



turas

The road to Recovery

2022

Annual Report



Contents

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Message from our Chairperson



I am delighted to reflect on the fantastic work undertaken by Turas in 2022. People with addiction are some of the most marginalised in society and the support we provide can be life changing for them.

We are working towards fulfilling the final year of our strategic plan and it is with great pleasure that I can report the implementation of most of the aims. We have also added additional work in the process, responding to needs as they emerged, such as our recovery cafes and dual diagnosis project. We are also acutely aware of the increase in gambling addiction and the ease with which it can be accessed.

I would like to wholeheartedly thank our statutory funders the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force and the HSE whom we have worked in partnership with for many years and hope to continue to do so into the future. We are also grateful to our other funders who are outlined at the end of this report.

We operate in a difficult environment financially and in 2022 have taken great strides to increase our own fundraised income in order to provide us with a little more sustainability. We are 95% reliant on our statutory funders to run our service and with inflation, lack of pay increments or pensions for our staff it creates a difficult environment.

On behalf of the board I would like to extend my thanks to the tireless dedication, commitment and compassion displayed by our staff team. Their contribution to improving the lives of our clients is immense and does not go unnoticed.

I would also like to commend our clients for the continuous efforts they make to improve their own lives, allow themselves to be open to receive the supports we offer and to use them to transform their lives to have meaning and purpose. None of this would be possible with the diligent, determined and steady support of our board of management. The board gives of their time, experience and knowledge freely and are totally committed to developing Turas into a sustainable and thriving organisation. Thank you.

Mary McDonald
Chairperson

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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. .

Mission

Offer a tailored pathway towards personal recovery, by providing a confidential and non-judgmental service for individuals to recover from addiction.

Vision

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

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

Our 2022 Journey



Our **Transformational Recovery Programme** commenced helping 12 people to engage in more long term change

JAN

We worked towards becoming a **trauma informed organisation** with a number of staff attending training in order to put into practice trauma informed care to ensure our clients are welcomed into a calm and soothing environment.

MAR

We kept our **Sober Socialising** going to increase recovery capital for people in addiction and provide an alternative to form of socialising.

MAY

We launched our **Recovery Cafe**, a space for people in addiction to socialise with other like minded people without addictive substances. The first of its kind in the North East.

FEB

Our Manager was selected onto the Carmichael Centre's **Mentoring** programme to develop strategic development knowledge and skills needed for steering Turas into the future.

APR

Drama therapy workshops provided another forum of expression with thanks to Create Ireland who funded it.

JUNE



We obtained funding from **Mental Health Ireland** to hire a dual diagnosis project, a first of it's kind in the region.

AUG

Fundraising success

- We held our annual spooky trail fundraiser to raise funds for our work and to offer our local **community** a family fun day out and highlighting the need for our work and developing links with sponsors

OCT

We secured funding from **Gambling Awareness Trust** to develop a new gambling service and conduct an advertising campaign to highlight the signs of problem gambling

DEC

JULY

12 people took part in **Sailing into Wellness** in Carlingford and Howth and had an amazing experience.

SEPT

Recovery Month was acknowledged in Dundalk with a range of stalls in public places and we turned Turas purple to highlight the importance of supporting people in recovery.

NOV

Women's group coordinator finished studying a Level 9 in Women and addiction to help us to deliver a more gender specific service

Impact

Our Mission

Supporting people with addiction to grow and be themselves by providing a warm, trustful and non-judgemental environment where they can feel safe, understood and listened to.

Outcomes

Improved mental health and well being
Stability in recovery
Understanding and awareness of triggers
Engaging in meaningful activities
Enhanced relationships
Enabled to make positive, lasting change in their lives

Activities that help us to achieve our outcomes

Counselling
Transformational Recovery Programme
Relapse Prevention
Community Alcohol Detox
Harm reduction
Sober socialising nights
Recovery Cafe
Weekly recovery groups
Social farming
Health promotion
Sailing

Indicators

Clients returning to volunteer in our service
Progression within our service
Attendance at our recovery capital programmes
Length of engagement
Active engagement

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Liz's Story

When Liz was 14 she was used to living with parental alcoholism. One evening when she was babysitting her younger brother she had fallen asleep on the couch and she woke up the arms of paramedics on her way to an ambulance realising that her house was on fire. Her father was already out there having just rescued her brother and their cat, leaving her lying on the couch.

She had no belongings only the clothes she was wearing. She felt so lost, unloved and unaccepted and that she wasn't worthy of belonging anywhere. She started smoking cannabis to feel accepted.

At 16 she was attacked and felt so vulnerable that she was too scared to go to the bathroom without her mother. The doctor put her on xanax. They were like magic, she no longer felt so afraid and moved in with aunt where she lived very happily, feeling safe and secure, for two years.

When she was 18 the old negative feelings started to creep back in and she became heavily addicted to tablets. "Hell on earth" is how she described it. She had no money to pay for the ESB, no food – she was starving but as long as she had drugs she was happy. "That's how deep it gets."

She went on to meet a partner and they had four children together but it had its challenges and their children were placed in care.

She tried treatment in 2018 but didn't find success but in 2021 after completing treatment for the first time she came to Turas to maintain her sobriety and get her life back. She was met with support and someone who listened and cared. They got her and she didn't have to explain herself to them over and over again.

Liz was accepted onto the Transformational Recovery Programmewhere she worked really hard at her recovery. It was tough but



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when she walked out and came home she was lighter and recognised how well she was doing, a feeling that she wasn't used to.

She shocked herself by taking part in the Sailing into Wellness programme and went onto to spend 3 nights on a ship in Howth, sailing around the bay every day and jumping in the water. "It was an amazing feeling".

She initially thought she wouldn't like it and it showed her the good side of life, how life can be enjoyed and how she deserved to be happy. "I did something I felt I wouldn't be able to do but felt great when I did it and that I was trusted because I was never trusted."

She has since participated in our Parenting under Pressure programme and is graduating as a hairdresser this May with a job lined up for when she finishes. Her and her partner are working closely with Tusla and will soon have their children returned to their full time care. She is so proud of getting sober and getting her children back. "It was unbelievably hard, but it has been so worth it, it feels amazing".

*Names changed in all stories and quotes to maintain anonymity



Reflection from our Manager

The road to recovery is paved with social support and connection. In Turas we have made great efforts to create a safe and supported road to overcome all of the barriers and obstacles that may arise for our clients on their road to recovery by helping them to develop their own recovery capital.

While we know that talking therapies are essential to explore underlying trauma, issues of identity, belonging etc. that can be present for people with addiction we have learned that it is equally important to have other avenues available for support in the weeks, months and years after someone becomes sober.

To this end, in 2022 we launched our weekly Recovery cafés in Dundalk and Collon to provide a weekly social outlet where people with addiction can go to socialise, gain support and meet other people who understand the recovery journey and the bumps on the road to gaining long term sobriety.

To further develop training and employment options we have liaised with the Department of Social Protection and hope to be in a position to open a drug rehabilitation CE scheme in 2023 to offer education and employment skills to those stable in recovery.

We are acutely aware of the unique needs of women in addiction and in 2022 have redeveloped our weekly Women's group to include a psycho educational element to it and have enjoyed a day trip to Titanic in Belfast. Many women would not have the confidence or finances to take a trip like this on their own so it was lovely to be able to offer this, particularly in the context of covid and the isolation it brought to people.

We have also worked to become a trauma informed organisation, acknowledging the underlying traumas clients attend with and the importance of respecting them from the minute they arrive in the door of Turas. This involves all of the team being mindful of their past experiences and ensuring they feel safe, trusted, empowered, have choices and the opportunity to collaborate in relation to the support they receive in Turas.

We have continued to support clients in the justice system through the Louth Drug Treatment Court. Clients are referred by the Probation services and receive weekly 1-2-1 key working appointments. Urine analysis is undertaken and care plans are reviewed at regular intervals. It is a fantastic programme for people before the court for minor drug related offences and provides the opportunity to become drug free and move on in life.

As an organisation we take work place culture very seriously and ensure that all of the team feel respected and valued. This ensures that our staff are energised and motivated when coming to work and able to manage the difficult situations that arise when supporting clients in chaos, trauma and difficulty.

I am delighted to have had the chance to lead Turas for a fifth year and grow its work and scope to offer even more support knowing that it has made the road brighter, more manageable and easier to navigate for the clients who attend our service, some of whose stories and quotes you will read in this report.

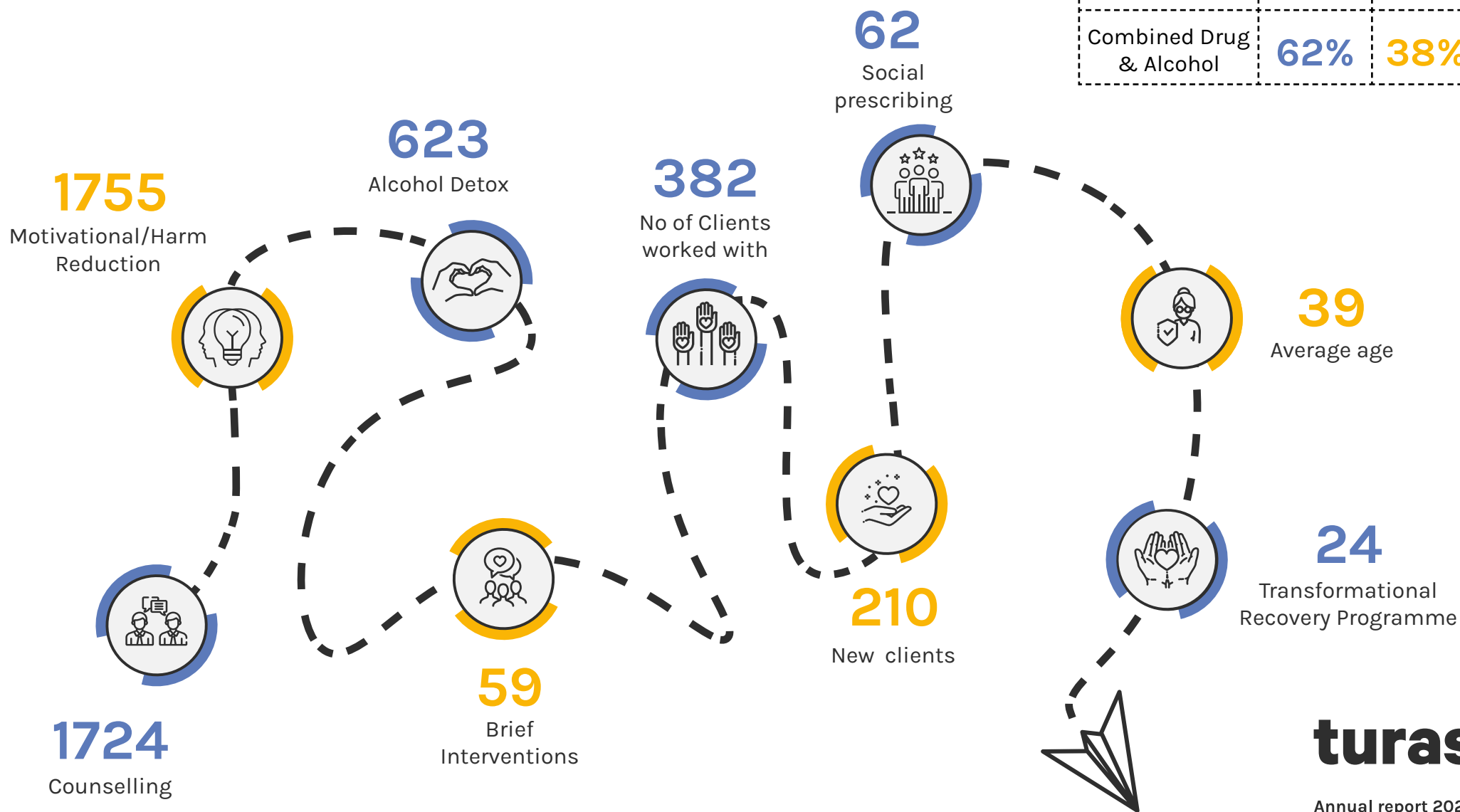
Nicki Jordan
Turas Manager



“Before my first meeting I was really unsure of what I was doing, having never been to counselling before. When I met the staff and my counsellor, Alan, I knew I was in the right place. He was easy to communicate with and friendly, always listening to what I would have to say and always giving good advice on my next steps towards keeping sober and making me a better and healthier person. It was really good and well worth making the effort and commitment as it benefited me massively. Months later I am still sober thanks to the hard work of the team at Turas.”

- John

Our Impact in 2022





Transformational Recovery Programme

The Transformational Recovery Programme (TRP) is a unique, person centred 15 week programme which balances group work and personal development alongside individual counselling.

The TRP allows individuals to continue with their recovery in a community based setting and involves group support, workshops, outdoor therapy, art therapy and drama.

Participants develop skills to stay sober long term and build their self-belief, enabling them to create substance free lives.

The TRP is not just another programme delivered from a manual. It moves and adapts to meet the needs of both the group and the individual. In 2022 this fluidity enabled us respond quickly when changes were needed and to implement the learning that we gained during Covid.

The importance of getting back to nature and spending time outside is something that was very helpful during Covid restrictions and we have continued to enhance our outdoor therapies in 2022.

As a result, many graduates of the TRP have advanced and become involved in our Social Farming initiative and our Sailing into Wellness Programme. Our graduates have also been supported to embrace their sobriety and further develop themselves by participating in ongoing training which, for many, has led to employment.

The main benefit of the TRP is that participants are supported in their recovery, while remaining in their own community and can learn to navigate stressful life events as they happen.

The group setting creates a safe environment for participants to learn from each other's lived experiences and grow together, knowing that they are not alone in their journey.

The happiest days I have at work are always the graduation days where we celebrate the participant's achievements, sobriety and lifelong learning. I love to see how people grow from being shy and nervous in day one, to confident in their future and their ability to move forward with their lives and their "Turas" (Irish word for Journey).

The end of the TRP does not mean the end of the individuals time with Turas and they are always welcome back to engage with the many other services that we offer which enhance their recovery capital and make their recovery more sustainable.

Alan Duff
Clinical Manager

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Sailing into Wellness

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With funding from Healthy Ireland and the National Lottery we were fortunate to be able to work with another not for profit who specialise in taking people in recovery out sailing. We were able to offer 2 sets of 4 week programmes which brought clients out to Carlingford one day a week for four weeks to participate in learning how to sail. This involved taking boats out into Carlingford Lough, using the knowledge they learned to prepare the boats for launch, steer the boats, manage the sails in relation to the wind, stay on course and get back safely to the marina.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we could only offer 8 people the opportunity to go to Howth for 3 nights sailing and had to use a lotto system to choose those to have this deeper experience. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all and we hope, funding dependent, to offer this again in 2023.





Some quotes from participants:

"I found such peace in the water and was really able to switch off"

"it was an out of this world experience to be able to talk about recovery in a tranquil environment"

"I never done anything more relaxing and calming in my life, it was great would love to do it every week"

"The social aspect was great and everything felt so natural with the instructors"

"I am starting to get my old self back and doing things again that I haven't done in ages, the sailing really inspired me"





Recovery Cafe and Recovery Groups



We launched our first café in February 2022 with the support of neighbouring local business XXI Ice. It commenced initially on a Wednesday morning and remained at that time slot until the Autumn when we decided to move it to the evening to suit those working during the day.

The cafe has become a big feature of the work of Turas and we were lucky to have a CE space lent to us from another local not-for-profit to take on a recovery coach to help to coordinate and drive this work.

Those attending are able to have a barista coffee and get support from our trained volunteers who are on site to discuss any issues emerging in relation to their recovery. We had an average of 5 people attending each week during the day and since moving to the evening slot it has risen to 10-15 each week.

We have a second café in Collon at the Oasis of Peace which attracts people from a wide geographical base for support.

We have also continued our recovery groups and moving our long standing men's to become a mixed gender group and moving to a venue outside of Turas to accommodate for the growing numbers in the group.

The café and group are a part of a suite of offerings that clients attending Turas can avail of that help them to build recovery capital for themselves, to develop networks of support that will help them to maintain sobriety when life hits challenges.



Self-care, staff nurturing and culture




Our strategic plan highlights the need to ensure that we nurture a warm and welcoming employee culture and taking time out for staff self-care days is a vital part of this.

In July 10 of us attended a walk in the Cooley mountains, followed by lunch and a swim in the sea. It was an idyllic day out where everyone had the opportunity to switch off, recharge and take a break from work.

In September 10 of us attended the Cacao ceremony in Carlingford which was a very relaxing and enjoyable experience that was tailored to those working in the helping professions. It was lovely for the team to be the focus of support instead the givers of support for a change and everyone acknowledged that it was a space created for them to unwind and rejuvenate.

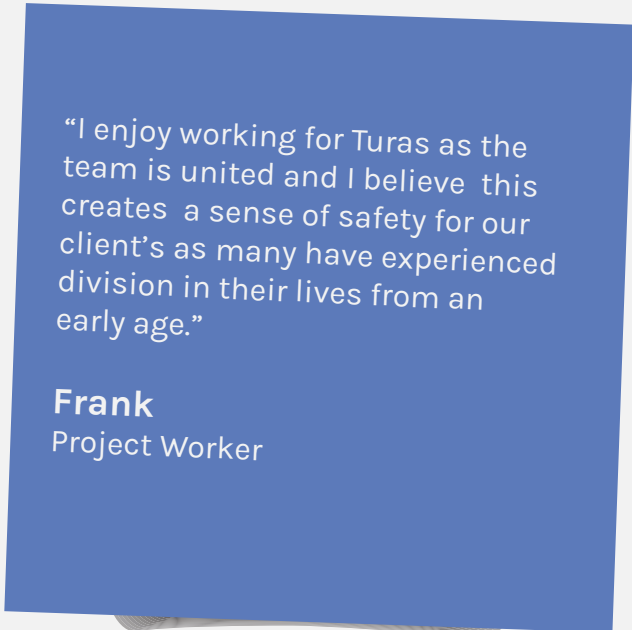
In Turas we strive to ensure that the team feel valued for the difficult work they do and our culture of collaboration extends to the team as well as clients.

Some quotes from the team:



“Working in Turas doesn’t actually feel like a job to me. Seeing clients taking the first step towards recovery by walking in through our door is so inspiring. Every day is so different - and with the support of a great team I genuinely look forward to “work!”.

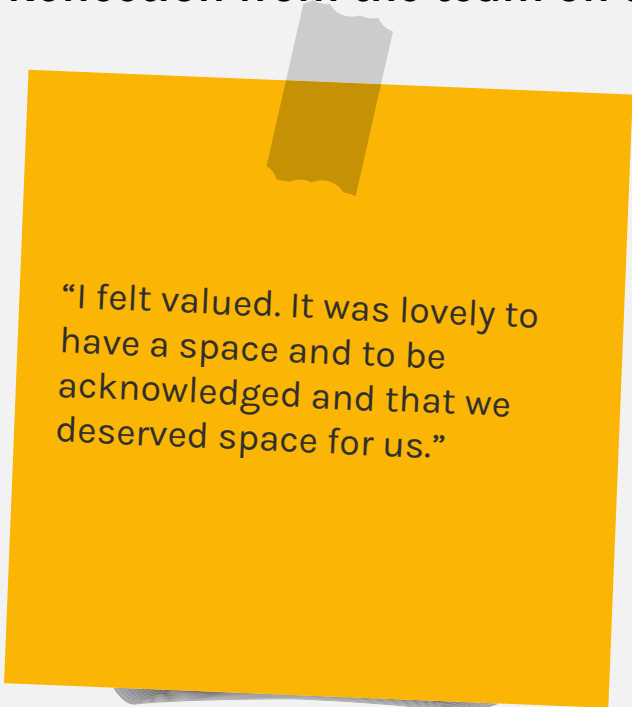
Chloe
Project Worker



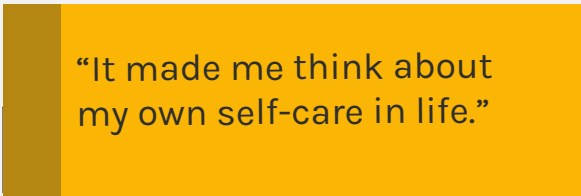
“I enjoy working for Turas as the team is united and I believe this creates a sense of safety for our client’s as many have experienced division in their lives from an early age.”

Frank
Project Worker

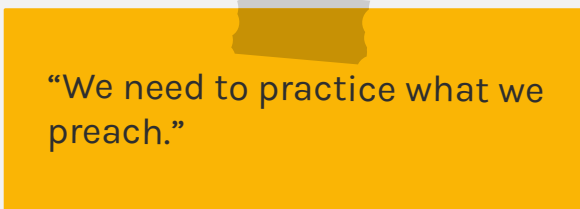
Reflection from the team on the Cacao Ceremony:



“I felt valued. It was lovely to have a space and to be acknowledged and that we deserved space for us.”



“It made me think about my own self-care in life.”



“We need to practice what we preach.”

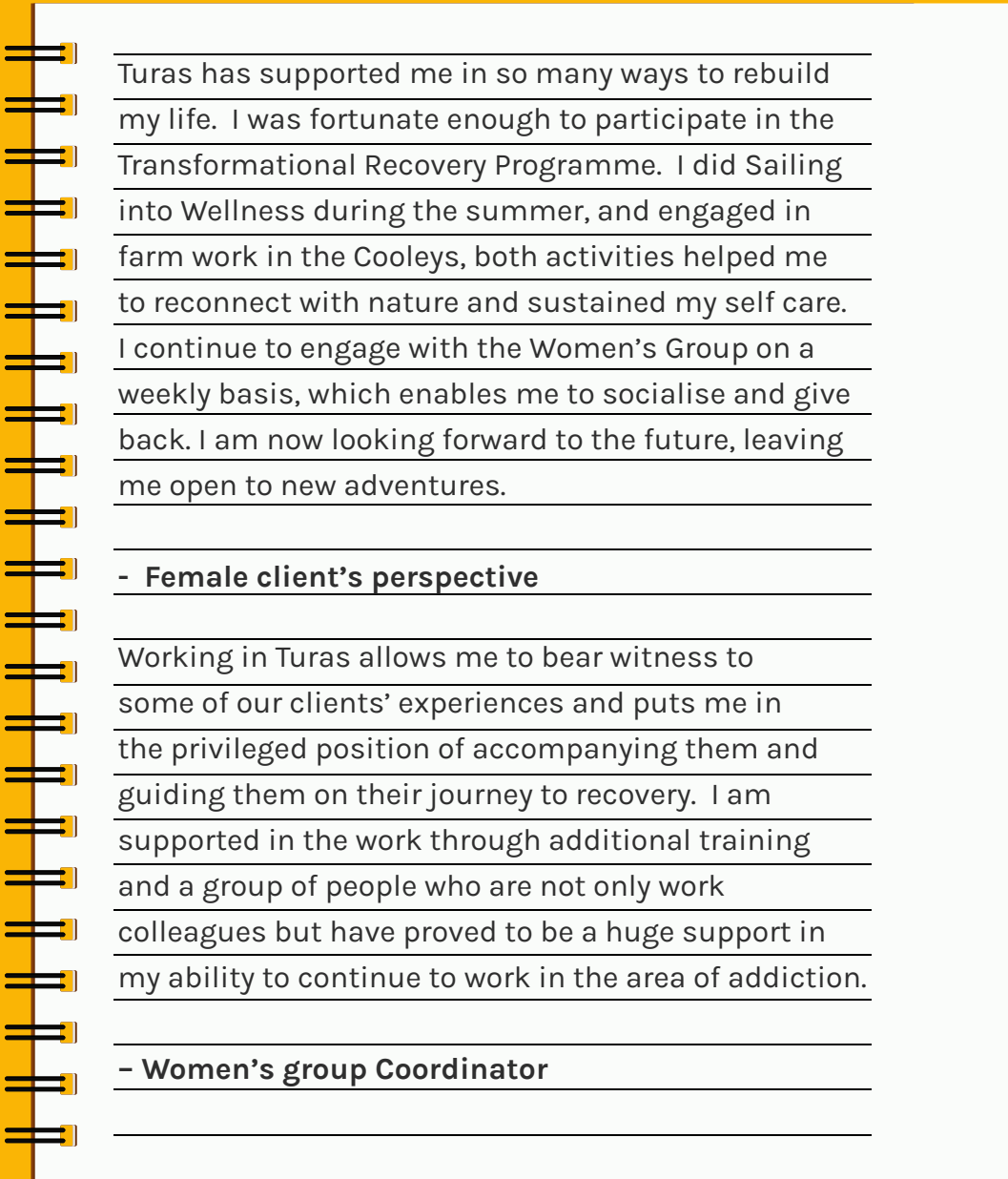


“The environment, the sound, the setting - it all made for a lovely experience.”

Our work with women

The Women's Group aims to provide a safe place for women to explore their experiences with addiction. Women have specific needs and require additional support due mainly to the fact that they are usually the main caregivers. We strive to support them and to help them build resilience through self care practices, offering financial support for childcare or travel or providing female staff at their request.

6 women attended a day trip to Belfast in March 2022.



Turas has supported me in so many ways to rebuild my life. I was fortunate enough to participate in the Transformational Recovery Programme. I did Sailing into Wellness during the summer, and engaged in farm work in the Cooleys, both activities helped me to reconnect with nature and sustained my self care. I continue to engage with the Women's Group on a weekly basis, which enables me to socialise and give back. I am now looking forward to the future, leaving me open to new adventures.

- Female client's perspective

Working in Turas allows me to bear witness to some of our clients' experiences and puts me in the privileged position of accompanying them and guiding them on their journey to recovery. I am supported in the work through additional training and a group of people who are not only work colleagues but have proved to be a huge support in my ability to continue to work in the area of addiction.

- Women's group Coordinator

Jane's Voice

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“Addiction can happen to anyone and addiction was my life experience for too long. My belief in recovering on my own had died and when I finally accepted that I needed help I found Turas, or maybe Turas found me.

It takes time to recover and from my first phone call Turas offered me patience, understanding, respect, education, life skills, and a commitment to help and support my personal experience of recovery.

I attended the Transformational Recovery Programme, and although challenging at times, it is a positive group experience that creates a good personal foundation to work from.

The Sailing into Wellness course was respite from my everyday life. I learned new skills, worked as a team and I viewed the land and myself from a different angle, creating new possibilities.

I still engage with Turas for personal reflection and growth through counselling, and the Women's group which offers and creates a time for connection by sharing, hearing from others, and self-care.

Turas is a safe and confidential space to explore a life lived, and to ignite hope and optimism for the life to come, in sobriety. They care and I'll always be grateful, thank you.”



Community Alcohol Detox

Our **Community Alcohol Detox** programme is unique in that it allows clients to undergo a medical detox from alcohol and avail of relevant therapeutic supports while staying at home.

CAD offers support for anyone who wants to reduce or stop their alcohol use.

Supports Offered

- **Motivational support to explore your relationship with alcohol**
- **Detox programme**
- **Relapse prevention**
- **One-to-one counselling**

CAD is managed by a **specialist detox nurse** and overseen medically by our detox programme GP.



“I met Patricia (Community Alcohol Detox Nurse) subsequent to a relapse in Spring 2023.

Patricia kindly and very firmly explained in detail the disease of alcoholism and the effects it has on the addict, their families, and the wider community. She detailed the detrimental effects on all aspects of life – physical and mental health, financial security, work, social, and family relationships.

I recognised my own situation in these discussions. On subsequent visits, she discussed wellbeing and the key steps towards establishing a healthy sober lifestyle through diet, exercise, work/life balance, relationship, and time management.

We discussed the key activities which I needed to maintain sobriety and the importance of prioritising this in my day to day life.

I was sorry to finish the sessions with Patricia but I left feeling motivated, positive, and determined to invest in re-establishing a sober and productive life for myself and my family.

I am very grateful to Patricia and to Turas for the invaluable help and kindness when I needed it most.”



Financial Assistance

Thanks to funding from a philanthropic organisation that wishes to remain anonymous we were able to support 6 people with an average of €238 towards electricity and heating this winter.

This was a lifeline for people in very destitute situations who often never had to request charitable help before.

Turas also helped 10 people with creche and/or travel to enable people to attend our TRP. In addition we provided food and food vouchers for 3 people who would have otherwise gone hungry.

Bridget's Story

Bridget is in her 70's and until recently continued to work as a carer and also provide care to her husband who could no longer adequately care for himself. Prior to coming to Turas she had been hospitalised herself, due to illness, and was unable to continue her work as a carer. The stress of everything led to consuming alcohol at a problematic level.

Turas was able to provide Bridget with help to reduce her drinking and also provide her with some financial support to heat her home over Christmas. She was worried about being able to buy presents for her grandchildren so we referred her to other community organisations who could assist with this.

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“The services Turas provide are invaluable, the staff are amazing, so supportive and helped me in so many ways, but I would never have been able to access those services without their help paying for travel and childcare.

As a single parent I would never have been able to complete the programme or attend counselling without that practical support as well.”

– Veronica

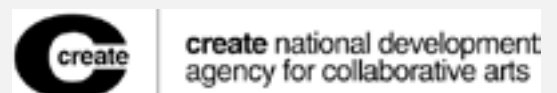
Governance

Turas would like to extend our thanks to our statutory partners the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Forum and the HSE, The Courts Service, Tusla, Louth County Council, Create Ireland and to our main philanthropic donors including Gambling Awareness Trust, Mental Health Ireland and The National Lottery.

Turas has very robust governance procedures and a range of policies to accompany this. We are fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code. We are also subject to external audit by our funders and in 2021 completed a full external audit by the HSE audit team.

To prepare our accounts we employ an external auditor with a new one appointed this year to ensure to fulfil the best practice of moving auditor every few years. We have controls and procedures in place to ensure sound and robust financial management and have a finance and governance subcommittee of our board.

We demonstrate transparency and accountability at all levels of the organisation. We have a board of management with 9 people, 7 of whom are directors. We also have 2 sub-committees of our board and are working towards forming a fundraising sub-committee. We have an SLA with the HSE and other funders which set out the terms of the funding we receive and how we must adhere to these terms.



Fundraising and Communications

2022 was an exciting year for Turas on the fundraising front. We welcomed our first ever Fundraising Manager to the team to help promote Turas to a wider audience, grow our community of supporters and create new sources of income. This will enable us to expand our services, reach more people who need our help and secure our long-term financial future.

We held our second annual Spooky Trail fundraising event in October, and it was a great success. We would like to thank our staff, volunteers, friends, sponsors, local media and all the families who attended. You helped to make the day so special, and raised over €5,000 to support people in our community who are impacted by addiction. We are already looking forward to Spooky Trail 2023!

October also saw our Clinical Manager, Alan Duff, take part in his first Irish Life Dublin Marathon. Not only did Alan achieve an impressive finish time, he raised a whopping €1,287! We are so grateful to Alan's family and friends for their generosity.

The inaugural Turas Newsletter was published in December and was warmly received by our supporters, clients and colleagues across the sector. Our newsletter aims to inform the community about our services and activities, celebrate our achievements, and inspire people to get involved by making a donation or fundraising for Turas.

Please sign up to receive our quarterly newsletter at www.turascounselling.ie (scroll to bottom of page).

We have also been developing our social media channels in order to reach more potential Turas clients and supporters.

We are so grateful to everyone who organised events, completed personal challenges and donated to Turas in 2022! Thank you so much for your support.

You can find us on Facebook @TurasSupport and Instagram @turasdundalk.



Thanks to all our funders and sponsors in 2022

Courts Service
Dundalk Credit Union
HSE
Louth County Council
Louth Leader Partnership
North East Regional Drug and Alcohol
Taskforce (NERDATF)
Individual donors
Create Louth
Louth County Bar Solicitors
Cathedral Financial Services
Balloon Boutique @ Oriel Office
Bespoke Trustees
Blooms Flowers
Brendan Marmion Decorating Centre
Broderick's
Byrne's Pharmacy
Country Fresh
Dash
Dole
Lidl
NERDATF
Pirates Den
Print Express
Proper
Skypark
Sync IT
XXI Ice



Board of Directors and staff

Board of Directors

Mary McDonald	(Chairperson)
Peter McKevitt	(Director)
Niall Weldon	(Director)
Nicholas Mc Shane	(Director)
Emma Caffrey	(Director)
Michéal O' Murchu	(Director)
Stewart Agnew	(Director)
Jane Fegan	
Sheila McGuire	Retired

Our Team

Nicki Jordan	(Manager)
Alan Duff	(Clinical Manager)
Maureen Zeltner	(Administrator)
Frank Fitzpatrick	(Project Worker)
Tiina Univer	(Administrator)
Patricia Kelly	(Detox Nurse)
Cian McCooey	(Reception/Admin)
Ciaran Warnock	(Reception/Admin)
Caroline Macken	(Counsellor for Community Alcohol Detox)
Deirdre Murphy	(Counsellor)
Joy Booth	(Fundraising Manager)
Leah Weich	(Dual Diagnosis Case Manager)
Chloe Rowland	(Project Worker)
Maria Murtagh	(Drug Court Liaison Worker)

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Turas Counselling Services

Legal and Administrative Details

Secretary	Peter McKevitt
Registered Office	Security House, 59 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Registered Company Number	425887
Registered Charity Number	CHY22271
Auditors	O' Connor Martin and Company, Blackthorn, Business Park, Coe's Road, Dundalk, Louth
Principal Bankers	Bank of Ireland, Clanbrassil St., Dundalk, Co. Louth
Solicitors:	Brian Berrills and Co., 18 Francis Street, Dundalk, Louth



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Turascounselling.ie