



Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

AN OVERVIEW



Foreword



Alan Duffy
Chairman

We are delighted to present Aware's Strategic Plan to cover the three-year period from 2018-2020.

This plan was informed by a comprehensive planning process incorporating organisational review, research and consultation with the organisation's wide range of stakeholders to include the Members, the Board, management, staff, volunteers and service users.

While Aware was originally established in 1985 to provide support and understanding to those impacted by depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions, the organisation has evolved over the years to recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health in order to work towards reducing the prevalence of mental illness. Over the next three years, we will continue in our mission to reduce the amount of people who require our support services in the future, by developing and expanding our education programmes to empower adults and young people with the knowledge and skills to look after their mental health.



Dominic Layden
CEO

This document outlines our plans to develop our Support Services to ensure we are meeting the needs of our current and future service users, along with increasing the volume and range of our positive mental health programmes delivered throughout the country. Since the earliest days of Aware, we have relied on the passion and dedication of our volunteers and we remain committed to improving the volunteer experience, increasing retention of our current volunteers, and recruiting new volunteers to allow us to deliver our expanded services to the highest standards.

The proceeds from the sale of Aware's Leeson Street office this year provide great opportunity for the future development of the organisation, facilitating the growth of our services and providing the resources to develop our fundraising function to ensure that we can continue to grow our services year on year. We will continue to raise the profile of the organisation through our marketing, PR and advocacy work, educating the public about mental health to bring about positive change in public attitudes and behaviour, challenge stigma and ensure that each and every person who can benefit from one of our services knows what is available to them and how to access it.

Following recent scandals, lack of public trust in the charity sector represents an on-going challenge. Aware remains fully committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance across all areas of its work and this will remain a core focus of the organisation going forward. Finally, on behalf of the Board, management team and staff at Aware, we would like to thank each and every person who contributed towards this Strategic Plan. We look forward to working together as we continue to build on our services and provide hope to all those impacted by depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions in Ireland.

Our Vision



To create a society where people affected by stress, depression, bipolar disorder and other mood related conditions are understood, supported, free from stigma and encouraged to access appropriate therapies.

Our Values



Excellence

We strive for excellence in all we do, in providing support and information to the public, in delivering our educational programmes and in engaging with donors and all stakeholders.



Compassion

We are person centric, understanding and responding to the needs of service users, volunteers, staff and all others we engage with.



Integrity

We value all opinions and treat all with respect and dignity in a transparent, honest and fair manner.



Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards in respect of clinical and corporate governance and financial probity.

Aware remains fully committed to the following principles:

- Governance Code for the Voluntary Sector
- Volunteering in Ireland Standards
- Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising
- A set of principles regarding equal opportunities and dignity at work for all our staff



Services

Maintaining and evolving our services to meet the needs of the public, delivered to the highest standards

The role of Aware in Irish society is twofold: support and education. Support all those impacted by depression, bipolar disorder and mood related conditions so they can live full and productive lives. Educate and empower people to look after their mental health with the aim of reducing the prevalence of mental illness.

Our service development over the next three years will be focused on fulfilling our role and ensuring we are delivering our support and education services to the highest standards.

Services



Developing our support services

Over the next three years, we will continue to develop and offer a range of quality Support Services underpinned by research and regular evaluations. The most significant development will be in relation to our **Support Line**. Currently we have the ability to answer approximately 13,000 calls each year. It is our intention to add a third Support Line to the service to ensure that no call for help goes unanswered. We will also focus on maintaining and developing viable **Support & Self Care Groups** throughout the country, with plans to grow our **Support Mail** service and increase the number of people we can support via email each year.



Increasing the volume of positive mental health programmes delivered nationwide

As an organisation, we believe that early intervention through education and empowerment is an essential component for preventing mental illness. We are passionate about equipping adults and young people with the knowledge, skills and tools to build resilience and help them to cope with the challenges of modern everyday life.



Equipping adults with 'Life Skills'

Throughout the next three years, we are committed to increasing the volume of positive mental health programmes delivered nationwide with the aim of delivering 100 **Life Skills Programmes** to 2,500 adults and Life Skills Online to 2,000 adults each year.



Supporting family & friends

Following the successful rollout of the **Relatives & Friends Programme** in 2017, we plan to deliver 40 programmes nationwide in 2018, increasing to 60 programmes in 2019 and 2020. Aware has always supported all those impacted by depression and bipolar disorder and the Relatives & Friends Programme is the only psycho-educational programme available in Ireland, that has been designed specifically for those supporting a loved one.



Future proofing generations

It is our belief that every child should be taught coping skills as part of their education. To that end, we will also be increasing the number of school programmes we deliver to senior cycle students to 140 **Life Skills for Schools Programmes** and 700 **Beat the Blues Talks** each year, also making this a core focus of our advocacy work.



Designing new programmes

We also recognise the need for new programmes to address the needs of those living with bipolar disorder and those experiencing panic disorder. During the next three years, we will develop and pilot a **Bipolar Group Programme**, two versions of a **Bipolar Online Programme** (one for those newly diagnosed and one for those living with the condition in the longer term) and an Online Panic Programme.

Fundraising

Ensuring future sustainability and stability of the organisation

As we currently receive less than 20% of funding from the State, it is necessary to maintain a robust fundraising function at Aware with responsibility for generating income via public and corporate donations.

The key priority of the fundraising team will be to maintain multiple sources of sustainable income to ensure the stability of the organisation and allow us to continue to develop and expand our services each year.

A major focus for this three-year period will be to develop a new flagship fundraising initiative that will generate significant, sustainable income going forward. Other areas of focus will include: maintaining and growing mass participation events in a cost effective manner, developing current and securing new multiyear corporate partnerships, increasing donations and securing additional sources of income from the State.



Communications

✓ Raising our profile

As the organisation develops, it is imperative that we prioritise building our profile to ensure that the public is aware of the range of services available to them – whether they require support or could benefit from participation in one of our positive mental health programmes.

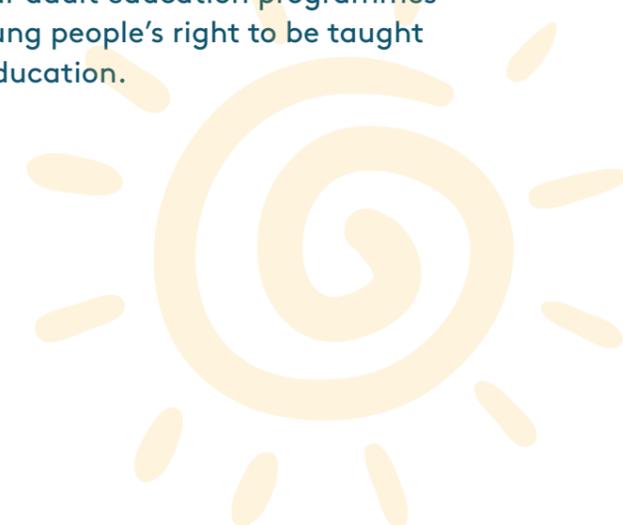
It is also our responsibility to communicate our vision and demonstrate the impact of our work to drive support of the organisation and ensure that we have the funds to continue to develop and grow these services into the future.

✓ Challenging stigma

As a leading mental health organisation, we have a responsibility to use our knowledge and reputation to increase public understanding and improve attitudes towards mental illness. We plan to continue in our efforts to educate the public on mental health through increased visibility of the organisation, awareness campaigns and consistently seeking opportunities to tell the stories of our service users.

✓ Promoting positive mental health

We are passionate about promoting positive mental health and this will be a core focus of our communications strategy as we drive participation of our adult education programmes and advocate on behalf of young people's right to be taught coping skills as part of their education.



Organisational Structure

We recognise that we have to develop as an organisation to ensure we have the capabilities to achieve our strategic goals effectively, efficiently and to the highest standards of good governance.

Organisational Structure



Governance

Aware is committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate and clinical governance across all areas of its work by strengthening our Board and processes, maintaining our Clinical, Financial and Services Committees and adhering to all regulatory requirements. Aware's accounts are prepared in accordance with the new standard FRS102 (The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland). Aware's annual accounts are published on aware.ie each year and also filed with the Companies Registration Office. We will continuously monitor, evaluate and evolve our processes and systems to ensure we are delivering on our goals effectively and efficiently and to the highest standards of corporate and clinical governance.



Developing our volunteer and Training Partner networks

Our volunteers and training partners are central to the delivery of services in Aware. Without the efforts and dedication of our volunteers, it would not be possible for Aware to deliver such a wide range of Support Services. We currently have approximately 450 volunteers either facilitating Support & Self Care Groups nationwide, answering calls to our Support Line, responding to emails to our Support Mail service or supporting clients availing of our Life Skills Online programme. Our volunteers are at the core of the organisation and we remain committed to improving the volunteer experience through open lines of communication, professional training and education days and regular evaluation of our processes. We also plan to undertake significant work on the development of our volunteer network, with volunteer recruitment and training remaining a central focus each year to meet projected demands as we expand our services. We will also continue to recruit and train current and new Training Partners to facilitate the expansion of our education programmes nationwide.



Staff

With over 50,000 people participating in Aware's services in 2017 and only 17% of annual income received from the state, staff with relevant professional competencies and skills are essential to ensure the organisation and its services operate effectively, professionally and in line with clinical best practice. We will continue to invest in our team, improving our management and staff processes and enhancing training and development as required to ensure we have the knowledge, skills and abilities to deliver on our objectives.



Financial Stability

We will protect the organisation's financial stability by ensuring the diversity of our income streams, implementing regular review of our financial position against budgets and future projections, increasing our levels of reserves and investing wisely to ensure the organisation can thrive into the future.

More than **450,000** or **1 in 10** people in Ireland experience depression at any one time



45,000 or **1 in 100** people in Ireland have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder



Aware's message is one of hope:
recovery is possible





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