



## **Head of Windmill Annual report 2021**

This year has been a challenging year, the greatest challenge being adapting to the demands of providing service / support within the Covid environment. While it has been a hugely challenging year there have been positive learnings, progress and gains made in several areas.

### **Level of Service:**

Covid forced the reduction of level of service being provided nationally. Windmill throughout worked to bring and maintain service at the highest level possible, risk assessing every step of the way ensuring the safety of all. Pre-Christmas Windmill was providing level of service at 75%, the new year Covid situation caused us to return to providing only critical supports.

The Board at that time made the decision not to collect Service charge for two months.

Since that time, we have been working to increase level of service, risk assessing every step we determined that the provision of space and transportation and staffing were our greatest challenges in increasing level of service.

Windmill worked hard to overcome these challenges. Windmill is currently offering full level of Service to all.

With the inclusion of 2021 school leavers there are 54 people currently recorded as attending Windmill. The whole-time equivalent number is just under 50.

### **New Service Location**

Following a search for premises that fit New Direction Criteria and our needs, we secured 86 Main Street. HSE agreed the Windmill business case, committing funding for the 10 year lease.

As part of the School leaver allocation HSE made €10,000 refurbishment fit out grant available to us. We are grateful to persons who made donation of suitable furniture to the service, in particular Maria who donated leather couches and other items.

This premises has been a critical factor in allowing us to return to offering full level of service. It has allowed us to provide safe social distancing. It has allowed us to respond appropriately to the evident increasing needs of some. It has allowed us to offer service to School leavers.

### **Transportation Service:**

Covid restriction regarding transportation resulted in huge changes and adaption in the provision of transportation. for eg a 16 seater reduced in capacity to 3 / 4 passengers.

In early 2021 Windmill purchased 2 new VW Caddy vehicles, these funded by a replacement of Old Bus grant provided by HSE.

Windmill's most recent review of the transportation service was prompted by the increase to 75% capacity. Through careful and detailed planning new routes have been introduced. We now offer transportation to all who seek it, including some people to whom we formally we were unable to offer transportation service.

This level of transportation has required the use of all Windmill vehicles, the 2 buses and the 4 cars.

With the announcement of public transport to returning to full capacity, we anticipate that this too will be extended to transportation provided by ourselves.

### **Independent Living supports Projects.**

The challenging environment created by the Covid crisis impacted upon Windmill's capacity to provide and maintain level of independent living supports being provided pre Covid. Windmill have now returned to providing the level of Independent Living Supports provided pre Covid. Working hard to respond to arising, increased or critical independent living support needs the level of support provide has increased in some cases.

Further development in Windmill Independent Living Projects Include:

- A generous donation of three one-bedroom apartments: Windmill is currently exploring the best approach to meet needs in the development of this project.
- Windmill in cooperation with Local HSE office have worked to address the transitioning and ongoing support needs of people now accessing Co Council Housing.

### **Staffing**

Windmill's greatest resource in this challenging year has been Windmill Staff Team.

Together the management team and Staff members, no matter what their role or position, have faced and overcome unprecedented demands.

The capacity and willingness of the staff team to adapt and respond to the increased challenges has been the most critical factor in the safe provision of supports /Service

Windmill's Management and staff team have been tasked with the planning and delivery of safe supports, and the development of Service, whilst managing the Covid risk. This they have successfully done against a background of often unclear guidance.

This has involved the Management and Staff Team working together to engage in a coordinated risk management process. It has required that each step, each individual support, be continually risk assessed. The Management team developed and constantly reviewed policy in order to keep abreast of the ever-changing Covid world. The staff team have in turn adopted and implemented policy working to ensure a safe environment for all.

These efforts, while they have been onerous and stressful have been successful in their aim. Windmill has, to date, avoided an outbreak of Covid within the service.

The risks associated with Covid have been the overriding risk / issue of concern in the previous year. Covid has required that risk management include some very restrictive controls and has demanded a change in our approach.

Previous to Covid a Positive risk-taking approach was a strong element of Windmill's culture. We risk assessed with the aim of enabling participation.

The risks associated with Covid has caused the country to employ onerous controls aimed at preventing the transmission of Covid. Protecting by limitation and restriction has been the main concern of society and an approach which Services had no other option but to employ.

I fear that this approach has brought about a regression in social inclusion and the enabling model of service provision.

Windmill's greatest challenge now, as the country reopens, is to find and return to the correct balance between protection and enabling. Working together to ensure the completion of our mission: to empower the people we support, by providing a service which enhances their lives through responsive, proactive, and collaborative approach to meeting their needs, wishes and choices.

## **Conclusion**

This year has, as I have stated several times, been a hugely challenging year. Yet it has been a hugely successful year in many ways.

Windmill's management team has grown and developed into a cohesive, supportive, and effective team. I extend my great appreciation and acknowledgement of their additional time and effort given, way beyond the call of duty, which has ensured the successful management of our service.

Thank you to the Staff team for their responsive approach and the individual efforts made in adapting to the demands and needs in providing support to those who access the service.

To the Board members I extend my thanks. It has been a great support to know that Windmill and I have a strong and skilled Board behind us. Thank you, each member of the Board, for taking on the responsibility of serving on Windmill board, thank you for the sometime demanding work which this has required. Thank you to Maria, the Chairperson for always responding and making herself available for consultation and for the hours of work expelled working for Windmill.