



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support CLG, formerly known as Aislinn Education and Support Centre for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, is a Registered Charity.

Charity Registration Number RCN 20141646; CRO: 330953; CHY: 13497

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Chairperson's Statement

The Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support undertook a number of activities during 2019 which highlighted the ongoing need for support for survivors of institutional abuse as well as highlighting how survivors can benefit from the services provided through the team at our centre.

Conference & Celebrating Survivorship

To highlight the need for ongoing State and other support for survivors, Christine Buckley Centre (CBCES) hosted a conference in Trinity College Dublin in May 2019 along with other groups which outlined important research on survivors' ongoing needs.

Substantial research presented at the conference highlighted in particular the health vulnerability of survivors due to their treatment as children. Consequently it recommended the need for an enhanced Medical Card to ensure that each of them receives priority health treatment.

The research also pointed to the fears of survivors that they could be put into nursing homes as they grow older and this would revive painful nightmares that they experienced as children in other institutions.

These are among the key points presented at the conference by Professor Alan Carr, Head of the UCD School of Psychology –based on his research into Services Supporting Recovery from Trauma: Implications of Research of the Psychological Effects of Institutional Abuse.

Media reports from this conference highlighted the need to address these concerns and the need for survivors to be cared for in their own homes for as long as possible.

Our founder and then chairperson Carmel McDonnell-Byrne is to be warmly thanked for being the driving force for the conference. She, along with our then manager Annmarie Kennedy, worked with a number of other organisations to organise the conference entitled "Facing the Future Together - Ireland's lifelong Responsibility to Survivors of Institutional Abuse".

By working on the conference with a number of organisations which assist survivors, the conference also served to strengthen ties between these organisations which include Caranua, National Counselling Service, Bernardos Origins, Towards Healing, Right of Place Second Chance, One in Four, Tusla and Community Response.

I wish also to thank Colm O'Gorman, executive director, Amnesty International Ireland, for so ably chairing the conference and facilitating survivors when they raised issues.

Following on from the conference a report will be submitted to the Ministers for Education and Health as well as HSE in order to encourage the provision of all the supports and services which survivors need.

Celebrating Survivorship Gathering

On the afternoon after the conference both survivors and attendees attended the Celebrating Survivorship Gathering in part of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The venue was provided free of charge by Rev Dr. William Morten. One of the highlights was the performance of the Christine Buckley Choir led by director Terri Harrison – an example of how survivors themselves can enhance the quality of their lives.

Art Exhibition

The capacity of Christine Buckley Centre to enhance survivors' lives is also demonstrated by the art work they create at the art classes in the centre. During 2019 their artwork featured at exhibitions organised by Terri Harrison in The County Library in Tallaght and Inspire Gallery in Dublin City Centre. I wish to thank Ms Harrison for organising the exhibition. We also thank the National Lottery for funding the exhibitions which are also such a boost to the sense of self-worth of those who participate in the art classes.

Group activities

The centre's group activities, including both classes and informal meetings, help to encourage peer support among survivors and they are especially beneficial for many survivors who may otherwise feel isolated because of their experiences and stigmatisation.

During 2019 a more structured approach to this key aspect of peer support was adopted when our team introduced men's and women's support groups. They have received a very positive response from those who participate and indeed during the Covid lockdown in 2020 the men's support group operated by Zoom meetings.

On behalf of the board of Christine Buckley Centre I would like to thank all those who helped survivors and the centre during 2019. In addition to those who made the conference such a success I would also like to thank Dublin City Council for its generous contribution towards our services and to CDEBT for its support for our education programme. Above all I would like to thank HSE for its continued funding.

During the year we also saw the retirement from the board of our founder and then chairperson Carmel McDonnell-Byrne, herself a survivor.

I wish to thank Carmel for all her many years of unselfish voluntary service to survivors, for being such an able advocate, for her hard work in getting the centre up and running and playing a key role to ensure that it responded and anticipated the needs of survivors.

I would also like to thank all our board members for their many hours of behind the scenes voluntary work for the centre and survivors.

Finally on behalf of the board of Christine Buckley Centre I wish to thank all our team at the centre led by the manager Annmarie Kennedy as well as to all the volunteers and tutors who have made such a difference to survivors' lives.

Donal Buckley
Chairperson

1. Purpose and Activities

The main object for which Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support CLG was established was to foster the personal development of survivors of institutional abuse by the provision of appropriate programmes and services including life-skills, personal and one-to-one support, educational programmes and to assist them in their engagement with government and non-governmental agencies which provide services to those survivors.

CBCES's goal is to allow a 'first chance' at education for those who attend, and help survivors to develop 'hidden talents.' Through the supportive environment nurtured in the Centre, opportunities for social interaction and the celebration of success, survivors gain the skills and confidence to fulfil their educational potential.

CBCES operates an open - access policy thus survivors can garner support as issues arise in their day to day lives. More in-depth support is also offered on an appointment basis. CBCES professional staff who are trained and experienced in this specialised area. CBCES's links to statutory and non-statutory agencies, including our key funder, the HSE, ensures staff can liaise with all other services available to clients.

The majority of survivors are aged more than 65 and extensive research has shown that continued social engagement and social participation helps to improve health and wellbeing and reduce mortality for this age group including those who are not survivors. So the centre provides such a means for social engagement for many survivors who may otherwise feel isolated because of their experiences and stigmatisation.

Indeed a more structured approach to this key aspect of peer was adopted during 2019 when our team introduced men's and women's support groups. It has received a very positive response from those who participate and indeed during the Covid lockdown in 2020 the men's support group operated by Zoom meetings.

Role of Education

Classes at Christine Buckley Centre (CBCES)

In 2019 we continued to offer a variety of classes so that clients can choose how best to use their time in terms of class attendance, support and sociability. Classes vary from academic / technical (e.g. Computers, Oil Painting) to recreational and therapeutic (e.g. Art for All, Drama, Yoga). In the summer of 2019, CBCES offered workshops in "Upcycling Furniture" which proved to be a great success. CBCES continues to encourage clients to take up literacy courses as improvements in this area can be life changing. Those survivors who lack of basic literacy skills can find that our literacy classes can boost their confidence and self-esteem.

Through a funding grant from DCC clients were taken on an educational tour of Causey Farm in County Meath. It is a working farm and involved baking traditional Irish soda bread, a tour of the farm to meet many animals including pigs, llamas and a goat named Barbara. Some of the clients milked the cows and watched a sheep dog demonstration. Later everyone ate Irish Stew and the home -made bread that was baked earlier in the day.

Tutors & Volunteers for the Educational Programme

The CDETB provides and pays for a number of tutors and allocated 800 tutor hours to our clients in the centre in 2019.

All volunteers and staff must comply with the Garda Vetting process. During 2019 the vetting process operated in conjunction with HBS (Health Business Service), the business division of the HSE.

Renovations

To facilitate classes the CBCES premises were reformatted and now include two more classrooms and a smaller room for one to one sessions. Although, the centre remains much smaller than in the previous location it is now possible to accommodate more classes.

Role of Support and Advocacy

CBCES continues to be a supportive meeting place and provides relevant information to Survivors. CBCES engages with a wide range of organisations and public bodies in its endeavours to assist survivors.

Support Groups

2019 saw the establishment of two support groups. One for female clients facilitated by a female member of staff and one for male clients facilitated by an experienced external male facilitator. The groups are not therapeutic in nature but referrals are made by the facilitators if needed. The groups provide a safe place for survivors to talk in a safe confidential setting about current struggles they are experiencing. The groups also cover topics relating to confidence building and practical coping skills.

Caranua

CBCES expends considerable time and resources assisting survivors in their applications for assistance from Caranua funds. The manpower involved in 2019 was significant not only in terms of administrative work but also emotional support as survivors have found the process stressful. As Caranua is due to close in 2020, it has been some of the most vulnerable clients who have been struggling with completing their applications.

Retention of Records Bill 2015

There is a great deal of distress amongst our clients regarding the current discussion around the Retention of Records Bill 2015. This Bill, if passed, will see all major industrial school and orphanage investigation records sealed for 75 years information access ban. CBC's co-founder Carmel McDonnell-Byrne in conjunction with a coalition

of institutional abuse survivors, archivists, historians and solicitors are involved in ongoing discussions with relevant parties regarding this issue and keeping our clients up to date. The group is advocating that instead the records ought to be available through an National Archive of Historical Institutional and Care Related Records and this would be an to the National Archives of Ireland.

CBCES Attendance

Fig.1 below depicts the monthly attendance in the centre of clients. The centre was closed for summer holidays during July. CBCES welcomed 30 new clients during 2019.

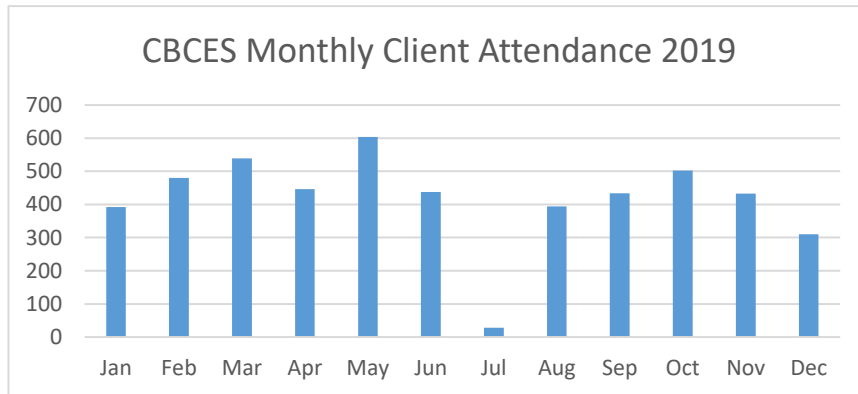


Fig 1 CBCES Attendance 2019

2. Achievements and Performance

Conference & Celebrating Survivorship

To highlight the need for ongoing State and other support for survivors after the 2020 closure of Caranua, Christine Buckley Centre for Education and Support (CBCES) marked two key anniversaries by holding a conference in Trinity College Dublin along with other groups.

The anniversaries were: the 20th Anniversary of the State's Apology to Survivors of Institutional Abuse and the 10th Anniversary of the Publication of the Ryan Report which vindicated the complaints that survivors had made at how they were treated as children in industrial schools.

The conference presented significant information about the ongoing needs of survivors. In particular their health vulnerability due to their treatment as children and the need for an enhanced Medical Card to ensure that each of them receives priority health treatment.

Research presented at the conference also pointed to the fear of survivors that they could be put into nursing homes as they grow older and this would bring back the painful nightmares that they experienced in the institutions. For this reason and also in order not to again cut survivors off from their families, they need to be cared for in their own homes for as long as possible.

Our founder and then chairperson Carmel McDonnell-Byrne is to be warmly thanked for being the driving force for the conference. She along with our then manager Annmarie Kennedy worked with a number of other organisations to organise the conference entitled "Facing the Future Together - Ireland's lifelong Responsibility to Survivors of Institutional Abuse"

The conference also helped to bring together a number of groups who provide support to survivors and provided a platform to create a unified voice. The process of organising the conference helped also to enhance CBCES' relationship with other organisations which support survivors particularly Caranua as well as Towards Healing, Right of Place, One in Four and Community Response.

The attendance included former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern who issued the apology to survivors in 1999. Senator Ivana Bacik was a speaker. Senator David Norris made a presentation on behalf of CBCES to key people involved in uncovering the atrocities. Carmel McDonnell-Byrne and Francis Treanor, a survivor and Caranua board member, both spoke from their perspectives on the future needs of survivors.

Prof. Alan Carr, UCD was the key note speaker and Fergus Finlay, former CEO of Barnardos, summed up the main points at the end. Colm O'Gorman, CEO Amnesty Ireland, chaired the conference.

Other speakers included Fiona Ward, National Counselling Service (covering the work of the NCS, One in Four and Towards Healing); Geraldine Ryan, ICAP (UK based

Counselling Service); Nicola Perry, Community Response; Isolde Blau, Tusla; and Micheál Walsh, Right of Place Second Chance.

Following on from the conference a report is being compiled of the key findings and presentations summarising the main points explored by the various speakers on the day. The plan is to submit this to the Ministers for Education, Health as well as HSE and to circulate it to various politicians and academic personnel in order to encourage the provision of all the supports and services which survivors need.

Celebrating Survivorship Gathering

On the afternoon after the conference survivors and attendees attended the Celebrating Survivorship Gathering in part of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The venue was provided free of charge by the Rev Dr. William Morten. Musicians as well as some well-known singers including Senator Frances Black performed. One of the highlights was the performance of Christine Buckley choir led by director Terri Harrison.

The events were a resounding success; CBCES received very positive feedback from survivors and both events were covered extensively by RTE as well as by various newspapers and social media sites.

Áras an Uachtaráin

Also marking the anniversary, survivors from the Christine Buckley Centre were delighted to be invited to Áras an Uachtaráin. It was a wonderful day for survivors who were made feel valued and very welcome by President, Michael D. Higgins, his wife and the staff in the Áras. The President gave a moving speech and considering the theme for the conference held on the very next day, a very pertinent speech. Part of his message was as follows:

“While progress has been made in the decade since the publication of the RyanReport it is imperative that the State remain vigilant in fulfilling its obligation to protect all of our citizens. It is essential that we strive to learn from the period of history that was tarnished by silence, by a failure to listen, an abdication of responsibility, a distortion of religious ideology and a refusal to hear and believe the tragic stories of those abandoned by the State to institutional care.”

The significance of this quote cannot be underestimated; there is still work to be done in terms of providing for survivors but also in terms of learning and understanding Institutional Abuse and its pathology so that it may never occur again.

Art Exhibition

To showcase the art work created by survivors at art classes in the centre, CBCES director Terri Harrison organised an art exhibition in two venues: The county Library in Tallaght and Inspire gallery on Gardiner St. in Dublin City Centre. The former venue was provided free of charge.

For the opening nights at both venues Ms Harrison also organised musical entertainment including performances by Christine Buckley choir. Both events were a

considerable success as they showed survivors' creativity to their families, friends and the broader community. They also attracted media coverage.

One of the attendees at the Inspire opening was Teresa Kelly of Helping Hands organisation which raises funds in Dublin's northside for charitable causes. Ms Kelly was so impressed by the stories and work of survivors that Helping Hands donated €1,000 to our charity.

An attendee at the Tallaght exhibition opening was Senator Gerard Craughwell and he organised a collection in Leinster House which generated €630 for our charity.

Research - Survivors' Stories

Survivors' Stories is a collaboration between the Christine Buckley Centre, the National Folklore Collection and UCD Library. It is a collection of recorded stories and transcripts of some survivors of institutional abuse. This oral history project was co-ordinated by Associate Professor Emilie Pine and Dr. Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh from UCD. Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone launched this significant piece of work and later in the year the project won the UCD award for "Research Impact Case Study". Part of the award was additional funding to carry out more recordings.

Education is key to the prevention of institutional abuse and other such violations of human rights. It is also a key aspect in helping survivors to recover from their trauma as is the telling of survivors' stories.

Because CBCES' survivors' stories will live on in the National Folklore Collection, it is a way of demonstrating to survivors that their lives mattered. In this way it enhances their sense of self worth. It will also provide records for other generations to understand the effects of institutional abuse. This project marks a real contribution to the continued study of such abuses and the long term impact on the lives of survivors.

CRM / Salesforce

Enclude continue to work on a client management system – Salesforce for CBCES which will make reporting simpler for our team, analysis more effective and will facilitate a more efficient use of staff time and resources.

Salesforce will help to upgrade CBCES's ability to produce statistics to enable various decision making processes around how best to meet the needs of clients and survivors in the wider community. It helps to streamline CBCES's data recording capability and allows staff to use their time more efficiently without the need for cumbersome spreadsheets.

Archives

In 2019 CBCES began uploading old client paper files onto a secure hard drive in order to preserve the historic information. All clients have the right to refuse to have their data recorded and CBCES offers the option to take files away or have them shredded at the centre.

This project helps CBCES to maintain GDPR compliance and to store information in a space efficient manner while also allowing easy access to required files.

3. Structure, governance and management

The Board consists of four directors:

Donal Buckley
Máire Mulcahy
Jackie Gallagher
Terri Harrison.

Carmel McDonnell-Byrne resigned from the Board in May 2019 but continues as a member of CBCES.

Mary Durack resigned as a member in 2019.

Francis Timmons resigned from the Board in June 2020.

Three directors had practical hands on dealings with the centre on an unpaid voluntary basis:

Ms McDonnell-Byrne played a key role in organising the 2019 Conference and Gathering and also worked in the centre on an unpaid voluntary basis on Thursdays and Fridays until her retirement in May 2019.

Ms Harrison acted as tutor with Christine Buckley Choir, the organisation of the Gathering in St Patrick's Cathedral and the organisation of the Art Exhibitions.

Mr Buckley provided back up administrative support from home.

Including the AGM there were nine formal meetings of the Board during 2019: February, April, May, June, September, October and two in November 2019 and the AGM took place in August.

Governance

In addition the directors also worked with Quality Matters consultancy on a number of occasions to review governance policies and procedures to bring them into line with the requirements of the Charities Regulator. The management team also separately worked with QM on reviewing procedures.

Management Team

CBCES has a Manager and an Assistant Manager. No one member earns in excess of €60,000.

Staff

2019 saw the introduction of an additional Project Work and Administrative Role. The funding for this role became possible due to the rental savings realised when CBCES moved into a smaller space.

The Board agreed that the centre will remain open for the 12 months of the year on a four day week basis and no longer shut for one month for holidays during the summer. This will also enable staff to take their holidays at other times of the year.

CBCES also has an Organising Committee, 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. Annmarie Kennedy was the Chairperson of the Organising Committee.'

Future Developments

Since lock down began in March 2020, the staff and team have been working from home providing a telephone support service.

The charity is undertaking a review to assess if any services such as one to one meetings can be provided from the centre or if staff can provide some of the current service from Jervis House.

Our team is also using Zoom technology with those service users who are able to avail of smart phones. We also have a class to teach others how to use it.

Already some of the service users in the men's group have been able to participate in Zoom support meetings. In this we are resuming peer support activity that is so valuable for survivors.

We also plan to extend this to include classes by means of Zoom.

4. Funding

HSE

CBCES maintains a good working relationship with our primary funder, HSE, and is grateful for the continued funding and support.

City of Dublin Education and Training Board, in addition to providing tutors provides funding for educational materials and equipment.

Donations & Fundraising

The National Lottery donated €2,000 during the year for provision of five new PCs. Dublin City Council, provided €12,000 which included funds towards the development of a new Website, development of a Strategic Plan and an educational tour for service users.

Previously, CBCES received a generous donation from Atlantic Philanthropies Ireland Limited. Half of this funding was devoted to engaging the services of Enclude to deliver a Customer Management System (Salesforce) for the organisation and the other half towards engaging consultants Quality Matters to provide support in the development of CBCES's service provision and governance. These projects continued into 2019.

Loyola Enterprises, which owns The Bath pub in Ringsend, once again organised an annual Charity Cycle in conjunction with Conor Buckley, son of our founder, Christine. The proceeds from this event are shared between CBCES and another charity.

We are grateful to the owners and organisers for the hospitality which they provide to the many cyclists who participate. We are also grateful to the cyclists who subscribe and those who donate through the event.

As previously mentioned, CBCES gratefully received €1,000 from the Helping Hands organisation and from a collection organised by Senator Gerard Craughwell.

CBCES did not undertake any fund raising campaign during 2019.