



Strategic Plan to 2025

Guiding Our Direction



"The whole family would have fallen apart if we hadn't had the help from CARI"

CONTENTS

CARI VISION AND MISSION.....	3
ABOUT CARI	3
VISION.....	3
MISSION	3
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	3
GUIDING OUR DIRECTION	4
CONTEXT AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.....	5
OUR AMBITIONS	5
OUR CURRENT CORE SERVICES.....	6
CARI HELPLINE.....	6
CHILD AND ADOLESCENT THERAPY.....	6
PARENTAL SUPPORT	6
FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
1. DEVELOP AND EXPAND THERAPEUTIC MODEL AND SERVICES	7
2. DEVELOP NATIONWIDE OUTREACH MODEL.....	8
3. DEEPEN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TUSLA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.....	8
CONCLUSION	9

CARI VISION AND MISSION

ABOUT CARI



CARI FOUNDATION is a registered charitable organization established in 1989 to provide a professional, child-centered therapy and support service to children, adolescents, families, and groups who have been affected by child sexual abuse or to children under 12 who are displaying sexually harmful behaviours.

CARI currently operates centers in Dublin and Limerick which offer safe and professional environments for children and families. CARI respects the need of each child and adolescent to have an individually tailored response to their particular trauma and its effect on their family. This work is supported and funded by TUSLA, and by other private and corporate donors.

VISION

CARI's vision is to provide trauma-informed therapeutic support, in a safe, trusted and professional environment, to children, adolescents, families and their carers whose lives are impacted directly and indirectly by child sexual abuse.

MISSION

Our mission is to ensure that every child and adolescent in Ireland who may need our services, wherever they live, is aware of CARI and able to access the information, advice and therapy services we provide. To achieve this mission CARI will continue to provide high quality therapy services for children and adolescents who are affected by child sexual abuse or if under 12 and displaying sexually harmful behaviour.



CARI will:

- Work with parents, carers, residential units and the wider community to help them support children and adolescents recovering from the trauma of child sexual abuse.
- Campaign for adequate resources and funding of necessary services for children and adolescents.
- Contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of child sexual abuse and advocate for appropriate responses.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The only comprehensive Irish study (SAVI, 2002)¹ indicates 1 in 5 people in Ireland experience an incidence of abuse in childhood (up to age 18). Child sexual abuse happens to children in every kind of

¹ The SAVI Report -McGee H, Garavan R, de Barra M, Byrne J, Conroy R. The SAVI Report: sexual abuse and violence in Ireland. Executive Summary. Dublin: Dublin Rape Crisis Centre; 2002.

family, neighborhood, and community regardless of age, gender or race. The SAVI Report showed that 47% of women and 60% of men who suffered sexual abuse in their childhood never told anyone until they spoke to the SAVI researchers.

The impact of sexual abuse can range from no apparent effects to very severe. Every child and family's experience of abuse is individual. Research has shown that up to 90% of children who have experienced sexual abuse will develop mental health issues by the time they are 18. Sexual abuse impacts on the child's sense of self, their relationship with others, their view of the world and reality, and their development. This can manifest itself in a range of ways such as the child becoming depressed, withdrawn, isolating him/herself, misusing substances, refusing school, self-harming, developing eating disorders, relationship difficulties or engaging in sexually harmful behaviours. Child sexual abuse can have traumatic impact on the family, who may experience a wide range of feelings such as shock, anger, disbelief, fear, guilt, shame, therefore, it is vital that both children and families have timely access to local services where their reactions are acknowledged and supported.

GUIDING OUR DIRECTION

Child sexual abuse has a serious impact on children and families. International research and 33 years of CARI providing the services needed by children and families in a supportive safe environment confirms that children and families who have access to the appropriate supports can heal and have a fulfilling future.

Through its therapy services CARI creates hope, trust and confidence, enabling these children and families to reach their full potential and reducing the risk of development of mental health issues in adolescence and adulthood.

This plan entitled 'Guiding Our Direction'- sets the course for CARI from now through to 2025 to meet the continuing needs of children and families who have experienced child sexual abuse in a more responsive manner.

'Guiding Our Direction' is the result of a 6- month process that has brought together CARI's Board, management, staff and funders to develop and focus CARI's strategy.



The Hope Tree in CARI's Dublin Therapy Center

CONTEXT AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the previous strategic plan period 2017 to 2020 CARI recorded a dramatic increase in the numbers of children waiting for therapy.

Referrals to CARI continue to increase and the severity and complexity of the cases we are facing is ever growing.

There is an urgent need to provide local access to services for children and families affected by child sexual abuse.

During 2020 we undertook significant change, our secondary services previously provided, such as court and forensic accompaniment, have transferred to an alternative organization. CARI now has gone back to its core function, which is tackling child sexual abuse in Ireland.



The success of our new Strategic Plan depends on CARI having the necessary organizational capability and capacity and the right people, both in terms of numbers of persons, and skillsets to allow us to meet the challenge.

We are committed to obtaining additional funding from TUSLA as well as other funders - from Trusts, Foundations, Legacies, Private philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility programs, so that we can secure sustainable funding, increase resources, clear waiting lists and support even more children and families.

OUR AMBITIONS

We have set our ambitions for the future based on what is achievable now. This strategic plan has been developed based on a comprehensive review of key factors including:

- CARI's current waiting list.
- The ever-increasing demand for our services in locations far away from Limerick and Dublin.
- The limited funds available.

"Ideally clients should be seen when they contact our services as these are clients in crisis."

"if additional funding was available, more therapists could be recruited to make therapeutic services more accessible to clients to cover 5 days per week."

- CARI Staff

OUR CURRENT CORE SERVICES

CARI HELPLINE

Our Helpline offers information, signposting and support to families impacted by child sexual abuse. CARI Helpline responds to calls from professionals seeking referral advice, parents who require advice in relation to recent disclosures and parents that are concerned about their child's sexually harmful behaviour.

Our Helpline communicates with children and their families already on our waiting list.

Once commenced within our service, the Helpline works to maintain contact with clients.

Our trained CARI Helpline advisors respond to calls from professionals seeking referral advice and parents .

Working in conjunction with our senior Therapy personnel, callbacks at suitably appropriate times are made by appropriately trained personnel.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT THERAPY

CARI provides child-centered, age appropriate, therapy for children and adolescents who have been affected by sexual abuse. CARI also provides therapy to children, up to (and including) twelve-year-old's who present with sexually harmful behaviours.

Therapy enables a child to express and explore his/her feelings and make sense of experiences in a safe environment. Children use therapy in a variety of ways. Some talk and others use a range of media e.g., paint, clay, toys to explore their feelings and develop a health way of coping with them. Therapy goes at the child's pace and the child can have as much or as little time as they need. Therapy sessions are usually weekly.

CARI is a post assessment therapy center and child protection concerns must have been reported to TUSLA before therapy can commence.

However, we do provide advice sessions to parents while reporting child sexual abuse to TUSLA. We also offer ongoing support sessions to parents while their child is awaiting and undergoing TUSLA's assessment.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

CARI believes that it is important to work with the child's family – his/her non-abusing parents and siblings and where appropriate extended family members who may assist in the child's recovery.

If the child is in the care of the TUSLA, CARI will work with the foster parents, residential care staff and social worker responsible for the child.

While the children are attending CARI, their parents or careers are offered sessions to support them and their children

Parental sessions offer a space for parents to discuss their fears and worries about their child. The therapist will assist parents to develop a language and a skill set to use to support their child in everyday life.

FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

These strategic objectives have been developed to achieve the outcome of significantly reducing our waiting list and to shape our operational plans to 2025 - 'Guiding Our Direction'.

- *Develop and expand our therapy model to provide consistent, tailored appropriate and timely access for children and families referred to CARI.*
- *Provide Nationwide outreach therapeutic services across Ireland.*
- *Deepen our relationships, working in partnership with TUSLA and other organizations in communities across Ireland, in such a way as to operate an on-demand service to children and families who need our help.*

1. DEVELOP AND EXPAND THERAPEUTIC MODEL AND SERVICES

Each child, adolescent and family attending CARI will have a tailor-made therapy approach that fits their and their families, carers and guardians individual needs. These needs will be identified by a therapeutic needs assessment which will also help create a tailor-made therapy plan for each child and their family prior to starting therapy.

This individual therapy plan will identify the therapeutic approach, frequency, therapists and locations. CARI will provide support and therapeutic services to parents and carers, It will enable parents to grow their confidence in caring and putting structures in place for their children who have experienced child sexual abuse.

BY CONSIDERING OTHER THERAPEUTIC MODELS AND SERVICES, WE EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE TIMELY ACCESS TO CARI SERVICES TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE OUR WAITING LIST BY 2025.

Key operational actions:

- **Develop a structured therapy support model that will support the child and family from first disclosure to the start of therapy**
- **Introduce other therapeutic approaches for children and families that can be adapted for each child and their family to create a tailor-made therapy plan. Create a clear support process for all children and their carers on the current waiting list.**
- **Creating a trauma-informed multi-disciplinary team to work in a variety of different ways that are client led.**
- **To explore and evaluate an aftercare process.**

2. DEVELOP NATIONWIDE OUTREACH MODEL

CARI plans to grow the organization nationally by creating an Outreach Model. This will provide therapy services nationwide to ensure that children, adolescents and families have geographically convenient access to CARI's services. Accessibility, community need and waiting list are just some elements that will be taken into consideration when looking at location of outreach services.

BY OPERATING AN EFFECTIVE OUTREACH PROGRAM, CARI CAN ACHIEVE ITS AIM OF SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING ITS WAITING LIST BY 2025.

Key operational actions:

- **Firstly, subject to funding, CARI plans to open up to three new outreach locations for each year of this strategic plan.**
- **To identify further locations, based on existing and future needs.**
- **Provide appropriate support and structures to develop and maintain a continuous professional, high quality therapy service at all locations.**
- **Connect with and develop strong partnerships with Statutory and Voluntary organizations operational in each location**
- **Ensure appropriate time frames and targets are set for the implementation of each outreach service.**

3. DEEPEN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TUSLA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Our aim is to ensure that CARI maintains its independence and is integrated into the national and regional services for child sexual abuse. We want to ensure that CARI is more integrated with statutory services therefore creating the best possible environment for children, adolescents and families to heal.

We will also increase networking and collaboration with other leading organizations in the community and voluntary sector.

IN SO DOING, CARI EXPECTS TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS MORE FUNDS, MORE QUICKLY AND SUSTAINABLY TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ITS WAITING LIST BY 2025.

Key operational actions:

- **Develop our relationship further with our key stakeholders in partner agencies**
- **Improve networking and collaboration with other organizations in the voluntary and statutory sector.**
- **As resources allow, play a role in multi-agency working groups.**
- **Collaborate with other organizations to share knowledge.**
- **Working with TUSLA and other statutory and voluntary agencies both nationally and locally to aid the reduction of CARI waiting list.**



CONCLUSION

Historically, CARI has always had a waiting list for its services. The waiting list has increased significantly in recent years. The impact and effects on children, adolescents and their families not receiving therapy in an appropriate time frame leads to problems within the home, the educational and the health systems. There are children and adolescents currently on the waiting list exhibiting signs of suicidal ideation, self-harm, or are at risk of harming others. These concerns impact on every area of the child's life. The financial long-term saving to the State for early intervention is but one advantage, the human long-term cost is another.

If left untreated in childhood, there is a substantial financial and emotional cost in adulthood. It can impact on health care costs, short term and long term, productivity loss, criminal justice system costs, mental health care services, addiction services to name but a few. The costs to the Exchequer can be sizeable. Therefore, it is imperative that the above objectives are implemented and for children's' and families' needs to be met. Children, adolescents and families who receive therapy for a traumatic event in their life, learn how to process their trauma and progress to a healthy fulfilling life.