



**An Evaluation of the WRENS Project  
Implemented by KDPPG**

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WRENS is a programme funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform through the Probation Service. The purpose of the programme is to offer support to women in the Killinarden and surrounding areas when their children, spouses/partners are subjected to criminal justice procedures. The rationale for the programme is based on the recognition of the key role of these women in diverting their children and partners from offending behaviour thus helping to promote social inclusion. Since 2002 programme has concentrated on increasing the confidence and awareness of the women through individual and group programmes. In addition, workshops on topics such as drugs, coping with stress, suicide prevention and many other important topics and skills have been delivered.

Because the WRENS programme is delivered by the staff of KDPPG it has a unique ethos and context. KDPPG has grown from a group of neighbourhood women activists concerned about drugs and crime in their community. An essential element in the development of the organisation has been the recruitment of local personnel and resources. Today KDPPG is recognised as having developed a valuable template for local communities to use in their efforts to combat the use of drugs in neighbourhoods. In this capacity KDPPG/WRENS have contributed to national policy-making fora and supported other local developments.

An essential element in the on-going development of community groups such as WRENS has to be periodic evaluation and assessment of the efficiency and focus of the programme. Local neighbourhoods are dynamic and constantly changing. Killinarden is no different. Local drug and crime issues are part of that changing dynamic, and local organisations such as WRENS must be part of that changing dynamic.

Alice Murray, manager, and the staff of KDPPG/WRENS were fully supportive of this evaluation. The organisation was fortunate in having cooperation of all those working and associated with it during the evaluation process. Thanks are due to all those involved.

Carmel Duggan conducted this evaluation in a professional and sensitive manner. Her evaluation, insights and recommendations particularly in regard to policy and structures will be of benefits to WRENS over the coming years. Most important of all, the implementation of the conclusions of the evaluation will ensure that an enhanced service is available to the women of Killinarden and surrounding areas.

Brian Horgan  
Chairperson,  
KDPPG,  
August 2007.

The proposal to commission an evaluation of the WRENS programme came from the staff of KDPPG. Nevertheless it was with an understandable sense of foreboding and apprehension that the Staff of KDPPG entered in the process of the evaluation of the WRENS project. We were conscious that it was necessary and could only enhance our work and be of benefit to our clients. As expected, all members of staff, and all those associated with WRENS, made themselves available and cooperated fully in a wholehearted manner with the evaluation.

During the process of the evaluation Carmel Duggan became a presence in our working life. That could have been a threatening and intrusive presence. However Carmel's professionalism allied with a profound sensitivity ensured that this did not happen. Throughout her searching thoroughness was not compromised. Her resulting insights are valued and accepted.

Now the task for us as staff of KDPPG is to embrace the challenges proposed by this report. The structural and practice recommendations will be implemented. This we intend to do with a determination and conviction born of a belief that our clients deserve the best possible service.

Alice Murray,

Manager,

KDPPG.

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## **Section 1: Overview of the Evaluation**

### **Introduction**

The Killinarden Drugs Primary Prevention Group (KDPPG) was established in 1993 to address issues of drug misuse and associated anti-social behaviour in Killinarden. The initiative was spearheaded by a number of home school liaison teachers working in the area together with some parents who were involved in second chance education. From the outset KDPPG sought to work organically and strategically: empowering local parents to better understand the problem of drug misuse and facilitating them to provide awareness programmes in local schools. In the years since its establishment, KDPPG has developed and extended its services. At this point preventative and educational work in local schools continues to be a priority. But it is now complimented by more intensive and targeted work with young people and adults, including group work and one to one key working.

Initially, KDPPG operated on an entirely voluntary basis. In 1997, the Tallaght Local Drugs Task Force provided core funding and until 2003, all areas of KDPPG's work were funded from this source. In 2002, with funding from the Probation and Welfare Service, the WRENS (Women Reviewing Equality Networks) project was implemented, initially for a period of three years from 2003 to 2005. Since 2005, ongoing funding has been received from the Probation and Welfare Service.

In 2003 the preventative work undertaken by the KDPPG was evaluated (Rourke 2003). The WRENS project was half way through its pilot phase at that stage and was only briefly referred to in the evaluation. At this point, the WRENS project has been in operation for five years and it is the work undertaken under WRENS that is the subject of this evaluation. The initial brief of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the work with families. Subsequently, and within the resources available, other areas of work were included. Consequently, the evaluation which was undertaken during May and June 2007, covers the following three main work areas:

- Young People's Programme
- Adult Outreach and Support Programme
- Work with clients of the Probation and Welfare Service

Additionally, as the evaluation progressed, it became clear that there were organisational issues that needed to be addressed. Reference to these is made to these in the final section.

## **Methodology**

The methodology for the evaluation involved a number of components, principally documentary analysis and interviews. The interviews involved staff and board members of KDPPG, family members using the services of KDPPG and key personnel in agencies with which KDPPG works closely. The specific elements of the methodology are noted below.

### **1. Review of reports and statistics relating to the project.**

KDPPG maintains records of its activities under its two main funding sources. These records and related statistics were analysed to provide information on the overall scale and impact of the WRENS project<sup>1</sup>.

### **2. Review of other documents relating to the project.**

Other documentation reviewed included Annual Reports since 2002, the Evaluation of the KDPPG (2003) and the DPPG Handbook

### **3. Interviews with staff members and board members**

In-depth interviews were undertaken with the Chairman of KDPPG Board, the organisations co-founder and Manager, and with a Project Worker.

### **4. Interviews with others with significant involvement with KDPPG**

The principle and the Co-ordinator of the SPHE Programme in Killinarden Community School, which works in partnership with KDPPG were interviewed as were five personnel involved in the Probation and Welfare Service (including the Chairman of KDPPG's board), which funds the WRENS project.

### **5. Interviews with families using the services of KDPPG.**

A total of nine people from eight families were interviewed. These interviews focused on the reasons for and experiences of using the services of KDPPG and what they felt the outcomes of this to be.

## **Main Findings of the Evaluation**

KDPPG is a small organisation doing excellent work in an area of high need. It has been highly effective in delivering interventions based on the principles of community development and organically embedded within the community. These interventions benefit individuals, families and the wider community as well as adding value the work of local schools and statutory agencies.

The organisation, however, is weak on strategic planning, targeting and reporting. As a result it is now experiencing some stresses on its resources and is facing uncertainty in relation to ongoing funding. These issues are more fully discussed in the final section of this report which also contains recommendations.

## **Section 2: The Context and Work of KDPPG.**

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<sup>1</sup> Some limitations to the use of these statistics are noted later.

## **The Local Context**

The establishment of KDPPG in 1993 occurred in the context of a very high level of need in the Killinarden area and was a direct attempt to respond to one aspect of that need: the problem of drug misuse. At that time, the drug problem was by no means unique to Killinarden. The 1980s had seen a heroin epidemic in Dublin's inner city and by the end of the decade the problem had reached the outlying suburbs and particularly those suburbs which experienced high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Killinarden, along with the rest of West Tallaght, was one such area. Tallaght had been developed as a major centre of population during the 1970s and 1980s and its growth had coincided with a period of significant economic decline, recession and unemployment in the country generally. The result was a high level of socio-economic disadvantage in areas such as Killinarden. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, unemployment and long-term unemployment were at very high levels, early school leaving and educational disadvantage were serious problems and social exclusion was widespread. In particular, drug use and related crime and anti-social behaviour were becoming widespread, threatening to overwhelm the communities and resulting in very low morale at community level.

## **The Establishment of KDPPG**

Against this back drop, a number of Home School Liaison Teachers and some local parents who were involved in adult education in Killinarden Community School came together to see what, if anything, they could do to respond to this situation within Killinarden. The result was the establishment of the KDPPG in September 1993, with the following aims:

- To network with relevant local agencies
- To provide appropriate information referrals
- To address offending / anti-social behaviour
- To provide high quality drug / alcohol education / awareness
- To create self-belief and hope for a better tomorrow
- To support and encourage community members affected by self harming or suicide
- To encourage change by working together to change the things we can change

From the beginning the KDPPG believed that it is essential that drugs education and prevention programmes are based on and respond to the needs and circumstances of the local community. As it is local people who know these needs and circumstances best, it follows that they have a central role to play in shaping drugs education and prevention programmes. *The more training and education local people gain the more likely they will in turn become leaders and support and encourage other local people into leadership roles* (KDPPG Handbook). This approach is reflected in the KDPPG Guiding Principles (see Box 1) and in its initial and ongoing strategy to address the needs of families and individuals in Killinarden. The new organisation highlighted two areas of particular need: the urgent need for young people and their families to be more aware and informed about the causes and consequences of drug misuse on the one hand, and the fact that there were no courses within the formal education curriculum which addressed issues of drugs, drug misuse and drug addiction on the other.

### **Box 1: KDPPG Guiding Principles**

The KDPPG believes that local residents living in the Killinarden have an important significant role to play in drugs education and drugs prevention work within the local area.

The KDPPG is committed to the process of empowering and enabling local people through the provision of education, training, employment and facilitation opportunities.

The KDPPG recognises the need for a multi-dimensional and integrated approach towards the drugs issues and anti social behaviour, an approach which requires the participation of a number of different organisations and agencies working together in pursuit of common goals.

The KDPPG believes that there is a clear link between high self-esteem and healthy lifestyles (especially in relation to alcohol and drugs and anti social behaviour) and will continue to give equally priority to self esteem activities and to drugs awareness / education activities.

The DKPPG strives to maintain the highest standards of care and professionalism in the ways in which it manages its affairs and in the service / supports it provides to local people living in Killinarden.

The KDPPG is aware of the need to constantly review its main priorities and work focuses as new challenges emerge within the drugs and offending behaviour area and as other agencies and organisations develop new responses to the drugs problem.

The KDPPG recognises the importance and the benefits of providing support to families within Killinarden who have been affected by the drugs problem and anti-social behaviour.



The KDPPG believes that it has a significant contribution to make in tackling the drugs issues in Killinarden on account of the experiences, the skills and the knowledge, which have been accumulated by the group members since its formation in 1993.

The initial approach developed by KDPPG was to train parents in the skills necessary to deliver drugs awareness and drug education programmes within a number of local schools in Killinarden. In this way, parents acquired greater awareness of drugs and drug mis-use. They could then use these skills to the benefit of their own families, and through the schools programme, they were able to educate young people in drugs awareness and facilitate them to make more constructive personal choices.

This strategy provided the initial focus for the work of the organisation and continues today to be a major dimension of KDPPG's strategy. However, new employment opportunities and changes in the regulatory framework are putting pressure on this strategy. While the preventative work in schools is not the focus of this evaluation, the strain on the model of working which KDPPG has used in the past is relevant to formulating recommendations within the context of the WRENS project.

### **Key Milestones**

From 1993 to 1997 KDPPG operated on a voluntary basis, working from a small office above a shop in the Knockmore area of Killinarden. During this period and despite very limited financial resources, the organisation succeeded in delivering on its original objectives and in expanding its services. In 1997, the Tallaght Drugs Task Force was established. This provided a broader local infrastructure for the work of the KDPPG and, importantly, also provided funding. Since 1998, KDPPG has received funding for its work in local schools from the Tallaght Drugs Task Force and is also represented on the board of the Task Force. Box 2 provides an overview of the development of the organisation since its inception (summarised from Rourke, 2003).

In 2003, ten years after its establishment, the KDPPG was evaluated and a report produced (Rourke, 2003). The evaluation noted that in the ten years since its establishment, the organisation had:

- Developed clarity about its functions and roles in relation to drugs education and drugs prevention
- Had moved from being a loose network of voluntary workers to a legally incorporated organisation employing a team of paid workers
- Become recognised as an important and significant organisation within the drugs preventions infrastructure of Tallaght.
- Increased its funding base and secured premises and equipment.

- Become lined into many networks and forums at local, regional, national and international levels.

### **Box 2: Overview of Evolution of KDPPG**

- In 1993, the KDPPG was affiliated to CAD (Community Awareness of Drugs). Since then, all KDPPG's facilitators have participated in drugs awareness training programmes organised by CAD and in other courses.
- Information stands were made available at parent /teacher meetings in local schools and a drug awareness poster competition in local primary schools was organised
- The KDPPG linked into the Development and Social Studies Programme in Killinarden Community School, and a series of drug awareness programmes were delivered in local schools. These include How to Say No Without Losing Face, a Six Weeks Drugs Awareness Training Course, follow up courses and a Self Esteem Programme, piloted in a local primary school in 1994
- A drop in centre for local people on drug related issues was opened.
- KDPPG began to work with individual families who had concerns about family members using drugs.
- In its initial years, KDPPG developed credibility with local organisations such as the Health Promotion School Network, Tallaght Youth Services and an Garda Síochána.
- Since 1998, the organisation has expanded its activities, recruited paid staff, taken on new projects and strengthened its organisational capacity.
- KDPPG has become a legal entity, established a board of directors and relocated to better premises.
- It has continued to deliver and expand its programme of drug awareness in local schools
- Programmes developed by KDPPG have been extended to other areas and KDPPG has acted as a resource for other groups in setting up drug awareness projects and initiatives
- KDPPG continues to provide support and guidance to local people, including parents and young people, who have sought advice and support and drugs related issues.

The findings of that evaluation validated the work and progress of the KDPPG over its first ten years and also argued that the organisation could continue to play a significant and meaningful role within Killinarden. It also made a number of recommendations in relation to the overall organisation and in relation to specific work areas. In relation to work with young people, the evaluation recommended that KDPPG should aim to significantly increase its work with young people outside of the formal education system, that it should consider setting up its own after school club and that it should continue to participate in the organisation of summer programmes. In relation to work with families and parents, the evaluation recommended that the KDPPG should continue to provide advice, guidance and support to families and should continue to organise education and training programmes for local parents.

Up until 2003, the ongoing and evolving work with young people and families was funded from the core funding of the KDPPG. This meant that the resources of the organisation were stretched very thinly. In 2003, KDPPG make a successful application to the Probation and Welfare Services to undertake a project entitled Women Reviewing Equality Networking Standards (WRENS). Success in drawing down this funding enabled the organisations work with women and with young people to be place on a more secure footing. Since then, funding has been received on an annual basis from the Probation and Welfare Services, although the amount, 80,000 euro, has remained at the same level since 2003. At this point, most of the work of the KDPPG apart from the preventative and educational work in local schools, is funded from the WRENS budget.

### **The Current Socio-Economic Context**

The overall socio-economic situation in Tallaght has improved over the past 14 years of the KDPPG's existence, as the Irish economy generally has recovered and as commercial, retail and recreational developments in Tallaght took place. West Tallaght, however, continues to be an area of considerable disadvantage and Killinarden continues to be particularly hard hit.

In 2006, the population of Killinarden was 4,163 a decrease of just over 11 per cent on the 2002 figure of 4,700. The decline in the overall population is reflected in the number of students and pupils at the local schools, which have also fallen over the past number of years. A detailed breakdown of the 2006 data is unavailable but the 2002 Census data shows that in that year, the population of Killinarden experienced a very high level of social and economic deprivation (Box 3)

#### **Box 3: Socio-Economic Features of Killinarden (2002)**

- A young population: Killinarden has a very high proportion of young people under the age of 18. In 2002, there were 1,888 young people aged less than 18 or 40 per cent of the population. Lone parent households: The area has a very high proportion of one parent households: in 2002, 35 per cent of all households were headed by a lone parent, compared to 11.9 per cent nationally. Over half (56.1%) of young households (i.e., household where all the children are under 15) are headed by a lone parent. In absolute terms there are 424 one parent families in the area.
- Unemployment: Census data shows that 16.3 per cent of males were unemployed in 2002 and 9.4 per cent of females: the national figures are 5.8 percent and 3.2 per cent respectively.
- Educational disadvantage: 30 per cent of the population has no formal education or only primary education: Almost one third had left school by the age of 16.
- Minority populations: There are relatively small numbers of Travellers living in Killinarden and small numbers of immigrants.
- On the basis of the Haase Index of Deprivation and Affluence, which allows areas to be ranked in order of their level of deprivation, Killinarden is rated as 'very

disadvantaged'. A Combined Deprivation Ranking shows that Killinarden and Fettercairn are the most disadvantaged areas of South Dublin

As the statistics in Box 3 indicate, the area remains characterised by a high level of socio-economic disadvantage. As a result, young people continue to be at risk of drug misuse, early school leaving and anti-social behaviour. At the same time, families continue to experience the long-term negative impacts of drug use among an earlier generation, some families experience very severe levels of social exclusion and offending behaviour also continues to be a problem.

In this context, the work of KDPPG / WRENS is at least as relevant now as it was at the establishment of the organisation 14 years ago. Indeed the manner in which the organisation has evolved and the extension of its work into new areas of activities over those years reflects the ongoing level of need within the area. To date, KDPPG / WRENS has been highly effective in both identifying that need and in developing innovative responses to it, as the following sections will demonstrate.

However, at this point in time there are severe stresses on the organisation and on its ability to respond to local needs. These stresses result from a combination of the model of working which the organisation uses and the context within which it operates. Drug prevention interventions within the local schools for example rely on local people who have been trained as facilitators. However, the availability of employment and the changes in the regulatory context makes such work unattractive to facilitators and KDPPG is finding it difficult to retain people they have trained.

The WRENS model of working is also challenged by the high level of need: the approach taken by WRENS, which is discussed in the following section, seeks to empower people to move on in their lives and to address more effectively the difficulties they experience. However, it seems that people are slow to move on: instead building a dependency on the organisation. This means that WRENS project is continually stretched as it tries to cater for existing clients while also addressing the needs of new clients.

### **3 The Work and Impact of the WRENS Project.**

In 2002, the establishment of the WRENS project allowed KDPPG to extend its work to a client group among whom a high level of need had been identified. These were women who were isolated from their communities as a result of the anti-social behaviour of a family member. The primary aim was to assist these women in developing more effective and constructive ways of responding to such behaviour, with a view to reducing it. It was, therefore, very much a community based approach drawing on the principles of community development and enabling people make their own response to problematic issues.

Other specific objectives of the WRENS project are as follows:

- To encourage women to become pro-active in the management of their families and to participate actively in their community with the overall objective of reducing anti-social behaviour.
- To offer meaningful methods of participation and user friendly information on how they can contribute to talking the drugs problem
- To develop skills which encourage and facilitate participation
- To encourage and support effective and proactive parenting
- To demystify the whole learning process and make learning accessible.
- To enable participants to understand difficult situations
- To create self belief and hope for a better future.

The initial strategy of WRENS was to provide a structured three year programme of personal supports and educational interventions for fifteen women to enable them better understand the difficulties that beset them and their families and to make more constructive choices in their lives. Rourke's evaluation of the KDPPG looked briefly at the WRENS project, which at that time was half way through the initial three year pilot. The evaluation concluded:

*It is considered that the WRENS project has made impressive progress since its formation in early 2002. The WRENS project has clearly identified the demand which exists for services focused upon issues like effective parenting, dealing with addiction with the family, handling conflict within the family etc. It is considered important that the KDPPG should continue to maintain the focus on families (which has become clearer and better resourced since the establishment of WRENS) in addition to its traditional and ongoing focus on children and young people. This type of holistic strategy and the capacity to respond to different needs of different family members should serve to strengthen the relevance and*

*importance of the services and supports being provided by the KDPPG. (Rourke, 2003)*

Since then, WRENS has continued the work with parents. However it has also developed additional work with young people within the school system including key working and group work and with clients of the Probation and Welfare service. In the following sections, the work and impact of WRENS is discussed under the following three areas of activity:

- Young People's Programme
- Work with Families / Parents
- Work with Clients of Probation and Welfare Service

NB: In the projects own documentation, work with families and parent and work with clients of the Probation and Welfare Service are grouped together and reported on under a single heading: Adult Programmes. However, for strategic as well as operational reasons, it is more appropriate to consider these as two separate areas of activity.

### **The Young People's Programme**

Since its inception, KDPPG has been delivering programmes in the local schools and this work continues to be funded by the Tallaght Local Drugs Task Force. These programmes are primarily preventative, with emphasis on providing information on drugs and with helping young people to make constructive choices about drugs. With funding from WRENS, KDPPG parallels this work with more targeted interventions for young people at risk. Most of the participants on the Young People's programme are second level students and so are between the ages of 13 to 18. The WRENS Young People's Programme targets young people who are at risk of disengaging within the school system and / or early school leaving and who display anti-social behaviour, substance abuse or involvement in crime.

The WRENS Young Peoples Programme aims:

- To reduce Juvenile antisocial behaviour in the community
- To reduce harmful damaging behaviour amongst young people such as bullying alcohol / drug abuse, vandalism and aggressive behaviour
- To support young people to understand choices and consequences of criminal behaviour in their personal family and community life.

School personnel identify the young people for participation and in Killinarden Community School (KCS) priority is given to young people becoming involved in drug use. The work of WRENS therefore combines the specific expertise of the

organisation in addressing the needs of individuals with meeting the objective of the school in terms of retaining vulnerable young people in the educational system.

### **Model of Working**

The WRENS Programme for Young People has a number of interlinked strands. These are:

- Intensive key working with young people
- Small group work with students in local schools
- A five week Summer Programme for students in local schools (in conjunction with the Society of St Vincent de Paul and KEEP, the Killinarden School Completion Programme)

Table 1 provides an overview of the number of young people involved in each strand of work since 2003.

**Table 1: Participation on Young People’s Programme, 2003 - 2007**

	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007 (up until June)</b>
Summer Programme	80	55	50	55	6
Group Work	18	28	22	14	20
One to One	5	4	5	3	2

In most years, the summer programme has catered for between 50 to 80 young people. The exception is the current year, when there were only six participants. This was due to the KEEP programme not being involved. The summer programme takes place over a four to five week period and is comprised of workshops, group work and social / recreational outings.

Small group work takes place in a number of local schools. The focus of the small groups varies according to needs and appropriate responses identified. (see Box 4). There has been a degree of consistency in the number of participants on small group work over the years. The project estimates that the optimum number of participants for small group work is about 15, which means this area of activity is consistently over subscribed.

The one to one keyworking is the most intensive intervention with young people undertaken within the WRENS project, consequently the number of participants that can be catered for is relatively low, with five considered the maximum. In the current year there are two participants. Since 2002, however, fourteen young people have availed of one to one keyworking.

#### **Box 4: Overview of WRENS Young People's Programme, 2003 - 2007**

2003	<p><b>The 16 – 18 Project.</b></p> <p>This project, which was an integrated initiative with Tallaght Probation Project, Tallaght Probation Service, Jobs Club and WRENS, focused on young people aged 16 to 18. Through a partnership approach which involved employers as well as parents and tutors, it aimed to prepare young adults for employment through needs based learning programmes. The programme was structured over one year and involved a combination of training and work placement.</p>
2004	<p><b>Youthreach</b></p> <p>Tallaght Youth Reach Drug Awareness programme ran for six weeks, with two hourly sessions per week. This programme focused on attitudes towards drugs, choices and consequences, effects of drug and alcohol use and correcting misinformation.</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Year Boys Personal Development Group</b></p> <p>This programme worked in partnership with KEEP (Killinarden school Completion Programme) and targeted six 1<sup>st</sup> year boys involved in KEEP in primary school. The group took place for one class every Wednesday for the academic year. Topics covered included drugs and alcohol awareness, decision making, choices and consequences, different ways of behaving, and community awareness and hobbies.</p> <p><b>KEEP / KDPPG / St Vincent de Paul Summer Programme</b></p> <p>This programme, also a partnership between Society of St Vincent de Paul, KEEP and KDPPG, rang for five weeks in June and July. Each week, the programme worked with a number of students from the four schools in Killinarden. Participants were provided with breakfast, followed by workshops and outings.</p> <p><b>Outreach work.</b></p> <p>Outreach work with young people also featured this area. Young people were referred from schools and local agencies. Support was provided through one to one and small group work.</p>
2005	<p><b>Young Adults Community Assertiveness Course</b></p> <p>This course took place one afternoon for eight weeks in Killinarden Enterprise Park. Eight participants, three boys and five girls aged 14 – 16 took part. The programme focused on anger management.</p> <p><b>Boys Cookery Group.</b></p> <p>The 6<sup>th</sup> class boys group took place in Scoil Caitlin Maude each week</p>



	<p>From March until the end of may. The focus of the group was to provide cooking skills and to address the needs of boys on the fringes of criminal behaviour. Six boys took part.</p> <p><b>Summer Programme.</b> In this year, St Vince De Paul were also involved, along with KDPPG and KEEP. The programme ran for four weeks, with each week catering for a different group of fifteen students. Activities took place from Monday to Thursday each day at Killinarden Community school. A total of 50 participants were involved.</p> <p><b>One to One</b> One-to-one work continued with five young people during this year.</p>
2006	<p><b>Boys Personal Development Groups</b> This course addresses issues of personal development, low self esteem anger management and anti-social behaviour. Two courses were facilitated over a period of 8 weeks, one hour a week in KCS. Fourteen boys participated.</p> <p><b>Summer Programme.</b> The Summer Programme has been operating since (KDPPG). The programme is structured on a weekly basis with up to 15 students taking part each week. In 2006, the programme ran for five weeks and included workshops, river walking, bowling quiz, and the NAC. A total of 55 young people participated.</p> <p><b>One to one work</b> KDPPG also provide one to one key working with youths referred by schools or by parents. The sessions take place within the school setting or in KDPPG offices. In 2006, three young people benefited.</p>
2007	<p><b>Group Work</b> Three small groups are in operation in 2007. Two were in local primary schools and one in KCS. Twenty participants were catered for in total</p> <p><b>Summer Programme</b> Due to KEEP withdrawing from the organisation of the summer programme, this went ahead this year with a smaller number of participants.</p> <p><b>One to One</b> Two participants were availing of one to one support in 2007.</p>

**The Outcomes and Impact of the Young People's Programme.**

As the information in Box 4 shows, a very diverse set of activities were undertaken under the Young People's Programme since 2003. It has not been possible to include all these areas within the terms of this evaluation. Given the resources available, the evaluation of the impact of the Young People's Programme is focused solely on the work which takes place in conjunction with Killinarden Community School, (which accounts for most of the participants).

Killinarden Community School is designated as a disadvantaged school by the Department of Education and Science. Consequently, a number of interventions and programmes to support students within the school are funded by the Department. These include the provision of counsellors, the KEEP programme, learning-support teachers etc. The targeted work of the Young People's Programme is complimentary to these supports and as a result it is difficult to assess the specific impact of any one element of the overall package of supports available to young people. Nevertheless, the Young People's Programme differs from the other interventions in so far as it is delivered for the most part outside of the school system and outside of the school setting. This enables aspects of its specific impact to be identified and in particular the impact of the one to one work.

From the point of view of school personnel the value of the Young People's Programme for participants and for the school can be identified as follows:

- It provides additional interventions for young people who would not get the same level of personal input from other sources.
- It helps to contribute to meaningful outcomes for young people thus generating long-term benefits for them including increased life and job prospects.
- It helps to identify needs among the families of the young people which the project may be able to respond to.
- It reduces disruptive behaviour in class and in the school generally.
- It has contributed to improving the rate of retention in the school system and the numbers completing senior cycle.
- It reinforces the work of counsellors and other support personnel within the school
- It adds value to the work of the school and to the work of other interventions aimed at combating educational disadvantage.
- It reinforces the partnership between KDPPG and KCS and makes the work of the KDPPG more integral to the concerns of the school.

The accounts of parents whose children benefit from the Young People's Programme also bears out these impacts. One mother noted that her son had been repeatedly suspended from school because of his behaviour: subsequent to key working with WRENS personnel, his behaviour improved significantly and his participation in school became much more satisfactory.

A key element in the success of KDPPG in working with young people is attributed by school personnel to a number of factors, as follows.

- The excellent relationships and rapport which KDPPG personnel and School Personnel share and which is facilitated by ongoing and regular communication
- The mutual understanding and respect which KDPPG and school personnel have for each others roles and responsibilities.
- The fact that KDPPG is aware of the social context within which students at KCS live. Consequently, they have good rapport with and understanding of the young people.
- The relatively long duration of time over which the KDPPG / WRENS can work with young people (up to a year in some cases), together with the fact that they extend the intervention to include family members
- The respect with which the personnel from KDPPG / WRENS are held in by school students which stems from their credibility at local level.
- The extent to which young people enjoy the extra attention they receive within the WRENS projects.

In terms of the extent to which the Young People's Programme meets its objectives, we can note the following:

*To reduce Juvenile antisocial behaviour in the community:*

Given the scope of this aim, and the time frame required to assess it, it has not been possible to determine if this aim is being achieved. Moreover, as the criteria used for participation on the Young People's Programme (at least in KCS) is based on drug use rather than anti-social behaviour it is not clear how focused the work of WRENS is on achieving this aim.

*To reduce harmful damaging behaviour amongst young people such as bullying, alcohol / drug abuse, vandalism and aggressive behaviour.*

In the views of school personnel, there has been an improvement in the behaviours of those involved in the more intensive work of WRENS, i.e., the one to one interventions.

*To support young people to understand choices and consequences of criminal behaviour in their personal family and community life.*

Again, in the views of school personnel, this aim appears to be being met, at least in relation to young people involved in more intensive work.

## **Issues Arising and Possible Future Scenarios**

Overall, the work undertaken by WRENS appears to be highly effective in addressing both the needs of young people themselves and in reinforcing interventions into early school leaving on the part of the Department of Education and Science. This is particularly the case in relation to the impact of the one to one work.

Currently, within Killinarden Community School alone, there are 466 students, a slight majority of which are girls. While the numbers in the school are decreasing (at one point it had over 1,000 students) reflecting the overall population decline of the area, the level of need and the nature of the need remains high. In 2006, the WRENS Young People's Programme catered for slightly more than ten per cent of the students of KCS, considerably less in 2007. In the views of KCS personnel, the current level of intervention is adequate to meet the needs of young people in the school. As noted already, from the perspective of the project a decrease in the numbers involved in group work is desirable, while there is a parallel capacity to increase the number of individuals availing of one to one work.

Although the overall aims of the Young People's Programme are broadly stated and refer to juvenile offending per se, the work of the Programme is mostly focused on problems of drug mis-use (frequently accompanied by involvement in criminal behaviour) and a significant impact of this work is on helping young people involved in drug misuse to remain within the school system. This type of intervention is very valuable for young people whose drug use makes them highly vulnerable to early school leaving and to slipping into an unstructured life style and further drug use and criminal activities. As such, it should be continued.

It could, however, be considered as an area of work that parallels and compliments the work within the mainstream school system undertaken by KDPPG rather than being seen as part of the work under WRENS. This point is returned to later in the recommendations.

## **Work with Families / Parents**

KDPPG had been working with families since the early days of its establishment. The success of the organisation in securing funding for the WRENS project meant that the focus and objectives of this work could be clarified and it could be put on a more secure footing. The work with families and parents is very responsive to individual need. Consequently it is difficult to describe it comprehensively. In its own reporting, the project differentiates between one to one work (keyworking) and outreach work. However, outreach activities include a number of different strands. So, within the family programme, four interlinked strands of activity can be identified.

These strands are:

- Befriending work through which the organisation maintains a personal contact with a client. This personal contact may occur prior to more intensive work with the client (in which case its objective will be to build trust and reassurance as a prerequisite to moving onto one to one work) or it may be subsequent to such work (in which case the objective will be to provide ongoing support and ensure the client continues to progress).
- One to One work: this is the more intensive keyworking which takes place with individuals and which is the core element of the WRENS model in terms of helping people to manage their problems and their lives more effectively. The number of one to one sessions a client has, will depend on their own needs and on the progress they make at a personal level.
- Group work / courses: A range of courses are organised on a small group basis for clients (outlined in Box 5). The objective is to provide training and development opportunities for clients within the context of a social network. The courses / group work also provide opportunities for clients to share their experiences and act as resources to new clients.
- Social events: WRENS also tries to maintain a link to clients through organising social events throughout the year. These allow the organisation to maintain contact, help people develop social skills and enable a greater degree of integration and participation within their community and society.

In theory, this model could be implemented as a pathway approach whereby clients would progress from one strand to another as their needs allow. This would facilitate resources to be used effectively where they are most needed, while also ensuring that clients receive the support they require. In practice, however, clients may be involved in different strands of activity at any one time, so instead of each strand being an element in a pathway towards progression and therefore to moving the client out of the project, the model operates to retain people over very long periods within the remit of the project. More than

anything else, this reflects the extensive level of need which clients have and the high level of response from the project, but it does cause pressures on the project as it tries to combine meeting the long term need of existing clients with providing supports to new clients.

### **Box 5: Examples of Courses and Group Work**

<b>Parents Programmes</b>
<p><b>Programme One: Health Education for Local Parents, (HELP).</b> Three-year programme, fourteen marginalized women, held in the K.C.S parents room every Tuesday morning throughout the school year from 9.30 to 12.30.</p> <p><b>Programme Two: "Parenting For Prevention"</b> "Parents dealing with crime, anti-social behaviour and drug issues from a parenting perspective". This is a one-year course with eleven women participating. The course takes place every Wednesday morning, time 9.30 to 11.30.am in the parent's room of K.C.S.</p> <p><b>Programme Three: "Drugs Education/Awareness &amp; Information Morning"</b> Parent's information morning. The topic: parents dealing with effects of anti-social behaviour and drugs misuse in the home and community. Held in the K.C.S and twenty-five parents attended.</p> <p><b>Programme Four: "The Good Enough Parent"</b> This is a six-week drug education and awareness course held in Killinarden junior school classroom, time 7pm to 9pm nine participants including two teachers.</p> <p><b>Programme Five: "Parents Being Aware"</b> This course takes place over four weeks and consists of introducing participating parents to drug education and awareness course held in K.C.S parents room from 9.30 to 11.30 am with fourteen women and two men participating.</p> <p><b>Programme Six: "Drug Awareness/Education &amp; Information Morning"</b> This programme consisted of a Parent's information morning with KDPPG, Killinarden Community School and Community Addiction Response Programme (CARP). The venue was K.C.S time 9.30 to 11.30 and the topic was "Hash and today's Teenager" which twenty-two parents attended.</p> <p><b>Programme Seven: "Adult Assertiveness Course"</b> This programme is run over eight weeks in local schools for two hours and is adapted from the Family Caring Trust by Michael and Terri Quinn</p> <p><b>Programme Eight: "Family Communication"</b> This programme is run over ten weeks for two hours and is used in long term prevention of drug and alcohol misuse. Course content includes: communication and listening, health, stress and drugs, the needs of children, self-esteem for all the family, the good enough, love and limits, drugs and peer pressure and resolving conflict.</p> <p><b>Programme Nine: "Flower Arranging through Personal Development"</b> This programme is run over an eight week period in Killinarden Community School. The sessions last two hours, one day a week. The course aims to teach the skills of flower arranging while providing a safe environment where mutual trust and respect are observed.</p> <p><b>Programme Ten: "Assertiveness Women and Mental Health"</b> This programme is run over a period of ten weeks in Killinarden Community School. The course covers the effects of depression, self-harming, suicide and moving forward.</p>

### **The Impact of WRENS Family Programme**

The fact that the delivery of the programme for Families and Parents is not structured as a pathway has many advantages for participants, whose level of need tends to be quite high and who benefit from the long duration of involvement. But it has disadvantages for the organisation, one of which as noted is the demand it places on staff. The second disadvantage is in how data is collected. The organisation collects data in respect of two broad areas of intervention. These are one to one interventions and all other strands combined under the term 'outreach'. So while it is possible to identify how many people are having intensive support through one to one work, the numbers involved in each of the other areas is less easy to determine. In addition, there appears to be some discrepancies across the data as a result of which it is difficult to determine the actual number of participants who have benefited from the Family Programme over the years of its operation. Overall, approximately 29 people have benefited from one to one work and a similar number from 'outreach' (these figures exclude clients of Probation and Welfare, which are looked at separately later). More significantly perhaps since 2005, the programme for Families and Adults has been operating well above the ideal maximum capacity. This issue is looked at later.

The approach to working with families and parents is highly responsive to the specific circumstances and needs of individuals and is very tailored to meet these specific needs. So, describing the interaction between the project and its participants is difficult. However, the following attempts to provide an overview of the main elements of the interaction, in the sequence in which they are most likely to occur.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Interaction</b>
Early engagement	Referral, initial contact, assessment
Core intervention	One-to-one, befriending, group work, social contact
Additional supports	Referral to other organisations, work with other members of the family
Progression	Moving on to employment, education, social integration

The following discussion, which is based on the interviews with clients of the WRENS project, looks at how people experience and perceive these different stages of interaction. Overall, it is clear that clients derived huge benefits from the project in terms of better understanding the issues that effect them, being better able to manage problematic situations in their family, better able to participate in their own community and, in some instances, being facilitated to acquire skills that they can use in their own communities or in other settings. We

should note, however, that the interviewees displayed a high level of dependency on the project and on their key workers which may have limited their ability to be critical.

- **Early Engagement**

*Referral:* Most of the families who come into contact with the WRENS project were experiencing difficulties arising from a family member using drugs, and / or being involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. In these circumstances, families typically experience a sense of shame and bewilderment. They are often unaware of services that might be available and may be reluctant to talk to neighbours because of the stigma attached to drug use and associated behaviours. Family members who were interviewed for this research recalled the time when they were referred to the WRENS project and spoke of being confused, having lost all confidence, having withdrawn from their communities and having lost the capacity to manage their household and family. Some indicated that they were depressed, on medication and suicidal before they made contact with KDPPG. Most described their situation at the time as 'being in a very dark place' 'being under a cloud' etc. Family members had different responses when they heard about KDPPG and the possibility they could get help from the organisation. Some were relieved to finally have someone to contact to look for help, others were hesitant about making the first call, fearing a loss of privacy or an unhelpful response. The hesitancy of some people, however, is anticipated by KDPPG and this is reflected in how they work with people once contact has been initiated.

*Initial Contact:* Once the initial referral was made, the second step was for the individual to contact the project, or if that was difficult for them, for a staff member to make contact with the individual. Consequently, sometimes this first meeting took place in the KDPPG offices or, and especially when the individual was depressed and withdrawn, it took place within the family home. The purpose of the first meeting was usually to calm and reassure the family member where necessary, and to develop a preliminary assessment of their needs. This first meeting is also important in building trust and in gaining the confidence of the family member.

The success of this first meeting is vital to ensuring that WRENS project can provide support and assistance to the families. That success is dependent on the extent to which the staff member can reach out to and reassure the family member and enable them to see how they might benefit from the support available. That can be a very challenging task, particularly when family members are hesitant or unsure of speaking about their difficulties. However, an integral feature of the way the WRENS project works is the degree of rapport and human empathy that staff can achieve with the clients and which featured strongly in clients perceptions of why they stayed with the project:



- **Core Intervention**

*One-to-One Support:* A frequent outcome from the initial contact is that a series of one to one meetings between the family member and a keyworker will take place. Sometimes the family member may hesitate before embarking on these and in these instances, the project will maintain a befriending contact with the person, dropping in to visit them, inviting them for coffee etc until they are sufficiently comfortable and reassured to embark on the one to one sessions. Again these sessions might take place in the family home or in the projects own premises. Sometimes they may start in the family home, but over time, as the individual becomes more confident and assured they may move to the projects premises. The number of one to one sessions, the frequency with which they take place and the number of sessions involved, will all depend on the family member and on what their needs are.

Regardless of these factors, however, the focus or objectives of the one to one sessions tend to be similar in all cases. Through these sessions, the keyworker will facilitate the family member to better understand the nature of the difficulty they are dealing with, to develop positive and constructive reactions to those problems, to rekindle their coping / parenting skills, and to begin to make effective decisions about how to move on or respond to the problematic issue.

From the interviews with family members who had been involved in these one to one sessions, it is clear that their impact was dramatic. People began to understand the nature of the problem they were dealing with, to regain their confidence in dealing with it, and to separate out their own needs and those of their family, from the needs of the member whose behaviour had generated the difficulty. In this way, family members were enabled to interrupt the negative dynamic resulting from drug use or associated criminal behaviour and to establish or re-establish a more appropriate and effective of managing behaviours within their households.

*Group / Course Work:* When it is deemed appropriate, the family member will be invited / encouraged / and supported to undertake one of the courses on offer from KDPPG. In some cases, this may occur quite quickly in others it will take longer. Sometimes too, participation in a course coincides with the ending of the one-to-one sessions (although not the ending of contact with the project), it other times such participation can take place alongside the one to one sessions.

Again, any supports necessary to enable the family member to participate in these courses will be provided. If people are reluctant or hesitant about participating in a group activity, if they have withdrawn into the home environment or if they have transport problems, project personnel will collect them and bring them to the course venue. This is another way in

which a gentle 'pressure' is kept on people to ensure they get all the support they need from the project.

Participation on the courses facilitates a number of positive outcomes for family members. The following were identified by the clients interviewed for this evaluation.

- It provides them with new understandings of issues
- It helps them to acquire new skills
- It introduces them to other women in similar circumstances;
- It increases their confidence in social settings;
- It enables the support they receive from the project to continue within the group setting,
- It facilitates the project to maintain contact with them
- It empowers them to give something back to their communities

*Social Networking:* Once a family member becomes part of the KDPPG group, they can benefit from long-term and ongoing interaction. Again, their own needs, circumstances and preferences will determine the extent and duration of this. The interaction can also take different forms:

- Invitations to join in social events
- Opportunities to take part in events organised by other organisations, for example, the Ceremony of Commemoration and Home organised by the Family Support Network
- Invitations to talks or other information events
- Being provided with information on particular courses that they may be interested in
- KDPPG personnel dropping in for tea and a chat or inviting the family member out to a local café.

- **Additional Supports**

*Extending Support to Other Family Members:* Occasionally, if people are willing and if the project has the resources, supports will be offered directly to other family members who are experiencing specific difficulties. Sometimes, if the other family member is at school, this support takes place under the Young People's Programme. Several families interviewed had benefited from this level of support which included one to one work with the daughter of one family who had an eating disorder, work with the son of another family in relation to anger management issues and support for a son with a drugs problem. Occasionally, too, WRENS works with both parents in the one family. A frequent comment from women interviewed however was that even if they were the only one in contact with WRENS, they were able to bring the benefits they were receiving into their homes.

*Referral to other Agencies:* Referral to other agencies which can provide support or advice to the families is an ongoing aspect of the work of the WRENS projects. These include the local authority, local organisations offering financial advice, organisations providing support with specific issues and the health services.

It is clear from the evaluation that, from the perspective of clients, very good work is being done with families and individuals. The manner in which the work is delivered, as well as the quality of the work, was important in this. The main elements cited as particularly beneficial in enabling clients to derive support were the following:

- The empathy and personnel rapport which project personnel developed with clients was very highly valued.
- The confidential nature of the support provided was also frequently referred to, particularly in context of the community dimension.
- The non-judgemental nature of the support provided was also frequently mentioned and was a significant factor in building trust.
- The ongoing support and contact from the project was important to people as was the practical support in getting to meetings etc.

### **Overview of WRENS Model**

The multi-stranded approach which WRENS takes is clear from the following table which provides an overview of the interventions provided to 10 clients who became involved in the HELP programme during 2003. These clients, all of whom were women, were identified on the basis of being very marginalised and were involved in a structured programme to help them understand and deal more effectively with the difficulties they experienced.

This table shows the extent to which WRENS provides multifaceted supports to its client group, facilitating them to acquire skills within its own provision and within the provision of other agencies and also referring on to other organisations which can play a role in assisting the person.

**Table 2: Example of Client Participation and Progression**

<b>Client</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Courses attended</b>	<b>Referred to</b>	<b>Progression to</b>	<b>Active (2007)</b>
Client 1	Jan 03	STEPS BEST TACT WTTN	MABS City Council FAS	Leaving Cert Courses	Yes
Client 2	May 03	STEPS BEST	Credit Union WTTN Deonach	Adult Literacy Employment	No
Client 3	Sep 03	STEPS Aromatherapy WTTN	Tallaght Probation & Welfare MABS Credit Union County Council Parents Support Group Jobsclub	Parents support group	Yes
Client 4	Sep 03		SWAN Family Support Services	Diploma in Counselling & Psychotherapy	No
Client 5	Sep 03	Left group due to family circumstances			
Client 6	Seo 03	STEPS Parents United Course	Credit Union MABS County Council Psychiatric Services Adult Literacy SWAHB Social Services Community Alcohol Services Parents Education Group	Failte Ireland Catering course WTTN Course	yes
Client 7	Sep 03	Left group due to family circumstances			
Client 8	Sep 03	Drug Awareness Addiction Course KDPPG Facilitator course	MABS	CE Scheme  Childcare diploma	yes
Client 9	Sep 03	Drug Awareness KDPPG Facilitator course	Left due to family circumstances		
Client 10	Sep 03			Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy.	no

### **Issues Arising and Future Scenarios.**

On the basis of interviews with clients of the family programme, it is clear that this is providing a much needed and very effective service. The only problem that has been identified is the duration of engagement with the project and the possibility that people are becoming too dependent on the work of WRENS. This is illustrated by another feature evident in Table 2, which is the rate of drop-out, progression and retention. Of the ten clients included in the above table, all of whom became involved in the project 30 per cent had dropped out due to family circumstances, 30 per cent had progressed to employment of training / education and 40 per cent were still involved with the project. The high progression rate, and the low drop out rate, are very notable. Given the characteristics of the client group and the difficulties they experience, a progression to employment or education / training of almost one in three is an exceptionally high success rate. Likewise, given the level of need among the client group, a similar drop out rate is also exceptional and highlights the success of the project in engaging successfully with participants. An issue arises with the retention rate, however. Of the group looked at in this table, 40 per cent, or four out of every ten are still involved in the project almost four years after their participation started. While this reflects their level of need, for the most part, it may also reflect the lack of mechanism within the project to move people on, to facilitate people develop their own social networks or to avoid a situation in which people perceive a dependency on the project.

Regardless of the main reason for this high retention rate, it is important that it be factored into planning and targeting. Mechanisms to decrease dependency, facilitate people establish their own networks and / or progress to other outcomes should be put in place. At the moment, there are 24 clients availing of the family programme (this excludes 7 clients of the Probation and Welfare Service, discussed separately in the next section). To stay within the numbers that the project believes it can cope with, this figure would need to be reduced to 8. If a reduction in numbers cannot be done without damaging the relationship between the project and its client group and the supports provided to clients, then the open door policy should be suspended until numbers drop to a more manageable level.

## **Work with Clients of the Probation Service**

The work with Clients of the Probation and Welfare Service was implicit within the original WRENS proposal and two such clients were involved in the project in 2003. Subsequently there was a lull in participation from this target group, until 2006 when this client group has emerged as a major focus of the work of the project. Currently the work with clients of the Probation Service is not thought of as a separate area of work within the organisation but is included within the programme for adults and families and reported on under this heading. However, given the specific nature of this work and given the fact that it can contribute quite significantly to the work of the Probation Service, it should be considered as a distinct service and data on clients under this heading should be collected and reported on separately.

Since 2003 a total of 12 clients of the Probation Service have been assisted through one to one work by the WRENS project and a further four were briefly involved in group work. In total fifteen women and one man have benefited. For the most part, clients of the Probation Service who are referred to WRENS are repeat offenders who are on probation orders, on community service orders, or pre-sentence reports. They will be assigned a Probation Officer whose role is to make a constructive input into helping them resolve their offending behaviours with a view to avoiding a custodial sentence.

In the view of Probation and Welfare personnel, female repeat offenders that come to the attention of the Probation Services are not criminally minded nor do they present a danger to their community. Their crimes are usually petty and the reason they come before the courts and end up in the remit of the Probation Services is due to the fact that they are repeat offenders rather than serious criminals. According to Probation personnel, the repeat offending behaviour of these women is indicative of difficulties in their personal lives. These difficulties may be associated with, or exacerbated by, alcohol or drug addictions, or they may be associated with deeper personal problems. As a result of this, these women are often incapable of engaging constructively with the services that are there to support them. Moreover, they invariably do not have personal support systems in place: a situation which differentiates them from most male offenders who do tend to have family or close relative providing some support. As a result of this combination of factors, Probation personnel can spend considerably more time working with these clients than they do with more serious criminals.

The clients of the Probation Service with whom the WRENS project works, and particularly the female clients, form a very specific group within the overall client base of the organisation, for the following reasons:

- The issues they are referred to WRENS for stem from their own offending behaviours rather than the behaviours of a family member.

- They are less likely to live within Killinarden itself and more likely to be drawn from other parts of West Tallaght.
- Because they are already within the remit of the Probation and Welfare Services, WRENS plays a supporting role rather than the primary role in relation to interventions
- Likewise, because of their problematic behaviours and generally difficult circumstances, these clients tend to be already well linked into other statutory services.

In view of all of the above, the model of working with clients of the Probation and Welfare Service is somewhat different to that of working with families and adults more generally. In general, such clients are somewhat more likely to avail only of one to one work. Within this context, the keyworker from WRENS will also work closely with the Probation and Welfare Officer and will engage in three way meetings with the client to discuss progress, next steps etc. The type of interaction with these clients is outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3: Overview of work with Clients referred by Probation Services**

<b>Client Id no.</b>	<b>Date of first Contact</b>	<b>Programme/ sessions attended</b>	<b>Date of Completion</b>
1	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2003	Literacy Skills Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour Personal Development Preparation for Theory Driving Test	March 2005  Returned October 2006 –February 2007
2	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2003	Drug Awareness Course Personal Development Course. Skills to address offending behaviour	June 2006
3	26 March 2007	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour	On going
4	15 <sup>th</sup> march 2007	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour Computers Addictions Studies IT Tallaght	On going
5	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2007	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour	Ongoing
6	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour	January 2007
7	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2006	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour	December 2006
8	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Key working one to one. Skills to address offending behaviour Assertiveness Through Mental Health CAD Training Day	On going
9	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Communication through Personal Development. Skills to address offending behaviour	November 2006
10	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Communication through Personal Development. Skills to address offending behaviour	November 2006
11	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Communication through Personal Development. Skills to address offending behaviour	November 2006
12	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2006	Communication through Personal Development. S0ills to address offending behaviour	November 2006



### **Impact of the work with Clients of Probation and Welfare Service**

Currently, WRENS is providing services and support to seven clients of Probation and Welfare. Four of these are receiving one to one support and three are involved in courses and small group work. The impact of the work on the one to one clients is looked at later. First, the experience of the group programme is presented. While this programme is no longer running and in fact did not complete its original duration, it provides a useful example of the type of work that could be developed again at some future point.

### **Six-week Programme**

The six week group programme was devised and set up to cater for about 8 women who were clients of the Probation and Welfare Service. As noted in the earlier section, Probation personnel believed these women would benefit from more intensive personal supports and group work to enable them engage in a more constructive way with the support agencies.

The six week programme was scheduled to run from the end of September 2006 to mid November. It sought to help the women to consider their offending behaviour as well as personal development and communication skills inputs. It was also hoped that the participants would continue to avail of one to one supports from the WRENS project when the group programme ended. At the first group session, four women turned up and these continued to attend on a weekly basis for a subsequent two weeks. However, on the fourth week just one woman showed up. The drop out rate from the programme reflected what was going on in the lives of the women at the time: one had more court appearances; one relapsed into alcohol abuse and one got a job. As it was not possible to continue the programme with just one woman, it came to an end. Additionally, none of the women availed of one to one work with WRENS personnel.

Despite the outcome from this first group project, there is a perception that the model that was implemented was appropriate and relevant and that it could be tried again at some point in the future. Feedback from the participants had been positive and given their chaotic lifestyles and the difficulties they had engaging with supports, it was felt that their attendance for three weeks was a positive achievement.

### **One to One work**

Currently four clients of the Probation and Welfare Service are availing of one to one key working with the WRENS project. These include three women and one man. As one to one clients they receive an intensive intervention from the project which focuses on helping them to understand the underlying reasons for their offending behaviour, to understand the implications of their offending behaviour and to begin to put in place the type of structures in their lives that might help them to address this. In addition to the one to one sessions, WRENS project personnel meet with Probation and Welfare Officer and the client on a monthly basis.

In the view of Probation and Welfare the following benefits have been derived by clients:

- The one to one intervention provides a re-affirming experience for women who are often without other forms of affirmation or support.
- It has enabled women to understand their behaviours, the implications of their behaviours and to realise that they can do something to change their behaviour.
- It has helped women to develop more structure in their daily lives.
- It has helped women to explore issues of alcoholism and other addictions.
- It enables women to work more effectively with the Probation and Welfare Officer and with other agencies with which they are in contact.

The work of the WRENS project is seen as adding value to the work of the Probation Services in so far as it enables them use their time more effectively, to focus on the work they can do and it also enables the client to engage more effectively with P and S.

The success of the WRENS work was seen as deriving from the following elements:

- The excellent rapport between Probation & Welfare personnel and WRENS personnel
- The fact that WRENS provides a non-intrusive intervention that respected and was sensitive to the situation of the clients.
- The fact that the intervention is focused solely on the needs of the client without any agency agenda.

### **Issues and Future Scenarios**

Currently, the work of the WRENS project with clients of Probation Service is achieving very effective outcomes, conferring benefits both on the clients themselves and also to the Probation personnel.

The work with these clients is similar to that undertaken with families: with the exception that one to one interventions are more frequent, and these interventions are focused on the behaviours of the clients themselves rather than on the behaviour of their family members. As a result of the similarities, this work has been absorbed within the adult programme and is reported on under that programme. It should, however, be thought of as a separate programme, it should be planned for as a separate programme with its own specific objectives, targets and reporting mechanisms.

In addition, there also appears to be considerable scope to build on the existing work and to explore a more cohesive programme of intervention for offenders in conjunction with the probation and welfare service and others within the criminal justice system. Women who come to the attention of the probation service tend to have more complex personal issues than do men: they are more likely to have childcare issues or abuse issues for example, and they are also less likely to have family support. Currently, the criminal justice system does not provide the range of services or options necessary to meet the needs of women. In this context, a targeted community based programme for women clients of the Probation service would seem to be highly desirable and the model of support developed under the WRENS programme could be considered for replication in other areas.

## Section 4 Overview of Findings and Recommendations

### Introduction

The work which has been undertaken by the WRENS project over the years since it started has been extremely effective in meeting its objectives and in addressing needs among the community in Killinardan. Moreover, the innovative model used and the integrated method of working converse benefits not just on individuals and their families, but also on the wider community and to statutory agencies working in the area.

The benefits arising at these different levels are summarised in Box 6

**Box 6: Overview of Benefits Conferred by WRENS**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Specific Examples of Benefits</b>
To individual clients	<p>They gain confidence and self esteem</p> <p>They are helped to understand and change their own behaviour</p> <p>They are helped to understand and better manage the behaviour of family members.</p> <p>They are facilitated to develop or rekindle coping skills</p> <p>They are empowered to take more control of their lives.</p> <p>In some instances, they have been facilitated to progress to employment or further education.</p>
To families	<p>Negative dynamics within the family have been interrupted and new positive dynamics established.</p> <p>Mothers / parents have been helped to manage their families more effectively.</p> <p>Parents have been helped to better safeguard their children from difficulties.</p> <p>There is potential for secondary or additional problems within the family to be addressed</p> <p>Clients can share their learning with other family members.</p>
To communities	<p>Social networks can be developed (to date, to a limited extent)</p> <p>Social capital is built up at community level</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour at community level can be reduced</p>
To other organisations	<p>Contribution to achieving the objectives of schools and statutory organisations</p> <p>These organisations are enabled to use their resources more effectively</p> <p>Good models of integrated working developed</p> <p>Good information on needs and appropriate responses available to service providers and policy making agencies.</p>

## **Findings in Relation to Specific Work Areas**

The table above provides an overview of the generalised benefits conferred by the WRENS project. Here, the specific findings relating to each area of activity are summarised.

- **Programme for Young People**  
The programme for young people is contributing in a significant way to young people in the school system. It is helping young people to understand and change their behaviours, it reinforces measures to retain people within the school system, and it consolidates the relationship between KDPPG and the schools. Despite an intended focus on anti-social and criminal behaviour, de facto, the programme is predominantly benefiting young people at risk of drugs. As such, it sits more easily with the mainstream work of the KDPPG rather than with the work of WRENS. Additionally, the young people's programme is relatively easy to quantify in terms of demand and therefore in terms of the resources, including staff, needed to respond to it.
- **Programme for Families and Adults**  
This programme is delivered through a strong and organic community development model. It has a significant and valuable impact on the lives of people who participate directly, and also on their families. There is a risk however, that the personal rapport developed through the work, together with the very high level of need amongst clients, may result in a dependency on the project: it appears that participants are slow to move on from the project or to develop their own social networks. This together with the open door policy results in very high levels of demand on the staff of the project.
- **Clients of Probation Service**  
This programme involves a very effective use of the keyworking skills of project personnel. It is very focused on the needs of the clients and is potentially a very good model of interagency working. The programme is also relatively new and somewhat ad hoc in its structure and planning. It needs to be differentiated from the programme for families and adults and planned in a different way. The scope expand the model to include other elements of the criminal justice system, along with Probation Services, should be explored.
- **Models of Integrated Working**  
There is a high level of professionalism evident in the working relationships which have been established between the WRENS project and other agencies. Very effective models of integrated working have been developed as WRENS has proven its capacity to extend the skills of its personnel to supporting the work of other agencies.

## **Organisational Issues**

Although organisational issues were not included as part of the original evaluation brief, it is apparent that there are some issues that need to be addressed at this level. The following are the main difficulties identified.

- Structures of decision making and management.

Since its establishment as a limited company, KDPPG has had a board of directors who have legal responsibility for the company under Irish company law. The Board has seven members and meets every two months. The Board has had a strong focus on issues pertaining to corporate governance and has tended to play a more limited 'overseeing' role in relation to the day to day work of the organisation and in relation to decision making and planning. The Manager of the organisation reports directly to the board. A Management Committee is also in place. The management committee meets every two months and considers management reports from the Manager. Day to day decision making within the project is largely undertaken by the Manager and more developmental decisions are also often taken by the Manager in collaboration with the Chairman of the Board. The structures in place to support decision making and planning appear to be appropriate and meetings take place on a regular basis. There does appear, however, to be a deficit in relation to strategic planning and review. In this context, the precise roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Board of Management need to be clarified.

- Strategic Planning and Review

As noted, there is a deficit in relation to strategic planning, including targeting, and review. Much of the planning that takes place is undertaken by staff of the organisation and consequently there is an inevitable tension between responding to the needs of families and individuals at local level and developing a more strategic and organisational approach to sustaining the ongoing work of KDPPG / WRENS. As a result of this, planning tends to be reduced to a commitment to ongoing efforts to reproduce activities underway, rather than to supporting a strategic approach to meeting the aims and objectives of the organisation with the resources available to it. While the priority on meeting the needs of people is commendable in human terms, it means the organisation has tried to respond to an extremely high level of need across a range of work areas and with limited resources. This type of responsiveness may be sustainable in the short term but it is not sustainable in the longer term. For example, the project estimates that the maximum number of adult participants it can cope with across both the Programme for adults and for Clients of the Probation Service is 15. In 2007, the actual number was approximately 31. At this point therefore it is essential that the organisation develop a more strategic approach to allocating its resources, to prioritising actions and to drawing up targets and indicators that will enable it to review and monitor its activities over time.

- Data collection and reporting

Data collection is a tedious process for people whose skills lie in the area of key-working and guidance. But good data systems are essential in order to effectively plan, manage and review the implementation of a project. Data gathering systems are in place in KDPPG / WRENS but they are not being used to produce meaningful information. So, while there is a lot of data available and while it points to a huge amount of activity, the way in which the data is presented doesn't always provide clarity. It is important that the organisation develops data gathering systems and reporting mechanisms specific to each area of work and which facilitate clear reporting within each area of work.

- Resources

*Premises*

All of the work of the WRENS project is delivered from the KDPPG premises in Killinarden Enterprise Centre where the organisation occupies one large office, with informal (and insecure) access to a second room which can be used for keyworking or meetings. While this premises is a major improvement on the previous situation when the project operated from a room over a shop, it does not facilitate any increase in the scale or scope of activities carried out by the project.

*Staffing*

Currently the full range of activities across the Prevention Programme and the WRENS work are delivered by the Manager of the project along with two project workers and an administrator. Pressure on the time of individuals is acute and there is also a burden of administrative work that falls to each project worker. The constraints on the time of project workers has been noted and reported on since the beginning of the project. Currently, the allocation of individuals to tasks is being reviewed and this may ease the pressure somewhat. However, proper planning and targeting is essential to deal with this issue on an ongoing basis.

## **Recommendations**

The WRENS project is a small project in an area of high need. It is doing very effective work in a highly constrained context. In order to continue to do so, it needs to take action to reduce the current work pressure and to secure ongoing funding for the distinct areas of work undertaken. Against this backdrop, the following recommendations are made:

1. The work undertaken by the WRENS project should be thought of as three specific interventions, rather than two as at present. These areas are:

- Young peoples programme
- Family and adult programme
- Work with clients of probation and welfare

These areas of work deliver benefits at different levels and involve somewhat different work models. They also have the potential to secure funding from different sources. They should each be planned for separately, relevant and achievable objectives should be identified, targets should be set for each one and resources sourced for each one. During implementation, the project should ensure it has appropriate data gathering and reporting systems in place for each one.

2. The young peoples programme complements the preventative work of KDPPG and could be considered as a parallel area of activity within the schools. The organisation should consider incorporating this work into the ongoing work with schools and seek to fund it from the same source. This would clearly demarcate the work within the local schools as one major strand of activity for the project and allow it to be planned, resourced and reported on clearly.
3. The family programme should be clearly differentiated from the work with Clients of the Probation and Welfare service. Realistic targets should be set in relation to how many clients can be catered for under this programme and no further clients should be accepted until the number of clients is at this target. Mechanisms should be put in place to move people on more quickly, if possible, and / or to help them develop their own networks thus reducing their dependency on the project.
4. Clients of Probation and Welfare Service: There appears to be scope to develop this area of work as a specific strand of activity and as an innovative model of integrated intervention for a very vulnerable target groups. The scope to develop this model should be explored with the relevant agencies and with relevant individuals within the criminal justice system.



5. The organisation should develop a strategy for the remainder of this year with the twin objectives of (a) dealing with the problematic issues around funding and (b) providing a sound basis for strategic planning for 2008 and subsequent years. The organisation needs to take a 'whole organisation' approach to this interim plan and to future strategic plans, incorporating all areas of work regardless of the funding source.
  
- 6 Current management and decision making structures should be reviewed to establish if they are working at maximum effectiveness to steer the organisation in a strategic direction and to support staff.