

Interventions and Preventions



Sligo Social Services Strategy 2014-2017



Our vision

To achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the quality of life of those needing our services and support in the Sligo region, delivered in partnership with statutory agencies and other non-profit organisations, and through the support of our local communities.

To be flexible and innovative in our response to those who are experiencing difficulties in our community, recognising their changing needs and circumstances, in order that they will never find themselves alone and without support.

Our mission

Sligo Social Services strives to empower individuals, families and communities in the Sligo region in improving their quality of life through the promotion of social justice, equality and the dignity of the human being.

We seek to address their needs respectfully by empowerment, support and encouragement and, where appropriate, direct assistance by caring, competent and professional individuals, deployed on a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis.

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

I am delighted to present this first Strategic Plan for Sligo Social Services, covering the period 2014 to 2017.

Ever since our organisation was founded in 1969, we have worked hard to meet the needs of those people in Sligo who are marginalised and disadvantaged, acting in partnership with State agencies and other voluntary bodies. Over the last 45 years, we have touched the lives of thousands of people to whom we have provided help in such diverse areas as homelessness, social care, meals-on-wheels, pre-school services, and other direct support for those who need it.

Fundamental to our strategic approach is our belief in the dignity of the human being, and our core focus is on the needs of our clients and those who use our services. This belief and focus have been central features in the development of our Strategic Plan, and will continue to be the main influencers for Sligo Social Services in years to come.

Of course, we recognise that the needs of our communities are changing, and Sligo Social Services is adapting to meet the demands of our clients and to continue to work in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders in the region. In an era of public sector austerity caused by the global economic crisis of recent years, statutory funding remains a challenge, and we will actively pursue new channels of funding over the lifetime of this strategy, whilst also seeking to consolidate our existing services. We will explore new opportunities to benefit the people in our region who need support, including the provision of much-needed services in parts of County Sligo which we have not traditionally served.

We are proud of the difference which we in Sligo Social Services have made over more than four decades, and our plan is to strengthen and grow our organisation over the coming years, to ensure that we can continue to support those who need our help.

None of this could be achieved, of course, without the active support of a wide range of organisations and individuals who work with us. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our Chief Executive, Christina McTaggart, and her team of caring and committed staff, many of whom have worked with us for lengthy periods; our superb team of volunteers, who give up substantial amounts of their time to work with our clients; the wide range of partner organisations in the statutory, voluntary and community sector who work with us; Retired Bishop of Elphin, Most Rev Christopher Jones DD, who has provided us with much assistance over many years, including our premises in Sligo; and our donors within the community, who contribute generously to our funds. Thank you all.

Pat Forde, Chairman, Sligo Social Services

Introduction and Message from the Chief Executive

Welcome to the Strategic Plan for Sligo Social Services for the period 2014 to the end of 2017.

In setting out our plans for the next few years, we have undertaken a searching analysis of the services we provide within Sligo and surrounding areas, against a backdrop of ongoing reductions in funding and changes in the way our statutory funders engage with voluntary sector organisations. We take nothing for granted, and we recognise that funding for some of our work is going to be limited and, in certain cases, may not fully cover our costs. In addition, the State is moving to a much more business like model of service commissioning, with defined quality standards and outputs required in return for contracted prices, and we need to be in a position to respond to those requirements.

Sligo Social Services is up to these challenges. Fundamental to our strategy is the need for our organisation to continue to provide vital services to those at the margins of our society who need our help, and to do so for many years to come – and this will mean that our core priority is to ensure that we are financially stable and that our business model is sound. This requires changes in the way we do things, and in some of the services we provide, but in many ways these modifications will also reflect changing demands amongst our service users, as people's lives change and as our communities develop. Much of our success over the last 45 years has come from the fact that we have adapted to circumstances and the developing needs of our clients, and we can't stand still.

Over the coming months, we will be reviewing the way we deliver our key services, with a view to having every service break even by the beginning of 2017. We will also commit specific resources to the raising of new revenue from other sources, in order that we can continue to provide much-needed and life-changing support to our communities. This means that whilst we will continue to work in active partnership with the statutory organisations who fund many of our activities, we will retain our capacity as an independent charity to direct resources to those needing help beyond what the State can provide.

In many ways, the four-year period of this Strategic Plan will represent a turning point for Sligo Social Services. As we approach our half-century in 2019, we will be a stronger organisation responding to changing demands, whilst maintaining our focus and our independence to meet the needs of our people with the same spirit that applied when we were founded in 1969.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Board for its support and vision in developing this strategy; the highly-committed team of staff and volunteers at Sligo Social Services; our partners and funders; and all of the people of the Sligo region who have supported us over the years.

Christina McTaggart, Chief Executive, Sligo Social Services

Who we are

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Since its foundation in 1969 Sligo Social Services has aimed to respond to the emerging and unmet needs of the people of Sligo. Major economic and social change began in Ireland in the 1960s, which brought prosperity for many people. However, many others did not benefit from these changes and some felt the effects of disadvantage and marginalisation.



Above: Staff and volunteers during visit by Dr Garret FitzGerald in the late 1970s

The organisation's two-fold purpose was, firstly, to co-ordinate the various voluntary bodies providing services within the local community, and secondly, to mobilise all available resources, both statutory and voluntary, to meet the emerging needs within the community. The newly formed Sligo Social Services Council was staffed on a voluntary basis by members of the Sligo Social Study Group who provided information to the public on entitlements in relation to health, social welfare, and other issues

In 1972, Sligo Social Services appointed its first Social Worker, and a year later its first Director was appointed. From small beginnings, the organisation has grown over the years and now provides personal and community based services to a wide range of people in Co Sligo and parts of Co Leitrim. Our impact has been considerable. For instance, we have delivered over one million hot meals through our Meals on Wheels service over the last 40+ years, and more than 1,400 children have passed through our childcare services (both pre- and after-school) in that period.



Above: President Mary McAleese addressing Sligo Social Services Volunteers in 2008 at our 40th Anniversary

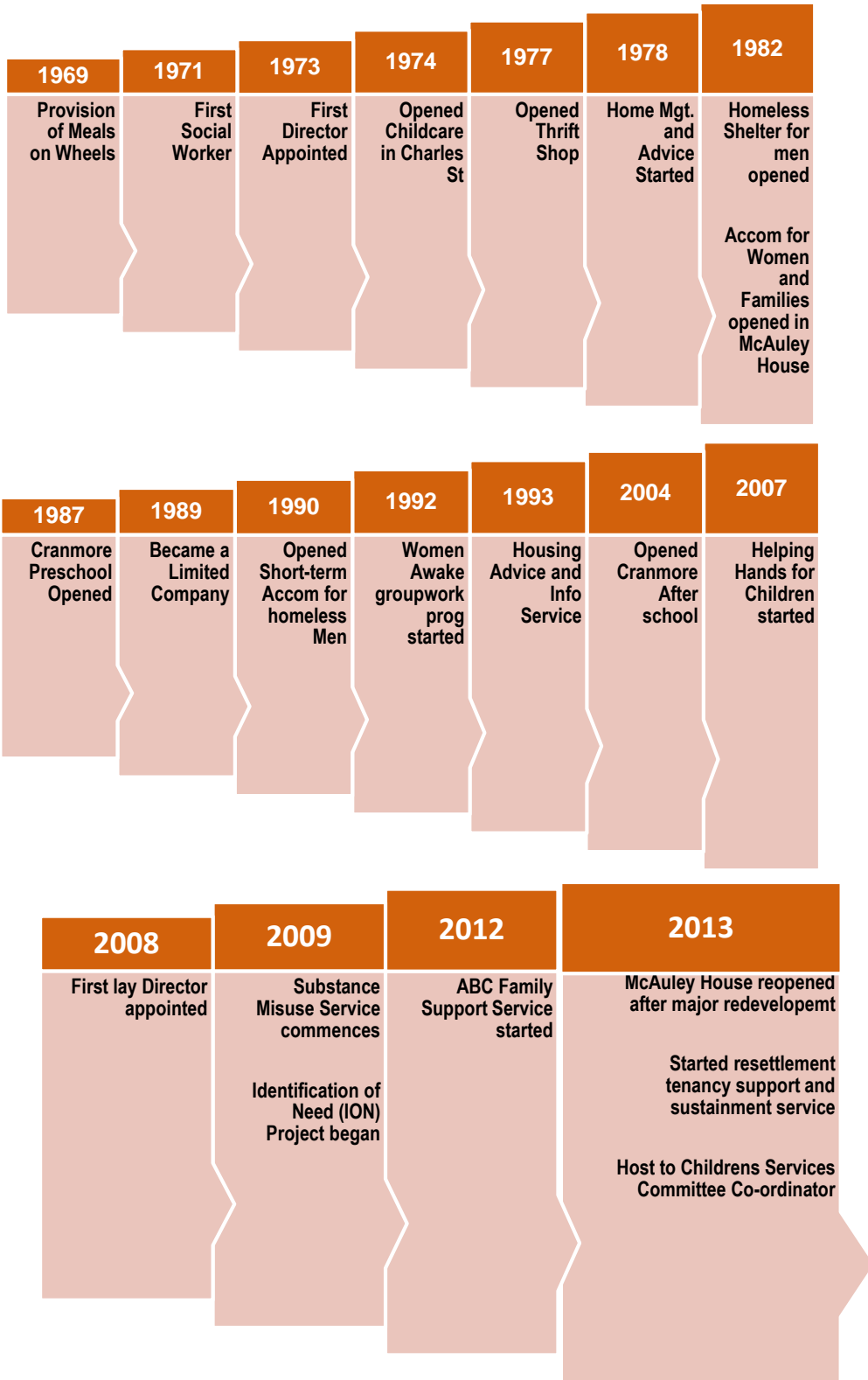


Right: FAS participants building extension in Charles St. to house the new MOW Kitchen and offices which opened in early 1993

The timeline showing the progress made by Sligo Social Services from its inception in 1969 until today is depicted overleaf, including all of the major milestones we have encountered over the last 45 years.

Sligo Social Services: Timeline from 1969 to the Present

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What we do

We work in partnership with a range of other agencies from both the statutory and voluntary sectors to provide targeted interventions in respect of identified needs within Sligo and adjoining areas.

We provide pre-schools, afterschool, and a variety of family support and social work services for children and families. We provide a meals-on-wheels service for the elderly in the Sligo area, and we also provide a number of homeless services including homeless hostels for single adults, short-term family accommodation and a tenancy sustainment service for those at risk of becoming homeless. Across all of these service areas, more than 1,100 people accessed our services in 2013.

Further detail on our forward strategy in respect of each of these areas of work is presented later in this Strategic Plan.

Structures and Governance

Sligo Social Service Council Limited is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, incorporated in Ireland on the 24th February 1989, under the Companies Acts, 1963 to 1983, registered number 140759.

The objectives of the Company are charitable in nature with established charitable status (Registered Charity No. CHY 9731). All income is applied solely towards the promotion of the charitable objectives of the Company.

The Board of Directors of Sligo Social Services currently comprises:

Chairperson	Mr. Pat Forde
Deputy Chairperson	Mr. Johnny Watters
Company Secretary	Fr. Tom Hever
Treasurer	Mr. Pat McCaffrey
Other Directors	Ms. Mary Harkin Ms. Patricia Murray Mr. Frank Murphy Mr. Barry MacMahon Mr. Dan Scannell Mr. Liam Mc Gurrin

The organisation is run on a day-to-day basis by Ms. Christina McTaggart (Chief Executive) and her team of 39 staff, with a further 33 community employment staff employed in service delivery. A team of around 250 volunteers is actively involved in the delivery of services and in fundraising for Sligo Social Services.

The Service is based at the premises known as The Retreat House at The Lungy, Sligo, a substantial property with an adjoining Peace Park made available by the Trustees of the Catholic Diocese of Elphin.

Core principles

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At the heart of our work is set of core principles which inform every aspect of our services, policies and practices:

- We're here for those needing our support and care in Sligo, and our approach is driven by their needs.
- We don't give up, and we work with all of our clients and service users to bring about positive change in their life and life chances.
- We don't stand still, and we are responsive to change, to new ideas and better ways of working.
- We value and respect each other, nurturing a work ethic that is open, honest and co-operative, based upon inclusivity, fairness and ethical standards.
- We are efficient and transparent in our work, based on best practice and proven solutions.
- We are good partners, and we work collaboratively with a range of partners to deliver the best outcomes for our clients and service users.

The environment we work in

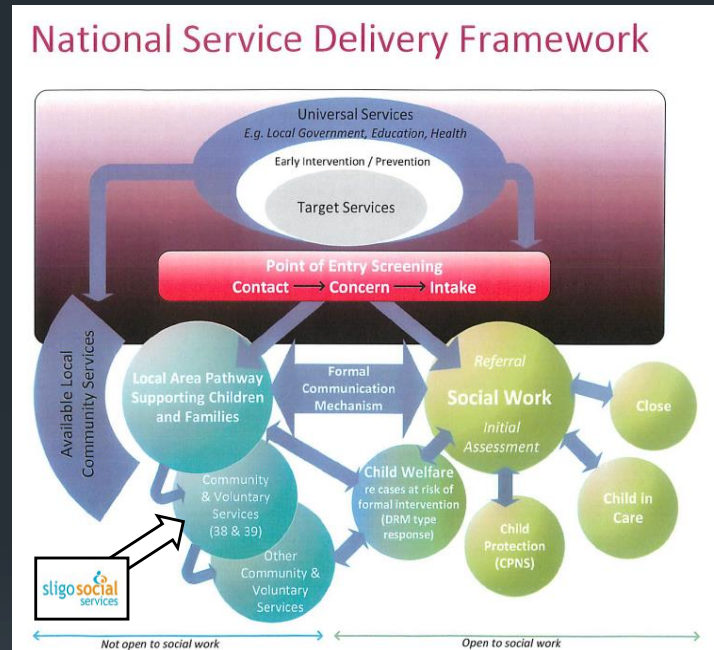
Sligo Social Services works within an overall strategic context which means that we must balance the meeting of local needs against national policies and funding priorities, recognising that we work in partnership with national statutory agencies to deliver services and support to the people of Sligo and surrounding areas.

Our closest working relationships are with:

- **Tusla, the Child and Family Agency**, which was established on 1st January 2014 as the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children;
- **The Health Service Executive**;
- **Sligo County Council**.

All three of these organisations have recently experienced significant change: Tusla was created at the start of 2104, and assumed various functions and staff which were previously part of the HSE, whilst Sligo County Council has taken on the functions of the former Borough Council as part of local government reorganisation and mergers.

The Government has recently launched its national policy framework for children and young people, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, which sets out a comprehensive series of objectives for the period 2014 to 2020. In that context, Tusla's national service delivery framework has also been developed (illustrated above), and this identifies the role to be played by Section 39 voluntary organisations such as Sligo Social Services.



With regard to homelessness, an area of major significance to Sligo Social Services, the *Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness – May 2014 to December 2016* was published in May 2014, and this, along with previous Government policy and strategy documents, sets out the overall framework within which we work for homeless people in Sligo.

Finally, as a responsible and professional organisation which is dependent upon public support, we recognise and endorse the importance of charity regulation, and we will work to ensure our full compliance with the Charities SORP (1), the Governance Code for charities, and the new regulatory arrangements for charities.

1. A SORP is a Statement of Recommended Practice. SORPs provide recommendations for accounting and reporting, in particular standards should be applied in the context of particular sectors and how to account for sector specific transactions.

Meeting Clients Needs

In preparing our **Strategic Plan** for 2014-17, we are very mindful of our heritage within Sligo Social Services. We also take account of our historical role in the co-ordination of the work of voluntary organisations and in the mobilisation of resources from all sectors to meet the needs of the community. When we first commenced work in 1969, significant amounts of disadvantage, poverty and social need existed across Sligo town and county, and despite the economic growth and social development seen during the 1970s and 1980s, and particularly during the Celtic Tiger years, many of these problems remain with us today.

That said, we recognise that society is very different today from the way it was in the late 1960s and early 1970s – people generally are more affluent, housing standards are better, many people have their own transport, and we use consumer products (mobile phones, TVs, kitchen appliances) to which our parents and grandparents didn't have access.

Public services now are also generally much more professionally-delivered and better resourced than they were 40 years ago: the State has invested significant sums in its efforts to improve services in the fields of health, education, social care, housing and other areas.

All of these changes in our society have created a different space for Sligo Social Services to occupy. Of course, there are still important areas of need where statutory service providers have not achieved the desired impact, and there remain many people in Sligo and adjoining areas who suffer from social disadvantage, people at the margins of our society who need help. The economic crisis which commenced in 2008, and the cutbacks in statutory services which resulted from it, have created a situation where the voluntary sector must play an enhanced and more active role in working with State agencies to meet the needs of these vulnerable people.

We also recognise that there are people in our society whose needs are not being met by the State, and we will continue to work to raise funds and thereby ensure that these people are not forgotten – something which has always been at the heart of our mission since Sligo Social Services was originally founded.

This is where we see the role of Sligo Social Services over the next four years and beyond.

We will aim to achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the quality of life of those needing our services and support in the Sligo region. These improvements will be delivered in partnership with statutory agencies and other non-profit organisations, and through the support of our local communities.

Key Challenges for 2014 – 17

Set against the above backdrop, we see our key challenges for 2014-17 as follows:

- **Identifying client needs within the Sligo region.** Our clients are our primary focus, and we will work with statutory service providers, other voluntary sector organisations, local stakeholders, researchers and others to identify the needs of people who need support in Sligo and adjoining areas, with a particular focus on those people whose needs are not being met by the State or other providers – people for whom Sligo Social Services can make a vital difference.
- **Meeting the needs of our clients in a highly professional manner.** We will work hard to provide the best possible level of service to those in need of our support, aiming to meet recognised standards of best practice, and in line with our statutory and legal requirements.

- **Ensuring the sustainability of Sligo Social Services.** As a charity, we are fully dependent at present on the funds we receive from our statutory funders and from the general public. We must still operate in a business like fashion and manage our scarce resources in a manner which gives us the best possible chance to maximise our impact within our client base, all of which will require close scrutiny and proactive, innovative thinking over the lifetime of this strategic plan. This will include an ongoing and active commitment to seek new sources of funding from statutory agencies, the general public, and potentially from philanthropic sources and commercial sponsors.
- **Developing our relationships with our external partners.** We will work closely with our statutory funders to ensure that we are delivering services to a high standard of quality, whilst also looking at future opportunities where Sligo Social Services can add value.
- **Working to address unmet need.** Recognising that there continue to be vulnerable people in our society whose needs are not being met by the State, we will work to support these people through advocacy, fundraising and service provision.
- **Close engagement with other non-profit organisations.** We will also liaise with our colleagues in the voluntary and community sector in the Sligo region, in order that client needs can be properly co-ordinated in a complementary manner which limits overlap and enhances economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Maintaining national and international perspectives.** We will stay attuned with developments and influencing factors in the non-profit sector at national, EU and international levels to ensure that we remain compliant with the developing regulatory framework for Irish charities and that we keep abreast of policy developments and best practice within Ireland, the EU and – where relevant – further afield.
- **Managing the development of our organisation.** To achieve all of the objectives set out in this strategic plan, we recognise that we have to develop and change as an organisation – within our management and governance structures, in our staff training and development, in our systems and processes, and in how we engage with clients and our external stakeholders.



Taking into account our key challenges for the next four years, we have identified a small number of core objectives on which the organisation must focus. We have deliberately kept these few in number, in order that we concentrate our energies on reaching these objectives, all of which are critical for our future as a service provider, and for our clients. Each of these objectives is carried forward into our specific service plans by functional area, as presented in the next section of this strategic plan.

Our core objectives are as follows:

- 1. Meeting the defined needs of our client population.**
- 2. Matching revenues against costs.**
- 3. Providing excellent services**
- 4. Addressing unmet needs of vulnerable people.**
- 5. Building for the future.**

Objective 1:

Meeting the defined needs of our client population

We will...

- ✓ ensure that all of our services are focused on meeting the defined needs of our clients over the period 2014-17, keeping them at the center of our attention, and changing our focus and our delivery mechanisms as necessary to meet their changing needs.
- ✓ work with our partners in the statutory sector and in the community to understand the current and emerging needs of the population of the Sligo region, with particular focus on those needs which are unmet or where Sligo Social Services can make a real difference.

Objective 2:

Matching revenues against costs

We will...

- ✓ pay close attention to the costs of the services we provide and to the revenues we receive, with a view to making sure that we achieve break-even in as many service areas as possible.
- ✓ work to eliminate our deficit within 3 years, and we will make every effort to avoid accessing our financial reserves for the purpose of funding ongoing services, with the intention of ceasing this practice (and having every service break even) by the start of 2017.

Objective 3:

Providing excellent services

We will...

- ✓ strive to ensure that our services are delivered to the highest possible level of quality and in a professional manner, meeting the expectations of our funders, and aligning with recognised best practice and with national regulations.
- ✓ keep our clients at the center of our attention, and will consult them regularly in respect of the ongoing development of our services to ensure that their needs are adequately being met, whether by Sligo Social Services or by other agencies and organisations

Objective 4:

Addressing unmet needs of vulnerable people

We will...

- ✓ recognise that there will always be some needs within the population for which statutory or other funding is not readily forthcoming, therefore we will work to support these vulnerable people through advocacy and service provision.
- ✓ achieve this by working hard to generate significant additional funds from other sources, including public fundraising, commercial sponsorship and philanthropic funding, with dedicated staff resources assigned to this essential work.

Objective 5:

Building for the future

We will...

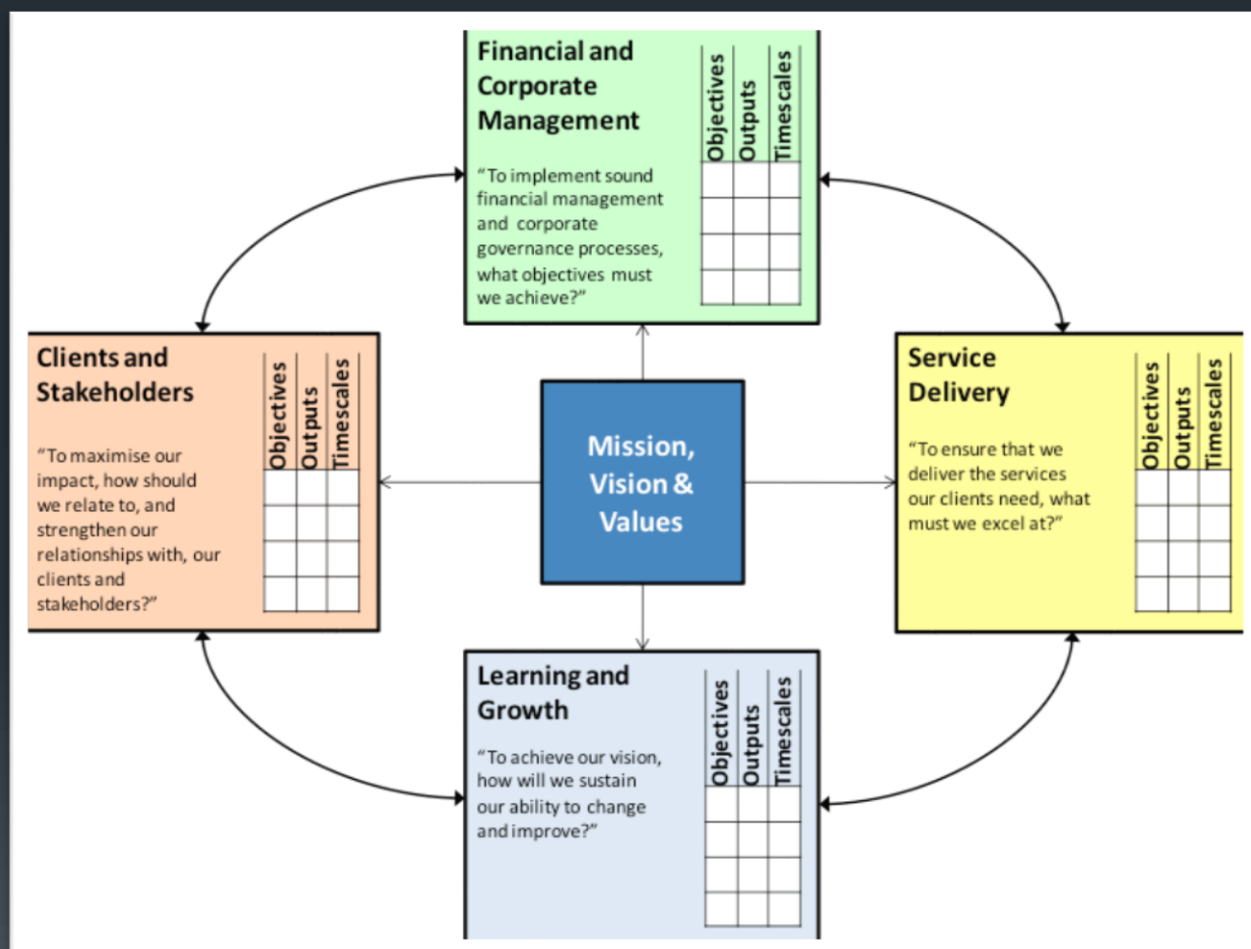
- ✓ develop our organisation structures to support service delivery at all levels, including the Board, management, staff and volunteers. This will entail improving our processes and support arrangements, and enhancing the training and development of all of our people.
- ✓ introduce an annual staff review system in line with the development of our organisational capacity.
- ✓ continue to strengthen the Board and our governance arrangements, including introducing new Board members with skill sets and experience which can add real value, updating as necessary our Memorandum and Articles of Association and associated Board processes, and moving to full compliance with the Charities SORP, the Governance Code for Charities, and the new regulatory arrangements for charities.
- ✓ expand and enhance our external fundraising and income generation activities, with the allocation of dedicated resources and the adoption of new approaches and techniques.

How will we do it

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Translating Our Strategic Objectives into Service Delivery – the Balanced Scorecard

To measure our performance over the period 2014-17, Sligo Social Services will use the Balanced Scorecard system, which sets out our key objectives and timescales over four quadrants, representing the main areas of our focus as an organisation – our commitments to our clients and stakeholders within our community; our plans for learning and developing as an organisation; our service delivery responsibilities to those who need us; and our arrangements for sound financial management and good governance. Use of the scorecard provides both Sligo Social Services and our external stakeholders with a clear and straightforward mechanism for measuring our performance in the areas which are of greatest strategic importance.



The Core Strategic Objectives presented earlier in this document have been grouped under themes within the four quadrants (depicted above), with a short series of targeted actions or initiatives identified as objectives, alongside clear timescales, in order to facilitate ongoing monitoring of progress and measurement of our performance.

Service Delivery	<p>We will continue to deliver high quality, cooked meals to our core client base in Sligo town.</p> <p>We will expand the MoW service in 2014, and will consider other possible service extensions over 2015-17.</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>We will undertake a comprehensive review of the MoW service in order to return it to break-even. This will include all aspects – production, pricing, staffing, days/hour of operation, etc.</p>
Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage closely with the HSE (main funder of the MoW service) to determine the ongoing level of client need and to ensure that access by clients to the service is maximised.</p> <p>We will liaise with other stakeholders in the community to identify people who may wish to use the MoW service</p> <p>We will engage with other service providers to determine whether there are opportunities to deliver the MoW service in partnership with them</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality, health and safety of the MoW service</p> <p>We will engage with other MoW providers across the country to identify any elements of good practice which may be relevant to our MoW service in Sligo and North Sligo</p>

Accommodation Services

Service Delivery	<p>We will continue to deliver a caring and compassionate accommodation service to those faced with actual or potential homelessness in Sligo, recognizing that these clients are often at the margins of our society</p> <p>We will continue to take part in the national initiative for the development of quality standards in the provision of homeless services.</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>Continued scrutiny of costs and revenues in accommodation service to ensure breakeven at a minimum</p>

Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage closely with HSE and Sligo County Council (funders of the accommodation service) to determine the ongoing level of client need, and to discuss how best the service may be delivered in future.</p> <p>We will engage with other service providers to determine whether there are opportunities to deliver the accommodation service in partnership with them</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality, health and safety of the accommodation service</p> <p>We will engage with other homeless services / accommodation providers across the country to identify any elements of good practice which may be relevant to our accommodation service in Sligo</p>

Resettlement Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service

Service Delivery	We will continue to operate the Resettlement Tenancy Sustainment Service to a high level of quality
Financial and Corporate Management	We will undertake a comprehensive review of the Resettlement Tenancy Sustainment Service in order to return it to break-even. This will include all aspects – service delivery model, staffing, days/hour of operation, premises, etc.
Clients and Stakeholders	We will engage closely with HSE and Sligo County Council (funders of the accommodation service) to determine the ongoing level of client need, and to discuss how best the service may be delivered in future.
Learning and Growth	We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality of the Resettlement Tenancy Sustainment Service

Social Work

Service Delivery	<p>We will predominantly focus our social worker resources on work commissioned by the Child and Family Agency</p> <p>We will assess the extent to which we can continue to operate our other elements of this service, in the light of funding restrictions.</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>We will undertake a comprehensive review of the social work service in order to return it to break-even. Central to this is the requirement that if Sligo Social Services staff are engaged in service delivery on behalf of a state agency, 100% of their costs should be recovered.</p>
Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage closely with the Child and Family Agency to determine the ongoing level of client need, and to discuss how best the service may be delivered and funded in future.</p> <p>We will engage with service users, their advocates and other stakeholders to help determine how best we may meet the needs of the people of Sligo in respect of non-statutory social work and social care support in future</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality of the social work service</p>

Childcare Services

Service Delivery	<p>We will continue to operate the Charles Street preschool centre, the Cranmore preschool and the After-School Project in Cranmore to a high level of quality</p> <p>Given changing enrolments and the challenging financial situation, these services will be evaluated by early 2015.</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>Continued scrutiny of costs and revenues in all childcare services to ensure breakeven at a minimum</p>
Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage with service users, their advocates and other stakeholders to help determine how best we may meet the needs of the people of Sligo in respect of targeted preschool and after-school services in future</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality of the preschool and after-school services</p>

Service Delivery	<p>We will continue to operate the ABC Family Support Service to a high level of quality</p> <p>Recognising that this service is still in its relatively early stages of development, we will examine the future training needs for our staff involved in ABC, and will actively consider how best the service may be improved and strengthened.</p> <p>We will explore the options with the Child and Family Agency for delivering the service on broader geographical scale</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>Continued scrutiny of costs and revenues in ABC service to ensure breakeven at a minimum</p>
Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage with service users, their advocates and other stakeholders to help determine how best we may meet the needs of the people of Sligo in respect of ABC Family Support Services in future</p> <p>We will examine how best we can measure impact of the ABC service, in order to assist discussions with funders</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality of the ABC Family Support Service</p>

ION

Service Delivery	<p>We will continue to operate the ION Service to a high level of quality</p> <p>We will continue to engage with the 30+ organisations involved in referrals and service delivery</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	<p>Continued scrutiny of costs and revenues in ION service to ensure breakeven at a minimum</p>
Clients and Stakeholders	<p>We will engage with the Child and Family Agency to ensure that the ION project hosted by Sligo Social Services is consistent with the model being rolled out nationally</p>
Learning and Growth	<p>We will continue to invest in our staff in order to ensure the quality of the ION Service</p>

Organisational Objectives to Support Service Delivery

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The achievement of the above objectives presented by service area will be dependent upon Sligo Social Services meeting a series of highly important goals in 2014-17, designed to support our overall organisation and ensure its future viability and continuity, as follows:

Scorecard Quadrant	Objective	Output
Service Delivery	We will strive to ensure that our services are delivered to the highest possible level of quality and in a professional manner, meeting the expectations of our funders, and aligning with recognised best practice and with national regulations.	We will conduct regular surveys of our service users and stakeholders, to ensure that service quality is maintained to the highest standard
		We will engage in a formal review meeting with each of our funders to ensure their satisfaction that service quality is maintained to the highest standard
		We will continue to undertake "horizon scanning" in order to identify new service requirements, new methods and approaches, and new legislative or regulatory requirements, in order to help strengthen our work
	Recognising that there will always be some needs within the population for which statutory or other funding is not readily forthcoming, we will work hard to generate significant additional funds from other sources, with a view to increasing this amount to €70,000 per annum by 2017.	<p>We will appoint a dedicated staff member to lead our work on external revenue generation including public fundraising, commercial sponsorship and philanthropic funding.</p> <p>We will develop a fundraising strategy by Dec 2014, to enable us to grow our external funds (i.e. those not related to service delivery) by €70,000 per annum</p>
Financial and Corporate Management	We will pay close attention to the costs of the services we provide and to the revenues we receive, with a view to making sure that we achieve break-even in as many service areas as possible	Detailed scrutiny of each service area, and production of financial reports to Sligo Social Services Board including analysis and recommendations to aim for break-even
		Follow-up dialogue with funders to address issues and problems raised in financial reports
	We will work to eliminate our deficit within 3 years, and we will make every effort to avoid accessing our financial reserves for the purpose of funding ongoing services, with the intention of ceasing this practice (and having every service break even) by the start of 2017	Separate financial health report for each Board meeting of Sligo Social Services, looking at the ongoing position with financial viability and breakeven for each service area
	We will develop a corporate Risk Register, which will be updated on an annual basis	Formal Risk Register to be signed off by the Board
Clients and Stakeholders	We will ensure that our services are focused on meeting the defined needs of our clients, keeping them at the centre of our attention,	We will conduct regular liaison with our service users, their advocates and other stakeholders within the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, in order to understand how best Sligo Social Services may respond to the needs of the population in the areas we serve. The output from this liaison will be collated and will be included within the annual Service Plans and three-yearly Strategic Plans to be produced by Sligo Social Services.
Learning and Growth	We will develop our organisation structures to support service delivery at all levels, including the Board, management, staff and volunteers, including improving our processes and support arrangements, and enhancing the training and development of all of our people	Annual skills review for staff, volunteers and Board; commissioning or development/delivery of training provision as required
	We will introduce an annual staff review system in line with the development of our organisational capacity	Development of annual staff review system
	We will continue to strengthen the Board and our governance arrangements	We will introduce new Board members with skill sets and experience who can add real value to our governance processes
		We will update as necessary our Memorandum and Articles of Association and associated Board processes
		We will move to full compliance with the Charities SORP and the Governance Code for charities

Risk Management

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The strategic objectives included within our Balanced Scorecard set out the priorities for Sligo Social Services between now and the end of 2017, and reflect the ambition and intent of the Board and Management Team to deliver on its mandate.

In preparing this Strategic Plan, a range of significant / strategic risks facing Sligo Social Services were identified.

This will be detailed in a formal Risk Register to be completed by the end of 2014, and the suggested risks presented below are reflective of the uncertainty facing many voluntary sector organisations in Ireland, and in particular address the challenges as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Risk Type	Nature of Risk
Budgetary and financial resources	Insufficient or inadequate budgets to meet service delivery costs in context of service plans and funds required
Changes in funder requirements	One or more funders change their service requirements (e.g. cessation of service, major changes in nature of the work required, etc) which results in Sligo Social Services having to discontinue service provision and downsize our service offerings / staff resources
Reputational	Impairment or loss of reputation of Sligo Social Services, or loss of confidence of the public, in the work of Sligo Social Services as a result of any failure to deliver effective services
Personnel	Changing requirement in level of staff knowledge, skills and competencies required to meet changing client needs, statutory and donor requirements
Inter-agency relationships	Failure to achieve joined up approaches to address cross-cutting issues within Sligo and surrounding areas. For Sligo Social Services to be fully effective, we need to foster robust relationships with the HSE, the Child and Family Agency, Sligo County Council, other State agencies, other non-profit organisations, and our service users and stakeholders.
Policy and Operational	Failure to ensure that the strategic and operational policies of Sligo Social Services are properly developed and implemented, and that targets are met.

Sligo Social Services will, over the life of this Strategic Plan, evaluate the above risks and will ensure that all actions and initiatives undertaken manage these challenges proactively, with risk mitigation / minimisation actions being identified and implemented without delay, so that our mandate to our clients can be pursued and effectively delivered.

Conclusion

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For further information and details on Sligo Social Services various services and contact points, please visit our website at:

www.sligosocialservices.ie

We have set ourselves an ambitious plan.

Together, with commitment and determination,
we can make our objectives become a reality.

This plan signposts what we are planning for the
next three years.

A sincere thank you is extended to

all who have participated in any way in the development of this plan.

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