CURRENT STATISTICS ON HOMELESSNESS

- Govt. statistics indicate that there are about 5,000 persons homeless in Ireland at any one time.
- SPSS /HA Assessment of Homelessness 2008 found 2,366 homeless adults in Dublin including 576 dependent children in Dublin.
- The Assessment found 110 Rough sleepers
- Demand for services increasing following on economic downturn. MQI 17% increase in demand for homeless services in 2010.
Homelessness & Drug Use

Cause or Effect?

- Complex Relationship
- Vicious Circle
- Social Adaption Theory
## Drug Use Among the Homeless Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total (n=355)</th>
<th>Dublin (n=247)</th>
<th>Cork (n=36)</th>
<th>Limerick (n=36)</th>
<th>Galway (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime Illicit Use*</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Illicit Use*</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Illicit Use*</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Alcohol Use</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic Alcohol Use</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic Drug Use**</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic Alcohol and Drug Use</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Drug Use (high degree of psychological dependence)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever injected</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Injectors</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for the purpose of this study, “illicit drugs refers to cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, crack cocaine, cocaine powder, heroin, hallucigen (LSD, poppers and magic mushrooms) and solvents

**Drug use is all drugs excl alcohol as follows; cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, crack cocaine, cocaine powder, heroin, hallucigen (LSD, poppers and magic mushrooms) and solvents, tranquilizers, sedatives, antidepressants, methadone, other opiates, steroids and other drugs

NACD: Drug Use Among the Homeless Population in Ireland; April 2005
Homelessness among Drug Users

Homeless Drug Users in Treatment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NDTRS. 2010)

MQI Needle Exchange:

Homeless Clients 51% (MQI 2009)

High Park Residential:

Homeless Clients 59% (MQI 2009)
Homelessness Among Drug Users

Demographics:

- 62% male; 38% female
- Mean age 24.4 years
- 71% early school leavers
- 100% unemployed
- 59% had children
- 50% served prison sentence
- 40% currently on Bail
- 18% currently on TR
Experience of Homelessness

- Reasons for current sleeping arrangements
  - 64% drug use
  - 38% family conflict
  - 16% forced out of home (court order/vigilantism).

- 59% prior experience of homelessness
  - Mean age first homeless 19.2 years
  - Average length of time out of home 2.26 years

- 57% drug use barrier to accommodation
# Homeless Drug Users

## Physical Health Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Complaint</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abscesses</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental Overdose</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberate Overdose</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Loss</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Homelessness, Drug Use & Risk Behaviours

Issues:
- Use drugs more frequently & less safely
- Poly-drug use
- Injecting practices
- Overdose
Client Comments

- *I’ve got really careless about my injecting practices, because I don’t have fresh water and a safe place to inject*”
  35 year old male staying in a hostel

- “*I’m using a lot more because I’m bored and have nothing to do all day and night*”
  18 year old male sleeping rough
Responding to the Needs of Homeless Drug Users

- Housing First Approach
- Greater Integration of Homeless & Drug Services
- Ensuring Access to Treatment
- Addressing compliance issues
- Expanding services:
  - Out of Hours Needle Exchange
  - Respite Care
  - Detoxification
  - Safer Drug Use Facilities
  - Social Support
Policy Recommendations

- Housing First for drug users too.
- Make drug services more accessible to homeless drug users
- Targeted harm reduction interventions with homeless drug users
- Open up homeless services to active drug users
- Responses to anti-social behaviour that do not result in increased homelessness should be developed