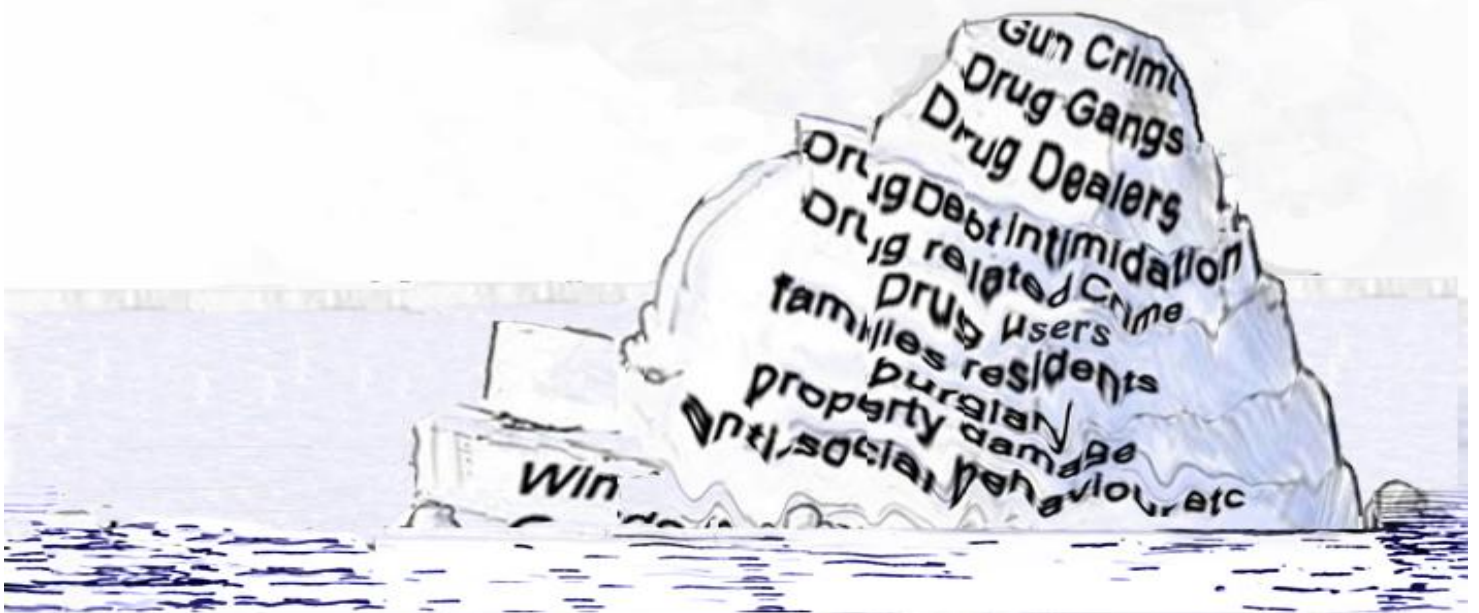


Melting the Iceberg of Fear



A Collective Response

Contents

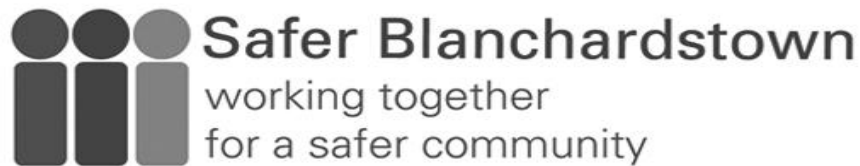
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Chairpersons note

In response to the research findings in *An Overview of Community Safety in Blanchardstown Rapid Areas (2010)* and to continued reports of drug debt intimidation from a range of partners, Safer Blanchardstown's own public meetings and from other sources, the management committee of Safer Blanchardstown decided that this was an issue that required investigation. The board requested that the coordinator research and report back on his finding on the phenomenon of drug debt intimidation.

This report is the result of research carried out into drug debt intimidation as experienced by residents in one local area of Blanchardstown; Mulhuddart; the fact that intimidation/drug debt intimidation is a national and international phenomenon and is not limited to Mulhuddart should be noted.

The following report with its analysis of a problem in a local context and the emphasis which the research places on the implications for social development in all aspects of the findings can be seen as a valuable step in facilitating discourse in the area of drug policy and community safety.

I look forward to the positive contribution of this report in acting as a guide to the services, agencies, families, individuals and communities in the Safer Blanchardstown area in particular and the wider community in general.

I would like to acknowledge and commend all who helped and assisted in the course of this research and in the construction of this report.

Finally I would like to thank Philip Jennings, Coordinator, Safer Blanchardstown; author of this report for getting the whole process to this stage.

Phillip Keegan
Chairperson Safer Blanchardstown

Foreword

Drug debt intimidation has emerged as a growing concern across all Drugs Task Force areas, including Blanchardstown, and the raising of this issue locally led to the coordinator of Safer Blanchardstown (the Local Policing Forum) being requested by the management committee to research this corrosive issue and report back and make recommendations on findings.

At the outset it was never intended to carry out a substantive piece of research into this issue but after a lengthy desk top trawl of contemporary research in which little of value in terms of usable recommendations or initiatives could be found, it was thought necessary to examine drug debt intimidation, at a local level in some depth. Early on in the process it was found that drug debt intimidation is an extremely complex issue that warranted as full a report as possible.

The research found that the issue of drug debt intimidation and intimidation in general must be viewed as part of a continuum of behaviour (e.g. from mild to severe to ruthless) that develops and grows in a community and should be tackled in a systematic and coordinated way along this continuum. For example if we try to understand the problem only in terms of threat and violence we only concentrate on perpetrators and victims. Instead our attention should also be directed at how the person became either the victim or the perpetrator, what were the stages immediately before and what are the likely next stages for both, if any. Also what are the factors that influence the development of drug debt intimidation within a community; are there any attractions or drawbacks? What are the aids and supports? Are there any indicators that a person is likely to become either a victim or perpetrator? What of the wider community; do they have a role to play in tackling or supporting the development of intimidation in the area?

These are some of the many questions that initially confronted this researcher and it was extremely difficult to keep track of the various influences which either positively or negatively affect the development of drug debt intimidation. However, it was found to be very useful to conceptualise drug debt intimidation as being ordered along a continuum from lower, middle to higher order. This ordering allows us to develop and direct interventions at specific aspects or stages of intimidation (lower middle or higher order) at the same time linking those initiatives in a collaborative fashion. Such ordering also allows us to identify those who are likely to engage in intimidation at each stage and to more accurately and efficiently direct appropriate resources to tackle the problem.

Finally it was found to be very useful to visually represent the continuum of drug debt intimidation as an iceberg where the inter-relationships of the different orders can more easily be seen and understood. The iceberg analogy also allows us to visually represent the effectiveness of collective, targeted initiatives through demonstrating the shrinking effect of the heat generated by such initiatives.

Philip Jennings
Coordinator Safer Blanchardstown

Melting the Iceberg of Intimidation

1.0 Introduction

Intimidation is a serious, insidious and coercive behaviour used by individual/s on others to force them to do something against their will. This behaviour affects victims, members of their family, their friends and the wider community in a variety of negative ways. We all have some idea of intimidation even without any direct personal experience. But we need to understand exactly what intimidation is, who intimidates, where it occurs, how it evolves and when a person is likely to be a victim if we are to tackle this issue in any significant way.

One way of understanding what intimidation is and the various effects intimidation has on a person, is to break the word down into its component parts i.e. to intimidate is to browbeat, bulldoze, cow, bully and bludgeon. These words all mean to frighten into submission, compliance, or agreement but each act has its own particular affect on an individual:

- To intimidate** implies the presence of a fear-inducing force or threat of force on a person, family or property.
- Browbeat** suggests the persistent use of highhanded, disdainful, or domineering tactics:
- Bulldoze** is to remove all spirit of opposition and develop feelings of complete helplessness and isolation
- To Cow** a person is to instil an abject state of timidity, demoralisation and of living in fear as a result of physical/mental abuse, threat or harassment.
- Bullies** intimidate through loud, overbearing, undermining insidious or threatening behaviours
- Bludgeon** is the use of violent and forceful methods to insure compliance of another person against their will (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/intimidation>)

1.1 Objective

- This paper aims to; (a) highlight who is likely to engage in intimidation (b) who is likely to be a victim (c) What are the causal factors leading to intimidation (e) suggest possible interventions (f) inform future research into intimidation.
- To assist partner agencies and the wider community to better respond to issues of drug related intimidation and to intimidation / harassment generally.

1.2 Methodology

The first and highly important aspect of the methodology consisted of face to face interviews with senior/outreach staff from the following agencies:

- Mulhuddart Community Youth Project (MCYP)
- Ladyswell National School
- Mulhuddart/Corduff Community Drug Team (M/CCDT)
- Local General Practitioner
- Blanchardstown Local Drugs Task Force Family Support Network
- Family Support, HSE
- Wellview Family Resource Centre
- Blanchardstown Garda Drugs Unit
- Local Community Development Project (LCDP)
- Public Health Nurse's
- Primary Care Team
- Social Workers

Question:

Each interviewee was asked the question; “The report *An Overview of Community Safety in Blanchardstown RAPID Areas 2010* showed that intimidation/harassment is an issue in Mulhuddart, from your experience, how does intimidation take place, what form/type of intimidation occurs and whom in your opinion are the main offenders & victims?”

Interviews were conducted by Coordinator (Local Policing Forum) Safer Blanchardstown Philip Jennings from August to October 2011. Responses were recorded, collated and de-personalised. Responses were also cross referenced with the minutes of Safer Blanchardstown Public meetings: since 2007 there have been a total of 9 public meetings held in Mulhuddart with an average attendance of 50 residents.

(See www.saferblanchardstown.com for full minutes of all public meetings)

The secondary mode of research was;

- An Overview of Community Safety in Blanchardstown RAPID Areas 2010
- Wider literature review
- Desk top trawl of internet published literature

The stimulus for this report is the factual evidence contained in *An Overview of Community Safety in Blanchardstown RAPID Areas 2010*. This evidence clearly shows (see excerpts from table 5.1 & 5.2 taken from the report below) that residents of Mulhuddart report that they suffer or are exposed to a number of incidents of intimidation/harassment that are significantly higher than residents in other parts of Blanchardstown.

Excerpts form *An Overview of Community Safety in Blanchardstown RAPID Areas (2010)*

TABLE 5.1: VICTIM OF CRIME or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months (Q.21 Pg 26)

		Mulhuddart**		Blakestown/Mountview		Corduff		Total	
	Harassment/ Intimidation	35	52.2%	20	13.5%	13	20.0%	68	24.3%

** Indicates significant difference from other areas of $p \leq 0.01$

Table 5.2 Crimes or anti-social behaviour witnessed by respondents in the last 12 months (Q.22 Pg 27)

		Mulhuddart**		Blakestown/Mountview		Corduff		Total	
	Harassment/ Intimidation	57	82.6%	39	32.8%	35	54.7%	131	52.0%

** Indicates significant difference from other areas of $p \leq 0.01$

A result is deemed statistically significant if such a result would be expected to arise simply by chance only in rare circumstances

NB* Responses and comments from interviewees/public meetings are reproduced in the text boxes found throughout this report

“There is a general sense of fear and intimidation in the Wellview area. Residents are afraid to pass (known) gang members on the street. This is a result of constant anti-social and criminal behaviour associated with particular individuals. These individuals constantly threaten residents, steal and damage cars, rob from peoples homes, go around the estate drunk/stoned and provoke/start/take part in drunken brawls”

Responses and comments from interviewees

Although intimidation is a widespread, national and international phenomenon that affects many citizens in almost every State, there has been little or no substantial study into the phenomenon of drug or community related intimidation. The prevailing literature relates mainly to intimidation of witnesses, business related intimidation and to the physical affects of intimidation.

Published articles, in the main, relate to how intimidation is taking place, which is the physical manifestation of drug debt, threats, beatings, property damage etc. They do not begin to determine how intimidation develops and persists in a particular community or society as a whole. Examples of such publications would be the National Family Support Network; *Intimidation of Families; March 2009* and; Drugnet Ireland reported on *Debt-related Intimidation of Drug Users and their Families* (May2011).

In the Drugnet article Johnny Connolly of the Health Research Board highlighted “*the limited knowledge base in this area and the general failure of research and other information sources historically to properly reflect the local impact of drug-related crime and intimidation on the individuals, families and communities most affected.*” He cited a recent Limerick study by Hourigan et al (see below) to illustrate the way in which gangs can employ a variety of strategies, from serious violence to verbal abuse and vandalism by young children, to instil fear and impose territorial control on communities. Recommendations in the Limerick study tended to be on a grander scale relating to wider national policy level changes rather than directed at ground level interventions.

1.3 Geographical scope

The geographical scope of this study included the Electoral Divisions of Tyrrelstown, with a population of 2922 and Mulhuddart with a population of 3866 (Census Ireland 2011)

2.0 Understanding the issue

2.1 Choice

In order to understand and predict whether or not an individual will become embroiled in gang membership and intimidation or become a victim we need to look at the issue in its entirety. In other words we cannot randomly locate intimidation in any one activity, sector, age or group in the community, but instead view intimidation as a dynamic part of a community. For intimidation to be effective within a community a collection of beliefs must exist that supports its development and continuation.

One crucial factor worth bearing in mind when examining intimidation is the concept of choice. Very often a person's lifestyle is reasoned in terms of personal and individual choice. But we do not have a choice in who our parents are, the family we will be born into, the supports that will be provided by our parents, the home we are raised in, the street we live on or the school we will attend. Yet each of these factors has a significant character forming and forceful influence on our early personal development and will have a dramatic impact on many of our lifestyle choices in the future. However, we do not remain children all our lives and at some point we must begin to accept responsibility for our actions. These life stages, early childhood and early adulthood, and their impact on each other are crucial considerations in terms of targeted responses.

Many studies catalogue in detail the physical, emotional and financial effects that intimidation has on individuals, families or the local community, while others focus their attention on gang formation. Examples of the latter are *Into the Abyss* by Mike Carlyle PhD and Gardner, 1992 who states that "*Gangs come into existence and flourish because the needs of the young people in a neighbourhood or culture or family are not being met. The gang, in essence, fills the void.*" Garry 1996 notes that "*Two friends playing booky may not fit the image most people have of a gang, but they have the potential of forming one. Left alone, the behaviour of the two boys may turn to other violations of law (i.e., loitering, disturbing the peace, being a public nuisance, theft, experimenting with drugs) and, were it to do so; more people would see them as a gang.*" By the two examples given above we can see that gang membership may serve a purpose i.e. filling of a void in a young person's life.

2.2 Advantaged of the Disadvantaged & Disadvantaged of the Disadvantaged (Hourigan et al 2011)

Understanding Limerick is an ethnographic three year sociological study into intimidation, fear and organised criminal activity in Limerick City carried out by Hourigan et al from 2007 to 2010. This study provides the most recent and relevant insight into the strategic use of behaviours such as violence, verbal abuse and vandalism by children to control communities.

Although Limerick is a large city with an ancient history and Mulhuddart is a relatively new estate on the edge of Blanchardstown, a suburb of Dublin, similarities between the residents of estates in Limerick and residents of Mulhuddart can be drawn. Indeed the clear distinction made by Hourigan between the "advantaged of the disadvantaged" and the "disadvantaged of the disadvantaged" illuminates clear and distinct aspects of living in a disadvantaged area.

In general, according to Hourigan, the advantaged of the disadvantaged would, even in single parent households, have stable family structures, enjoy extended family support and most likely be in, or have access to, some form of employment. They would be well clued in to other supports available in the community. For example members of this group would be sure to include their children in available youth and sports groups, ensure their children went to and stayed in school for as long as possible. In short they would have a measure of motivation and expectation of upward mobility for themselves and their children. In areas of disadvantage members of the advantaged of the disadvantaged would be more likely to be active citizens in their community, volunteer in local clubs/groups and be found on resident associations and estate management committees.

The "disadvantaged of the disadvantaged" on the other hand, in general, live in unstable family structures, experience addictions and invariably suffer from a lack of resources and money as a result. Such families tend to be unstable, their extended family, although important, would be a source of more harm than good through the stress caused by drug and alcohol misuse, violence and child neglect. Another significant factor for some of the children of the disadvantaged of the disadvantaged is the absence of a stable male role model in the family. Although the use of alcohol and drugs may provide

the parents with some short term relief from stress, it steals their emotional and psychological energy, leaving little for child rearing responsibilities. Dunn et al found that addicted parents are three times more likely to neglect their children than those with no serious addiction. Further these parents, in the main, would have been early school leavers and therefore may not recognise the value of education. As a result their children are more likely to begin to fall behind at a very early stage of the educational cycle.

“There is an absolute correlation between those who have left school early and those who are involved in drug/alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour, criminal activity and intimidation, just look at the history”

Responses and comments from interviewees

The disadvantaged of the disadvantaged can constitute a small number of people who may be known to most residents and service providers in the area. It is this cohort that may be seen to cause the majority of trouble in areas and who absorb the majority of agency resources. Also, people drawn from this cohort may sometimes go on to join and form gangs.

It is important that the distinction between the advantaged of the disadvantaged and the disadvantaged of the disadvantaged is recognised as a first step to mapping social exclusion and intimidation and, importantly, in identifying the existence of the resource pool from which future gang members, drug mis-users and intimidators may be drawn.

2.3 Iceberg analogy

If we conceptualise and visualise the problem of intimidation as an iceberg we can more easily see how best to approach the problem. In order to reduce the size of an iceberg the least effective approach would be to try to remove a piece from the top (head) as the removed section will soon grow back (be replaced from below) and the iceberg would soon gain its original size. But if a slice is removed from the bottom, no matter how small, the iceberg will sink and it will not be able to replace the removed section. Another way of reducing the overall size of an iceberg is to apply heat to the sloping sides which will cause the iceberg to melt, shrink in size and sink lower in the water. Again this method reduces the opportunity for the iceberg to replenish its lost mass.

“Intimidation in Mulhuddart can best be described as physical, psychological and emotional. Cars are attacked & house windows broken mainly at night time”.

Responses and comments from interviewees

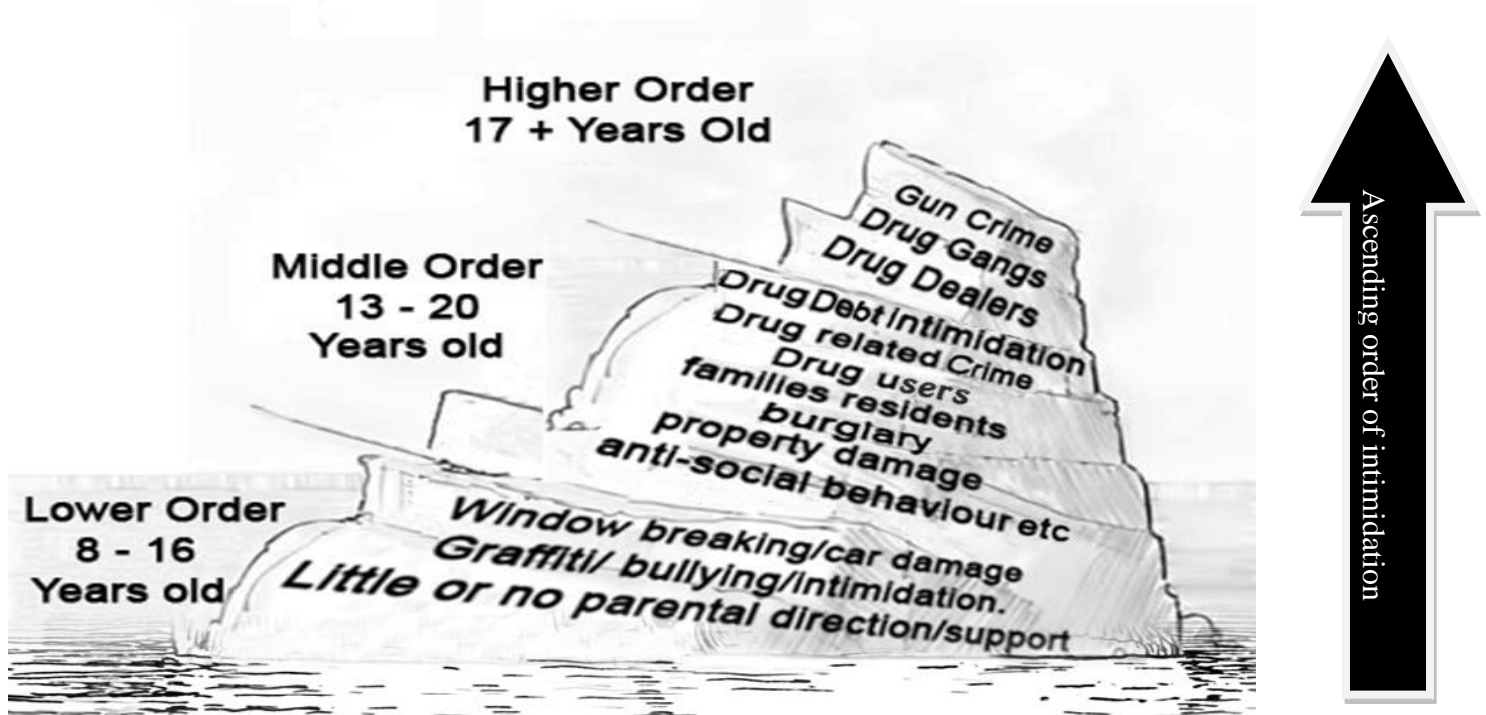
3.0 Lower Order

3.1 Iceberg of intimidation

Figure 1 is a diagrammatical representation of the various aspects of intimidation and is presented in the form of an iceberg and in a lower, middle and higher order of intimidation. Graphically it shows the typical progression or ascending order/pathway of development that a young child who, without support or intervention, may be socialised into becoming a perpetrator of intimidation within his/her community.

Figure 1

Iceberg of Intimidation



This structure could well have been presented as low, middle and high levels of intimidation but it was felt that to use the word “low level” to describe intimidation by young children would somehow diminish the severity of the affects such intimidation has on victims and the wider community and its potential to develop into something much more sinister. It may also dilute the fact that there is a real ascending order to intimidation locally and, possibly, to intimidation in general.

*“This intimidation is very debilitating with no let up, older boys move on and the younger ones take over”.
“Younger brothers and sisters are encouraged to get involved with this kind of intimidation”*

Responses and comments from interviewees

3.2 Making the connections

Structured interviews coupled with resident's contributions at Safer Blanchardstown public meetings and at other fora confirmed that interrelated intimidation takes place in Mulhuddart and that intimidation at the lower order has a direct link to intimidation which takes place at the middle and, possibly, the higher orders.

Those in the lower order are young children bullying, assaulting, stealing, vandalising and spreading fear within the community, often directed to do so by older siblings and friends. Children may be directed to intimidate those who are thought to be talking to the Gardaí/Local Authority. This intimidation can take the form of breaking of windows, property damage, name calling, racial slurs and harassment of children in the street etc.

"Some young 15/16 year olds target vulnerable women in the area and demand and get €20 or €30 from them.

"If offenders think you gave names to Gardaí your house will be targeted"

"Residents are scared to give names of youth to Gardaí because of intimidation"

"After complaining to youths parents, hall door had paint smeared on it".

Responses and comments from interviewees

These incidents can have negative impacts on the community through the spreading of fear; feelings of being helpless and isolated, reduced quality of life, and negative mental and physical health of residents. What the World Health Organisation refers to as the social determinants of health. (*See also Mountview and Blakestown Health Action Plan 2010*) In conducting these interviews it was found that resident's confidence in the authorities to do anything about their plight is also adversely affected by persistent anti-social behaviour. Some residents are fearful of leaving their homes in the evening due to gangs drinking in the area who often demand cigarettes and insist that residents go to the off licence for them.

"Residents, especially older residents, will not go to the shops once it gets dark"

"Non Irish national residents constantly suffer from racial comments and name calling when leaving their homes"

Responses and comments from interviewees

These young people are supported in their behaviour through:

- (a) Encouragement by older siblings, extended family and friends from within the middle/higher order
- (b) A lack of parental control, boundaries, structure or direction in their lives

"What is worrying is that the 10/11 year old brother of the main offenders is now becoming more and more involved"

"Young children 14, to 16 year olds are running wild around the estates with nobody taking responsibility for them"

Responses and comments from interviewees

3.3 Indicators

Significant indicators for those who are more likely than others to become involved in alcohol/drug misuse, intimidation and other criminal behaviour are; early school leaving, low educational attainment, low school attendance and early exclusion from school coupled with a lack of parental support. The Steering Group on the National Substance Misuse Strategy, February 2012 states that *"there is clear evidence that early school leaving increases the risk of harmful alcohol consumption"*. More worryingly research conducted on behalf on the Aislinn Adolescent Addiction Treatment Centre (2009) which interviewed 1000 teenagers over 15 years of age found that alcohol was a gateway to illicit drug use for adolescents.

"The parents of these young children are more often in denial and will never admit that their son/daughter is involved in anything"

"There is a lack of parental control of young children; parents need to be held responsible for their children's actions"

Responses and comments from interviewees

Trutz Haase published a comprehensive report for the *National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD)* of early school leavers and school attending students which demonstrated that substance use among early school leavers is significantly higher than among school attending students. Another important factor highlighted by this research is that contact with parents is associated with lower propensity to use substances. In other words a lack of parental contact (control, support or direction) coupled with problematic school attendance may be considered to be among the primary indicators of problems in the future.

An important pull factor for children from the disadvantaged of the disadvantaged families is that being a gang member can provide a welcome relief from emotional, physical, and financial poverty. Gang membership can and does provide access to peer group status; respect and financial reward (see Carlyle 1992). These children may over time learn they can say and do what they like to adult neighbours without fear of retribution from their parents. Neighbours learn that it is pointless to approach the parents of the child as no corrective action will be taken against the child.

“Unlike other parents the parents of these children will always defend their children’s behaviour”

Responses and comments from interviewees

It must be noted that not every resident living in Mulhuddart has experienced intimidation/harassment or incidents of anti-social behaviour. Areas within areas exist and this fact can determine whether or not a person may become a victim. Becoming a victim or not can also very much depend on who your neighbours are.

“One family that I deal with has lived for many years in the Dromheath area and has never had any cause for complaint. They put this down to living in a quieter part of the estate”

Responses and comments from interviewees

In the course of conducting these interviews a significant fear factor which neighbours must take into account was identified; which is who a child is related to. As a consequence of challenging the parents of a child causing trouble homes are likely to be attacked, thus initiating intimidation. The law states that *“It shall be conclusively presumed that no child under the age of 12 years is capable of committing an offence”* 52.—(1) Children’s Act 2001. Vulnerable adult victims of this type of behaviour must and do learn to cope in this environment.

“People just want to leave the estate”

“Older (17 & 18 year olds) youths are forming gangs with younger children in the area”

“Evidence on the ground (Parslickstown) is that the 17 year olds are selling drugs to 11 & 12 year olds who are in turn dealing to their peers.”

Responses and comments from interviewees

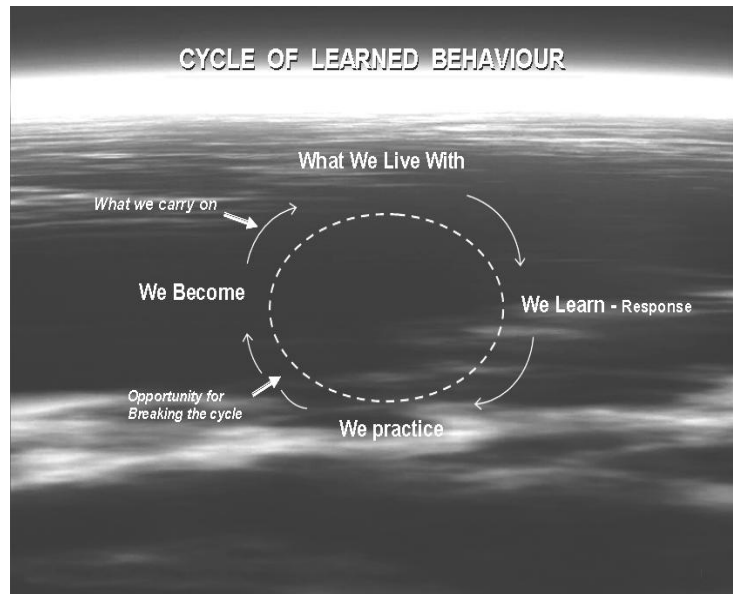
Some young children live on the margin of gang membership and are drawn into the gang despite parental best efforts. Some parents struggle to maintain control over their children but, reasonably, they cannot watch them every time they leave the house

“One mother will always ensure that her son attends groups at the proper times and likes to get a call when he is finished. She keeps a tight control on him as much as she can but when he is around the estate with his friends he is as bad as any of them”

Responses and comments from interviewees

3.4 Socialisation

Figure 2 (opposite) Taken from *Tolka River Rehabilitation Project 2007* graphically illustrates the vortex of learned behaviour which can allow for the socialisation of a community into living and coping with intimidation/harassment on a daily basis. Fortunately this illustration also indicates an opportunity for breaking the cycle of learned behaviour with direct accurate and timely intervention. Systems need to be put in place that allow for the identification, flagging and proactive targeting of young people in respect to key indicators of future involvement in substance use, anti-social behaviour and intimidation. For example key indicators may include evidence of parental neglect, low school attendance or becoming involved in lower order intimidation.



The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) in their position paper *Shifting Focus: From Criminal Justice to Social Justice* quoted from a Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform report which called for “an increased emphasis to be placed on preventative measures and early interventions which should form a key component of any youth justice system”. Prevention and early intervention through the provision of supports and services to children, families and communities are well recognised as important steps to preventing crime and breaking the cycle of poverty, crime and imprisonment “Early intervention should be a fundamental principle and a key target of all crime prevention Strategies.”

An example of such an intervention is the Interagency Working Agreement group (IWA) for Mulhuddart/Corduff which has developed protocols for sharing of relevant, confidential information between all agencies working with young children and their families in order to provide them with appropriate and timely supports. The IWA will be piloted for one year from January 2013 to January 2014 in the Mulhuddart/Corduff area. The agreement will adhere to current best practice, HSE Children First Guidelines and work closely with the Fingal Children’s Services Committee. It is important that all service providers in Mulhuddart support this progressive initiative.

However one of the stated aims of the IWA should be the reduction of anti-social behaviour and intimidation in Mulhuddart/Corduff through improvements in low school attendance, low educational attainment, reductions in school suspensions, reductions in expulsions from school, increasing numbers of students completing second level and progressing on to third level education. In other words tackling the “early indicators” of problem behaviour by providing timely, targeted, multi-agency interventions.

“The hard to reach families, the ones we really need to be working with, will never give consent for multi agency support. They pick and choose which agencies they will allow into their homes. In this way they maintain control over the situation which allows the cycle (of bad behaviour) to continue.

Responses and comments from interviewees

3.5 Drawback

One drawback to operating the IWA is one of consent. Consent is really about the power to choose. For example the power of parents to choose what is best for their children. However as individuals and parents, we seldom knowingly or willingly make a choice that introduces stress or strain into our daily lives. This position is also true for some hard to reach parents/families. They may choose to remain in a particular situation because to change could introduce stress through challenging the status quo, and one way of doing this is by using their power of consent. Some parents can and do choose which agencies they will consent to allow into their homes and which ones they will refuse entry. This cherry-picking of services has two possible affects 1) children in the home receive a reduced service 2) agencies may be fearful of being too challenging in case they be directed to leave the home. As stated earlier, young children have no choice in the parents/home/area/school/supports they are born into and are therefore powerless to decide their own future.

The notion that all parents, including hard to reach parents/families, should have the power to choose to refuse consent in cases where it is evident that a multiagency approach would yield benefits for their children and the wider community needs to be challenged. One possible way of overcoming this refusal of consent that needs to be considered and discussed is to provide such parents with a menu of relevant supports based on initial assessment. This menu must be taken in its entirety by such parents, no cherry-picking, all services on the menu must be given access to home and children, if not then all services should be withdrawn until such time as consent is given. By “leveraging” consent in this way young children and parents will receive necessary supports, the community will experience an increase in quality of life and Local Authority and Gardaí will have reduced costs further down the line.

Importantly, in considering opportunities for breaking the cycle we must not lose sight of the active citizenship engaged in by the advantaged of the disadvantaged. For example this group do not only volunteer on residents associations and estate management groups but are also found on a range of programmes supported by Fingal County Council. They volunteer as adult leaders of youth groups and as community representatives on Boards such as RAPID, Safer Blanchardstown and others. Their activities are extremely important to the development of workable “bottom-up” interventions in the area through the provision and promotion of the more universal social supports needed in a community.

Every effort should be made to expand this group, or to significantly increase local support of their activities by developing hands on opportunities for residents to effectively address the problems which exist in their area. An example of a hands on opportunity would be the family fun-days organised by Fingal County Council in association with other agencies and local residents. Also Garda Problem Solving training is currently being rolled out across Blanchardstown targeting agency staff and residents. Problem Solving uses a model of Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (SARA) to develop effective integrated responses to problems identified in the community.

Garda Problem Solving is emerging as the primary method for identifying the underlying causes of issues that exist in an area that have been identified by residents. Garda Problem Solving is a multi-agency approach that, importantly, involves residents at every stage of developing an intervention that does not contravene the statutory responsibilities of agencies such as Fingal County Council, the HSE or Gardaí.

Lower Order - Recommendations

Recommendation 1

All agencies working in Mulhuddart should support the Interagency Working Agreement. The principle aim of the IWA should be, through the provision of appropriate supports, an increase in educational attainment, the reduction in the number of young people with a low school attendance, at risk of suspension/exclusion from school or who have come to the attention of Fingal County Council/Gardaí in relation to anti-social behaviour harassment or intimidation.

Recommendation 2

An interagency group be set up to discuss the possibility of challenging, in some way, hard to reach parents/families who may be guilty of cherry-picking supports and services.

Recommendation 3

Members of local residents associations, active citizens and other interested residents to be invited to participate in Garda Problem Solving training and facilitated and supported in applying such training to the resolution of problems in the area as identified by residents/agencies.

Recommendation 4

That agencies work collaboratively to develop hands on initiatives aimed at maximising the involvement of the existing pool of active citizens, increase local support for the work of this group and, where possible, increase their number. This will directly and positively affect the lived experiences and quality of life for all the residents of Mulhuddart

NB* The above recommendations are aimed at taking a slice from the bottom of the iceberg of intimidation see figure 2 below.

Figure 2



4.0 Middle Order Drug Dealers

The middle order is where the most prolific offenders of drug debt intimidation and of all crime types operate. Members of this group are most likely to be early school leavers, unemployed and engaged in misusing drugs and alcohol, possibly from an early age. It is often stated that the majority of crime is drug related, indeed Connolly (2006) states that *“Most Irish drug users who receive sentences of imprisonment are punished for offences committed as a consequence of their drug use, such as theft from the person, burglary, larceny or prostitution.”* Connolly further states that research studies have identified this clear link between some forms of illicit drug use and crime; findings which are consistent throughout criminological literature. For example Ian O’Donnell et al of the School of Law UCD in their paper *Where Prisoners Come From (2007)* states that *“the most disadvantaged urban communities seem to produce the offenders who are imprisoned for violence, robbery, drug and property offences. The link between drug use, addiction and crime has been established by international and Irish research. This would indicate that those involved in burglaries, theft and other criminal activity in order to feed a chaotic drugs habit reside in the middle order.*

The middle order is where most of the drug related intimidation takes place and from which stems the criminal activity that financially supports those caught up in addiction. This position is supported by responses made by interviewees. Importantly one must not forget that the middle order draws its members from the lower order and so any reduction in the numbers operating at this middle order will inevitably reduce demand for replacements from the lower order.

“In the past I had to pay my child’s drug debts to dealers, but the dealers were mainly drug users themselves that I knew personally. They would have been childhood friends of my children. The only way out was to pay, in some cases the dealers themselves would die and the debt would die with them. In my experience the intimidation was mainly between drug users that were known to each other and their families.”

Responses and comments from interviewees

Drug users invariably “deal” drugs to each other (thereby becoming drug dealers) to make a profit to feed their own habit. In other words many of the local ‘dealers’ are local drug users wheeling and dealing in the middle order. The profit and loss aspect is where the most violence or threat of violence stems from with the main emphasis being on the loss side. If drugs are lost, used, stolen or seized by Gardaí they will still have to be paid for. Innocent immediate and extended family members of those who owe money for drugs are most often the target as the drug user will not have money with which to repay the debt. This is where local communities also become victims, especially the more vulnerable members. Indeed some drug users have been known to intimidate their own family members into paying for daily drugs habit.

“Some drug users intimidate their parents, siblings and even grandparents into paying for their drugs. These family members are terrified and have nowhere to go for help”

Responses and comments from interviewees

Another evidential indicator for the existence of the middle order is the Family Support Network report into *Intimidation of Families in March 2009* which found *“62.5% of respondents stated that intimidation originated from a drug debt worth €500 or less.”* These sums may indicate an upper level of the financial scale at which the middle order operates. In turn this sum may also reflect a lower average income ceiling of residents and why it is that such a relatively small sum would cause such hardship for the parents and extended families of those being intimidated.

“In the main people contact the service for a positive outcome, help or to begin a course. They are in general fed up with their chaotic drug taking lifestyle and wish to change. They do not contact the service if they are experiencing or have experienced intimidation in the past; they wish to begin to leave all that behind them However some forms of intimidation do get spoken about in the course of key work with clients, especially intimidation by drug users of drug users.”

Responses and comments from interviewees

4.1 Breaking the cycle

The middle order is a distinct and identifiable group which exists and are deeply involved in drug use and the criminal activity that can go hand in hand with such behaviour. Members of this group would, again, be known to local residents and to service providers working with older youths and adults. This group may also have been negatively impacted upon by early childhood environment and experiences but are now, possibly, at an age where they need to take, or to be given an opportunity to take, responsibility for their own behaviour.

The lives and behaviour of human beings are governed to some degree by external forces which may be compared to flowing water in that we will almost always choose to travel along a path of least resistance wherever possible. Members of the middle order can find it easier to remain in their addictive pattern of behaviour, until something dramatic happens, which makes addressing their habit easier than not addressing their habit. The challenge for agencies working on the ground is to develop strategies to construct barriers to remaining with the flow of addictive behaviour and develop strategies of directive pathways to behavioural change. One possible means of constructing such barriers and pathways is to develop a Prolific & Priority Offenders group.

“For drug users trying to address their drug misuse habit there is the problem of their past catching up on them. It’s true that many will have a history full of negative experiences with the Gardaí. But when they are really trying the fact that the Gardaí will regularly stop & search and generally hassle clients makes it very difficult for them to remain motivated.”

Responses and comments from interviewees

4.2 Prolific & Priority Offenders

Prolific & Priority Offender (PPO) groups are by no means a new and novel approach to dealing with aspects of community safety. For example PPO’s are in widespread use in England, Wales, Scotland, Canada, USA and Australia. The UK home office web site describes PPO’s as *“An approach that effectively manages offenders who are identified as committing a disproportionate amount of crime and harm in their local communities.”* PPO schemes have been successful in reducing re-offending rates among targeted offenders. The latest data shows that during 2009-10, there was an overall reduction of 39 per cent in recorded re-convictions across England and Wales among 10,635 prolific and other priority offenders, compared to the year before.

In 2000 the Irish Prison Service introduced computer based recording system known as PRIS which allowed academics for the first time to conduct a comprehensive study of where prisoners come from, what is known about the community contexts from which they are drawn and to which they will likely return.

In health research it is common to use the concept of a Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR). This is the ratio of the number of events observed in a population to the number that would be expected if the population had the same distribution as a standard or reference population, such as the whole country. For this study the concept has been adapted to give a Standardised Prisoner Ratio (SPR) for an Electoral Division (ED) namely the observed number of prisoners divided by the expected number given the age-redistribution of the ED. O’Donnell et al used Standardised Prisoner Ratio (SPR) to identify a number of Dublin suburbs as having high SPR’s, one of which is Mulhuddart. O’Donnell et al reported that in the most deprived areas of the country there were 145.9 prisoners per 10,000 populations in contrast to 6.3 in the least deprived areas. The scale of this difference is startling and demonstrates clearly that it is the areas already marked by serious disadvantage that must bear the brunt of the social problems that accompany released prisoners. Fagan (2004) asserts that *“Incarceration begets more incarceration, and incarceration also begets more crime, which in turn invites more aggressive enforcement, which then resupplies incarceration.”* As stated above, according to UK Home Office figures, interventions such as PPO provides the tool and opportunity to break this crime- incarceration- crime cycle.

In short the PPO group works to:

- Identify group of offenders that meets the threshold for prolific and priority offender
- Name individuals within this group
- Identify what agencies (if any) individuals are engaging with
- Identify what agencies individuals should be engaging with and promote same
- Colour code individuals in relation to engagement with PPO vs. engagement in criminal activity
 1. Green = Low Level offending = high level of support
 2. Orange = Medium Level offending = continued support available/provided plus visit from Community Garda & warning given
 3. Red = High Level offending = Target, arrest and convict
- Identification of those who are likely to become PPOs in the future
- Prevent and deter this group
- Work with individual/s while in prison in order to bring individual/s back to Green upon release.

At the outset this process would be explained fully to targeted PPO individuals or families. In other words the offender must take on personal responsibility for their future and continued behaviour based on the path of least resistance. In this way we can visualise the PPO process as applying heat to the sides of the iceberg of intimidation causing it to melt and further reduce in size.

Usually prolific offenders are made up of a small number of offenders in a community that are responsible for a high proportion of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. The aim of PPO's is to "target harden" such groups using a multi agency carrot and stick approach with full disclosure of information between the agencies on the PPO.

The aim of the PPO group is to more effectively catch, bring to justice and rehabilitate the core group of prolific offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime using a prevent and deter, catch and convict, and rehabilitate and resettle model.

Prevent and Deter:

This strand has a focus on three specific target groups within the overall objective of preventing those most at risk becoming the prolific offenders in the future:

- Young offenders, who are not yet prolific
- Older children and young people at high risk of criminality
- Children who need early intervention programmes

Catch and Convict:

This strand requires that the criminal justice agencies work together to ensure effective investigation, charging and prosecution of prolific and priority offenders. Attention is paid to the time it takes to bring offenders to justice and attrition rates (rates of behavioural change).

Rehabilitate and Resettle:

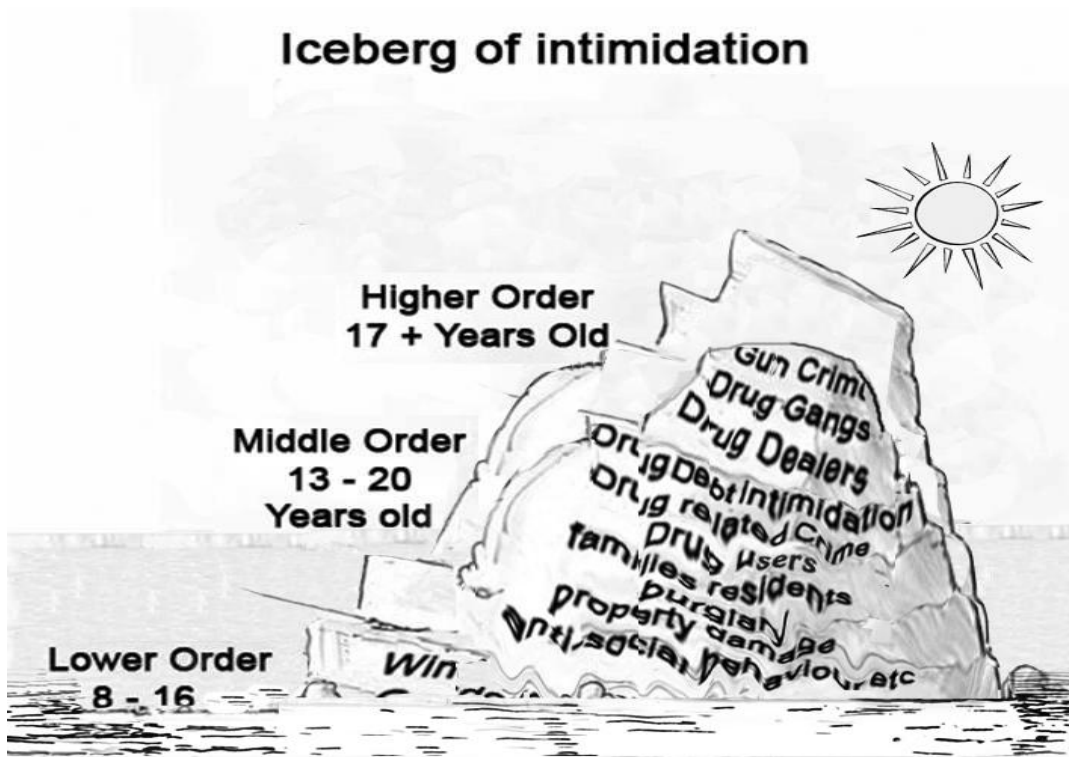
This strand is about presenting the prolific and priority offenders with a simple choice – the opportunity to reform or face a very swift return to court should they re-offend or fail to comply with the conditions of court orders. This approach needs to be supported within the context of locally agreed and implemented rehabilitation plans.

4.3 Advantage of PPO

The PPO approach allows for the more streamlining, effective and efficient application of scarce resources across a wide range of agencies. Those needing help and willing to engage with workers on the ground can be identified and appropriate help accurately put in place, reducing the need for unnecessary duplication of resources. More effective information gathering (in relation to behaviour) will happen as there are more eyes on the ground (agency workers) reporting on progress, if any, to PPO group. Gardaí on the PPO will know who is trying by attending programmes, back in education etc. and can concentrate on actual offenders. This allows for accurate direction of resources and provides support for the work of key workers and those participants really trying to address the causal factors associated with criminal activity.

At present individuals who seek out services in Mulhuddart receive support that is delivered in a timely and professional manner. It also seems clear from the evidence supplied by workers on the ground and family support group members, that persons in the middle order may, and sometimes do, eventually come to their senses, seek help and address their behaviour. If this point of awareness can be speeded up by applying heat to the side of the iceberg of intimidation (middle order) through the operation of a PPO group then the size of the iceberg and the appeal for those in the lower order to join the middle order will be reduced appreciably. In turn this will improve the quality of life for residents, boost community confidence and improve community relations for a wide range of agencies.

Figure 3



Middle Order - Recommendation

Recommendation 5

A multi agency Prolific Priority Offender Group be set up and piloted in Mulhuddart with the express intention of intervening to reduce the number of individuals engaged in or likely to become engaged in prolific offending in the Mulhuddart area.

5. Higher Order

5.1 The real money

The higher order is where the serious players reside and those gang members and leaders who actively defend and try to expand their share of the drugs market. It is this group who are responsible for the serious intimidation and murders commonly understood to be associated with drug dealing and where the real money lies. It is imperative if we wish to make any significant impact upon the issue of serious drug related intimidation at the higher order, that we tackle the issue in a holistic manner that takes account of the interrelated and progressive nature of intimidation between higher, middle and lower orders and the criminality associated with the real money.

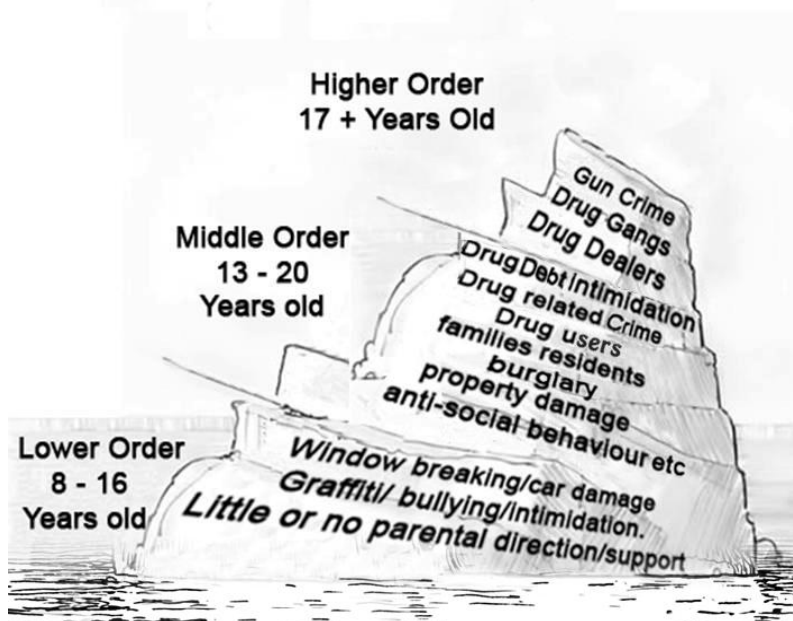
In order to understand where the real money is generated it is necessary to briefly examine this upper end of the drugs market. The drugs market is made up essentially of two distinct end user groups (a) regular users (b) casual, occasional or recreational users. Regular users would be those people who use drugs every day and would be a dependable steady source of income for the supplier that keeps the “business” going.

As a consequence of conducting these interviews a pattern emerged that allows us to draw an analogy with the local pub. People who go to the pub daily or on a regular basis enable the landlord to pay the rent, heat, light and staff wage bills. It’s at the weekend however; when the casual drinkers come out that the publican makes the real money. Likewise with the drugs suppliers, it’s at the weekend when the casual recreational users order their small bit of hash/cocaine etc. that the real money is made and it is this real money that attracts the serious violence. It is essential that the link between casual recreational drug use of a small bit of hash, the real money, the devastating serious violence and the lower/middle order intimidation is made.

Consideration must be taken of the devastating fear that residents have with regards to drugs activities. This fear is exacerbated when a drug related murder is committed in the locality. As a consequence of the interrelated nature of intimidation residents will attribute a relationship between those at the lower orders and those at the higher order even where this is not warranted. This fear will be picked up by those in the lower order whose swagger and power to intimidate will increase. It is this descending fear that imposes the most corrosive aspect of intimidation on an individual, family or community.....Silence.

Figure 4

Iceberg of Intimidation



“The most difficult aspect of intimidation is one of secrecy and silence. If a person is too frightened or terrified of reporting intimidation/harassment then this hidden aspect is the most corrosive and leads to isolation and mental health problems”.

Responses and comments from interviewees

Through systematically reducing the size of the iceberg by the recommended interventions above the higher order will become incrementally exposed. Those at the top of the iceberg who depend on silence and fear to maintain their position will come into clearer focus for the Gardaí. If we further consider all the chaotic activity at the lower and middle orders as noise, then as the noise from below is reduced we provide an opportunity for the Gardaí to listen more intently to the hushed movements from those at the higher order (top of the iceberg).

5.2 Community Support

The law is very black and white in regards to giving evidence relating to drug debt intimidation. Persons being intimidated must identify their tormentor to Gardaí who must in turn pass on the name of complainant to the offender’s solicitor. Understandably residents are not prepared to do this as they know the court process is long, their name and address will be given to the perpetrator along with the nature of the complaint, this leaves people very vulnerable and serves, in the main, to guarantee their silence.

One way of overcoming this obstacle is to confidentially give the information to the Gardaí, without committing to going to court. Gardaí will not be able to arrest those engaged in drug debt intimidation for the offence of intimidation at this point, but will be able to support victims of intimidation through target hardening of the individuals involved. As a result Gardaí become aware of the person/s involved in intimidation whom they may not have been aware of before. Such information can be used as part of Garda intelligence gathering to build a case against particular individuals. They can be watched and other information could become available that will allow Gardaí to search this persons home. This may lead to drugs, stolen goods or other contraband being found which in turn could lead to a prosecution in court and a jail sentence.

Victims however are very fearful of meeting the Gardaí even in private for fear of being found out. But victims may approach people working in the community they themselves trust and to whom they relate their experience of intimidation. For example trusted people may be Drug Team Workers, Teachers, Social Worker, Doctors, Priests, Community Development Worker or Support Worker...essentially any person working in the community or even a close friend. Not all of these people will know how or to whom they should or could pass this information on to.

A Community Information Network (CIN) to become a conduit of information relating to intimidation to the Gardaí should be developed and promoted among all those working in the community. This CIN would greatly support the initiative recently developed by Gardaí and the National Family Support Network (Appendix 1) that now has in place a designated senior Garda at the rank of Inspector to coordinate reports of drug debt intimidation at a local level. This would allow residents to speak in confidence to people they know and trust and Gardaí can be confident that the information being passed on is as accurate as possible. The aim of this Community Information Network would be to serve as a conduit of relevant information from the community to the Gardaí, to build confidence in residents and encourage victims of drug debt intimidation to meet privately with the Gardaí.

It must be noted that the Gardaí meet regularly with Fingal County Council to discuss and exchange information on issues relating to anti-social behaviour, intimidation and harassment. Therefore the Community Information Network will benefit and support existing information gathering initiatives of both Fingal County Council and the Gardaí.

Higher Order - Recommendations

Recommendation 6

Develop an initiative to expose the link between casual recreational drug use, the real money and the resulting devastating serious violence. This may be achieved through an awareness raising campaign coupled with exposure of “the real money link” by all public representatives and Gardaí, in written and spoken media, as and when the opportunity arises.

Recommendation 7

A Community Information Network be developed and promoted among all those working in the drugs field or community sector in Blanchardstown area providing the name and contact details of the designated Inspector who will act as the Liaison Officer for Blanchardstown.

7. Invest To Save

7.1 Agency Reward

The invest-to-save approach yields gains some years away and is therefore not so attractive to programme/agency managers in these financially stringent times. But early intervention and prevention, in general, is always more cost-effective than responding to incidents when they happen. It has been estimated that for every €1 spent on intervention a further €10 is saved in social and economic costs of problematic activity in the future.

Consider the comments of Justice Michael Reilly Inspector of Prisons when he stated that “prisons should not be the sole preserve of the disadvantaged” (*White Paper on Crime Consultation May 2010*) and O’Donnell (1997) who identified that; Irish prisons are clogged up with members of the lower socio-economic groups. So given that the vast majority of the prisoner population comes from areas of disadvantage then it is not so difficult to work out the potential cost benefit to the public purse by investing to save in specific targeted interventions.

Nationally, the prisoner population stood at 4,276 in May 2010 at a cost of €92,717 per prisoner per annum (since reduced to €77,500 approx), which equates to approximately €400 million. As stated, in the main, the prisoner population is drawn from areas of disadvantage. In light of the evidence presented in this paper we could drill down further and argue that in reality the prisoner population is drawn from an even smaller cohort; from among the disadvantaged of the disadvantaged.

It has often been stated that 5% of the people from disadvantaged areas cause 80%+ of all the trouble and absorb the majority of available resources in particular areas. If so we can assume that the prisoner population is drawn from this 5%. If by the targeted implementation of the interventions recommended above the offending 5% in any area were reduced to 4% this would translate into a 1/5th or 20% reduction in offending behaviour in that area. At this stage, it is quite difficult to accurately attribute the financial savings that may be made in any specific area if such a reduction was achieved. If the same outcome could be affected nationally, then the savings to the state could be estimated (based on 2010 estimates) as approximately €80m to the Irish Prison Service alone (€400m divided by 5). Savings to court, Gardaí, Local authority and other agencies costs would be in addition to this substantial sum.

By operating IWA ,PPO and CIN groups along with Garda problem solving we may be able to accurately localise and measure, to some extent at least, outcomes from specific interventions. Additionally by using Problem Solving to identify issues of concern that residents wish agencies to tackle, it may be possible to more effectively cost interventions and measure financial benefits by using existing tools. For example, the UK Home Office figures for certain crime types can be used to convert performance into savings, see Figure 5 below. This will allow participating agencies to convert staff time engaged on particular interventions into real financial cost benefits.

Figure 5

Crime type	Cost per crime in £Stg	€
Violence Against The Person	22,800	26,909
Homicide	1,320,000	1,558,000
Wounding	21,000	24,783
Serious Wounding	156,000	184,096
Common Assault	648	764.
Sexual Offences	22,800	26,912
Robbery	5,640	6,657
Burglary	2,340	2,762
Theft	720	849
Vehicle theft	890	1,050
Criminal Damage	612	722
Burglary non-dwelling	3,240	3,824
Theft form shop	120	141
Robbery or till snatch	6,000	7,081

Source; UK Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Unit 2010

Recommendation 8

Tools be developed to allocate projected savings to the Criminal Justice System to projects operating local initiatives and interventions. Initially projected savings may have to be measured against reductions in indicators of future problem/criminal activity. Over time savings can be measured against actual reductions in criminal activity and prisoner numbers.

Recommendation 9

Given the limited research that could be accessed in the writing of this report, further research, possibly at a national level, into drug debt intimidation needs to take place in order to better inform workers, local communities and wider Irish society on how to best tackle this devastating behaviour.

Conclusion

The English language may be inadequate in its description of the range of debilitating behaviours it describes under the umbrella of “intimidation”. It is even more so when drug debt is added to the mix and brings a whole new meaning to the word “intimidation”. As has been shown in this study intimidation and drug debt intimidation are extremely complex issues to deal with. But when intimidation and drug debt intimidation are seen as behaviours which have a genesis not only in early childhood but also in the wider socialisation process in a community then we can visualise ways in which the issue can be tackled effectively.

Visualising intimidation as an iceberg helps us to understand that this seemingly overwhelming problem can be effectively tackled. The ordering helps us to focus our attention on the various stages of the issue while at the same time recognising the link between each stage, and to realise that by the application of effective interventions drug debt intimidation can be significantly reduced. The deliberate ordering in terms of lower, middle and higher order further allows us to understand the role of players at the different stages. Understanding this ordering will allow us to link interventions through collaborative working and the application of a collective aim of reducing drug debt intimidation.

This collective aim can be achieved through the implementation of the various recommendations in this report. What is also important to note is that through collaborative working and by using existing measurement tools potentially substantial cost savings can be measured and applied to the various programmes/agencies working under the proposed initiatives.

By taking a slice from the bottom of the iceberg of intimidation while at the same time applying heat to the sides allows for a substantial reduction in the size of the iceberg. This reduction in size will reduce the demand for replacements from the lower orders to the higher orders, which will in turn, serve to expose those at the highest order to more intensive scrutiny. By developing a coordinated collective response through the operation of the recommendations in this report, we will demonstrate the effectiveness of **“Working together for a Safer Community”**

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

All agencies working in Mulhuddart should support the Interagency Working Agreement. The principle aim of the IWA should be, through the provision of appropriate supports, an increase in educational attainment, the reduction in the number of young people with a low school attendance, at risk of suspension/exclusion from school or who have come to the attention of Fingal County Council/Gardaí in relation to anti-social behaviour harassment or intimidation.

Recommendation 2

An interagency group be set up to discuss the possibility of challenging, in some way, hard to reach parents/families who may be guilty of cherry-picking supports and services.

Recommendation 3

Members of local residents associations, active citizens and other interested residents to be invited to participate in Garda Problem Solving training and facilitated and supported in applying such training to the resolution of problems in the area as identified by residents/agencies.

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That agencies work collaboratively to develop hands on initiatives aimed at maximising the involvement of the existing pool of active citizens, increase local support for the work of this group and, where possible, increase their number. This will directly and positively affect the lived experiences and quality of life for all the residents of Mulhuddart

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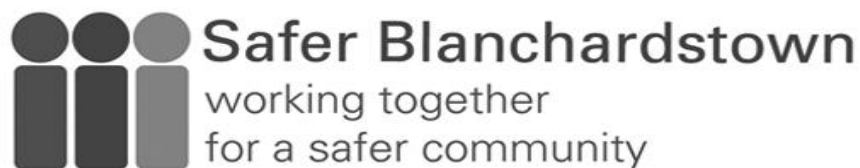
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- Lisa Leech.....Community Representative (Hartstown/Huntstown)
- Paul Donnelly.....Community Representative (Mountview/Blakestown)
- John McGuinness.....Community Representative (Corduff)
- Rose Emmett.....Community Representative (Mulhuddart)
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- Jim Doherty.....Blanchardstown Local Drugs Task Force
- Liam BurkeFingal County Council
- Breffni O'Rourke..... Fingal County Council RAPID
- Cllr Mary McCamley..... Elected public representative
- Cllr Mags MurrayElected public representative

The Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme has been developed by the Garda National Drugs Unit and the National Family Support Network. The purpose of this programme is to respond to the needs of drug users and family members who are experiencing drug related intimidation through the provision of support, advice, information and assistance.

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing drug related intimidation you can, in complete confidence, contact;

National Family Support Network on; Tel (01) 836 5168
E-mail: info@fsn.ie
Web: www.fsn.ie

**Project Office, Garda National Drugs Unit,
Dublin Castle on;** Tel (01) 666 9900
Web: www.garda.ie

For further information contact Safer Blanchardstown on; Tel (01) 870 8494
E-mail Philip.jennings@fingalcoco.ie
Web: www.saferblanchardstown.com



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