



COPE Galway

Let's help together

Annual Report **2016**





**Our
VISION**

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE, IN A HOME OF YOUR OWN FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS, WOMEN & CHILDREN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND OLDER PEOPLE.



**Our
MISSION**

IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO QUALITY OF LIFE IN A HOME OF YOUR OWN, BY SUPPORTING HOME, PROMOTING COMMUNITY AND REDUCING ISOLATION.



COPE Galway

Let's help together

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Homeless Services

In 2016 we worked with **702 adults** and their **512 children** affected by homelessness in Galway

211
families



438
Single people



Most significant issues:

Shortage of Housing

Increase in Family Homelessness

Increase in Rough Sleepers



Domestic Violence Services



In 2016 we worked with **314 individual women** & their **158 children** experiencing **Domestic Violence**



We were unable to accommodate **204 women** with **246 children** who requested refuge on **249 occasions**



We provided **719** outreach appointments, **161** Court Accompaniments, **139** play therapy sessions for children and answered **1,709** crisis and support calls

Older People's Services

In 2016 we produced & home delivered **44,565** meals for **392** clients

Catered **8,064** meals for 7 city and 2 county lunch clubs attended weekly by between **80-100 older people**



Supported **63 people** at our Sonas Day Centre & **55 people** through our community support projects



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Annual Report 2016

Chairman's Summary



JOHN CONCANNON
Chairman

Welcome to COPE Galway's Annual Report for 2016.

COPE Galway is a local Galway organisation whose vision is improved quality of life in a home of their own for people affected by homelessness, women and children experiencing domestic violence and for older people.

In 2016 COPE Galway:

- Worked with 702 adults and their 512 children experiencing homelessness. This included 211 families and 438 single people.
- Worked with 314 individual women with 158 children who were experiencing domestic violence at home in 2016. We provided 719 outreach appointments, 161 court accompaniments, and answered 1,709 crisis and support calls.
- COPE Galway Community Catering Meals on Wheels produced and delivered 44,565 meals to older people in Galway city and parts of the county. The service supported 392 individual clients to stay living in their own homes, and catered over 8,000 meals for 7 community-based lunch clubs across the city and 2 in the county. Our Sonas day centre and community support workers supported 118 people also living independently in the community.

Our annual report 2016 outlines the wide range of issues we seek to address and provides insights into how we work on behalf of the Galway community. While there are many examples of the really positive impact of our work, you will also see that the effects of the economic crisis are still being felt by many in our community. We are particularly concerned about the impact of homelessness on children as family homelessness continues to rise in Galway with 21% more families seeking COPE Galway's assistance in 2016 than the previous year (211 families up from 166 in 2015).

Children experiencing homelessness

In 2016 COPE Galway worked with 512 children all of whom were part of families who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. A further 158 children of women who sought the support of our domestic violence services, including refuge, were in contact with COPE Galway. Some of these children also ended up in a homeless situation as suitable housing options were not available after having to leave their family home due to violence.

Homelessness in childhood is particularly damaging, occurring during the most important developmental years in a child's life. Placing families in tourist accommodation such as hotels and B&B's means a child's rights to play and education can be seriously affected. Tourist accommodation may not have sufficient space or opportunities for play and recreation. Children may not be able to have friends over and in some cases there are no cooking facilities. And children living in families with domestic violence experience further trauma. Reliance on tourist accommodation for families experiencing homelessness is unsustainable and there is an increased concern that there will no longer be adequate availability of tourist accommodation to meet the accommodation needs of families using COPE Galway's Homeless services. While working hard to prevent an episode of homelessness, when it does occur all efforts are made to place a family in suitable accommodation and close to their normal community and amenities. But the chronic housing shortage makes this difficult.

We continue to advocate strongly for families and children in such circumstances.



Homelessness

The Homeless situation in Galway continued to intensify during 2016. This was most apparent in the increase in the number of families both at risk of and actually becoming homeless. COPE Galway homeless services accommodated and supported 211 families in 2016 compared to 166 in 2015, and 134 in 2014. Instances of rough sleeping in the city also increased.

Throughout 2016 COPE Galway emergency accommodation services at the Fairgreen Hostel and Osterley Lodge operated at full capacity with people remaining for an average of up to three months compared to one month just three years previously. There has been a heavy reliance on transitional emergency accommodation and tourist accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs and holiday letting properties to meet the emergency accommodation needs of families during the year. Approximately 20 families resided in such accommodation at any given time.

Families with children are remaining in emergency accommodation for longer with a small number in accommodation for the full year. This is in large part due to an acute shortage of affordable housing in Galway. Private rental accommodation is in especially short supply and rents continued to increase in 2016. Other contributing factors are the complexity of the needs of some people who require our services, relating to mental health and addiction support needs. This is further compounded by the limited availability of spaces in supported accommodation settings and of accessible detox and rehabilitation services in the region.



One of the knock-on effects of this situation is the increase in the numbers of people who are sleeping rough on the streets of Galway. In response to this, the now annual Cold Weather Response came into operation on November 30th 2016 with capacity to accommodate 14 people nightly. The aim of this project, operated by COPE Galway with the support of Galway City Council and the HSE, is to provide shelter and support to people who would otherwise sleep rough. It ran for 18 weeks until the end of March 2017.

Despite the challenges on the housing and accommodation front there have been some positive housing outcomes. In the six-month period between May 1st and December 31st 2016 a total of 100 individuals and families secured move-on housing and accommodation including 30 to social housing, 40 to private rented, and 30 to transitional and supported accommodation.

In the long term, the solution to the housing and homeless crisis in Galway, as for the rest of the country, is to increase the supply of social housing. We are fully supportive of Minister Coveney's plan "Rebuilding Ireland" launched in 2016. However, while various measures are being progressed nationally and locally, COPE Galway is committed to bringing housing on stream ourselves and



in partnership with other agencies during 2017 and beyond. We are also fortunate to be the recipient of a very generous gift of the proceeds of a house sale on the Aran Islands just before Christmas. Barry O'Sullivan (Dragons Den and former board member of COPE Galway) sold his holiday house on December 16th for €273,000. The proceeds were divided between ourselves and Focus Ireland, and will be used in blocks of approximately €20,000 to leverage funds to purchase additional housing for people experiencing homelessness.



Older People



COPE Galway's Older People's Services support *Healthy, Independent Ageing at Home*. Our flagship service is our Community Catering Meals on Wheels. We also support older people living at home across a number of communities in the city.

Community Catering Meals on Wheels produces and delivers meals to older people across Galway city and parts of the county. Our meals are nutritionally balanced to suit older people and cater for a range of medically

related nutritional requirements. 392 people received 44,565 meals in 2016, all produced in our Q mark awarded service (Excellence Ireland Quality Association for Hygiene and Food Safety) at the highest possible level. We are seeing a growing demand for modified meals and currently almost 30% of our production is some form of a texture modified or fortified meal.



Over the last number of years COPE Galway has also become involved in the redistribution of food for the benefit of those at risk of food poverty. Managed in our Community Catering facility, we now receive food from a variety of sources including Tesco and Aldi, local producers and wholesale distributors.

This year we became a partner of the European FEAD programme (The Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived). All food received is distributed across our services and to a variety of other local partners for use directly by individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of food poverty. During its pilot (August-November 2016) COPE Galway supported 686 individuals. We have seen at first-hand the benefit of this programme and we are fully committed to ensuring food reaches the most vulnerable in our community.



We recognise the importance of good social connections as vital to health and wellbeing. We continue to develop and promote our lunch clubs for older people across the city and rural communities. There are now 7 lunch clubs organised by local communities in the city and 2 in rural settings. These are supported by local volunteers, and give older people an opportunity to get out and about and meet others for chat, fun and of course great meals. The latest club to commence in 2016 was in Ballindereen which now meets monthly. Our community worker worked with older people in the Headford Road/Ballinfolyle area to plan for a lunch club in the new



community centre. During 2016 we also developed the role of the lunch club as a platform to introduce older people to new interests and information sessions on nutrition and healthy eating.

COPE Galway also links in with a number of housing clusters around the city where older people are living and helps them to address issues to improve their quality of life such as heating issues, security measures (for example use of personal alarms), or accessing benefits.

Community Support Workers promote positive and healthy ageing by facilitating participation in activities including art, yoga, healthy eating, gardening and IT skills, along with social events and regular meetings of residents. They also support individuals to access information and services such as home help and provide social and practical support and advocacy. In 2016, our Information & Advocacy Support Project, funded by The Community Foundation for Ireland, compiled a newsletter with a checklist of issues and concerns identified by Lunch Club members and circulated it widely prior to the General Election. During Positive Ageing Week, they organised an information session on Staying Safe at Home, in collaboration with Age Action, the Community Garda, Galway City Council and the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Team.

In addition to group activities we are seeing an increase in the need for more intensive 1-1 support. Since we started the community support role eight years ago the health status and mobility of a number of residents has changed. We are currently researching the possibility of setting up a Morning Call Service to support our older clients who have higher needs and are at risk of isolation.

Our Sonas Day Centre in Mervue links in with residents in the area with a whole range of activities such as arts & crafts, a film club and outings, as well as help with access to practical support such as shopping, laundry, form filling and assistance with benefits. In 2016 we held several events, such as a *'Think Ahead'* presentation on considering end of life issues while still well and a *'Fair Deal'* presentation explaining this scheme. We also had a wonderful show on Galway Bay FM to celebrate Mervue Lunch Club's 6th birthday.



The community garden is a positive focal point in the Mervue local area and has enabled residents to meet with neighbours and develop those relationships. Again the need for more 1-1 support features strongly as people age and health needs change and Sonas has a number of younger clients (in their 40s) with high support needs who use the service on a regular basis. We have put a more structured approach in place for outreach/home visiting to support older clients confined to home and we have an advocacy volunteer on site one morning per week to work with clients in relation to entitlements, form filling and advice.



Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence continues to be a very serious issue affecting a large number of women and children in Galway city and county. Our range of services offer safe refuge; 24 hour one-to-one telephone support; childcare and parenting support; information about the dynamics of a violent relationship; assistance with legal options and court accompaniment as well as support groups for women and children. A forum for women who have used the Waterside House services is facilitated monthly with the aim of involving them in the development of the service.



The service participates in local and national advocacy activities with regard to seeking practical solutions as well as social change pertaining to the issue of violence against women. Our focus is also very much on preventing the cycle of violence and our staff continue to develop and deliver information sessions for young people around healthy relationships and dating abuse, as well as providing training for health professionals and others in terms of recognising and responding to domestic abuse. Links with local third level institutions in 2015/16 has resulted in valuable survey and research findings which can be used to inform and improve responses to women experiencing domestic abuse.

The housing crisis has also affected our ability to accommodate all those who seek refuge. Due to the shortage of private rented accommodation within the rent caps, many women who wish to move on from the refuge are unable to do so. This has resulted in the service being unable to accommodate 204 individual women with 246 children in 2016. It is deeply worrying that so many women and children who are seeking refuge are unable to access safety at the time they need it most. However our outreach service has increased its resources in order to respond to and assist women who need to address safety planning and supports. In 2016, the outreach service provided a total of 719 appointments throughout Galway city and county.

In the meantime the development of our new refuge continues steadily and we expect to be in construction phase in Autumn 2017. We will commence a public fundraising campaign to raise the remainder of the funds required to complete the project.

Funding & Finance

In 2016 the COPE Galway annual budget was €4.58m. Of our total income, we receive 72% from statutory bodies (HSE 34%, Galway City Council 20%, and Tusla 18%).

A further 10% is generated from service charges. 15% of income comes from the generosity of the public in the form of donations and support for our fundraising activities, and philanthropy/grants make up the remaining 3%.

For each Euro raised, this is how it's spent:



Governance

COPE Galway continues to lead the way in operating to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. We manage our resources efficiently in order to deliver the best possible service at the least cost.

We were one of the first organisations to voluntarily sign up to the Governance Code for the Community & Voluntary sector in Ireland. We adhere to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising, and we are signed up to the new Voluntary Regulation Code for Housing Associations. Our board of management is also 100% voluntary.

Advocating for Change

COPE Galway believes its role to advocate with and on behalf of its clients is a critical part of a remit that complements the provision of our services and supports. We are also very committed to policy and structural changes. Our staff advocates for our clients on a daily basis and helps them to access benefits and entitlements and to move towards more stability in their personal circumstances.

We also engage in educational campaigns. A recent example is an email campaign supporting the Global *16 Days Opposing Violence against Women*. From November 25th to December 10th 2016, COPE Galway sent a daily email containing critical facts, statistics and information to almost 5,000 people as part of an awareness campaign to highlight the issue of domestic violence in Galway. We also continued to regularly compile point-in-time census figures throughout 2016 to contribute to solutions regarding the housing and homeless crisis. And we made submissions on a range of issues relating to the needs of those with whom we work and support. This included a pre-budget submission to highlight, for example, issues affecting the lives of our clients and measures to support older people to remain living at home.



Employees

The work of COPE Galway is delivered in the main by our employees across all our services. Their professionalism is in evidence in their day to day interactions with our clients, and the network of organisations with whom they interact.

Their sheer persistence in the face of significant and on-going challenges is coupled with a caring and compassionate approach. This comes across in the feedback we receive from clients who have availed of their assistance and whose lives have improved in many ways as a result.

Volunteers

COPE Galway has a vibrant team of over 200 volunteers, who are crucial to the running of our services and achieving our mission of an improved quality of life in a home of your own for all our clients.

Our volunteers help across all our services in over 30 volunteer roles. We are so appreciative of their generosity and expertise and many aspects of our services and supports could not function without the involvement of our wonderful volunteers.



Client Involvement

In COPE Galway we are very committed to involving our clients in as many ways as possible.

Being involved gives clients the chance to take part, to use their own ideas, talents and skills to make our services better, to meet other people, have fun, feel valued, and build self-confidence. 2016 was full of activities for clients, from movie nights to sports tournaments, music to mindfulness and so much in between. We also offer some volunteering opportunities for clients in our COPE Galway charity shop and our Community Catering service. These slots are always popular and can be very beneficial in preparing for the world of work and in building self confidence.



Fundraising

COPE Galway relies on the generosity of the Galway community who donate directly, take part in events, organise corporate days to revitalise our services, volunteer, and support our charity shop with clothes donations.

In 2016, we continued to enlist regular monthly donors in order to have a more dependable source of income generation and we are very heartened by the enthusiastic support we received.

We are also very appreciative of all the community events which are organised by individuals and groups on behalf of COPE Galway. This has become a very important source of funds and offers the community a wide range of ways to support our work.

Christmas gives us the opportunity to bring the generosity of the public directly to our clients. This Christmas alone we distributed 379 hampers, over 1,500 gifts (courtesy of the Galway Giving Tree) and 670 shoe boxes for adults and children (courtesy of the Galway Homeless Gift Appeal and other donors). The Tribes Motorcycle Annual Christmas Toy Run also took place in December with over 10 motorcyclists taking part, raising €4,700.

Our Corporate Sleepout took place on December 2nd this year and raised over €140,000. This has become our flagship fundraising event, extending far beyond the night itself as many of the businesses involved become long term supporters of our work. Our Christmas Day swim has become an annual social gathering of the brave and their families all in support of our work. This year it raised over €25,000.



Connacht Rugby player Jake Heenan launched COPE Galway Annual Christmas Day Swim 2016 at Blackrock, Salthill.

COPE Galway keeps in touch with our loyal supporters via our Tribes newsletters throughout the year and through our social & digital media platforms where we engage with and update people about what we are doing and the impact of our work.



Charity Shop

Our charity shop has become a very important source of income and we are appreciative of all who donate to it and buy from it.

The Shop is run by a paid manager and a team of around twenty volunteers, Tús and CE workers, who kindly donate their time and effort. The shop is often complimented on its colourful layout and the quality of the goods for sale. Its continued success is delivering crucial income to support our ongoing work in the Galway community.



Finally...

Throughout the full version of the 2016 Annual Report, available on www.copegalway.ie, you will read features on real stories people have relayed back to us, which gives a flavour of the kind of work we do, the reasons why it's needed, and the outcomes. We are very grateful to all who contributed to telling their story. I encourage you to read them.

I would like to thank each and every person, company, group and the local media, who have helped us in our work. Without this support we could not continue to offer the range and volume of services and supports available across all of our 8 locations in the city.

Le buíochas,
JOHN CONCANNON
 Chairman



Working Together
Toward Home and Community

COPE Galway's Strategy (2013-2018)

COPE Galway's Vision is for Improved
Quality of Life, in a home of your own
 for
 People affected by Homelessness
 Women & Children experiencing Domestic Violence, and Older People

Our Mission is to contribute to Quality of Life in a home of your own, by
Supporting Home, Promoting Community and Reducing Isolation



Strategy Reviewed in 2016

During 2016 we conducted a review of the strategy we pursued over the last 3 years in conjunction with Hensey consulting. This wide-reaching review involved consultations with our board of management, managers, staff and volunteers across the organisation, client forums, and our statutory funders.

The purpose of the review was to assess the future suitability of our vision and mission, review our performance against the strategy, identify future challenges and issues to address, and formulate areas of focus for the next number of years. The executive summary of findings shows that in an environment of reduced statutory funding and a crisis driven external environment, there have been significant achievements against the strategic objectives. In parallel, COPE Galway has sustained core services and increased some services.

It was agreed to continue broadly with our existing strategy, with renewed objectives aligned with the current and future issues identified. These include developing a greater community model focused on prevention services and following the client with appropriate supports.

The broad objectives for each pillar of the next phase of the strategy are outlined below:

New Strategy Objectives 2016-2018

Delivering Outcomes

Concerned with the ongoing delivery and further development of services toward the achievement of outcomes which improve the quality of life of our clients in homes of their own. Includes some refocusing of activity toward a Community Model of service, with increased focus on outreach, preventative and in-community support.

Objectives 2016 – 2018

- Improved prevention and sustainment services
- Improved access to housing
- Measure outcomes and impact
- Build client capacity to live independently

Developing our Organisation

Concerned with ensuring that there is open dialogue, meaningful engagement & opportunities for leadership/ contribution and a sense of empowerment is fostered/ supported across the organisation so that everyone (staff, volunteers and clients) knows, understands and feels part of achieving COPE Galway's vision.

Objectives 2016 – 2018

- Improve our culture
- Enhance our volunteer experience
- Improve client involvement opportunities

Advocating for Change

Concerned with maintaining a strong and consistently high profile with each of our key stakeholder groups, communicating in a way that is relevant to their interests and that demonstrates that COPE Galway is a voice for social change and can use its reputation and network of contacts to influence the development and application of policy in relevant areas

Objectives 2016 – 2018

- Pursue specific advocacy campaigns
- Deliver our communications calendar
- Maintain our public profile aligned with our advocacy campaigns

Developing Revenue

Ensure COPE Galway has sufficient funds to support our vision across diverse and dependable income streams.

Objectives 2016 – 2018

- Grow non-statutory income
- Develop new commercial income streams
- Develop and oversee fundraising income streams



COPE Galway's Homeless Services

In **2016** we worked with **702 adults** and their **512 children** affected by homelessness in Galway

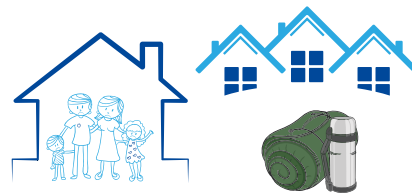
211
families



438
Single people



Most significant issues:
Shortage of Housing
Increase in Family Homelessness
Increase in Rough Sleepers



In **2016** COPE Galway worked with **1,214 people** – **649 households** - who experienced homelessness in Galway.

Homelessness in Galway: The Challenges

COPE Galway was at the forefront in attempting to tackle the ever-deepening homeless crisis in Galway throughout 2016. At a local level, the main challenges we encountered in 2016 were:

- The growth in the number of people rough sleeping
- The numbers of families that continued to become homeless as a result of the loss of their homes
- The resulting increase in numbers of children affected by homelessness
- The extended periods of time people remained in emergency/ transitional accommodation or endured overcrowded situations in the homes of family/ friends due to an acute shortage of housing

COPE Galway is on the frontline responding to this extremely challenging crisis on a daily basis. Our emergency accommodation services for single person households operated at 100% plus occupancy levels over the course of 2016 and experienced a 50% increase in average stay, up from 8 weeks in 2015 to 12 weeks in 2016. This contributed to a situation where there was an increase in rough sleeping as it was not possible to accommodate some people who presented seeking accommodation.



The year was bookended by the operation of our annual **Cold Weather Response** up to the end of March for the winter of 2015/16 and again from the end of November onwards for the winter of 2016/17. The aim of the Cold Weather Response is to help ensure that there is a bed available during cold and inclement weather conditions over the winter period for anyone who needs it who would otherwise sleep rough. These additional beds helped to significantly reduce

the incidences of rough sleeping over the winter period but, as with other emergency accommodation operating in Galway, the challenges in progressing people out of homelessness remain.

Family homelessness continued unabated in Galway with 73 families, comprising 97 adults and 162 children, provided with or placed in emergency accommodation by COPE Galway in 2016: an increase of 30% on the figures for 2015. We also worked with and supported a further 138 families including 348 children who were at risk of or vulnerable to becoming homeless. With a challenging level of demand for emergency accommodation, it was necessary to continue to grow and develop the range of emergency accommodation options available. We leased private houses and used "hard to let" local authority housing units as emergency accommodation for families. We also continued to rely heavily on private emergency accommodation providers in the tourism sector and on student accommodation over the summer period.



Homelessness in childhood is particularly damaging, occurring during the most important developmental years in a child's life. Feelings of stress, uncertainty and anxiety felt by children experiencing homelessness can be profound.

Forgiveness

I met a boy the other day
At first he turned to walk away
But then he stood

If in that moment
I had spoken

What we shared
Would have been broken

So I let it be.

I cannot say what made him stand
And look upon a man
He never met before

But there and then he was forgiven
And I escaped my adult prison
Because that boy was me

End

This poem was sent to us by a man experiencing homelessness, with a note: *I wrote this poem after a long struggle. Calling it up in my mind's eye helps me to like myself, I hope you can share it, it may help others.*





Alex's Story

Alex's* journey of homelessness began almost a year ago when he found himself without a job, and forced to leave his apartment. It's been a long journey since then, but with the help of COPE Galway, he's finding his feet again, and is feeling positive about the future.

Having spent some months in the Fairgreen Hostel, Alex is now residing in one of COPE Galway's shared residential houses, and is enjoying his new job in a hardware store.

Alex came to Ireland 12 years ago. He immediately made a home in Galway, a city he loves passionately. Things were going well for Alex - he had a job he liked, he shared a house with friends, then things rapidly went downhill over two years ago. He had just lost his job when the landlord of the house he was sharing with others gave them notice to leave. "I could not save €600 for a new deposit and rent with one month's notice - simple as. I was hoping that things would work themselves out, that everything would be fine, but they turned out not to be. Basically, I found myself on the street; I had nowhere to go."

Alex made contact with COPE Galway Day Centre, who organised a number of hostel stays for him for three weeks, until he secured a place at Fairgreen Hostel.

"At Fairgreen, it took me a while to get back to myself from all the stress. During the day, I was always trying to do something to keep busy, do some projects for the Day Centre, help out. After a time, I just said, 'I have to take control now, do things for myself again'. Being on social welfare, not having an income or a home, Alex went out to look for a job, which he found quite quickly.

"When you're homeless, finding a job is the best thing that can happen - mentally as well as financially. It's not just

because it gets you more money or stability - it gets you to feel a part of something and you just feel better."

Now living in a house with three others through the COPE Galway Resettlement and Tenancy Support Service, Alex says he still has some way to go to getting his life back in order, but is confident that he's well on the road to recovery.

"I still find it very stressful, with no family, both my parents have passed away and so I'm on my own. Loneliness is still the hardest thing, but when I'm busy, that's when I'm at my happiest. There's a danger of becoming really lonely when you go back out into the world."

Keeping in contact with the staff at COPE Galway through the resettlement service has been a lifeline for Alex. In addition to the calls every couple of days from his caseworker, Alex still has a lot of contact with COPE Galway, for example, playing football for the COPE Galway team, who play against the Galway City Council staff regularly. "I feel free now, with a job and a house to live in. But what makes a big difference is knowing that people are thinking of you and your problems, which they do at COPE Galway."

"Knowing these people are looking out for you makes a world of difference."

Alex would like to live in his own home sometime in the future, but is focusing on getting himself strong again, and focusing on work until the time is right. Like most people, he never expected to experience what homelessness was like, but is grateful that COPE Galway existed when it did. "Thanks to COPE Galway, I am in a really, really good place at the moment, and I will be forever grateful to them for that."

*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the interviewee.

Looking back on his experience of homelessness, Alex says he finds it difficult not to think of the mistakes he's made. But mostly, he's focusing on ensuring he will never be in that position again. "I'm also looking for a future and hoping for a better life. You have to think like that, be positive. If you don't, what's the point?"

COPE Galway Resettlement and Tenancy Support Service provides structured support to men and women moving out of homelessness to independent living and those in need of on-going tenancy support.

Some Positive Outcomes

Despite enormous challenges, there were some notable successes in terms of securing housing in 2016 for individuals and families engaged with COPE Galway Homeless Services.

In the eight month period between May 1st and the year end 40 households secured private rented accommodation, 30 moved to social housing allocations from both Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies, 16 took up spaces in supported housing projects and 11 moved from emergency to transitional accommodation. These successes would not have been possible without the partnership and joint working approaches with both statutory agencies and with fellow voluntary sector agencies in Galway.

2016 – Rebuilding Ireland - Opportunities for Galway



The publication of the Government's Action Plan for housing and homelessness, *Rebuilding Ireland*, in July 2016 was welcome and timely. COPE Galway as an organisation is committed to playing its part in progressing the implementation of this comprehensive action plan which is vital to addressing the challenges we are experiencing first hand at a front line service level.

Increasing the supply of housing must be front and centre going forward. We are committed to growing our own housing stock and in 2016 secured *Capital Assistance Scheme* funding through the Department of Housing and Galway City Council for the acquisition of two housing units, which will provide an additional seven beds for single homeless men. We also entered into service level agreements with Galway City Council for the use of two further properties to provide an additional 6 accommodation spaces for single homeless people.

The initial period of the roll out of the Housing Assistance Payment scheme (HAP) had a positive impact for our clients. Half of those we supported to move to private rented housing did so through this scheme. However the shortage of supply in the rental housing market in Galway city and the consequent higher rents as more and more people compete for what little housing is available, has lessened its effectiveness for people who are homeless seeking rental housing. In our view, the extension of the HAP to Galway with the facility for up to 50% uplift on the cap levels payable for homeless people is necessary to offer a realistic prospect to those seeking to move out of homelessness. The moderation of rental price inflation, an objective of the *Rebuilding Ireland Strategy for the Rental Sector*, published by the Government in December 2016, is also necessary if the rate uplift is to have an enduring impact.



Gerald's Story

Homelessness at any age can be soul destroying. But having spent your life working hard, paying your dues and believing that your more difficult years are behind you, homelessness at 60 can be particularly hard.

*Gerald, originally from Co Clare, left for England as a teenager, working on building sites around the country until he came back to Ireland 15 years ago to work in construction. Like many others, he lost his job five years ago during the downturn, but it wasn't until he was given notice from his long-term rental property that things hit rock bottom for Gerald.

"It was the first time something like that happened in my life. It was awful; I literally had nowhere to go. On one side, I was lucky that I was on my own, that I had no one else to worry about, but it was also very hard being on my own."

Gerald found refuge in COPE Galway Fairgreen Hostel, where he stayed for a number of months.

Determined to retain as much normality as possible during his stay, Gerald would get up every morning and go for walks. He would leave the hostel during the day, visit COPE Galway Day Centre, come home every evening, watch TV for a while, then go to bed, and do the same again the following morning. At the hostel, he helped out whenever he could, cleaning or washing up. He says he didn't mix with many of the others in the hostel, but enjoyed the banter with the staff there. "I can't thank them enough," he enthuses. "They were very good, very helpful. They always did their best. And the food was brilliant. There are a lot of people in there with problems, of course, but the staff at Fairgreen are running a mighty show there."

A resourceful man by nature, following some dark times, Gerald resolved to do all he could to get himself out of the situation he was in. With the help of the staff at Fairgreen, Gerald, who had been on the city council housing list for nine years, finally secured an apartment in the city. "It was very difficult, but I had to accept it until things got better. COPE Galway helped me all the way - with all the trips to City Hall, the support, the chats.

"Homelessness can happen to anyone. I'm 60 years old; I never in a million years thought I'd see myself in that position, but it happened. I just dealt with it the right way; I didn't hit the drink, I just kept on and on. I could have gone the other way, but if I did, I wouldn't be here talking to you today. I kept on going; I had to"

Gerald believes that it was a mix of his own determination and the constant support and help from COPE Galway that has resulted in his current situation, which he says is "brilliant".

"Getting my own place was like winning the lottery."

"Life is brilliant now; I don't know myself. When you have a key to your own place, it's wonderful. I love it. I don't know what I would have done without COPE Galway. Truly, I feel so lucky. The whole experience was such an eye opener for me. I thought I had seen it all; I've travelled around London and I've seen homelessness there - it's an awful thing. But at the end of the day, it's you that has to help yourself; you can get so much help, but the rest of it is up to you. And it worked out very good in the end. I'm delighted now."

COPE Galway's Homeless Services in 2016

COPE Galway Fairgreen Hostel, a 26-bedroom emergency accommodation hostel for men who are homeless, responds to a wide range of need and operates a harm reduction approach in working with those actively misusing alcohol and/or drugs. **A total of 108 men were accommodated in 2016.** The service supports these men on a range of fronts including health, welfare and housing. There is a *key work* system in operation with hostel-based staff assigned to individuals while resident in the hostel.



Fairgreen Hostel

The Cold Weather Response operated from the Fairgreen Hostel for the first three months of 2016 with 13 dedicated beds put in place through the doubling up of a number of bedrooms and use of communal areas within the building. Consistently high numbers of individual men and the complex needs of an increasing number of these men were among the challenges presented for the service. Its city centre location and its history of working with people who move in and out of rough sleeping make the service a point of contact for many rough sleepers and this was very much the case during the course of 2016 with increasing numbers of people rough sleeping.

The acute shortage of appropriate housing suitable for single person households in 2016 and increasing numbers with complex needs were among the factors that contributed to a 66% increase in the average length of stay of clients, up from 59 nights on average in 2015 to 98 nights in 2016. This contributed to a situation where there was a reduction in the numbers it was possible to accommodate, down to 108 in 2016 from 174 in 2015.

COPE Galway Osterley Lodge provides emergency accommodation and support for single women and women with children who are experiencing homelessness. It has capacity to accommodate up to 12 women and 8

children at any given time. In 2016 we provided a total of 57 single women households and 14 families with emergency accommodation in Osterley Lodge.

The service offers a safe and secure environment focused on assisting and supporting women to address the causes of their homelessness and to move out of homelessness. Clients have an assigned key worker and a case review system is in operation focused on move-on planning and linking women to support services in the community. The aim is to help women achieve improved health and well-being, to experience increased belonging in the community and to develop a solid foundation to prevent a recurrence of homelessness in the future.



Osterley Lodge garden

COPE Galway Family Support Services, operating from Teach Corrib Day Centre, is involved in the areas of emergency accommodation provision and placement, prevention, resettlement and tenancy support. This service is provided to families in Galway city and county and works closely with the housing departments of both Galway housing authorities in addressing family homelessness in Galway. In 2016 emergency and transitional accommodation units operated by the service increased from 5 to 10 in response to the continuing growth in family homelessness.



Wall Garden at Teach Corrib Day Centre



Organising and facilitating the placement of families in various forms of private emergency accommodation including hotels, holiday apartments and B&Bs is also undertaken by the service as part of this response. In 2016, 69 families were either accommodated directly by the service or placed in some form of private emergency accommodation and 138 families were supported through a combination of preventative, resettlement and tenancy support interventions.

COPE Galway Teach Corrib Day Centre provides a range of services for single person households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Galway. We provide information, refer to accommodation and mainstream services and assist in securing welfare payments. Food and access to washing and laundry facilities are also available. In 2016 the service worked with 380 single person households of which 87 were accommodated in or supported by other COPE Galway services over the course of the year. The Cold Weather Response project for the winter of 2016 to 2017 came into operation on this site on November 30th 2016 through the use of *portacabin* units with capacity to accommodate 14 men.

Resettlement and Tenancy Support for single person households focuses on supporting people through their transition to independent living when moving out of homelessness for the period of time required to help establish and sustain their tenancy. We deliver our work here in a range of ways including regular home visits, appointments and ongoing phone contact. We also focus on supporting people to self-advocate and accompany clients to appointments to help them to secure their rights and entitlements and to advocate on behalf of clients in the areas of housing, health, social welfare, education and training. A panel of volunteers delivers a *Befriending Programme*, providing one to one support for clients who may feel isolated. We accommodate 6 men by operating the *Towards Independence Project* from Bridge House. The project supports men moving on from emergency accommodation who are not ready to move immediately to independent living. Additional transitional accommodation came on stream in 2016 in the form of two spaces in a shared house to accommodate men and three spaces in a shared house to accommodate women. The Resettlement and Tenancy Support Service worked with a total of 67 people in 2016. **The resilience of front line COPE Galway staff facing these challenges was vital to the organisation in playing such an important role in addressing homelessness in Galway in 2016.**



Cold Weather Response accommodation 2016/17



Tilled Vegetable Garden at Bridge House



Garden at Fairgreen Hostel



Sonya's Story

It was September 2015 when, faced with a month's eviction notice, *Sonya, a single mum of two young girls, was faced with the possibility of homelessness. Rising rents, a lack of housing on the market, and the reluctance of landlords to accept rent receipts meant that Sonya was one of dozens of families across the city and county faced with the stark reality of the housing crisis.

Without family support, and living on social welfare due to the fact that she is a carer to her children who both have special needs, for the first time in her life, she saw no other options. She would be homeless. Each evening, Sonya would dress her two young children - an eight-year-old and six-year-old, up in layers of clothes, and bring them outside to see if they would be able to face sleeping outside should it come to it.

"Imagine dressing your children up so you can go out to see how you could live under the rain. You're counting how many days are left before you become homeless and you can't even tell the children. And nobody can help you. You're just helpless - it's between you and God. Around 8pm or 9pm every evening, we'd go outside. It was cold, but I wanted them to be prepared for what we would be experiencing in a month's time. We were doing that every night. I did wonder, could we really do it?, how long could we bear it for? It was a very difficult time."

While Sonya had been on the city council housing waiting list for a number of years, due to the fact that her children have specific needs, finding a house was even more challenging. There was house size, location and disability requirements to consider. "On top of it all, I couldn't even talk to my children, to tell them what was happening; neither can talk very much. I was so scared at this stage."

It was during one of her visits to the council to enquire about updates to her status on the housing list that she was told about COPE Galway, and got in touch. "I had never heard of COPE Galway before. I wouldn't have been so scared if I had known about them." Finally, Sonya's fears about taking to the streets with her children were allayed. "They told me I didn't have to worry, that they would have a room for me and my girls to stay. I knew that if we just had somewhere warm to stay, somewhere for the girls to go to school from, we would be OK."

Having secured another two months in her home, Sonya continued to look for a house, but this time with the support of COPE Galway. She was housed in temporary accommodation for a number of months, until last February, when her dreams were finally answered, and a house was offered to her in the east of the city.

"I just knelt down on the floor and cried. It was as if I was dreaming and I didn't want to wake up. When I heard the news, I just looked at the staff in COPE Galway who had been helping me and almost cried with gratitude. All I can say is, for people who are homeless, there is hope with COPE Galway".

At the most vulnerable time of her life, Sonya says that COPE Galway offered her the support, solace, respect and kindness when she needed it most.

"If someone had told me that for the summer of 2016, I'd be in my house, I would have said, 'How? How will it happen unless it's a miracle? Imagine waking up in the morning, and having no idea what tomorrow will be? You just sleep, and hope and trust that everything will be OK. And it was!'"

PROFILE:



Joan Gavin, Community Nurse for Homeless Services in Galway

Nurse Joan Gavin **Community Nurse for Galway's Homeless Services**

Nurse Joan Gavin, Community Nurse for Homeless Services in Galway, takes a practical approach to helping improve the lives of homeless people. She is tenacious when it comes to securing vital health appointments and services for people experiencing homelessness in Galway.

Since she took up the role in September 2009 as the first designated Community Nurse for Homeless Services (General) in

Galway, Joan Gavin has made huge inroads in advocacy, tackling the health issues of homeless men and women and health education among the homeless. The role is a joint initiative between the Health Service Executive (HSE) West and Galway Simon Community, and Joan believes it is one that has worked extremely well.

Having previously worked as a Community Midwife abroad, Joan brought a wealth of experience to working with the marginalised in society and the associated challenges with the position. "When I took up the job, it was the first time that a designated general nurse was appointed – the role was created in response to the health needs of the homeless population in Galway," says Joan, explaining that her first challenge was to set about building relationships with people experiencing homelessness and gaining their trust.

"I set up monthly meetings with the HSE, Emergency Department and Medical Social Workers when I came into post and the staff working in those departments have gained a better understanding of the needs of the homeless population as a result," says Joan. The meetings have continued on a monthly basis and this has been crucial for Joan in accessing services for homeless clients.

The number of people experiencing homelessness who attended the Emergency Department at University Hospital Galway (UHG) has dropped significantly over the past eight years. This, she explains, is due to the constant communication between Joan and the various medical staff and the setting up of clinics for homeless clients including podiatry clinics, nurse-led and dental clinics.

Joan spends her day attending the various facilities of COPE Galway, Galway Simon Community and Vincent

de Paul (VDP) Hostel where she meets with clients experiencing homelessness and domestic violence. Joan also runs various clinics and can very often be found in University Hospital Galway advocating for appointments for her clients.

“Nurse Joan has been a great support and given me good advice around my health and helped me sort out my depression.”
COPE Galway Client

It is a busy role but one that Joan relishes – she likes nothing more than to get on with the task at hand. "You need to understand the personal values and beliefs of the various clients when going into a post like this and that's what I would say to anyone going into it. Having worked in London for some 16 or 17 years, I know that you need to have that mind set to work effectively."

Podiatry is a cost effective way of transforming community services in collaboration with Homeless Services, helping the financial burden faced by the HSE without compromising quality.

One of Joan's biggest achievements over the past eight years has been establishing podiatry clinics where clients can attend and have their feet assessed and treated. People experiencing homelessness can have major foot health problems because of the nature of their lifestyles, long periods of standing, ill-fitting shoes and often with associated issues such as smoking, drinking and substance misuse.

When Joan commenced the role, there was no funding available for a Podiatry Clinic. She set about negotiating



to get funding and to secure a podiatrist to work with the organisations. The clinic now takes place on the third Tuesday of the month with between 25 and 35 clients attending. "That's important and although it is the feet that we are addressing at the clinic, a client may have other health problems that come to light when they attend and then we can deal with that and make the necessary referrals, if needed." The result, she says, has been a significant drop in the numbers attending the Emergency Department for podiatry issues.

The HSE has informed Joan that there is also a low defaulter rate in homeless services regarding attendance. "After setting up outpatient and specialist appointments, I talk to the client prior to making an appointment for him/ her, ensuring that it is a day or time that suits. I also explain the importance and benefits of the appointment for the client," she explains.

Joan constantly faces challenges in her role but takes them head-on. An example of this is when clients have no medical cards and cannot get access to a General Practitioner because they are homeless and not 'in the system' so to speak. Joan has resolved this issue with the Client Registration Department in Dublin and now the department accepts a letter from Joan stating that a particular client is homeless and they then allocate a medical card and a General Practitioner to the client. Meanwhile Joan works on health promotion to encourage the client to attend the doctor, again avoiding unnecessary trips to the Emergency Department.

"From the feedback that is coming from the HSE, this is working well. When a client is admitted to hospital, staff from the homeless service they are linked to know to contact me and I will link in with the relevant Hospital Department and commence working on a pre-discharge plan so that the client is not discharged onto the streets."

"All the time we are working towards empowering clients and making them confident and linking them in with the appropriate health service."

While the various clinics have been very successful, Joan says it is a constant challenge to encourage some clients to attend and so, she feels it is important to visit the various facilities to see clients. A simple task such as showing a client how to brush his or her teeth properly can help avoid unnecessary trips to the dentist in years to come. "By going to services such as Fairgreen, Waterside House, and all the various homeless services in Galway, you ensure you see all the clients. Generally, they are happy to see me and

they're asking when I am coming in again. I do things such as monitor blood pressure, show clients the findings and explain in lay terms how to improve that."

Joan's is a common sense approach; one which she feels applies not only to people experiencing homelessness, but also to the general public. "As with any client, I ensure they are attending the appropriate professional and that I am carrying the appropriate nursing care," she explains.

"I offer health screening to include physical health assessment, screening for dental/oral problems, smoking, drugs, alcohol and promote healthy eating and exercise. I can then refer clients to the appropriate health professional with their consent. I make sure the client has a clear understanding of their diagnosis, treatment plan and if necessary (with the client's consent), I will accompany them to the specialist clinic."

Advocacy takes up a huge amount of Joan's time, something that is very satisfying to her when her hard work results in positive outcomes. "Clinical solutions for people who are homeless don't just *happen*. In a fundamental sense, I roll up my sleeves and do what needs to be done." And with that, Joan's phone rings – she has been called to the hospital to help a client who is about to be discharged and this tireless and determined lady dashes off to find them a respite bed and to secure mental health services.

COPE Galway would like to acknowledge the invaluable work Joan does for people experiencing homelessness in Galway.

Half way up or half way down the hill?

The poem below was written by a man who has come through our homeless services. He sees it as a snapshot of where he is today and is grateful not to be "at the bottom of a hill" looking upwards. He says: "Thank God, I am in a much better place mentally, physically and generally more outward looking than this time a year ago." He described how sleeping on the streets conjured up numbing thoughts of how "This was not in the script/plan I and others, especially my family designed" and "When did I ever envisage walking sideways past a mirror because I was ashamed of what I may see looking back at me?"

At his lowest ebb, he says he was advised by a friend to contact us for assistance but, "being of a stubborn nature, I refused all help". He continues, "Then, on the point of absolute destitution and hopelessness, I finally swallowed my worn out pride and contacted COPE Galway, firstly at the Teach Corrib Day Centre and eventually in the welcoming environment that is the Fairgreen Hostel. I can honestly say each and every one of the personnel is class personified. Twelve months ago I would never have envisaged writing this message, but, let me say at this juncture, I am now half way up the hill to my old self, and am looking up the summit rather than down the valley!"

He has some advice for others: "If I can do it and am a stubborn git, then if you read this and feel like I did, do not be afraid to hold out your hand for HELP, as believe me it will be greeted with OPEN ARMS!!"

ME AND MY MIND

"Troubled thoughts, troubled mind, troubled life as now I find

Was not always this way so, a pleasant and happy time not so long ago

The paths to choose were so far apart, was never destined from the start

Where did it all go wrong, we all quote the same line from the same old song?

It is everyone else who did the harm; I was willing and so easy to disarm

The illusion took me to the brink, they forced me to sit and drink

It brought me to the abyss, the alcohol left me without a mind to think

The place I am in is on the upward curve, my mind now stimulated, oh thank God it reacts

Whoever, Wherever, Whatever, please people, be aware of the FACTS!!"



COPE Galway's Domestic Violence Services



In **2016** we worked with **314 individual women** & their **158 children** experiencing **Domestic Violence**



We were unable to accommodate **204 women** with **246 children** who requested refuge on

249 occasions



We provided **719**

Outreach appointments,

161 Court Accompaniments, **139** play therapy sessions for children and answered **1,709** crisis and support calls

Addressing Domestic Violence in 2016

Safety

As the only 24hr refuge in the Western Region, demand for space continued to exceed capacity. The numbers of families we couldn't accommodate continued to be unacceptably high, with 249 requests for refuge throughout the year. While women are always offered referral to refuges in nearby counties, this is not always a practical option. In these instances women are supported to explore other options and a safety plan is carried out with them. Although operating at full capacity for most of 2016, the service recorded 37 admissions at night for women in crisis situations who were accommodated on pull-out couch beds, with their needs further assessed in the morning.

Outreach Service

Our Outreach service provides information and support to women experiencing domestic violence in Galway city and county.

Appointments are provided in a range of locations depending on need, in areas such as Tuam (weekly clinic established Autumn 2016), Ballinasloe, Gort, Portumna, Athenry and Headford. We offer support and information on issues such as safety planning, court orders, managing access, parenting in the context of domestic violence and tips on how to support children and manage their behaviour.



Children

Last year Waterside House supported 158 individual children through both the Refuge and Outreach services.

For children who present to the refuge with their mothers in a crisis situation, it can be an especially traumatic time. Waterside House has trained childcare workers who support children on both a one to one and group basis so that they can work through their fears and anxieties about what has been happening in their home.

For most children, their stay in refuge will see a big improvement in their emotional and physical well-being. Even short interventions can make a difference in a child's life.

This time can enable a child to explore a wide range of feelings, build up resilience and self-esteem, and gain insight and understanding of their situation. This can also give mothers hope and confidence that their children can survive and get through their experiences and can help to assuage some of the guilt that mothers take on, often blaming themselves for staying in a violent relationship, even though they were trying to manage the situation and keep the family together and were not in any way responsible for the abuse.



Awareness Raising & Advocacy

Our domestic violence service supports global, national and local campaigns as much as possible.

In 2016 we were very active locally on (inter)national initiatives such as the *16 Days of Action*, when we took part in a public information campaign on the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and engaged in awareness raising on International Women's Day (8th March). There is more information on this in our Advocacy section on Page 48.

Dating Abuse

Awareness Raising

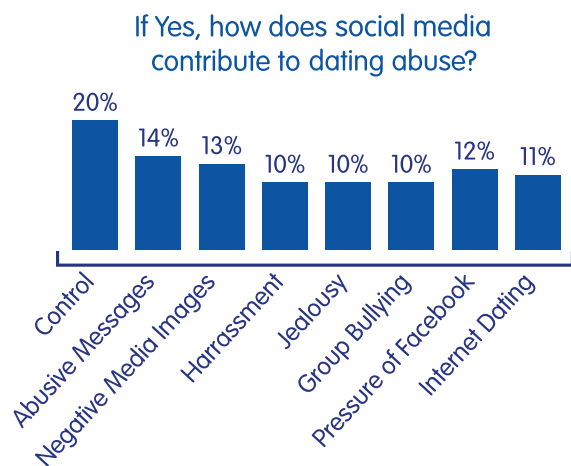
In October 2016, Waterside House participated in the GMIT KISS Week which aims to highlight the issue of sexual health and consent in dating relationships.

We carried out a short survey in the main campus, resulting in 126 responses relating to students' knowledge and opinions of dating abuse. Two of the main findings were:

- 72% of students felt that social media contributes significantly to dating abuse and
- 63% of students were not aware of the supports available if they were in an abusive relationship.

Physical violence rated quite high when the students were asked to define the warning signs of dating abuse. This could indicate that more information is needed for students with regard to identifying the more subtle controlling behaviours that are not so obvious in the initial stages of a relationship.

Survey Results on Dating Abuse 126 Participants GMIT Students October 2016



72% of those surveyed think social media plays a part in dating abuse

Research

COPE Galway Domestic Violence services carried out two research projects in conjunction with Masters students from NUI Galway as part of a community-based research partnership under the Community Knowledge Initiative, which pairs up academia with community based organisations.

Parenting Research

“



Knowing that my son's behaviour was caused by what he had seen and heard meant that I could support him better...the parenting support from the childcare workers really helped me to see that ... we're both doing so well now..."

Sarah Melvin, NUI Galway MA student in Social Work, carried out research for her work, *Parenting in the Context of Domestic Violence - Challenges for Mothers and Implications for Practice*. She interviewed women who were parenting in the aftermath of domestic violence.

Among the findings of the research were:

- 40% of women first experienced domestic violence either during pregnancy or after childbirth
- 100% of women continued to experience abuse after they had separated

A further finding was that mainstream parenting courses, to which women are frequently referred, do not take account of the specific circumstances of women who have been in an abusive relationship. Co-parenting is rarely cooperative in the context of domestic violence and mainstream parenting advice may therefore not always be realistic or applicable for women in such situations.

This can be very stressful for both mothers and children and the effects on children can also be significant without supportive interventions to address the impact on them. However, when these issues are recognised as part of ongoing abuse, and not seen merely as a problem specific to the couple, and when the woman and her children get adequate supports, positive outcomes can be achieved. Accessing support is a vital first step for both safety and recovery.



Pictured at the launch of Parenting in the Context of Domestic Violence research are (l-r) Anne Lyons, CKI, NUIG; Sarah Melvin, NUIG MA student in Social Work; Ciara Tyrrell, Senior Childcare Worker, Waterside House; Karen Kilduff, COPE Galway Board; Declan Coogan, NUIG Lecturer in Social Work

Dating Abuse Research

COPE Galway Domestic Violence Service delivers awareness sessions to second level transition year students in Galway city and county on healthy relationships. In 2016 NUIG MA UNESCO Child and Family Research student Deirdre Nalty carried out research on the issue of dating abuse.

This included focus groups with women who had experienced domestic abuse, an analysis of feedback from the participants of the Healthy Relationships schools workshop and an exploration of how the content fits with the aims of the SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) programme currently being delivered in schools.

Among the findings were that there is a dearth of information in both European and Irish literature pertaining to the issue of dating abuse in teenage relationships and that the current dangers surrounding internet use was an added difficulty for young people when trying to leave an abusive relationship.

All the women interviewed as part of the research felt that, had they been given information on dating abuse similar to the content of the Healthy Relationship workshop when they were younger they might not have ended up in abusive relationships. Low self-esteem and a lack of information were cited as important indicators of vulnerability to future abuse.

Healthy Ireland Smart Start (HISS)

Cope Galway Waterside House refuge participated in the *Healthy Ireland Smart Start* training programme for pre-schools which aims to ensure that children in early years settings adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours in early childhood, thus supporting the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, skills, behaviours and attitudes.

The programme is subsidised by the Department of Health, through the Health Improvement division of the HSE and is supported by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.



Healthy Ireland Smart Start offers all participating preschools the opportunity to be recognised officially as a 'Healthy Ireland' Preschool. Waterside House was put forward for assessment in 2016 and was officially certified early 2017. Claire Sweeney, Childcare Worker at Waterside House is pictured above accepting the award.

While not a preschool, our children's service works with many children of preschool age and their mothers, who may need some support and guidance in relation to health promotion and their children's needs. Much of the information is also applicable across the age spectrum, including for older children. With a mother's participation key to ensuring its success, our mothers were involved at every stage of its introduction into the service. The children in the refuge were excited to see all the colourful posters and were keen to help with displaying the information sheets.

Surf – Client Forum

Women who have used the domestic violence service and have moved on from an abusive relationship can remain involved by participating on a service user forum.

A group of women meet with a facilitator once a month and get involved in social events, producing service information and strategic and annual planning for the service. See our Client Involvement section for key achievements by this group during the year.

Child to Parent Violence

Child to parent violence is an issue that is presenting more frequently to social care services in general.

It is also an issue with particular relevance to domestic violence services due to the impact of domestic violence on children. COPE Galway is involved with the Child to Parent Violence Committee in NUIG and in 2016, participated in a seminar on Child to Parent Violence run by the Western Regional Drugs Task Force.

New Refuge

Plans are progressing steadily to redevelop the former Convent site on Forster Street, donated by the Mercy Sisters 3 years ago, for use as a domestic violence refuge, child care unit and outreach service for women and children.

We secured planning permission in May 2016 and a design team has been contracted. Construction is due to commence in Autumn 2017.



Niamh's Story

**Niamh and her partner were together for over 15 years. Looking back now, still shaken, she says the majority of those years were spent living in fear.*

Recalling those years of mental and physical abuse, Niamh still has difficulty talking about it - she says it's easier to just forget and move on. She still questions why she wasn't 'brave' enough to leave on the hundreds of occasions over the years that the thought had entered her head. But abusive relationships are like that; they make you believe you're at fault, cause you to lose your confidence and self-esteem until you feel you have no choices any more.

Before she arrived at COPE Galway with her family of 6, she had nowhere to live and no source of income. She had left her home in a hurry and brought very little with her. Her ex-partner was taking legal action to get her children back to the UK. Things started to turn around for her from there - here is her story:

The abuse began gradually, with violent or aggressive outbursts every now and then - so gradually, in fact, that before Niamh realised how deeply embroiled she was, she had six children, no income, and was firmly under the control of her partner.

"It started out with criticisms about small things, like brushing my teeth. But over the years, the criticisms grew until it was almost all of the time. If he was away, he had a list of chores I had to do. I wasn't allowed to sit and relax; I always had to be working. I couldn't do anything right in his eyes; sweep, wash the floor, wipe the surfaces, wash dishes, make tea, cook, butter toast, walk, talk, brush my hair, brush my teeth, ride my bicycle, eat, change my babies' nappies, make a bed, wash clothes, talk on the phone."

Soon after they met, the couple moved to South West England, and started a family. It was during these early years that Niamh lost touch with all her friends. Any conversations with her family were monitored by him listening in on the phone calls. The children were not allowed to make friends, and apart from their time spent in school, where they were discouraged from speaking to anyone, they were kept behind closed doors at all times.

It was while pregnant with her first child that the physical abuse began, and it gradually increased over the years. "When I'd speak, or dare to give my opinion on something, I'd end up getting beaten into a corner with him shouting at me. Then it would progress into a constant flow of words for hours on end. I was left physically and emotionally drained; I couldn't think straight. After the abuse, he would say that the argument had happened because I was hormonal and emotional."

There were “normal” times though, says Niamh, which was probably why she stayed for as long as she did, hoping the “crazy” times would become less and the “normal” times more frequent. But they never did.

As time went on, the abuse reached every member of the family, with the children being forced to clean the house constantly and suffering regular beatings for the smallest perceived infraction. Then began the death threats, threats that the Social Services would take their children should she contact the police. The children were also threatened that they’d be taken away, or killed, should they attempt to tell anyone about what was happening.

With the abuse becoming more intense, and the children, who were all under ten, beginning to suffer directly at the hands of their father, Niamh, who says she was in the midst of a physical and mental breakdown, finally cracked in 2012.

“We were all in the kitchen this one night in July when he began his usual tirade of abuse at me, but this time, I just went crazy; it was like I just lost my mind. I was screaming at him to get out, pushing him further and further out the door. He was so shocked; he had never seen that side of me, and he went.”

With help from a local woman and the police, Niamh managed to get all the children on a bus and back to Galway on the boat within a matter of days. Arriving back in Ireland, Niamh and her family, scared, scarred and very fragile, stayed on friends’ floors each night. Her relief was short lived, however, with her ex attempting to get them back to England through the court system. “It was really stressful - the thought that we might have to return to England was more than I could bear; it was horrifying. I thought the legal system would protect us, but we still weren’t safe.”

It was around this time that Niamh was introduced to COPE Galway by a friend of the family, and at COPE Galway’s Waterside House Refuge for women, she found the peace and security she and her family had so desperately needed. “That room, that was our space and when I was in there, I did feel safe. I used to have nightmares that he was going to break in and get me, but it was so secure and I was always assured of my safety. Whatever it was, whatever problem I had, I could go to them and there was help there. If they couldn’t help me themselves, they knew where to guide me. Even just having the opportunity to talk with women who were in similar situations, and talk to the women who worked there who were so supportive - that really helped. When it came to the day that I had to go to

court to fight for my right to stay in Ireland with the children, they were with me”.

Staying in Waterside for almost six weeks, Niamh managed to find a house for the family to rent - not an easy task due to soaring rent rates and a reluctance of landlords to accept rent receipts. With the children in school, and finally settled in their house, Niamh says she started to breathe again, to enjoy her freedom. “I could wake up in the morning and I knew I could get up and I didn’t have someone telling me something I was doing was wrong. There was so much freedom - it was amazing. We had been imprisoned for so many years that we’d spend every waking minute out and about. We’d go to the college grounds where the kids would run around, and play in trees, or we’d go to the park, the beach - just living! It was amazing that we could just walk out a door and we could go where we wanted to go. We were really loving it.”

While Niamh says the whole family is doing really well, she still feels like she has to look over her shoulder; the fear hasn’t completely disappeared. She’s had counselling, and the children have had play therapy, both of which have been organised through COPE Galway. This has helped them all immensely, she says.

The help that she got from COPE Galway, from the accommodation through to the emotional and practical support, meant that she was able to create a new life for her and her children in Galway.

“Even to get legal support, I had to battle, so I really needed their help. Without them, and in the most vulnerable part of my life, I don’t know where I would have been.”

The new chapter of Niamh’s life has brought with it peace and a wonderful sense of freedom, she says. “The kids are doing really well, but there are still scars there. We still have issues - sometimes you don’t know whether it’s normal kids’ behaviour or because of what happened. It’s hard to tell. Me? I think I’m doing really well; I just try not to think about it. It’s the past, and I put the past behind me. I’m quite easily pleased. I get up in the morning and the sun is shining and I just love it. I look out and can see the mountains, the sun rising and all the beautiful colours. I love that I can cycle and go whichever way I want. I can talk to people, I can talk to other mothers and there’s nothing stopping me.”



Lesley's Story

**Lesley's relationship with her husband had been controlling from the beginning. Coming from a culture where separation and divorce is frowned upon, she didn't find the support she needed in the Asian community she lived in. Then she found COPE Galway.*

Lesley smiles broadly at the mention of COPE Galway. "Finding COPE Galway was the beginning of my life", she reflects. "I am a happy woman now; I am free, thanks to COPE Galway."

When Lesley made contact with COPE Galway some months back, she had been severely beaten by her husband. She had lost her home, had no source of income, no friends or family in Ireland to support her. It was a story like many other women who are in abusive relationships, but for Lesley, the control started on the very first day of their marriage, when her husband told her she had to cut ties with friends and family. Some years down the line, with her three children settled in school in Galway, Lesley decided it was time for her to do something for herself, and so she got a part time job as a teacher's assistant. It was then the controlling behaviour became more pronounced. "He had never hit me throughout our marriage, but he was very controlling. Anyone I would meet, he would tell them to stay away from me. I could see signs but in the culture I come from, marriage is forever, so I stayed."

Ten years into their marriage, when she was six months pregnant with her third child, Lesley was subjected to horrific abuse, which lasted an entire night and into the next day. The following morning, the children, who witnessed what had happened, ran for help. Her husband was arrested and Lesley was taken to hospital.

"Once I was out of hospital, I knew I couldn't return home to that house, so I had to stay with a family friend. I was depressed, and there was a lot of pressure from my husband's friends for me to forgive him"

It was on a maternity check-up at the hospital, that the staff arranged for her to get in touch with COPE Galway services, where it was arranged that Lesley and her children could take a room at Waterside House. "I thank God that Waterside House exists, because I can't say I'd be here today if I had stayed at home. The support I got there was unbelievable. I cried, I talked and there was always someone to listen to me and support me." The staff at Waterside House also accompanied Lesley to numerous court sittings. "I needed a lot of support, just to get through it. I can't say that I would have only for COPE Galway."

"What COPE Galway Waterside House was for me and my children when we needed it most was a place of peace. Everyone in there understood me, supported me. They worked with me, went with me to appointments, to the courts, meeting with solicitors. I simply couldn't have done it by myself. They saved my life, they changed my life."

"I am strong now, and I'm happy because I made that decision not to go back there, but I couldn't have done it alone. The women at COPE Galway were working behind the scenes to support me - that's why I'm here. I've come out of it now, I'm happy, my children are happy. It's been a long process, but today I can stand and say I did it."

COPE Galway's Older People's Services

In **2016** we produced
& home delivered
44,565 meals for
392 clients



Catered **8,064** meals for 7 city
and 2 county lunch clubs
attended weekly by between
80-100 older people



Supported **63** people at our
Sonas Day Centre & **55**
people through our
community support projects

Our mission in Older People's Services is to:
Support Healthy Independent Ageing at Home.

Our services include:
Community Catering Meals on Wheels, Sonas Day
Centre and our Community Support Projects based
in Galway City Centre and the east of the city.

The older people we work with tell us how important it is to them that they can stay living in their own home in their local community for as long as possible. Ensuring an older person has support to stay living at home can be a challenge as their health needs change or support networks may be less available over time. By working together with a range of community supports and services we can help older people to *age in place* with a good quality of life.



As part of the Galway Age Friendly network we share the vision of the Age Friendly Programme:
Galway will promote and respect older people's engagement in economic, educational, social, cultural, community and family life and foster better solidarity between generations.

Currently in Ireland *Over-65s* account for 12% of our population. By 2041 this is expected to rise to 22% (1.4m people). Irish health policy supports older people to remain living at home in their own communities and COPE Galway's Older People's Services support this. Our support can range from offering a daily meal delivered to the door, a listening ear, and help with filling in forms; to gardening and local clean ups, a meal with friends at a lunch club and having a friendly place to drop in when its needed.

Our work is based in local communities and in older people's homes and is hugely supported and enabled by our team of volunteers. Issues experienced by older people include isolation, loneliness, loss of family and friends, poor nutrition, poverty, poor living conditions, adapting to changes in their health and managing to stay connected with friends, family and their community.



Community Catering

We produce and deliver Meals on Wheels to older people across Galway city and in parts of the county.

Our varied menu includes traditional and ethnic options, meals for clients with specific medically related dietary requirements or requiring a texture modified or fortified meal (for example if they have had a stroke or have a difficulty swallowing) – all for short or long-term service requirements. We are flexible and aim to meet all client needs and preferences.

Our promotional work is ongoing & during the year we worked with a number of local chemists. This provided us with an opportunity to meet older people, promote the service, offer a free sample meal and inform the chemist's staff and customers about our service and the benefits of Meals on Wheels.



COPE Galway Community Catering (l-r) Ann King, John O Grady, Margaret Buckley, Paul Madden, Kevin Hession, Colette Rocke, Mary Doherty



Mike McDonagh & Fiona Gillespie from Community Catering with staff from Briarhill Pharmacy during Meals on Wheels promotional event.



Peter's Story

Peter Finn pictured with his grand-daughter, Sharon Nolan, who helped him write his memoirs, and his great-grandson, Ben. All sale profits from the book were donated to our services

For such a simple concept, the effect that COPE Galway Community Catering Meals on Wheels has on the lives of clients can be far reaching. By delivering a healthy dinner to the door of older people unable to cook for themselves, Community Catering allows older people the freedom to remain in their own homes, and independent, for longer than they otherwise could.

The 21st century version of the traditional Meals on Wheels service, COPE Galway Community Catering, is all about providing quality, delicious and nutritious meals, and social contact for Galway's older community.

In his 90s, Peter Finn has been getting Meals-on-Wheels for the past six years. Peter's wife, Mary, sadly passed away seven years ago. Mary, whom Peter describes as having been a wonderful home-maker, had always cooked for them both. Being on his own, he found cooking for himself challenging as time went on.

A farmer from Oranmore, Peter was used to being out and about on the farm, spending his time tending to his cattle. With eight children, six living in Galway, 27 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren, Peter is never short of company, but was delighted when a neighbour told him about Community Catering six years ago.

"I was cooking for myself for a year or so, and while it was OK, it was also a lot of trouble, cooking for just one person. You had to get the vegetables ready, do the cooking, clean the saucepans."

Peter has a meal delivered to him five days a week. Each Friday, two meals are delivered - one for Friday and another for Saturday, and on Sundays, Peter goes out to eat with one of his children.

"The driver leaves it in the fridge so if I'm not at home, he can just leave it there. He usually comes about 12 o'clock. It's very handy; I just heat it up in the microwave when I choose to eat my dinner. The food is good; vegetables and fish one or two days a week, chicken another day, beef another. Then maybe ham or pork the next day."

For Peter, that daily delivery makes a big difference to his days. "I'm a lot less steady on my feet now than I was six years ago, so whatever chance I had of cooking then, it is not possible now," he adds.

For Peter's children, knowing he's having a good meal every day must also be reassuring, and while one of his children stays with him each night, the cooking is something that would prove to be a challenge were it not for Community Catering. "My children thought it was a great idea. They like the fact that I get my meals delivered to the door; it would be difficult to organise it any other way. It's important to have a decent meal some time in the day."

Recently, Peter published a book - *Memoirs of Peter Finn* - which documents his life as a farmer, and the practices used by farmers in the West of Ireland when he was a

young boy and man growing up in Maree. Grateful for the service provided to him over the last number of years, Peter decided to offer the proceeds of the sale of the book - €2,400 - to COPE Galway.

“COPE Galway has been good to me. I’m very grateful, and was happy to offer the profit as a ‘thank you’.”

COPE Galway is very appreciative of this kind gesture from Peter.



Peter Finn visits Community Catering to launch his book of memoirs, with sales proceeds in aid of our services.

Lunch Clubs

We recognise the importance of good social connections as vital to health and wellbeing, and so we continue to develop and promote our community-based Lunch Clubs for older people across the city and county. We have established 9 Lunch Clubs for older people in Galway City (7) & County (2) in partnership with a range of organisations.

Lunch Clubs are organised by local communities, run by local volunteers and provide freshly prepared, nutritionally balanced meals in the company of neighbours. In 2016 our Lunch Clubs were shortlisted for a national *Age Friendly Achievement Award*, which celebrates innovative & creative initiatives across the country that make a real difference in the lives of older people in Ireland.

During 2016 we also developed the role of the Lunch Club as a platform to introduce older people to new interests and information sessions. Working with groups of older people, our Community Worker provided information and advice on nutrition and healthy eating.

In 2016, the Information & Advocacy Support Project, funded by The Community Foundation for Ireland, compiled a newsletter with a checklist of issues and concerns identified by Lunch Club members and circulated it widely prior to the General Election.



Community Support Project



Just some of the many Helping Hands Volunteers who assisted residents with home maintenance and garden work throughout 2016.

We promote healthy, active and independent ageing in a safe, comfortable environment by linking with older residents in a number of housing clusters around Galway city.

Our Community Support Workers provide residents with information, advocacy and support and develop activities of interest that facilitate social support, promote community identity and reduce isolation.

During Positive Ageing Week 2016, we organised an information session on *Staying Safe at Home* in collaboration with Age Action, the Community Garda, Galway City Council and the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Team.

We help residents to access home maintenance, small home repairs and home care services and have had ongoing support from Age Action, TÚS, and COPE Galway's corporate and group volunteers for maintenance of homes and communal areas.

In 2016 we developed a Garden Project, funded by Galway & Roscommon Education & Training Board (GRETB), where residents grew herbs and salad leaves and enhanced the communal spaces with colourful planting in shrub and flower beds, tubs and window boxes. Residents now also have access to a community room which will be used for meetings, visiting speakers, IT introduction and training, an information library and 'drop-in' social gatherings.



One of the garden projects by Community Residents



Older people can sometimes be marginalised in their own community through lack of resources and technological knowledge. In 2016 we secured €5,000 funding from IPB Insurance through their Community Engagement Fund.

This allowed us to provide hardware, information and support for two groups of older people that we work with to learn basic IT, internet and email skills. The groups met with a tutor on a weekly basis over the course of 12 weeks and worked up from the basics of using a computer to booking flights, doing on-line shopping and making skype calls.

Sonas Day Centre

Sonas drop in centre for older people supported approximately 60 people to live a more informed and improved quality of life in their own homes during 2016. Staff and Volunteers delivered 1,191 meals; served over 800 dinners at the Mervue Lunch Clubs; made 197 hospital, nursing home and home visits and, along with the outreach work, Sonas recorded 4,738 drop-ins this year.

The Sonas garden project made great progress this year with vegetables, salads and herbs grown for our clients and the community. We enjoyed delicious meals using the produce and are hopeful this garden project will continue to 'grow and grow'!

Other activities included outings to Coole Park, the Flying Boat Museum in Limerick and St Bridget's Garden; an exercise project and regular information sessions on, for example, the Fair Deal Scheme, *Thinking Ahead*, and other welfare schemes. During Positive Ageing Week clients enjoyed a cooking demonstration and information sessions on occupational therapy, nutritional advice and mindfulness.

Sonas also carried out major refurbishment in 2016, resulting in a brighter, more comfortable service centre for our clients.

Mervue Lunch Club's 6th Birthday Party in November was a particular highlight of 2016. Sonas clients, staff and volunteers celebrated with supporters & special guests and staff from Galway City Council, Galway Resource Centre and members from the local Active Retirement Groups and community. Keith Finnegan (Galway Bay FM) broadcast his radio show from Sonas, hosting many engaging interviews and songs. A celebratory dinner provided by Community Catering was held at St James GAA Hall to celebrate the event with music and song.

“ I really enjoy doing stitch work and crafts – I do model building too”

**Denis Connolly,
Sonas Day Centre,
November 2016**



Sonas art group took part in furniture decoupage, oil painting and pottery - three separate projects part funded by Galway & Roscommon Education & Training Board and Galway City Council.



“I'm loving this day” – Molly Clancy after her interview with Keith Finnegan on Galway Bay FM . November 2016.

Sonas would like to thank the many clients who took part in our annual Christmas fundraising events and the facilitators for all of our projects and talks during the year.

Pictured at Sonas Day Centre 6th Birthday Celebrations (l-r) Angela Fahy, Broadcaster Keith Finnegan, Teresa Heaney, Cllr Terry Flaherty, November 2016



COPE Galway's Food Rescue

COPE Galway's food rescue initiatives ensure no food goes to waste from businesses with surplus food in the community.

Community Catering



We manage our food rescue initiatives from our Community Catering unit, collecting & redistributing 15 weekly food rescues with the support of a team of 12 food rescue volunteers. Beech Lawn organics donate surplus vegetables weekly. Green Earth Organics also offer an innovative option to holidaying customers to re-direct their weekly box of organic fruit & vegetables to COPE Galway. We rescued a total of 3,413kg of food in 2016 working with local Tesco & Aldi outlets using the FoodCloud app, which equates to €10,239 worth of food.



Food Rescue Volunteers Molly Foley, TY student & Peter Queeney.



Food Rescue: COPE Galway's Geraldine Ryan & John O'Grady with Geraldine Mahony Morgan of Tesco Galway.





Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) Programme

The Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) is an EU-wide programme to help people take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion. FEAD Ireland is co-funded by European funding and Irish exchequer funding. The Department of Social Protection is responsible for the implementation of the FEAD Programme in Ireland.



COPE Galway was one of 11 Charities in Ireland to pilot this EU-wide programme, managed locally by Geraldine Ryan, our Executive Chef at Community Catering, to help people take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion.

The Foodcloud hub in Oranmore is responsible for the procurement and storage of the FEAD products - basic staples that every household needs. These food boxes are distributed to individuals and families supported by our services and at risk of food poverty and homelessness. We also partnered with TUSLA to extend the support to families most at risk in our community. During the pilot August – November 2016 we supported 686 individuals.

In December 2016 the FEAD Programme increased its partner organisations to over 100 charities throughout Ireland and will continue to 2020. Since the programme started COPE Galway have reached out to local services and community groups and we now have 9 partners organisations whose clients benefit from a delivery. We have seen at first hand the benefit of this programme and we are fully committed to ensuring food reaches the most vulnerable in our community.

“We can always rely on the food you give us, my baby loves the porridge and the soups are so handy and good for her.”

“I love having the press filled and I love knowing that there will be enough food for the kids for the month.”

Feedback from families supported by Tusla





Joe's Story

Volunteer Joe Fox pictured with Community Catering's Fiona Gillespie at a Meals on Wheels event.

Joe Fox, Volunteer with two of COPE Galway's services, explains how his work with the local charity has enriched his life.

Joe Fox describes himself as "an ordinary Joe soap" and says he "just likes to help out" when it is suggested that he is a volunteer that goes above and beyond. Working in Medtronic by day, Joe volunteers with COPE Galway on two of its projects – the Meals on Wheels service and the Food Cloud initiative, both of which take up between two to three hours a week.

His involvement with COPE Galway came about in early 2010 when he was between jobs. Joe decided to give something back. "I needed something useful to do and volunteering seemed to be a good option". Joe had seen an advertisement for volunteers in the missalette at mass in Mervue Church and the seed was planted to contact COPE Galway. "As it turned out, COPE Galway Community Catering Meals on Wheels centre in Ballybane was close to where I lived and so, I thought it made sense to apply there." After making enquiries, Joe signed up for the Meals on Wheels service and has been delivering meals to the Mervue, Ballybane and Castlepark areas every Saturday since.

It is clear from talking to Joe that he is a very personable character and he admits that he likes nothing more than the 'chat' with the clients that he visits every Saturday, many of whom he has developed good relationships with. Every Saturday morning begins with a trip to the COPE Galway Community Catering facility in Ballybane where

he collects the meals from Saturday's kitchen assistant on duty, Anne Comer. "She's a tough task master," he jokes; "We have great banter every Saturday, she's a great person." After collecting the meals, Joe begins his weekly routine of driving to the various clients and dropping off their dinners. "It's nice to be out and about meeting people. Clients are super people and most, I think, really look forward to seeing the drivers arrive with the meals".

The number of houses that Joe drops the meals to varies each week and depends on factors such as illness, whether clients are away visiting their families, whether it is a bank holiday weekend or for example, if the clients' children have taken them out to lunch. Many of the clients are elderly and cannot cook for themselves and so, the Meals on Wheels service ensures they get a nutritious dinner. "The Service has the Q Mark award and meals are good quality. The clients tell me how much they love the dinners. A man I deliver to says "only for them" every time I arrive at the door – that makes it worthwhile," explains Joe.

"There is no typical Saturday and there are clients who brighten up my Saturday every week – some have been through hard times for some reason but they always seem to have a funny story to make you smile," he says. "Another lady that I visit has dementia- now she is a real lady, I always look forward to seeing her. I knock a bit of fun out of her. She is an example of someone who really benefits from the meal." Very often the clients invite Joe

in for a 'cuppa' and while he would love to stay and chat, delivering the next meal is always at the back of his mind.

"They know I don't have time to have a cup of tea as the next person will be waiting for their dinner but often they invite me in."

Joe also drops off dinners to the Sonas Day Centre in Mervue; a drop in centre where people can avail of a cup of tea and a chat. "The people in there are great characters. We have great fun in there and I look forward to meeting the members every week."

In addition to his Saturday delivery slot, Joe also volunteers with COPE Galway's food rescue project, Food Cloud. This is an initiative which matches businesses with surplus food and charities in their local community ensuring no good food goes to waste. "I started as a food rescue volunteer two years ago. On a Monday night myself and [volunteer colleague] Ita drive to Tesco on the Headford Road and collect surplus food. We then load up our cars and drive

to Ballybane. Other volunteers go to other designated supermarkets in Galway. When we get to the COPE Galway Community Catering facility in Ballybane, we separate the food, putting the meat in one fridge/freezer, the vegetables in another and so on."

Joe explains that the surplus items which are donated by the supermarket is food that is within the 'use by date'. "When I started I was definitely surprised by the amount of good quality food that we got. The number of crates of food varies between three and eight crates which is fantastic." Having this food donated means a huge amount to the charity, says Joe; "Instead of the food going to waste, it can be used by COPE Galway's services to make soups, desserts etc. It's a win-win: COPE Galway has access to a supply of surplus fresh food and businesses can contribute to their community in a significant way".

Volunteering with COPE Galway has been an entirely enriching experience for Joe. "I couldn't give it up; if they keep me, I'll keep doing it".



The team at COPE Galway Community Catering

Working at COPE Galway

Cope Galway employs approximately 120 staff across 8 services. Our staff teams are made up of full time, part time and relief staff.

We provide services in three distinct areas so the roles within COPE Galway vary, from our Chefs in Community Catering, to Social Care and Child Care Workers in our domestic violence service, Project Workers in our Day Centre, Residential Hostel Workers in Fairgreen and Osterley, and a range of other support roles. Many staff also work across the organisation in more than one role. This provides staff with useful experience and broadens their perspective on the work we do.



Staff Induction Day

Our work is challenging. As an organisation we do our best to support our staff. From induction days and ongoing training to wellbeing days; from supervision to work/life balance policies, and even with events just for fun like our Murder Mystery Night (pictured) – we recognise and support the powerful difference our staff make in people's lives in the Galway community.



Staff in character for Murder Mystery Night.

“ Put in simple terms, it is our front line staff who make the difference in people's lives.”

Client Testimonials

It's not possible to truly articulate or capture the difference our staff makes, but some of our clients have told us what our staff's work means to them:

“You treated me with the warmest non-judgmental kindness I have ever experienced...You treated me with dignity, respect and most of all you treated me as an equal human being.”

“You gave me hope and positivity, which were the two things I had given up on.”

“I hope your lives are fulfilled and complete, and never feel that your jobs are in vain, because the two of you saved a life on that cold dark November night.”

“I will never, ever forget what you did for me.”

“God hand-picked good people and put them in COPE Galway. They look at everyone as human beings. These people changed my life. I could be anywhere now - in a rehab centre, with my children taken away from me, but we're so happy now.”

Recognising Loyalty

The experience built up by long term staff over the years is a valuable asset to our organisation and one we acknowledge each year by marking each employee's milestone of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of service with a small gift.

In 2016 we did this for 12 staff, 5 of whom had reached the 20 year mark. These years of experience are irreplaceable.



Wellbeing Day

On the 8th of April 2016 we had our second wellbeing day for staff and volunteers as part of a national initiative.

A fantastic day and now a yearly event, we provided support staff with a number of therapies, both one to one and group such as massage, reiki, reflexology, yoga, mindfulness etc. The therapists gave their time for free and we thank them wholeheartedly for providing such a wonderful experience on the day.

“ I loved the day, as I wouldn't usually get the opportunity to do anything nice for myself.”

THANK YOU to all our staff – your dedication, compassion, commitment, energy and determination is what drives our organisation towards our vision of improving the quality of life in a home of your own for so many.

PROFILE:



Joanne Traynor
Domestic Violence Outreach Worker,
COPE Galway Waterside House

So Joanne, can you tell me about your role in COPE Galway?

My role as a Domestic Violence Outreach Worker across Galway city and county is to provide support and information on a 1-to-1 basis for women who are currently or have previously experienced domestic violence. This role includes court accompaniment, accessing support with regards to parenting from our childcare unit and offering a domestic violence support group when women move on.

Have you had other roles with COPE Galway previously?

I have worked as relief worker in Osterley Lodge (for women and children experiencing homelessness) and I was full time in the refuge previous to my current role. The skills I developed throughout my experience in COPE Galway's Osterley Lodge really helped me when I started in the refuge. I developed key working skills, advocacy skills and the ability to support and empower women to make positive life choices. Both Osterley Lodge and Waterside House have two excellent teams who I found very supportive. They were very helpful and always encouraged me to develop further.

What have you found most rewarding about your role(s)?

In my current role I feel lucky to be able to work alongside women over an extended period of time. It is very rewarding to feel part of their journey and to feel like I am helping. When I meet women initially they may be in crisis and from there I work with them, being part of their journey that hopefully, ultimately empowers them to make the decisions that are right for them.

And what about the challenges?

At times it can be difficult when supports that women need are not always there i.e. difficulties of navigating the court system or parenting in the context of domestic violence. However, when supports are available this assists women towards living their lives free from abuse.

COPE Galway's vision is Quality of Life in a Home of your own – how does your work play a part in this?

Women who experience domestic violence are vulnerable. They need support. The mission of Waterside House is to empower women. Domestic violence is not a once off event. It is a process. My role helps support and advocate for women towards achieving a life free from abuse helping them through to a home of their own.

“It is very rewarding to feel part of their journey and to feel like I am helping.”

Volunteering at COPE Galway

Some interesting facts about our team of 200 volunteers:

5 volunteers in the
18-25 range

OVER **55%**
of volunteers
are female

21

volunteers
aged
between
26-40

89 volunteers
in the age range **41-65**

60
volunteers are
aged between
66-75

14
volunteers over
the age of
75 years

COPE Galway has a vibrant team of volunteers. We also have people who help us out on an occasional basis at fundraising events and on our *Helping Hands* Projects.

Our volunteers are crucial to the running of our services and achieving our mission of a quality of life in a home of your own for all our clients. We are very grateful for their invaluable contribution.

In 2016 we recruited almost 50 new volunteers. We also have a very loyal and dedicated team of volunteers - over one third of the team have been volunteering between 1-5 years; 50 between 6 and 10 years, and an incredible group of volunteers (13) with us for more than 16 years.

Our volunteers help across all our services in over 30 volunteer roles. Some of the many opportunities include:

Meals on Wheels driver, Kitchen Assistant, Food Rescue, Cookery Tutor, Befriender, Lunch Club, Musicians, Playroom Support, Health & Well-being, Physical Activity, Shop Assistant, Fundraising & Administration and many more.

Annual Recognition

We held our 2nd Annual Volunteer Recognition Event in the Salthill Hotel in May 2016 to celebrate the invaluable work our volunteers do across the services.

The event was held during National Volunteering Week. Attended by 150 of our volunteers and key staff members, it was deemed a huge success. It's a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to get together, meet fellow volunteers in a relaxed setting, and hear about volunteering in other services.

"Volunteering has such a positive impact on my life. It keeps me busy, and makes me feel confident and happy!" Anna Goldrick, Volunteer



COPE Galway's 'Helping Hands' Projects

We rely on the assistance of our generous corporate groups and other groups to assist us with short term volunteering projects.

In 2016 we completed 16 projects ranging from gardening, painting, upkeep of the services and clients' homes and our Christmas Donations Project.



Just some of the companies/groups who donated their time, skills and enthusiasm in 2016 included: Wayfair, Medtronic, Sisk, Aviva, DTZ Sherry Fitzgerald, HC Financial Advisers Limited, GlaxoSmithKlein, RSA, NUI Galway, Oracle, John Martyn & Friends and many more.



Paudie Cunningham, Gardening project at Fairgreen Hostel

"This idea came to me when our Volunteer Coordinator, Lucia mentioned that a person who was turning 40 wanted to volunteer his carpentry skills along with a few friends instead of organizing the standard 40th party. We planned to develop a wild flower garden at the front of the Fairgreen Hostel to hopefully bring a positive feel/image for our service users on entering the building and also for the general public who pass by our building on a daily basis. It is a work in progress but I believe we have achieved our aim already as feedback from clients and passers-by has been very positive."

Christmas Food & Donations Project 2016

Our Christmas Project was very special this year, thanks to the generosity of Galway's various companies and the public in general for the unprecedented amount of donated food, toys and provisions.

This year we partnered with CISCO to sort and distribute Christmas gifts and hampers to COPE Galway families and individuals. Their work and all the donations helped make Christmas a special experience for everyone we support through our various Homeless, Domestic Violence, and Older Peoples' services in Galway.



Ronan Silke, Christmas Donations Volunteer Co-ordinator

"It was an unbelievable experience to give something back to the community, especially around Christmas time when people get so caught up with the marketing frenzy. Christmas can be a very difficult time for those less fortunate, so to be able to provide them with a hamper of food and some small presents can really make a huge difference to their festive season. Looking forward to next year's project already!"

Ronan kindly volunteered his time and energy for the month of December to coordinate this very busy project with his volunteer team. COPE Galway would like to extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time so generously on the Christmas Food & Donations Project.

The Christmas Project Team from left: Neil Cronin, Ronan Silke, Emla Palmer, Saibh Egan.

Volunteer Satisfaction Survey 2016



Communicating with our Volunteers is very important to us in COPE Galway.

We are constantly looking at how we can improve our Volunteer Programme and essentially improve our volunteers' experience while they are working with us. So we asked our volunteers to take part in a survey and were delighted that so many took the time to feedback. We are currently putting together a list of recommendations based on this.

Some of the findings are:

- One third of our volunteers become involved as a result of their friends
- Over 98% of volunteers report that they are happy with their experience in COPE Galway
- 71% agree that it has a positive effect on their well-being and mental health
- Majority of volunteers (93%) report that they believe the work they do is important and that the staff in COPE Galway make them feel welcome and valued

Finally, as an organisation which is committed to being the *'Best in the West'*, we asked our volunteers to rate us on a scale of 1-5. The majority of volunteers rated COPE Galway as a 5 (highest end of the scale). We were delighted with this vote of confidence.

With almost 200 people volunteering with COPE Galway - from the board of directors, to community services and fundraising events - there is a volunteering opportunity for everyone.

To become a volunteer, contact
Lucia Canavan, Volunteer
Coordinator at:
volunteeradmin@copegalway.ie
or on 091 778750.



Our amazing volunteers at the 2016 Volunteer Recognition Event

VOLUNTEER PROFILE



Sarah Hennelly

Acupuncturist Sarah Hennelly arrives at the COPE Fairgreen Hostel for homeless men every Wednesday to offer a group acupuncture session for the hostel's clients. Whoever wants to take part simply gathers in a room, sits

around in a circle, and joins in a 40-minute meditation with acupuncture.

With this relaxation, the release of feel-good endorphins, and the boost to general well-being that acupuncture brings about, clients at Fairgreen get to experience a healing treatment they may have otherwise never come into contact with.

"They love it!" says Sarah, who volunteers her services. "At first, it took the clients a while to get comfortable but soon they started to feel more relaxed with themselves and the other men and the shared experience of the acupuncture helped them open up with each other about their experiences. Communication is the most important thing and that's how we heal and help each other."

Choosing to volunteer her services to the clients of COPE Galway free of charge, Sarah is quick to point out that she's getting much more than she's giving. "It's been a really positive experience. I get a lot from it and I'm learning so much about people. Many of the men would share their stories a bit, and people can be so encouraging; some of these people have overcome the most incredible things and are still smiling and still full of hope. It can really make you re-evaluate your own worries. Sometimes, all you need is one conversation with one person to change your life. And that's what these people are teaching me. I feel lucky."

Sarah uses the five needle protocol method, which uses acupuncture on the ear only. An all-round treatment, it is also an effective treatment for addictions. The fact that this treatment can be done sitting down, in a room with others, makes it the perfect treatment for the clients of the Fairgreen Hostel. "The guys can't believe they can feel so good after acupuncture. What the needles are doing is rebalancing energy, and when we're in balance and in alignment, our mind is calm, pushing all that chatter of the mind away. This is something that people in their position need: some calm and positivity," suggests Sarah.

Many of the clients who have received these acupuncture sessions have started meditating, doing yoga and writing poetry since beginning the treatments with Sarah. "They're just really opening themselves up, maybe seeing that there's another way; that we don't have to block out our minds with drugs and alcohol. We can do all these simple things that fulfil us."

One of the Fairgreen clients, who attended one of Sarah's sessions out of curiosity, says he is grateful to have the chance to experience a treatment that he would never have encountered, only for Sarah;

"I have a drug addiction for many years, and Sarah explained that the ear acupuncture helped with addictions, so I thought I'd give it a go. It was great. For the first time in a long time, I feel comfortable and relaxed in myself for the hour or so she sits with us. Only for Sarah coming here every week, I'd never have a chance to experience something like this. It's great that someone is good enough to volunteer their time with us, showing us something different that we'd probably never experience in a million years. I've enjoyed listening to the music and sitting there with the other lads. We don't need to speak to each other, so it's nice just to sit there quietly with each other".

Advocating For Change

We are an advocate & voice for social change across a wide range of issues at **individual/local/national service & policy levels**.

Our advocacy included submissions & dialogue around:



General Election – Older People’s issues • Collaborative Research
City Development Plan • National Drugs Strategy

Although much of the focus of COPE Galway’s work is on addressing the range of needs of those in the community who are marginalised and disadvantaged, the organisation also recognises the importance of addressing the underlying inequalities and policy failures that give rise to this situation in the first instance.

We are strongly committed to our advocacy role in COPE Galway and our strategy supports the value we place on being a voice for social change on the issues that so negatively impact the lives of our client groups. COPE Galway understands advocacy to range from actions that aim to bring about changes in legislation, public policy, administrative practice and attitudes in the broadest sense to also being a “means of empowering people by supporting them to assert their views and claim their entitlements and, where necessary, representing and negotiating on their behalf” (as defined in Citizen’s Information Board Advocacy Services Guide).

We do this in a wide variety of ways:

Regular Advocacy Forum Meetings

The Advocacy Forum is made up of Managers/Coordinators and some staff of front line services as well as our Assistant CEO. Its role is to attempt to address barriers and blockages clients of COPE Galway encounter in asserting their views and claiming their entitlements. The Forum is responsible for:

- Identifying possible solutions to such barriers and blockages through sharing knowledge and experience
- Agreeing actions to raise awareness and advocate at interagency level
- Agreeing actions to raise awareness and advocate for changes in legislation and administrative practices at a statutory level where appropriate
- Agreeing actions to raise public awareness through publicity and more targeted measures
- Encouraging advocacy training
- Devising an effective communications program
- Developing and reviewing an annual plan of action for advocacy

Advocating for Change Subcommittee

Our Advocating for Change Committee is a Sub-Committee of the board of directors designed to support the board in the delivery of the COPE Galway Strategic Plan – *Working Together towards Home and Community*, and specifically the area of the plan relating to advocacy. This committee ensures that we have a clear focus for our advocacy work and that we maintain momentum in seeking and securing social change on issues affecting those we work with. The sub committee has representatives from our board, managers and staff.

Seeking change in public policy

We seek to influence public policy where possible. In 2016 much of our focus was on housing and on highlighting the plight of a growing number of families and individuals in Galway who were homeless. Submissions were made to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness and to the Department of Housing in respect of the preparation of a strategy for the private rented sector. We also made a submission to the Ministers for Finance and Public Expenditure in advance of Budget 2017 seeking a range of budgetary measures to help address the needs of those we work with and support.

COPE Galway also contributed at a local level to the discourse on various policy initiatives and changes in practices in areas such as housing, health and welfare. We did this both directly in our interactions with statutory bodies and through our active involvement in networks including the Galway City Community Network.



Minister Simon Coveney and local TD, Hildegard Naughton, pictured with COPE Galway's John Concannon, Jacque Horan and Martin O'Connor during discussions on Homelessness in Galway.

Election 2016



GENERAL ELECTION 2016

Let's create a better future for:

- ✓ The men, women and children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Galway
- ✓ Women and children experiencing domestic violence
- ✓ Older people living in isolation in our community

Tel: (091) 778 750 | www.copegalway.ie Homelessness – Domestic Violence – Older People

We offered pointers for voters to seek the commitment of candidates to support the issues which affect our clients.

Information events

We hold information events across our services. For example, our services for Older People held a range of information events of interest to older people, from safety and security with Community Garda Declan Mulligan to *Thinking Ahead for Older Age* – a workshop on the booklet produced by the Irish Hospice Foundation delivered by Ben McPoland and a talk on entitlements and accessing The Fair Deal Scheme in older age, by the Health Service Executive's Eileen O Donohue.





Awareness Raising Campaigns

Our domestic violence service supports the annual global awareness campaign - 16 Days of Action on Violence against Women. In 2016 we released "16 Facts for 16 Days". This involved sending daily statistics & information on domestic violence by email and on social media to 4,768 recipients running from Friday, 25th November until International Human Rights Day on 10th December.

We also release statistics and information annually for International Women's Day in March.

We continued to regularly compile point-in-time census figures throughout 2016 of the numbers in contact with and availing of COPE Galway services who were homeless and in need of housing to help inform policy responses and to contribute to solutions regarding the housing and homeless crisis.



2016 saw a national public awareness campaign launched by COSC, the government office for the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, to highlight the issue of domestic violence. COPE Galway supported the campaign at a local level through interviews with local radio stations, and press releases detailing local statistics.



We also take part each year in campus-based awareness-raising around dating abuse at GMIT and NUIG. Last year we conducted research during GMIT KISS Week – this is reported on in our section on Domestic Violence Services. We believe that working in collaboration with others offers the strongest opportunities for success.

We regularly make submissions on a range of issues relating to the needs of those we work with and support. Our pre-budget submission highlighted, for example, issues affecting the lives of our clients and measures needed to support older people to remain living at home. In this regard we participate on the following forums to advance our advocacy objectives:

Collaboration

We participate in the following forums to advocate at local/regional/national policy levels:

HOMELESS SERVICES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Homeless Services

- National Homelessness Consultative Committee
- Galway City Homeless Forum
- Voluntary Homeless Services Galway
- Aftercare Steering Committee Galway (Tusla)
- National Quality Standards Advisory Group

Domestic Violence

- Safe Ireland
- Children's Consultative Committee (Tusla)
- Children and Young People's Services Committee - (CYPSC)

Older People's Services

- Galway Age Friendly Alliance & Implementation Group

General

- Galway City Community Network including its Housing Linkage group
- Community Knowledge Initiative (NUIG)

Client Participation

We are very committed to involving our clients in our work in as many ways as possible here at COPE Galway. There are two equally important reasons:

Because we know that it will help us to meet their needs better, and

Because it will help clients to feel better about themselves, which will improve their quality of life (in a home of their own).

Being involved gives clients the chance to take part, to use their own ideas talents and skills to make our services better, to meet other people, have fun, feel valued, and build self-confidence.



2016 was full of activity:

We produced a policy on Client Involvement and conducted a series of consultations across the services with 16 clients attending.

Other great things happening across our services included:

Card games Sunday breakfasts Art
 Pool and darts competitions Paintballing Movie nights Soccer tournaments
 Mindfulness colouring
 Riddle of the day
 Barbeques
 Yoga Furniture upcycling
 Music and singing sessions Gardening
 Golf Beauty evenings Cinema tickets Fishing
 Bingo Life coaching
 Mindfulness and much more! Acupuncture
 Trips to adventure centres



Residents' meetings take part in our accommodation services and these are a good way to get feedback and suggestions about how to improve our services and incorporate clients' suggestions. We also look for ways to consult with clients and during 2016 this resulted in –

- Redecorating in the Fairgreen Hostel
- A new organisational drugs policy
- A client well-being day
- The review of COPE Galway's Strategy (March 30, 2016 attended by 16 clients)

There were also other opportunities for clients such as participating in a "taking control" workshop (approx. 10 clients attended), literacy skills, children's support group, participation in a pilot project on children's play in our refuge and CV clinics and our day centre is involved in producing a clients' stories booklet.

We offer some volunteering opportunities for clients in our COPE Galway Charity Shop and our Community Catering service. These slots are always popular and can be very beneficial in preparing for the world of work and in building self-confidence.

Voice Forum 2016

- Ronnie McLaughlin represented the forum at the Client Participation meetings throughout the year
- Continued to work on a "moving on" booklet.
- Attended regular social events, coffee morning, lunch and afternoon concerts.
- Organised a walking group.
- Attended training opportunities that arose.

SURF Forum Key Achievements 2016

In 2016, these forum members supported the research projects undertaken by Waterside House and NUI Galway students and contributed to service activities with regard to providing information on parenting and service development for children. They also:

- Celebrated International Women's day - In March a large group of women attended a get-together at the G Hotel with staff from our domestic violence services (pictured). This annual celebration is always a very enjoyable event.



- Attended a Healing Day - Organised in conjunction with SCCUL in the new Sanctuary in Clarinbridge. 8 women attended. A second Healing Day was planned for March 2017 in conjunction with International Women's Day.

SURF Forum speaking on domestic violence services as part of our strategy review in 2016:

"They believe me, they get it, it's powerful, they make the impossible possible, I feel good, they make me smile, it's a healing for me, they give you courage and strength, they restore your self-belief, your self-confidence, it's like a big family, we find friends, Waterside changed my life, there's nothing more they can do, I just wish they could help more people".



- Were involved in research on Parenting in the context of domestic violence – challenges for mothers and implications for practice launched on September 30th, 2016 by Sarah Melvin of NUI Galway.
- Worked with Deirdre Nalty to develop her research on the Healthy Relationships programme for schools which is run by staff from our child care unit. Deirdre presented her results to the forum in December. (See our section on domestic violence for more)
- Consulted for our dating abuse workshop for 2nd level students and involved in research on dating abuse with NUI Galway
- Produced piece for transitioning ceremony in new refuge building
- Two SURF participants took part in a Tusla national consultative panel for Service User Participation on October 18th
- Prepared a Parenting booklet with Elaine Cosgrove.

VOICE of COPE Galway speaking on services for Homeless as part of our strategy review in 2016:

"We worry about the ongoing housing crisis, the system is overloaded, there is no ability to move on. Where we go from here. Life is passing us by, we feel like we are stuck in a rut, a vicious circle. COPE do a good job, it's not their fault".

Fundraising For COPE Galway

Thank You

We would like to thank the people of Galway for your amazing generosity in 2016.

Every contribution from individual donors, groups, schools, colleges or businesses made a real and positive difference in the lives of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Your support has enabled us to provide our range of services, to provide hope and encouragement, and to shine a light on the lives of men, women and children who are experiencing difficulties, so that the issues and challenges they face can be addressed and overcome.

For your support whether small or large, **we thank you.**

Highlights of 2016

Regular Donors

Over 200 new regular donors joined the COPE Galway Tribe as a result of our recruitment campaign during the summer, taking the total number of regular donors to over 700.

These regular donations are essential, providing us with a stable income and allowing us to plan our work efficiently.

Mail appeals continued in 2016 with almost €27,500 raised through direct mail appeals and Galway COPE Connections newsletter mailing.

COPE Galway Events

Business Sleep Out

The 5th Annual COPE Galway Business Sleep Out took place on a dry but frosty night 2nd December 2016. 32 business leaders took part and together with all the people who supported them, they raised over €140,000 – an amazing result. The funds raised support our homeless services in a variety of ways, one of which is kitting out newly acquired houses for use by people who can now move out of emergency accommodation.

Christmas Day Swim

Despite the gale-force winds and heavy showers on Christmas morning we were once again “blown away” by the support from the Galway community who came to take the plunge in the wild Salthill waters. We are happy to say that the total amount raised between registrations, bucket collections and fundraising was €24,238. The funds will be used across all COPE Galway’s services.

Corporate Fundraising

We would like to thank all the businesses who supported our work in 2016. Businesses were particularly supportive at Christmas time by organising fundraising events, donating to COPE Galway in lieu of the usual Christmas cards and gifts, giving food, clothes and gift vouchers, and providing space to sort and redistribute our Christmas donations. We were delighted to have the ongoing support from companies such as Nelipak and Thermo King, and to be charity of the year for French Vanoli who organised events throughout the year and raised a total of €1,785.



COPE Galway
Business Sleepout Participants 2016

COPE Galway *Let's Help Together*

The Supervalu staff in Clifden took part in a Sleep Out on the night of the 2nd December and raised €1,740 towards our homeless services. Thanks to all the staff!

Church Collections

The Annual Church Plate collection raised an amazing €23,165. Church Gate collections raised €5,000. Thanks to the parish priests, the congregations of the various churches and all the volunteers who coordinated the collections in their local churches. Special thanks also to the Diocesan office and the support of the Bishop.

Community Fundraising

In June the Marine Institute Singers raised €2,695 in the Augustinian church with the SSE Airs for the Midsummer Melodies. Thanks to all the singers for organising the events and lending their beautiful voices to the cause.

Good weather and a great team of volunteers led to our Annual Flag Day raising €1,691 on the 25th June.

The Salthill UBfitters (pictured) held a summer coffee morning and managed to raise a total of €1,052 - a great result!



All summer we had bucket collections and bag packing events in supermarkets across the city and raised a total of €7,066. Thanks to all the supermarkets who allowed us to collect and to all the volunteers for donating their time and effort. And a big thanks to all the members of the public who donated!

Our Superheroes took on a great challenge in 2016 by going to the Loughcrew Adventure Centre in July for Tough Mudder, taking on the Streets of Galway 8k race in August and also their own races across the County. The summer challenges raised a total of €4,460.



Pictures above and below:
Streets of Galway Participants 2016



Our volunteer kitchen assistant, Emanuele Ferri (pictured below), took on 3 challenges this summer, the *Connemarathon*, the *Tour De Connemara* and climbing of Croagh Patrick, raising a total of €524 for our services. Thanks Emanuele!



Our **€1 more** initiative took place for the first time during Positive Ageing Week in restaurants and hotels around Galway and raised a total of €1,858 towards our Meals on Wheels service. Thanks to all the outlets involved in the initiative.

Evan O'Ceallaigh a young chef on the rise organised a very successful pop up dinner in Sebastian Taylor's Café Temple in October raising €910 for our Meals on Wheels. Thanks Evan and Sebastian for your support.



Thanks also to Mary Monaghan, ARM Ireland Ltd, who raised €2,600 to fund a new cooker for our services at Community Catering.

We were delighted to be part of the Local Food and Crafts Fair in November and to organise the raffle at the door, raising a total of €2,068. Thanks to the Local Enterprise Office for choosing COPE Galway as their partnering charity and to the support of the local producers, who offered raffle prizes.

The Galway International Arts Festival donated tickets for various concerts to us, as they do every year. We sold 100 tickets in 2016, raising €2,830.

Once again the Annual Christmas Toy Run (pictured below) was a great success with €4,700 raised towards our services. Thanks to all the motorcyclist members of Tribes Motor Cycle Club.



On St Stephen's day, James O'Toole's soccer crew (pictured below) gathered for the annual Mark Reilly Memorial Soccer tournament under a beautiful sun and raised over €1,000 for our services. Thanks to James O'Toole and all the team members who took part in the tournament.



Schools and Colleges

Galway City and County primary and secondary schools, GMIT and NUI Galway were very generous again this year. Thanks to all the students and teachers involved in raising funds for COPE Galway's services. It was a privilege for our Community Fundraiser to go and visit schools to share with the students issues that COPE Galway works on.

A sample of their great initiatives:

Thanks to the students of Presentation College in Tuam (pictured below) for organising a film screening and raising €417 in aid of our homeless services.



Thanks to the 6th Class students and the teacher in Killeeneen National School for organising Christmas Carols in the Eyre Square Shopping Centre in December and raising €965.

A huge thanks to all the students, parents and teachers of Scoil Iognáid (pictured below) who organised a bag packing fundraising initiative at Tesco supermarket last December and raised €5,288. Go raibh míle maith agaibh.



Thanks to the GMIT Students Union (pictured below) for organising a food collection in December and raising €650 for our homeless services.



Barry O'Sullivan's House Donation

And finally, a new "Home from Home" campaign raised €273,000 from the sale of the first home at an auction in December. Thank you to Barry O'Sullivan and family for donating the proceeds of this home to COPE Galway and Focus Ireland. This really generous gesture will turn into more homes for homeless families in Galway.



David's Story

David Cunningham is a student at Coláiste Iognáid in Galway City. On the night of 22nd December 2016, he and his classmates stayed out in the rain and cold for their annual Sleep Out. They raised a fantastic total of €3,735 for COPE Galway's services. David wrote to us of his experience and kindly gave permission to reproduce it here:

"Honestly, the weather was miserable. There's no sugar-coating the fact that it rained non-stop for, what seemed to most of us, at least two days. "Surely it couldn't only have been twelve hours", we thought quietly to ourselves as we treaded water in the car park. I was ill-equipped with rain gear and only realised about half way through the night that I'd forgotten my swimming togs and was left pondering my missed opportunity for a midnight swim in front of the beautiful St. Nicholas Church in the moonlight for the proceeding hours.

However, the night was a shared experience. In a way, my suffering was blunted slightly by wonderful company in the form of my fellow students, friends and hardy but devoted teachers. The night would've been, dare I say it?, 'pleasant', had it not been for the opening of the heavens, minus the chorus of angels of course. We passed the night singing and chatting with interludes of the most generous gift of Supermac's chips by teachers and the unexpected arrival of a bag of sandwiches by charitable strangers.

This company was most appreciated but at the same time brought to me the realisation that this was what made homelessness such a difficult situation to find one's self in. Simply put, the homeless don't have this. Living and sleeping rough is incredibly solitary; it's lonely. I don't believe one can ever truly appreciate that fact until one

doesn't have the assurance of returning home to warm beds, welcoming arms and the comfort that we were temporarily deprived of. We were blessed to be given the chance to peer into the very real and scary struggles that these individuals suffer through every night, without the fear that this would be our life for any amount of time.

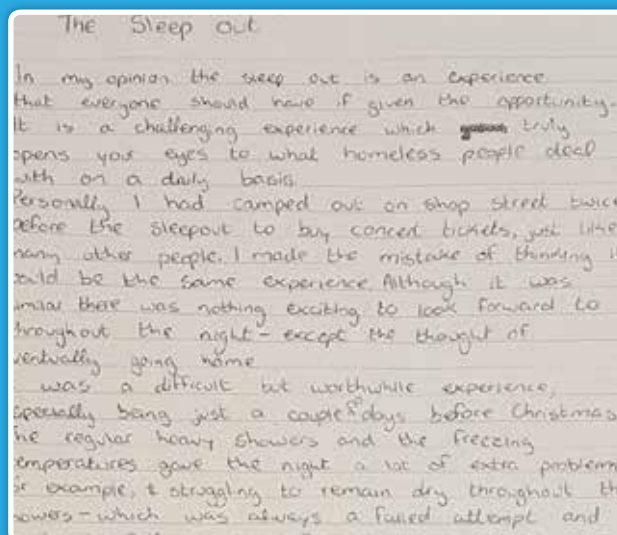
The Sleep Out was an education. It was a start. I learnt from it and I certainly hope to do more in the future for individuals that, more often than not - and through no fault of their own - find themselves in this position of vulnerability; to the elements, to people at night and day and to the struggles related to their situation. I don't think this experience would have been as poignant had the weather been mild and blessed with clear starry skies. The fact that it was cold, miserable at times and uncomfortable only went to further the true representation of the daily and nightly ordeal of those we pass every day on the street and in shop doorways.

I've personally always thought, or at least hoped, that my interactions with those less fortunate was one of compassion rather than pity; kindness rather than guilty responsibility and understanding before making assumptions. Whatever my thoughts and intentions however, they were uneducated. I could of course sympathise but I was unable to fully empathize.

How could I? I had never slept under whatever sheet of paper I could drag under my chin and hope my body's natural reaction of shivering would be enough to keep me warm throughout the night.

Small deeds done are always better than great deeds planned". What the COPE Sleepout offered me was a sense of scale, to put some things in perspective. It offered me a sense of what people experiencing homelessness in my community and city go through on a regular basis, at least in a tiny part. I feel I've gained a more honest feeling of empathy, sympathy and, perhaps more personally, a greater grasp on my own blessings which may have been taken for granted.

I hope to do the Sleep Out again next year and I would highly encourage others to do the same because it is only through coming together as a community that we can help those that have fallen on hard times. No one can ever know when they might find themselves in a similar position. Someone much wiser than me once said: "I always wondered why somebody didn't do something; then I realised: I was somebody.



We all have the power for change; all it takes is for us to start."

COPE Galway wishes to thank all the students of Coláiste Iognáid for taking on the big challenge of staying out in the rain and cold on the 22nd December for their annual Sleep Out.

Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising

COPE Galway is fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

The Statement exists to:

- Improve fundraising practice
- Promote high levels of accountability and transparency by organisations fundraising from the public
- Provide clarity and assurances to donors and prospective donors about the organisations they support

COPE Galway has considered the statement and believe we meet the standards it sets out

We welcome your feedback on our performance via any of the contact points provided at the end of this report.

Further information is provided on our website www.copegalway.ie

TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK
IN ANY WAY WE SAY **THANK YOU** SO VERY MUCH



COPE Galway Charity Shop

Our charity shop on Saint Augustine Street is another source of revenue for our services. The COPE Galway Charity Shop is run by a paid manager and a team of around twenty volunteers who kindly donate their time and effort. Some people who work at the shop were on TÚS or CE schemes in 2016.

The shop sells donated ladies', men's and children's clothes, accessories and jewellery, books, CDs/DVDs and small bric-a-brac.

2016 was another year of good trading for the shop with increased profits.



Throughout the year, our *COPE Galway Charity Shop* Facebook page kept followers up to date with selected items offered for sale (pictured above).

Some of the shop's many volunteers, on whom we rely greatly, have been with us since we opened in 2013. In May, we were able to recognise the invaluable work they do at our Volunteer Recognition event in Salthill (pictured right).

Lots of unwanted gifts were donated to the shop before Christmas and we held them until the appropriate season to be successfully sold anew.



Volunteer Recognition Event in Salthill

Some of the volunteers went on the bus tour of COPE Galway's services and found out more about how they've contributed to the work we do. During National Volunteers Week the shop's youngest volunteer, Anna, spoke on Galway Bay FM Radio to talk about her volunteering experience in the shop.

The Irish Charity Shops Association held a national event in the summer. Mary Hunt from the shop, pictured here with shop manager Allison Currah, was nominated as Volunteer of the Year and she was awarded runner up!



The donated diamond ring raised over €800

Without an advertising budget, the shop relies on stories and pictures appearing in the local press and is grateful for the publicity. In 2016 the shop was given a diamond ring as a donation. Local papers ran an article about it for Valentine's day, creating a lot of interest and the ring raised over €800 from its sale so thanks to all involved!



Mary Hunt awarded runner up for Volunteer of the Year



Race Day has become an annual marketing event for the Charity Shop. In 2016, volunteer models helped publicise outfits, including hats that were for sale in the shop.



In the summer the shop held a Pop Up shop at NUI Galway

THE MANAGER WOULD LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK ALL DONORS, CUSTOMERS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT



Financial Statement

Income & Expenditure Account for year ended 31st December 2016

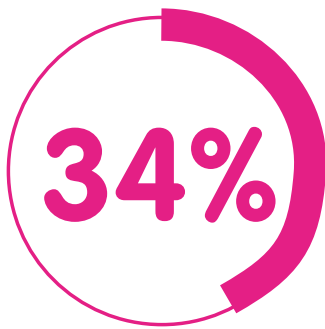
Financial Information

Income	2016		2015
HSE	1,546,032	34%	1,556,032
GCC	925,485	20%	805,166
Tusla	795,767	18%	772,489
Fundraising/Donations	705,763	15%	554,335
Service charges	473,776	10%	450,555
Grants and Other Income	<u>123,777</u>	3%	<u>118,909</u>
	4,570,600		4,257,486
Refuge	<u>8,233</u>		<u>600,000</u>
	<u>4,578,833</u>		<u>4,857,486</u>
Expenditure			
Homeless	2,196,490	50%	2,114,634
Domestic Violence	888,922	20%	867,448
Older People	607,150	14%	590,880
Fundraising	267,946	6%	297,341
Administration	<u>442,595</u>	10%	<u>398,146</u>
	4,403,103		4,268,449
Depreciation	<u>43,086</u>		<u>42,989</u>
	<u>4,446,189</u>		<u>4,311,438</u>

COPE Galway adopted SORP 2014 from 1st January 2015.

Full statutory accounts are available at www.copegalway.ie/about/publications/annual-reports

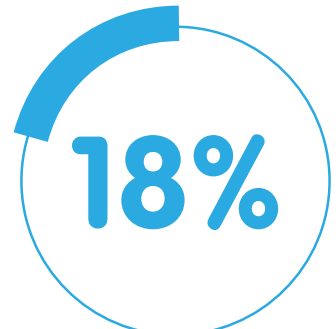
Where our money comes from



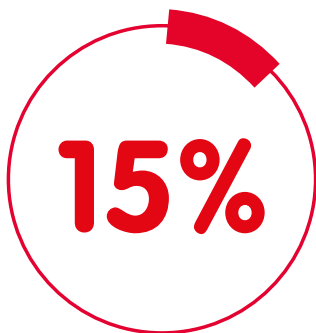
HSE



Galway City Council



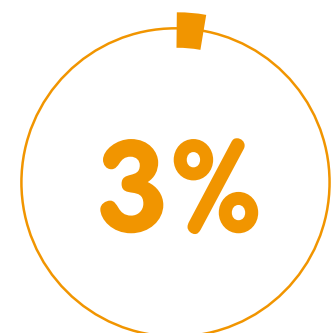
Tusla



Fundraising & Donations



Service Charges



Grants and Other Income

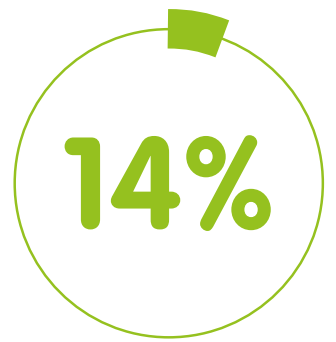
How our money is spent



Homeless



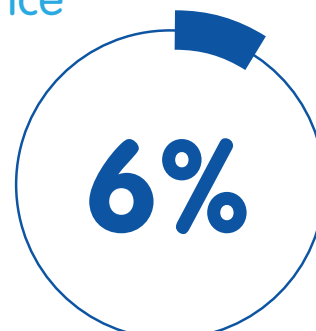
Domestic Violence



Older People



Administration



Fundraising

Organisational Structure

COPE Galway is a private company limited by guarantee. A Board of Trustees manages the Organisation, with operational responsibility delegated to the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of the organisation.

During 2016, the following persons held the various seats on the Board of Directors:

John Concannon (Chair)	Ireland 2016
Fr Martin Whelan	Diocesan Representative
Andrew Murphy	General Practice
Hannah Kiely	Governance Representative
Dr Martina Kelly	Health & Safety Representative
Peter Glavey	Staff Representative
Paudie Cunningham	Staff Representative (replacement)
Paul Dilger	Marketing & Communications Representative
Sean Silke	HR Representative
John Royston	Business Representative
Cait Noone	Educational Representative
Karen Kilduff	Services Representative
Ronan McLoughlin	Services Representative
Deirdre Squires	Older Persons Representative

The Board of Management of COPE Galway held 6 board meetings during 2016, with 74% attendance overall.

Six sub-committees of the board continued to operate in 2016 to support the delivery of our strategy. Various members of the board sit on these sub-committees, who met as follows:

Delivering Outcomes	5 meetings
Developing our Organisation	6 meetings
Advocating for Change	6 meetings
Developing Revenue	5 meetings
Property Sub-committee	Met regularly throughout the year
Audit Committee	3 meetings

The work of the Audit Committee involved a review of the effectiveness of the organisation's internal financial control and procedures, oversight of the external audit process from planning to completion and recommendation of the financial statements to the board for approval. COPE Galway also maintains a risk register.

During 2016 COPE Galway continued to comply with the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable sector in Ireland.



We also complied with the Housing Agency Regulation office.

One board member, Peter Glavey, who was the staff representative on the board, resigned in 2016. Many thanks to Peter who has given very generously of his time and expertise over the past 3 years. He is replaced by another staff representative – Paudie Cunningham.



Deirdre Squires also joined the board in November 2016 to represent the interests of our Older People's Services.



Deirdre Squires



Paudie Cunningham

I would like to thank all members of the Board of Management who progressed the interests of COPE Galway during 2016. The board are volunteers who give of their time and expertise freely to help COPE Galway to set out and achieve our mission.




In Conclusion



Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report. As you can see our work covers many areas and addresses very significant challenges facing our community.

We receive enormous support for our work from so many people both individually and as part of a company, group, funder, network or community organisation, or maybe even as a participant. You have answered our call to “let’s help together” and by doing so you are a vital part of COPE Galway and our vision of “Improved quality of life in a home of your own”. I hope you can see how your help has contributed and how you have been part of so many people’s stories.

Unfortunately there are still very many challenges facing those who seek our help and I know your continued support will enable us to maintain our services and to advocate strongly on behalf of our community.

On behalf of our clients, I would like to thank everyone who is part of COPE Galway - our staff, volunteers, supporters, funders and friends.

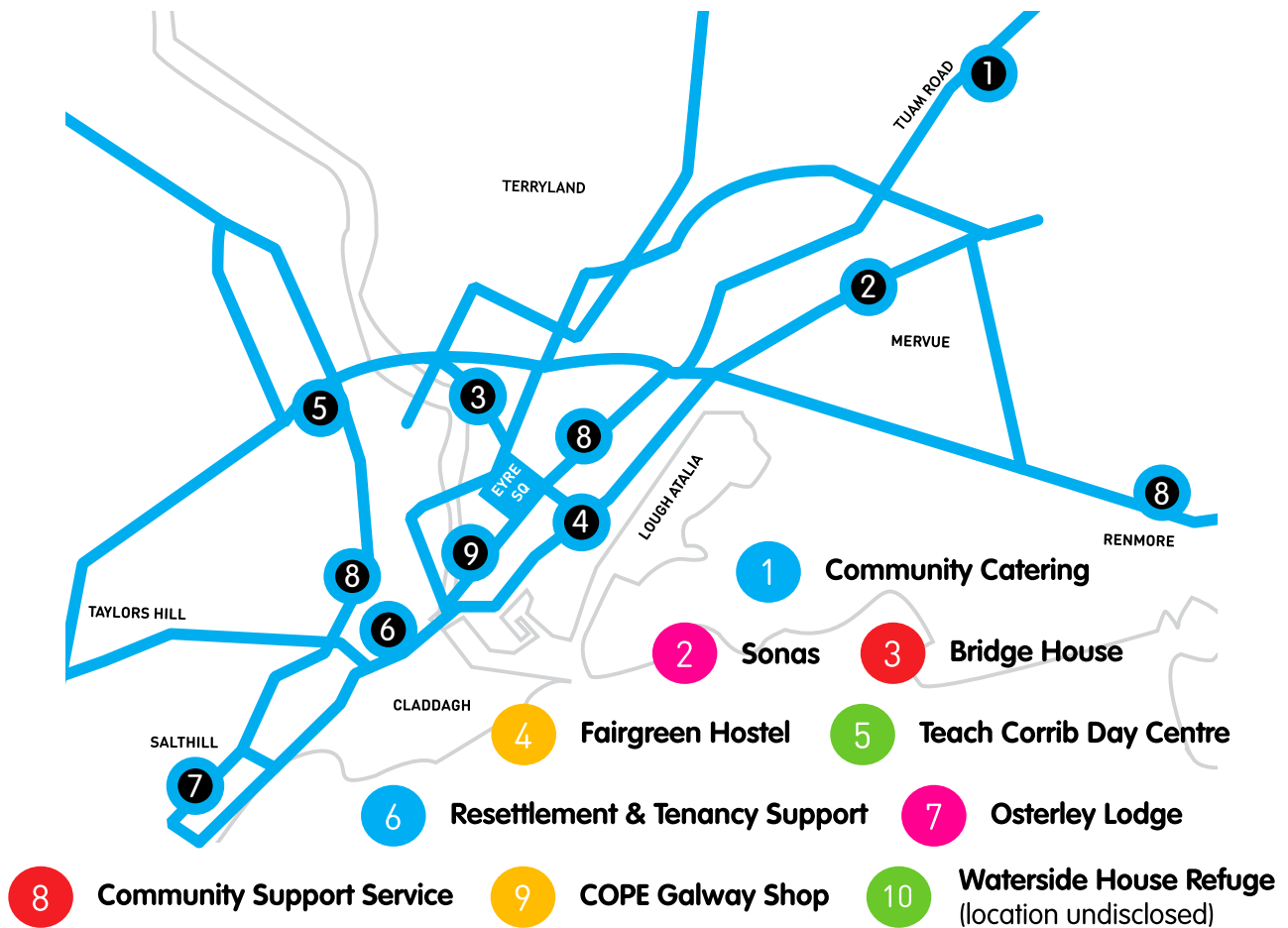
I would also like to thanks Colette who was the main person behind the production of this annual report.

Thanks to all,

Jacquie Horan
CEO, COPE Galway



COPE Galway's Services



COPE Galway Service Centre Locations

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Community Catering. Location: Unit 5, Ballybane Industrial Estate. Contact: communitycatering@copegalway.ie Tel: 700 800</p> | <p>6 Resettlement & Tenancy Support Services. Location: 12a Ruxton Court, Dominick Street (laneway beside Le Petit Rouge restaurant) Contact: scolsh@copegalway.ie Tel: 087 738 8993</p> |
| <p>2 Sonas Day Centre. Location: 1-3 Walter Macken Flats, Mervue. Contact: sonas@copegalway.ie Tel: 091 753 402</p> | <p>7 Osterley Lodge. Location: 140 Lower Salthill (beside Morton's shop). Contact: Osterley@copegalway.ie Tel: 521 301</p> |
| <p>3 Bridge House. Location: Dyke Road, just past the bridge. Contact: bigoe@copegalway.ie Tel: 730 969</p> | <p>8 Community Support Service. Location: Unit 5, Ballybane Industrial Estate. Contact: njennings@copegalway.ie Tel: 086 023 7022 & ehough@copegalway.ie Tel: 085 876 7785</p> |
| <p>4 Fairgreen Hostel. Location: Fairgreen, beside train/bus station, behind Jigsaw. Contact: fairgreen@copegalway.ie Tel: 568 818</p> | <p>9 COPE Galway Shop. Location: St Augustine Street. Contact: acurragh@copegalway.ie Tel: 569 715</p> |
| <p>5 Teach Corrib Day Centre. Seamus Quirke Road. Location: adjacent to Enable Ireland (small white bungalow with green windows). Contact: daycentre@copegalway.ie Tel: 525 259</p> | <p>10 Waterside House Refuge. Location: undisclosed. Contact: waterside@copegalway.ie Tel: 565 985</p> |

COPE Galway Head Office. **Location:** 2-5 Calbro House, Tuam Road. **Contact:** info@copegalway.ie **Tel:** 778 750



Advocacy

We are an advocate & voice for social change across a wide range of issues at **individual/local/national service & policy levels**. Our advocacy included submissions & dialogue around:



Improved access to **housing & accommodation**

Home maintenance issues



Pre Budget submission



Access to benefits and entitlements

General Election – Older People’s Issues • Collaborative Research
City Development Plan • National Drugs Strategy

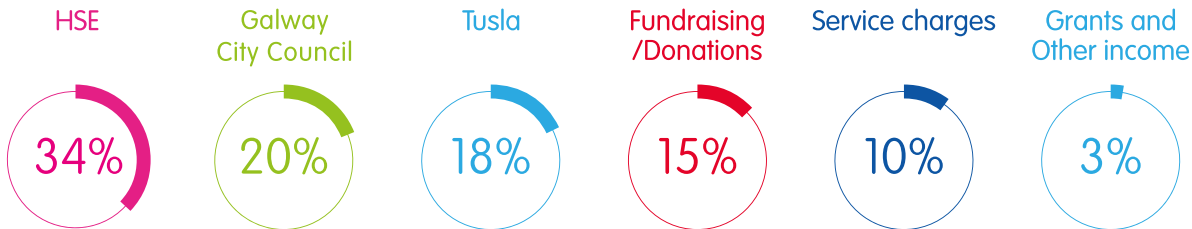
Collaboration

We participate in the following forums to advocate at local/regional/national policy levels:

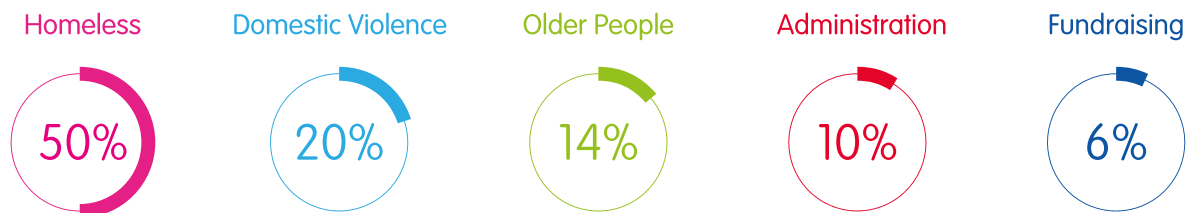


Finances

Where our money comes from



How our money is spent



To all our supporters, your help allows good work happen to assist Galway’s most isolated and vulnerable men, women & children. Thank you.



Improved quality of life in a home of your own

For people affected by Homelessness

Women & Children experiencing Domestic Violence
and Older People

Local organisation providing local services

COPE Galway,
2-5 Calbro House,
Tuam Road, Galway
Tel: 091 778 750
www.copegalway.ie



COPE Galway

Let's help together

