

# Offaly Traveller Movement

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012



# Message from the Chairperson

The year 2012 has been one of the most significant years for Offaly Traveller Movement and a year of many changes both internally and externally. As with the year before, 2012 continued to present a challenging environment for OTM in which the Irish government continued to prioritise austerity and cuts to services and social supports as a way of dealing with the current economic crisis. This has continued to have detrimental effects to the most disadvantaged in society and the Traveller Community have been disproportionately affected. The core funding of OTM under the LCDP, local community development programme, was cut by 13% with similar cuts to all budgets. However OTM also introduced some new areas of work, most notably in Men's Health.

The year started with the restructuring process well underhand and by April 2012 the organisation had moved into its new premises at Bury Quay, Tullamore. The new office presented a brighter and more functional space and also a better public image for OTM. The major highlight of the year was the registration of a new company name, Offaly Traveller Movement and along with it the launch of our first website and facebook page. These changes represented a new era for the movement and an opportunity to showcase the great work undertaken throughout the county of Offaly.

I would like to say a special thank you to Emma Gilchreest, the OTM Director, who worked tirelessly to implement the many changes that occurred over the year. Her vision and leadership has ensured that OTM is a thriving organisation today.

I would like to thank you, our Board, our staff, ITM and the local Traveller community, for your ongoing support during what was a very exciting year for OTM. You embraced the changes with openness and worked hard to ensure a detailed strategic plan was put in place in 2012 to guide the organisation over the coming years as it strives to ensure equality and social justice for the Traveller community in Offaly. This strategic plan has ensured that OTM is Traveller-led in a very real way.

**Chairperson – Maureen Ward**



Maureen Ward representing OTM at the National seminar on Traveller Ethnicity 2012

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# Introduction

The Tullamore Traveller Movement Ltd was launched in 1996 as a response to the needs of the local Traveller community. We have since become the Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) and continue to work for Traveller rights and social justice throughout the county. We are a community development organisation offering services responding to health, accommodation, youth, education and human rights.

## Vision

The vision of OTM is full equality and social justice for Travellers in County Offaly

## Mission

The mission of OTM is to empower Travellers and to work as a partnership between Travellers and settled people to achieve equality and social justice for Travellers in County Offaly.

## Principles, Values and Commitments

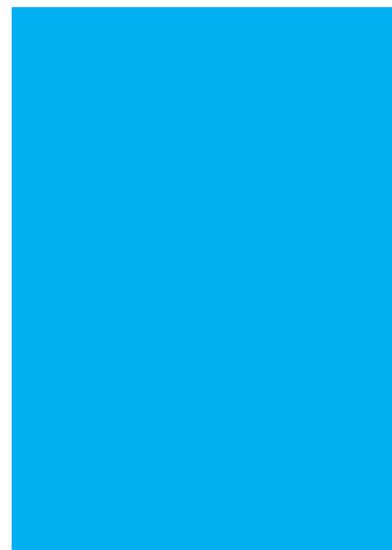
### OTM believes in:

Travellers as a nomadic ethnic group  
 Equality  
 Social Justice

### OTM is committed to:

Human Rights  
 Community Development  
 Empowerment  
 Participation  
 Partnership

The OTM Annual report shares a flavour for our work throughout the year, for much more information please visit our website on [www.otm.ie](http://www.otm.ie)



Mary Robinson launching the Tullamore Traveller Movement in 1996



In 2012, OTM Board of Management identified the need to develop a strategic approach to the future development of the organisation. As part of the process of developing the plan, a significant consultation process was carried out with members of the Traveller community and with other stakeholders in Offaly. The results of this process provided the framework that underpinned the strategic planning process and influenced the Strategic Areas of Work that have been prioritised for the period of the current Strategic Plan (June 2012-June 2015)\*

\*OTM Consultation Report and OTM Strategic Plan available on OTM website [www.otm.ie](http://www.otm.ie)

## Community Consultation & Strategic Planning Process

It was important for OTM to engage with the Traveller community and to ensure they were the primary group consulted for the Strategic Plan, and many welcomed and were pleased to be involved. It is also important that the views of other stakeholders were gathered.

However, it is also essential to take account of the fact that cuts to organisations in the community sector over the past number of years have been significant and OTM, like the majority of community organisations, is operating under a reduced level of resources. In addition, the implementation of the Local and Community Development Programme determines that the work of OTM may be more programme-driven than work under previous programmes and this may reduce the capacity of OTM to respond appropriately in some instances.

In terms of issues and priorities, it is clear from the consultation process that accommodation is the largest single issue currently affecting Travellers in Offaly. The impacts of poor and inappropriate accommodation are linked to poor health, oppression and poor mental health. Addressing the issue of accommodation will take a whole organisational approach by OTM.

Education is another major issue for Travellers. It is clear that children and teenagers in the education system are in need of support with homework and with the transition to secondary school. Adult education and the provision of opportunities for Traveller adults to access adult education, particularly given the closure of the Traveller Training Centre Programme, is very significant for Offaly.

Traveller health is an area that has been given some attention over the past decade, and it is clear that Travellers are beginning to see the benefits of peer-led programmes such as the Primary Health Care Programme. However the Consultation highlighted that much work needs to be done, particularly in the area of mental health and Traveller men's health.

Nine areas were clearly identified and are: Accommodation, Health, Education & Youth, Discrimination, Employment & Enterprise, Culture/Ethnicity, Working in Partnership, Community Development and Organisational Capacity. A number of the Strategic Areas of Work refer to ongoing work/project areas within OTM. Generally, these areas have a member or members of staff assigned to them. A number of other Strategic Areas of Work are new or developing areas of work that do not necessarily have a member or members of staff assigned to them but are considered of sufficient importance to warrant an organisational approach to addressing them.

The Strategic Areas of Work are designed to work to implement the OTM vision and mission, and within the principles and commitments of the organisation as above.

This annual report highlights many of the strategic areas identified in the Strategic Plan. Although the Strategic Plan was only implemented half way through the year (June) there have been major achievements made in 2012.

## Priority Work Areas



*‘There are still a lot of Travellers living in very poor (third world conditions) on unofficial sites around the country ... their basic human rights are being denied -no toilet facilities, no running water ‘*

*(OTM Community Consultation 2012)*

## Accommodation

Strategic priority 1.1: ‘To achieve culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers in County Offaly, including better facilities for travelling Travellers’

Accommodation was named as the number one issue for Travellers in Offaly in 2012. There is a huge volume of accommodation issues impacting on Travellers across the county and OTM dealt with approximately 732 issues/queries. This year the work included the following:

- Raising awareness and knowledge of services in Offaly by providing information through an outreach service to Traveller community on accommodation needs
- Providing accommodation clinics to Travellers living on the unofficial and official sites throughout Offaly
- Providing information through a "drop in centre" to Travellers living in Tullamore
- Setting up a drop in centre for Travellers in Birr
- Supporting Travellers to access local accommodation services
- Linking service providers with families
- Documenting accommodation needs
- Working with Offaly County Council and Tullamore and Birr Town Councils to help families with their housing applications
- Working directly with the County Council Vet to ensure horses are removed from areas before being impounded
- Supporting families that are facing eviction
- Setting up the OTM Accommodation working group



**Thomas McDonagh**  
Accommodation Worker

## Example of the PHCP work over a 6 week period (10th Sept—19th Oct 2012)

127 women and 54 men were seen by CHW's,

16 of which were new clients

57 received emotional support

53 received advocacy support

16 received breast screening advice

43 received cervical screening advice

30 received dental health promotion

2 received suicide prevention support

28 received smoking cessation advice

3 received bereavement support

12 received mental health support

40 received nutritional advice

86 received vaccination advice

60 received elderly care and support

### Referrals:

5 substance misuse referrals were made

10 GP referrals were made

23 dental referrals were made

6 Des PHN referrals were made

6 counselling referrals were made

3 social worker referrals were made

3 domestic violence service referrals were made

3 social welfare referrals were made

18 accommodation service referrals were made.

# Health

Strategic priority 2.1:

Increase life expectancy for Travellers in County Offaly

## PHCP

The work of the Offaly Primary HealthCare Programme commenced in 2003. The work continues to have a Primary Health Care ethos which is rooted in a community development, peer-led model. Partnership between OTM and HSE is the approach used and the strategies are based on policy, needs assessment and inter-sectoral collaboration.

The Offaly PHCP provides a range of information, advocacy and networking roles, with the aim of improving the health of Travellers, including access to health services, policy development and lobbying and monitoring on behalf of Travellers. A particularly important role is given to the provision of health promotion, information, support and outreach work with Travellers delivered through community based approaches to health. At the end of 2012 a recruitment process was initiated to increase the team from 5 Community Health Workers to 7.



Photo: Publication of 'From the inside out: using peer education in community development practice- a case study of the Tullamore Traveller Primary Healthcare Project (1999 to date) in the new textbook 'Community Development in Ireland'. The current CHW's have been credited with the chapter, along with Aisling Jackson, senior lecturer in AIT. The CHW's were invited to and congratulated at the launch of the book at Trinity college Dublin.



*‘A lot of women work in them Training Centres. My daughter did but they said they were all closing down now, Sure there will be nothing for women then’*

(OTM Community Consultation 2012)

## Community Development Health Work

Key areas of work include health policy, women’s health – domestic violence, suicide awareness, and drugs misuse. This role also supports Travellers to participate on various policy structures and co-ordinates the Midland Traveller Health Network. Some highlights of the work for 2012 include the following:

Traveller women in Offaly put on a play in the Court Hotel ‘Barring & Safety Orders, What Steps to Take’, this was the highlight the International 16 days of action and violence against women at a conference hosted by Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services, Dec 6th 2012. Also on the day included a presentation of the study Domestic Violence and Traveller Women conducted in 2007 by OTM.

World Heart Day: A walk was organised in conjunction with PHCP to create awareness of heart disease and stroke. The walk was a great opportunity to show all participants the health benefits of walking!

Youth Health Talk On Substance Misuse took place for Midland Regional Drugs Taskforce Week in Scurragh, Birr. The event was hosted by OTM in conjunction with RDTF, H.S.E, ANA Liffey Drug Project and Community Gardaí. The aim of the talk was to increase awareness about drug and alcohol related issues and to highlight the drug and alcohol support services available to people in the region.

Traveller women in Birr supported to engage in Swimming Lessons in Birr.

Defence Forces Workshops: Workshops for young Travellers wishing to join defence forces took place during 2012. First workshop in partnership with OLDC Offaly jobs club, second workshop preparing for entry exam in partnership with OCC.



*‘More men's groups are required. Horse projects and men could then link in to the Offaly Traveller Movement and other workers’*

(OTM Community Consultation 2012)



Hector with the Birr Men's Horse Group, launching the OTM 2013 calendar.

## Traveller Men's Health

The findings from the All Ireland Traveller Health Status Study (2010), state that the life expectancy gap between Traveller men and settled men has widened to 15 years. Traveller men have six times higher suicide rates than the settled population and heart disease and stroke account for 25% of deaths. There is also a 15% higher rate of smoking and 66.3% of Travellers said illicit drug use is a problem.

In order to address these findings, OTM built on its health team in 2012 by introducing a Community Development Men's health worker and a Horse Project facilitator. These posts work closely with all the OTM staff to support Traveller men in Offaly, of which there are over 300 Traveller families.

A major highlight of the Men's work in 2012 has been the OTM Horse Project which has engaged over 60 Traveller Men in 2012. Some of the outcomes of the project are as follows:

- Increased engagement of Travellers in relation to the social determinants of their health
- Capacity building for Traveller men
- Improvement of men's physical and mental health through the interaction with the horse
- Facilitated discussions around relationships, positive communication skills, leadership and trust

## *Strategic priority 2.2:*

### *Improve Traveller mental health and wellbeing*

## Travelling to Wellbeing

In mid 2012 OTM went into partnership with the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project and submitted a joint application to Genio Trust for an exciting new programme of work called the 'Travelling to Wellbeing' programme. It is a response to the AITHSS findings and the OTM Consultation Report, both of which highlight mental health as a growing concern.

The Travelling to Wellbeing programme is a three year pilot programme which will implement, research and develop culturally appropriate wellness recovery action plans for Travellers experiencing mental health issues and work with services and Travellers alike to break down the barriers that exist to recovery pathways. Upon successfully securing the funding for 3 years, OTM went into partnership with Exchange House Dublin and at the latter part of 2012 began the recruitment for our mental health social worker.....watch this space in 2013!

*'Respondents spoke frequently of the links between physical and mental ill health and the affects of inappropriate or substandard accommodation, often further compounded by experiences of discrimination and the oppression experienced as a result of the imposition of a way of life that does not suit Travellers'*

*(OTM Community Consultation 2012)*



Sandra McDonagh, new Mental Health Social Worker for 2013

### Strategic priority 3.1

*Travellers have the same education outcomes as their settled counterparts*

### Strategic priority 3.2

*To support Traveller young people to reach their full potential*



Above: Children from the School Transfer Programme  
Below: Reach a Teacher Programme 'Online Grinds'

## Education Work

As a directed response to the Traveller Consultation Report in 2012, OTM in partnership with Offaly Local Development Company, put in place two new and exciting education pilot programmes. Both programmes have proven successful with positive outcomes and it is hoped they will be rolled out again next year.....

### School Transfer Summer Camp

The OTM consultation report identifies the following: children up to 12 years; Difficult transition from primary to secondary school. In addressing this Offaly Traveller Movement in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company delivered a pilot School Transfer Programme from the 23rd of July to the 26th of July 2012. The programme targeted Traveller students transferring from primary to post primary, from Tullamore and Birr. It was an action packed week and included; Discussions on differences between primary & secondary school, importance of attending school everyday, Future jobs/ambitions, Supports in place in secondary schools, School Timetables, Day 1 and week 1 of secondary school and much more.....

Comments from the Evaluation Report on the School Transfer Summer Camp:

*'I thought it was good because you got to know more about school. I learned not to be shy, to ask for help and that you have to listen and it important to participate'*

*'I thought the summer camp was excellent because it was fun!'*

### Reach a Teacher Programme

Again from the consultation with the Traveller Community in 2012 it was stated that early school drop-out is a growing concern. The poor education outcomes of Traveller children in comparison to their settled counterparts was noted and the fact that only 13% of Traveller students stay on to Leaving Cert level compared to settled counterparts of 86.1% in County Offaly and rate of 84.5% nationally (2009/2010) was cited as a major concern. The consultation report identifies the following: Teenagers between 13 and 18 years; Absence of support for those doing exams, particularly for those whose parents have poor literacy skills and are unable to help them with homework.

The programme was an online one to one tuition service called Reach a Teacher, where each student received tuition/grinds in Maths. The students attended once a week after school for one hour. They were given a hot snack on arrival from school and before they started the session. There was no cost to the student for either the grinds or food.

Each student was assigned a tutor and they communicated online through headphones and an interactive whiteboard on the computer screen. The student and tutor worked on a topic of the students choice each week. The tutor recorded progress made and a report was produced at the end of the six weeks for each student.

Comments from the Evaluation Report on the Reach a Teacher Programme:

*'I understand maths a lot better' 'made tests easier in school'*



Alan Kavanagh and Elizabeth Doyle (youth workers) and Emma Gilchreest (Director) with the winning team of the OTM soccer tournament 2012

## Youth Work

Other youth work in OTM in 2012 included the following:

- Junior Horse Family project with older family members
- Swimming lessons & soccer tournament
- Drop in youth club
- Seasonal events for Halloween and Christmas
- Easter project in Birr
- Summer project in Tullamore
- Regular consultation with Traveller youth
- Monthly workshops on personal well being, nail art, mediation, healthy eating
- Support to young women in to complete a 'first responder' course

*'More done for Traveller youth. Money funds should be invested in young people now, not when they are in jail - it costs thousands to keep a person in jail'*

(OTM Community Consultation 2012)



Art Workshop at OTM

*‘This [discrimination] will never go away. It’s everywhere and it happens every day. It is just like the norm now. I don’t think it will ever change - if anything it is getting worse’*

(OTM Community Consultation 2012)



OTM has mobilised support at a number of direct action events in 2012, including a rally against anti-Traveller racism.

## Discrimination

Strategic priority 4.1

To reduce discrimination, direct and indirect, in County Offaly

Discrimination is thought to be widespread and deteriorating (OTM Consultation report 2012).

It is currently not being tracked or measured and addressing incidents of discrimination needs careful consideration and a strategic approach. In response to this, at the latter part of 2012, OTM established the OTM Anti-Discrimination Working Group. OTM joined the Irish Network against Racism and we hope to set up a recording system to participate in the national logging system being co-ordinated by the Irish Network against Racism as one step towards assessing the extent of discrimination in Offaly.



# Staffing

## *Staff Team:*

Two staff members left the team in 2012, Julie Scully and Biddy Kavanagh. Biddy Kavanagh was a founder member of OTM and had worked in the organisation for two decades. Due to funding cuts to education work her position in OTM was made redundant during 2012, Biddy remains a loyal friend of the organisation and continues to volunteer her time and expertise on a regular basis.

No	Name	Position	Profile
1	Emma Gilchreest	Operations Director	Full Time
2	Thomas McDonagh	Community Development Accommodation Worker	Part Time
3	Karen Guilfoyle	Administration Manager	Part Time
4	Bridget McInerney	Administrator	Part Time
5	Biddy Kavanagh	Education Worker	Part Time (until May 2012)
6	Matt York	Health Co-Ordinator	Part Time (from April 2012)
7	Julie Scully	Community Development Mens Health Worker	Part Time (from April 2012 until August 2012)
8	Larry Scully	Community Development Mens Health Worker	Part Time (from June 2012)
9	Sorcha Lewis	Community Development Health Worker	Part Time (from May 2012)
10	Lesley Jones	Horse Project Facilitator	Part Time
11	Mary McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
12	Lily Kavanagh	Community Health Worker	Part Time
13	Pinkie McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
14	Sarah McDonagh	Community Health Worker	Part Time
15	Brigid McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
16	Sarah Joyce	Youth Worker	Part Time
17	Celine McInerney	Youth Worker	Part Time
18	Noeleen Eustace	Youth Worker	Part Time (from November 2012)
19	Elizabeth Doyle	Youth Worker	6 week contract
20	Alan Kavanagh	Youth Sports Coach	6 week contract

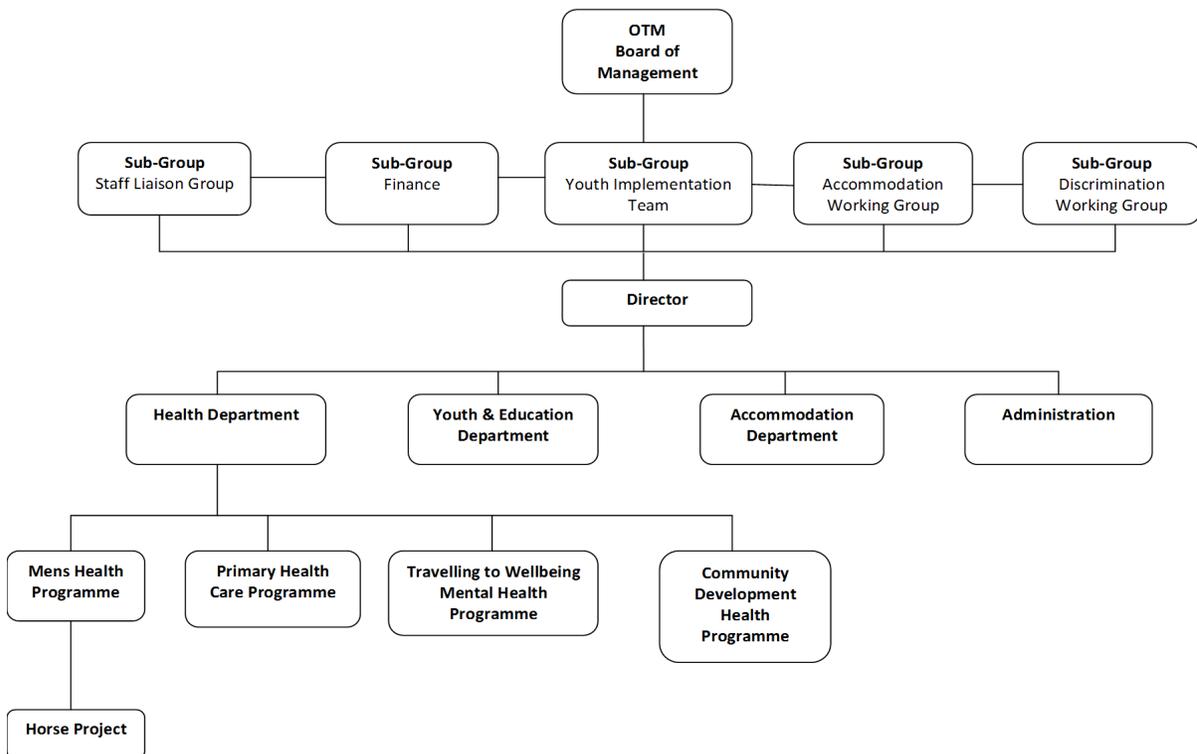
# Board of Management

The Board of Management oversees the work programmes, financial management and staff development of the organisation.

Nine board meetings took place throughout the year and the AGM took place on 5th July 2012. Directors and members for 2012 include:

- Maureen Ward – Chair
- Sylvia O’Leary – Vice Chair
- Marina O’Malley – Treasurer
- Lilly Ward – Secretary
- Elizabeth Doyle
- Geraldine Ward
- Mary Rose Kerrigan
- Damien Peel
- Ellen Teresa Ward

## Organisational Chart 2012



# Representing and Networking

## **During 2012 OTM was represented on the following external bodies:**

National Traveller Partnership, both as a Board member and on operations committee (NTP)

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

Offaly Joint Policing Committee

Irish Traveller Movement Accommodation Sub Group

Offaly Traveller Interagency Group (TIG)

Offaly Social Inclusion Measures (SIM)

Regional Traveller Health Unit and finance sub-committee (THU)

National Health Advisory Forum

National Traveller Health Network (NTHN)

Midlands Traveller Substance Misuse Steering Group

Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services (ODVSS)

Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force Education and Prevention Sub Committee

Midlands Region Health Network (MHN)

Midlands Regional Mens Network

National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project Steering Group

Travelling to Wellbeing Steering Group

## **OTM are members of:**

National Traveller Partnership

Irish Traveller Movement

European Network Against Racism

European Anti Poverty Network

Community Workers Cooperative

# Financial Report

**Tullamore Traveller Movement Ltd**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)**

**Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31 December 2012**

<b>Income</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Community Development Programme	92,857	106,733
Special Projects for Youth Grant	48,771	52,162
Health Service Executive	226,000	78,000
Primary Health Care Programme	-	77,168
Midland Health Network	-	15,000
NTSAP ( National Traveller Suicide Awareness Programme)	4,000	-
Pobal (After School Programme)	-	19,228
<b><i>Once off Funding</i></b>		
HSE Horse Project 2011	6,060	-
SPY Sundry Income	993	-
Genio	4,750	-
After School Programme Fees	-	1,583
OTM Calendar	925	-
Horse Calendar Project	1062	560
Maynooth NUI Student Placement	-	200
Traveller Pride Week	1,097	-
Redundancy Rebate	4,480	-
Sundry Income	334	-
	<b>391,329</b>	<b>350,634</b>

**Tullamore Traveller Movement Ltd**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)**

**Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31 December 2012**

	2012	2011
<b>Expenditure</b>	€	€
Community Development Programme	93,803	111,754
Special Projects for Youth Grant	49,000	40,295
Health Service Executive	-724	45,406
PHCP Co-Ordinator	29,751	-
Primary Healthcare Programme	74,104	70,917
Community Development Workers	25,654	-
Midland Health Network	8,752	8,585
Mens Network	1,203	968
Administration	18,549	23,094
HSE Office Costs	23,571	-
Horse Project	22,230	9,157
General Expenses	19,205	361
After School Programme	950	39,058
PHCP Phase 2 Training	-	14,965
Move Budget	3,437	-
Interagency Traveller Pride	778	-
NTSAP	900	-
ITM	178	-
Genio	1,477	-
Laois Calendar Project	1,622	-
OTM Calendar	200	-
NATC	-58	19
Traveller Health Unit	1,440	6,414
	<u>376,022</u>	<u>364,579</u>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>15,307</b>	<b>(20,359)</b>

