

Offaly Traveller Movement

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



Message from the Chairperson

The year 2014 came with many challenges and was a year of grave uncertainty for the organisation. Nationally the threat to Community Development work was very real and we have worked hard and continue to work with the NTP (National Traveller Partnership) and CWC (Community Workers Coop) to highlight our concerns to the Irish government. Locally the ever increasing need for supports has become critical as the detrimental cuts to Irish Travellers has become very real. Combined with this struggle was another year of cuts to the organisation, most notably to our Primary Health Care Programme where our Community Health workers lost one fifth of their weekly hours and wages. 2014 was also a dramatic and drastic year for Traveller accommodation with the closure of the Tullamore temporary site combined with a refusal to add the provision of a future site onto the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2014-2018 despite the documented need and statutory obligation to do so.

Bearing these pressures in mind and combined with a very small annual income it is absolutely remarkable that OTM staff have recorded over 11,000 interventions with Travellers in the year 2014. This is due to the dedicated and hard working staff, lead by our committed Managing Director Emma Gilchreest, a special thanks to you all.

I would like to also thank you, our Board, our staff, ITM and the local Traveller community, for your ongoing support during what was a very busy and challenging year for OTM. As we continue to strive to ensure equality and social justice for the Traveller community in Offaly, we hope that the Irish government will protect our right to be an independent organisation so that we can continue to ensure that OTM is Traveller-led in a very real way.

Maureen Ward (OTM Chairperson)



In 2014 OTM staff recorded 11,261 interventions with members of the Traveller Community in Offaly on the new data collection system

All photos in this report are of Offaly Travellers taken in 2014!

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Mary Robinson launching the Tullamore Traveller Movement in 1996

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 non-governmental, not for profit community development organisation offering programmes responding to health, accommodation, youth, education, enterprise 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 and join us on **Facebook!**

Community Consultation &

Strategic Plan

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)*

In 2015 the organisation began the process of reviewing the strategic plan and our work over the last three years. We also undertook a lengthy facilitated reflective process with entire staff team as part of strategic planning for 2015-16

This annual report highlights many of the strategic areas identified in the Strategic Plan 2012-2015, which have underpinned the work delivered in 2014.

*OTM Consultation Report and OTM Strategic Plan available on OTM website www.otm.ie

Priority Work Area: Accommodation

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

2014 was a very challenging and difficult year for Traveller accommodation as the local authority in Offaly failed to meet their statutory obligations in the provision of Traveller specific accommodation. In 2014 OTM dealt with over 1,027 accommodation issues. During this year the organisation was deeply saddened to have to say goodbye to Thomas McDonagh, accommodation worker since OTM's inception. We now have a new accommodation worker Marcella Stakem who join the team at a very busy juncture in Traveller accommodation. Marcella has a post grad in Law and worked as an apprentice solicitor before perusing her Masters Degree in Community Development. Marcella completed a thesis on Traveller accommodation policy for her Masters and OTM find the combination of her skills of huge benefit to the accommodation situation in Offaly so watch this space!!



Farewell & good luck party for Thomas McDonagh....

Not surprisingly accommodation continues to be the main issue that affects Travellers in County Offaly. This has been further compounded in 2014 with the rising numbers of people becoming homeless. We also saw the closing down of the temporary site in Tullamore and we supported the families concerned in this process. 2014 saw the implementation of the new county based Traveller Accommodation Plan (TAP 2014-2018) and OTM conducted both needs analysis and detailed submissions to inform this plan. However despite all our work and having the support of the LTACC (Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee) and Housing SPC, the provision to build a halting site in Offaly was removed from the plan by our local representatives. OTM strongly believe that the closure of the temporary site, combined with no plans to build another, has been the greatest violation of Traveller rights in recent history.



Photos taken on Clara Halting Site in June 2014

PHCP Interventions 2014

1539 interventions with women and 737 interventions with men

13 of which were new clients

838 emotional support interventions

508 advocacy support visits

309 child safety awareness/ advice

156 breast screening advice

282 cervical screening advice

913 dental health promotion interventions

30 substance misuse support

291 smoking cessation interventions

118 bereavement support interventions

274 mental health support interventions

1041 nutritional advice interventions

393 vaccination advice interventions

304 elderly care and support interventions

8 fire safely awareness/ advice

20 anti/ post-natal information

Referrals

8 substance misuse referrals

50 GP referrals

28 dental referrals

5 Des PHN referrals

5 counselling referrals

24 social worker referrals

2 domestic violence service referrals

2 social welfare referrals

21 accommodation service referrals

Health

Strategic priority 2.1:

Increase life expectancy for Travellers in County Offaly

PHCP

The Primary Healthcare Project was set up to improve the health and life expectancy of local Travellers. Training for the Community Health Workers involved a number of stages and was initiated back in 1999. Following on from a period of comprehensive training for the peer workers, the programme has been up and running since 2003. The project is a partnership between OTM and the HSE and has a primary health care ethos which is rooted in a community development, peer-led model. The programme provides healthcare advice and information to over 1,000 Travellers living in Co. Offaly.

The Community Health Workers are at the centre of activities in OTM and they carry out outreach work with local families and provide information, advice, referrals and support on a range of health topics. These issues are broad ranging and include information on such matters as cancer screening, dental health, substance misuse, smoking cessation, bereavement support, ante and post-natal care, vaccination advice, nutritional and healthy heart information as well as working to raise awareness and encourage positive mental health among the Travelling Community.

In addition to the outreach, advocacy and networking roles, the CHW's are constantly upskilling themselves and improving their ability to successfully deliver on their work plans. In 2014 they successfully completed a FETAC Level 5 minor award in Family Support (focusing on domestic violence), provided by the National Traveller Women's Forum. In 2014 CHW's also linked in with the Midland Regional Drugs Task Force (MRDTF) to develop a drugs information booklet for parents and the CHW's took part in a number of workshops around this during the year. Lily Kavanagh (CHW) successfully completed another FETAC level 5 minor award in community addiction studies and earned a distinction. 2014 was a successful and a busy year and the Primary Health Care Programme supported and worked with over 300 families in county Offaly.





Yvonne Doyle—Marathon Runner from Halting Site in Birr



OTM's Lily with Sargent Graham Kavanagh

Community Development Health Work

Key areas of work in 2014 included; health policy, women's health, domestic violence, suicide awareness and substance misuse. This role also supported Travellers to participate on various policy structures and co-ordinated the Midland Traveller Women's Health Network. Over 700 interventions with Traveller women were recorded throughout the year. Some highlights of the work for 2014 include the following;

Lily Kavanagh took over from Sorcha Lewis while she was on maternity leave (January – September 2014). In addition to taking over all the activities of this busy post, she also organised a campaign to ensure that more Travellers in county Offaly were registered to vote in the May elections. Lily Kavanagh and our Maynooth student on placement disseminated information on the importance of voting. They also organised two voter registration sessions with Sargent Graham Kavanagh in OTM and on all the halting sites in Tullamore and Clara. There was extremely positive participation with a record number of Travellers registering to vote and very positive communication and relationship building with the local Garda and OTM staff. Almost 150 members of the Offaly Traveller community registered to vote and participated in workshops with local Garda and OTM health staff.

Lily also undertook a lot of work supporting Traveller families who were experiencing evictions from the unofficial and the official halting sites in Tullamore in April - June. As Community Development worker she was involved in mediating between County Council and HSE officials and many organisations alike to assist the families to find favourable solutions to their needs. Other things that Lily was involved in include setting up a focus group for a research project for an AIT student on Travellers education and arranging for OTM staff to take part in the Women's Mini Marathon in Dublin.

The findings from the All Ireland Traveller Health Status Study (AITHSS, 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.

Traveller Men's Health & Horse Project

2014 was the third year for the operation of the Community Development Mens Health Worker. Sadly the work was delayed by the departure of the popular Larry Scully who contributed so much to improving Traveller men's health in Offaly. His vacated post was filled in May by Catherine Rountree. In all 2,072 interventions with Traveller men were recorded in this year by the staff of OTM.

Highlights of 2014 include;

- The continued development of the Midlands Mens Health Network
- 3 Health Checks in collaboration with the HSE during 2014 resulted in over 20 men in Tullamore gaining greater physical health awareness and GP link-in where needed
- OTM Horse Project has continued from strength to strength with Traveller men of all ages getting involved. 2014 saw the representation of OTM horse project at seminars in Cork and Dublin and partnerships built up with Offaly County Council, Irish Horse Welfare Trust, Horse Sport Ireland and National Veterinary panel
- A big part of the work in 2014 was raising awareness of compliancy with current horse legislation and the highlight of the year was the highly successful microchipping clinic in Birr where 47 Traveller horses were passported and microchipped in one afternoon!



Microchipping Clinic in Birr 2014

Strategic priority 2.2:

Improve Traveller mental health and wellbeing

Travelling to Wellbeing

Studies show there is a high rate of mental health illness and suicide within the Traveller Community, with suicide 6 times higher than the rest of society accounting for at least 11% of all deaths. Mental health is a growing crisis within the Traveller community: these very high suicide rates, the high numbers of Travellers on anti-depressants and also in psychiatric units and the huge stigma and shame which still exists around issues of mental health within the community are all much higher than in the settled population. Experiences of social exclusion, discrimination, racism and negative stereotypes of the Traveller community over many generations have led to the current situation. As well as these visible signs, there are the invisible: the way such experience is internalised and leads to feelings of shame and worthlessness both individually and as a community as a whole. These experiences naturally lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, anger and aggression, substance misuse and self-harm and suicide behaviours.

In response to this crisis, Sandra McDonagh, Mental Health Social Worker at Offaly Traveller Movement oversees the Travelling to Wellbeing Programme. Travelling To Wellbeing is the first mental health support service of its kind in Ireland dedicated to working with Travellers. It was developed to support Travellers experiencing mental health difficulties. The primary goal of T2WB is to design, develop, deliver, monitor and evaluate a Traveller specific mental health service within the context of a local Traveller organisation. Now in its third year T2WB continues to develop with a total of 69 Travellers accessing the service in 2014, 26 male, 43 female.

Travelling To Wellbeing continues to offer professional and culturally appropriate, individual support, family support, crisis intervention support, individualised recovery plans, advocacy and referral pathways to other services. We work with a range of services and value partnership working. We promote and develop positive mental health training and local community mental health initiatives. Using a collaborative approach, providing ongoing support, the Travelling to Wellbeing social worker, Primary Health Care Programme, men's health, accommodation and youth workers, work together on an integrated mental health initiative. In developing the service we will address inequalities by working with Travellers and service providers throughout Offaly to deepen their understanding, improve referral pathways and aid recovery. Counselling and Family Therapy was also offered in OTM to the T2WB clients.

Travelling to Wellbeing also hosted a range of programmes and seminars in 2014 highlighting the issues, challenges and opportunities faced by Travellers in Offaly. Some of the highlights from 2014 include attending and presenting at the Irish Association of Suicidology 18TH Annual Conference on the "Particular Experiences of Travellers in Mental Health Settings- Challenges & Opportunities" and organising and hosting the following: A Traveller's Journey: Offaly Mental Health Talk week (40 attended), A Traveller Health & Wellbeing Day (30 attended), World Suicide Prevention Day (90 attended).



Sandra McDonagh—OTM mental Health Social Worker

Mental Health & Wellbeing Activities

Trip to Dublin Zoo

With thanks to funding from the National Lottery, Offaly Traveller Movement organised two trips to Dublin Zoo for Traveller families throughout Offaly in October 2014. The aim of this adventure was to provide a Mental Health and Wellbeing social outing for families, youth and older people:

to promote positive mental health among Travellers

to encourage important family time together

to initiate dialogue and raise awareness conversation around mental health and wellbeing

to promote social inclusion

to provide an outing for children accompanied by parents and extended family members

to engage in the educational and therapeutic benefits to enhance their quality of life

A total of 180 members of the Traveller Community in Offaly travelled to the Zoo accompanied by staff of Offaly Traveller Movement. The buses left Tullamore at 9.30am and returned at 5.30pm. This trip was energetic and inspiring and by the end of the day everyone was well acquainted. Mental Health is something we all have and it is important that we take steps to protect it in the same way we guard our physical health. Community events are a healthy activity and a great recipe for a healthier body and mind.



A Traveller's Journey, Offaly Mental Health Talk Week 2014



Birr Women's Group

Enterprise & Training

The **Birr Women's Group** was established in late 2014 as a social outlet for the local Traveller women. It consists of 16 members who meet weekly (except in the summer months) to engage in a range of educational, and health & wellness workshops. The group members are offered training specific to their interests and needs. This space offers an excellent social outlet for the group to meet and discuss issues that are affecting them, bring about positive change and promote social inclusion.

In 2014 this group completed the FETAC Level 2 module on "Food Choice and Health". This course offered by the Educational Training Board provided the group with the opportunity to further their skills and knowledge around healthy eating and food safety.

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

**Traveller Youth Needs Analysis**

OTM undertook a detailed Traveller Youth Needs Analysis in 2014. This included focus groups with youth across the county. Led by an independent consultant and a youth peer worker the process has ensured that we have up to date information on the challenges that face our young Travellers in Offaly today. The report will be launched in 2015 and will direct our youth work over the coming years



Youth and Education

In 2014 there were 992 individual youth interventions made. A wide range of positive work took place through a variety of activities and programmes:

OTM Youth Drop – In Club

A weekly social outlet for young Travellers which addresses the following; confidence building, peer support, leadership skills, awareness raising, information sharing on local events, empowering young Travellers, supporting young Travellers to reach their full potential. The young people themselves chose the activities at the drop in club and in 2014 they included; clay modeling, glass painting, pool tournament, painting the OTM youth banner, art/mask painting, healthy eating, cooking, nail art, make up application, skin care, input from agencies such as the OSPCA.

Soccer Tournament

OTM and Offaly Sports Partnership delivered this 6 week training on 5 aside soccer, the last night included a tournament competition. The coach was Alan Kavanagh and the winning teams were presented with gold and silver medals. 38 young Traveller men between the ages of 14 and 24 participated.

Seasonal Events

Other seasonal youth events that took place in 2014 included the St Patrick's Day Parade, Halloween Ghost Tour to Charleville Castle and the OTM Birr Christmas Disco and Santa Claus grotto visit to Traveller children in Tullamore.

Reach a Teacher Programme

In order to address the early school dropout in Offaly and to follow on supporting the students from the School Transfer Programme, OTM with the OLDC and Tullamore library put in place the Reach a Teacher Programme throughout 2014. The programme is an online one to one tuition, where each student received tuition/grinds in maths or science. The students attended once a week after school for one hour.

Additional Events in 2014

- Swimming Lessons Programme, 10 young people aged 10 – 16 participated.
- Day trips to ZIP IT in Lough Key, Open top bus tour in Dublin, stopping at Collins barracks and Trinity college.
- Junior Horse Project Trip to Cherry Orchard Equine Education and Training Centre.

Youth Advisory Panel

Linked in with Jigsaw and Yap to encourage Traveller participation on local groups for mental health. To build relationships with extended agencies and advocate for young Traveller needs.

Culture and Ethnicity



Our Lives Traveller Pride Week 2014 Photo exhibition displayed in Tullamore Library

Strategic priority 6.1 To promote Traveller culture in County Offaly

Strategic priority 6.2 To contribute to the achievement of recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group

Traveller Pride Week 2014

OTM organised a Traveller Photo exhibition for the annual Traveller Pride week celebrations with assistance from the Offaly Traveller Interagency Group. Laois photographer Ann Marie Kelly accompanied by OTM staff went across the county to photograph local Travellers doing the things they love best. This included a wide range of jobs, hobbies and pastimes and included Travellers of all ages from Tullamore, Birr, Clara, Banagher and Kilcormac in their own environment. The exhibition was designed to challenge public perceptions and stereotypes of Travellers in Ireland. The exhibition was a huge success and was on display for one month in the Bridge Shopping Centre in Tullamore before being displayed in Birr for Vintage week and later in the year in both Tullamore and Edenderry libraries. The photo exhibition is now permanently housed in the ETB (Education Training Board) offices in Tullamore.

St Patrick's Day Parade 2014

Another busy and exciting St Patrick's Day for OTM this year with over 40 Travellers participating in the Tullamore parade



Staffing

Staff Team of 2014:

No	Name	Position	Profile
1	Emma Gilchreest	Managing Director	Full Time
2	Thomas McDonagh	Community Development Accommodation Worker	Part Time (until October 2014)
3	Marcella Stakem	Research & Policy Worker for Traveller Accom-	Part Time (from April 2014)
4	Karen Guilfoyle	Administration Manager	Part Time
5	Bridget McInerney	Administrator	Part Time
6	Carol Abraham	Administrator	Part Time (until September 2014)
7	Matt York	Health Co-Ordinator	Part Time (until May 2014)
8	Margaret Lovett	Health Co-Ordinator	Part Time (from September 2014)
9	Sandra McDonagh	Mental Health Social Worker	Full Time
10	Larry Scully	Community Development Mens Health Worker	Part Time (until March 2014)
11	Catherine Rountree	Community Development Mens Health Worker	Part Time (from May 2014)
12	Sorcha Lewis	Community Development Health Worker	Part Time
13	Lesley Jones	Horse Project Facilitator	Part Time
14	Mary McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
15	Lily Kavanagh	Community Health Worker	Part Time
16	Pinkie McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
17	Sarah McDonagh	Community Health Worker	Part Time
18	Brigid McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
19	Celine McInerney	Community Health Worker	Part Time
20	Geraldine Ward	Community Health Worker	Part Time
21	Sarah Joyce O'Brien	Youth Worker	Part Time
22	Noeleen Eustace	Youth Worker	Part Time (until July 2014)
23	Elizabeth Doyle	Youth Worker	Part Time
	Leona McDonagh	Volunteer	Part Time
24	Massi Carni	Volunteer	Part Time
25	Darragh McDonagh	CE Placement	Part Time (since November)
26	Tom Collins	Student Placement NUI Galway	Full Time (April 2014)
27	Mairead Dooley	Student Placement Athlone Institute of Technology	Full Time (March - June)
28	Niamh Daly	Student Placement Moate Business College	Part Time (Jan - April)
29	Marcella Denny Stakem	Student Placement NUI Maynooth	Part Time (Feb - July)
30	Darragh McDonagh	Student Placement Moate Business College	Part Time (Feb)

Board of Management

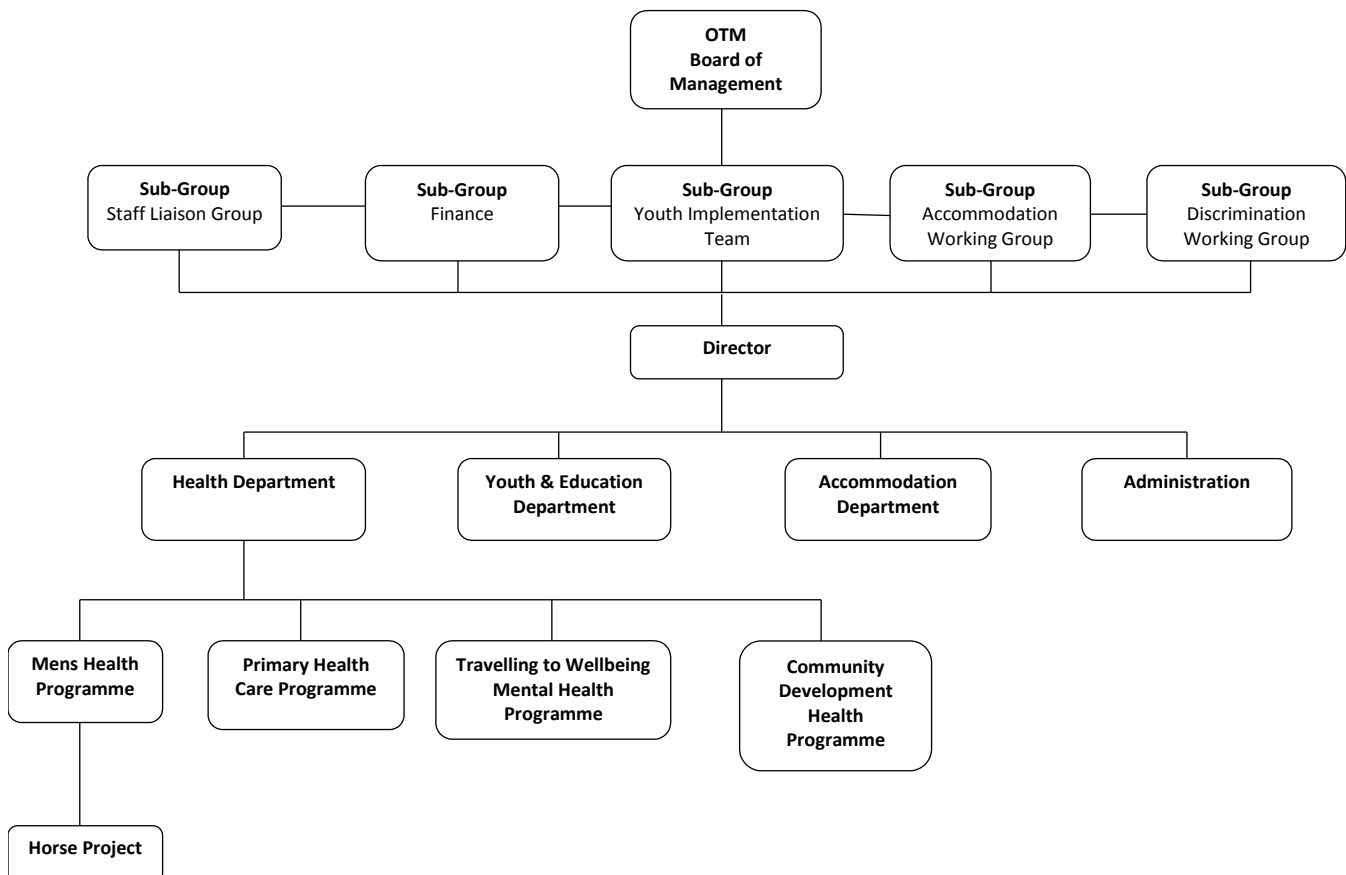
The Board of Management oversees the strategic direction, financial management and staff development of the organisation.

Eight board meetings took place throughout the year and various sub group meetings. The OTM AGM took place on 25th March 2014. Directors and members for 2014 include:

Maureen Ward – Chair
 Mary Rose Kerrigan – Vice Chair
 Marina O'Malley – Treasurer
 Lilly Ward – Secretary
 Liam Rodger
 Ellen Teresa Ward - Vice Treasurer

The OTM Staff rep is Sarah Joyce O'Brien

Organisational Chart 2014



Representing and Networking

During 2014 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)

European Anti Poverty Network

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

Irish Traveller Movement Central Group

Irish Traveller Movement Accommodation Sub Group

Public Participation Network

Offaly Mental Health Talk Week Committee

Offaly Traveller Interagency Group (TIG)

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

National Traveller Women's Forum

National Traveller Health Network (NTHN)

Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services (ODVSS)

Tullamore School Completion Programme Board of Management

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

National Traveller Health Network

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



Some members of OTM Staff & Board 2014

Financial Report

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

Schedule of Income and Expenditure
for the year ended 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
	€	€
Note 1: Income		
Community Development Program	83,596	84,550
Department of Children and Youth Affairs - SPY	42,248	43,894
NTSAP	3,841	2,793
Health Service Executive	229,000	200,596
Genio	16,374	5,245
Once off Funding		
OTM Calender	-	400
Horse Calendar Project	-	-
Maynooth NUI Student Placement	-	200
SPY Sundry Income	178	123
Traveller Pride Week	1,999	2,243
ESB Electric Aid	9,230	5,000
Offaly VEC	-	500
OLDC	1,500	2,568
Credit Union	-	300
Admin / Management	24,056	-
Electric Aid	-	-
Social Welfare	(216)	-
Lotto Grants	4,800	-
Department Social Grant	3,000	-
Go for Life	300	-
Sundry Income	989	1,153
	<u>420,895</u>	<u>349,565</u>

The notes on pages 10 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.

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

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Notes	31 December 2014		31 December 2013	
		€	€	€	€
Income	1		420,895		349,565
 Expenditure					
Community Development Programme	2	82,189		84,914	
Department of Children and Youth Affairs - SPY	3	53,289		44,869	
Health Service Executive	4	206,833		236,058	
General Expenses	5	17,569		324	
Move Budget	6	-		1,783	
Interagency T.Pride	7	1,999		2,243	
NTSAP	8	3,815		6,199	
Genio	9	14,981		9,574	
OTM Calender Project	10	-		1,217	
OLDC Enterprise Group Grant	11	516		483	
Electric Aid Horse Project	12	4,229		4,946	
OLDC TP Week Grant	13	-		468	
OLDC H.P Grant	14	-		1,054	
VEC H.P Grant	15	-		393	
Student Expenses	16	(50)		197	
St Patricks Day Expenditure	17	50		100	
Tullamore Credit Union Grant	18	-		300	
Lotto Grant	19	2,000		-	
Department Social Grant	20	3,000		-	
OLDC Online Grinds	21	675		-	
Staff Development	22	1,412		-	
			<u>392,507</u>		<u>395,122</u>
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year			<u>28,388</u>		<u>(45,557)</u>

The notes on pages 10 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.

