

Befriending/human contact is a vital component of the work of the **Alice Leahy Trust** and this entails an enormous amount of time, which is difficult to quantify and increasingly not easy to provide.

The provision of showers is easy to undervalue. It is the first step to linking in to other services, statutory and voluntary, keeping an appointment in a hospital, in the Courts, even to access accommodation or reconnecting with family etc. Our submission to Dublin City Council for public showers (July 2006 and resubmitted 2014) in our capital city can be viewed on our website www.aliceleahytrust.ie. The need for same still exists in 2021.

A presentation and submission made to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government & Heritage in January 2021 can also be viewed on our website together with a copy of their Interim Report on Homelessness.

Changes due to Pandemic

Covid has been challenging for everyone, but we have been able to remain open while adhering strictly to Government guidelines. This has meant that our work must now focus solely on people who sleep rough. Due to social distancing requirements and the size of our centre we have to limit the number of people allowed in at any one time, therefore people in accommodation, even if emergency accommodation, are encouraged to avail of the services provided there.

The words of the late Tony Gill who used our service for many years and is buried in our plot in Glasnevin Cemetery reminds us daily of the isolation of some of our fellow human beings.
“Today I spoke to no one
And nobody spoke to me
Am I dead”

Thank you

A word of gratitude to the many people from all walks of life who continue to make our work possible while recognising that in an ideal world there should be no need for our service. The support and concern for our staff and people who use our service we received from the general public during Covid times was particularly gratifying. While we know that we cannot change the world, all of us together can make a difference.

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*..a befriending,
social & health service
for people who are homeless*



The Alice Leahy Trust

TRUST founded in 1975 grew out of work carried out by Alice Leahy and a group of doctors, all working in a voluntary capacity visiting people in shelters, hostels and people sleeping rough. That work and the generosity of the late Anne Rush led to its foundation. Our service, the first of its type in Ireland, has been used as a model for services here and abroad. In November 2015, after 40 years in existence, the then trustees after a lot of reflection decided it was an opportune time to reconstitute TRUST as a company limited by guarantee without a share capital. For a number of reasons, including confusion sometimes caused by the existing name, it was also decided to rename TRUST the **Alice Leahy Trust**

Location

We operate from the basement of the Men's Iveagh Hostel on Bride Road, Dublin 8 (between St. Patrick's Cathedral and Christchurch) with our own entrance to the basement.

We strive to ensure a safe, secure and welcoming environment. We had to cease our 'open door' policy in 2009, due to a number of health and safety issues which posed considerable challenges to staff. Health and safety challenges persist to this day and, if anything, are even greater now than in the past.

Opening Hours

We open each week day morning from 9.00am to 1.00pm closing at 12 noon on Fridays.

For people using our service no appointment is necessary. All other appointments can be made by contacting the centre.

Staff

We have 6 members of staff, 1 of whom is part-time. Teamwork is crucial to the day-to-day running of the agency. Staff meetings are held every 2/4 weeks.

The **Alice Leahy Trust** is governed by a Board of Directors who meet every 4/6 weeks.

The **Alice Leahy Trust** meets the requirements of the Charities Regulatory Authority, the Companies Registration Office, Revenue and the Data Protection legislation.

Fundraising

The **Alice Leahy Trust** is not grant aided and not actively involved in fundraising.

The running costs of the agency are met in full by unsolicited voluntary donations which are receipted and gratefully acknowledged. Accounts are audited annually by Chartered Accountants Deloitte.

Media and Broader Education

All media queries are dealt with by the Director of Services.

Lectures and talks if appropriate are given on request. Submissions are made to Government agencies when appropriate.

Work Placements are no longer possible due to safety concerns. Our website www.aliceleahytrust.ie is updated regularly and only used for educational purposes.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of the **Alice Leahy Trust** is based on the recognition of every individual's right to be treated as an autonomous and unique human being. **Alice Leahy Trust** accepts people as they are, in the spirit of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recognises that everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. No information on people using our service is kept on computer or shared.

Our Work

Our work has a dual focus, providing frontline health and social services for people who are homeless while ensuring they receive their statutory entitlements. We have a strong commitment to education and advocacy to create a greater understanding of the nature of homelessness. We work with people who were traditionally labelled the 'single' homeless from here and other jurisdictions.

Homelessness cannot be treated like an illness with an easy cure, and people cannot be treated like machines without rights and responsibilities. We recognise that everyone who is homeless is unique. People are complex and have varying needs. There is no "one size fits all" solution. The distinction between the lack of housing and homelessness is important.

Some mornings we meet up to 12 people who come from doorways, squats, skippers, parks, tents and Garda Stations. On a given month we could meet people from up to 12 different countries down from 26 different countries pre-pandemic who are homeless in our capital city. Many of these people would have come here, like our own Irish of a generation ago who left our country with a dream of a better future.

Some people we meet cope with very serious addiction problems, including drugs, alcohol and gambling. Many people call on an ongoing basis and then disappear; many call just once and others reappear after many years. This has become very noticeable since the pandemic.

Time with people is spent on providing a wide range of care, advising on housing and entitlements, referral to specialist services, assisting with washing/showering, foot-care (extremely time-consuming yet hugely beneficial to those sleeping out), contacting families, healthcare professionals working in hospitals and the community, Gardai, welfare officers and workers in the NGO sector and the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.