

Item: no. 4

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 September 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 includes representatives from Novas, Tus Nua, DCC, WFTRA, Gardaí and the Probation Services.

Issues

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

Within the services themselves the number of clients currently stands at 36. 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 number of incidents has been negligible and no incident of any substance has been recorded. Examples of minor issues reported are detailed below. The atmosphere in both services is still very positive and every effort continues to be made to facilitate and support the clients to move to permanent long term housing in line with their individual social care plan.

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

Where the Gardai had to be called they were very supportive and speedy in their response to ensure that there was no overspill into the local community. I would like to thank the local DCC office for their support and for assisting in working with groups such as Pavee Point and the Mens Shed in utilising the campus. I would also like to acknowledge the role of the Probation staff and their Supervisors in the coordination of ongoing works on the campus.

- A client had a very personal and sensitive occurrence while walking on Kildonan Road. While portrayed as a community issue I am satisfied that this was not the case and that the issue was taken out of context.
- A client returning to the project was verbally abused by a group of youths and had objects thrown at her. She was very distressed on returning to the project.
- On one occasion a client did not pay her taxi fare. In keeping with the services policy the taxi driver was contacted and a reimbursement offered. The fare was then charged against the client.

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

- The CDET have deployed a new lead tutor to the Abigail Centre.
- The Yoga and Mindfulness classes have resumed and are well attended.
- Following the centres involvement in the Finglas Wellness fortnight, management have received enquiries from a number of community groups for the use of facilities on the campus. These are currently being considered.
- A member of staff and a client from the Abigail took an active part and spoke at the recent launch of the FAST addiction services strategy. The client spoke of the key roles both the Abigail and FAST service played in her ongoing recovery.

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

Brendan Kenny, Assistant Chief Executive, attended two meetings in October with the WFTRA Committee and public representatives in the Finglas Area Office to discuss the management of the existing services and the long term plans for the overall site. Brendan has confirmed that he will be writing in the first instance to the Community Representatives involved on the outcome of the meetings and that a copy will be circulated to Councillors for the area. The Executive Manager, Housing & Community Services, subsequently instructed City Architects to engage design consultants to deliver on the initial feasibility sketch proposals, Option C, in the Site Framework Study prepared by Brady Shipman Brady. An in-house Project Team is being formed to prepare a Brief for the engagement of the design consultants.

I note that Eddie Matthews will end his tenure as On-Site Specialist Manager at the end of this year. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Eddie for his commitment, reports and keeping the Area Office updated on issues arising. Brendan Kenny is expected to soon assign to the Area Office a Council employee as a Liaison Officer for the Abigail Centre: the assignee will report directly to me. This person will be the first responder to issues arising and communication channel for the local community.