



# 2020 Annual Report

CHRISTINE BUCKLEY CENTRE FOR EDUCATION  
AND SUPPORT CLG

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# 1. Chairperson's Statement

The year 2020 proved particularly challenging for the Christine Buckley Centre for education and support CLG on several fronts. Like other charities we shared the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic while successfully maintaining a service to survivors of Industrial schools, Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Institutions. Even before the Taoiseach announced the lockdown in March, we conducted a risk assessment which confirmed that over 90% of our clients were for a variety of reasons extremely vulnerable to Covid 19 infection. It was also a year which saw challenges arising from a change in management and the deadline for compliance with the Charities Regulator's requirements in line with governance legislation.

## How We Reorganised Our Services

As many survivors already suffered from isolation due to the lack of family support networks, the lockdown which resulted in the closure of the centre, deprived them of their key, if not only, peer-to-peer supports and social groups. Above all they missed the direct supports provided through our centre. Lock down also meant that from March until September 2020 we were unfortunately unable to provide students with onsite classes in home skills, crafts, art, oil painting, drama therapy, holistics, computers and other classes which they enjoy and clearly benefit from.

However, in spite of these challenges our team of staff, led by manager Annmarie Kennedy and acting manager Doreen Davis; quickly established a telephone help line service to ensure that the assistance and supports that our team provides could be maintained. This was equally important as it alleviated the isolation which lock-down inflicted on so many.

Due to the particular vulnerability of our clients and in order to enhance our phone supports we extended our service from the four days that the centre was open to five days a week.

Staff have been alternating working on site and remote working in line with NPHET/HSE guidance for managing safe operations during the pandemic. We are grateful to all our team for providing this service while remote working most of the time from their homes.

When our new manager Nóra Dempsey came on board in June 2020, she also quickly introduced a Covid 19 response plan in compliance with HSE regulations. She also secured Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) so that staff could work together in the centre and also meet certain clients who needed to meet with a staff member in order to address particular requirements they had in terms of social welfare and other matters. As our premises extends to less than 1,800 sq. ft, it is too small for having safely distanced meetings for even relatively small groups. A deep clean of the premises was completed by a cleaning contractor. Spaces were reconfigured for adequate social distancing measures for One-to-One meetings/small groups and staff workstations. Staff received an onsite Covid 19 Induction session prior to returning to work in the centre during Level 3.

At Level 3 status the centre opened for only one-to-one emergency appointments as required under NPHET guidance. During level 5 lockdowns staff switched to remote working from home. Also, the staff staggered attendances when onsite to ensure the fewest number of people were onsite. Demands on staff were and continue to be high and their resilience should be commended for the workloads they are completing weekly and their interagency networking to get the right supports for Individual clients.

## Assessing Client Needs

A second risk assessment survey was undertaken by phone in the summer with clients who had physically attended the centre pre Covid 19 to establish would they be prepared to attend the centre physically with a Health and Safety Plan in place and/or would they be prepared to learn how to access online classes from CDETb in September or October if staff supported them to learn how to use Zoom and other available online platforms.

A total of 230 clients, including new clients, actively linked with the service during Covid 19 in 2020. Of these, 88 had physically attended regularly prior to Covid 19 and of the 88, 61 participated in the survey and of these participants 44 were in the 60 to 80 age group and 11 were in the 40 to 60 age group. 30 people said they had smartphones, 6 had tablets, 4 iPad, 2 laptops and 13 stated they had no device: either old mobiles or house phones. 35 wanted to upskill or source and learn how to use a smartphone for contact with others and online learning. 35 were prepared to attend the centre to learn how to use a smartphone 40 wanted to see staff for 1:1 supports/ in small groups with staff.

## Meeting Needs of Survivors

Several Survivors continued to present with social problems during the year including housing issues, addiction problems, medical/psychological/psychiatric related issues and monetary issues. CBC assisted a variety of Survivors with housing applications, difficulties associated with their housing such as anti-social behaviour, social welfare applications, medical card, disability parking card and pension applications. This involved face to face meetings with clients followed by a mixture of letters, email and phone communication.

There are a number of single men requiring assistance with their housing situations. CBC staff contacted as many clients as possible on a regular basis and one benefit of these one-to-one contacts was that it enabled staff to better get to know clients especially those who require more focused supports.

Some emerging barriers which survivors encountered:

- Refusal of social welfare payments and or medical cards even for some with major health issues including terminal illness.
- Many Clients attending require mental health support.
- Some have alcohol and addiction issues and have regressed due to the pandemic.
- Many are elderly and require smartphone supports to network effectively and are very anxious about the threats of further lockdowns as they fear the consequent isolation.
- Some clients could not cook for themselves and meals on wheels has been accessed for these people around the country.
- Many were not using smartphones or any IT devices when the centre closed. A number of smart phones were sourced for clients through Alone Ireland/Vodafone. CBC arranged for CDETБ to provide tutors to deliver Smartphone lessons to as many Survivors as possible to use zoom to access their CDETБ classes online in autumn.

### **Free Education**

Due to inadequate education during their time in institutions, literacy is a major issue for many Survivors. CBC registered as a National Adult Literacy (NALA) centre to provide for virtual lessons that our clients can learn at home facilitated by a CDETБ Tutor.

After the successful set up of the existing Men's Group onto Zoom by summer the group continued to operate online very successfully for the rest of the year, this supported the setup of CDETБ classes with some of this group to begin with and during the period October to December all CDETБ classes successfully transferred to the centre's Zoom online account. There was an Increase in numbers using online classes and requesting phone supports to access classes or link with the centre by the second lockdown and return of the autumn semester. On average 22 clients consistently attended classes every week. A further 10 to 14 more accessed classes on one or more occasions on an ad hoc week by week basis.

Some Clients prefer attending the centre and declined to stick with or join online classes, but they still engage with phone supports. Others noted how online activity has been a lifeline for them as they live rurally and would have no contact with any of their peers without it. It cannot be underestimated the amount of time and resources required to support each student with smartphones when they have little to no literacy skills, so this has been a huge accomplishment for the students who have been successful in this area.

To enhance the delivery of online classes in 2021, CBC secured funding from CDETB through the Mitigating Against Education Disadvantaged Fund and purchased 50 Computer Tablets and 53 headsets to start a tablet lending scheme for students where staff supported clients to access the internet in their homes and avail of a free loan of a tablet and headset to access their online classes more effectively.

### **Working with Other Agencies and Groups**

CBC worked closely with clients seeking to get Caranua redress as it wound down. New connections were made with Little Penney Dinner's, Meath Street, and the Arc Cancer Support Centre. Since lockdown we have had great support from the HSE, Towards Healing, Garda Outreach Team, Community Centres in different areas, pharmacies, GPs, Dept of Community Affairs, Age Action Ireland, Addiction services, St Vincent's Hospital, Croft Nursing Home, Enclude and DCC.

I wish to thank all our staff for their willingness to work from home and continue to do their best for clients.

### **Facing the Future Together**

Our co-founder Carmel McDonnell-Byrne followed up on her initiative which led to the Facing the Future Together conference of 2019. Working with other groups, a report of that conference was launched in October 2020 at a webinar chaired by Fergus Finlay.

As well as our managers, representatives from a number of agencies collaborated on this report including: Barnardo's Origins, Caranua, One in Four, HSE National Counselling Service, Right of Place Second Chance, Community Response and Towards Healing. It was funded by the Department of Education and Skills. The report was circulated to key ministers, public representatives, members of relevant Oireachtas committees and other Government agencies.

Based on research conducted by UCD Professor Alan Carr and his colleagues, the report identified five asks which our board believe are essential to address the future needs of survivors of institutional abuse:

- Health Amendment Act medical card for survivors and support with housing
- Continuation of free easily accessible counselling services for survivors
- Provision of advocacy supports for survivors in the long-term, including accessing public services, linkage with support services, homelessness and addiction supports.
- All medical and public service staff working in a customer-facing role should receive trauma-informed practice training on how to identify survivors and the different approaches to the support they may require.
- Identification of supports needed by survivors based outside of Ireland

## **Staff**

Other significant challenges arose in relation to our management during the year. Annmarie Kennedy gave notice before Christmas 2019 that she intended to take up a new position. However, she agreed to continue on a one-day week until the new manager was appointed. Assistant manager Doreen Davis agreed to take the position of acting manager for the other three days of the week that the centre was open. We completed the process of recruiting a new manager and approved her appointment at our 12 March board meeting.



However, that was the same day that the Government announced the lock down and as the board did not know if the centre could continue to serve Survivors we asked our successful candidate Nóra Dempsey to give us some time to see how the situation would develop.

At our May board meeting we were appraised by our existing manager that the service continued to work well and that if anything there was an even greater need for our services. Consequently, we asked Nóra Dempsey to take up the position of manager on a four day week. She took up her post in June.

I wish to acknowledge the trojan work over the years of our outgoing manager Annmarie Kennedy. I also wish to acknowledge the work of our assistant manager Doreen Davis especially during the challenges that arose in the first half of last year and in assisting the new manager to hit the ground running. I also wish to thank our director Terri Harrison in helping to keep our doors open during staffing shortages in Spring 2020.

### **Premises**

Because of the unsuitability of our current premises, we have made attempts to find an alternative but so far this search has proved fruitless. To facilitate Survivors we require premises close to many public transport routes that should be at least 3,000 sq. ft and have a balcony or outdoor area and good ventilation.

### **CBC Governance**

#### **Board Changes**

The number of board members, all of whom are unpaid volunteers, increased to six during the year as two new directors joined: Joan Burton and Linda Coone.

The board also included: Chairperson – Donal Buckley, Secretary – Maire Mulcahy, Jackie Gallagher and Terri Harrison.

I wish to thank all my colleague board members for all of their work during the year.

## 11.1 Board Policies

The Board approved and adapted the following policies including some that were reviewed:

- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of interest
- Board of Management Guidebook
- Recruitment policy for Board Members
- Staff handbook
- Health and Safety
- Hazard and Risk Assessment
- Risk Register
- Covid 19 Response Plan
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data protection and Freedom of Information policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Harassment: Dignity at work Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- Advocacy Policy
- Complaints and compliments policy
- Financial Policy
- Performance appraisal policy for Manager
- Safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults
- Remote Working Policy

All directors signed the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest forms. Following those approvals, the Board completed the Governance compliance record form to ensure that there is compliance with the requirements of the Charity Regulations.

EGM meetings passed two amendments. One extended the objects of the constitution to include services to those who were in Magdalene laundries, Mothers and babies who were in institutions or who had their babies taken from them. The other resolution amended the Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with HSE's self-evaluation questionnaire to include criteria for recruitment of new directors.

## **Improving Governance**

The chairperson participated in the Charities Regulator's training course on Compliance with the Charities Governance Code. He also became a member of the Board Chairs network, a network of chairpersons of charitable organisations organised by Carmichael Centre.

CBC Chairperson and Manager liaised with the professional free services of the Carmichael Centre for guidance and support to enhance skills in this area.

## **Christmas Gifts**

For Christmas, clients benefitted from generous donations from Helping Hands which enabled many clients to receive a gift/voucher to ensure they got something for Christmas, and this was especially beneficial for those who are isolated and living alone. We thank Theresa Kelly of Helping Hands for the €1,000 which funded Christmas gifts bags for many clients. We also thank Inner City Helping Homeless for the 120 Christmas boxes which were distributed to those in need.

## **Financial Support Donations**

In December 2020 the recruitment company Indeed encouraged its employees to donate to a charity of their choice through its Good Deeds program. As part of the program, one of their team, Darragh Buckley, who is also the son of our co-founder Christine Buckley, set up a donation page for Christine Buckley Centre and asked his colleagues to donate. Many did and generated a total of €1,514.00. This was donated through Benevity's Irish Online Giving Foundation which forwarded a net donation of €1,440.40 to Christine Buckley Centre for Education & Support CLG.

Above all I wish to thank the HSE for its continued funding as well as CDET B for providing tutors and funding for educational materials and for funding the 50 tablets which made it possible to help clients with Zoom classes.

Donal Buckley  
Chairperson

## 2. Purpose and Activities

### Our Mission

Since 1996 our mission has been to provide a place of welcome, dignity, respect and safety where all survivors of institutions can feel supported and empowered.

In particular, survivors of Industrial schools, Orphanages, Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby institutions can participate in a healing journey as they endeavour to rebuild their lives and find the peace and justice they truly deserve. We aim to achieve this through education, personal development, holistics and creativity in a community setting. Our centre will always be a place where people are not alone or made to feel different, we can stand together with peers.

### Our Objective

As per our organisation's constitution and articles of association; the main object for which the company is established is to foster the personal development of survivors of institutional abuse, by the provision in our centre in Dublin, but not limited to our centre, of appropriate programmes and services including life-skills, personal development and one-to-one support and educational programmes and to assist them in their engagement with government and non-governmental agencies that provide services to those survivors. In addition, we aim to develop and implement programmes designed to meet the needs of institutional abuse victims and to provide back up and support services appropriate to their needs.

The centre aims to provide advocacy support and appropriate referrals in the areas of:

- Education and Training
- Admin Support
- Crisis Intervention

## Access to Counselling Services

- Access to Legal Services
- Access to Training Services
- Access to Health Services
- Access to Addiction Services

Prior to the current Covid 19 pandemic, the Christine Buckley Centre (CBC) typically provided ongoing support via a day centre setting for education, drop in and general social care supports for Survivors of Institutional Abuse. The centre services are open to all survivors of Industrial schools, Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Institutions and their families.

The long-term effects of abuse have had an immense lifelong effect on each survivor with the trauma they have endured. The consequences of this trauma for those affected have impacted across many areas of their lives including mental health, physical health and general overall wellbeing and has been noted to have had a knock-on effect through the next generation of Survivors' family members. The Christine Buckley Centre recognises that Trauma informed care is a necessary approach that all staff in the centre must adapt to when working with Survivors and staff will receive the necessary ongoing training as appropriate.

## **Revised Adapted Services in 2020**

In light of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic which immediately impacted the centre's day to day operations in March 2020 with the national announcement of the first lockdown, Christine Buckley Centre revised its service delivery in response to ongoing guidance from the HSE and NPHET. Due to the small size and unsuitability of our premises to adhere to national guidelines for the prevention and protection of our Clients and Staff from Covid 19, the physical centre had to close immediately with staff working remotely from home.

## **Outreach and Online Services**

Services became an outreach phone service taking incoming calls from Survivors in need or distress and making outreach calls to vulnerable survivors in the community. As the centre is often the only social outlet for Survivors using our services and as many live alone, have health conditions, are elderly and/or isolated, this vital outreach service successfully continued to develop over the course of 2020 into referrals to appropriate support agencies according to their needs. As the year progressed, we also used Zoom to provide survivors with access to our peer groups and online CDET B classes by autumn.

Christine Buckley Centre continues to be dedicated to supporting Survivors for their social care and educational needs going into 2021.

## **Adapted Reopening of Centre**

A new manager Nóra Dempsey commenced at the end of June and completed a health and safety review of our premises in Jervis House to implement the necessary health and safety measures as per the National Return to Work Safely Protocol as recommended by the NPHE T for Covid 19. A risk assessment survey was then completed by contacting our client group to identify the numbers who are most vulnerable to Covid 19, the supports that would be needed to develop online services and to determine the planning required to reopen the physical centre. A Covid 19 response plan including a risk assessment and protocols for staff to follow around the prevention of Covid 19 were developed followed by a staff information/training day which was held prior to reopening to clients. PPE supplies, equipment and furniture for the necessary health and safety measures and management of infection control for clients and staff were sourced. The centre finally opened on a limited appointment only basis due to the small size, ventilation, and layout of our premises.

It was acknowledged by the board that the service requires a much larger building in a more appropriate social care setting which could facilitate both Covid 19 restrictions and considerations of survivors' needs. A search for new premises got underway, however this was delayed when lockdowns were imposed as visits to sites were postponed.

The outreach phone supports and development of online access for Survivors continued into Autumn and finally saw the return of group classes provided by CDETB on the centre's Zoom account at the end of September. This continued to go from strength to strength with more students joining in and learning how to use smartphones and IT devices to access Zoom. The centre also gratefully received a grant which purchased Samsung Galaxy tablets which were then lent to Survivors to enable them to access classes online. We are grateful to the CDETB and its Mitigating Adult Education Disadvantaged Fund for the funding it provided at the end of December 2020.

To date this has been successful, and staff continue to strive to increase class numbers despite the lack of a physical centre that so many survivors miss during the pandemic.

### **Facilitating Family Members of Survivors**

While CBC usually provides its services to the adult children of survivors and actively encourages survivors to invite their adult children to come to the centre, this is not possible under current Covid 19 restrictions. However, we do encourage them to avail of the outreach phone service. We refer adult children to family support and counselling services and in some cases adult children have helped by volunteering. Some survivors also have family members or spouses who are also survivors who attend the centre.

### **Counselling**

Several survivors continue to present with social problems including housing issues, addiction problems, medical/psychological/psychiatric related issues, medical card/social welfare payment concerns, monetary issues, relationship breakdowns etc. The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on Survivors' mental health, especially for those isolated cannot be underestimated.

The centre assists clients in sourcing counselling services. This is suggested to all new clients on their initial contact with the CBC centre and to those in distress. Many of our clients engage with Towards Healing to fulfil their immediate counselling needs as they can be seen within 2-3 weeks. Towards Healing also offered counselling for family members. In addition, their service provided an Anger Management Programme, A Trauma Workshop, a Befriending Service and a Support Line. CBC clients speak very highly of Towards Healing and many clients have benefited greatly from the various services and supports that complement the counselling process.

At CBC, we believe there has been a drop in numbers of survivors of institutional abuse attending National Counselling Service NCS due to the extensive waiting time and not because survivors no longer require counselling. Survivors attend Towards Healing because they can meet their need for timely counselling. Towards Healing and Connect telephone counselling service offered telephone support to our clients during this pandemic.

Clients can also access addiction counselling services through the HSE South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force and referrals are made when necessary and urgent in some cases while clients are awaiting counselling for childhood issues.

## **Redress**

Caranua was wound down in early 2021 and all outstanding applications and cases that were not completed ended as of December 2020. This caused distress to some Survivors who found the whole redress process extremely difficult.

Minister O Gorman will begin a new redress scheme in 2021 for Survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions and the Manager submitted a submission on the consultation of this scheme in early 2021 with information gathered from survivors themselves, the CBC staff team, and the board.



### 3. Key Statistics from 2020

**230**

SURVIVORS ACTIVELY LINKING WITH THE SERVICE DURING COVID-19 IN 2020

Number of regular attendees onsite prior to Covid 19 = 88. Survey aimed at these 88 in August 2020 who physically attended for resumption of some physical services. Over half of these were over the age of 60 years.

**69%**

RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

61 out of 88 responded. Of the 17 non respondents there was either no contact details given or they were not answering calls from staff.

It should be noted that some clients may not have phones due to various issues such as homelessness and literacy skills. Also, some clients wish to maintain anonymity or do not wish their families or support networks to know they are survivors using the centre and opted not to engage with us or classes at this current time. CBC will continue to support these Survivors when they are ready to return. It should also be noted this survey was carried out with those who physically attended for the purposes of data gathering for phone supports and numbers to re-attend classes. Many had phone call supports prior to Covid 19 which continues through the pandemic. This was due to their location and ageing; not being able to travel to Dublin City Centre anymore. It should also be noted that both new and returning clients from years before made contact for supports with our services in 2020 due to issues they faced during the pandemic.

## 4. Charity Status

### Governance and Compliance

Registered Company Limited by Guarantee without a share capital.  
Our Registered Charity Number is 20141646

Registered with the Companies Registration Office CRO number  
330953

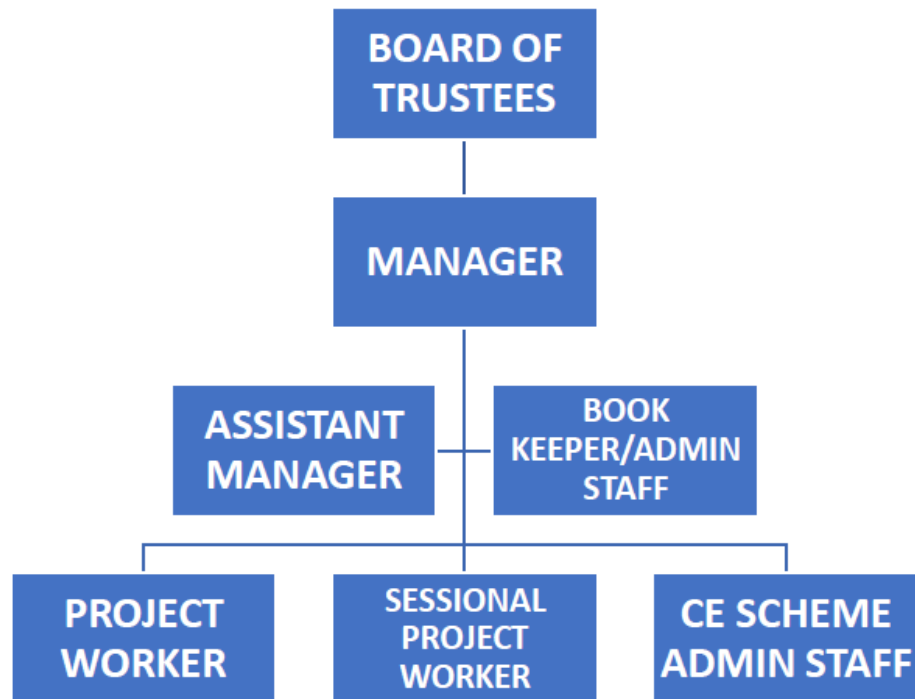
Registered charity with Revenue number CHY 13497

Compliant with relevant Irish charity legislation and framework  
Compliant with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and  
Charitable Organisations

Adopted the use of Charities SORP in our financial statements and  
tendered for a new Auditor for 2021.

The Christine Buckley Centre is currently reviewing its governance in  
line with the Charities' Regulatory Authority's Code of Governance to  
ensure our compliance for the next reporting year.

## 4. Charity Status



### Board of Trustees:

Chairperson–Donal Buckley

Secretary–Máire Mulcahy

Treasurer–Jackie Gallagher (Stepped down 2021).

Trustee–Terri Harrison

Trustee–Joan Burton

Trustee–Linda Coone

Trustee Francis Timmons stepped down from the board in Spring 2020, as did Jackie Gallagher in Spring 2021. The Christine Buckley Centre would like to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude for their valued contributions to the centre during their time with us and wish them both the very best for their future endeavors.

The board welcomed Joan Burton and Linda Coone in November 2020. Three new members also joined in 2021, Joe Lyons as the new treasurer, Fergus Finlay and Gary Gannon. We look forward to a bright future working with you all going forward in the development of the service.

Ten formal board meetings were held in 2020. The AGM took place on 30th September 2020. The Board developed, reviewed, approved and adapted a number of policies. This work is ongoing to develop and review policies further.

An EGM meeting also passed a resolution extending the objects of the constitution to include services to those who were in Mother and Child institutions.

The board amended the Memorandum and Articles of Association in line with HSE's self-evaluation questionnaire to include criteria for recruitment of new directors.

CBC also has an organising Committee, established in 2006 which includes client survivors. It is chaired by a staff member and its purpose is to organise events such as plays, singing performances, educational tours and outings. It is very important to survivors themselves that they are involved in the organisation of such events. Unfortunately due to Covid 19 restrictions this did not operate in 2020 but will resume once all restrictions are lifted. The Manager will be the Chairperson of the organising committee.

### **Staff:**

- New Manager Nóra Dempsey. July 2020 4 days per week: Tuesday – Friday 10am – 5pm.
  - (Former manager Ann Marie Kennedy January until June – 1 day per week: Wednesdays. )
- Assistant Manager-Doreen Davis. 3 days per week: Tuesday – Thursday 10am – 5pm. She also stepped up as acting manager during Ms Kennedy's absence from February until Ms Dempsey became manager
- Project Worker- Mandy Moore- 3 days per week: Tuesday- Thursday 10am – 5pm.

- Sessional Project Worker–James Bowes– 2 days per week: Wednesday and Friday 10am to 5pm.
- Book keeper/Admin staff–Emma Beatty– 0.5 days per week.
- Admin Worker–Elena Kerpiene– 19.5 Hours per week c/o Sub sponsor CASPR

Staff are currently paid on daily estimated wages per position in CBC apart from the Manager who has a salary.

Ms Kennedy moved to a new career in June 2020. Ms Dempsey and James Bowes left CBC in 2021. James continues to facilitate the Mens support group for two hours per week, while Matt Larkin stepped in to support in the project worker role in early 2021. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to each of them for their hard work and dedication to Survivors. We wish each of them good fortune in their future careers.

## Training

Christine Buckley Centre strives to ensure all staff and Board Members receive ongoing relevant training and intend to develop a new Training policy in 2021.

- Staff training completed in 2020:
- Trauma informed care– c/o Quality Matters Feb 2020 – Staff team
- Covid 19 Induction prior to centre reopening July 2020 – Staff team
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Diploma Course– Assistant Manager
- Trauma Grounding Kit workshop c/o Susan Wallace– Staff team
- Capacitar Ireland Hopscotch Multicultural Wellness Education Programme: a unique and innovative project that empowers people to deal with stress and enrich their overall quality of life c/o CASPR x 6 hours– staff team
- Manager– Mentee programme Carmichael Centre

Board Member Training completed in 2020:

The Chairperson participated in the Charities Regulator's training course on Compliance with the Charities Governance Code. He also became a member of the Board Chairs network, a network of chairpersons of charitable organisations organised by Carmichael Centre.

## 6. Achievements and Performance

### Adapting our Services with COVID-19

While 2020 was an unprecedented year of challenges for the centre due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on our operations, the centre adapted and continued to support Survivors over the course of the year.

At the beginning of the year prior to the first lockdown, staff successfully completed training with Quality Matters on Trauma Informed Care to learn to support survivors in the most beneficial way. A survey of clients was also completed that established that many were at risk from Covid 19 in the vulnerable age group categories or with health concerns as identified by NPHET and the HSE as the pandemic unfolded.

On March 13th after the Government's announcement of a national lockdown in 2020, the Board decided to close the physical centre to immediately reduce the risk of infection amongst our clients and staff. Staff immediately started working from home to provide an outreach call service to those most vulnerable and operated an incoming call support service for those in distress while the centre was closed.

Sincere gratitude to the whole staff team led by the Manager Ms Kennedy and the Acting Manager Ms Davis who organised these changes to operations in this period and to the whole team for their extraordinary efforts and sheer determination to keep as many vulnerable Survivors as possible connected to the service as it adapted. Our full time Project Worker should also be commended for her hard work in getting this up and running and to all staff for extending services to 5 days a week during the first lockdown.

During lockdown staff also postponed taking annual leave until after Ms Dempsey took her position. We must also acknowledge our dedicated admin/reception staff who also supported people to access online classes, host Zoom classes and support the staff schedule. The team are to be commended for their efforts.

### **Virtual Centre Supports**

It should be noted the variety of challenges some Survivors faced during lockdowns in 2020. Some people were very isolated and were determined to stay connected with the centre's supports. Huge efforts were made by many Survivors trying to access online classes, many of whom had never used a smartphone before and also had literacy challenges to overcome to learn how to enter classes on Zoom and use smartphones effectively.

Our admiration for our clients for their never ending efforts to adapt and upskill to access our changed services cannot be understated in 2020. They are to be celebrated and commended for their fantastic achievements. Clients ranging from ages in their 40s to 80s successfully upskilled in these areas from never using a smartphone, to making calls, using WhatsApp and eventually accessing classes via Zoom by Autumn. We must acknowledge the fantastic support to the staff team with these efforts from our CDET B Smartphone and Literacy Tutor for without her dedication and support to clients, many would not have had the chance to be successful.

### **Men's Group Online**

From April to June with thanks to the determination of CBC staff and our sessional project worker/group facilitator and our Smartphone and Literacy CDET B Tutor and the successful liaison with Alone Ireland and Vodafone, smartphones were sourced for the established men's peer group and these sessions moved onto zoom by June.

Thanks to the continued support of Vodafone and Alone Ireland during summer months phones were also sourced for some of the ladies and other gents to prepare for accessing classes in the autumn.



## Education

In Autumn 2020, Christine Buckley Centre became a registered NALA centre so that when clients may attend once again on a one-to-one basis, they can be facilitated to access literacy classes online in the centre or in the comfort of their own homes once shown how to by a tutor/staff member.

The CDETB provide Christine Buckley Centre with 800 tutor hours per year. Currently 8 different CDETB tutors teach at CBC or via Zoom as required. Current subjects include Art for all, Oil painting, Holistic, Home skills, Drama, Literacy and Smartphone technology. The Centre, through its nurturing environment, allows victims to develop social support while building new skills. This holistic approach in the provision of education and support offers a path to self-sufficiency and inclusion. Unfortunately, from March, no CDETB group classes were held other than smartphone one to one lessons completed by one Tutor for the end of Spring or Summer 2020 as the other tutors were not ready to go online until the end of September.

The Manager and Assistant Manager met the Managers of CDETB to secure autumn hours and summer hours in 2021 as they had been missed due to the pandemic. Classes were begun on the third week of September and were facilitated via CBC staff on Zoom and hosted by our dedicated receptionist and volunteer for the term as staff resources were in huge demand for social care supports. Numbers using classes gradually grew over the term as Survivors were supported to access online classes through lessons from tutors or staff, or staff informing family members to support people at home where possible.

## COVID-19 Response Plan and Re-opening a Physical Centre

Ms Dempsey completed a Health and Safety review in July 2020 to establish if it was possible to open the centre following NPHE and HSE guidelines when lockdown lifted. A Covid 19 Response plan was developed and passed by the board from the return-to-work Protocol guidelines from NPHE, HSE and HSA.

The premises were deep cleaned, new furniture sourced for infection control, PPE was sourced, and staff received a Covid 19 induction on returning to work onsite. A survey was carried out on which clients would choose to attend for appointments and who had IT skills/devices to access classes when they went online.

However due to the unsuitability of our premises; inadequate space, ventilation, restriction of contact numbers and facilities for vulnerable groups with Covid 19 restrictions the centre could only open on a one-to-one appointment basis only.

### **Social Care Supports**

As the pandemic continued these one-to-one sessions proved very beneficial particularly to those in crisis as staff could give clients undisturbed allocated time to support what they needed resolved. Staff noted they were getting to know Survivors even better as they finally had time to speak to individuals properly and follow things through on the appointment basis and were uninterrupted on the phone or in appointments. It clearly emerged the array of social care supports that our clients were requesting supports with. Staff adapted to these supports immediately and made referrals to appropriate services.

By September the team identified that there was a high priority group as demand for services outweighed current staffing ratios. At that moment in time staff identified as many as 90 clients who needed high priority immediate supports. Staff reorganised key working groups with the manager to maximise potential of outreach calls as much as possible within the small team limits.

The staff team of the CBC are to be commended for the supports they consistently delivered in 2020 under immense pressure, whilst juggling their own lives during this pandemic.

Typical supports/concerns arising with Survivors were:

- Change of circumstances leading to refused social welfare payments/ medical card applications- All of which were successful when appealed by CBC.
- Mental Health Conditions
- Overall health conditions including new diagnosis, hospital stays, long term and terminal illness
- Safeguarding Matters
- Emotional support including relationship break downs and bereavements.
- Poverty
- Isolation and Loneliness
- Addiction Issues
- Ageing and Mobility Issues
- Literacy Issues
- Learning to use smartphones/tablet/iPad etc
- Redress issues with applications
- Advocacy with other services such as nursing homes, homeless shelters and other service providers
- Advocacy to access new service supports in addition to CBC support

Sadly, four Survivors of the centre died in 2020 due to various reasons. A Memorial service will be held when the centre physically reopens to celebrate the lives of those lost.

### **Board Development and Future Planning**

It was highlighted to the board that because of the changing focus in service delivery to increased social care needs in 2020, the staffing ratio falls far short of demand for services and consequently further funding sources from the HSE and possibly other streams would be necessary. CBC needs to develop a physical outreach to the elderly and vulnerable and provide more inclusive models of service such as a Men's/Women's shed model for activities as suggested by Survivors themselves was noted.

This was also conveyed to the HSE at a meeting with the Chairperson and Manager in September 2020 and the HSE recommended to put in a business case with our upcoming annual grant aid agreement. This was completed in November. While we did not receive an increase in funding, thankfully our funding amounts from the year before were granted again for 2021.

Alternative funding sources are being explored in 2021 and the CBC board agreed to complete a Strategic Plan in 2021 to further explore and structure future investment in the service such as creating a Men's shed and Peer Group for Ladies, finding a more suitable premises, sourcing further funding for more staff and reviewing the quality and development of services in the future. The board has actively recruited new members in 2020 to expand its expertise for future development.

### **Advocacy in 2020**

In Autumn, CBC advocated for Survivors on two fronts by launching the Facing the Future Together report and a meeting with the Minister for Education Norma Foley on the 8th December online to discuss the services we provided and the key asks from the report.

### **Facing the Future Report Launch**

Following the 2019 conference Facing the Future Together organised by our co-founder Carmel McDonnell-Byrne to research and discuss the ongoing needs of survivors, the seven organisations involved in that conference worked on the development of a report in order to highlight supports that are needed. The report details the ongoing effects of the childhood trauma endured by survivors of institutional abuse and looks at their ongoing and future needs.

The five key 'asks' identified in the report are:

- Enhanced medical card for survivors and support with housing
- Continuation of free easily accessible counselling services for survivors and their families

- Provision of advocacy supports for survivors in the long-term, including accessing public services, linkage with support services, homelessness and addiction supports
- All medical, and public service staff working in a customer-facing role should receive trauma-informed practice training on how to identify survivors and the different approaches to the support they may require.
- Identification of supports needed by survivors based outside of Ireland

These seven organisations included Caranua, Towards Healing, Barnardos Origins, HSE, Right of Place Second Chance and Christine Buckley Centre.

The report was launched during lockdown via a webinar to the public and posted on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/CTB9HpzSQVw> on 9th October 2020. The webinar was chaired by HSE director Fergus Finlay.

The Facing the Future Together report is based on presentations made to the conference by respected academics and experts in the experiences of survivors.

The report's recommendations are evidence-based and are derived from qualitative research from respected academics most notably Professor Alan Carr in UCD, with input from survivors and knowledge sharing from service providers with years of experience.

The report and conference were funded initially by Christine Buckley Centre and reimbursed by the Department of Education through the work of Caranua. We are very grateful to the CEO of Caranua and the Dept. of Education for their support.

As part of the launch Christine Buckley Centre contacted key Government Departments as well as all members of the Oireachtas to whom it distributed copies of the report in hard copy and pdfs online and released the key asks to the press to circulate.

Prior to the release of the Commission of Inquiry report into Mother and Baby Institutions and the wind down of Caranua In December 2020, the Manager of the Centre along with the co-founder Carmel McDonnell Byrne and representatives from other groups as listed below were invited to meet with the Minister for Education Norma Foley on the 8th December online to discuss the services provided and the key asks from the report. These groups included those from the report's committee and other Survivor groups in the UK where similar challenges faced by all Survivors were highlighted. They included: Caranua, Irish in Britain, Coventry Irish Association, Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, Right of Place Second Chance, Connect, ICAP Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Disabled Survivors Support Network, Barnardos Origins, Emigrant Services Advisory Committee.

The Minister noted that these issues would require a cross departmental approach by the Government.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the report's committee group for their dedication and collaboration on this project to advocate for Survivors, in particularly to our former Chairperson and Co- Founder Carmel McDonnell Byrne who for over 20 years has continued to advocate for better services for Survivors even into her own retirement.

# 7. Funding

HSE Grant Aid Agreement Total €227,963

Grant - CDET B Mitigating Against Education Disadvantaged Fund- 50 tablets and headsets €10,800.

## Donations

- In November, a fantastic donation was made for Christmas by Theresa Kelly with the Helping hands Committee from Raheny/Edenmore who very kindly donated €1000 which was to be distributed in Vouchers and Gift bags directly given to as many Survivors as possible. Theresa also organised 120 Christmas boxes from Inner City Helping Homeless. This was much appreciated as this really cheered some of our Survivors for Christmas especially given the isolation during the pandemic.
- In December 2020, the recruitment company Indeed encouraged its employees to donate to a charity of their choice through its Good Deeds program. As part of the program, one of their team, Darragh Buckley, who is also the son of our co-founder Christine Buckley, set up a donation page for Christine Buckley Centre and asked his colleagues to donate. Thankfully many did and generated a total of €1,514.00. This was donated through Benevity's Irish Online Giving Foundation which forwarded a net donation of €1,440.40 to Christine Buckley Centre for Education & Support CLG. Sincere thanks to Indeed and its employees for their generous donations.

## Acknowledgements

The Christine Buckley Centre wish to express our sincere gratitude to the following for supports in 2020:

- HSE
- CDETB
- Dept of Education
- Alone Ireland
- Counselling services with Towards Healing, Connect and HSE NCS.
- Mary Durack
- Ciara Byrne
- Theresa Kelly Edenmore and The Helping Hands Committee and Helpers
- Indeed
- Caranua
- Friends of Elderly
- Hail Mental Health Supports
- CASPR
- Capacitor Ireland- Marian Baker Tutor
- Susan Wallace Hypnosis academy
- Security staff in Jervis House
- Right of Place
- Barnardos Origins
- Primary Health Care Teams
- Arc Cancer support services
- Social Welfare
- Hospitals
- Solicitors
- SDCC
- NDCC
- Fingal CC
- Barnardo's
- Tusla
- One in Four
- Community Response
- RCC



- National Safeguarding Teams
- Mental health Services
- Addiction Services–SICLDTF
- Dentists
- GPs
- Revenue
- Quality Matters
- Enclude
- Pension Providers
- Funeral Homes
- Garda Outreach
- Meals on Wheels
- Little Penny Dinners
- Pharmacies
- Legal services
- Citizens Advice
- St Vincent’s Hospital
- Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown
- Beaumont Hospital
- MABS
- Garda Sexual Assault Unit
- Croft Nursing Home
- Age Action Ireland
- Dept. of Social Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Tuath Housing
- Diarmaid Ó Corrbuá, Sam and all staff at the Carmichael Centre

Lastly Sincere Gratitude to all our dedicated Volunteers for their ongoing support to our service. We hope to see you all in 2021 when we reopen.



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