

Merchants Quay Ireland Launches 2023 Annual Review **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/110993>)**



Merchants Quay Ireland Sees Increase in People Accessing its Services for 10th Year Running

54% Increase in Volume of Meals Provided

Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) has seen a further increase on the number of people accessing its homeless and addiction services, a trend that has continued for over a decade. 13,516 individuals sought support from the charity in 2023, compared to 12,764 the previous year.

MQI's latest annual report showed 136,850 interventions with their clients. Notably, the charity provided 66,126 meals, a 54% increase on the previous year, highlighting the increasing demand for its drop-in services.

Launching the report, Colm Burke, Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy said:

"I have visited MQI and witnessed firsthand the wide range of compassionate services offered, from hot meals to family support, to addiction treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare. I am fully committed to ensuring that a person-centred approach to reducing harm and supporting recovery will continue to be at the core of Ireland's drug policy going forward. In with our health-led approach, I look forward to the opening of the medically supervised injecting facility in MQI, which will reduce the harms associated in injecting drug use and help to save the lives of people who use drugs."

In 2023, over 3,100 people were supported by the MQI harm reduction team, and 123 people were admitted to detox and rehab services. The report also shows an increase in those presenting as homeless which resulted in 3,928 crisis support interventions being provided from the charity's Riverbank centre.

CEO of MQI Eddie Mullins continued:

"The stark reality is that MQI have seen an increase in the numbers of people looking for support every year of the past decade. More and more people are now homeless for longer as they have less options, this in turn has a devastating impact on people's mental health, physical health and can cause addiction to spiral. There is little doubt that easier access to more recovery services is essential."

The opening of the Medically Supervised Injection Facility this year signals a significant shift in society's understanding that addiction is a health issue and requires a health-led response. While this is an important step forward, we still have a long way to go. Recovery is only possible, if people can access the services they need, when they need them. At present, there are simply not enough recovery and detox beds available to meet the demand."

More Information (<https://mqi.ie/merchants-quay-ireland-launches-2023-annual-review/>)

Nationwide

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