



# Sophia

providing homes · supporting people

Annual  
Report 2019



## Directors

### **Denis Doherty**

Chairperson

### **Liz Murphy R.S.M (appointed 15th of May 2019)**

Company Secretary

### **Jean Quinn D.W**

Founder

### **Eamonn Martin**

Co Founder

### **Michael McCarthy (Appointed 4th December 2019)**

Chair of the Finance Committee

### **Grainne Hilton D.W**

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee

### **John Donohue (Appointed 13th of March 2019)**

Chair of the Development Committee

### **Karl McDonagh**

Director

### **Seamus Dooley**

Director

### **Andy Caffrey (Appointed 15th of May 2019)**

Director

### **Hugh Clohessy (Resigned 13 March 2019)**

### **John Duffy (Resigned 4 December 2019)**

### **Marion Ryan RSM (Resigned 11 September 2019)**

## C.E.O

Tony O’Riordan

## Registered Charity Number

20042363

## Charity Number

CHY 13516

Front Cover: Drawings of Sophia’s future development on the former site of the Presentation Sisters School and Convent Church Ave, Portlaoise

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# A Message from our Chair



Denis Doherty,  
Chairperson of Sophia

Sophia reached a significant milestone in 2019; for the first time in its history, Sophia supported over 1,000 people to have a home of their own.

Since its foundation, Sophia has been described as a niche or specialist service provider. In its role as an Approved Housing Body it focuses primarily on providing quality homes for people with multiple needs. As a service provider within the homeless sector, Sophia focuses exclusively on providing homes with support as the solution to homelessness.

Sophia continues to remain true to its core values and places particular emphasis on the importance of providing safe, well maintained homes and services that are offered with compassion, emotional warmth and respect to the individuals, couples and families supported by Sophia. This would not be possible without our dedicated staff who bring our values to life each day. On behalf of the Board of Sophia, I would like to express our sincere thanks to them for the quality of care and support they consistently provide.

Our partners in the statutory sector, especially the Local Authorities, HSE, Tusla, the Department of Social Protection, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, have been essential in assisting Sophia to **Provide Homes** and **Support People**. Sophia's development plans, to provide more homes, have received significant support from Local Authorities across the State and from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This support, has enabled a viable pipeline of new homes to be created that will deliver new homes over the coming years.

Sophia is most appreciative of the supportive relationship it has with Religious Congregations who assist Sophia's work in ensuring individuals, couples and families move out of homelessness and into the security of a home of their own.

Sophia's collaborative agreement with Midlands Simon Community is an example of how organisations with a shared value base can work together to deliver more cost effective services that reach more people and make advances in the quality of care that is being provided.

Finally, the Regulatory Frameworks that Sophia complies with requires a Board of Directors that is committed to meeting these standards and to ensuring effective governance. This would not have been achieved if it were not for the existence of a Board of Directors and Standing Committees comprising of Directors and others with a diverse range of skills and a willingness to devote their voluntary time in the service of Sophia's strategic goals and values. I thank them for the valuable role they perform.



# Sophia

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## OUR MISSION

Sophia exists to provide homes and ongoing support for families and individuals with complex needs.

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is to support marginalised people to realise their potential and fulfil their ambition. Sophia pursues its vision through projects that enable people to make positive differences in their lives. Every project aims to be innovative and ensure service users feel safe and secure.

## OUR VALUES

Social justice,  
 Empowerment  
 Inclusion  
 Respect for diversity  
 Wisdom derived from experience  
 Reflection, sharing and openness



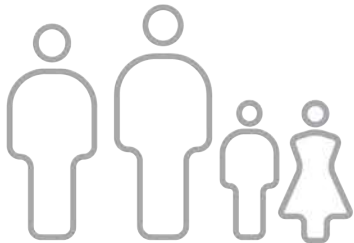
# 2019 in Numbers

**2019 was the first year that Sophia supported over 1,000 people.**

In 2019 Sophia supported 1034 people offering a range of accommodation including 1, 2 or 3 bedroom houses or apartments catering for both long-term and short-term tenancies.

This is the first time that Sophia has supported over 1,000 people in any one year and it represents a 14% increase from the number of people supported in 2018. Responding to the Homeless and Housing Crisis in Ireland has seen Sophia increase the number of people it supports by 100% since 2016.

Sophia's development plan will see significant growth over the next 3 years building over 200 new homes, providing support for at least 546 people including 86 families of which 172 will be children.



## Families

Throughout 2019 Sophia supported 226 families

## Children

510 children were supported by Sophia in 2019



## SUPPORT

Sophia supported 1034 people in 2019



### Staff

In 2019 Sophia employed on average 142 people. Our Support Team grew from 79 to 90.

### Homes

Sophia has been given approval for €28,000,000 in CAS funding to build homes across the state.



# Sophia

providing homes · supporting people

# Providing Homes

Sophia was founded over 20 years ago by Jean Quinn a Daughter of Wisdom, who recognised that to end homelessness people must be provided with homes and the support they need. Sophia provides safe and secure homes so that families and individuals can begin the journey of recovery from the impact and the insecurities of not having a home of their own. The complex needs of homeless people are met through our unique support services, offering practical advice, and linking them in with specialist services as required.

Sophia believes that high quality homes and their surroundings are a holistic response to the needs of the people we support. These homes offer a welcome environment which convey to the people emotional warmth and that they are valued which reinforces a person's human dignity.

Sophia provides a range of homes across the country from single site projects such as Sean McDermott St in Dublin where we provide accommodation for 18 couples with intensive 24 hours support on site, to providing homes and support in the wider community.

Sophia has a long-term aim to increase the number of homes with support for families and single people. Therefore, the organisation aims to provide up to 200 new homes between 2020 and 2023.

Sophia has been supported to achieve this target by Religious Congregations who have made lands and buildings available to the organisation. With the support of Local Authorities and through the facilitation and support of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Sophia will be able to provide homes with support for those who need them.



Sophia's Donabate Project

“

I was homeless for 11 years, when I got this place with Sophia, it didn't seem real to me.

Sophia Resident





Ciara Noone (Project Manager) and Lazarus Murinda (Support worker)

Sophia received CAS (Capital Assistance Scheme) funding from South Dublin County Council for acquisition of 4 dwellings in Clondalkin, which are now providing long-term accommodation for families coming from homelessness.

In Cork City, CAS funding was received for 4 dwellings for the provision of long-term accommodation for people coming from homelessness.

Sophia took over the management and ownership of four one bedroom apartments in Dublin 8 that were previously under the ownership of Round Tower Housing Association.

In partnership with the Sisters of Mercy, Sophia took over the management of a number of one-bedroom apartments in Limerick City

In 2019 Sophia lodged funding applications for a total of 57 dwellings in counties Limerick, Kilkenny, Offaly and Dublin and received CAS funding approval of over €15 million for these projects

Sophia has entered purchase and lease agreements for an additional 28 dwellings which are targeted to come into management and ownership in 2020 in Limerick, Dublin, Sligo, Clare, Mayo, and Laois.

In 2019 Sophia, in partnership with Cork County Council began a Tenancy Support Service

# Sophia Portlaoise



Architectural Drawings of Sophia's Project on Church Ave Portlaoise

For 192 years the Presentation Convent on Church Ave has been a central part of the community in Portlaoise. The Presentation Sisters, who moved their school to a new site, have been working with Sophia for a number of years to ensure that the buildings and lands remain central to the life of the town. They have been working with Sophia to reopen the doors of these historic buildings as homes with support for those who need them locally.

In 2019 Sophia unveiled designs for the 52 home project on the Presentation Convent and Parish site. Capital Assistance Scheme funding has also been secured for the project.

Sophia also received backing from the Project Ireland 2040 fund to develop community facilities including a new park and greenway. The support of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Local Authority have been instrumental in the progress of this project.

Following a period of intensive consultation with all stakeholders and the public in Portlaoise the project plans were presented to



“

I had felt powerless for four years, four years of being homeless, now that I'm in Sophia I feel hopeful.

Sophia Resident



the Local Councillors in December 2019. This project has been made possible through the leadership, vision and support of Laois County Council and the Presentation Sisters. The aim is once planning permission is given to commence construction of these much needed homes in 2020.

The blueprint for this project was created when Sophia worked with the Sisters of Mercy converting lands and buildings in the heart of Dublin 8 into homes with support. Portlaoise and Cork St are emblematic of a number of other projects Sophia is working on with Congregations across the country, such as the Sisters of St Paul the Apostle in Kilfinane, Co Limerick where together we hope to provide 9 homes with support. In Kilkenny the Sisters of St John of God have partnered with Sophia to develop plans to create 12 new supported homes. These Congregations see in Sophia shared values and a conduit for their social justice legacy.



Architectural Drawings of Sophia's Project on Church Ave Portlaoise

# Transforming Our World

## The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This UN agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It seeks to restore dignity and equality to all people by eradicating poverty and family homelessness as the furthest left behind in our world. Combatting the issue of homelessness is integral in achieving the 2030 agenda. While the Sustainable Development Goals do not explicitly mention homelessness, the issues of those who experience homelessness are systematically tied to the SDGs. Working to achieve the SDGs helps to end homelessness and working to end homelessness helps to achieve the SDGs. The issues that the SDGs work to address such as poverty, health, education, inequalities, housing, Communities, partnerships, are integral in the experience of those who are homeless. The following Sustainable Development Goals specifically relate to homelessness:

**SDG 1 - Eradicating Poverty**

**SDG 3 - Good Health and Well Being**

**SDG 4 - Quality Education**

**SDG 5 - Gender Equality**

**SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities**

**SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities (Adequate Housing)**

**SDG 16 – Peace and Strong Institutions**

**SDG 17 – Partnerships**

The Sophia model of work reinforces the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The issues of family homelessness and trauma are intertwined throughout the SDGs and addressing these issues is vital to ending homelessness.

Reaching them will help end homelessness and ending homelessness will profoundly and positively affect everyone in society.

“The SDGs are the most important global development in the UNs history

Jean Quinn DW



# Supporting People

Sophia was founded on the simple yet radical idea that what a person who is homeless really needs is a home, and with that home the wrap-around supports needed to emerge from homelessness.

This model of providing a home with supports is now mainstream public policy (Housing First) and is central to the Irish government's response to the homeless crisis.

Over the past two decades, Sophia has been tailoring this support model to respond to the many different needs of homelessness in Ireland, after all, one size does not fit all, and a person-centred approach needs a person-centred response.

2019 is the first time that Sophia has supported over 1,000 people in any one year. This is a 14% increase in just 12 months. In the three years from 2016 until 2019 Sophia has increased the number of people it supports by 100%

In 2019 Sophia, in partnership with Cork County Council, began a Tenancy Support Service.



Residents Summer BBQ 2019

Homelessness is not normal, being traumatised by that experience is a rational reaction to being without a home. Our focus is to help people recover from the trauma and stigma of homelessness, reducing not only social exclusion and poverty but also the health and social issues associated with living through the traumatic experiences of being without a home.

Sophia believes that a person needs to be given the space and time to process this, work through it, and recover. Trauma can take a long time to process. Having a safe, secure permanent home is vital to that process. Recognising this informs and shapes how Sophia's teams support people across the country.

This people-centered approach has set Sophia Housing apart because of the support model it created, but also in the way the organisation works with a wide range of partners such as Religious Congregations who, together with Sophia, are utilising lands and buildings they own across Ireland and bringing them back to life as housing for people who need more than just a home; those who also have complex support needs.

“

I was 8 months pregnant when I moved into my apartment with Sophia, I had a support worker who worked with me, and when I say with me, I really mean with me, not for me, not on behalf of me, together. I felt trusted and listened to

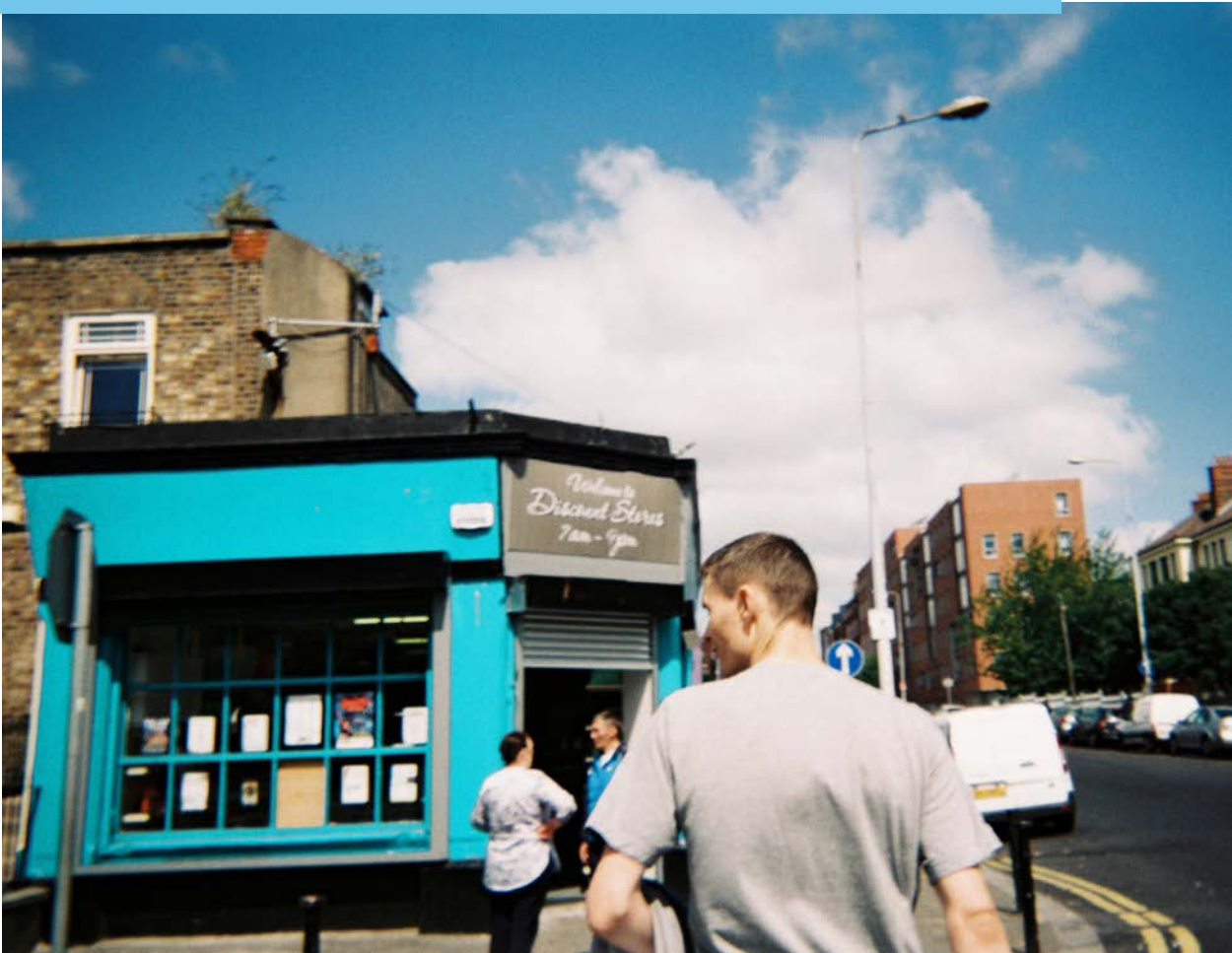
Sophia Resident

The Sophia Support Team across the country works with people who have a wide range of support needs. Providing a safe home, where people can feel secure is the basic starting point of the work they do.

This work can be challenging at times, the complexity of need as the people they support go through difficult times, when they are at their most vulnerable is demanding but incredible rewarding work.

Wrap around supports means working collaboratively with those supported in Sophia and with many other organisations. We share the aim of creating space where people can live their own lives on their own terms, in the safety and security of their own homes.

## What You See has Value



The above photo was taken from *What You See Has Value* an exhibition in which the residents of Sophia's Sean McDermott project in Dublin documented their lives through a series of photographs.

# Advocacy

## Jean Quinn DW reflects on her advocacy work with Sophia and with UNANIMA International at the United Nations in New York

Advocacy is integral to delivering Sophia’s vision and mission. It is about influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing, and implementing policies to address homelessness. Our vision and mission acknowledge that innovative solutions will be needed to end homelessness, and that influencing policy must be part of our efforts to achieve lasting change for those out of home. Advocacy for Sophia is a powerful complimentary tool to other strategies, including service delivery and capacity building.



Jean Quinn DW Speaking at an event in 2019

Part of my work at the U.N. in New York and Geneva is to raise the global profile of homelessness and to achieve an agreement on a global goal related to homelessness. Our work at the U.N. is to influence the development of social policy that will ultimately benefit all those on the margins of our society.

Homelessness has been systematically ignored in the United Nations global political discussions until recently. Now that homelessness has been included in the priority theme of the Commission on Social Development (CSOCD ) 2020 a window has been opened for us to move our advocacy strategy agenda forward.

I was invited on behalf of UNANIMA International to take part at the UN expert meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2019. The meeting took place at UN-HABITAT as part of the preparation for the 58th session of the above commission. It brought together experts from across the globe to discuss affordable housing and social protections to address homelessness. The objective of the expert group meeting was to review the major drivers of homelessness, identify existing gaps and priority areas for interventions, and make specific policy recommendations on effective housing and social protection policies to address homelessness in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNANIMA International were ask to present a paper on “The Impact of Personal and Family Circumstances on Homelessness.

This work is focused on bringing new resolution to Third Committee in 2020 and to the floor of the United Nations General Assembly in 2022 the plight of people experiencing homelessness.



The Expert Group Papers and findings are available to read here.

[https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/final\\_for\\_publication\\_homelessness\\_egm\\_proceedings\\_report\\_1.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/final_for_publication_homelessness_egm_proceedings_report_1.pdf)



Jean Quinn DW Speaking at the United Nations in New York

# Research



Jean Quinn DW and speakers at the Unanima Int symposium

## UNANIMA International Global Research Project

Sophia is a partner in a global research mandate carried out by UNANIMA international. UNANIMA International is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with Consultative Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Global Communications (DGC). The NGO advocates on behalf of and with Women, Children/Girls, Migrants and Refugees and has a niched focus

and expertise on Family Homelessness/Displacement, and Trauma. Executive Director, Jean Quinn, a Daughter of Wisdom, and founder of Sophia, has made sure that homelessness has been focused on at the United Nations, and that the lived experiences of women and children are heard. Jean's background in permanent, supported housing and family therapeutic processes have supported the NGO's success in being heard at the UN and homelessness being included on the international agenda.

The research has explored Family Homelessness internationally, including the various drivers of it, and the gendered experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity, including trauma.

UNANIMA International partners with experts, including the ultimate experts with lived experience to analyse Family Homelessness. In October 2019 as part of this project, Liz Madden and Sophia's Projects Manager John McEvoy spoke at Unanima International's Symposium on "Women and Girls Experiencing Homelessness /Displacement" in New York. The panel had a number of prominent speakers including Leilani Farha, the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Homelessness, and Human Rights, Chris Williams, Director of UN Habitat and Renata Kaczmarek from the UN Focal Point on the Family. A diplomat from the Irish Mission at the UN also attended the event.

## SMES Europa and Publishing of European Manual on Best Practices

For 3 years Sophia has taken part in a European Erasmus+ Research Project which was focused on examining European Best Practices in supporting people with Mental health Support Needs in Homeless Services. Midlands Simon Community invited Sophia to take part in the project.

This research was conducted across 8 countries, looking at what each country was doing to support people who were homeless and had mental health support needs. Examining what practices worked best and the services which supported people who had experienced homelessness.

Sophia staff met with front line practitioners and saw first hand the innovative practices that are being used to help people

## Dignity and Well-Being

Practical Approaches to Working with Homeless People with Mental Health Problems



experiencing homelessness.

Part of this project looked at Ireland and in 2017 Sophia hosted a Seminar with delegates from across Europe traveling to Dublin to work on the project and visit services in the capital and in Athlone.

In 2019, the final European seminars on the SMES Europa Project - Dignity and Well-Being were held in Warsaw, Poland.

One of the key outputs from the project was the publication of a front workers manual on *Practical Approaches to Working with Homeless People with Mental Health Problems* which was co-written by Sophia. This manual selected Sophia's service in Sean MacDermott Street as an example of a European best practice service and was profiled in the manual. The manual has been translated into 8 languages and published in 8 countries.



Erasmus+ Partners first meeting in Belgium Dec 2019

## Trauma Informed Care

Sophia is acutely aware that people who experience homelessness are often traumatised by that experience. Sophia continues to advocate and campaign for a housing lead and Trauma Informed response to homelessness

In 2019 Sophia was successful in its bid to secure EU funding to lead a programme with 7 Partners across Europe on how to introduce the Trauma Informed Care Model into homeless services. Sophia is honoured to be entrusted to lead this programme as the 7 Partner organisations are recognised as leaders in their own countries in the area of mental health and homelessness.

Sophia believes that recognising and working to appropriately support people who are homeless means creating organisations that are truly Trauma Informed.

The project will work with expert practitioners in Trauma Informed Care and Psychologically Informed Environments across three week long seminars. The seminars will take place during in Cork, Lisbon and Rome. Those who have experienced homelessness will be central to each seminar as expert voices in how organisations can become trauma-informed

# Partnerships

Since its foundation Sophia has been an organisation that has valued and sought partnerships. These partnerships have enabled Sophia to grow into a national organisation which supports over 1,000 people to move from homelessness into a home of their own.

Over the years a diverse range of partners has backed Sophia. Local Authorities and the Department of Housing have invested in Sophia developments across the State, in the past three years over €30 Million of capital funding has been approved by the State, which across the country will support hundreds of people to progress out of homelessness.

2019 was the third year of Sophia's partnership with Midlands Simon Community. Both organisations share values on how services should be delivered and are committed to adapting the Housing First model to an Irish context. The Collaboration Agreement allows both organisations to share costs and lead to greater efficiencies.

The agreement is an example of an innovative partnership, how two organisations who are committed to similar goals and share the same philosophy in terms of service provision can support more people.



Sophia Staff and Supporters Gathered at the Wisdom Centre

provide a better quality of service and achieve greater returns for the public funds that are entrusted to it.

Religious Congregations continue to be generous donors and valued supporters of the work of Sophia. In 2019 they played a very important role in providing funding and sharing a vision for our partnership that will provide homes for many well into the future.

Many of the Religious Congregations see in Sophia a new or additional way of fulfilling their mission for social justice. Sophia's values and its reputation as an ethical partner has seen it work with Congregations who have been making lands and buildings available to create affordable, permanent supported housing for families. In the next 3 years, this partnership will see hundreds of new homes built across Ireland, providing support for at least 546 people including 86 families of which 172 will be children.

As exemplified in our future service in Portlaoise, Sophia is working in partnership with the Presentation Sisters North East Province exploring together a number of projects across the state.

In October 2019 Sophia was invited to present at the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) Autumn Conference. This was significant in that it highlighted the strong partnership that exists between Sophia and the Religious Congregations who partner with Sophia to support those impacted by homelessness



Board members of Sophia and Midlands Simon at a meeting held in Sophia and MSC joint offices in Presentation House Athlone

Front Row Left to Right: Stephanie Duffy (MSC Board Member) Mark Cooney (Chair of MSC) Denis Doherty (Chair of Sophia) and Eamonn Martin (Sophia Board Member and Co-Founder Sophia)

Back Row: Tom Keady (MSC Board Member) Willie Burns (MSC Board Member) Gráinne Hilton (Sophia Board Member) Molly Buckley (MSC Board Member) Seamus Dooley (Sophia Board Member) Brian Cowen (MSC Board Member) P.O. Keenan (MSC Board Member) Gerry Raleigh (MSC Board Member) Mary Doyle (MSC Board Member) and Tony O'Riordan (C.E.O of Sophia and MSC)

## Collaboration Agreement with Midlands Simon Community

The Board of Directors renewed their partnership which included signing a Collaboration Agreement with Midlands Simon Community in 2019. Both organisations have a shared value base in terms of service delivery and are committed to adapting the Housing First model to an Irish context. The Collaboration Agreement between both organisations has led to greater efficiencies through the sharing of resources and the sharing of costs.

The Collaboration Agreement is an example of an innovative partnership of how two organisations who are committed to similar goals and share the same philosophy in terms of service provision can support more people, provide a better quality of service and achieve greater return for the public funds that are entrusted to them. In 2019, both organisations collaborated in the following areas:

- The post of C.E.O is a shared resource. The C.E.O of Sophia while being an employee of Sophia also carries out the duties of C.E.O of the Midlands Simon Community.
- Both organisations collaborate in the areas of creating new homes for people to progress out of homelessness.
- Shared office space in Athlone, kindly made available to Sophia by the Presentation Sisters.
- Joint partnership in developing the SMES Europa Best Practices in Homeless Services Manual.

A Joint Working Group was established by both Boards with terms of reference approved by both organisations. This working group has the delegated authority to monitor the Collaboration Agreement and report to both Boards on the implementation of the agreement.

# The Wisdom Centre

The Wisdom Centre in our Cork Street Project is a beautiful architecturally designed structure, with a bright and tranquil space inside. The Wisdom Centre is surrounded by open green space, gardens and water.

The Wisdom centre offers an oasis of calm among the bustle of the city. It is a modern, creative, multi-functioning space that offers:

- **A Quiet Space**
- **Counseling Rooms**
- **Therapy Rooms**
- **Conference Room**
- **Coffee Dock**
- **Enclosed Outdoor Garden**



Wisdom Centre Cork St

In 2019 the Wisdom Centre held the launch of Unanima International's Global Research Project on Homelessness and Trauma. We also celebrated the Golden Jubilee of our founder Jean Quinn D.W.



Therapeutic space in Sophia Wisdom Centre

# Nurturing Centres

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In Sophia we recognise childhood as a significant and distinctive time in life that it is a really important time, some children have adversities in their life and we want to provide positive relationships and a safe secure base to build on their strengths and have a positive impact on their development.

Jacinta Corcoran, Childcare and Nurturing Centre Manager

The experience of being homeless is deeply traumatic for children and their parents. Homelessness itself is traumatic and puts families in situations where they are at greater risk of additional traumatic experiences.

Sophia recognises this and has a dedicated childcare team working in our Nurturing Centres. The Nurturing Centres focus on each child encouraging them to thrive despite any traumas they may have experienced.

In our dedicated Nurturing Centres in Donabate and Cork St, Sophia provides support to the families living in Sophia tenancies. We also provide support to families living in emergency accommodation through our Outreach Services.



The new soft play area installed in Cork St in 2019



The team is always innovating and responding to the needs of children and concluded a review of its support model in 2019 and in 2020 will implement the findings to further develop their work supporting children and their families to move out of homelessness.

In total 48 children were supported by Sophia Nurturing Centres through pre-school and after-school services in 2019 with our Our After school Club which went from strength to strength in 2019. The St John of God early years group continued to work with our Nurturing Centre in Cork St taking part in drama classes.

Sophia's Nurturing Centres are the children's own space, a space where all they need to be is a child. An importance is placed on the children being able to see themselves in each centre, where their identity, family and sense of belonging is on show. Our nurturing centres not only work to support the child but they also support each parent valuing them.

“

So much work is done in the Nurturing Centre, celebrating their childhood and their experience, building memories of them as children and as a child in their families

Cathy Bent Childcare and Nurturing Centre Manager



Art work by children supported by Sophia Nurturing Centre Staff

## Intergenerational Project

In 2019 Sophia's nurturing centres looking towards the Together Old and Young (TOY) Initiative set up Sophia's Intergenerational Project.

The project brings together young children with older adults to learn and benefit from each others company. The project has clear benefits of learning together for both young and old and for communities at large. It creates understanding as some of the children we support have little or no contact with older relatives. The project creates improved feelings of wellbeing, and decreased loneliness.

They were also successful in applying for a grant from Applegreen Ireland which meant that the project was able to hire a Drama Teacher. Old and young took part in the drama classes and are hoping to build on this to produce a book of stories in the future. School age children took part in intergenerational gardening and horticulture workshops. In Dublin 8, the SICDA over 55 group which meets in Sophia Cork St, were also involved in the project.

## Cork St Cafe



Trevor Kearns Recipient of EU Ordinary Hero award

When Sophia was founded one of the first things they noted was the need to have access to good nutritious food. This was at the heart of our decision when designing the service in Cork St, to include an on-site cafe which would provide meals for our residents and also cater for our Wisdom Centre. For 12 years Chef Trevor Kearns has been at the helm of the cafe.

In 2019 Trevor's commitment to ensuring quality, nutritious meals are available to residents received European recognition when he was recognised as an 'Ordinary Hero' by the 'European Union's *"Together We Protect"* campaign. The campaign highlights and promotes people who protect EU citizens. The campaign celebrates 'the chain of ordinary heroes' from all European Union countries who work together every day across Europe to protect EU citizens and their environment, their safety, their health and society.

The award gained national attention when Trevor was interviewed on his work and the award by Marian Finucane on her RTE 1 Radio show as well as appearing in a number of local and national newspaper articles.

Trevor has partnered with FoodCloud in Ireland ensuring that the ethos of the Cafe is one which is committed to a reduction in food waste. FoodCloud works with food producers and grocery retailers to make food available to organisations like Sophia and thus reduce food waste, increase sustainability and help reduce food poverty for those who need support the most. Food poverty has a huge impact on people who experience homelessness. Access to affordable nutritious food can often be a struggle, our cafe continues to strive to reduce this inequality and improve peoples lives one dish at a time.



Meals prepared for residents in Cork St





# **Governance and Finances**

# Governance



Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe T.D and Sophia C.E.O Tony O'Riordan

Sophia is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity and is dedicated to meeting all Governance and Regulatory requirements for the Housing Sector and the Not for Profit Sector. Sophia is committed to attaining the standards outlined for Tier 3 Approved Housing Bodies by the Regulation Office for Approved Housing Bodies.

In particular, Sophia prioritises adherence to the Financial, Performance and Governance Standards for Approved Housing Bodies as produced by the Regulation Office for Approved Housing Bodies.

The Charities Regulator launched a new Charities Governance Code in late 2018. This Code sets out a mandatory standard for governance in Irish charities. Sophia has completed the Compliance Record form which has been reviewed by

the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee.

Sophia is at an advanced stage of the process of completing identified actions in order to ensure compliance.

Sophia's Finance and Audit, Risk & Governance Committees work with the Board to ensure that there is a strong framework of governance, financial accounting and effective reporting within the organisation, ensuring there is:

Monitoring and review of the accounting and financial reporting systems of Sophia;

A strong framework for accountability and governance and for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of financial control and oversight.

Strategic direction and

oversight on all financial and operational matters of Sophia; and

Compliance with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice.

Sophia is committed to complying with the Charities Regulator "Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public".

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It comprises of nine non-executive directors. The directors are drawn from diverse backgrounds in business and professions, who bring to board deliberations, their significant business and decision-making skills achieved in their respective fields together with a broad range of experience and views. The Board is very attentive

to reviewing its membership and recruiting new members as required. There is clear division of responsibility within the organisation with the Board retaining control of major decisions under a formal schedule of matters reserved to the Board for decision.

The C.E.O is responsible for implementing strategy and policy within the authorities delegated to the C.E.O by the Board.

The organisation has a comprehensive process for reporting management information to the Board. The Board is provided with regular information, which includes key performance information for all aspects of the organisation.

The Board meets regularly as required and met eight times in 2019 (six times in 2018).

There are three sub-committees of the Board: All board sub-groups are advisory in nature and have written terms of reference. A fourth committee has been formed and will commence its work in 2020 focused on the monitoring of the quality of services and the adherence to Sophia's ethos and values.

## Development Committee

The committee supports the CEO and management team to ensure that there is a strong framework for property development and property management within the organisation. The committee reports back to the Board at least four times a year on property development and property management issues.

## Finance Committee

The committee reviews and monitors all aspects of the organisation's financial reporting and controls. The committee meets at least four times a year.

## Audit, Risk & Governance Committee

The committee evaluates, examines and reviews all systems and methods of control, including governance, risk analysis and risk management; and to ensure the company is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. The committee meets at least three times a year.



Denis Doherty Chairperson of Sophia Housing

# Finances

Sophia's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102). The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (Revised 2015) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities'.

Sophia's financial results for 2019 are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities.

A surplus of income over expenditure of €1,028,326 (2018: surplus of €435,745) was recorded by Sophia for the year end 31 December 2019. The surplus arises due to the following:

1. An excess of the amortisation of the CAS/CLSS Loans over the depreciation of the housing properties resulted in a net gain of €456,720 (2018: €393,743) being credited in the Statement of Financial Activities in the current year.
2. Sophia received a donation of a property valued at €527,136 and this was recorded as income in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The two items noted above resulted in a significant surplus of income over expenditure for 2019. However, the operating surplus of the organisation is €44,470 for 2019 (2018: €42,002).

It is noted that through the generosity of Religious Congregations Sophia was able to meet its fundraising targets and continue to respond to the housing and homeless crisis in Ireland by proactively seeking to build homes for people recovering from homelessness.

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Sinking Fund 2019 €	Unrestricted Funds 2019 €	Restricted Funds 2019 €	Endowment Funds 2019 €	Total Funds 2019 €	Total Funds 2018 €
Donations and legacies	-	454,958	96,566	-	551,524	469,798
<b>Charitable activities</b>						
Income from Charitable activities	-	-	4,237,999	-	4,237,999	3,858,916
Other income	-	2,305,935	-	527,136	2,833,071	2,242,936
<b>Total income</b>	-	2,760,893	4,334,565	527,136	7,622,594	6,571,650
<b>Expenditure On:</b>						
Raising funds	-	6,379	-	-	6,379	3,995
Charitable activities	-	1,949,599	4,497,620	22,986	6,470,205	5,981,187
Other expenditure	-	117,684	-	-	117,684	150,723
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	-	2,073,662	4,497,620	22,986	6,594,268	6,135,905
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year</b>		687,231	(163,055)	504,150	1,028,326	435,745
Accumulated funds at the beginning of the year	269,284	3,134,145	9,886,708	1,063,648	14,353,785	13,918,040
Transfer to sinking fund	60,000	(60,000)				
Transfer from sinking fund	(19,283)	19,283				
<b>Accumulated funds at the end of the year</b>	310,001	3,780,659	9,723,653	1,567,798	15,382,111	14,353,785

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2019 €	2018 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Assets - housing properties	39,989,374	37,616,667
Financial Assets	9	9
Other income	39,989,383	37,616,676
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	910,157	702,679
Cash at bank and in hand	838,401	1,040,151
	1,748,558	1,742,830
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	(1,086,109)	(906,592)
Net Current Assets	662,449	836,238
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	40,651,832	38,452,914
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one Year</b>	(25,269,721)	(24,099,129)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>15,382,111</b>	<b>14,353,785</b>
<b>Reserves</b>		
Sinking Funds	310,001	269,284
<b>Accumulated funds:</b>		
Endowment	1,567,798	1,063,648
Restricted	9,723,653	9,886,708
Unrestricted	3,780,659	3,134,145
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>15,382,111</b>	<b>14,353,785</b>



## Thank You

Sophia does not work in a vacuum. We are able to provide support to people in the safety and security of homes of their own through partnerships with a huge number of people and organisations.

To each of you we would like to take this opportunity to say **thank you**. We look forward to continuing our important partnerships in 2020 and working together to end homelessness in Ireland.

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