



Annual Report 2012



Working for women and children experiencing domestic violence

THANK YOU...

Sonas works to provide refuge, support and housing for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Our work is made possible through funding support by:

- The HSE
- The Dublin Region Homeless Executive/ the Department of Environment
- Dublin City Council
- Fingal County Council
- South Dublin County Council
- Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
- Wicklow County Council
- Cosc (contribution to the Killing Me Softly verbal abuse campaign)

Sonas is grateful for the on-going support, partnership and collaboration of individuals and organisations working in the areas of domestic violence and homelessness both statutory and non-statutory.

A particular thank you to the Irish Council for Social Housing which was instrumental in helping Sonas move forward on our key 2012 development – a new supported housing development in Wicklow – which in turn was made possible by the Department of Environment and Wicklow County Council.

As ever a massive thank you to our services' teams, both women's support and children's support, who every day help women and children rebuild their lives and the administrative support team that provides the framework to make this happen.

Sonas is guided in its work by a voluntary board, headed by Chairperson Anne McKeon, whose on-going commitment continues to inspire. A special thanks to former chairperson Rachel Mullen who stepped in as interim CEO in 2012 and oversaw significant developments for the organisation.

Above all thank you to the women and children who come to Sonas for support with rebuilding their lives, we are humbled by your courage and strength.

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FOREWORD

FIONA RYAN CEO SONAS



Sonas provides refuge, support and housing to women and children experiencing domestic violence across the greater Dublin area and more recently in Wicklow.

In 2012, Sonas supported over 620 women and children who came to us for help.

Helping to make this change happen is core to who we are and what we do. Change, however, can and does take time. Victims of domestic violence may share similar experiences but in Sonas we never lose sight of the fact that each woman, each child, each family is individual with different circumstances and needs.

Sonas has developed its services over the past 20 years to reflect this learned reality. Whether we are opening a refuge door to a woman and her children in the silence of the night; meeting a woman to discuss how she can stay safe; or playing beside a child while they re-discover, or discover for the first time, what it is like to have fun and laugh.

The purpose of this review is to provide an insight into Sonas's work, the challenges and successes we faced in 2012 but above all this, Sonas annual review is about the 312 children who engaged with our services: victims in their own right; they are the silent witnesses to domestic violence.

We are grateful to the children for sharing their experiences whether in stories or pictures. To their mothers who demonstrated great courage by consenting for their children's stories to be told as well as relating their own experiences of parenting in the midst of domestic violence.

Some will find these women and children's stories shocking and disturbing but then so is domestic violence. What we have learned over 20 years providing refuge and support services is never to give up: hope and change walk hand in hand.

Domestic violence is a child welfare and protection issue; hearing the voice of the child has to be more than just words; children's experiences have to be

acknowledged and their needs and the needs of their families met; it means resourcing accessible services including affordable housing which is one of the biggest barriers facing families attempting to move on from their experiences of domestic violence.

No one organisation can make the difference for women and children experiencing domestic violence, it requires recognition of the extent and depth of the problem and a whole system response at every level. In a time of unprecedented change to statutory services, there is an opportunity to make that difference and deliver that change.

For our part we are grateful to our funders for their continuing support, to the board and staff that continue to work tirelessly to make a difference; to individuals and organisations in the domestic violence and homelessness areas, both statutory and non-statutory, for their partnership and co-operation but above all to the women and children whom we are privileged to support as they move on from their experiences of domestic violence.

¹ This figure does not include the number of women who made phone contact looking for information and/or signposted to other services



SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES 2012

SUCCESSES 2012

- We supported over 620 women and children across the greater Dublin area via refuge, outreach services including risk and safety planning, court accompaniment, supported housing, visiting support and crisis intervention
- We began working in conjunction with Wicklow County Council on Sonas Wicklow in Autumn 2012 – a supported housing complex which has eight family homes; a playroom and a playground for children. A much needed service for victims of domestic violence in the county
- We initiated the Visiting Support and Crisis Intervention Service in Winter 2012 – a new outreach service designed to work with women experiencing domestic violence who are in homeless services or at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence
- We engaged in domestic violence prevention work with the roll-out across a number of Dublin locations of the Freedom Programme, an evaluated UK originating programme developed by a former probation officer, with the goal of equipping victims of domestic violence with the understanding of how domestic violence works in order to avoid it in the future
- We commissioned research demonstrating the need for a refuge for victims of domestic violence in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council area
- We rolled out the Killing Me Softly campaign which focussed on the role of verbal abuse in domestic violence

CHALLENGES 2012

- Ongoing statutory funding cuts impacted not only on Sonas but on the additional external services women and children need; this is similar to the general population but among women and children experiencing domestic violence the need may be more acute as they may be facing an additional range of challenges
- Severe shortage of housing and other suitable affordable accommodation posed a significant problem for women and children leaving refuge. Women who contacted us via outreach stated that the lack of affordable suitable accommodation was a factor in their decision to remain in their current living arrangements. This issue was a particularly strong factor for home-owners
- Ongoing high demand for Sonas services, particularly refuge and housing, with demand exceeding capacity. Sonas provided refuge to 117 women and 186 children in 2012 – an additional 500 women sought refuge



SONAS 2012 CLIENT STATISTICS:

WHO DID WE WORK WITH AND WHAT WERE THEIR NEEDS?

Every year Sonas compiles client statistics in order to better meet the needs of the women and children whom we work with via refuge, support and housing and in the process develop more effective services.

Our goal is to provide better services for the women and children we work with in our refuge in Blanchardstown, supported housing in Killester, Ringsend, Clondalkin, Tallaght, Ranelagh, Stepside, Northern Cross and Wicklow, outreach in the Fingal catchment area or Visiting Support and Crisis Intervention across the greater Dublin area.

OVERALL...

- 308 individual women and 312 children engaged overall with Sonas's services via refuge, support including outreach and housing

AGE OF WOMEN

- Generally aged between 20 and 40 and likely to be a mother to young children
- Of the 308 women... the age range spanned from 18 to 79
- 22 women, however, were under the age of 20, demonstrating that domestic violence can and does begin early in a girl/woman's life
- 1 in 6 women were over the age of 45 (demonstrating that for a significant proportion of women, domestic violence is a life-long experience) but the figures decrease significantly after 55

WHERE WERE THEY FROM

- Irish, 53%
- Non-European, primarily African, 22%
- Irish Traveller, 15%
- European, non-national, mainly Eastern European, 10%

WHAT WERE THEIR NEEDS

In terms of specific supports; the following were the main categories of support Sonas was asked to provide: a safe place; risk and safety planning; parenting support and housing/accommodation.

- Domestic violence including personal safety and security concerns were issues (*safety and security particularly high in clients engaging through outreach and in refuge*)
- Parenting (including support with wider family relationships)
- Finances and social welfare
- Legal issues including court accompaniment; custody and access etc
- Moving on to independent living/housing
- Life skills
- Employment/education
- Residency issues (non-Irish clients)
- Substance misuse
- Mental health issues

CHILDREN IN SONAS SERVICES: 2012

Children in Sonas services have always been a vital part of the work we do. We have a dedicated children's support team, that works alongside our women's support team. We are committed to the women and children in our services; their welfare and protection in our services is our paramount priority.

In 2012, Sonas services engaged with 312 children largely through our refuge and supported housing services. What surprised us was just how young the children were in our services – 2 out of 3 were under the age of 10 with the under 5's being the biggest group of all.

Interacting with children and young people from new-borns to teenagers can be challenging for a service but add the trauma of domestic violence and the challenge for services is exponential. Key to this work is respect, patience and really hearing the voice of the child: in other words, listening to what children have to say.

Many of the 312 children who engaged with our services in 2012 were either silent witnesses of abuse or direct recipients of abuse by the perpetrator: the toddler who was in the same room when her father raped her mother or the 10-year-old boy who tried to protect his mother while she was being beaten by her partner; the child in turn beaten for trying to help her.

Our children's support workers work with mothers to rebuild parenting skills and trust. Perpetrators, in their attempts to undermine and control, will often seek to undermine a victim's parenting skills until she too believes she is totally inadequate. They will abuse the mother in front of the child either not caring what the child is witnessing or deliberately as a means of further abusing the mother. In turn, they abuse children as a further mechanism for control over the children themselves or the mothers.

Children are left confused, traumatised, angry and afraid by their experiences. They may resent their mother for leaving or staying or failing, in the child's eyes, to protect them from abuse. Or they may have an inappropriate level of anxiety for their mother's safety and see it as their responsibility

to keep her safe. There is no one response but there is a spectrum of responses which Sonas has experience of working with.

In turn, mothers in our services can believe they are inadequate parents as a result of the domestic abuse, that the abuse was their fault and that they are letting their children down by having stayed/ left. Some clients minimise the impact of domestic abuse on their children or deny there was any impact, both coping strategies.

Sonas women's support and children's support teams implement a mixture of approaches in family situations: on-going one-to-one support and group work, constructive challenging, and advocacy with external services to ensure women and children who have experienced domestic violence get the help and support they need.

The good news is, even in the midst of this hurt and trauma, children regain their childhoods, women regain their confidence as parents and families build resilience to move on psychologically and emotionally from their experiences of domestic violence.

One of the biggest challenges for Sonas clients, whether single or with their families, is securing a place to live due to the current shortage of housing and appropriate accommodation. The current situation is a cause of grave concern.



CHILDREN IN SONAS SERVICES: AGES AND NEEDS

Domestic violence, even when the child is not the direct victim of abuse or violence, is the emotional abuse of children. Many of the children who engaged with Sonas's services were themselves the direct victims of abuse or neglect by the perpetrator.

- the biggest group in 2012 were the under 5's (133)
- the second biggest group were the 6 to 10-year-olds (101)
- one in 4 children were between the ages of 11 and 15 (70)
- 8 were 16 and over
- Attachment/bonding even with non-abusive parent
- Anger/withdrawal
- Behavioural issues/acting out
- Establishing routines
- Establishing healthy boundaries

While some children in Sonas services have additional needs and many face the additional challenge of poverty; they can have an additional set of specific needs based around domestic violence including:

- Fear/anxiety and additional mental health issues
- Hyper vigilance; analysing environment for threats even at a very young age
- Delayed or restricted development, for example, not allowed to speak or make noise
- Trust/over-concern for mother



A 7-year-old boy in one of our services invited to paint a picture of his family explained this was "me, my sister and all the blood". He had witnessed his mother being stabbed by her partner.

2 out of 3 children engaging with Sonas services in 2012 were under the age of 10



"I WISH I WAS A SUPER HERO..."

"My name is Liam and I am 10. Before moving to Sonas, I lived with my Mam and my brother. My Mam's boyfriend was really mean to all of us. He locked me in rooms and pushed me down the stairs. He used to call my Mam bad names and hurt her. I remember sounds of crying, screaming and things breaking. I used to wish I was a super hero and have magic powers so I could make him disappear. I hit him once to make him stop choking my Mam. I was scared but I felt I had to protect her.

Since we came to Sonas, I don't have to protect her any more. I see people who talk to me about what happened and how I feel. My Mam is getting the help she needs and she is getting much happier and we are all getting on better. I am in a new school, have loads of new friends, playing sports and my coach says he thinks I am brilliant and have loads of talent."

10-year-old Liam's Story



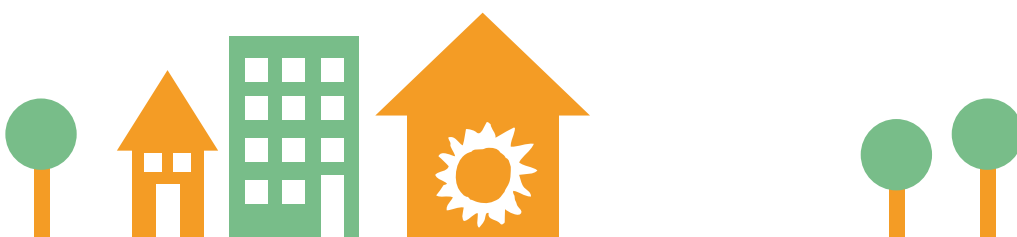


“When me and my two kids moved to Sonas two years ago I was completely lost and very lonely. Jack was going through his terrible twos and I didn’t know what to do. I was so worried about the effect on Jack after all the abuse and violence he had seen living in the house with his dad.

“Claire was such a great help. She found me parenting courses, she got in touch with the specialist to get Jack’s assessment. Sometimes when everything is getting on top of you, you can be snappy and not nice at all but she will have patience and understanding as well. When you are trying to come out to another side of the river that’s exactly what you need. Thanks to Claire, Liam is getting his play therapy. He has got his hearing test sorted too.

“The kids are attending the best school and playschool in the area. When they bring home a birthday card or Christmas card that they have made I just start crying. Thank you Claire, for building my confidence back up as a mother and for all your hard work.”

Carol’s Story



“The kids are always really interested in you and the older ones want to know if you have a boyfriend and if he is nice to you. One little boy asked me did he have to get married when he grew up and I said not if he didn’t want to. He said that was OK then. When I asked why, he said because he didn’t want to grow up and do mean things. I had to explain that getting married didn’t make you mean and there were lots of nice daddies and husbands.

Domestic violence is tough on kids and it is really annoying when someone says “oh he didn’t hurt the kids” as if it is OK to hurt their mother and either not care that the kids are watching and hearing or making them watch and hear.

The reality is that the children are direct targets of the abuse too – we have had kids that were punched as babies because their mothers were holding them at the time, kids that were beaten up because their father or mother’s partner was in a bad mood, felt they deserved it, or the child was trying to protect their mother or just because he could. We are talking about a grown man beating up a little boy or girl.

One of the things I have noticed with a lot of children who have experienced domestic violence is how locked away they can seem; as if they are holding back expressing themselves verbally, physically...

It is amazing the changes that can happen just by getting them away from the violence. Small changes in most children’s behaviour can usually be seen almost instantly even without any specific intervention, you can see withdrawn children gain the confidence to speak out, and fearful, anxious children begin to relax more, their reaction is almost physical, like they are letting go.

“To me, these relatively quick changes show just how affected children are by domestic violence. The first and biggest step is making sure children and their mothers aren’t exposed to ongoing violence and that they are safe.”

SONAS SERVICES

Sonas works across the greater Dublin area and more recently Wicklow. The range and extent of services we provide makes Sonas one of the leading service providers to women experiencing domestic violence.

Sonas services have been honed through evidence based best practice over the last 21 years. We provide:

- **Crisis Refuge** (based in Blanchardstown)
- **Supported housing** (permanent and 2-5 year leases) via 103 housing units
- **Outreach Support Service** – a support service for women experiencing domestic violence where women can seek help directly from Sonas
 - **Short Term Crisis Intervention and Visiting Support Service** – a support service for women experiencing domestic violence where the woman is in danger of being made homeless or a woman is already in homeless services (the woman is referred to the service by a local authority or other agency)
- **Prevention work** including the Freedom Programme

We have developed services so that a client's engagement is defined by her particular situation, the context of the presenting need and timing rather than a traditional linear progression. Inherent in this model of service delivery is a dynamic interaction between service and client, a journey out of domestic violence with the ultimate goal of clients moving on from their experiences.

Core principles to Sonas's work are:

- working from an empowerment model of service delivery ie we work *with* clients to find the best ways to support them to move forward from domestic violence
- rights-based in relation to both women and children; children's welfare and protection is the paramount consideration
- inter-agency co-operation with statutory and non-statutory services to promote best outcomes for clients and children

Located within the quantum of these Sonas services are the following:

- Risk and Safety assessment, planning and management
- Legal-related support including court accompaniment: protection orders, safety orders, barring orders, maintenance, divorce/separation etc
- Parenting and family support in the context of domestic violence and potentially additional needs such as substance misuse or mental health
- Housing and accommodation-related support
- Direct work with children through Sonas's children's support team which operates across refuge and supported housing
- Advocacy with statutory providers re: accessing services and benefits for clients and their children ie crèches and schools; residency status etc



SONAS RECOMMENDATIONS:

WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE...

1. Systemic review and reform of current Domestic Violence Legislation and court structure and proceedings

The review should include operation of protection, safety and barring orders; and whether domestic violence is given due regard in access judgements.

2. Any proposed legislative or legal changes around domestic violence should have due regard to existing legislation or pending legislation which establishes the best interests of the child as of paramount importance and takes the views of the child into account in all matters affecting them

This recommendation is particularly relevant in the context of the development of the legislative and policy framework for the new Child and Family Agency under the auspices of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

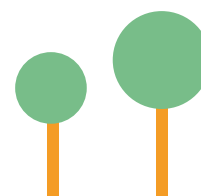
3. Access to affordable housing/appropriate accommodation

Domestic violence is a leading cause of women, and if they are mothers, their children becoming homeless or at risk of homelessness. Establishing a home, a place of safety, is among the crucial first steps a woman takes in her journey to regain control of her life.

Sonas provides refuge and support to women and children fleeing domestic violence – one of the key support services we offer is housing.

4. Policies, supports and services for individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness need to be reviewed to ensure they are adequately addressing domestic violence

- “Domestic Violence” should be named specifically as a reason for homelessness under Section 2 of the Housing Act 1988 to specifically include, among nine categories, a category of applicants who became homeless as a result of domestic violence.
- The application for social housing needs should be accepted by the Local Authority from a victim of domestic violence irrespective of residency of the applicant or local connections.
- The provision should be made that if the applicant has an accommodation, but it is unsafe for occupation due to fear/risk of domestic violence, such accommodation shall not be regarded an “alternative accommodation” for the purposes of housing needs assessment.
- That a duty should be placed on local authorities to provide a spectrum of safe accommodation options for victims of domestic violence including access to domestic violence refuges which specialise in safety and support.





SONAS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL

DIRECTORS' REPORT AND FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2012

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SONAS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide good quality safe accommodation for women and their children made homeless primarily due to gender-based violence and to provide a holistic support service to empower women and children to regain control over all aspects of their lives. Furthermore to influence housing and social policy and decision making as it relates to women and their children who are out of home due to gender-based violence.

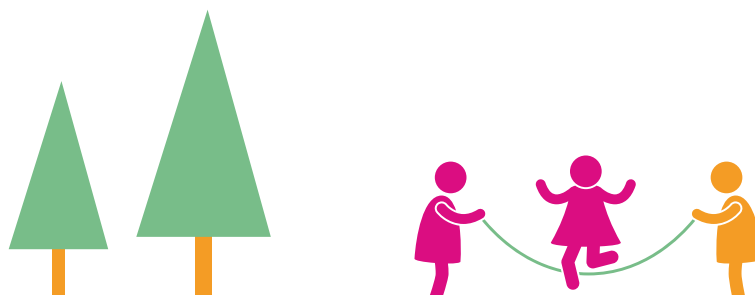
VISION

Sonas Housing Association believes in the need to support women who have left crisis accommodation and who have ongoing support needs through the provision of safe, secure supported accommodation for women and their children (if any), made homeless because of gender-based violence. Sonas believes in the need to support and empower the women to be able to move-on in their lives following the crisis precipitated by violence.

OBJECTIVES

Sonas Housing Association Limited has the following core objectives:

- To provide the supports necessary for women and their children to equip them with the skills to be able to live independent lives
- To provide good quality, safe accommodation for women and children out of home primarily because of gender-based violence
- To influence housing and social policy decision making as it relates to women and children out of home primarily because of violence. All policy work must have at its core experiences of tenants and their children
- Ensure that the structures, procedures and policies of the organisation are adequate to deliver the objects of the company and its strategic plan



DIRECTORS AND OTHER INFORMATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rachel Mullen
(Resigned 31 August 2012)

Theresa Sweeney
(Appointed 15 May 2012)

Anne McKeon

Yvonne McKenna
(Resigned 28 November 2012)

Louise Byrne
(Appointed 04 July 2012)

Deirdre Murphy

Sile McGuckian Fitzpatrick

SECRETARY AND REGISTERED OFFICE

Sile McGuckian Fitzpatrick
Sonas Housing Association Limited
14 Bachelors Walk
Dublin 1

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER
195618

AUDITORS

Duignan Carthy O'Neill
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors
84, Northumberland Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

PRINCIPAL BANKERS

Bank of Ireland
371 North Circular Road
Dublin 7

SOLICITORS

O'Donnell Sweeney Eversheds
Earlsfort Centre
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2

Aitken Clay
46 Harrington Street
Dublin 8

Hayes Solicitors
Lavery House
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 1



DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

The directors present their report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2012 for consideration at the annual general meeting.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

Sonas was established to provide refuge, support and housing to women and children experiencing domestic violence. The organisation was established as a voluntary housing association which has been granted approved status under section 6 of the 1992 Housing Act by the Minister of the Environment.

RESULTS FOR THE YEAR AND STATE OF AFFAIRS AT 31 DECEMBER 2012

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2012 and Balance Sheet as at that date are set out on pages 22-23. The surplus amounted to €46,777 compared to a deficit of €31,926 in the previous year. A nil charge to taxation arose and accordingly an amount of €46,777 was credited from reserves.

LEGAL STATUS

Sonas Housing Association Limited is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital incorporated under the Companies Act 1963. Membership of the company is unlimited. The liability of each member of the company is limited to €1. The company, as a charity is exempt from the reporting and disclosure requirements of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1986. Although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) as issued by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales in October 2005 the company has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these accounts. The main activities of the company are charitable.

PROPERTIES OPERATED BY SONAS

Sonas operated 103 properties in 2012, and the locations of the 103 properties are as follows:

Killester - 25 Homes	Clondalkin - 10 Homes
Ranelagh - 4 Homes	Tallaght - 10 Homes
Stepaside - 15 Homes	Belmayne - 15 Homes
Ringsend - 10 Homes	Ballymun - 6 Homes
Sonas Refuge - Viva House - 8 Self Contained Apartments	

SONAS HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

The Sonas Housing Partnership (SHP) is the name given to a management arrangement between Sonas Housing Association Limited and two other services, Meath Women's Aid Housing Association Limited, and the Mayo Women's Support Service. Established in 1998 its aim was to replicate the Sonas Model of support.

The two local partners are Meath Women's Aid Housing Association Limited and Mayo Women's Support Service. Funding is accessed by Sonas from the two relevant local Authorities and distributed according to the terms contained in a management agreement with each partner.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Within Sonas Housing Association there is a voluntary board of management established for good governance.

STAFFING

In 2012, Sonas employed an average of 39 full time staff, and a relief panel which varied between 8 and 10 part time staff. Of the 39 full time staff, 33 work directly with women and children in Sonas's refuge, long-term supported housing, visiting support and outreach and on housing and tenancy maintenance. Of the total payroll gross salaries cost of €1,300,183, 86% (€1,112,928) relates to support staff for women and children and 14% (€187,255) to administration support staff.

The senior team consists of a CEO, a Finance Manager, three Service Project Leaders (Refuge, Long Term Supported Housing and Visiting Support) and a senior Housing Officer.

FUNDING AND INCOME

Sonas is primarily statutory funded with the HSE and Dublin Regional Homeless Executive accounting for over 76% of total income. The HSE is Sonas's main statutory funder, with the DRHE being its second; they fund Sonas on almost 60%/40% split. There is some additional funding from other local authorities outside of Dublin.

Rents receivable make up 11% of total income, and amounted to €299,057 for the year.

Fundraising and donations represents 1% of total income, and amounted to €18,423 for the year.

All of the above funding received, with the exception of monies fundraised, is restricted funding.

The balance of grant and revenue funding is for revenue expenditure. These revenue funds are to cover the running of refuge, support and housing services.

Out of the €299,057 of rental income, the board agreed to ring-fence a minimum of 20% of rental income from its houses and apartments and 100% of its refuge rental income, into a building maintenance reserve with the balance going towards the day to day maintenance of properties and payment of the housing officers' salaries.

Additionally this year, the Board reviewed the adequacy of the building maintenance reserve fund, and decided to increase the provision by a further €128,389, to a value of €522,901, which represents 2.85% of the building cost in the balance sheet.

Specific projects undertaken in 2012 and financed by fundraising and donations income were:

	€
Equipment and supplies for garden and play area in Clondalkin	2,021
Transport costs for children's summer project activities	3,000
Various campaign advertising costs	1,818
Subscription to My Charity.ie	665
T-shirts and other supplies for fundraising activities	1,051
Total Fundraising costs	8,555

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sonas had a year of challenges and achievements in 2012. Sonas provided refuge, support and housing to over 350 women and over 350 children against an on-going backdrop of statutory funding cuts.

Work began on Sonas Wicklow in Autumn 2012 and marked the fruition of a partnership between Sonas and Wicklow County Council; the result has been the opening in April 2013 of Sonas Wicklow - which has seven family apartments; a playroom and a playground for children resident in Sonas Wicklow.

The key achievements for Sonas Housing in 2012 were:

Core Work - Refuge, Support and Housing

- Supporting over 350 women and 350 children in group across refuge, outreach and housing. This included intensive one-to-one work; signposting women to relevant services; court accompaniment; parenting assistance; play therapy

Innovative Service Provision

- Successful planning and launch of Sonas's Visiting Support Service - an innovative outreach programme delivered to women in their homes providing one-to-one specialist support
- Successful launch and roll-out of the Freedom Programme The Freedom Programme is a 12-week facilitated support group designed for women who have experienced domestic abuse. The programme aims to prevent violence against women through education and focuses on helping women understand the dynamics of domestic violence and abusive behaviour in intimate relationships

Development

- Building work began on Sonas Wicklow in Autumn 2012 and was scheduled for completion in April 2013

DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

ADVOCACY AND CHANGE

Sonas workers advocate every day for individual women and children with legal services, with health providers, with schools. We recognise that if the overall situation of domestic violence in Ireland is to improve we need to advocate for women and children at the "change" level: raising awareness of domestic violence; seeking the legislative changes that will benefit women and children; making the case for improved services.

In 2012, we implemented an advocacy programme:

We commissioned research which found a major need existed for the provision of refuge facilities in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, one of four administrative areas of Dublin. By year end 2012 that need was still not being met.

We continued with awareness work around domestic violence including raising awareness in the media of the issue and specific campaigns:

The Killing Me Softly campaign which highlighted the role of verbal abuse in domestic violence and was run across the greater Dublin region

FUNDRAISING

Sonas works to supplement our income through fundraising activities. We are currently developing a fundraising strategy for the organisation to allow us to take a whole organisation and more strategic approach to fundraising going forward. This is vital in the context of the worsening economic situation and in light of year on year reductions to core funding from our main funders.

OVERVIEW

We expect 2013 to build on the successes and achievements of 2012 while maintaining the core work that Sonas does which is to provide - refuge, support and housing to women and children experiencing domestic violence across the greater Dublin region. In 2013, we celebrate our 21st birthday.

PENSIONS

Sonas Housing Association operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of the majority of the employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from the company in independently administered funds. The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution payable by the company during the year.

INTERNAL CONTROLS

Sonas follows the financial reporting protocols of its statutory funders including quarterly reports; management accounts and audited accounts.

The company prepares quarterly management accounts which are reviewed by the Board and an independent audit is undertaken annually.

There is a formal organisational structure in place with clearly defined lines of responsibility, division of duties and delegation of authority and a dedicated Finance Manager.

Sonas has strict policies and procedures in place for the receipt, recording and control of donations.

RISK

Sonas Directors are aware of the statutory obligations in relation to providing a fair review of the company's development and performance. The directors are satisfied that the principal risk facing the company is the availability of continued funding from the Government. The directors have addressed this risk by competent spending of the funds received, ensuring tenancies are maintained as well as developing fundraising efforts.

DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE END OF THE YEAR

Following a complete refurbishment of the property acquired in 2012, Sonas opened its premises at Wicklow in April 2013.

DIRECTORS

In accordance with the Articles of Association four members of the Board of Management shall retire from office at the Annual General Meeting, but shall be eligible for re-election.



DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that year. In preparing these the directors are required to:

1. Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
2. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
3. Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and with Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts 1963 to 2012. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

ACCOUNTING RECORDS

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities under Section 202 of the Companies Act 1990 to keep proper books and records for the company. To this end, the directors allocate appropriate resources to secure compliance with the requirements of the Act.

The books and records are kept at 14 Bachelors Walk, Dublin 1.

AUDITORS

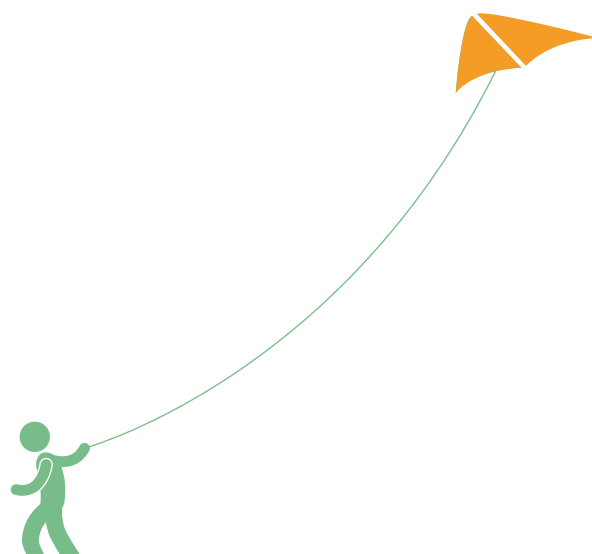
The auditors, Duignan Carthy O'Neill, have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 160(2) of the Companies Act, 1963.

On behalf of the Board

Anne McKeon
Director

Theresa Sweeney
Director

Date: 11 September 2013



INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

We have audited the financial statements on pages 10 to 19 of Sonas Housing Association Limited for the year ended 31 December 2012 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS

As described in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities the company's directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

This report is made solely to the company's members as a body in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters that we are required to state to them in the audit report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company or the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2012. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company and whether the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purpose of our audit, and whether the financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

We also report to you if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and directors' transactions is not disclosed and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

We read the directors' report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatement within it.

BASIS OF AUDIT OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

However with respect to the title to some of the properties currently utilised by Sonas Housing Association Limited the evidence available to us was limited and a full breakdown by property detailing full title and value from the solicitors was not obtained. As a result we were unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the title of properties by using other audit procedures.

In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.



QUALIFIED OPINION ARISING FROM LIMITATION OF SCOPE

Except for the financial effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves as to the title over all properties utilised by Sonas Housing Association Limited, in our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31 December 2012 and of its surplus for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2012

In respect solely of the limitation in our work relating to the title over properties, we have not obtained all the information and explanations that we considered necessary for the purposes of our audit and we were unable to be satisfied in this aspect alone. In our opinion proper books of account had been maintained. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.

Liam McQuaid
for and on behalf of

*84, Northumberland Road
Duignan Carthy O'Neill
Ballsbridge
Chartered Accountants
Dublin 4*

Registered Auditors
Date: 11 September 2013



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

Income and Expenditure

Incoming Resources	Notes	Restricted Funds 2012 €	Designated Funds 2012 €	Unrestricted Funds 2012 €	Total Funds 2012 €	Total Funds 2011 €
Corporation & Grant Funding	1.6	2,048,368	-	-	2,048,368	1,908,023
Rental Income		85,655	213,402	-	299,057	295,230
Donations & Fundraising		-	18,423	-	18,423	18,738
Amortisation of grant income		-	-	324,017	324,017	328,956
Total Incoming Resources		2,134,023	231,825	324,017	2,689,865	2,550,947
Resources Expended						
Crisis Intervention & Provision of Support Services		(1,859,135)	(16,822)	-	(1,875,957)	(2,002,142)
Depreciation		-	-	(397,040)	(397,040)	(374,262)
Legal, Professional & Administration		-	-	(177,120)	(177,120)	(158,310)
Total Resources Expended		(1,859,135)	(16,822)	(574,160)	(2,450,117)	(2,534,714)
Net Movement in Funds		274,888	215,003	(250,143)	239,748	16,233
Provision for building maintenance reserve		-	(213,402)	-	(213,402)	(60,077)
Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary activities before interest		274,888	1,601	(250,143)	26,346	(43,844)
Interest receivable and similar income	3	-	-	20,431	20,431	11,918
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		274,888	1,601	(229,712)	46,777	(31,926)
Surplus/(Deficit) retained for the year	12	274,888	1,601	(229,712)	46,777	(31,926)

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the above two financial years.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 September 2013 and signed on its behalf by:

Anne McKeon
Director

Theresa Sweeney
Director

BALANCE SHEET

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

	Notes	2012 €	2011 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	6	15,850,075	15,897,270
Current Assets			
Debtors	7	53,314	49,354
Cash at bank and in hand	8	1,308,162	1,103,212
		1,361,476	1,152,566
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	(228,895)	(296,988)
Net Current Assets		1,132,581	855,578
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		16,982,656	16,752,848
Restricted Government Grants	10	(16,105,057)	(16,124,829)
Net Assets		877,599	628,019
Capital and Reserves			
Building Maintenance Reserve	11	522,901	320,098
Accumulated Funds		354,698	307,921
Funds	12	877,599	628,019

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 September 2013 and signed on its behalf by:

Anne McKeon
Director

Theresa Sweeney
Director

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

	Notes	2012 €	2011 €
Reconciliation of operating Surplus/(Deficit) to net cash inflow from charitable activities			
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)		26,346	(43,844)
Depreciation		397,040	374,262
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors		(3,960)	62,584
Decrease in creditors		(68,093)	(266,781)
Government grant released		(324,017)	(328,956)
Provision for building maintenance reserve		213,402	60,077
Net cash inflow from charitable activities		240,718	177,440
Cash Flow Statement			
Net cash inflow from charitable activities		240,718	177,440
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	16	20,431	11,918
Capital expenditure		(349,846)	(36,585)
Capital Grants Received		304,245	6,050
Building Maintenance Reserve Expended		10,598	-
Increase in cash in the year		204,950	158,823
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds (Note 15)			
Increase in cash in the year		204,950	158,823
Net funds at 1 January 2012		1,103,212	944,389
Net funds at 31 December 2012		1,308,162	1,103,212

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1. ACCOUNTING CONVENTION

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2012, and the Charities SORP (Amended 2008). Accounting Standards generally accepted in Ireland in preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view are those published by Chartered Accountants Ireland and issued by the Accounting Standards Board.

1.2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

All tangible fixed assets are recorded at historic cost.

Depreciation is on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual value, of each asset systematically over its expected useful life, as follows:

Land & Buildings - 2% Straight Line

Office Equipment - 20% Straight Line

Fixtures, fittings & equipment - 20% Straight Line

The carrying values of tangible fixed assets are reviewed annually for impairment in periods if events or changes in circumstances indicate the carrying value may not be recoverable.

1.3. PENSIONS

Pension benefits for employees are met by payments to a defined contribution pension fund.

The regular cost of providing retirement pensions and related benefits is charged to the Income and Expenditure account over the employees' service lives on the basis of a constant percentage of earnings. The assets of the scheme are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

1.4. GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Grants are credited to deferred revenue. Grants towards capital expenditure are released to the profit and loss account over the expected useful life of the assets. Grants towards revenue expenditure are released to the Statement of Financial Activities as the related expenditure is incurred.

1.5. INCOME

Income represents the total of grants, donations and rental income related to the year.

Income is received in cash by way of donations, gifts, grants and fund-raising events. Cash donations, gifts, and grants are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as they are received. Cash collected from fund-raising events is included in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as it is credited in the bank.

Bank interest received is included in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as it is credited to the bank account. Rental income is accrued for the year to which it relates.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012 (CONTINUED)

Revenue based grant income	2012	2011
	€	€
Dublin City Council	718,101	342,358
HSE South West Ranelagh	12,272	12,980
HSE South West Ringsend	78,218	82,727
HSE South West Clondalkin	92,923	98,279
HSE South West Tallaght	45,046	47,418
HSE North Killester Grant	173,986	184,112
HSE North Killester Childcare	24,788	26,093
HSE VSS	60,000	-
HSE North West Blanchardstown (CCAS)	18,059	19,110
HSE North West Blanchardstown	729,909	662,604
Fingal County Council	9,001	178,340
South Dublin County Council	10,860	139,514
Mayo County Council	45,228	45,228
Meath County Council	2,173	2,173
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	-	56,013
Wicklow County Council	22,885	11,074
Other Grants	4,919	-
	<u>2,048,368</u>	<u>1,908,023</u>

Income received from Grant Funders	Received and released in 2012	Deferred from 2011	Deferred from 2013	Per Financial Statements 2012
	€	€	€	€
Dublin City Council	726,983	17,118	(26,000)	718,101
HSE Grants	1,202,752	75,449	(43,000)	1,235,201
Fingal County Council	9,001	-	-	9,001
South Dublin County Council	10,860	-	-	10,860
Mayo County Council	45,228	-	-	45,228
Meath County Council	2,173	-	-	2,173
Wicklow County Council	22,885	-	-	22,885
Other Grants	4,919	-	-	4,919
	<u>2,024,801</u>	<u>92,567</u>	<u>(69,000)</u>	<u>2,048,368</u>

EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is charged in the period to which it relates.

2. SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR

	2012	2011
	€	€
Operating Surplus is stated after charging:	397,040	274,262
Depreciation of tangible assets	8,154	8,154
and after crediting:		
Government grants amortised	<u>(324,017)</u>	<u>(328,956)</u>

3. INTEREST RECEIVABLE AND SIMILAR INCOME

	2012	2011
	€	€
Bank interest	<u>20,431</u>	<u>11,918</u>

4. EMPLOYEES NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

The average monthly numbers of employees (including the directors) during the year were:

	2012	2011
	Number	Number
All employees	<u>39</u>	<u>37</u>

Employment costs

	2012	2011
	€	€
Wages and salaries - support staff for women and children	1,112,928	1,078,846
Wages and salaries - administration support staff	187,255	328,474
Social welfare costs - support staff for women and children	116,210	116,384
Social welfare costs - administration support staff	19,830	26,766
Pension costs - support staff for women and children	14,629	12,785
Pension costs - administration support staff	5,008	6,220
	<u>1,455,860</u>	<u>1,569,475</u>

Directors salary for 2012 was €Nil (2011 : €Nil).

5. PENSION COSTS

The company operates one defined contribution scheme for eligible employees. Pension costs amounted to €19,637 (2011 - €19,005). The assets of the scheme are vested in independent trustees for the sole benefit of those employees.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012 (CONTINUED)

6. TANGIBLE ASSETS

	Land and Buildings €	Fixtures, fittings Equipment €	Office equipment €	Total €
Cost				
At 1 January 2012	17,997,146	133,211	121,809	18,252,166
Additions	320,671	17,291	11,884	349,846
At 31 December 2012	18,317,817	150,502	133,693	18,602,012
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2012	2,140,048	133,103	81,746	2,354,897
Charge for the year	361,585	995	34,460	397,040
At 31 December 2012	2,501,633	134,098	116,206	2,751,937
Net book values				
At 31 December 2012	15,816,184	16,404	17,487	15,850,075
At 31 December 2011	15,857,098	108	40,063	15,897,270

7. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2012 €	2011 €
Rent Receivable	119	119
Prepayments and accrued income	53,195	49,235
	53,314	49,354

8. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	2012 €	2011 €
Current Accounts	252,801	268,416
Deposit Account		
- Amount set aside to provide for a sinking fund	522,901	320,098
- Other deposits	530,520	512,892
Petty Cash	1,940	1,806
	1,308,162	1,103,212

The funds held in the current account are primarily restricted to the running of the service and the charity. All monies held in the deposit accounts are restricted funds to cover charity running costs and housing officer wages. The funds set aside for the sinking fund are designated funds.

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2012	2011
	€	€
Trade creditors	45,059	18,565
Pension	69	(30)
Other taxes and social security costs	38,151	39,597
Accruals & Deferred Income	117,401	239,673
Other Creditors	28,215	(817)
	<hr/> 228,895	<hr/> 296,988
Other taxes and social security costs include:		
PAYE & PRSI	<hr/> 16,895	<hr/> 39,597

10. GOVERNMENT GRANTS

	2012	2011
	€	€
At 1 January 2012	16,124,829	16,447,735
Increase in year	304,245	6,050
	<hr/> 16,429,074	<hr/> 16,453,785
Released in year	(324,017)	(328,956)
At 31 December 2012	<hr/> 16,105,057	<hr/> 16,124,829

The company owns properties in Killester, Clondalkin, Ballina, Navan, Ringsend, Ballymun, Blanchardstown, Stepside, Belmayne, Tallaght and Wicklow. These properties are subject to mortgages. The company has a contingent liability to repay the monies advanced if certain conditions set out in the various mortgage agreements are not complied with.

11. BUILDING MAINTENANCE RESERVE

The company has a building maintenance reserve. This reserve is to meet contingency building maintenance expenditure that may arise on housing stock. This reserve has a balance of €522,901 at 31 December 2012 (2011: €320,098)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012 (CONTINUED)

12. RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS

	2012 €	2011 €
Restricted Funds - Current Year	274,888	157,855
Designated Funds - Current Year	1,601	1,917
Unrestricted Funds - Current Year	(229,712)	(191,698)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	46,777	(31,926)
Transfer to Building Maintenance Reserve	202,803	320,098
	249,580	288,172
Opening Funds brought forward	628,019	339,847
	877,599	628,019

Closing Reserves allocated as follows:

	Opening Surplus/(Deficit) 01/01/12 €	2012 €	Closing Surplus/(Deficit) 31/12/12 €
Restricted Funds	259,869	274,888	534,757
Designated Funds	85,801	1,601	87,402
Unrestricted Funds	(359,967)	(229,712)	(589,679)
Un-allocated reserves prior to 1/1/07	322,218	-	322,218
Building Maintenance Reserve	320,098	202,803	522,901
	628,019	249,580	877,599

13. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

As at 31 December 2012, Sonas had contracted for the refurbishment of its property at Fitzwilliam Road, Wicklow. The contract price was €819,659 inclusive of vat and was funded by a grant from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

14. ULTIMATE PARENT UNDERTAKING

The company is controlled by its Members and the Board of Directors.

15. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	Opening balance €	Cash flows €	Closing balance €
Cash at bank and in hand	1,103,212	204,950	1,308,162
Net funds	<u>1,103,212</u>	<u>204,950</u>	<u>1,308,162</u>

16. GROSS CASH FLOWS

	2012 €	2011 €
Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	<u>20,431</u>	<u>11,918</u>

17. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 September 2013 and signed on its behalf by:

Anne McKeon
Director

Theresa Sweeney
Director

We
supported
over 620
women and children

Our children's support
workers work with mothers to
rebuild parenting skills and trust

Sonas provides refuge and support to women
and children fleeing domestic violence

Children regain their childhoods

2 out of 3 children engaging with Sonas
services in 2012 were under the age of 10

**SONAS REFUGE
SUPPORT, HOUSING**

Key to this work is respect, patience
and really hearing the voice of the child

Support to rebuild their lives

**WORKING FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN
EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Sonas, Main Office 14, Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 1 **Tel:01 872 0068**

Sonas Viva, Crisis Refuge **Tel:01 866 2015**

Email: info@sonashousing.ie www.sonashousing.ie