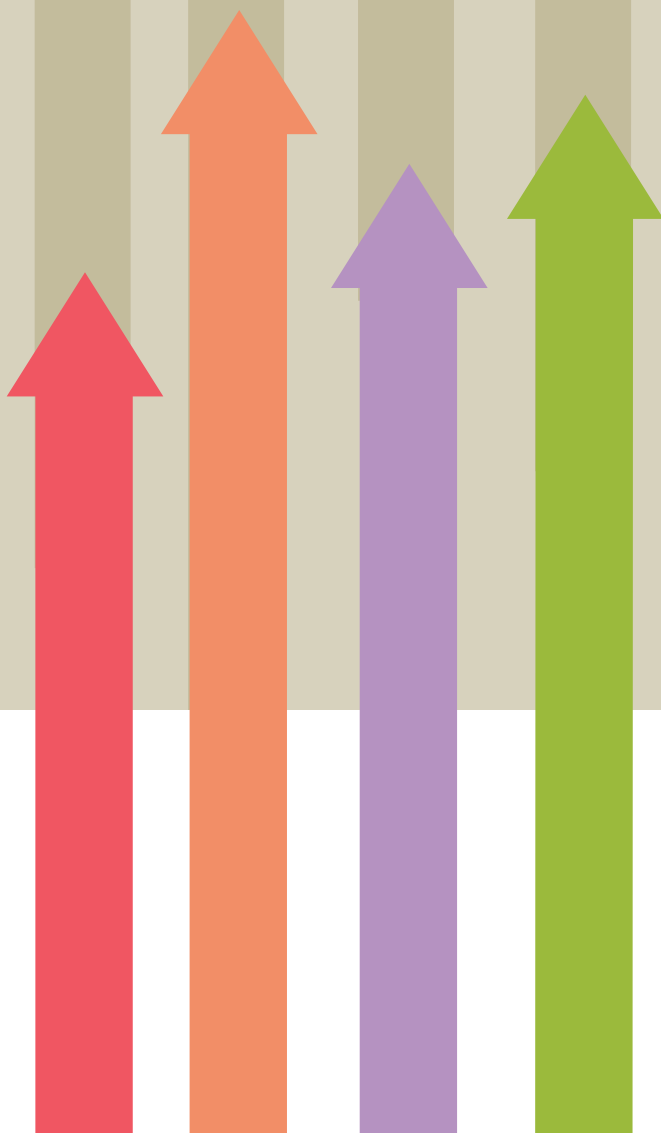


Strategic Plan

2015 - 2017



From Ideas
to Action

“You know that when the archer bends his bow, he aims above the desired mark, otherwise the arrow will fall short. Do the same, aim higher so that you will reach at least the minimum required.”

St Mary Euphrasia – Foundress of Good Shepherd Sisters

- 1 | Introduction**
- 2 | Strategic Planning Process**
- 3 | Strategic Priorities**
- 4 | Rolling out the Strategy**
- 5 | Fundraising Goals**



1 | Introduction

1. Good Shepherd Services

Good Shepherd Services is a not for profit organisation supporting in excess of 800 women and children each year who have experienced homelessness, isolation and loneliness and a host of other economic or social disadvantage issues.

Our services are clustered around Cork City and we provide emergency and long term accommodation, outreach and aftercare support together with education and training.

A number of social activities and courses are run to support and improve the lives of the women and children we serve.

2. Mission

Through trusting relationships, we help women and children who are vulnerable to homelessness to live more fulfilled and self-sufficient lives.

3. Vision

Our vision is a society where every woman and child enjoys a secure, safe and dignified home in a supportive environment.

4. Values

Welcome | We welcome women of all backgrounds, ages and stages in life in a non-judgemental way.

Respect & Dignity | We acknowledge and respect the intrinsic dignity and value of each individual person, and promise trust, confidentiality and integrity in our conduct.

Ambition | We are ambitious for the women and children we serve: we aim for lasting positive change.

Social Justice | We believe in social justice and equality: we look to address the reasons for homelessness.

Leadership | We look to lead and to give example in shaping a better future.

Collaboration & Partnership | We are open and responsive to the women and children we serve and to working with other agencies and organisations.

Accountability | We work to clear standards; we are transparent and answerable to our stakeholders; we are outcomes-focused and learn from each experience to improve our service.

Heritage | Founded in Cork more than 40 years ago by Sr. Collette Hickey, a Good Shepherd Sister, we draw on a heritage of nearly 400 years of seeing and helping women and children who have been left behind, taking our name from the Good Shepherd of the Gospels.

2 | Strategic Planning Process

1. The SOAR process

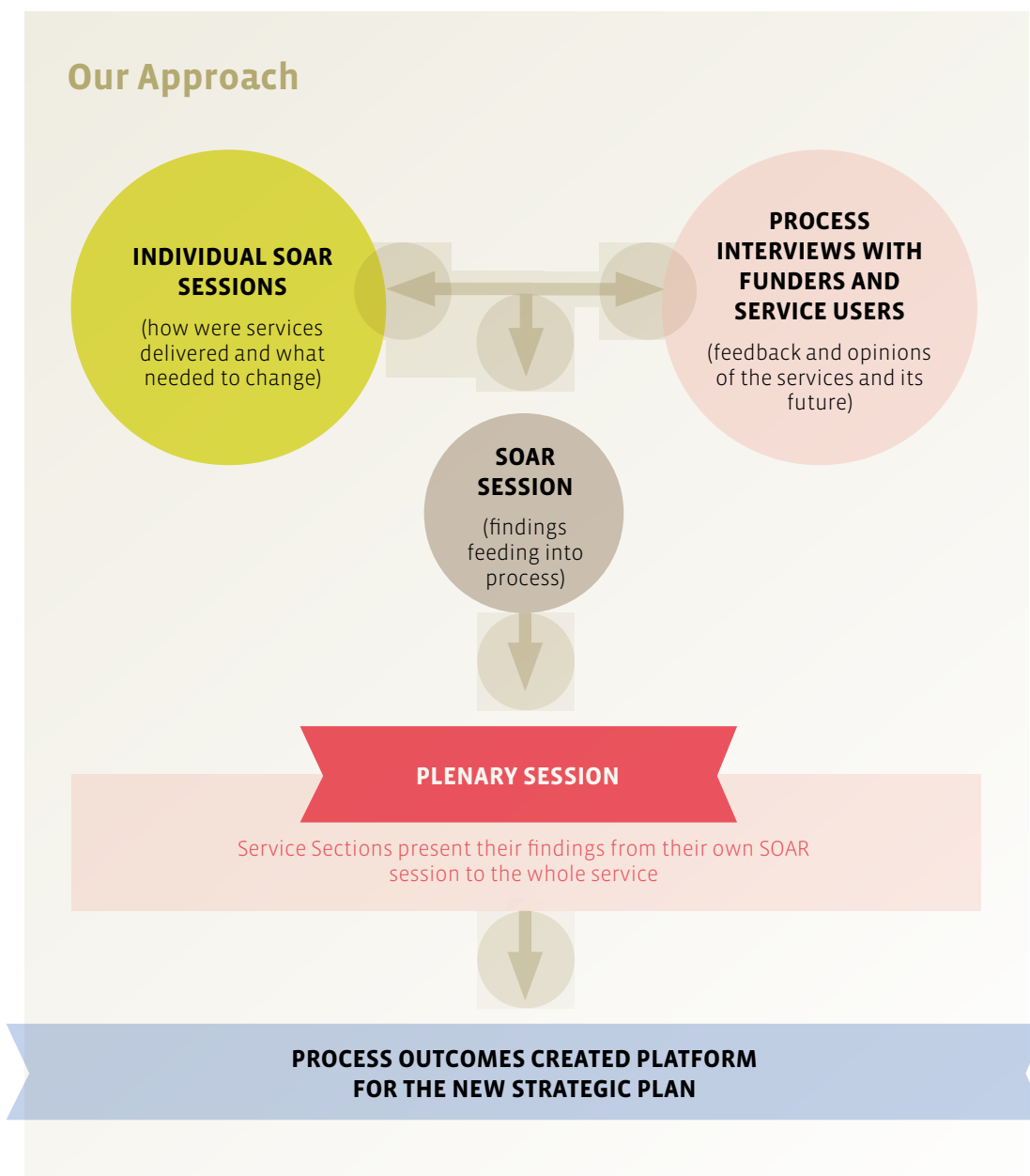
The work of framing the SOAR process (*Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results*) to begin the formulation of a new strategy and to engage fully with all of our stakeholders began in late 2013.

Serious consideration was given to evaluating alternatives before agreeing to use the SOAR model, however, SOAR was chosen because it offered a bottom up approach to strategic planning that was inclusive and strengths based.

SOAR is based on strategic inquiry into what works best in the organisation and what are the best possible opportunities for growth and gets the whole organisation involved in the process. The SOAR process was also used as the basis for our interviews with service users, funders etc.

My Notes

2. SOAR Sessions and Interviews



Work began in earnest in January 2014 with each section of the organisation conducting individual SOAR sessions to take a good look at how they were delivering services and what needed to change over the next few years.

This process achieved a high level of engagement and the discussions were energising and meaningful. In parallel with this process interviews were conducted with funders and service users to get their feedback and opinions of the service and its future. The Good Shepherd Services Board

conducted a SOAR session to feed into the process so that we had strong information on which to build our platform for our new strategic plan. When this work was complete a plenary session was arranged where each section of the service presented their findings from their own SOAR session to the whole service.

This plenary event was a great opportunity to create a shared understanding of the continuum of care provided by the service and to hear all the ideas about how we should develop into the future.

3. Context and Assumptions in Developing Strategic Plan

- ➔ Good Shepherd Services provide a 'continuum of care' to some of the most vulnerable women and children in Cork City and surrounding areas.
- ➔ Good Shepherd Services has over 40 years of experience of responding creatively and innovatively to the needs of vulnerable women and children.
- ➔ The availability of suitable affordable housing for our service users is very difficult at present and likely to remain so for quite a while. This is putting additional strain on our service.
- ➔ The Governments 'Housing First' strategy will provide both challenges and opportunities to the organisation.
- ➔ All of our funders are going through radical change with new models of funding under discussion and the State will continue to seek value for money and transparency.
- ➔ Change is being driven by diminishing and tightening of public finances, changes in public sentiment towards charities, resulting in intense scrutiny and regulation of the charity sector.
- ➔ Good Shepherd Services will have to deploy its resources efficiently and effectively so as to maintain, improve and expand services to meet the changing and increasing needs of vulnerable women and children.
- ➔ Good Shepherd Services will have to review and modify its models of service delivery and funding base in the light of ongoing economic changes.
- ➔ Private sector operators will endeavour to play a greater part in the provision of services to the people we serve.
- ➔ The PASS system is the national database of those receiving housing and related supports and will be used in relation to future decision making and resource allocation by Government agencies.
- ➔ A number of opportunities for Good Shepherd Services to provide additional services to meet unmet educational, social care and social inclusion needs of vulnerable women and children have been identified in this report.
- ➔ Good Shepherd Services has the ability, desire and focus to generate the capacity and agility to adapt, modernise and thrive in a challenging economic environment.

3 | Strategic Priorities

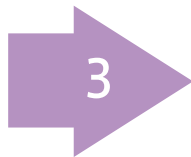
Four strategic priorities and programmes of change have been identified to develop and improve our service and the lives of those we serve. These suggestions have come from our directors, staff, funders and service users.



Improve the accommodation offering and develop new options to support transitioning to independent living and advocate for homeless women and children we serve.



Develop a more integrated approach to tackling isolation and loneliness and improve the available supports for service users.



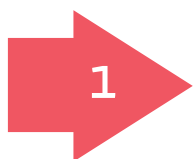
Maintain a strong outward focus for the organisation and maximise the potential of the links in place with statutory funders and others. Seek to develop new alliances and be “**Outcomes Focused**” in our work.



Invest in staff development, encourage renewal and engagement for the most effective service provision and prevention of burnout.

My Notes

Strategic Priorities 1



Improve the accommodation offering and develop new options to support transitioning to independent living and advocate for homeless women and children we serve.

1.1 Existing Accommodation Improvement Programme

- Make Edel House development fit for purpose – building programme to commence in 2016.
- Provide a family room in the new building for family recreational use.
- Improve kitchen facilities in our training centre Bruac Eile.
- Provide improved play areas for children in the redevelopment of Edel House.

1.2 New Accommodation Programme

- Complete the Baile an Aoire integration in 2015 and look at the potential development of the site.
- Progress accommodation opportunities with compassionate landlords / housing associations / NAMA and City Council.
- Provide stepping stone options for younger women particularly who have difficulty in finding and sustaining tenancies.
- Engage fully with Housing Action Team to maximise opportunity for those in emergency accommodation.
- Develop a supported accommodation offering for mothers of new born babies.

1.3 Advocacy Programme

- Develop a response to the 'Housing First' strategy on homelessness.
- Advocate for the housing rights of service users on a continuous basis.
- Highlight the extent of homelessness among women and children in Cork.
- Increase understanding of the reasons for homelessness amongst women and children to inform and improve service provision.

Strategic Priorities 2

2

Develop a more integrated approach to tackling isolation and loneliness and improve the available supports for service users.

2.2 Communications Programme

- Increase Group Work offering in life and social skills for current and past service users / Look at offering more out of “office hours” services.
- Offer more in-house activities throughout the service.
- Offer WRAP facilitation to interested groups.
- Explore possibility of Youth Café or Drop-in centre for evenings and weekends.
- Look at the possibility of hosting “Women-only” AA meetings.
- Explore opportunities to work with Asylum seekers.
- Encourage past service users to contribute to future development of the service (new initiatives and activities) and to get involved in creating self-supporting groups.
- Develop services for partners of women and children.
- Expand the current evening groups /develop nail bar/mentoring current and past residents /Holistic service i.e. yoga and other holistic therapies.
- Look at service user readiness to engage and participate in what we have to offer and the barriers which prevent them.
- Establish links to an employment services agency to develop job opportunities for service users.
- Increased linkages with social workers.
- Organise counselling and support for early school leavers to break the cycle of homelessness.
- Provide a mobile classroom – setting up community based learning and development for those in need of support.
- Offer counselling services through low cost agencies to women in need of this service.

2.2 Communications Programme

- Publish newsletter for service users.
- Develop a database of the services of voluntary and statutory service providers for vulnerable women and children to keep them informed of available services and to identify gaps.

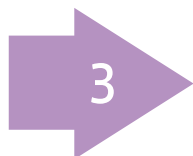
2.3 Support Programme

- Strengthen connections with family, school and community to improve lives and keep family & social networks open.

2.4 Multi-disciplinary team

- Conduct a full review and develop an integrated service offering by health care professionals i.e. GP & Public Health Nurse, Drugs, Alcohol, Mental Health and Addiction Counsellor.

Strategic Priorities 3



Maintain a strong outward focus for the organisation and maximise the potential of the links in place with statutory funders and others. Seek to develop new alliances and be “**Outcomes Focused**” in our work.

3.0 Public Relations Programme

- Promote Good Shepherds as a valid and credible voice within the homelessness sector.
- Highlight the range of services and continuum of care provided by Good Shepherds.
- Develop a coherent and professional image for the service.
- Create a public image that creates empathy with our service user group.
- Promote service/fundraising/funding challenges.
- Respond to changing government policy – be a voice for the voiceless.
- Use sale of work of service user products in a co-ordinated way for the benefit of the service and to promote a positive identity.
- Speak at Sunday masses and other places on the needs of our service users where the general public might be able to assist.

3.1 Strategic Alliances Partnership Programme

- Collaborate with statutory funders and collaborate with organisations like MOVE, Simon, SVP and Mental Health and Addiction services.
- Look for a partner who can provide Crèche facilities.
- Avail of Job Bridge Interns/CE workers/TUS workers.
- Explore Meitheal initiative aimed at strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services which are responsive to needs.

3.2 Develop a strong Volunteerism Programme

- Develop an operational programme to organise and manage a strong volunteer group.
- Encourage male volunteers as positive role models.
- Facilitate new ways of working by recruiting volunteers with clear roles.
- Develop the “Friends of Good Shepherds” volunteer base through encouraging people to give of their time, talent and treasure to support our mission.

3.3 Become more Outcomes Focused

- Be outcomes and impact focused in our work and be able to demonstrate the difference we make.

Strategic Priorities 4

4

Invest in staff development, encourage renewal and engagement for the most effective service provision and prevention of burnout.

4.1 Skills analysis and training development programme

- Develop the use of Solutions Focused Brief Therapy within the service.
- Appoint a training and development co-ordinator.
- Conduct training (including sharing resources across GSS and with other agencies etc.) on anger management/conflict resolution/managing threatening behaviour.
- Make more use of HSE training which is offered from time to time.
- Offer shadowing opportunities within the service to allow staff from one section of the company spend time in another section.
- Develop staff interest groups for specific initiatives to further the service offering i.e. WRAP, Sexual health, Parenting, Being well.
- Conduct a current skills audit of the professional and other qualifications of staff to offer new programmes.
- Build individual and team reflection time for staff to ensure best engagement with mission and vision.
- Train staff or recruit volunteers in holistic therapies.
- Offer training courses in which we have qualified staff to other organisations.
- Encourage more regular feedback from service users, particularly those availing of Aftercare.
- Offer job rotation opportunities.
- Explore more Research/Theoretical foundations (e.g. Trauma Informed Care) and the potential for integrating into training programmes and practice.

4.2 Internal Communications Programme

- Improve internal communication through social media, newsletters etc.
- Write some case studies entitled "A day in the life of" to give staff perspective on their daily lives.

My Notes

Your Opinion is important, that's why there is space for Your Notes in this document so that we can grow and get better ... together!

4 | Rolling out the Strategy

Fulfilling our mission and vision is at the heart of this strategic plan and delivering this strategic plan by 2017 will take dedication, commitment and enthusiasm.

There will be an increased focus on advocacy and communications to deliver the objectives outlined in this plan.

Time will be spent on developing the brand of the organisation to ensure the brand is understood trusted and respected.

Cross functional teams will be appointed with appropriate expertise made up of staff, managers and board members with additional assistance from outside the organisation as required.

Good Shepherd Services are ready for the challenge and will be outcomes focused in delivery.

The strategy will be rolled out through a comprehensive operational plan. This will highlight the execution of the “*Programmes for Change*” as well as the proposal for resourcing, ownership and phasing of the initiative.

This plan is strongly dependent on the buy in and support of the funders, directors, staff and volunteers of the organisation. Updates on progress will be communicated at a minimum of six monthly intervals.

My Notes

Aspects of Strategy Roll Out



5 | Fundraising Goals

Reductions in funding have been ongoing for a number of years from our statutory funders and the fundraising landscape has also been difficult. We commit to do our absolute best to fulfil this plan and will increase our fundraising efforts over the life of the plan.

We will begin with a target for additional fundraising of €100,000 in 2015 and increase this by a minimum of 20% each year over the life of this plan. Specific proposals will be developed and submitted to funders and supporters for major projects over the life of the plan.



My Notes

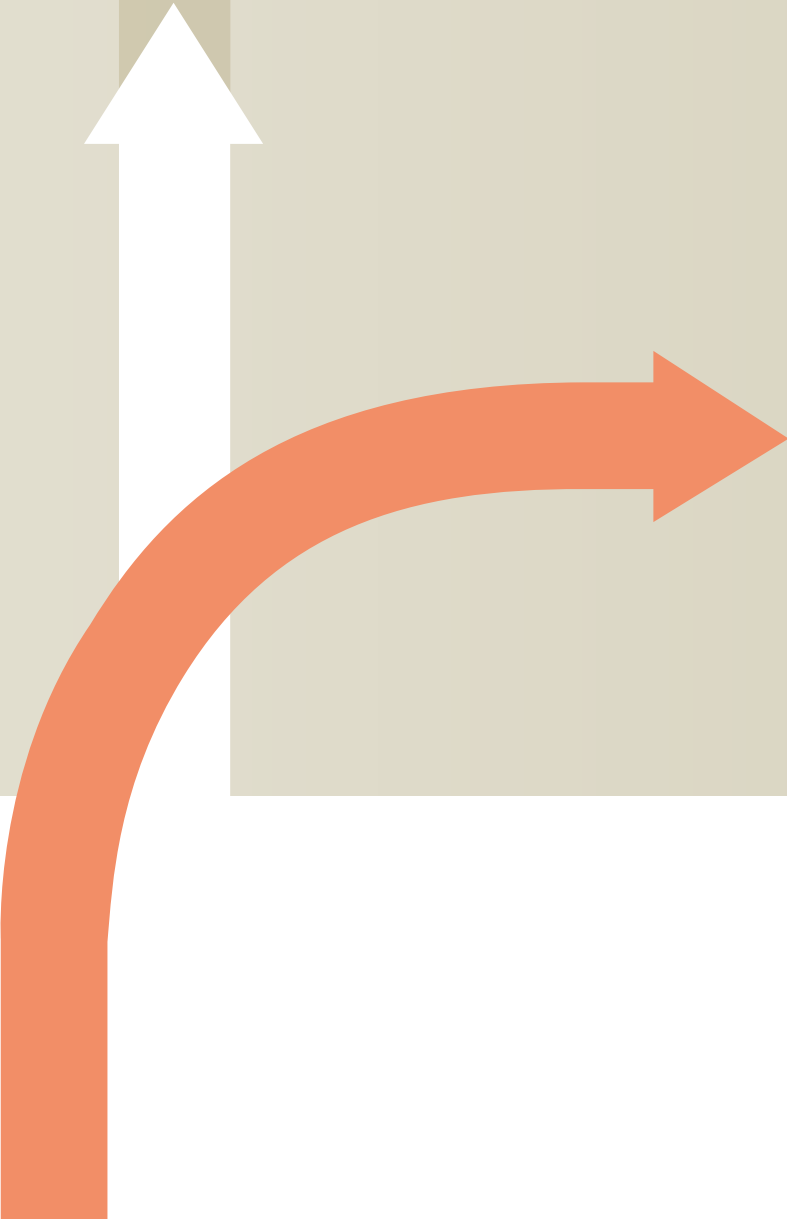
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Acknowledgements

- We would like to thank our funders, service users, staff and directors for their input to this strategic plan.
- The level of engagement with examining our strengths and opportunities as an organisation and the enthusiasm to improve the lives of our service users was first class.
- All of the sessions conducted to arrive at this plan were proactive and engaging and showed great commitment to our mission.
- We would like to particularly thank Ms Miriam O'Connell of "*Space for Change*" for facilitating the process and going above and beyond the normal course of engagement to ensure we achieved the best possible outcome for those in need of our services.



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