

Item: no. 3

Update on the Abigail Centre – Eddie Matthews, On Site Specialist Manager

The following is a report in respect of services for homeless women on the Abigail Campus since the update provided to the last meeting of the NWA, JPC in March 2017.

The Steering Group meeting overseeing and reviewing the services on the campus has not yet recommenced since the meeting held in March 2016. The Steering group include representatives from DCC, WFTRA, Gardaí and Probation Services.

Issues

Both managers continued to address any individual issues, complaints or queries arising from members of the community in as timely fashion as possible.

Within the services themselves the number of clients remains on any given day between 30 and 35. This fluctuates depending on move on's, unsuccessful transfers and the well documented and unprecedented demand for homeless services in Dublin, particularly for women.

Since the last meeting the recording of incidents has been low however one incident in particular was distressing to the local community. The atmosphere in both services is still positive and the number of successful move on's to long term accommodation for client's remains ahead of the targets set out in the service level agreements despite the lack of housing options generally.

While most issues that arose were managed in-house within the confines of both services the following are brief outlines of issues brought to management's attention, in order of occurrence.

When the Gardaí had to be called, they were very supportive and speedy in their response to ensure that there was no overspill into the local community.

- A client had a verbal exchange outside a local shop and was then witnessed in an apparent chaotic state walking back to the centre. Management interacted quickly with the shop owner. The client who just had just suffered a significant bereavement was transferred to another service.
- A woman was witnessed apparently using an illegal substance on the street. Staff investigated and found an empty box (benzodiazepine). The client admitted taking these tablets and was referred back to Dochas as she had breached the terms of her temporary release and the good neighbour policy.
- An ex client was witnessed by management begging outside a local shop. Management ensured the woman left the Finglas area.
- A client was reported as stealing goods from a local shop. It was verified that there were two women involved and one had been a client of the centre. The woman will not be readmitted.
- I, together with a DCC official, met with a local neighbour regarding cans and rubbish been thrown in her garden. We agreed to follow up such incidents as soon as they were brought to our attention.
- The local DCC office arranged for a contractor to cut back trees which were overhanging into neighbours gardens and blocking light.

- A local neighbour reported that a couple had engaged in an alleged lewd act close to the centre late one afternoon. Staff from the centre went out, and when the woman was identified they brought her back to the centre. While staff did not witness any unlawful activity the local Gardaí were immediately notified of the complaint. I am aware that individuals have made complaints to the Gardaí regarding the same incident.

The woman in question was transferred from the centre later that evening. At the time of writing this report I understand the Gardaí are investigating this complaint and may ultimately prepare a file for the DPP. We will naturally fully engage with this process.

The progress which was outlined in the last update has been maintained and in addition:

- The garden project has been completed, landscaped and fully populated with plants.
- International Women's Day was jointly celebrated by staff and clients on the 8th of March.
- The local CDETB will be working with the local community and the clients to mount an arts exhibition in the centre in the coming weeks building on the positive take up of the yoga, mindfulness and CBT sessions. The large room in the centre (former church) will be fitted with rails to facilitate future/ongoing art exhibitions.
- A very talented client had pieces of art displayed as part of an area wide arts exhibition organised by Dublin City Council's Area Office. The work was very well received including offers to purchase some of the pieces.
- A dedicated room has been refurbished for use by FAST in providing reach work with clients on a one to one basis with regard to their individual issues.
- The National Travellers Network now has the use of a dedicated meeting/outreach base in the centre.
- While the CDETB closes for the summer months it has been decided to continue to organise the yoga and garden projects during this time.
- The Dublin North West Area Partnership has requested the use of the training kitchen in the centre during Finglas Positive Wellness week at the end of the summer.
- I'd like to acknowledge the significant input and assistance from management and staff from the local DCC area office with the Men's Shed and Travellers projects and with general maintenance and support issues.
- Three clients are engaged with the Voyagers Programme (6 months /Fetac 4) at the Fingal Centre while two other are enrolled with the BRIO programme in the SAOL Project.

Update on Kildonan Lands Project – Aidan Maher, Asst. Area Manager

Brady Shipman Martin (BSM) presented their draft report providing an overview of three potential options for the Kildonan site to the group chaired by Rita Burtenshaw, the Independent Facilitator, on the 4th May in the Finglas Office. The Group, which included representatives from WFTRA, unanimously favored option (c) for the following reasons:

- It maximises the use of the land for the provision of much needed homes.
- There are no large public buildings with unspecified uses.

The group also made a number of recommendations to the planners.

BSM subsequently presented their updated report to the May meeting of the North West Area Committee (NWAC). Councillors praised the work of the group which succeeded in bringing the process to this stage. Following NWAC approval we were able to commence a public consultation of the options during June.

Public consultation commenced on the 6th June. The draft masterplan was/is available to view at the following locations:

6 th June – 16 th June	Finglas Library, Finglas Village Centre, Jamestown Road. <i>Opening times:</i> Monday and Wednesday 1.00pm - 8.00pm Tuesday, Thursday to Saturday 10.00am - 5.00pm
19 th June – 23 rd June	WFTRA Community Centre, 52a Mellows Road, West Finglas <i>Opening times:</i> Monday to Friday 9.30am - 2.30pm
26 th June – 30 th June	North West Area Office, Finglas Civic Centre, Mellows Road <i>Opening Times:</i> Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm

Submissions can be made online at: www.consultation.dublincity.ie or at the above locations.

Brady Shipman Martin were in attendance at the WFTRA Community Centre on Tuesday, 20th June from 6.15pm - 7.45pm to respond to questions from the public.

Information leaflets were distributed from the 8th June to households in adjoining estates. Advertisements were also placed in the Northside People and The Local News.



Display in Finglas Library