



Don Bosco Care Annual Report 2018

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Introduction from the Chair of Don Bosco Care

2018 was the fortieth anniversary of Don Bosco Care providing safe and nurturing homes for young people whom through no fault of their own cannot live with their family. Since we opened our doors in January of 1978 there has not been a single day or night when a vulnerable young person has not slept safely and securely, knowing that there were truly valued in the care of our team. We hope we can continue to say this for the next 40 years.

The board would like to thank the staff for all their hard work during the year. The therapeutic care service they provide to the young people in our care is unrivalled, and the significantly improved outcomes they can influence and generate for our young people are very impressive. As a society we should all be helping these troubled young people but in reality it falls on the shoulders of our staff to show there is a better way and that society has not forgotten about them. The board is fully supportive of the work of each staff member and would again like to thank them for their work.

Despite an extremely challenging year for DBC, 2018 saw some significant successes and expansion in the services we are able to offer young people. With support from our partners we were able to purchase three new apartments for young people leaving care service - and perhaps facing homelessness - thus giving them the safety and security of a home for the foreseeable future. The board would like to thank Tusla, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and Meath County Council for their financial support under the CAS Scheme to make this possible. We are hopeful of continuing to participate in this initiative if we can secure a more sustainable funding model.

The board continued with its strategic plan to invest in fundraising in 2018 in an effort to reduce its 100% reliance on state funding. This is a long term strategy which is exposed to changes in the economy and the board continually reviews the strategic options around fundraising. To date the number of donors who generously give to Don Bosco Care has grown to almost 4,000 since the plan was implemented. The board would like to thank all those who contributed to our cause in 2018.

Unfortunately following extensive discussions with state funders we were unable to secure funding for the CEO position and Brian Hogan returned to Oberstown following the completion of his five year secondment. The board would like to thank Brian for his service and wish him well for the future. Currently DBC is operating without a CEO with members of the senior management team taking care of day to day operations. The board would like to thank them for their commitment and professionalism.



Tony McPoland
Chairperson

Residential & Aftercare Services

Occupancy

Demand from TUSLA for Don Bosco Care's services remains extremely high. At all times during 2018 we had a number of young people on a list awaiting assessment and placement in our houses. The occupancy levels in our residential services remains above 85% of the available beds throughout the year and our aftercare houses maintain an average of over 75% occupancy of available beds. We are not always able to run a house at full capacity as we must allow time for young people to settle in one at a time and there is also a transition period between one young person leaving and another moving into their room to allow others in the house to adjust. We continue to struggle to find housing for young people who are ready to leave our care which is why we have been so willing to participate in the programme to provide 'forever homes' for those leaving care. We hope this programme continues to grow and allows greater movement of young people out of the care system.

Our Outreach Aftercare service continues to be operating at full capacity providing support to young people leaving care and moving towards independent living.

Outcomes

At Don Bosco Care our staff work with some of the most at risk and troubled young people in Ireland. Many of the children and young adults who come under our care have experienced extreme trauma and hurt at an early age and this pain can manifest itself in many ways. Some of our young people can be withdrawn, agitated, quick tempered, easily led or a combination of these and many other behavioural characteristics. They are placed in our care because they are at risk. Our role is to help reduce this risk in the short term and to give them the tools to manage risks in the future. Successful outcomes are different for every young person who comes into our care. Some will go on to university and achieve outstanding academic and professional success. Some will break the cycle of violence in their family and raise their own children in safe, secure, loving homes. Some will battle the risks of addiction for many years and finally free themselves. We are proud of them all.

Let us share with you a short story from a recent newsletter:

Chris came to Don Bosco when he was just 12. He had suffered physical abuse at home and never felt safe. Chris, who wasn't safe or happy at home, found stability and security and a loving family at Don Bosco Care. He fondly remembers swimming in Finglas and going on holiday to Spanish Point in Clare. These are simple things we might take for granted, but which young Chris certainly wouldn't have experienced if it hadn't been for Don Bosco. Chris came back to Don Bosco recently to talk to the boys about his experiences, because he wanted to give something back to the next generation. Now a successful IT professional, Chris was kind enough to tell the boys that he wouldn't be where he is today without Don Bosco. He also kindly donated a couple of laptops to young care leavers to help with their studies.

We also had a very special guest write out Christmas appeal:

It's Santa here.

No, really, it is – I'm proud to say I've been Santa for the last eight years. This will be my ninth. Okay, so I'm not the Santa you see on cards. I don't live at the North Pole. And I don't

travel the world on Christmas Eve. In fact, I live a lot closer to you, but I won't tell you exactly where or my real name. All I'll say is I don't work for Don Bosco Care. I'm a volunteer Santa and each year I visit only one group of children – the boys at the Don Bosco house. I do it because I believe as a community we need to care for these kids, and I keep it a secret because I don't want to spoil the magic for them. They need a little magic in their lives.

We were also delighted to secure 'forever homes' for three young care leavers during the year. Many care leavers struggle to find safe and secure homes due to a variety of reasons. We have been excited to partner with Dublin City Council, Meath County Council and TUSLA over the last year in order to secure two apartments which can become permanent homes for two fantastic young care leavers. We are hopeful that this programme will continue to grow and we can secure 'forever homes' for many more care leavers.



Photo L-R Eithne Rathcliffe Aftercare Worker, Ogo Mutto, Bronagh McKenna Principal Social Worker Fostering and Aftercare, Jacqueline Bourke After Manager, Val Collier Founder Don Bosco Care

Fundraising & Communications in 2018

As you know, Don Bosco Care relies to a huge extent on state funding which we are very grateful for. Our strategy has been to invest in fundraising to develop a core group of supporters who can provide funds for the organisation to grow, to support the young people in our care and in the long term to reduce our reliance on state funding.

In September of 2018 we undertook a large investment in donor acquisition and added 1,200 new donors to Don Bosco Care which brings our number of regular supporters to 4,000. We are hugely grateful for all your support.

Christmas 2018 was our most successful appeal ever for Don Bosco Care. Over the Christmas period we received 1100+ donations with a value of over €60,000. On top of that we received many generous donations of food and clothes that we distributed among young people in aftercare who may not have much to look forward to at Christmas. These small but heartfelt gifts make a huge difference to those in difficulty

Governance of Don Bosco Care

Don Bosco Care is governed by a voluntary board of directors and managed on a day to day basis by the Senior Management Team. We have a number of sub committees, who report into and make recommendations to the board of directors: Finance, Audit & Risk, Governance and Property.

We are committed to being fully compliant with the Governance Codes for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations, the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and SORP financial reporting standards - our governance committee continues to work to ensure we reach this goal. We are fully compliant with the Voluntary Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies.

Board of Directors December 2018

Tony Mc Poland, Chairman

Patrick Hennessy

Michael Casey

Mike McGuire

Terry Dignan

Nichola Costello

Leadership Team

Martin Burke Director of Services

Breda Keogh CFO

Kevin Delaney Head of Fundraising & Communications

