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# ÁIT LINN ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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Paul's Journey



ÁIT LINN  
1 Longdale Terrace, Ballymun, Dublin 9.  
Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20140953  
Company Number: 255115

### Paul's Journey

#### When and why did you begin to drink, what happened?

My alcohol use began in my teens like many others. I also was a very withdrawn solitary person with high anxiety and found sleep to be elusive and was always exhausted. I found pubs through work and friends in work and developed ritual drinking patterns which increased as time went on. I drifted in and out of using other drugs to maintain the `good times` Over time my alcohol use increased to nearly every day. Drinking alcohol became a priority in my life in my mid-twenties. Without realising it I allowed it to control my lifestyle and work more and more as I relied on it more.

#### What affect did it have on your mental health?

I would regularly get anxiety attacks which would last for days. Even while consuming alcohol until I would pass out and then the harsh reality of the next day would just feed my need to try and subdue the horrors I was feeling. I created a limbo of existence; completely predictable and as safe as I could make it as my anxiety worsened. Alcohol was numbing everything for me. My thoughts, my body, my emotions. I had started hiding from everything isolating myself further and further from people and work. It had affected my work badly.

Drinking alcohol became a priority in my mid-twenties. Without realising it, I allowed it to control my lifestyle and work, more and more,

#### And your physical health?

Pain from nerve damage kept me awake for days on end. It wrecked my sleep patterns and I found work and just about anything hard to do. I got to the place where I was always conscious of the pain. I used alcohol not for the pain because it didn't relieve any of it but just to help me forget for moments and to fall asleep. Even when I had an operation to remove the pressure. I remained in pain for years and still do but at least now it is not constant and dulled. I continued using alcohol as it was just part of my everyday life and helped me with my ever-increasing lows and lack of sleep.

I wanted alcohol to stay in my life. Despite all the rot it was causing, I wanted it there. I knew it was not helping. I would tell myself I would stop soon but decades later it was still there infecting everything I did.

#### What about the people in your life, family, partner?

I have no idea how horrific a time my partner had watching me and knowing I was hiding and lying about my usage. I was high and happy, completely manic and funny, frightening and angry, depressed and self-loathing a few months I'd had attempt suicide. I had no was in a very selfish, self-thoughts were only of different but it wasn't. The

My drinking increased to the point I was in a frenzy of alcohol and sleeping tablet consumption. I was only awake to consume more

and tender and sweet. After enough of this and chose to idea the pain I was causing I obsessed place where tomorrow. Maybe it will be hurt I was causing was

## Áit Linn Annual Report 2019

unknown to me. My partner was coming home every night while worrying all day about whether she would find me catatonic or dead. To go another day of this worry that cannot be shared with others. My isolation created isolation for her. I will be always sorry for what I have done.

The unpredictability of my nature was magnified by alcohol. Small problems became catastrophes and the real problems were being ignored. Anger was laser focused at times, almost sadistic. It was sadistic. I would seek confrontation in order to vent and cause pain on somebody else. My victim was torn apart verbally with arguments. She had to hurtful words. Solely aimed pain. I cannot and will never the past. It doesn't matter physically. Remembered or saying is to forgive and be forgiven what is already But over time I have lied to partner consistently in for alcohol inside me.

I was trying to rush my recovery but it doesn't work that way. I had thrown myself into books and papers to speed things up. But I was told the hard truth that I cannot speed up time. That's the hardest part for me and I'm sure others.

well-chosen insults and listen to a tirade of enraged at causing someone else justify what I have done in where I was mentally or not. They occurred. The forget but how can a person forgotten. myself, family, work and my order to hide the real want

### **What happened then?**

Eventually work problems caught up with me and my mood was so low I wasn't functioning or performing. I had to leave work. My drinking increased to the point I was in a frenzy of alcohol and sleeping tablet consumption. I was only awake to consume more and sleep from passing out. I would stay in bed for weeks at a time because there was no reason to do anything else. I had no interest in things, people, my partner, life. Out there was too much. All I wanted was it to stop. I had a failed attempt at suicide which sent my partner in to a complete panic. That's when she and brother intervened, removed everything from the house and my partner contacted my doctor who referred me to the hospital. When I was in the hospital, the doctor was understanding and compassionate.

..Over time I have lied to myself, family, work and my partner consistently in order to hide the real want for alcohol inside me

### **So, you sought recovery?**

Yes, I came to Ait Linn as a referral from Beaumont hospital. To say I was nervous was an understatement. It took me over a week to gather the courage to phone for an appointment. When I arrived; I was greeted with a friendly smile, which has been the case since. It is amazing how much I grew accustomed to that kind of greeting and how it has taught me the ripple affect it can have on my day. I was invited in and shown around. There was hustle and bustle, people chatting, laughing. It felt too much for me at the time but now I am part of that wonderful noise of communication.

When I began. My trust was on the fence. I was ready to try this but if anything put me off, I would never have gone back. I had only intended to control my drinking; I had no intention of stopping. I

## Áit Linn Annual Report 2019

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started with individual counselling sessions. They made me feel safer. My anxiety and fear levels were intense. But gradually as I started to trust, I relaxed a bit at a time. It was gently suggested that my plan to continue my relationship with alcohol may not be prudent. I wasn't ready for that but as long as I was in the service, I was going to stay away from alcohol.

After a few weeks I was persuaded to go into a LifeRing meeting. I sat, scared to be there, mute and overwhelmed by the noise and talking going on. People were being open and honest and laughing with each other while showing compassion to each other. I was completely floored because I wasn't the only person feeling these things. Other normal people had these wants and urges. I walked out of that meeting realising two things. Firstly, I didn't belong there because some of these people had real problems. But I was assured later that mine were just as real, only different. And the second, I could never drink again if I was to ever hope to live life

### **So, you continued to go?**

Yes. The education/relapse prevention group was so helpful. I learned so much about what was happening within me and what to expect. It was with a small group of people once a week led by Ann. We got to discuss anything that came to mind while there. It also let me start to feel a structure. Something to look to weekly. Everything else was in the day to day. It helped to know I had something to be part of with mainly like-minded people in an environment that was safe. I think that was the most important thing I got initially was I felt safe there always. When I have had problems or struggles, I have always felt and have spoken to Mara, Ann and Sibeal and they have tried to help me no matter how off the wall I was.

Then I moved into the Treatment Group. This was also a huge learning curve. Talking openly to strangers about feelings and thoughts. The past and present and being presented with alternative viewpoints. They of recovery. I move to the next doesn't work papers to speed cannot speed up others. It's not a like osmosis. while what's speeds. No everyone is

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were a good group of people in different stages learned a lot from the group but wanted to group. I was trying to rush my recovery but it that way. I had thrown myself into books and things up. But I was told the hard truth that I time. That's the hardest part for me and I'm sure switch that can be changed quickly. It's a process Slowly transferring, absorbing and seeping in been kept inside comes out in its own paces and amount of thinking can hurry the process, and different.

Now, the Aftercare Group is where I am at. I have found the attitude towards sobriety and insights to be incredibly valuable. Within the group and myself, we hear each other and our situations. They differ greatly but have overlaps such that people mostly relate to each other and can help each other navigate through firsts like Christmas sober and pasts like grief. The meetings are generally convened and guided currently by Mara with the objective of delving into ourselves and extracting the person within. To confront who we are and tackle our emotions and fears which we spent years hiding with alcohol and find out strengths and bring them out. It is not easy. We laugh but we are serious and there to learn what we can about ourselves and others.

## Áit Linn Annual Report 2019

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### **And now, what next?**

I have thought about making amends a lot; while I know it cannot be done, fully, partially, wholly. How can I ever be sorry enough for things that occurred once, twice, regularly, months apart, every single day. Harsh words and unforgivable comments. Selfish actions, terrifying rages and angers, doling out sadness and regrets to her. I've forgotten many of the things I'd said and done. I had trapped her with guilt and shame and confused her with welcoming warmth and tenderness. I was good until I wasn't.

Since I attended Ait Linn. I have begun what these people call a journey. I suppose it is. In the past I was always rushing always said that it is all appreciating what's on the with me, not even a little. It a world that demands beginning of my recovery in the end. Reading, watching and searching for the result that wasn't coming fast enough for me. Now I feel very differently. I realise I need time and am lucky enough to have it. I am in a safe, trusting and caring environment. My scope is widening. Health is better than it has been for decades. My mind is awakening, and my memory is returning. I notice and feel things I would have passed by for so long. Fun and laughter has returned. I can see a future now which is something that had been very distant before. This service has supported me throughout, guiding and advising me. Challenging me constantly to improve my life. I cannot say definitely where I would have been had I not spent the last year and a half at Ait Linn every week other than I would not be capable of sitting down and rattling off these thoughts without any plan of what I will say with truth and honesty and fear of others criticising me. I am very lucky and grateful of the work that is done here and I am very aware of the consequences of the good the project does and the good I hope to do in the future.

Selfish actions, terrifying rages and angers, doling out sadness and regrets to her. I've forgotten many of the things I'd said and done

manically. My partner has about the journey and way. It never resonated always seemed pointless in results. I was at the a massive hurry to get to

I have missed out on so much in life due to my choices. I am much older now and life is short. But it's not about how old we are but when we start living. Without alcohol I am learning, seeing and hearing so much. I can appreciate small things. I am starting to remember clearly. I have found nature. I can enjoy people. I have found I like people and some of them like me. I can be alone without being lonely. I want more now. I can see I have more.

# Ait Linn

## Income and Expenditure Statement

Year Ending December 2019

**Opening Balance** € 23,029

**Income** €  
Grant Income (DCC) 120,000  
Donations 3,110  
Grant 3,019

**Income Total** €126,129

### Expenditure

Staffing 103,801  
Consulting & Staff Training 529  
IT 2,779  
Rent 3,888  
Printing and promotional materials 105  
Audit Fees 1,373  
Insurance 1,330  
Fixed Assets 1,570  
Utilities 1,991

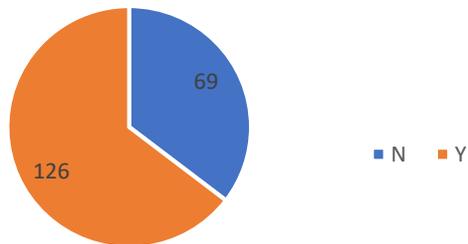
Administrative and Sundry 2,472

**Expenditure Total** €119,938

**Balance as at 31 December 2019** €29,320

## Áit Linn Annual Report Statistics 2019

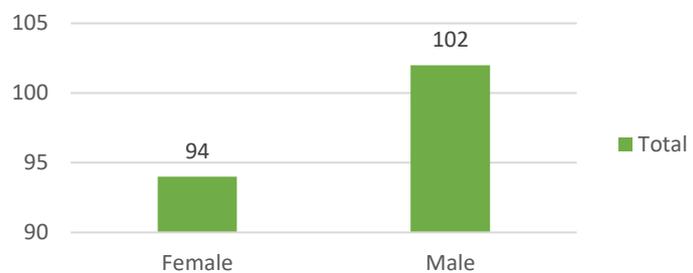
Total Referrals / Clients Engaged



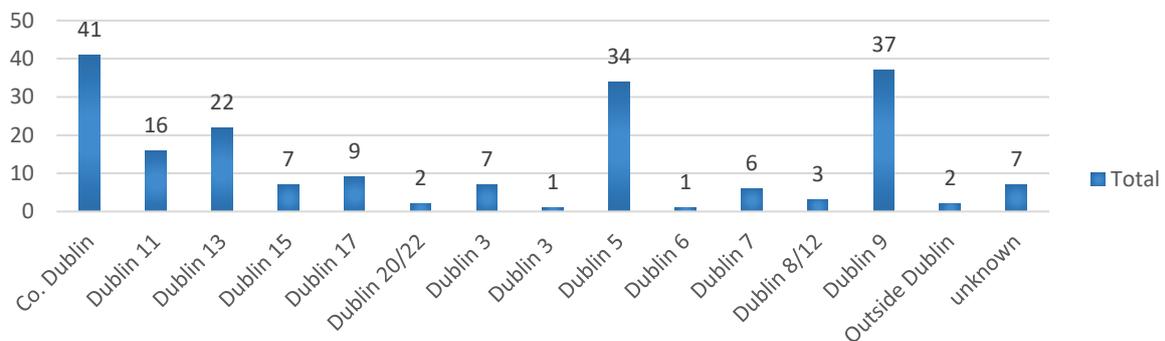
**During 2019 we received 196 referrals. Of these, 126 individuals engaged with the service and received Individual and group support.**

**Of the 196 referrals, 102 were male and 94 were female**

Referrals by Gender

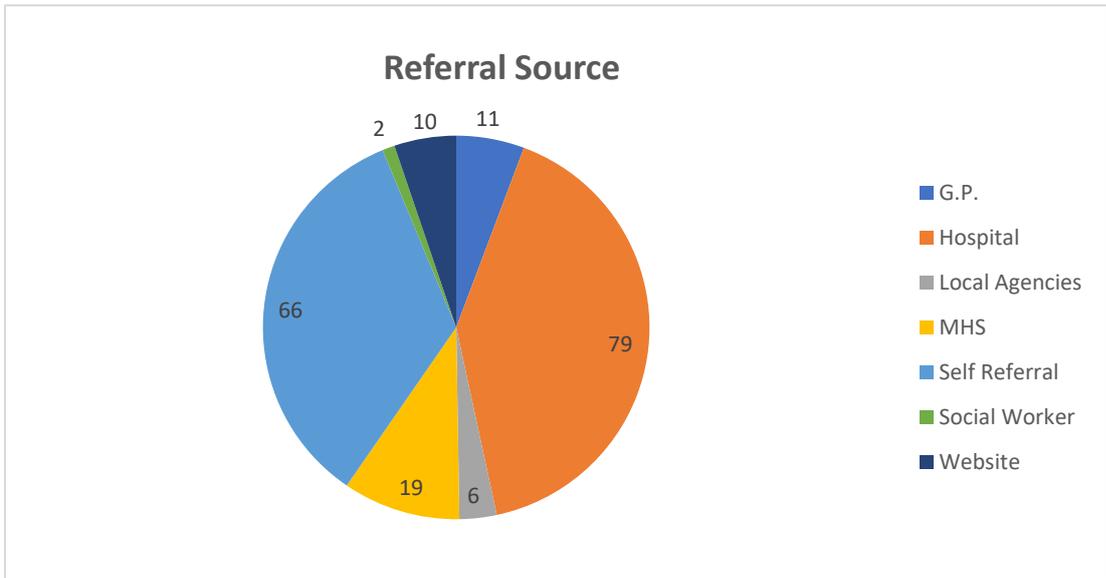


Referrals by Area

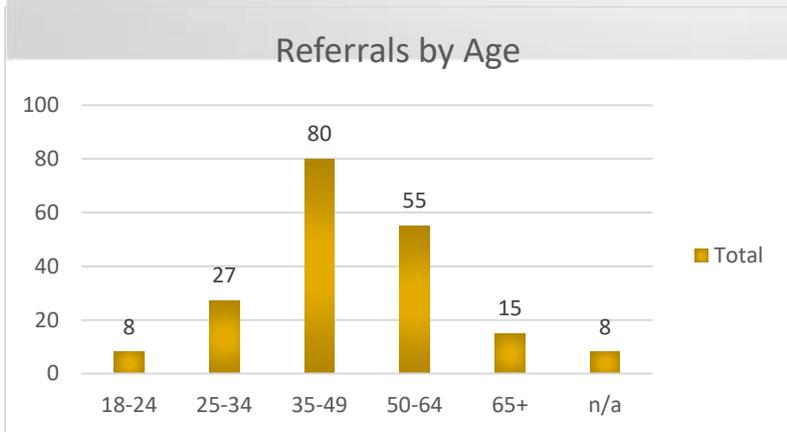


**Most referrals to the service came from Ballymun and surrounding areas including Santry, Coolock, Donaghmede, Artane and Finglas.**

**There were also a significant number of referral from Co. Dublin including Swords, Malahide, Portmarnock, and a small number of referrals from outside of the Dublin area or from unknown areas.**



*A large number of referrals came from the hospitals (79), the majority coming from Beaumont Hospital. We had a significant number of self-referrals from individuals/families (66) and a number of referrals from G.P.s (11). A small number of referrals also came through local social and community services including Mental Health, Social Care, Addiction and Employment agencies.*



***The 35-49 age group made up the biggest share of referrals at 80 referrals for 2019, with a significant number of individuals aged 50 years and over (70).***