



**ANA LIFFEY**  
DRUG PROJECT

# 2023 Annual Report



# Chairperson's Report

**From a governance perspective 2023 was another big year for Ana Liffey Drug Project with both the publication of our strategic plan *Who We Need To Be...* and the start of a complete review of how the organisation is structured.**

“*Who We Need To Be...*” is a brave strategy not because it is calling for actions external to the organisation, but because it is internal looking. We know that the recent global pandemic changed us. We must adapt now and improve how we deliver services into the future. In this regard one clear statement of intent is co-production – we’re taking active steps to increasingly have people with lived and living experience employed throughout the Ana Liffey. When it comes to how and by whom our services are delivered, this is now an inbuilt part of the discussion.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging time for Ana Liffey, as we faced a new and emerging risk for both our personnel and service users. However, throughout this period, we remained committed to maintaining our core services. We continued supporting people through face-to-face key working, adapting to the situation while ensuring that those who needed us most received care and support. This ability to sustain services during such a difficult time highlights the flexibility and innovation that has always been central to our work. From our founding to the present day, these qualities continue to flourish within our organisation.

In recent years, we have experienced significant growth in both the demand for our services and in our capacity to meet these needs. Our team has expanded from 34 personnel in 2018 to over 70 by 2023, and we continue to grow in response to the increased demand for the services we provide.

Reflecting this growth, the strategic plan of Ana Liffey for the period 2024 to 2029, seeks to transform the organisation. As part of this transformational change, Ana Liffey’s senior management and the Board identified the need to review the internal processes and structures of Ana Liffey and to map out a future organisation that aligns with its current size and focus on the delivery of its strategic goals and ambitions.

**“Our advocacy directly informs policy development and initiatives originally championed by Ana Liffey have become recognised as mainstream good practice.”**

In September 2023, we invited expressions

of interest from groups to assist us in undertaking a transformative organisational review and restructuring in response to a significant phase of growth and evolution. We have been working with a diverse range of issues and a broad cohort of people, and we recognised the need to adapt our internal structure to optimise impact and effectiveness. This adaptation is crucial for enhancing support for our frontline workers, especially given our recent growth.

The terms of reference we set out aligned with our strategic goals and were aimed at enhancing our ability to deliver exceptional

services to our clients. After reviewing proposals, we selected a group to collaborate with us on the organisational review. Together, we drafted a project charter outlining the scope, objectives, key milestones, and the responsibilities of each team member, which was agreed upon with our senior team. The organisational review began in earnest in October 2023.

At a recent organisational event it struck me just how diverse and inclusive our teams have become. This is a huge asset when reaching out to different groups of people who might want to access our services. Another thing that struck me on that occasion is the incredible enthusiasm and camaraderie that exists across the organisation – which translates to a supportive working environment.

Ana Liffey's strong reputation within the sector is in no small part down to our CEO, Tony Duffin. In 2023 Tony, who consistently represents Ana Liffey with distinction, made impactful submissions to the Citizens' Assembly on Drugs. Amongst other external responsibilities – Tony serves as Independent Chair of both the Advisory Committee of Correlation: European Harm Reduction Network and the Strategic Implementation Group 5, a subgroup



Ana Liffey team members at the Recovery Walk in 2023

within the National Drugs Strategy structure.

Our advocacy directly informs policy development and initiatives originally championed by Ana Liffey have become recognised as mainstream good practice.

I'd like to end with a special word of thanks to our frontline staff in Dublin and Limerick – their level of client engagement is something the Board and I are all rightly proud of.

**VIVIAN GEIRAN**  
**CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

## The Financial Year

**With regard to our finances - in 2023, Ana Liffey Drug Project had an income of €4,110,957 (2022 - €3,760,266). It had expenditure of €4,008,125 (2022 - €3,731,973). At the end of the year the company had fixed assets of €843,993 (2022 - €843,993), current assets of €2,089,731 (2022 - €1,632,056) and current liabilities of €1,546,532 (2022 - €1,191,689). The net funds of the company amounted to €1,387,192 (2022 - €1,284,360) and the directors are satisfied with the level of retained reserves at the year end. As we had done in 2022, our 2023 company financial statements were prepared in accordance with the FRS 102 Charities SORP, which we have adopted voluntarily as a matter of good practice. In addition to reporting in compliance with the charities SORP, the board keeps a critical view on financial matters with a financial update at every board meeting, as well as quarterly meetings of the Finance Sub-Committee. Ana Liffey Drug Project receives funding throughout the year from a number of statutory and non-statutory funders, as well as from public donations. We're very grateful to everyone who contributes to the running of the organisation. The company's full financial statements are publicly available on our website at [aldp.ie](http://aldp.ie).**

# CEO's Statement



**Tony Duffin speaking at the launch of *Who We Need To Be...* at the GPO**

As the Chairperson has mentioned above, last November saw the launch of “*Who We Need To Be... The Strategic Plan Of Ana Liffey Drug Project 2024 To 2029*”, which sets out our goals for the next five years. Based on feedback from our staff, our board, service users and external stakeholders, Ana Liffey will be researching and then implementing a policy whereby we have client participation throughout the organisation.

There are two groups that we particularly feel can help us in this respect; those with ‘lived experience’, i.e. they’ve had the experience of drug use, street homelessness and the judicial system, and those Ana Liffey clients currently using drugs which is termed as ‘living experience’. We’ll be looking at how we can involve them more to the benefit of both themselves and the services we provide.

For a long time now we’ve had a tradition of Ana Liffey clients making positive contributions to research programmes; various events we run in Dublin and the Mid West; and peer-to-peer engagement. They have proven especially effective at communicating what Ana Liffey does to

the cohort of people who may be in need of our services.

In addition to those with lived and living experience, we’re also taking steps to ensure that our services have the widest possible positive engagement with people

## Ana Liffey Drug Project 2023 Timeline



### MARCH

**Tony Duffin, CEO of Ana Liffey Drug Project, welcomed the publication of the *Working To Decriminalise People Who Use Drugs* report, which evaluated drug policy progress across five jurisdictions: Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, and Maine (US). The report highlighted different approaches to decriminalisation and emphasised the need for informed debate on drug policy changes.**

[Read more](#)



**L to R: Ana Liffey’s Vivian Geiran, Dawn Russell and Tony Duffin with Minister of State of State Hildegarde Naughton and Brian Kirwan (HSE) at the Launch of *Who We Need To Be...***

from diverse backgrounds. It’s also our goal to have the full spectrum of Irish society represented on Ana Liffey teams, which our Director of Services, Dawn Russell, explains in more detail below.

Having a diverse workforce has many benefits. It encourages creativity and brings different perspectives, leading to better communication and trust between staff and supervisors. Diversity strengthens teamwork, drives innovation, and helps with planning and making decisions. It also improves service quality, helps resolve conflicts, and increases cultural understanding. A diverse team tends to be more empathetic and productive. It also boosts motivation, job satisfaction, and helps keep staff long-term. Diversity creates opportunities for mentorship and career growth, and it enhances the

organisation’s overall reputation.

There’s also a focus in the new strategic plan on the continued development of our low-threshold nursing, which was very effectively delivered in 2023 by Ana Liffey’s Clinical Nurse Manager, Jade McGroarty, and her team. Jade talks about this on page 8.

As our Chair has explained above, in 2023 we began the process of reviewing the organisation and how it’s structured. We look forward to reporting on the outcome of that review in our 2024 Annual Report.

I’d like to end by thanking the Board, the staff, volunteers and service users for contributing to what was a hugely positive year for Ana Liffey.

**TONY DUFFIN**  
**CEO**



*“When you get called junkie, scumbag or something like that, you honestly think that’s what you are. So many people when they start off taking these drugs, they like them so much that they can’t think about coming off them. You just think about wanting them and then it gets to a certain point where you realise, you’re sick of this. You don’t want to do this anymore, but you feel like you just don’t belong in the community – and that’s why you stay taking drugs.”* **Dean**

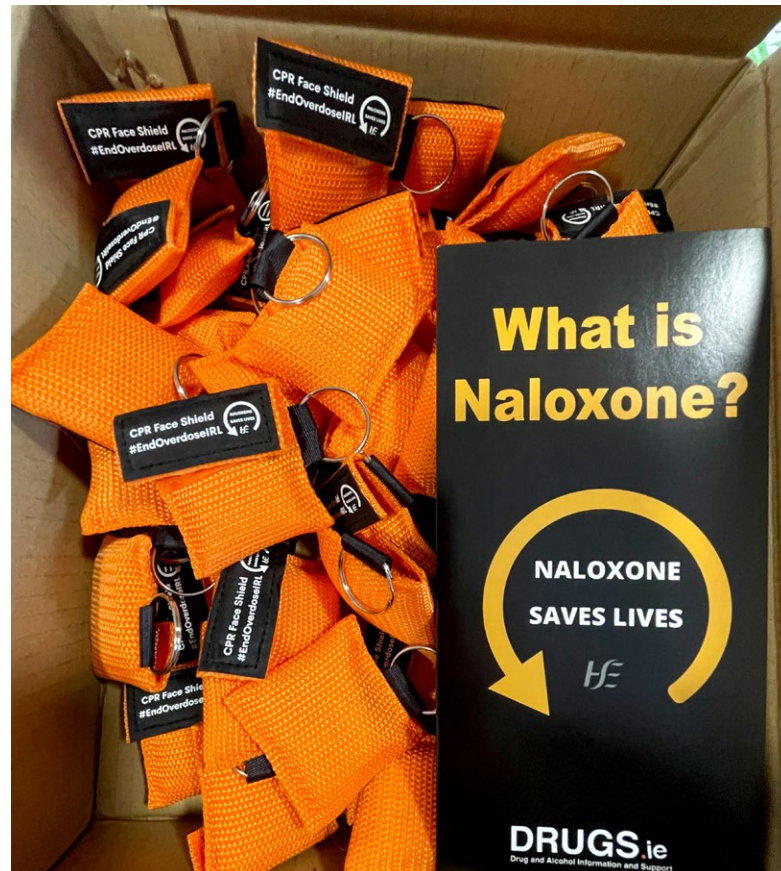
# Director of Services' Statement

One of the year's major events was a cluster of Nitazine overdoses towards the end of 2023.

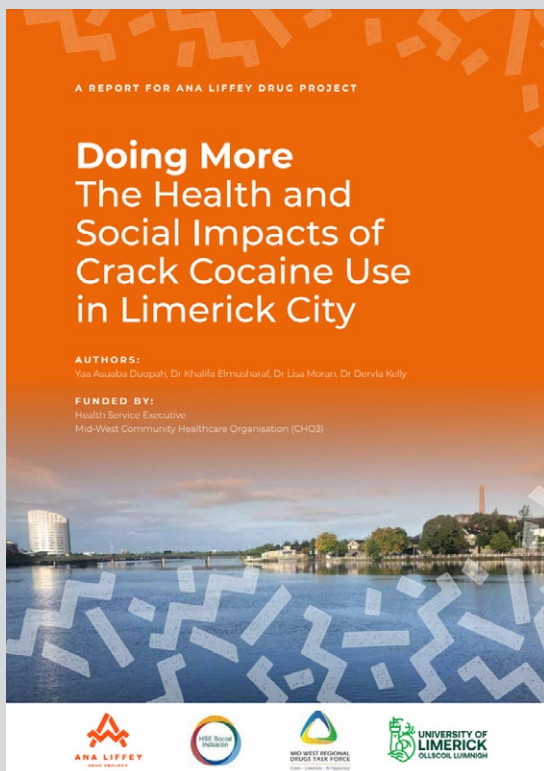
Ana Liffey played a key role in the joined-up, multi-agency response to this serious incident.

At around 8.30am on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November, calls began coming through that a serious situation was unfolding in Dublin City Centre – overdoses were occurring at an alarming rate. Our outreach teams immediately hit the streets in Dublin and Limerick, passing on news of the overdoses to peers and they did an excellent job spreading the word through their own social circles.

Realising this wasn't just a one-day problem, I asked for volunteers to work through the weekend, and many team members immediately stepped up. Over the weekend, the HSE gave us more information, which we again passed on to peers again.



Naloxone is an important tool in the response to Nitazines



## APRIL

Ana Liffey launched a dedicated team in Limerick to reduce harm from crack cocaine use. The project, part of the Law Engagement & Assisted Recovery (LEAR) initiative, received €200,000 in funding from the HSE's Mid West Regional Drug and Alcohol Service. The launch followed the publication of a study by University of Limerick researchers on the health and social impacts of crack cocaine in Limerick.

[Read the report](#)



*“There’s an awful lot of people out there who’ve ended up in courts for small amounts of this, that and the other. It’s costing the taxpayer money and it’s costing people time. They shouldn’t be treating day-to-day users like that.”*

**Darragh**


Peers shared what they knew about the overdoses with us and if someone said “A guy named Chris overdosed last night on Such-and-Such Street,” we’d head to that area, gather what info we could, and relay it to the HSE. While not always scientific, this information helped us build a clearer picture of what was happening.

We also worked closely with the Gardaí during the Nitazines overdose cluster, including collecting samples. If someone had overdosed in the street or a hostel and we could access a trace sample from them, their partner, or a worker, the Gardaí would rush it to the HSE for testing. This shows the level of trust between Ana Liffey, the HSE, the Gardaí, and others as we worked through this crisis.

I am proud to say that lives were saved because of this joined up and fast thinking response.

As our CEO has referred to above, last year Ana Liffey’s management also focused on improving diversity and inclusion - both in hiring staff and in how we deliver services. A key part of our new strategy is to ensure equity for people of colour, different genders, those who identify differently, people with neurodiversity, and those with living and lived experiences of drug use.

As our team has grown more diverse, so has our client base. One example is our work with the Travelling community in Dublin and the Mid West. We’ve also seen more service users openly discussing their sexuality and gender, as they feel represented by our staff. Our team’s language skills have also expanded, and we now have team members who speak Ukrainian, Arabic, French, Portuguese, Polish, and Russian.



**MAY**

**Ana Liffey published *We Are Innovative*, a report summarising the key discussions from its 40th Anniversary Conference held in December 2022. The event featured speeches and panels, with a special address from President Michael D. Higgins. The report celebrated the organisation’s history of innovation in harm reduction and service delivery.**

[Read the report](#)

Despite the challenges of 2023, I believe Ana Liffey’s team, our clients, and our partner organisations rose to meet them - and continue to do so today.

**DAWN RUSSELL**  
**Director Of Services**

# Special Focus on Low Threshold Nursing

In 2023, Ana Liffey’s nursing team moved permanently into our Dominick Place location in Dublin, which now has a new, high-tech treatment room. Our approach is “low threshold”, meaning we make it easy for people to access care without judgement or barriers. We focus on health equity, ensuring that people from low-income areas get the care they need. Unlike some services, we don’t turn people away if they’re intoxicated, because it could harm their health, potentially leading to hospitalisation. We also don’t require appointments or paperwork, which can be difficult for our clients, who may have other pressing priorities like court dates, doctor visits, or methadone clinic appointments.

We treat a range of health issues, including chronic venous ulcers, which are common among intravenous drug users. These painful wounds need compression therapy and specific dressings applied three times a week to heal properly. Without this care, the ulcers can lead to serious infections like sepsis, which could result in amputation. We also address related health concerns like poor nutrition, housing problems, diabetes, and anaemia, helping wounds heal over time with the right treatment plan.

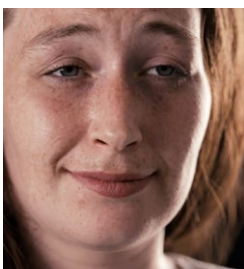
Clients can self-refer by calling us, thanks to posters in emergency accommodations with our contact information. One of our team regularly visits these accommodations for assessments and, if clients prefer, we can provide their full



**Members of Ana Liffey’s Dublin-based Low Threshold Nursing Team**

treatment on-site. We also receive referrals from our health inclusion teams and other organisations like Granby Clinic, Dublin City Council, and Coolmine.

Another member of our team is a mental health nurse. In 2023, we created mental health care plans for 36 people living on the streets or in NGOs, and general health plans for 59 people in similar situations. We customise care based on the client’s needs and build relationships with them to encourage re-engagement with their health. We also discuss topics like sexually transmitted infections (STIs), blood-borne viruses (BBVs), and harm reduction. Sometimes, clients share information about dangerous street drugs, which we pass on to the HSE. If needed, we can organise translators through our PACT



*“Trying to get help when you’re an addict with mental health difficulties is very difficult. They either wanna deal with the mental health or deal with the addiction separately. They won’t deal with them together and I think they go hand in hand.”* **Ceiligh**





**Members of Ana Liffey’s Mid West Team**

coordinator to ensure we provide culturally sensitive care to clients of all nationalities.

In total, we saw 70 people in our clinic and 114 in emergency accommodations, including the Ripley and Charles Stewart Parnell COVID shielding unit, which Ana Liffey managed from October 2022 to July 2023. Many clients had complex health needs, which we were able to address.

A big part of our success is thanks to our clients, who help spread the word about our services. As we move towards involving people with living and lived experience throughout our organisation, we believe it will benefit everyone.

**JADE McGROARTY  
CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER**

**JUNE**

**Tony Duffin presented at the Citizens’ Assembly on Drugs Use in Dublin, discussing low-threshold services for people with complex needs. His presentation, along with testimonies from team members and service users, emphasised the importance of harm reduction and low-barrier services in reducing drug-related harm. The Citizens’ Assembly’s recommendations will influence future Irish drug policy. [Watch Tony’s presentation](#) | [Watch the service user video](#)**

**NOVEMBER**

**Ana Liffey launched *Who We Need To Be... The Strategic Plan of Ana Liffey Drug Project 2024-2029* at the GPO in Dublin. The plan outlines goals for the next five years, focusing on post-**

**COVID-19 recovery, improving service delivery, and employing people with lived experience of addiction. Minister of State Hildegard Naughton praised Ana Liffey’s continued dedication to harm reduction and service innovation. [Read more](#)**

# Ana Liffey's 2023 in Numbers

This breakdown showcases the wide range of impactful interventions and services Ana Liffey provided in 2023, addressing diverse needs through outreach, harm reduction, and case management.

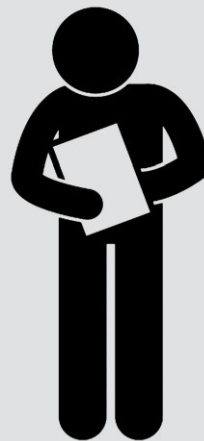
## MID WEST ADDICTION OUTREACH TEAM

**3,488** NSP  
(Needle  
and Syringe  
Programme)  
/ harm  
reduction  
interventions



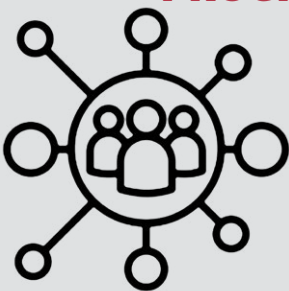
Engaged with  
individuals from  
**23 different  
nationalities**

## NATIONAL DRUG TREATMENT REPORTING SYSTEM (NDTRS)



Reported  
**1,430 unique  
treatment  
episodes**

## DUBLIN LAW ENGAGEMENT ASSISTED RECOVERY (LEAR) PROGRAMME



**836** outreach  
interventions  
conducted

## 'VANALIFFEY' MOBILE UNITS



**2 mobile units**  
operated in Dublin  
and the Mid West

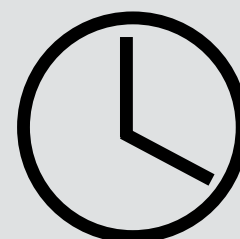
## DUBLIN PRIVATE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION ASSERTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT TEAM (PACT)



Assessed **1,099**  
people  
**882** individuals  
now have  
personal care  
plans

## SPEED OF SERVICE DELIVERY

**204**  
new  
people  
helped  
within **2  
weeks**



**137** new  
people  
helped  
within **4  
weeks**

## **WHO WE ARE**

For more information about who we are please click [here](#)

## **OUR SERVICES**

For more information about our services please click [here](#)

## **AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023**

To view our audited financial statement for 2023 please click [here](#)



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