Salary	122,542	–
Employer pension contribution	7,493	–
	<u>130,035</u>	<u>–</u>

## 6 Salaries and wages – continued

	2014	2013
	No. of employees	No. of employees
<b>Salary range</b>		
€120,001–€130,000	2	1
€110,001–€110,000	–	–
€100,001–€110,000	–	1
€ 90,001–€100,000	–	–
€ 80,001–€90,000	5	4
€ 70,000–€80,000	–	–

The Focus Ireland remuneration policy contains a provision for some of the Executive Management Team to have a performance-related element in their remuneration. Irrespective of performance, no payments were made under this performance-related policy in respect of 2014 (2013: €nil). All Executive Team remuneration payments are reviewed and approved by the Remuneration Committee of the Board. All executive remuneration is regularly benchmarked independently.

## 7 Net resources

	2014	2013
	€	€
The net incoming resources for the year is stated after charging / (crediting):		
<b>Directors' remuneration</b>	–	–
<b>Fees paid to Auditors (exclusive of VAT)</b>		
Audit fees	20,500	20,500
Other assurance services	–	1,000
Non-audit services	–	–
Taxation	–	–
<b>Other items</b>		
Depreciation	111,702	102,214
Amortisation	(20,071)	(20,072)
Deposit interest	(24,785)	(62,254)
Pension settlement	–	(2,000,601)
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

## 8 Taxation

The holding company and its subsidiaries have been granted charitable tax exemption by the Revenue Commissioners.

## 9 Financial assets

The Caretakers Project Limited was established as a joint venture to manage a project under which Focus Ireland Limited would provide all of the administrative and financial input into the company, and the Society of St Vincent de Paul would make available the property from which the company would operate.

The effect of the results of this joint venture (which is treated as a subsidiary) on the group are summarised as follows:

	2014 €'000	2013 €'000
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>		
Grants received (HSE)	767	808
	<u>767</u>	<u>808</u>
Less:		
Support and advocacy services	765	807
Surplus	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Balance sheet</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	94	15
Debtors	–	65
Creditors, accruals and deferred income	<u>(78)</u>	<u>(66)</u>
Net assets	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Reserves brought forward	14	13
Surplus for the year	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Accumulated reserves	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>

## 10 Housing properties and Capital Assistance Scheme loans

Group	Properties		Capital Assistance Scheme loans	
	2014 €	2013 €	2014 €	2013 €
<b>Housing properties</b>				
Stanhope Green	4,720,912	3,263,085	–	–
George's Hill	3,908,935	3,908,935	3,421,023	3,421,023
Buckingham Street	93,097	93,097	93,987	93,987
Ballybough	170,760	170,760	172,488	172,488
Finglas	4,895,398	4,895,398	4,895,398	4,895,398
Basin Lane	1,132,230	1,132,230	1,077,956	1,077,956
Parnell Street, Limerick	877,856	877,856	740,257	740,257
Grange Cohen, Waterford	5,734,460	5,734,460	5,453,940	5,453,940
Corbrac House, Limerick	1,127,803	1,127,803	1,129,429	1,129,429
Waterford units	12,725,124	12,725,124	12,322,033	12,322,033
Belmont, Waterford	8,054,329	8,054,329	8,047,876	8,047,876
Dublin units	3,812,680	3,220,849	3,271,371	2,679,960
Limerick units	4,936,290	4,604,075	4,029,585	3,750,155
Cork units	3,554,533	2,764,592	3,467,383	2,643,938
George's Hill, Block 4	335,198	335,198	–	–
Kilkenny units	1,070,549	1,070,549	1,082,437	1,082,437
Sligo units	1,518,185	959,210	1,424,408	890,100
Aftercare, North Circular Rd, Dublin 7	2,626,180	2,626,180	2,403,121	2,403,121
<b>Group properties</b>	<b>61,294,517</b>	<b>57,563,728</b>	<b>53,032,692</b>	<b>50,804,098</b>

### Ownership, finding agreement and conditions

The title deeds of the properties at Stanhope Green, George's Hill, Ballybough, Finglas and Basin Lane are held by Arthur Cox. The title deeds of the properties at Parnell Street, Limerick and Grange Cohen, Waterford, are held by Limerick City Council and Waterford City Council, respectively. The title deeds of the properties at Cork are held by Cork City Council. The title deeds of the properties at Kilkenny are held by Kilkenny County Council. The title deeds of the properties at Sligo are held by Sligo Borough Council. In regard to certain properties, legal charges are registered against the properties by the local authorities. All properties are now held by the subsidiary company, Focus Housing Association Limited.

Loans advanced by municipal (housing) authorities have a 20-year repayment period for those advanced prior to 2002 and a 30-year repayment period for those advanced post-2002. However, the subsidiary company is relieved in full of repayments of capital and interest as long as the housing authority is satisfied that the accommodation continues to be properly maintained and to be let to eligible categories of persons at reasonable rent levels.

In the event of the accommodation not continuing to be let in accordance with the terms of the scheme, the subsidiary company will become liable for repaying the outstanding balance of the loan together with any accrued interest. In the event of default of repayments, the housing authorities may take appropriate steps to secure redemption of the loan. The subsidiary company may not, if there is any balance outstanding on the loans, dispose of the accommodation without the consent of the housing authorities.

## 11 Other tangible assets

Group	Freehold	Leasehold	Office	Housing	Motor	Total
	buildings	improvements	furniture and	furniture and	vehicle	
	€	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost</b>						
At beginning of year	31,763	765,717	527,328	610,291	86,980	2,022,079
Additions	–	–	–	6,054	27,800	33,854
<b>At end of year</b>	<b>31,763</b>	<b>765,717</b>	<b>527,328</b>	<b>616,345</b>	<b>114,780</b>	<b>2,055,933</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At beginning of year	–	577,267	339,215	610,291	73,780	1,600,553
Charge for year	–	24,878	77,457	–	9,367	111,702
<b>At end of year</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>602,145</b>	<b>416,672</b>	<b>610,291</b>	<b>83,147</b>	<b>1,712,255</b>
<b>Net book value</b>						
<b>At 31/12/14</b>	<b>31,763</b>	<b>163,572</b>	<b>110,656</b>	<b>6,054</b>	<b>31,633</b>	<b>343,678</b>
At 31/12/13	31,763	188,450	188,113	–	13,200	421,526

### Company

All of the other fixed assets above, with the exception of housing furniture and equipment, are held within the holding company, Focus Ireland Limited. The housing furniture and equipment is held in the subsidiary company, Focus Housing Association Limited. The net book value of other assets in the holding company at 31 December 2014 and 2013 was €337,624 and €421,526, respectively.

## 12 Debtors

	Group		Holding company	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
	€	€	€	€
Amounts falling due within one year:				
Other debtors	717,223	295,002	60,911	113,955
Prepayments and accrued income	386,174	209,127	340,155	166,945
Amount due from subsidiaries	–	–	142,299	46,669
	<b>1,103,397</b>	<b>504,129</b>	<b>543,365</b>	<b>327,569</b>

### 13 Creditors, accruals and deferred income

	Group		Holding company	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
	€	€	€	€
Amounts falling due within one year:				
Trade creditors	375,534	247,326	317,370	216,695
Accruals and other creditors	1,241,550	1,333,893	1,108,465	1,219,597
Deferred income	216,712	389,318	216,712	216,712
Amounts owed to subsidiaries	–	–	–	1,198,047
PAYE / PRSI / USC	321,260	317,768	288,993	306,993
VAT	128,181	20,394	128,181	20,394
Grants received in advance	131,738	87,861	93,015	58,614
	<u>2,414,975</u>	<u>2,396,560</u>	<u>2,152,736</u>	<u>3,237,052</u>

### 14 Capital grants and donations

	Group		Holding company	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
	€	€	€	€
<b>Received and receivable</b>				
Balance at beginning of year	3,617,906	3,477,906	607,403	930,333
Amounts received during the year	238,466	140,000	–	–
Transferred to subsidiary	–	–	–	(322,930)
Balance at end of year	<u>3,856,372</u>	<u>3,617,906</u>	<u>607,403</u>	<u>607,403</u>
<b>Amortisation</b>				
Balance at beginning of year	345,333	325,261	123,558	116,621
Released during year	20,071	20,072	14,305	6,937
Balance at end of year	<u>365,404</u>	<u>345,333</u>	<u>137,863</u>	<u>123,558</u>
<b>Net book amount</b>	<u>3,490,968</u>	<u>3,272,573</u>	<u>469,540</u>	<u>483,845</u>

## 15 Unrestricted Capital Reserves

	Group		Holding company	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
	€	€	€	€
Balance at beginning and end of year	2,590,266	2,590,266	–	–

In 2010, the CAS loan for Stanhope Green was transferred from CAS to Unrestricted Capital Reserves as the term of the loan was completed.

## 16 Reconciliation of net incoming resources to net cash outflow from charitable activities

	2014	2013
	€	€
Net incoming resources	302,670	1,210,476
Depreciation, net of amortisation	91,631	82,142
Decrease in provisions	–	(2,000,600)
Increase in debtors	(881,312)	(726,164)
Increase in creditors	18,415	76,686
Net cash outflow from charitable activities	<u>(468,596)</u>	<u>(1,357,460)</u>

## 17 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 Jan 2014	Cashflow	At 31 Dec 2014
	€	€	€
Cash at bank and in hand	5,052,824	(1,766,179)	3,286,645
Net funds	<u>5,052,824</u>	<u>(1,766,179)</u>	<u>3,286,645</u>

## 18 Reserves – Group

	Accumulated funds restricted €	Accumulated funds unrestricted €	Total €
At 1 January 2014	1,534,780	3,984,326	5,519,106
Net movement in funds	144,103	158,567	302,670
<b>At 31 December 2014</b>	<b>1,678,883</b>	<b>4,142,893</b>	<b>5,821,776</b>

### Strategy review

Focus Ireland holds bank funds of €3,286,638 as at 31 December 2014 (2013: €5,052,824). The cash position of the company has depleted over the last 12 months due to expenditure for housing development and investment in fundraising. During 2012, the Board approved of, and work commenced on, the major redevelopment of one of the organisation's properties in Stanhope Green. Expected costs of this project are €3.4m, which will be incurred over a three-year period. Costs incurred during 2013 amounted to €98,719. Significant expenditure amounting to €1,457,827 was incurred during 2014. It is anticipated that the development will commence in 2015 on completion of planning permission.

## 19 Reserves – Holding company

	Accumulated funds restricted €	Accumulated funds unrestricted €	Total €
At 1 January 2014	1,367,321	1,583,248	2,950,569
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources	142,076	(477,236)	(335,160)
<b>At 31 December 2014</b>	<b>1,509,397</b>	<b>1,106,012</b>	<b>2,615,409</b>

## 20 Capital and leasing commitments and contingent assets and liabilities

### a) Capital commitments

The Board has approved a strategy of housing expansion to be carried on from 2005 to 2016 to meet the growing needs of homeless people. Company capital commitments approved by the Board at 31 December 2014 in respect of a proposed development of houses amounted to €1.7m in relation to Stanhope Green and €4m in relation to Harold's Cross developments (2013: €3.4m).

### b) Leasing commitments

The company's lease commitments are broken down as follows:

	2014	2013
	€	€
Less than 1 year	67,670	67,650
Between 2 and 5 years	65,622	65,222
Over 5 years	317,655	317,655
	<u>450,527</u>	<u>450,527</u>

### c) Contingent liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities at 31 December 2014 (2013: Nil).

### d) Contingent asset

During 2009, Focus Ireland was granted deed of transfer of a site in Harold's Cross for a nominal fee of €100. There are a number of restrictions placed on the development and use of this site. If these restrictions are not adhered to, or if Focus Ireland does not develop this site within a six-year timeframe, the site is to be sold back to the donor at the nominal price. As such, the asset has been recognised in the financial statements as a deferred asset. The process of appointing a contractor was undertaken during 2014.

## 21 Reconciliation of movements in capital and reserves

	2014	2013
	€	€
Opening funds	11,381,945	9,237,341
Total recognised gain for the year	302,670	2,024,676
Movement on capital grants and donations	218,395	119,928
	<u>11,903,010</u>	<u>11,381,945</u>

## 22 Pension

Focus Ireland Limited operated a contributory pension scheme which provided defined benefits for its employees. On 8 January 2013, Focus Ireland Limited notified the Trustees of the Defined Benefit Scheme of its decision to terminate employer contributions to the scheme with effect from 8 April 2013. The company and the Trustees have now concluded all consultation. Focus Ireland paid a lump sum of €1.49m into the plan to help fund the settlement. The scheme closed on 8 April 2013 and the plan had no assets or liabilities as at 31 December 2013. The Deed of Indemnity and wind up was signed, dated 15 January 2014.

The following amounts have been recognised in respect of the defined pension scheme.

	2014 €'000	2013 €'000
<b>Analysis of amounts charged to operating profits</b>		
Current service cost	–	–
Total charged to operating profit in respect of members	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>
<b>Analysis of amount debited to other finance costs</b>		
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	–	95
Expected return on assets in the pension scheme	–	(77)
Net debit to other finance cost	<u>–</u>	<u>18</u>
<b>Analysis of amount recognised in statement of total recognised gains and losses</b>		
<i>Analysis of amounts recognised in statement of realised gains and losses</i>		
Gain on assets	–	(50)
Experience gain on liabilities	–	(31)
Gain on change of assumptions (financial and demographic)	–	(733)
Actuarial gain to be recognised in statement of realised gains and losses	<u>–</u>	<u>(814)</u>
	<b>2014</b> <b>€'000</b>	<b>2013</b> <b>€'000</b>
<b>Reconciliation to the Balance Sheet</b>		
Market value of scheme assets	–	–
Actuarial value of scheme liabilities	–	–
Deficit in the scheme	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>
<b>Analysis of the movement in deficit in the scheme during the period</b>		
Deficit in the scheme at beginning of period	–	(4,305)
Contributions paid	–	1,490
Pension settlement gain	–	2,001
Actuarial gain / (loss)	–	814
Deficit in the scheme at end of period	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

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To protect the identity and privacy of our customers, names, place names and references to family members have been changed in their stories; otherwise, all details represent real-life stories as told by our customers. In order to protect the identity of our customers, the photographs in this publication are not those of people who have experienced homelessness.



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In order to protect the identity of our customers, the photographs in this document are of volunteers.

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