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## CASE STUDY

# Accreditation: a journey of continuous organisation-wide improvement for Cuan Mhuire

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**BACKGROUND** Cuan Mhuire is Ireland's largest voluntary provider of treatment and rehabilitation for people suffering from addiction. It has been using the CHKS programme of accreditation to ensure continuous improvement for its residents. Cuan Mhuire has five treatment centres across Ireland, helping residents who have a dependence on drugs, alcohol or gambling.

The residents are supported through a 12/20 week, abstinence-based residential treatment and support programme, which works in partnership with their families. It now provides in excess of 140,000 bed nights per annum and caters for in excess of 2,600 admissions to its services per annum.

Sister Agnes Fitzgerald says: "Our mission statement requires us to be wholly inclusive and to embrace those who feel marginalised and unloved. It also requires us to always be attentive to providing the highest standards of excellence for those for whom we provide care and support."



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### THE ACCREDITATION JOURNEY

In 2009, Cuan Mhuire Bruree was awarded CHKS accreditation and ISO 9001:2008. This was followed by the Top Hospitals Quality Improvement Award in 2010. Sister Agnes Fitzgerald says: “This was a great encouragement not only for Cuan Mhuire Bruree but for all other Cuan Mhuire centres as it reassured us we were on the right road.”

The Cuan Mhuire centres at Athy, Co. Kildare, Coolarne, Co. Galway and Farnanes, Co. Cork were awarded CHKS accreditation in 2010. Last but by no means least, Cuan Mhuire, Newry, Co. Down, which was a new-build, was surveyed in 2014 and this led to the organisation being awarded the Top Hospitals Quality Improvements Award in 2015.

How accreditation is a catalyst for future improvement Sister Agnes says: “Accreditation has continued to motivate our staff to work consistently as a team and has focused on implementing best practice in all areas. From the beginning staff were eager to take on board the changes in behaviour and thought processes that were essential to meeting the requirements of accreditation. Their commitment and enthusiasm has been the driving force at all times.”

“When we first began working towards accreditation, it was a case of each centre working on its own but getting the help they needed from the other centres,” she says. This has changed and accreditation is less about improvement at the individual site level and more about Cuan Mhuire CLG as a corporate organisation. This means that all treatment centres and step down facilities work towards accreditation each year but only four randomly selected sites are surveyed.

### WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION?

Sister Agnes believes accreditation has been a valuable learning process for Cuan Mhuire and its staff. It has brought a new sense of purpose, team spirit and cohesion to the organisation and its centres.

“While we have many different centres we approach accreditation as one,” she says.

As a result of accreditation, all Cuan Mhuire’s working practices have supporting documentation. It can now check working practices against policies and procedures. Relevant training is carried out in all its centres on an annual basis.

Among the quality markers it uses to ensure improvement is continuous are staff feedback surveys, complaints management, surveys on medication management and satisfaction surveys. Committees, such as the Risk Management Committee and Infection Control Committee, ensure areas for improvement are identified and progress is tracked. It has also put in place structures that are enabling it to preserve, develop and pass on its ethos and fundamental values. These are:

- reaching out to every person in need of healing, especially those suffering from addiction and its effects;
- seeing the value of each person as unique, original, unrepeatable;
- preserving the family dimension of Cuan Mhuire as one of its greatest strengths;
- fostering a person-centred culture.

“We have no doubt but that accreditation has helped us to drive quality and safety and we have no doubt but that it has helped us with the future planning of our organisation,” says Sister Agnes.

As for support from CHKS, Sister Agnes says Cuan Mhuire has been fortunate that its client manager quickly grasped the depth, meaning and value of its mission statement. This support helped to affirm its commitment to providing the highest standards of excellence for those whom we provide care and support.

### TO FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH:

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