

NATIONAL NEWS

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*The National
Office would like
to take this
opportunity to
wish all our
readers a very
Happy Christmas
and a Peaceful
New Year!*

Corporate Strategy—up-date

Just to refresh everyone's memory, the new corporate structure is outlined as follows: There will be one National Company governed by the Brothers of Charity Congregation and subsidiary companies in each of the six regions, namely:

Brothers of Charity Services, Clare,
Brothers of Charity Services, Limerick,
Brothers of Charity Service, Southern,
Brothers of Charity Services, Roscommon,
Brothers of Charity Services, Galway, and
Brothers of Charity Services, South East.

Each Local Company will have a Board of directors comprising of individuals proposed by each region and selected by the Brothers.

In order to ensure that all staff members are fully informed about the incorporation of our services, Brother John O'Shea, Regional Leader and Winifred O'Hanrahan, National Director of Services met with the management and staff of each region in November 2005. At these meetings a "Frequently Asked Question and Answer sheet" was handed out. Some of the questions and answers are reproduced at the end of this article for convenience.

The decision to incorporate the organisation was taken by the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity Services. The Congregation wished to identify a formal structure which facilitates both their service motivation and guardianship role and good management structures. The establishment of six Local Companies is an attempt to further formalise devolved decision making within our structures and to enable the full inclusion of service users and of the wider local community in the governance of the regional services. With new Charity legislation expected, in the near future, the Brothers of Charity considered it necessary to put a formal legal framework in place whereby Regional Services can respond to the varying and differing needs of the service users, members of staff and families in an independent way but under the governance of clear principles enunciated by the Brothers of Charity.

We are currently in the near final stage of incorporation and you will be receiving a letter welcoming you as staff to the new legal entity in the first half of 2006. You are already aware that this will not change anything about your working terms and conditions. However, if you are at all anxious about how incorporation might affect you please do not hesitate to contact your HR Manager or any senior manager within your Region. If you require a copy of the full Q&A document please contact your line manager or the National Development Officer on 091 796623.

Questions and Answers are continued on page 2.

Complaints and Appeals Procedures for Service Users

The Brothers of Charity Services are committed to providing all its service users with a high quality service. Service Users are recognised as stakeholders in our services and their views are solicited in the preparation of national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans. Individuals and families also give feedback on their experience of care; this is a right and is welcome, as it helps the Brothers of Charity Services to improve continuously. The National Health Strategy 'Quality and Fairness' includes in its vision "A Health System that encourages you to have your say, listens to you, and ensures that your views are taken into account". It also refers in Action Point 49, to proposed legislation and statutory complaints procedures. This legislation is now no longer proposed and Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 deals with rights of people to make complaints. "Any person who is being or was provided with a health or personal social service by the Executive or by a service provider or who is seeking or has sought provision of such service may complain, in accordance with the procedures established under this Part about any action of the Executive or a service provider that (a) it is claimed, does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice, and (b) Adversely affects or affected that person."

While we work hard to provide a high quality service to our service users, we are aware that sometimes service users feel they did not receive as good a service as they expected. As a result, and in keeping with our open policy we introduced a National Guideline—Complaints & Appeals Procedures for Service Users in May 2004. Now that the legislation is in place we can confirm that our current complaints procedures are in keeping with the new legislation.

CORPORATE STRATEGY continued from front page....

- Q What does incorporation mean?**
A. Incorporation is a structural change, which changes the Brothers of Charity Services into a Legal Company Limited by Guarantee
- Q. Is my job secure?**
A. Yes.
- Q. Will my pay change?**
A. No.
- Q. Will I continue to have my pension contribution deducted at source and will my benefits continue to be paid as before?**
A. Yes, pension contributions will continue to be deducted and benefits paid, as has been the case prior to incorporation. Along with this, A.V.C and P.R.S.A. deductions, where appropriate will continue to be deducted.
- Q. Will I lose out by this change?**
A. No.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ADVOCACY WITHIN THE BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES

The Brothers of Charity Services are committed to working with people with an intellectual disability to claim their rightful place as valued citizens. Inclusion is a fundamental principle that underlies all aspects of our work (Going Forward Together, 2002).

Advocacy empowers people to speak out for themselves and others. It allows people to be heard and to be involved in any decision making process which impacts on their lives.

The key principles under which Advocacy operates within the Brothers of Charity Services are set out in the National Governance Statement which will issue in January 2006.

All members of staff should familiarise themselves with these key principles as they are an essential part of everyone's role within the organisation.

Independent Advocacy Projects—Funded by the Dormant Account Fund.

Applications were invited from groups, organisations, agencies, who wished to submit programmes/projects under the categories of the Dormant Accounts Fund.

- Economic and Social Disadvantage
- Educational Disadvantage
- Persons with a Disability.

The Brothers of Charity National Office formed a partnership with Comhairle in order to apply to this source of funding to develop an independent national advocacy project. The application was successful in securing funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund. The funding granted covers two posts for one year only. The application was for two posts for two years. The amount of funding granted was €110,220 over one year to be split between two regions. This works out at €55,110 to cover the salary, expenses and analysis for each post. The regions identified to undertake this project were Clare and Waterford as both the Citizen Information Centres in each of these regions were able to undertake the role required of them and had the office space to accommodate the Independent Advocate.

The aim of this partnership is to provide an “Independent Advocacy Service” for people with Intellectual Disability who use the services of the Brothers of Charity. The project will involve input from our partners Comhairle and the Citizens Information Services. Steering Committees have been appointed to lead the project and support the Independent Advocacy Officers who will be recruited to deliver the project in each geographical area.

Further information on this project can be sought from the National Development Officer on 091 796623.

SERVICE USERS BY REGION AND ABILITY 2004 - Excerpt from the National Annual Report 2004

Service	total no.	Child	Adult	NV	NR	borderline	mild	mod	severe	profound	Total (on data base)
Galway	949	444	505	32	1	11	428	246	201	30	949
Clare	173	9	164	0	0	0	43	110	19	1	173
Limerick *	476	77	399	1	0	4	71	193	99	31	399
South East**	616	333	283	56	9	24	168	226	118	15	896
Southern***	616	333	283	56	9	24	168	226	118	15	616
Roscommon	321	135	186	17	2	8	117	123	46	8	321
TOTAL:	3151	1331	1820	162	21	71	995	1124	601	100	3074

* Children currently receive regular care but are not on data base therefore do not show up in other data..

** 33 children who receive regular respite care but are not on the data base therefore do not show up in other data.

*** In addition to these figures, the Autism Intervention Services currently provide supports to 280 children attending special classes and mainstream schools in Cork and Kerry.

NV = Not Verified NR = Normal Range & Mod = Modern—Department of Health Classifications.

DEFINITIONS

Governance Statements: are rules that relate directly to the reserved functions or to statutory reporting obligations between Companies. These Governance Statements are set by the National Company and must be implemented within regions by the Local Company as read.

National Guidelines: are broad statements of guidance in relation to best practice. They are documents from which the Local Chief Executive will develop a Local Company Policy.

National Policies: are nationally developed policies developed mostly by the F-Team and the P-Team in relation to Human Resource Management and Financial procedures, which must be uniform across Companies. There are other specific areas such as the Reporting of Abuse etc, that relate to matters other than the reserved functions, and are issued as National Policies and must be implemented within Local Companies as read.

Policies: are formal rules and regulations for the management of the Local Company, formulated from National Guidelines. In the Brothers of Charity Services policies are developed by the Local Company.

Local Company = Region National Company = Regional Team

ARE YOU A TEAM PLAYER?

An Effective Team Worker:

- Understands the part or parts they are expected to play as a member of the team.
- Is multi-skilled—capable of carrying out a number of team member roles.
- Is prepared to work flexibly
Takes a full part in team meetings and contributes useful ideas—is not afraid to express a point of view.
- Is tolerant and supportive of colleagues and respects other people’s points of view.
- Works co-operatively with other members of the team.

Rate yourself and see if there is room for improvement!

(M Armstrong—Managing Activities)

PASTORAL CARE

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We would love to hear from you—
suggestions/ articles

NOTICE BOARD

The following Governance Statements, National Guidelines and Strategies were submitted to the National Directorate and/or Regional Team for Ratification in 2005:

- (a) The Use of Seclusion within the Services. Gov Statement (Dec 05)
- (b) The National Housing Strategy (Oct 05).
- (c) Quality Services & Systems (Oct 05). Gov Statement
- (d) The Management of Repetitive Assaults by Service Users—National Guideline (June 05)
- (e) The Practice of Advocacy within the Brothers of Charity Services –Gov. Statement (Nov 05)
- (f) Governing Statement on Bank Accounts.

Some of these documents have been returned to the various working groups for editing prior to publication.



Love and Respect in Every Action



A Position Paper entitled 'Realising Pastoral Care within Brothers of Charity Services' was drafted from the outcomes of the Pastoral Care Workshop held May 2005. The paper was prepared by a National Pastoral Care Work Group. At the November National Directorate and Regional Team meeting a discussion took place in relation to defining, integrating and monitoring Pastoral Care within our Services.

Pastoral Care, in the context of the Brothers of Charity Services, is described as the attitudes and activities which:

- Recognise the dignity and humanity of all persons.
- Respond to the needs of all stakeholders for a spiritual dimension to holistic living.
- Respect and facilitate the expression of religious belief and practice.

The Regional team felt that Pastoral Care should be an integral part of our approach to service delivery which encompasses a deep respect for the inner richness of the person. Its aim is to support service users in their desire to live full and meaningful lives. This can only be achieved if we strive for the highest possible human dignity of all associated with our services by creating a caring and Christian environment.

The Regional team stressed the importance of staff looking outside the parameters of their individual role particularly as we are caring for such vulnerable people. "Our staff should be committed to principles based on Personal Outcome Measures, which emphasise person centred planning and should establish supports and processes to allow people to attain their own personal outcome and help develop the enrichment of their inner self.

This can be done through a lot of different activities which allow service users to express their inner self. Staff should be prepared to accept, and to the best of their ability, fulfil this ethos. Feedback and monitoring of the outcomes of Pastoral Care programmes should be available at local and national level in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pastoral Care programme.

The National Directorate agreed to develop this process through a National Working Group who will submit a plan to bring pastoral care into the centre of our working lives.

It is important to state that senior management recognise the hard work and dedication of staff who have striven over the year through difficult times with limited resources. They also recognise the work already being done in relation to breaking down the boundaries around the marginalisation experienced by people with intellectual disabilities.