

# Respond!

Housing Association

## Annual Report

2013 - 2014



## Annual Report 2013/2014 - Copyright Respond! Housing Association 2014

### Respond!

Respond! is one of Ireland's leading not for profit Housing Associations. We seek to create a positive future for people by alleviating poverty and creating vibrant, socially integrated communities. We do this by providing access to education, childcare, community development programmes, housing and other supports.

Respond! was established in 1982 as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and in 1984 was approved by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government as a Housing Association. Since our foundation, we have built more than 5,400 homes nationwide and have provided homes for families, older persons, homeless people, members of the travelling community and people with a disability.

**Respond!** is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Dublin, Ireland.

**Registration Number:** 90576

**Charity Number:** CHY 6629

**Registered Office:** Airmount, Dominick Place, Waterford, Ireland.

<b>Respond! Directors 2014:</b>	<b>Incoming</b>
Niall Bradley (Chairperson),	June 2014
Sean Dorgan,	June 2014
Jill Jackman,	June 2014
Heather Reynolds,	June 2014
Brian Hennebry,	
Tom Dilleen,	
Michael O'Doherty,	
Patrick Cogan, ofm.	
Deirdre Keogh*	
Joe Horan*	
(* Retired April 2014)	

**Auditors:** Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Ballycar House, Newtown, Waterford, Ireland.

### Solicitors:

Luke House Solicitors (Waterford)

William Fry (Dublin)

P.J. O'Driscoll & Sons (Cork)

**Bankers:** Ulster Bank, 97/98 Custom House Quay, Waterford and Allied Irish Banks, The Quay, Waterford.

### Respond (Support) Limited

This Company was established to prevent and relieve hardship and distress amongst those who are homeless and amongst those in need.

To provide care, support and services for those in housing promoted or provided by voluntary housing associations and charitable bodies.

To advance education, to relieve poverty and to further other charitable purposes beneficial to the community and in furtherance of the foregoing objects where appropriate.

The ancillary, caring and supportive operations of the Respond! organisation such as Childcare Services, Day Care Centres, Better Being Initiatives and Educational Supports are administered within Respond (Support) Limited.

**Respond (Support) Ltd.** is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Dublin, Ireland.

**Registration Number:** 206013

Charity Number: CHY10864

**Registered Office:** Airmount, Dominick Place, Waterford, Ireland.

<b>Respond (Support) Limited</b>	<b>Directors 2014:</b>
Niall Bradley (Chairperson)	June 2014
Anna Walsh,	June 2014
Jill Jackman,	June 2014
Michael O'Doherty,	
Brian Hennebry,	
Tom Dilleen	
Patrick Cogan, ofm	
Deirdre Keogh*	
Joe Horan*	
(* Retired April 2014)	

We achieve our aims through the following entities:

- Respond!
- Respond (Support) Ltd.
- Respond! College

- Respond! and Respond (Support) Limited are registered charities and comply with the Governance Code for community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland.
- Respond! is an Approved Housing Body and complies with the "Voluntary Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies in Ireland, Building for the Future" issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

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# Annual Report Introduction



*“The opposite of poverty is not wealth. In too many places, the opposite of poverty is justice.”*

Bryan Stevenson

## Foreword

Respond! is a voluntary housing association providing accommodation for older persons, families, the homeless, members of the Travelling community, those with special needs; anyone in need of accommodation who cannot provide for it from their own resources. In addition to housing, Respond! supports families and communities through the provision of education, training and community development programmes. We are committed to providing good quality homes which meet residents' needs and aspirations and strive to provide excellent support services to enable the development of flourishing communities.

### National Housing Plan

In the current challenging environment, where there are over 90,000 families on local authority housing waiting lists, the lack of a national housing strategic plan has been a major obstacle to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) achieving their goal to deliver a sustainable social housing

model, to meet the demand from Ireland's most marginalised groups, and to assist in the elimination of homelessness. Respond! welcomes the new start signposted in Minister Alan Kelly's 'Social Housing Strategy 2020' while noting that the strategy appears to aim only at the quantity of housing need rather than working to a comprehensive National Housing Plan which Respond! has been advocating for more than a decade. We support the fresh approach which the Minister promises to be more responsive and streamlined to modernise the delivery of social housing. However, there needs to be a renewed emphasis on policy dealing with homelessness, which has been deficient in recent years. Respond! considers that a revised plan, which tackles the root of homelessness – rather than the unrealistic “Housing First” aspiration – needs to be given equal priority by the Government in the quest to eradicate homelessness for good.



## Resourcing Communities

Bricks and mortar alone will not end the cycle of poverty and disadvantage being experienced by too many of our communities. Two recent education reports commissioned by Respond! studied an area in North of Cork City and a large area on the Northside of Dublin City. Both studies illustrated that the poorest and most deprived communities also have the lowest levels of educational attainment. They clearly show the importance of properly resourced community education programmes if we are to overcome these inequalities. When greater investment in social regeneration, community development and education programmes was made in Ballymun, education to third level steadily improved from 7.3% in 2006 to 11.6% in 2011. No such resources were put into Kilmore and Priorswood where the standard for third level education is at 8.7%, and likewise in North City Cork, Knocknaheeny (4.65%), Churchfield (6.13%) and Fair Hill (6.36%). Respond! believes it is essential that disadvantaged communities are properly resourced and are provided with the educational programmes and supports to help them grow and thrive. Respond! is committed to delivering community education through our community development and community education model, assisted by Respond! College and advocates that a model such as this should be resourced by the State and made available to communities suffering disadvantage and exclusion.

## Resist the Backward Movement to Segregated Housing

Respond! welcomes the Minister's commitment to integration and mixed tenure. The building of integrated communities has been an important part of our work over the last decade. Respond! is strongly committed to moving away from the single tenure model of social housing delivery to the European norm of integrated living. Citizens should not be pigeon-holed as a result of their socio economic position, but rather should be valued and supported to contribute to a diverse and integrated community. Respond! believes the recent dilution of the provisions of Part V, reduced from 20% to 10%, is a retrograde step in achieving the goal of integrated, vibrant communities. When this is coupled with the almost exclusive reliance by government on the new Payment and Availability Agreement model, which supports mainly

segregated housing Respond! has good reason to worry. The new Social Housing Strategy, unlike the measures which built upon the original Plan for Social Housing of 1991, neglects the critical ongoing community development resourcing measures which are vital for the sustainment of social housing communities.

## Social Housing Ombudsman is required

Respond! fully supports the enhancement of tenant rights contained in the Residential Tenancies Bill 2012, however we argue that it is totally inappropriate that the voluntary sector tenancies should come under the remit of the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) as the sector's tenants share the same characteristics of the Local Authority (LA) sector who are not being included in its remit. The appropriate jurisdiction of the Office of Ombudsman, where currently LA tenants can have their complaints examined, is a far more appropriate appeal structure for the voluntary sector. The PRTB structure which was established to vindicate the rights of tenants in the private rental sector completely lacks any familiarity or experience of the social housing sector which renders it an unsuitable structure for vindicating the rights of social housing tenants.

**Our Annual Report sets out our structures and governance as well as our main achievements for 2013- 14. Respond! Housing Association wishes to thank everyone who have assisted us and continue to assist us in our work.**

**Ned Brennan:**  
**Chief Operations Officer**

**Patrick Cogan, ofm:**  
**Chief Executive, Respond!**



# Challenges for Respond! over the next 3 - 5 years!



## Challenges:

- Government subsidy for AHBs has fallen by 63% since 2008.
- Demand for social housing has more than doubled since 2005, and currently stands at nearly 90,000 households.
- It is estimated that 16,000 residential homes are required a year; half in Dublin alone.
- There remains a constant undersupply of housing in some areas, including social homes – only roughly 600 new dwellings were completed by AHBs in 2012.
- Undersupply has led to increasing unaffordability in the private rental sector in urban areas – the cost of renting a home in Dublin increased at 10 times the rate of other parts of Ireland over the last 12 months.

## Obstacles:

There are currently a number of obstacles being encountered by AHBs in the delivery of a robust social housing model to meet the demand for general housing, housing for the elderly & people with disabilities, and the elimination of homelessness.

They are:

- Absence of certainty around the support funds available from government on a year-to-year basis, which, in turn, limits the scope for AHBs to prepare 5 year development plans as required;
- Inadequate CALF funding for certain projects where AHBs are expected to contribute their own equity to make proposed projects viable. This is a limited resource as AHBs have competing pressures on their reserves / sinking funds in terms of long-term component replacement plans and the requirement to satisfy a housing regulator as to the adequacy of these sinking fund;



## **Respond! mission;**

***To advance education and relieve hardship and distress amongst those who are homeless and amongst those in need who are living in adverse housing conditions. To empower individuals and develop their skills for the benefit of the community as a whole.***

### **Respond! Memorandum and Articles of Association (1982)**

- Limitations of other security / collateral that can be offered by AHBs to external funders to cover construction / development risk, as the majority of existing housing stock is mortgaged to LAs and cannot be leveraged on or offered as security;
- Due to the lack of a “soft government guarantee”, onerous conditions are being imposed on AHBs in mortgage documents such as debentures on all assets, negative pledges, loan covenants etc. These severely limit the scope for significant development to take place;
- An under functioning private banking sector and the over-reliance on the HFA for development funds;
- Deficiencies in applying the current variable differential rent model to the delivery of sustainable social housing model;
- Long delays in the planning & administrative process and the time taken to approve schemes and applications for P&A and CALF is not conducive to capacity building within the sector, and often leads to higher costs and creates a disadvantage when competing with private developers.
- Shortcomings in the P&A agreement in terms of the security it affords to funders, no government guarantee, non-payment for void periods, management company service charge costs, payments related to market rents and the significant variance between market rents in urban and rural areas;
- The volatility of dependency on market rent as the basis for the Payment and Availability Agreement;
- Absence of regulation requiring AHBs to deliver robust governance with sustainable long-term financial position;
- Funding the cost of Regulation and Governance;
- Additional Government charges and taxes i.e. property tax, water charges, which put considerable pressure on the finances of our tenants at a time when their resources are already under attack and pushes families further into poverty.

# History, Structure And Governance

*“..we will bring about social creativity and advancement of opportunity for all our community”*

Patrick Cogan, ofm

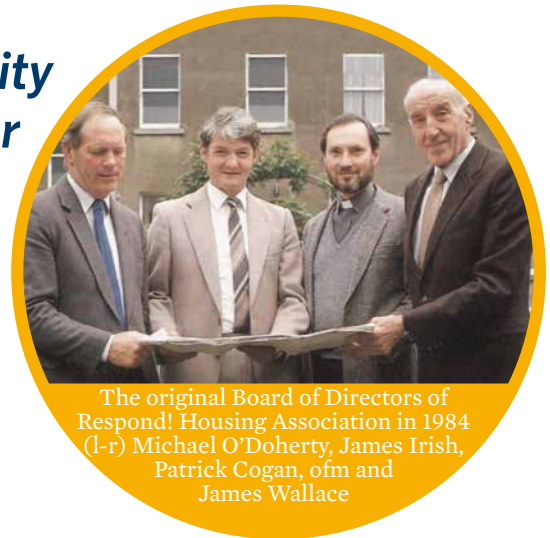
## The History in Context

Respond! was founded in Waterford City in 1982 at a time of severe recession and unemployment. It started from small beginnings, informed by a commitment to those experiencing poverty. Respond! is a Company Limited by Guarantee; it is recognised by Revenue Commissioners as a Charity, and is a Voluntary Housing Association recognised by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) as an ‘Approved Housing Body’ (AHB).

Respond! is Christian in origin and motivation and non-denominational in operation. We see the provision of housing in resourced communities not as an act of ‘charity’ but as one of ‘justice’: a right which should be available to all.

Respond! has a Franciscan rooting whose founder-director is a Franciscan in Waterford.

Volunteerism is core to the Respond! philosophy and work. Respond!’s Board of Directors and



The original Board of Directors of Respond! Housing Association in 1984 (l-r) Michael O’Doherty, James Irish, Patrick Cogan, ofm and James Wallace

Staff work with the support of some 400 nominated volunteer-leaders or ‘enablers’ operating at ‘cluster’ or cross-estate level, for the betterment of whole communities and regions.

The principle of subsidiarity (i.e., decision-making located as close as possible to those on whom it impacts) is aspired to in the collaborative work of Respond!.

Viewed from a human rights perspective, the core goals espoused by Respond! is to foster:

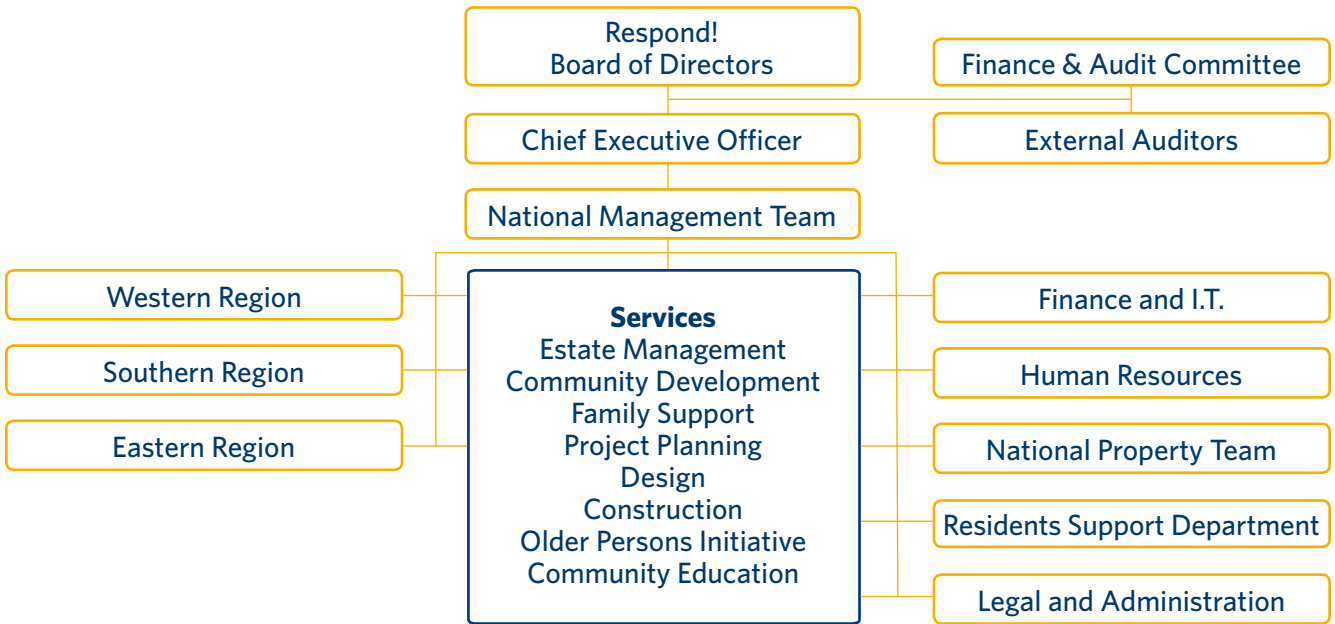
- Equality of opportunity.
- Equality of access.
- Equality of circumstance.
- Equality of outcome.



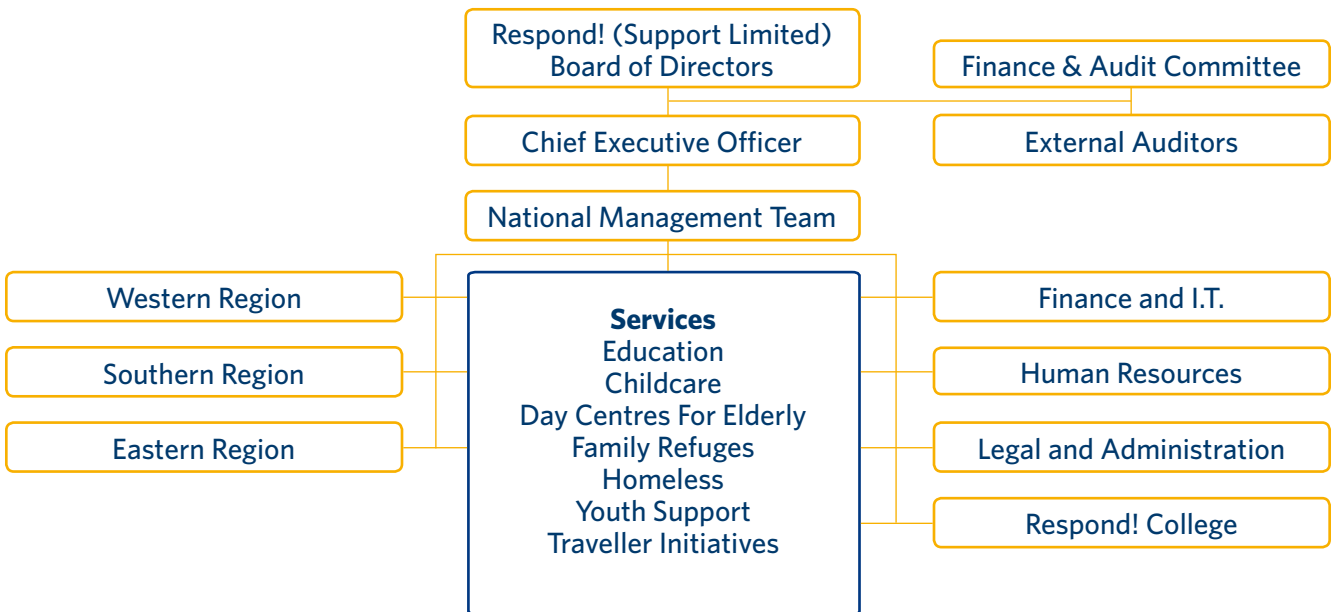
# Corporate Governance



The Governance Structure of Respond! is as follows:



The Governance Structure of Respond (Support) Limited is as follows:



# Respond! Achievements, Events & Development 2013-14



Respond! invited to visit Áras an Uachtaráin by President Michael D. Higgins to celebrate 30th Jubilee – **March 2013**

‘Give My Head Peace’ Seminar (one of the many Respond! well-being /mental health events which took place – **April 2013**



Announcement of significant regeneration project for Cork City Centre – **April 2013**

We celebrate the dedication of our volunteers during National Volunteer Week – **May every year**



Shortlisted for an award in the ISOVER Energy Efficiency Awards 2013 – **June 2013**

53 Families moved into new Respond! estate at Oakley Wood, Carlow – **September 2013**



Launch of Respond! Tenants Complaints Policy at Personal Debt Seminar – **August 2013**

Launch of Respond! Cuan Alainn - Women and Childrens Refuge, Dublin – **September 2013**





Respond! Older Person Conference / Launch of Older Person Strategy 2013-2016  
– **October 2013**



Respond! College /UCD BSS graduations.  
– **September 2013**



President of Ireland officially opens 10 new houses for Older People at the Liscarroll Housing Project – **November 2013**



Launch of St. Johns College Project, First Social Housing Scheme Funded with Private Borrowing  
– **December 2013**



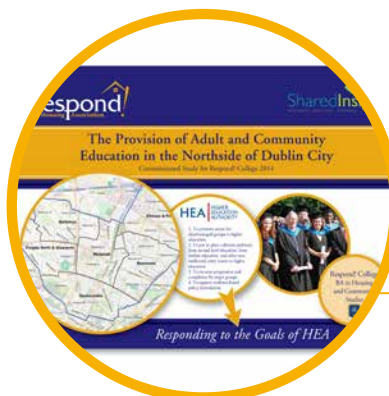
Publication of Respond!/Shared Insight Cork Education Research Report. Launch of our Tenant Information and Contractor Portal  
– **March 2014**



Formal Opening of Gleann na hEorna, Springfield, Tallaght 204 dwelling collaborative Housing Project  
– **May 2014**



Opening of Centralised Call Centre for all residents queries – **August 2014**



Launch of Dublin Report highlighting the Importance of Adult & Community Education Programmes  
– **September 2014**



# Respond! Board Of Directors 2014



**Niall Bradley (Chairperson):** Niall Bradley has over forty years experience in public service, specifically in the area of local government with experience of eight Local Authorities, in County and City/Town Councils, across three provinces. As a former County Manager in Kildare and Laois County Councils, Niall has extensive managerial, administrative and corporate governance experience.



**Patrick Cogan, ofm (Chief Executive Officer):** Patrick a Franciscan, is a founder-director of Respond! Housing Association since 1982. He served for three terms, as a Ministerial appointee, on the benchmarking Quality Action and Performance Verification Groups of the Local Authority sector and served four terms as a member of the Board of Directors of the Housing Finance Agency.



**Tom Dilleen:** Tom was formerly District Inspector of Taxes with the Revenue Commissioners for more than two decades in Waterford, up to his retirement in 2002. Tom was the longest ever serving District Inspector of Taxes in Waterford and has more than 40 years experience in the financial sector. Tom joined the Board of Respond! Housing Association in 2006.



**Sean Dorgan:** Sean is Chairman of the Irish Management Institute (IMI) and non-executive director of a number of companies including FBD Holdings plc, Short Brothers plc, Respond! and the Irish Cancer Society. He has also served as Chairman of the Governing Body of Dublin Institute of Technology, of Ulster Bank Group, of Tesco Ireland and of various other boards. In his earlier career he was Secretary General of two Government Departments, Chief Executive of Chartered Accountants Ireland and CEO of IDA Ireland.



**Brian Hennebry (Company Secretary):** Brian is a Chartered Accountant and founder of Brian Hennebry Associates Tax Consultants based in Waterford, with nearly thirty years experience in the financial sector. Brian joined Respond! as a Board member in the 1980s when he was asked to assist with the development of the organisation.



**Jill Jackman:** Jill is Legal Manager of Respond! and has been with the organisation since 1999. Jill is responsible for legal and administration matters within the organisation including the acquisition of properties and development sites, litigation and the insurance portfolio. With more than thirty-eight years' experience in the legal profession, Jill previously worked with Nolan, Farrell & Goff Solicitors (1976 to 1983) and with Kinsella Heffernan & Foskin Solicitors (1983 to 1999).



**Michael O'Doherty:** Michael is one of the founding members of the organisation and has helped develop and progress the organisation since 1982. A retired builder, Michael has more than forty years experience in the housing and construction sector and played an important role in the development of the organisation over the past 30 years.



**Heather Reynolds:** Heather is the Owner/ Director at Eishtec and has extensive experience in driving cost efficiencies and improving customer satisfaction for in-house and offshore sites through customer lifecycle mapping and robust implementation plans. Heather is an influential leader who transforms business practices through stakeholder engagement and a focus on both internal and external working relationships



## Respond (Support) Limited Directors 2014:

**Niall Bradley, Patrick Cogan ofm, Tom Dilleen, Brian Hennebry, Jill Jackman, Michael O'Doherty and Anna Walsh.**

**Anna Walsh:** Anna manages the Waterford Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS) and has been with MABS for almost twenty years. Prior to that Anna was a Community Welfare Officer with the South Eastern Health Board. Anna joined the Respond (Support) board in 2014.





**Respond! Senior Management Team**

(L to R): Deborah Butler, Parag Joglekar, Ray Fanning  
(L to R): Ned Brennan, Patrick Cogan ofm, Jill Jackman

# Respond! Staff And Volunteers

## Our Team:

Respond! employs 308 people throughout the country in a variety of different areas of expertise.

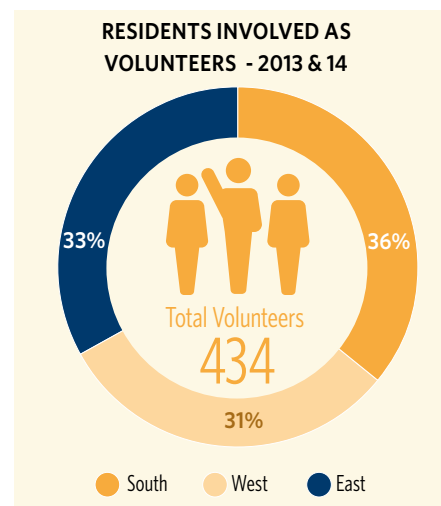
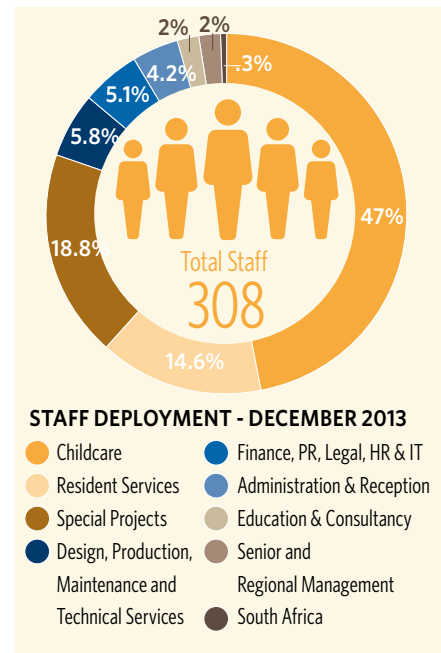
Crucial to the running of many of our programmes/events is the tireless effort of over 400 volunteers nationally. The success of many of our estates community projects nationally can be attributed to the work, dedication and vision of these remarkable people.

## Staff and Volunteer Training:

In 2013, there were 483 participants in thirty-six training activities. These activities ranged from half-day interventions to seven-day courses, the bulk of the training taking place in two days or less. The training can be categorised as follows:

- Social Housing, Social Welfare and the Law
- Health Education
- Child-focused including Child Protection
- Active Citizenship
- Information Communications Technology

Ten employees were supported through our Employee Educational Assistance Programme to Masters Degree PHD and QQI-FETAC level 5 & 6.





# Respond! People

*I would like to say that over the years, I have got great pleasure and personal satisfaction from being involved with Respond!*

Willie Doyle

One of the 434 volunteers nationwide, one of 25 in Youghal



*It's great living here and I'm glad to get my own wee corner that's mine and my home.*

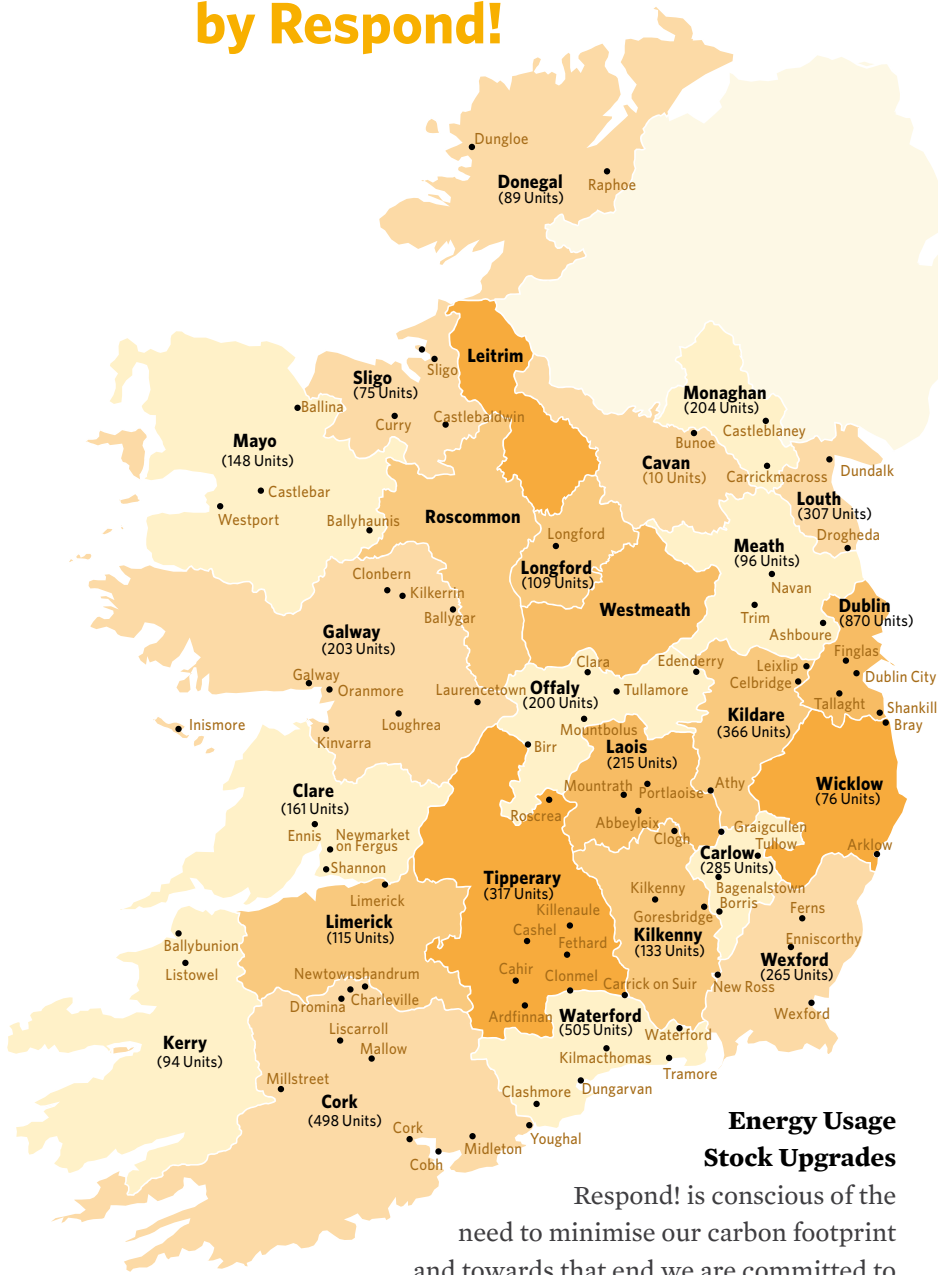
Cathal McCole  
Resident

*I feel truly passionate about what I do, supporting families to reach their full potential.*

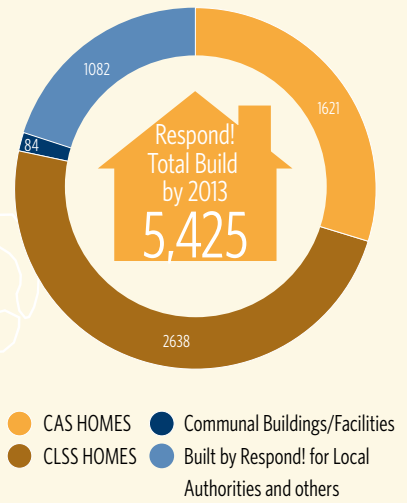
Niamh Flavin  
Employee



# Communities Built by Respond!



## TOTAL HOUSING AND ESTATES - OVERVIEW



Reactive Maintenance (2014)  
3,875 maintenance to 1,955 properties

Works completed (2014)  
659 emergency repairs,  
1339 urgent repairs  
1877 routine repairs

Year-end spend ( June 2014 )  
(including reactive, cyclical, voids, planned)  
€2,636,277

Void rate 2014  
200 New voids/vacancies  
197 New Lettings

Arrears (June 2014)  
3%

### Energy Usage Stock Upgrades

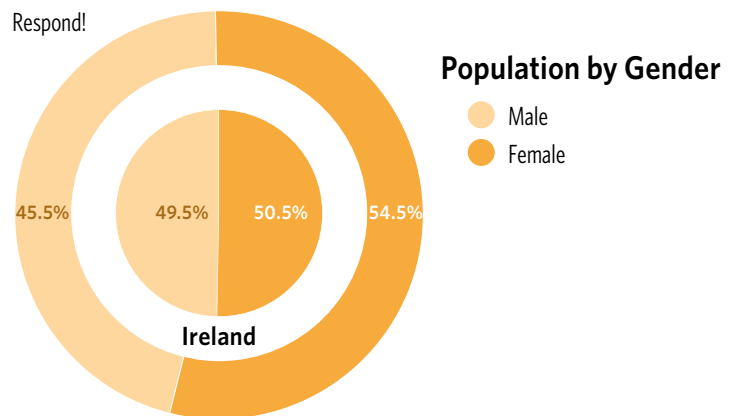
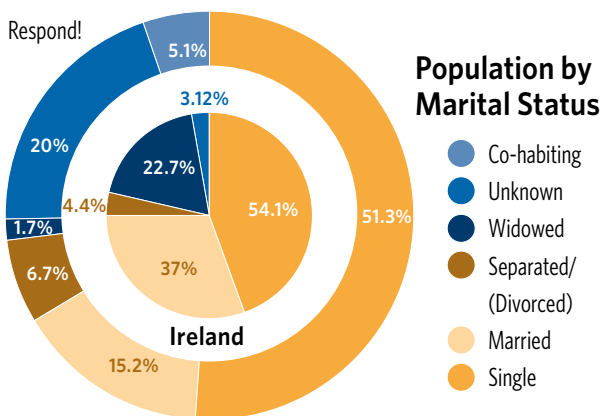
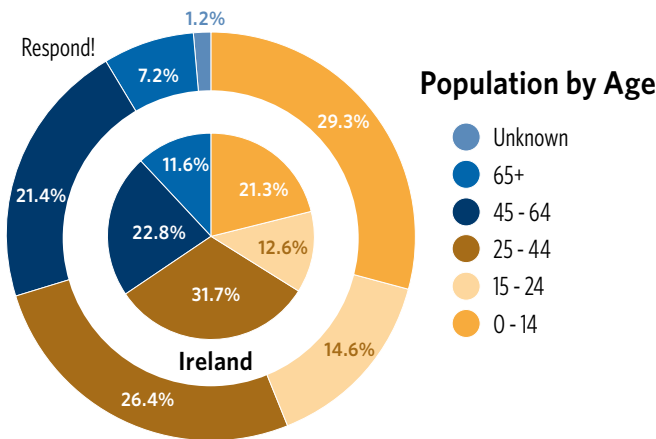
Respond! is conscious of the need to minimise our carbon footprint and towards that end we are committed to working with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Furthermore Respond! is conscious of the way in which fluctuating fuel and energy costs significantly impact on the economically vulnerable in society.

Working with SEAI, we will improve our Building Energy Rating (BER) rating, increase general comfort, reduce CO2 emissions, and reduce heating bills.

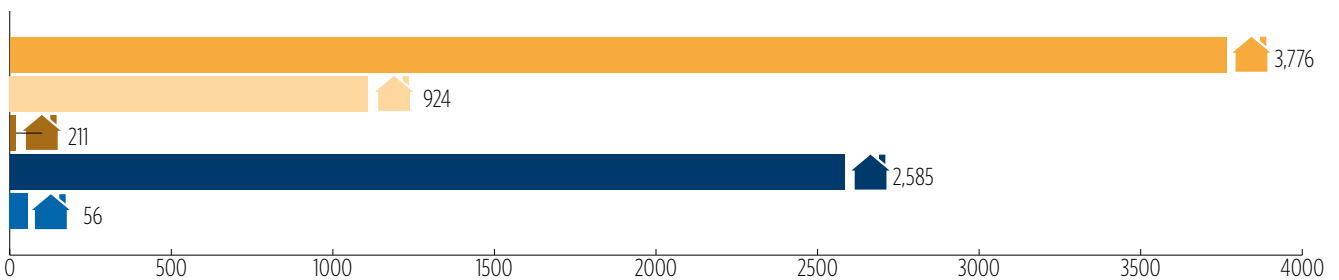
# Respond! Resident Population Relative to CSO Irish Population (2011)

Respond! residents differ from the general population in a number of respects. There are more women than men in the Respond! population when compared with the general population. The age profile is also noticeably different. There are more children (0 - 14) in the Respond! population and there are more

people in the next age category (15 - 24). There are however, fewer adults among the Respond! population and significantly fewer older people (65+) in the Respond! population when compared with the adult population however Respond! also cater for more older people in the wider community.



## Analysis of Housing Stock



- Managed by Respond! for Local Authorities (56)
- Family Homes CLSS (Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme) + Private (2,585)
- Units in Group Homes (Comprise of 4 to 14 units per home) (211)
- CAS Homes (Capital Assistance Scheme) (924)
- Total Stock Managed by Respond! 2014 (3,776)



# Production and Design Previous Regeneration Projects

## Moyross Regeneration

Ballygrennan Close in Moyross is an excellent example of collaboration between Respond! and Limerick County Council in transforming a derelict, downbeat neighbourhood into one in which people could comfortably live. Thirty-four family residences were re-constructed along with a community building to cater for the needs of adults and children. Located here too is Suaimhneas, a facility for homeless women and children now twelve years in existence.

In collaboration with the Limerick Homeless Alliance (LHA) and other agencies, Respond! staff are implementing the area Homeless Action Plan.



## Blackpool Regeneration

The regeneration of the Glen Flats complex at Thomas David Street, Blackpool delivered twelve homes for families, thirty-nine apartments for older people, Respond! offices and a Day Care Centre.

The Day Care Centre is situated on the fifth floor, over-looking the north side of Cork City. Facilities include a canteen, day room, activities room and older people have access to podiatry, physiotherapy and dietician services. People who attend are provided with a hot three-course meal and have the option to participate in a range of activities and companionship.

St. Francis Day Care Centre caters for people from within the complex and the wider Blackpool community and surrounding areas and warmly welcome all over 65's. Staff includes Nurse Co-Ordinator, Care Assistants, and a part time Chef who work as part of the team of Public Health Nurse (PHNs) and GP's in the greater Blackpool area.

# Current Projects



## Carlow - Unfinished Housing Estate completed by Respond! in 2013

Oakley Wood has been transformed from an abandoned gated site to an open, vibrant, thriving community. Respond! has overseen the transformation. Purchased from the National Management Agency (NAMA) in January 2013 Respond! has breathed new life into a dying estate when 53 families moved into their new homes between August and October 2013. This type of project can be replicated across the country to assist in bringing suitably located unfinished estates into full use for the benefit of local communities.

*I am pleased to announce that work will begin on site after Christmas on Respond!'s redevelopment of St. John's College, marking the end of our seven year marathon preparation.*

CEO Patrick Cogan, ofm  
December 2013

## Launch of St. John's College Project for Older Persons Accommodation in 2013

The College building itself will house twenty-one, self-contained apartments for older persons, an eleven bed Group Home Facility and a supporting Day Centre. Respond! is also constructing thirty-six new-build one-bed apartments on the site parallel to The Folly road, also for older persons. The total project costs will come to just €12 million. Some €8million of this will be made available in state mortgages to Respond! from Waterford City Council through the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government with balance required being provided by Respond! through Private Finance in association with AIB Bank.





# In-house Production & Design



Respond! is unique amongst Irish Approved Housing Bodies in that it is the only one that has its own in-house design team. The design team consists of Chartered Architects, Architectural Technicians, Quantity Surveyor and Site Agent who undertake work on all aspects of the projects including Feasibility studies, Planning, Tendering and Project Management on site. They also provide additional services such as BER certification, H&S – Project Supervisor Design Process.

Respond! designs take into account the vast experience that has been accumulated over the last 30 years in every aspect of developments including housing management, while also incorporating the ever changing regulatory requirements such as building and statutory regulations.

The projects undertaken by Respond! vary widely from special purpose one off dwellings up to large scale integrated developments of several hundred units with values exceeding €50 million plus.

The in-house design team forms part of the National Property Team, which also deals with the national maintenance requirements of the Respond! housing stock of 3776 units. This service is delivered through an asset management strategy implemented by Technical Services Officers located in various regions across the country.

## Production and Design Service

- Design and Master Planning
- Procurement and Construction
- Planning and Design Advice
- Experience and Advice in planning integrated family housing



# Integrated Project



**Carraig Liath in Midleton, Co Cork** is an integrated estate designed and built by Respond! Housing Association with the support of Cork County Council and kindly funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The estate contains 41 family homes and 19 homes for older persons managed by Respond! Housing, 21 family homes managed by Cork County Council, 10 affordable homes and communal facilities for residents.

***Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of poverty/disadvantage and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources.***

National Community Development Programme 1995





## Resident Support Services

*One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.*

Jean Vanier

So wrote activist, humanist, philosopher, theologian and writer Jean Vanier who in 1964 established the L'Arche community for people with developmental disabilities in France. In many respects Respond! philosophy is imbued with the values and aspirations of Jean Vanier. The language we use reflects modern-

day parlance but the human heart is at its core, the recognition of our shared humanity and our core belief that we all deserve to be treated with dignity.

# Respond! Strategies



## Overview

In everything we do, we subject ourselves to serious scrutiny. Comprehensive strategies with clear aims and objectives are agreed. Compliance with statutory requirements and regulations is a pre-requisite of our work.

## Our Estates

We are both landlords and enablers, managers and facilitators. It is a complex role and one that has to be negotiated with care and discretion. Each day as staff we collectively commit ourselves to doing just that, to negotiating the roles of allocation and assessment, rent and property management with the needs of the people with whom we work. It is a task we are constantly re-defining, constantly re-evaluating, constantly learning. Our estates are communities peopled by women and men, young, middle-aged and old, the active and the frail, able-bodied and people with disabilities, people whose families have lived in this country for generations and the newly arrived.

## Information Technology

Respond! has introduced a new Housing Management System to assist in the Management of our housing stock and delivery of improved services to residents.

Our on-line Tenant Information Portal (TIPS) went live in 2014. Now each resident can view her/his payment schedule details and log any maintenance issues directly through the Respond! website at [www.respond.ie](http://www.respond.ie). This is designed to improve the delivery of services to Respond! residents.







# Community Development

*“What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?”*

George Eliot

## Childcare Scheme - Intake Sept 2013

- Our 23 childcare services nationally, preschool, full day and/or afterschool services operate three operational programmes.
- Under the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) we supported 472 children nationally.
- We have supplied places for 150 children under the free Pre-School Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.
- Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) had a very low uptake for 2013.

## Childcare and Youth

### Policy Work Across our Estates:

- Making Communities Safe for our Children
- Pre-school Work
- After-School Programmes
- Youth Work Programme
- Summer Camp Programmes
- Youth Cafe

## Family Programmes

### Parent & Toddler Groups

- Parent & Child Initiatives
- PEEP's (Peer Early Education Partnerships)

### Parenting Programmes

- Incredible Years Programme
- Triple P Parenting Programmes
- Parent Plus

### Family Learning

- Doodle Den Literacy Programmes

## Better Being Programmes

- Improved Mental Health
- Social & Cultural Events
- Environmental / Estate Enhancement
- Healthy Living





### Child Protection

Respond! Housing Association is committed to promoting the highest standards of child protection in line with “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (2011). To achieve this we developed our child protection policy in 2011 “Making our Communities Safe for Children”. This policy is now implemented within the organisation and is promoted on all of our family estates.

All our childcare services are guided by Aistear – The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Siolta – The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. We constantly engage with the children and their parents in a more needs-led approach. As a result, parental participation has increased and our programmes have been enhanced.



### Older People's Programmes 2013/2014

- Launch of National Strategy for Older People 2013 - 2016
- National Conference 2013 – The Best Way Forward – Inclusive Communities for Older People
- Specialised Service Plan for Each Older Person Completed for 90% of Older People with regular reviews
- Activation, socialisation, education and lifelong learning programmes
- Allotment and Gardening Programmes
- Engagement not just with older people on our estates but with older people in the community
- Dedicated newsletter for older people with information on health care, advocacy issues, rights and entitlements, community activities and local educational programmes





## Case Studies Introduction



*No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.*

John Donne

The following three case studies from Respond! projects around the country tell of times shared, the coming together of people, of similar ages and across the ages. Like all good stories they are rooted in particular places and in particular times, each story born out of particular a set of circumstances. Stories that emerge from shared experiences, from doing

things together, gardening, card playing, enhancing the environment, trips to museums and exhibitions, shared reading and a whole lot more.

It is the creation of these comings-together that Respond! facilitates. People secure in their homes in communities that nurture. This is the Respond! ideal.

## Case One - Airmount Allotment, Waterford

*I love gardening, but this is also a meeting place. It's a place to have a chat, a cup of tea and help each other out and relax. It takes you out of yourself if you're feeling down.*

Christine O'Donoghue  
Resident

### Community Garden and Allotments

#### The Challenges:

The twenty-eight allotments and polytunnel located at Airmount, officially opened in 2013, were specially designed and constructed at a suitable height for older residents and people with specific needs and requirements. Respond! has actively encouraged Grow it Yourself initiatives to provide an important outlet for our older residents to meet and engage with their peers in a practical way. One of the biggest issues facing older people nationally is undoubtedly loneliness and social isolation. There is growing recognition that loneliness and social isolation are serious problems, with far reaching implications, not just for individuals, but also for wider communities, which merits the attention of large Voluntary Housing Associations like Respond!.

#### The Outcomes:

The allotments have been vitally important in this regard as they were/are an effective method of successfully engaging with tenants who were slow to engage in typical activities run by Respond!. In December 2013, Carl O'Brien, Chief Reporter, Irish Times wrote a powerful piece on the allotments in Airmount in Waterford. He interviewed a number of residents who were actively involved in the allotments on a daily basis. One of the residents who suffers from mental health issues has effectively halved their medication since they became involved in the allotments and other programmes on offer at St. Francis Terrace, Waterford.







## Case Two - Andrew Meadows, Athy



### Family Development

#### The Challenges:

The Andrew Meadows ten-week, two-mornings-a week Family Programme was open to women and men parenting alone. Twelve people attended the two to three hour sessions. This initiative arose out of an exercise on Future Planning with the local Residents Association who felt that there was a real need for a family support programme in the area. This course was an open engaged participant-led encounter facilitated by Respond! staff and in collaboration with other local agencies. Cookery, budgeting, meditation, CV preparation were the eclectic mix of activities.

#### Outcomes:

The programme was centred on learning-by-doing and thus had a direct relevance to the lives of the people doing the course. The final two sessions had a reflective element built into the programme asking the participants to reflect on their engagement with the programme, what they have gained from it and what future courses they would like to see. Feedback mentioned a deeper sense of community, networking opportunities and better knowledge of supports available.

## Case Three - Rinneanna View, Shannon, Co. Clare

*I was nervous, you go through your whole life to sit this exam so there is a lot of pressure on you. The exam café helps, it gives you a break - for a few hours anyway.*

Youth Club Member

### Youth Engagement

#### The Challenges:

In June 2013 the Resident Support Worker worked with Clare Youth Services (who operate out of the Community Building in Rineanna View) to run an exam café for young people in the area doing the Junior and Leaving Certificate exams. The aim of the initiative was to provide a 'chill-out' zone for young people going through the stress of exams.

#### Outcomes

The café proved very successful with sixteen young people regularly attending. Even more significant

was that four of the eight Respond! young people attending the exam café went on to become Youth Volunteers with Clare Youth Service. They underwent training in Personal Development, Voter Education, etc. In addition they travelled to France and Germany with the Youth Service and made presentations in both countries on living and growing up in Shannon. The nett outcome is that there are now four new, well-motivated and trained young volunteers amongst our residents in Rineanna View.





# Respond! Education

*You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.*

Dr. Seuss



Nineteen students completed the BSS in Housing and Community Studies accredited by UCD.

## Education Programmes

Respond! education recognises that like the flawed and unequal world in which we live, educational opportunities are unevenly distributed and those with fewest resources are often the ones given fewest educational opportunities. We want to challenge that injustice.

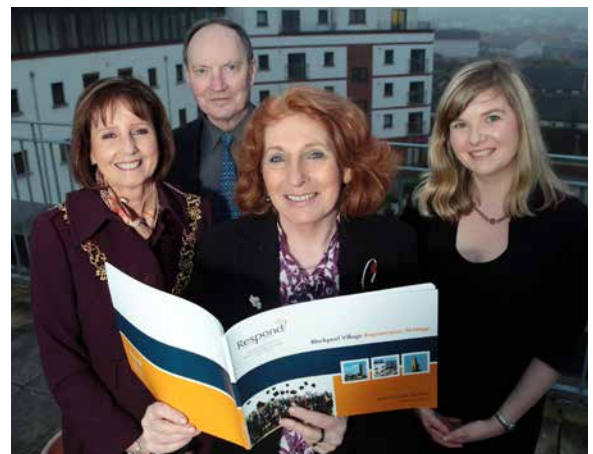
Respond! has worked in partnership with University College Dublin, National University of Ireland, Maynooth and other higher educational providers for many years, delivering an array of third level courses to both housing professionals and residents.

In 2011 Respond! College was established and is a Quality and Qualifications (QQI) (formerly HETAC/FETAC) validated Institution. A number of Programmes have now been developed and validated. These include a BA in Housing and Community Studies (Level 7 and Level 8) and a Certificate in Community Studies (Level 6). Respond! College, which has a main campus in High Park, Dublin 9, seeks to provide a range of courses across the spectrum of the National Framework of Qualifications to enable our residents and the general public advance in their level of education attainment.

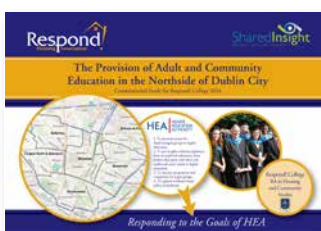
## Respond! launched two Education Reports in 2014

A report entitled “The Provision of Adult and Community Education in the Northside of Cork City” was launched in March.

The report on Adult Education on the Northside was commissioned by Respond! and prepared by a team from the research body SharedInsight with colleagues from UCC.



The report was officially launched by Lord Mayor Cllr. Catherine Clancy and Minister Kathleen Lynch.



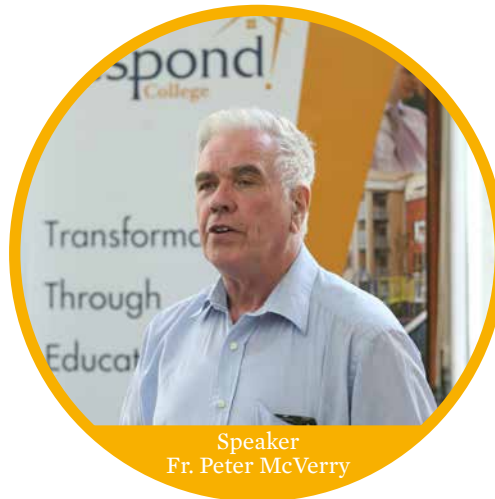
The report contains a socio-economic and demographic profile of the Northside of Cork, and provides the most up-to-date information on the provision of Adult and Continuing Education providers and programmes currently running in the Northside of the City.

A second Respond!/SharedInsight report was launched in September entitled:

**The Provision of Adult and Community Education in the Northside of Dublin City**

This Respond! report highlights great vitality and activity in the sector. It also highlights the need for a more systematic approach to tackle educational inequalities to ensure that where you grow up does not simply determine what you do.

Fr. Peter McVerry introduced the Study by saying: *“I welcome this revealing report from SharedInsight, and the establishment of Respond!’s BA Course in Housing and Community Studies for students*



Speaker  
Fr. Peter McVerry

*predominantly living or working in such communities is a whole-hearted response to its findings”*

# Partnerships & Stakeholders

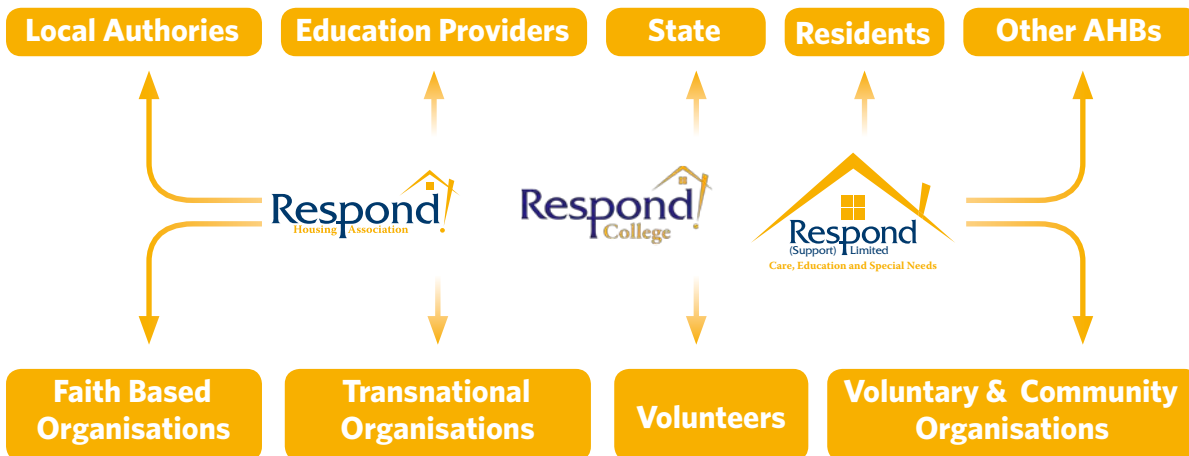
*“Nobody does it on their own”*

Elizabeth Warren

We work collaboratively with all kind of agencies – statutory, voluntary, community. We work with national, regional and local groups: with individuals, families and local communities.

We are concerned with human rights, the dignity of the person and are bound by international

conventions and treaties that took signatories years to find common cause. As well as shaping the physical and social landscape, we in turn are shaped by the people with whom we work and by our own history and by the history of the culture and society in which we live.



# Respond! Special Projects



- Refuges Women & Children
- Daycare Services
- Traveller Supports
- Young People Leaving Care
- South Africa

*One morning last week I saw a woman... surrounded by children. They'd run away. Her husband had been beating her. You could see the bruises. They stood there, all with the same blue eyes. Matter-of-fact, they were, as if it's just another thing you do in life, to pack up all your worldly goods and set out.*

Nuala O'Faolain

In response to experiences like this Respond! women and children refuge Suaimhneas was established in the Limerick region in 2002 and Cuan Alainn was officially opened in Dublin in 2013.

#### **Suaimhneas Women & Children Refuge (Moyross)**

Suaimhneas provides accommodation for homeless women over eighteen years of age and their children. Since Suaimhneas opened its doors in November 2002, 323 families have been accommodated to date.

#### **Cuan Alainn Women & Children Refuge (Tallaght)**

In 2013 we opened the Cuan Alainn Women and Children's refuge in South County Dublin. The capacity in this Centre provides for nine families at any one time. The average stay

varied with thirteen families staying less than three months and five families staying for less than nine months.

#### **Day Care Centres**

Respond! has three Day Care Centres throughout the country which provide activation programmes based on the residents' personal profiles and service plans. The Day Care Centres also provide an essential service for older people in the greater community. Respond! works very closely with the HSE and HIQA to ensure best practice and the highest standards at our Day Care Centres located at our carer-led service at Nethercross Day Care Centre, Tolka Valley, Finglas and our two nurse-led services located at St. Francis Day Care Centre, Blackpool, Cork and La Verna Day Care Centre, Baldoyle.



### Members of the Travelling Community

Respond! has up to fifty families, from the Travelling Community living in integrated estates (Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Meath, Offaly, Kildare, Mayo, Clare and Galway). We have a Special Project Manager whose role is to work with or assist Local Authorities develop and provide new services with and for members of the Travelling community in a given area. Our Special Projects Manager also works in collaboration with National Traveller organisations e.g. Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement. Collectively and in collaboration with members of the Travelling community, we have engaged in community development and mediation initiatives along with



site design and development in Dublin. We also contribute to policy and we made submissions to all Traveller accommodation plans 2014 – 2018.



### Young People Leaving Care

Respond! and Tusla (The Child and Family Agency) will work in partnership with regards to the launch of a one year pilot scheme, which will provide six dedicated units of supported accommodation for young people leaving care (18 to 23 year olds) and to facilitate their access to education and support at our new development at High Park, Drumcondra, Dublin.

This project will provide an extremely high standard of supported accommodation to young adults in a safe and secure environment which encourages peer support and engagement. Respond! will work closely with the individuals to help with integration and provide a tenancy support service. This is the first of a number of such projects around the country.



# Sivile! South Africa – 2014



Respond! was invited in late summer of 2005 by the Diocese of Kokstad in South Africa to assist them in developing supports and services for those in need in its area. Following identification and analysis of need & services, the following capital construction works were completed -

## **Hardenberg:**

The redevelopment of the old school building into purpose-designed dormitories and meeting rooms for the counselling and education services being provided for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in the area. Other facilities provided include community room, kitchen, shower and wash rooms, workshop and gardens.

## **Shayamoya:**

iThembalabantu Centre (Hope for the People) with the following facilities:

- TLC Home Services, Hospice, Clinic, Palliative Care for all: HIV/AIDS, TB, Cancer
- Sakhisizwe Pre-school
- Respond! Training Centre, under Sivile's own management
- Children's' Playground
- Blessed Paul Joseph Nardini Catholic Church, owned and funded by the Kokstad diocese



***For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.***

**Nelson Mandela**

Respond! also undertook preparation of feasibility and initial design proposals to develop integrated housing and associated community and educational facilities at the R56 site in Kokstad.

Respond! had intended from the completion of the capital phase programme in South Africa to withdraw entirely from its work in Kokstad and Hardenberg and leave the ownership, management and development of all assets and programmes in the hands of a locally-based Section 21 Company, Sivile, with its own locally-

based Board of Directors and its locally-based CEO who would develop a management and service delivery programme.

Teresa Olivier was appointed as the CEO in April 2014 and a new majority South African Board was established in May 2014 to help Sivile! embark on the road towards self-sustainability whilst continuing to deliver a myriad of services to communities in Kokstad and Hardenberg. Some of the programmes that are currently being undertaken include:



# Sivile! South Africa – 2014



## **Hardenberg:**

- Asset Based Community Development Training, Poverty Alleviation programmes
- HIV/ AIDS testing and referral clinic
- Agriculture and Poultry projects including setting up of Cooperatives and encouraging entrepreneurship
- Family Well Being & Support programmes for Orphans & vulnerable children

## **Kokstad:**

- Training in areas of acute skills shortage through relevant SETAs accreditation programmes such as Information Technology- current and functional primary SETA, Construction SETA (Plastering & Bricklaying in the development stage).
- Entrepreneurial - Seedlings & Vegetable gardens with potential income generation.
- Other training activities such as Life Skills coaching, welding, furniture making and other vocational courses.

Sivile! has been actively engaged in raising funds for its activities through programmes within South Africa and around the world; since July 2014, Sivile! has been successful in securing funding commitments of around R500,000. Respond! will continue to assist Sivile! in areas of education, skills development, health, community development projects and housing management by providing technical support and capacity building in addition to promoting volunteering services through individuals partnering agencies in Ireland.

## **Sivile! Board Members:**

Owen Peters, Bishop ZP Mpambani, Martin Brand, Fr. Vincent Bwete, Sr. Flora Bless, Brenden Marnce, Shannon Peters & Parag Joglekar





Metal and Construction Skills Training Workshop



Sr. Hedwig, Respond! Irish volunteer Jim Cahill, and local student at Hardenberg for community programmes.



Training by Department of Agriculture for Poultry Farm at Hardenberg



Establishing local partnership with St. Anthony's Education & Training Centre at Boksburg established by the late Fr. Stan Brennan

# Respond! and Respond (Support) Ltd.

## Combined Financial Summary Income & Expenditure

Income	Year End June 2014	Year End June 2013
Rents	9,844,170	9,297,512
Payment & availability income	292,065	0
Maintenance Allowance	1,181,905	1,164,076
Grant Income	1,974,952	2,089,678
Deposit Interest	559,642	664,582
Childcare Fees	352,057	349,501
Joint Venture Funding	-43,062	-12,489
Gain on Disposal of Assets	1,302	58,827
Course Fees	7,063	58,315
Sundry Income	585,999	359,387
	<b>14,756,093</b>	<b>14,029,389</b>
Expenditure		
Administration & General Overheads	551,042	768,856
Homeless, Day Care & Elderly Projects	1,248,354	1,320,383
Employment Schemes - Childcare Support	1,749,484	1,686,158
Education	114,215	230,591
Estate Management & Community Development	6,365,389	6,565,824
Property Maintenance	1,997,529	1,795,186
Overseas Investment	194,749	133,242
Depreciation of Charity Assets	295,574	320,520
	<b>12,516,336</b>	<b>12,820,760</b>
<b>Surplus on activities for the Year</b>	<b>2,239,757</b>	<b>1,208,629</b>
Structural Maintenance	638,748	250,816
<b>Operating Surplus for the Year</b>	<b>1,601,009</b>	<b>957,813</b>
Net Amortisation / Depreciation of Capital Projects	3,598,716	3,837,414
Transfer from Specific Reserves to General Reserves	780,743	612,730
Transfer from Friends of Respond!	1,409,191	0
<b>Surplus after Transfer from Specific Reserves</b>	<b>7,389,659</b>	<b>5,407,957</b>

Note: The combined Income & Expenditure reflect the consolidation of the audited financial statements of both Respond! and Respond (Support) Ltd.

## Combined Financial Summary Balance Sheet

	As at June 2014	As at June 2013
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>323,525,995</b>	<b>332,508,497</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	8,918,158	9,535,279
Cash and Bank Balances	925,107	550,794
Investments	21,855,846	23,574,623
	<b>31,699,111</b>	<b>33,660,696</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors and Accruals	2,539,606	3,391,897
Bank Overdrafts	0	0
	<b>2,539,606</b>	<b>3,391,897</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>29,159,505</b>	<b>30,268,799</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>352,685,500</b>	<b>362,777,296</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Capital Grants	19,842,280	20,779,605
Mortgage Liabilities	277,467,786	293,231,173
	<b>297,310,066</b>	<b>314,010,778</b>
	<b>55,375,434</b>	<b>48,766,518</b>
<b>Financed By :</b>		
Retained Reserves	32,025,389	27,768,775
Maintenance Fund	17,517,275	14,384,230
Specific Reserves	5,832,770	6,613,513
	<b>55,375,434</b>	<b>48,766,518</b>

Note: The combined Income & Expenditure reflect the consolidation of the audited financial statements of both Respond! and Respond (Support) Ltd.





**Respond!**

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Limerick  
Dublin  
Cork  
Laois  
Galway  
Clare  
Meath

**Respond!** Bachelor of Arts in  
Housing and Community Studies  
and Certificate in Community  
Studies available through the  
CAO system

