



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

National Population Health Directorate
Health Service Executive HQ
Oak House, Lime Tree Avenue
Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 882 520 Fax: 1890 200 893

16th April 2008.

Deputy Charles Flanagan T.D.
Dáil Eireann
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: Parliamentary Question – 12499/09

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which was forwarded to the Health Service Executive Parliamentary Affairs Division for attention.

To ask the Minister for Health and Children the amount spent annually by the health promotion unit in her Department and the Health Service Executive on underage drinking awareness; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

- Charles Flanagan

Health Promotion activity on Alcohol related issues including under age drinking awareness includes education and raising awareness of the consequences of alcohol use and misuse.

• Strategic Task Force on Alcohol

The Department of Health and Children set up a Strategic Task Force on Alcohol in January, 2002. The Task Force's aim was to come up with evidence based recommendations ways to prevent and reduce the damage that alcohol does in Ireland and included the following recommendations:

STFA 4.2 *'Encourage sports organisations to promote alcohol free environments for children'*

STFA 5.3 *'Expand policy development for the out of school setting'*

STFA 5.1 *'Raise awareness of importance of public health alcohol policy'*

The Task Force saw the effect of excessive drinking on children and young people as particularly worrying. The HSE has part funded a number of non-statutory organisations to support the education and raising awareness of the consequences of alcohol use and misuse to young people in particular, and the development of and research projects in line with the recommendations of the Alcohol Task Force. These initiatives are part funded by the HSE. In 2008 the expenditure on these projects was €800,000.



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Northwest Alcohol Forum (NWAFF)

In 2007 The North West Alcohol forum Ltd launched itself as a not for profit company with a 5 year Action Plan which sets out how it will tackle substance misuse in the North West. The NWAFF Action Plan looks at measures that address intervention, awareness raising prevention and education and treatment services for communities and individuals who are experiencing the consequences of alcohol related harms. The NWAFF also participated in the Donegal Youth Council Youth Agenda Day, has established links with Comhairle Na nOg Sligo, Donegal VEC Youth officer (Youth Consultation). The HSE provides part funding to the North West Alcohol Forum

HSE & GAA National Alcohol & Substance Abuse Prevention Programme (ASAP)

The ASAP Programme is a joint venture by the GAA and the Health Service Executive the aim of which is to reduce the harm that is being caused by alcohol and other drugs. The three principal objectives the ASAP Programme has been promoting the development of policy and practice in prevention, education and in responding appropriately to drug/alcohol problems that arise and refer to professional agencies as required. Simple, clear and focused leaflets and posters to distribute appropriate information in a form more easily assimilated, particularly by the younger members are currently being developed. The cost for the HSE is associated with secondment of the National Co-ordinator to the GAA.

FAI National Alcohol & Drugs Policy

The FAI and the HSE are currently jointly developing an Alcohol and Drugs Policy for all levels of the organisations. A substance misuse policy will be developed for the organisation which will help raise awareness of the impact a sporting organisation can have on attitudes and social norms in terms of alcohol consumption drug misuse and in reducing alcohol/ drug related harm. The FAI will promote the availability of information, through downloadable leaflets and links related to alcohol and health from www.spunout.ie & www.drugs.ie .

Alcohol Action Ireland

Alcohol Action Ireland was set up in 2003 to complement the work of the Department of Health and Children's Strategic Taskforce on Alcohol and are currently running the following Campaign: *Keeping it in the Family – Children Living With Problem Drinking Parent*. The HSE provides part Funding to AAI

No Names Club

The No Name Club is a national, voluntary, youth organisation with over 1,000 active members and the organisation was founded to provide an alternative to pub culture for the young people of Ireland. Members of the No Name Clubs learn through experience in the



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clubs that they can make friends, enjoy social outings and have great fun in a warm, friendly and healthy atmosphere without the use of alcohol or drugs. It is a club for young people, organised by young people, with the help and guidance of adult leaders. No name clubs promotes the availability of information, through downloadable leaflets and links related to alcohol and health from www.spunout.ie , www.drugs.ie .

National Youth Council of Ireland - Get 'em Young: Mapping young people's exposure to alcohol marketing in Ireland

This is a collaborative project involving the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE). The NYCI represents and supports the interests of 50 voluntary youth organisations across Ireland and acts on issues that impact on young people. The purpose of this research project is to examine if Ireland's stated commitment to protect young people from pressure to drink is reflected in the actual experience of young people.

Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Trinity College - The impact of treatment on adolescents with alcohol and drug problems

Many Irish teenagers drink to excess as has been frequently demonstrated. A service has been set up to carry out interventions with under-eighteen year-olds having significant drug or alcohol problems. This research initiative measures the effect of the treatment interventions delivered to adolescents. The findings will inform policy development in the HSE.

• Alcohol Campaigns.

Health Promotion Campaigns are based on national strategies using health related social marketing techniques. Health related social marketing is "the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to achieve specific behaviour goals, to improve health and reduce health inequalities" and is differentiated from Advertising / PR programmes. Social marketing looks at what influences behaviour and considers ways to increase motivation for positive health behaviour while removing the barriers.

The 2008 /2009 campaign is a specific campaign aimed at delaying the age at which young people start to drink. The Campaign objectives are:

- to reduce the number of young people under 18 who consume alcohol
- Increase the number of 16 yrs old who have not consumed alcohol
- Encourage / empower and support the adult population 'you can do something' ...'you can influence young people' in relation to alcohol consumption.

The integrated Health Promotion campaign comprises a number of elements including advertising - TV, radio and outdoor - and information resources.



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www.yourdrinking.ie will provide information and support on the topic of alcohol for the general population and young people. The information leaflets 'Straight Talk - a guide for parents on teenage drinking' and 'Less is More' can be accessed at www.yourdrinking.ie or through the HSE information line 1850 24 1850.

In line with the Government decision on the matter the HSE is required to reduce expenditure on advertising, PR and consultancy by at least 50% of the total spend in 2009, as against 2007 expenditure levels. The amount allocated to the Alcohol Health Promotion Campaign in 2009 will be approximately €300,000.

HSE Population Health - Health Promotion:

Alcohol has been identified as core topic area for health promotion and is being addressed across population groups including young people. The focus on Alcohol within Health Promotion is on early intervention and prevention strategies and programmes are delivered across a range of settings, including schools and community based settings. Alcohol awareness and education is also being delivered as part of the Drug & Alcohol services. The costs in the main associated are pay costs, with a small associated non pay cost to support local and community based activities.

Core work undertaken by Health Promotion departments at local level includes the following activities.

- ***Social and Personal Health Education Programme (SPHE):*** This programme is delivered in Primary and Post Primary Schools addressing several topics and issues pertinent to young people. Alcohol education is part of the of this programme, and is delivered in an integrated and developmental way throughout the second level SPHE programme and provides information and aims at developing positive attitudes and skills to young people on alcohol use.
- ***An Emergency Departments Resource*** developed to raise the issue of alcohol with patients who access the emergency services with alcohol related injuries and illness. Frequently these patients include young people. These resources have been developed and include a training DVD, posters on the responsible use of alcohol which are displayed in emergency settings and information pocket booklets.

A number of specific local initiatives targeting underage drinking include:

- **Youth Health Service:** Youth Health Service (YHS) is a HSE South led project in partnership with Ógra Chorcaí and Cork City Development Board. The YHS provides support for young people under the age of twenty-five, offering a range of dedicated health services under one roof. Alcohol consumption is discussed routinely where appropriate with clients during consultations with each of the services. These services include drugs and



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alcohol counselling, crisis pregnancy counselling, family planning service, and a wide range of health promotion information.

- ***Club Projects Cork City, Counties Cork and Kerry*** is to increase awareness among owners, staff and management of pubs, clubs & off licenses of the negative consequences of alcohol and drug mis-use and to explore / identify possible solutions to deal with such issues effectively. Prevention of underage drinking is a key objective of the projects.
- ***Youth Health Programme*** This service focuses primarily on sexual health but also addresses alcohol education as part of issues that influence sexual health behaviour.
- ***School Support Project***
 - To support schools to review and implement substance use policies.
 - To provide drug/alcohol awareness training to both staff and parent groups.
 - To provide information, support and referral pathways to schools where appropriate
- ***Party Hearty*** - a Youth Group trained in alcohol issues and to produce guidelines for young people regarding alcohol. This consisted of for 16 evenings and 10 days work with the group. The North West Alcohol Forum funded the printing of the posters which were distributed in Youth Clubs, discos, schools and colleges, libraries, etc.
- ***Living With Teens course*** for Parents and also Parents, Schoolchildren and Drugs Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim (This has a primary focus on alcohol).
- ***Developing Capacity:*** In Dublin North East a module on alcohol and other substances is included in summer courses for teachers at second level. Support is to also available to schools in developing their substance use policy and training for teachers on Alcohol Awareness to support their work with young people.

A full description on all of these projects is available from the Health Promotion service of the HSE. Other education and prevention initiatives targeting children and young people are also provided at PCCC Functional Area Level.

I trust this answers your question, but if you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Patrick Doorley
National Director of Population Health



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