

# Annual Report 2020



**turas**

*“I was at the bottom of the ladder,  
Turas showed me the steps  
and how to use them.”*

*- Gerry*

# Board of Directors and staff

## Board of Directors

Carol McGuinness	
Emma Caffrey	(Director)
Jane Fegan	
Mary McDonald	
Michéal O' Murchu	(Director)
Niall Weldon	(Director)
Nicholas Mc Shane	(Director)
Peter Mc Kevitt	(Chairperson and Secretary)
Sheila MacGuire	
Stewart Agnew	



## Staff

Alan Duff	(Clinical Manager)
Caroline Macken	(Counsellor for Community Alcohol Detox)
Cian McCooley	(Reception/Admin)
Ciaran Warnock	(Reception/Admin)
Deirdre Murphy	(Counsellor)
Frank Fitzpatrick	(Project Worker)
Lee O'Neill	(Project Worker)
Maureen Zeltner	(Administrator)
Nicki Jordan	(Manager)
Patricia Kelly	(Detox Nurse)
Tiina Univer	(Administrator)

# Chairperson's Statement



## A year like no other

2020 was a most unusual and difficult year for everyone around the world, not least for us here in

Turas. However, we remained committed to our mission to ensure people in addiction were met with a confidential and non-judgemental space and when we couldn't meet in person we quickly moved our services online.

When Covid arrived we quickly altered our services to provide them remotely and worked tirelessly during the year to tweak and temper them to develop the best practice model we now have.

We offered 2,288 sessions to 272 people using face-to-face, online and telephone methods to ensure people in Dundalk and surrounds replaced an addiction filled lockdown with one of solace, contemplation and hope.

In March 2020 we had no idea for long these new changes would continue but we kept going, developed new services and alternative approaches to service delivery while remaining steadfast in our commitment to people with addiction.

We offered all of our normal services and even added to them to meet unmet needs we were presented with. In addition we worked with asylum seekers in isolation to provide a listening ear and psychosocial interventions. We also collaborated with FoodCloud to receive and distribute food to our clients financially challenged by the pandemic.

Throughout it all we were driven by our ethos of respect, acceptance and non-judgement and remained dedicated to our clients who have told us the immeasurable difference Turas made in their lives.

I would like to thank the HSE and the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force for their financial support towards funding the service and in particular the Court Services for their donations throughout the year.

I would like to thank all of our staff and management for their dedication and commitment to finding solutions to the difficulties Covid-19 presented, in a way that enabled us to continue to provide a first class service and for remaining constant throughout with our clients as their priority. I would also like to thank all of our board members for their work and support throughout the year.

Peter McKeivitt  
Chairperson

# Who are we?

Turas is a Dundalk based community addiction service offering hope, supports and opportunities towards change to men and women, 18+, struggling with an addiction in the North East.

## Vision

A society where people overcoming addiction can live fulfilling, healthy and substance free lives.

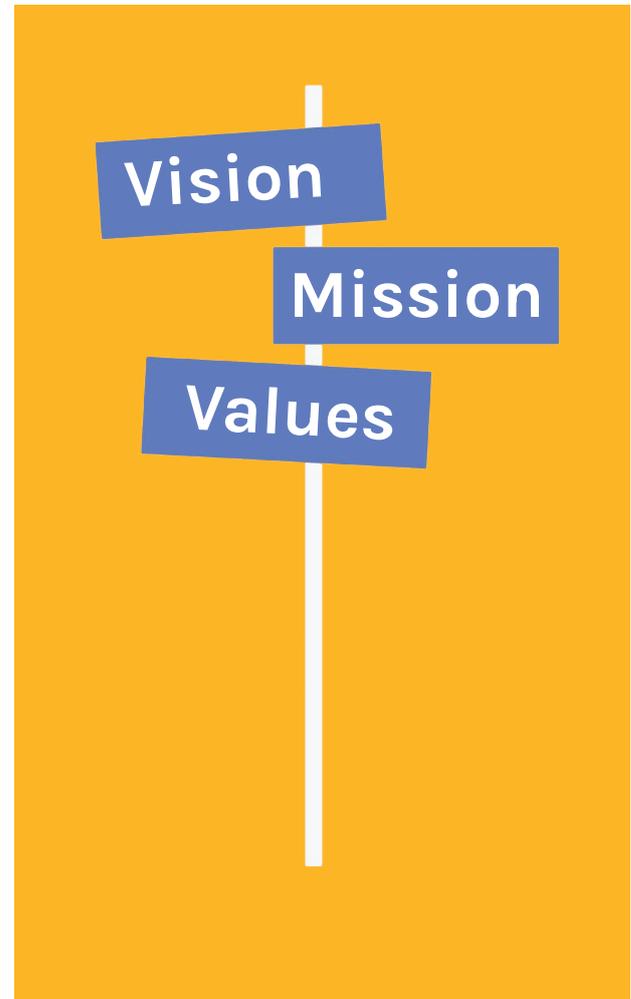
## Mission

Turas offers individuals a tailored pathway towards personal recovery from drugs and alcohol by providing a confidential and non-judgmental service for individuals and their families.

## Values

**Acceptance** - we understand the unique challenges and experiences of each individual

**Compassion** - we provide a welcoming, compassionate and trusting environment



**Dignity** - we respect and support people to develop their own potential

**Health** - we promote health and well-being as part of a substance free lifestyle

# How we work



## Mary's Story



Mary spent most of her life caring for her husband who had depression, her children and her ageing parents. After her children moved out, her husband also left and her parents both died around the same time. Suddenly she felt alone.

She began working in a job that she later realised was putting her down, demeaning and critical of her every move.

Terrified of the future and tired of life, alcohol slowly became the only thing that mattered to Mary because it helped her to feel numb of all the pain she had endured throughout her life.

One morning her daughter arrived at her door sobbing to see the way her mother had become and Mary herself knew it was time to be honest with herself and admit that she needed help.

Talking to her GP, he recommended Turas, and she made her way straight down to us. Shaking with fear she was met with kindness, acceptance and understanding. "I want me to happen to life, instead of life happening to me" she said on arrival. Immediately she felt understood and knew she was in the right place.

Through attending group work and one-to-one sessions she delved into who she really was for the first time and blossomed. She finally learned what a Sunday felt like because she was no longer hungover. Mary lives now with her senses open, her mind at ease and feels fully alive.

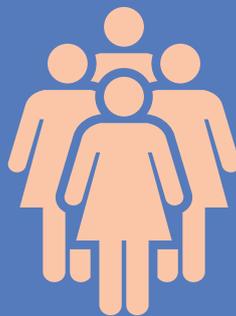
She knows that she is brilliant and has hope for the future.

## 2020 in numbers

**345**  
ASSESSMENTS  
COMPLETED



**41**  
WOMEN  
IN SOBRIETY  
SESSIONS



**49**  
MEN'S  
SMART RECOVERY  
GROUP SESSIONS



### PROGRAMMES

**178**  
RELAPSE  
PREVENTION

**1669**  
COUNSELLING  
SESSIONS  
OFFERED

**38**  
TRANSFORMATION  
RECOVERY  
PROGRAMME  
SESSIONS

**157**  
CAREPLANNING  
& PERSONAL  
REVIEW

**29**  
SIGN POST  
& ADVOCACY

**781**  
KEYWORKING



**21**

**MINDFULNESS  
SESSIONS**

**402**

**MOTIVATIONAL  
SUPPORT**

**287**

**COMPLETED ALCOHOL  
DETOX PROGRAMME**



**3986**

**TOTAL ONE-TO-ONE INTERVENTIONS**

## Year in review

We began in January with hope and excitement for a new year. By March we heard about lockdown's in China and within a few short weeks we were thrown into a very challenging, disorienting and unknown world. But we coped, and indeed thrived in our commitment to ensuring that addiction was not going to be another problem added to peoples already tumultuous lives.

Turas responded with strength, decisiveness and flexibility and made the new way work. We supported more clients than in 2019 and we also provided far more sessions because people were at home with less distractions and some fantastic work was done with our clients.

We kept communication with all of the team, the board and our clients open from the outset which helped with a smooth transition to our 'new normal'. Turas knew that to succeed in such an unpredictable and fluid space it required us to be flexible in our approach and offer new services and programmes when required.

On the request of the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force we provided daily support to asylum seekers in isolation staying at the Carnbeg Hotel. We continued this for a number of weeks until the service was no longer required.

We also offered weekly meditation classes to ensure all of our clients had access to a mindful and calm space to help them deal with their addiction during such a restricted time.

Turas further broadened our services to meet need and collaborated with FoodCloud to provide food to our clients in financial difficulty. We would collect food from Tesco and contact clients whom we would meet at Turas, or for those immobile, we would deliver it to their door.

On the operations front we made several interventions to establish a system that worked for our staff and clients and these were supported by buying staff mobile phones, which were funded by Dundalk Credit Union. These have become a vital part of our ability to provide our service.

Thanks to funding from the HSE/NERDATF and Louth County Council we were able to ensure all staff also had a laptop and to conduct a full Covid risk assessment and deep clean before we returned to working face-to-face.

We developed a Covid policy and a remote working policy and required all staff to undertake a home health and safety risk assessment of their home work space. We held team meetings every Wednesday morning to discuss client issues, self-care and any struggles with working from home.

While we managed to do fantastic work during Covid it is important to note that core issues facing some of our clients such as dual diagnosis and the lack of detox support, particularly in relation to benzodiazepines, continue to be a problem and we have continued worked together with the NERDATF to find long-term solutions.

Our strategic plan launch in September by Minister with Responsibility for Drugs Frank Feighan laid the foundations for advocacy to continue on these issues and to develop our fundraising, purchase a new building, improve staff wellbeing, develop a drop-in service and CE scheme. While Covid has slowed some of these down it has not

deterred us in achieving our aims and we will continue to work on these into 2021 and 2022. We have worked hard to ensure we are compliant with the Charities Governance Code in 2020 and will continue to comply with this going forward.

## Communications Support

Turas responded to a call from the Irish Charities Institute and was placed with a Senior communications specialist who supported us to develop our messaging online and via radio. It was a fantastic initiative and Turas benefited from the expertise we received to develop our website, improve our Facebook content, design an ad for Dundalk FM and developed a longer term communications plan.

We established our '12 tips of Christmas' campaign on Facebook to offer encouragement and positive thoughts for people with addiction as they approached Christmas.

Fundraising is a challenging arena to succeed in and we hope in 2021 to develop new initiatives to create a more sustainable future for Turas to ensure we can deliver services to people in Dundalk for the future.

### Fundraising

We also streamlined our online donations and signed up with I donate to create an easier experience for people wishing to donate.

The Manager and a number of people took part in a walk in Ravensdale, walking 21 miles and raising €3100.

The Event Management students in DKIT organised a range of online fundraising activities including a quiz and coffee morning and raised €539 for Turas which was presented via zoom.

We also painted our building blue to brighten our shop front and develop brand awareness locally.

All-in-all the staff and volunteers in Turas ensured that Covid did not deter us in our mission of ensuring people with addiction received the support they need and our client quotes and stories are testament to this.

Thank you to all our volunteers, staff and board members for their ongoing dedication, hard work and professionalism to Turas and to our clients who make our work worthwhile, offer feedback and keep working towards change.

Nicki Jordan [Turas Manager](#)

## Thanks to all our funders in 2020:

- Thanks to all our funders in 2020:
- Courts Service
- Dundalk Credit Union
- HSE
- Louth County Council
- Louth Leader Partnership
- North East Regional Drug and Alcohol
- Taskforce (NERDATF)
- RTE Comic Relief
- Individual donors

## Strategic Plan launch

### Aim 1

Establish a low threshold drop-in service for Dundalk with support from local service providers

### Aim 2

Develop a specialisation for supporting clients with dual diagnosis

### Aim 3

Improve referral and care pathways for individuals and families with experiences of drug and alcohol misuse

### Aim 4

Explore development of a special community employment rehabilitation scheme

### Aim 5

Ensure a secure and sustainable financial future

### Aim 6

Nurture a warm and welcoming employee culture based on excellence

### Aim 7

Secure a new building for Turas



## Grace Kelly's Poem



A letter to Turas during covid 19.

Turas now are my support you see.  
 With their assistance and care I've learned to be  
 me.  
 Counsellors, reception and Ann are all available.  
 Without them I don't think I'd be quite able.  
 Even with covid their support is still there.  
 Helping us all not to despair.

Without Turas a year ago  
 It would be difficult to deal with every low.  
 More difficult not to drink  
 Especially when I'm on the brink

I feel so supported it's uncanny to say,  
 Because of them I see and feel every day  
 'cause I have support and group like no others  
 In that establishment we're all like brothers.

They help me to live one day at a time  
 Without them my life would be so sublime.  
 Others may be unavailable to us  
 But with Turas it's like we're all on a bus  
 A bus taking us into sobriety,  
 Helping us join a more compassionate society.

The women's group is part of my life  
 It helps me to deal with trouble and strife.  
 We have a laugh and coffee you see,  
 And with all my flaws it's ok to be me.  
 Sometimes we cry and sometimes we laugh,  
 We talk about self care and just having a bath.

For anyone in trouble their there for you  
 They'll assist you with what ever to do,  
 We're all friends there,. a big family  
 Thanks to them all my reality I see.

They've helped me bring love back to my daily  
 living.  
 In sobriety life is so forgiving,  
 For a time I wasn't an available mother,  
 And through my addiction two sons lost one  
 brother.

Now in my life I have my three sons and I love  
 being there and just baking the buns.

Life is not perfect but 100 times better  
 So with love and gratitude...this is my letter.

## Paddy's Story



*"I was on the road to the graveyard, broken and felt like I was near death. I tried residential twice and couldn't handle it. Then I found Turas. The way Turas deals with people is amazing. I owe my life to Turas. Now I feel like I am living my life, dealing with the issues I had and I have a whole new perspective. Life is about the simple things that mean so much and how little I need to be happy. Turas took me out of a dark whole and let me see the light again. Thank you Turas!"*

### Quotes

*"I was at the bottom of the ladder, Turas showed me the steps and how to use them." - Gerry*

*"Turas is fantastic, I can't thank you enough. The amount that I have learned is amazing. It has changed my life for the better. I have relationships again; I have gotten to know my children in the past 11 weeks of my sobriety."  
- Olwyn*

*"The Community Alcohol Detox Programme changes your whole mentality. I would have previously seen alcohol addiction as a taboo issue. The non-judgemental approach that Turas offers means that I no longer look at it as a shameful thing. The programme was exactly what I needed. Thanks so much for everything."  
- Jack*

# Legal and Administrative Details

## Registered Office

Security House  
59 Clanbrassil Street  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth

## Registered Company Number

425887

## Registered Charity Number

CHY22271

## Auditors

CMF  
3rd Floor  
Quayside Business Park  
Mill St.  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth

## Principal Bankers

Bank of Ireland  
Clanbrassil St.  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth

## Solicitor

Brian Berrills  
18 Francis St  
Townparks  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth  
A91 EW2V



**turas**

59 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth

E: [info@turascounselling.ie](mailto:info@turascounselling.ie)

T: 042 9338221

W: [turascounselling.ie](http://turascounselling.ie)