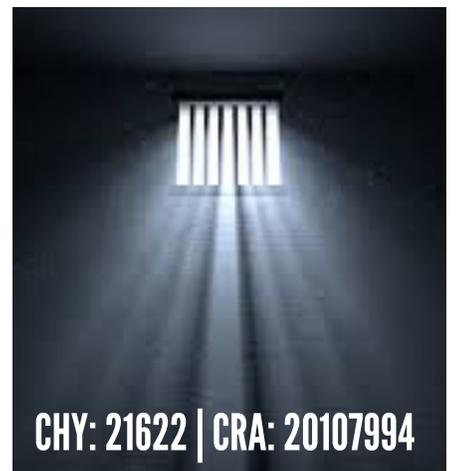


RELEASE



Letter from the CEO



After many years of volunteering in prisons and playing the long game to make the dream of Release a reality, 2016 was the first year Release Prison Partnership became formally incorporated and received our Charity Registration number. When people ask me why Release exists, I tell them it's about love - loving people defined and stigmatised by their offending, helping them become the people God intended them to be.

I am constantly inspired by the men who attend our programmes - like Jack*, who after serving 5 years left prison with a 3rd level qualification, or Sean* who is now free of his addiction, working full time, and enjoying life as an involved parent. Our volunteers witnessed many victories this year, but perhaps the most significant were the men we were able to connect and support back into work. After building bridges with entrepreneurs, we launched an Enterprise Project - joining the Lord Mayor of Dublin in a campaign to assist ex-offenders in obtaining employment. The coaching of our mentors and liaising with supportive employers empowered these service users to not only support their families, but to contribute positively in the communities they had once harmed.

All this considered, lessons around identity and niche were important as we continue to grow in our capacity to support our clients, and deepen our relationships with statutory and other voluntary agencies. What we achieved in 2016 would not have been possible without the compassion of our staff and volunteers, the direction of our partners, and the generous financial contributions from supporters. We are hopeful and ready to keep contributing to a future of less recidivism, better reintegration interventions, and the destigmatisation of people who have served time with you as our advocate.

Thank you,

Philip Larragy
CEO of Release

* names of service users changed

The Year In Review

'I'm not lost any more. I belong
to something now.'

Service User, Arbour Hill

69 prisoners completed Alpha across 3 prisons - the Training Unit, Arbour Hill, and the Midlands. Four prisoners in Arbour Hill were trained to lead a follow on course for their peers, which set a record attendance of 29 participants.

11 graduated the Recovery course - facilitated in the Training Unit and for those at risk of offending in the Salvation Army's Granby Centre.

Release mentors supported **34** ex-offenders in the community; providing social support, advocacy, and coaching to secure stable housing, employment, entitlements and positive relationships.

Our volunteers visit **88** prisoners for at least 4 hours every month. 20% of these clients are young people, between the ages of 18 and 30.

Our music and worship team lead **12** holiday and social events in 2016 - practicing and performing alongside musicians from the Training Unit.

Release advocated and secured **3** new full-time jobs for ex-offenders this year - supporting and supervising alongside line managers and HR personnel to ensure long-term success.



Shane Taylor, ex-offender and speaker with Alpha in Prisons.

With the help of Alpha in Prisons UK and Alpha Ireland, Release facilitates the Alpha Course in Irish Prisons. The course is a group discussion-led introduction to Christianity and its principles.

Many participants, whether Christian or otherwise, often find it stimulating to discuss their beliefs, while others are uplifted to consider a God who is on their side and gives them a chance to start again. For others, the course is a chance to build relationships and learn to share in a group.

In an effort to be client-centred and empowering, Release decided that after the initial Alpha Course at Arbour Hill, our staff would train prisoners to deliver a second peer-led course.

Iwan Matheson of Alpha UK trained the facilitators alongside Release staff. The peer leaders then delivered the course with the support of Release volunteers.

Upon completion of the course, one leader reflected "I enhanced my people management skills and my self-confidence. I came closer to God and feel better able to deal with life and motivated to do good work in His name. The best part was the sense of achievement in having kept the group together."

The leaders were amazing in their ability to encourage and empathise with participants, setting an all time record of course graduates at 29 prisoners. Release aims to continue this method of training leaders in future courses.

Snapshot: Training Leaders at Arbour Hill

'You can see things from other people's point of view and relate, and maybe understand some of their feelings and give help. It is hard to talk out in front of other people, but with the help of Jesus I can do so.'

Service User, Arbour Hill

New Digs, New Faces



Prisoners on community return from the Training Unit help paint the new Release office.

At the start of the 2016, Release moved into our offices on 5 Gardiner Row, convenient to the Mountjoy Campus. We were grateful to have the help of a few of our service users from the Training Unit during the move!

This new location gives us a place to receive ex-offenders during office hours, We also have a furnished living space and kitchen, which is available as a neutral venue for escorted

prisoners to meet with their families.

Release also recruited 20 new volunteers in the Autumn, rounding our total to 55. Like our original team, these new members are all IPS approved and trained, visiting prisoners 1-1 or facilitating courses for at least 2 hours every other week.

Our team is as diverse as the prisoners we visit - consisting of a variety of backgrounds, ages, faiths, nationalities and languages.



Release volunteers at a training event

'I absolutely love visiting. My mentor partner and I are able to ask questions and encourage [our mentee] to focus on the future. I believe we can continue to be good friends to him and make a difference in his life, especially as he has no other visitors.' - volunteer

Finance Report

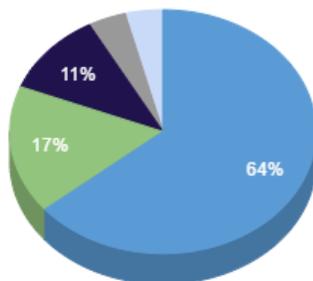
Income

Grants	30,122
St Stephen's Green Trust	8,000
Gifts	5,251
Church Donations	1,855
Direct Debits	1,765
Total Income	€ 46,993

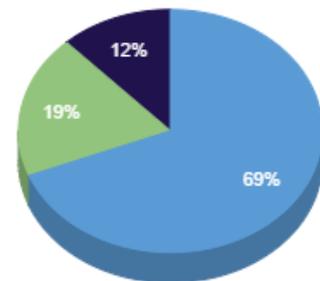
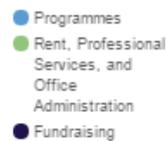
Expenditure

Programmes	32,802
*Programmes includes staff wages as there are only 2 client care professionals who facilitate our in-reach programmes, advocacy work, and volunteer training/management	
Fundraising	6,005
Rent, Accountancy and Professional Services, Office Administration	9,235
Total Expenditure	€ 48,042

Income



Expenditure



Making the Most of Our Time in Prison

This year, we gathered a group of our volunteers, partners, supporters, and role models to talk about how we might contribute to prison as a positive, transformational experience.

The Speakers and the Takeaways

Governor John Kavanagh opened the conference talking about the importance of volunteers and pro-social relationships for prisoners.

Phillip Richardson spoke from his experience of recovering from addiction, running a treatment facility, and his current position working with young offenders through Solas Project; examining how far Irish prisons have to go in supporting those in recovery. Phillip is now assisting Release to revamp our own Recovery Course and pilot the new material in Mountjoy.

A **panel of prisoners currently serving in the Training Unit** described their experience of prison - the hardships, the loss, and the comebacks. Many thanks to the Training Unit staff for their collaboration and support in making this possible, and keeping the voice of our service users at the heart of what we do.

A panel of **employers of ex-offenders** attested to how prisons can provide training opportunities previously unavailable to their residents, and the implications of keeping their policies around hiring ex-offenders open to the public or private. As a result, the Lord Mayor of Dublin held a roundtable for employers to consider hiring ex-offenders, and led a group of employers to visit the training facilities at Wheatfield Prison.



The panel of employers discuss ex-offender hiring issues at the Release Annual Conference

The Annual Conference 2016

Thank You

Our role as advocates and mentors would not be possible without the financial support of our funders and the service provision of our partners. We would like to express a special thank you for all you have accomplished with us in 2016, and acknowledge those who do not wish to remain anonymous.



Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
IRISH PRISON SERVICE

st.stephen's green trust

Jobcare 
WORKING MATTERS



Want to continue your support?

In the face of increasing demand and the exciting expansion of our programmes, there are several valuable ways you can contribute to our mission, including:

- 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

Contact us at:

Release Prison Partnership
5 Gardiner Row, Dublin 1
www.release.ie
086 044 9351
info@release.ie