

RELEASE



Annual Report 2018

Release Prison Partnership
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Letter from the CEO



So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

2018 was perhaps the most perplexing year in the history of Release, yet ended well with great signs of encouragement for the future. Change and growth are always challenging. This year we continued to develop partnerships with other churches and community organisations both here and in the UK as we seek new programmes to touch each part of criminal justice related environment; Including prisoners, families, communities, policymakers, and prison authorities.

In this annual review you will read of the many initiatives we deploy to ensure that the prisoners we connect with should not be without hope, yet many behind bars struggle to find it. Our experience is that the best outcomes are seen when we remain firmly committed to our mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus.

None of our achievements would be possible without the commitment of our volunteers some of whom give many days a week working alongside our 3 part-time staff team and college interns. This is only made possible with financial support from a number of charitable trusts and committed friends. We welcomed some new staff in 2018. Our new Programme Coordinator Fiona Daly in February, Paul Donoghue as Addiction Support Worker in March and Sara Itani as Intern in June.

Perhaps the most successful aspect of our work in 2018 was seeing former prisoners and recovering addicts helping others to find freedom and recovery whilst in prison and then supporting them in maintaining their recovery through living changed lives on the outside. It is such a blessing to see many of these men find employment and accommodation, recommence broken relationships, make new friends and give back to their communities. We are deeply indebted to Paul Donoghue and Ellis Rowland who manage the Release Addiction Recovery Course and to their team of volunteers.

2018 brought many challenges in relation to compliance with ever-changing governance legislation, GDPR, Safeguarding Children, etc. and we are thankful for the high quality and timely work delivered by Fiona Daly and Sara Itani, also for the external expertise we received. I'm proud to say that we are one of the most accountable charities in the low income sector.

As a Christian charity, working with people of any faith and none, we are grateful to God for his continuing provision and guidance and take this opportunity to thank all of the trusts, donors and prayer supporters who have made our work possible. Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank our directors and volunteers for their dedication to Release's work. It is exciting to see both our staff and volunteers go the 'extra mile' for our service users.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Curran'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Overview of Release Prison Partnership

Our History

Release commenced as an outreach from St. Catherine's church in Thomas St. in 1995. Its main focus was to provide a time of worship and bible study on Sunday mornings to a handful of prisoners who were seeking to live changed lives. In 2014 we commenced a strategy of opening up our ministry to include volunteers from all Christian churches and to expand beyond Dublin to work with men still in prison and provide mentoring and reintegration services to ex-prisoners returning to our communities.

Our Vision

Release is driven by the belief that restoration is possible for every person. We envision an Ireland where people with offences are treated with dignity, supported to live transformed lives, and make positive contributions to their communities.

Our Mission

58% of prisoners in Ireland re-offend within three years. For many of these offenders, loss or lack of significant personal relationships was the most significant factor in their decision to commit a crime.

Release interrupts the revolving door of imprisonment by connecting prisoners with our trained volunteers from the community for mentoring. These mentors build relationships and self-esteem, provide consistency and accountability, and help prisoners to achieve goals – proven interventions in the prevention of crime.

Our Ethos

We are faith based but not faith biased, and serve all clients with the same uncompromising love, respect, and dedication; regardless of offence, religion, race, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or family status.

We are founded in the belief that we are all created in the image of God, regardless of who we are, what we have done, or where we come from. We believe no life is beyond the reach of God's unconditional love. We see the whole person, and pursue fulfilment of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health for each of our service users.

Our plans for 2019

Looking forward to 2019 we are greatly encouraged by the decision of the Joseph Rank Trust to make a 3-year investment to support some of our core costs. We are also grateful for the generous support from Allchurches Trust for the last 3 years which has allowed for Release to grow their mentoring programmes to support ex-offenders back into churches and communities. It is vital that we find new funders in 2019 to allow us to continue to grow our reintegration and mentoring activities.

23 service users graduated our:

WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE COURSE

The “Walk Through the Bible” course ran in Arbour Hill in Autumn 2017 and finished in Spring 2018. The course involved teaching the participants how to use the bible. The last few sessions of the course were led by different female speakers who are prominent in their own churches across Ireland. They spoke on inspirational stories of women in the bible.



20 service users graduated our:

PARENTING TEENAGERS COURSE

Following on from our successful parenting children course in 2017, Release ran the parenting teenagers course in the progression unit of Mountjoy West in the Summer of 2018. The material focused on meeting your teenager’s needs, setting clear boundaries, developing emotional health and helping them make good choices.



34 service users graduated our:

ALPHA COURSE

3 Alpha courses ran in the Spring and Autumn of 2018 in both Arbour Hill and Mountjoy prisons. Alpha is an interactive series that addresses the relevance of Christianity in the world today and is one of the most successful courses run by Release.



23 service users graduated our:

GRACE COURSE

The Grace course ran in Arbour Hill in the Summer of 2018. The objective of the Grace Course is to enable Christians to experience God’s grace. The content consists of practical exercises, times of listening to God, and a gentle ministry component: The Steps to Experiencing God’s Grace.



25 service users graduated our:

ADDICTION RECOVERY COURSE

The Recovery course ran in the Summer and Autumn of 2018 at Mountjoy. The course was largely discussion based, following videos and a handbook. It explored the complex journey of recovery through the community, faith, and forgiveness. Each week a guest speaker gave their testimonial.



“I feel I could help people with any problems they have after taking part in this course especially myself”

PARTICIPANT OF OUR ALPHA COURSE IN ARBOUR HILL

Year in Review

130 prisoners were visited through our:

BEFRIENDING SERVICE

Release volunteers visited 135 prisoners across 3 prisons during 2018. The volunteers met with prisoners to build friendships and support them through their sentence. This number was an increase on 2017 due to the dedication of our volunteers and staff who give so much of their time and love to help to reduce recidivism by meeting and empowering the men.

45 ex-offenders were supported by our:

MENTORING PROGRAMME

Release volunteers provided social support, advocacy, and coaching to secure sustainable housing, employment, social welfare entitlements and provided supportive relationships which assisted service users to reintegrate back into their communities.

7 ex-offenders secured employment through our:

POST-PRISON SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Release linked in with relevant services and secured 5 part-time jobs and 2 community employment schemes for active service users who have advanced in their reintegration journey. Release hopes to continue to increase this number in 2019 as employment opportunities arise and continue to break the cycle of offending to help ex-offenders make a better life for themselves and their families.

55 service users attended our:

MUSIC EVENTS

Throughout the year, Release worship team continued their weekly music therapy sessions in both Mountjoy and Arbour Hill. Service users performed alongside our team and took part in our annual Christmas and Easter events.

10 service users took part in our:

FACILITATOR TRAINING

A huge part of the work we do is empowering prisoners and ex-prisoners to take on responsibilities and become contributing members in their communities. Training prisoners to work alongside our lead facilitators is an excellent method of accomplishing this goal. In 2018, 7 prisoner and 3 volunteers took part in our facilitator training in Mountjoy Progression Unit.

RELEASE



RELATE » RESTORE » REINTEGRATE

Joe Fleming



Mr Joe Fleming

(Joe with the Release Team)

In March 2018 Release lost one of our beloved volunteers Joe Fleming. Joe gave his time, love and support to the work of Release and helped with the Parenting course in Mountjoy prison and mentoring in Arbour Hill prison. Joe is sadly missed by all the staff and volunteers at Release.

Volunteer Appreciation Evening



On the 18th of May Release hosted the volunteer appreciation evening in the Castle Hotel. Without the dedication of our volunteers we would not be able to deliver the services we are currently providing. This picture shows some of our amazing 'Worship Team' who not only go into prisons to bring joy and music to our service users, but also bring joy to all of us in Release.

Parenting Teenagers Family Event



In October Release's Parenting Teenagers course celebrated the end of this course with a family day in Mountjoy Progression Unit. Families, course participants, Release volunteers and prison staff came together to have an evening of food and chat to celebrate the participant's success. Governor Walsh of Mountjoy West presented the guys with their certificates and it was a proud day for everyone involved.

UCD Volunteer Fair



Release staff and volunteers were delighted to join the students and staff of UCD on Wednesday 3rd October for their Volunteer Fair. This event allowed us to engage with many students, staff and alumni who were interested in volunteering with our organisation. Volunteering can play a very significant role in developing greater levels of community and social awareness and involvement amongst young people in Ireland.



Prisoner Support Network

Release had the pleasure of hosting the Prisoner Support Network meeting at our offices in March 2018. The PSN is a network of service providers aiming to meet the needs of people who experience imprisonment.

Established in 2017, the Prison Support Network has developed a network for former prisoners aimed at enhancing access to local service providers in health, housing, education and employment.

Cinnamon Network



Release continues its partnership with The Cinnamon Project and The Cinnamon Project Incubator. The Cinnamon Network enables people and service provided to transform their communities and help those in social need through management training and startup/growth capital.

Tommy Stewart continues to coach Release and other community projects from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as part of the Cinnamon Incubator. Release is indebted to Tommy and the Cinnamon Team for the support they have shown over the last 2 years. With this support Release is continuing to grow and expand and transform the communities in which we work.



World Meeting of Families

Release participated in the World Meeting of Families on the 22nd -24th of August. This event was held in the RDS in Dublin. This was a momentous occasion and gave the Release team an opportunity to network with other organisations of faith.

Held every three years, this major international event brings together families from across the world to celebrate, pray and reflect.

The theme chosen this year was “The Gospel of the Family and Joy for the World”.

Prison Ministry Conference



On the 19th November 2018 Philip Larragy CEO of Release attended the Prison Ministry Conference in London. This conference was hosted jointly by Alpha Prisons and Caring for Ex-Offenders. This conference was an opportunity to spend time with people who are passionate about making a difference to the lives of prisoners and ex-offenders.

The aim of the conference was to bring hope into the prison system and to the people within it. Different speakers, organisations and charities working in and around the Criminal Justice System spoke of how everyone deserves a second chance and that the church carries a transforming narrative of hope, love and forgiveness to those incarcerated in prison and those reintegrating into society.

A word from our volunteer!

I was involved in Release's Parenting Teenagers Course in which 8 participants successfully completed the course in Mountjoy West in the Summer of 2018.

The content was designed to promote positive parenting skills and to help parents and carers of 11 - 18 year olds equip their teenagers for life by exploring key concepts: Keeping the end in mind, meeting our teenagers needs setting boundaries, developing emotional health and helping them make good choices.

Parenting teenagers can be extremely challenging for many parents. Participants on this course are faced with additional complexities as they are striving to develop and maintain positive relationships in a very difficult environment. With this in mind, the course also touched on significant issues relevant to the the participants in terms of their primary role as parents intertwined with their current status as prisoners. These issues included, how children's lives are affected by parental imprisonment, how to explain and talk to children/teenagers about having a parent in prison, barriers in maintaining contact and the concept of families as the invisible victims of crime.

The structure of the sessions gave participants the opportunity to reflect on previous learning, examine and discuss new concepts and engage in follow-up activities based on the content. It also provided participants with a platform to share their own experiences and to develop relationships with other parents in the group.

Facilitating this course was an extremely rewarding experience due to the respect, warmth and eagerness shown by the participants. The commitment and level of engagement demonstrated their strong desire to develop positive parenting skills and to build and sustain positive relationships with their children and families going forward.

Bronagh Fagan

A word from our service user!

We are honoured to bring you the story of our service user, Jason, who competed in the Dublin City Marathon in October 2018. Jason ran the marathon on behalf of Release and all proceeds from his fundraising have assisted to support our services! He began his running career while in prison and hasn't looked back since. We sat down to speak with him about his motivations and this is what he had to say:

"While in prison, I gave up alcohol and cigarettes which I tried to replace with positive habits- such as running! Running is an excellent way to clear my head and if you get a run in in the morning, you're set for the day. I organised 4 charity runs in prison, each of which included up to 50 participants, raising over 3,500EUR. To be honest, I think I was kept alive for a reason, and running is my way of finding out what that reason is. For now, I'm settled on doing my best to give back to organisations like Release who helped me when I needed them. And of course, I am blessed to have God- whom all my life I ran away from, and for whom I run today."

Jason

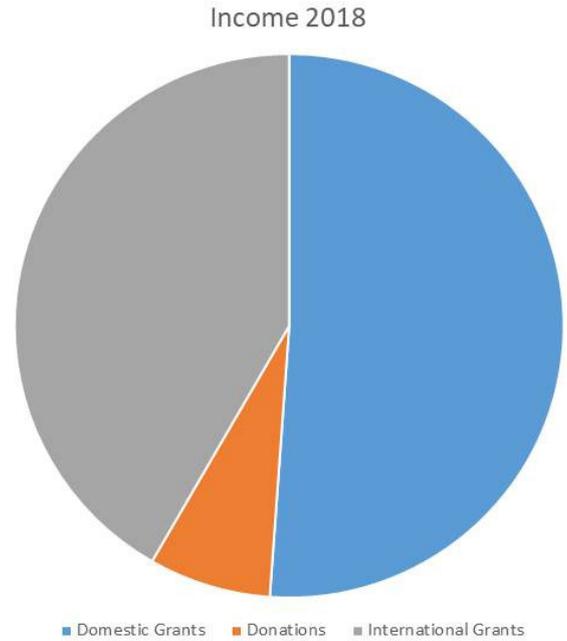


Financial Report

As a charitable organisation working to better the lives of those around us, we strive to provide you with the utmost transparency in regards to our financial reporting. With any organisation, income and expenditure ebbs and flows with the different services we invest in and we greatly appreciate the support of the organisations and people who make this feasible through their generous funding. Being transparent about how we spend that funding, to them and to those we serve, is the least we can do to show our gratitude!

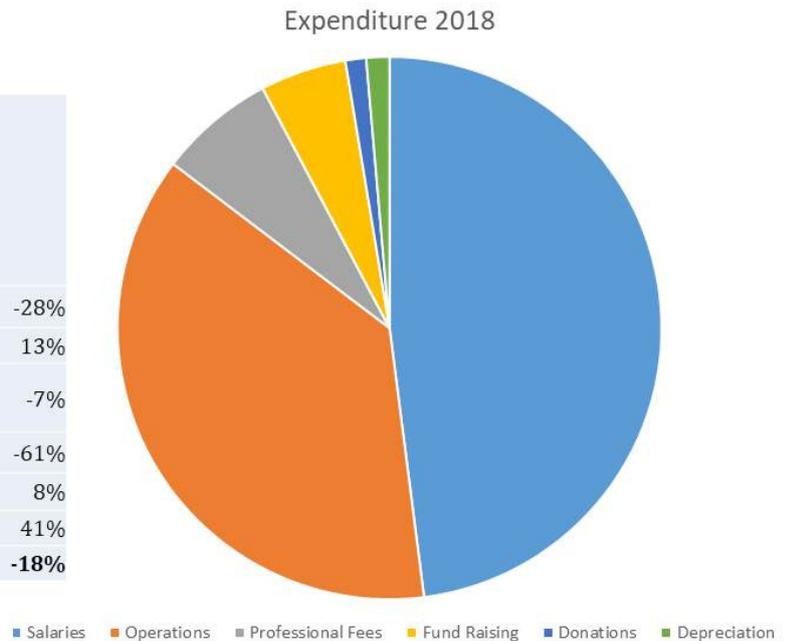
Income

Income	2017	2018	% Change
Domestic Grants	30,645	30,581	0%
Member Donations and Gifts	4,767	4,305	-10%
International Grants	34,083	24,924	-27%
Total	€69,495	€59,810	-14%



Expenditure

Expenditure	2017	2018	% Change
Wages and Salaries	38,303	27,517	-28%
Operations	18,989	21,439	13%
Legal and Professional Fees	4,246	3,969	-7%
Fundraising Costs	7,540	2,940	-61%
Charitable Donations	649	703	8%
Depreciation of Assets	560	790	41%
Total	€70,287	€57,358	-18%



Thank you to our Funders and Partners

Funders



Partners



Want to continue your generous support or become a new donor?

Below are ways you can make a difference and contribute to our mission:

- Become a monthly or quarterly donor through a standing order
- Make a once off donation
- Ask your employer about making a gift or donation matching
- Organise a fundraising event

Please contact us at info@release or 086 044 9351 for more information.

Release Board of Directors and Trustees



Rodney O'Hara
Chairperson



Hendrik Botha
Company Secretary



Róisín Ní Cheallaigh
Treasurer



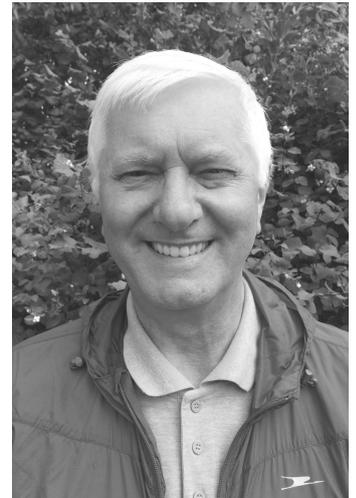
Rosalinde Schut
Director (Until Mar 18)



Fergus Carey
Trustee



Allan Kilpatrick
Trustee



Ellis Rowland
Trustee

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