

Development and Implementation of a University Alcohol Action Plan

Dr. Michael Byrne

Student Health Department, University College Cork, Ireland



Introduction

Concerning levels of alcohol related harm have been reported in the literature, both for students in Ireland¹ and for students in UCC². Incidents of anti-social behaviour, drunkenness, alcohol related injuries and even assaults have been noted in the university community and the local environs around the campus. The adverse consequences of the misuse of alcohol amongst our students are very real, all too common, and occasionally have been very serious, up to and including devastating injury and death. Given these very visible and serious consequences of the misuse of alcohol amongst our students it is vital that every effort is made to engage with this serious issue.

We describe the development and implementation of an Action Plan to reduce the impact of alcohol-related harm on our students

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to seek to reduce alcohol related harm amongst our students and to influence attitudes to the use of alcohol in society.

The objective is to develop an Action Plan which

- contains specific actions to be undertaken
- has specific measurable targets to be achieved
- has a local, sectoral and national focus
- undergoes periodic review

Method

- UCC took part in a seminar in 2010 in National University of Ireland, Galway, along with other 3rd level institutions in Ireland entitled; Effective management of alcohol-related harm
- A series of recommended evidence-based actions was outlined following this seminar
- UCC Healthy Living Group, a University-wide working group, comprising students, student support professionals, healthcare professionals and local Health Service health promotion professionals was established
- The issue of alcohol-related harm is identified as the number one priority area for UCC's Healthy Living group
- UCC Healthy Living group adopts the actions recommended following the 2010 seminar in a plan entitled "Effective Management of Alcohol issues in UCC"
- Actions identified are implemented by student groups and professional student support services
- The implementation of the plan and the targets set are monitored and reported at end of October 2011
- The plan is extensively reviewed and modified based on the experience of the 1st 12 months
- A new plan is developed in April 2012

Strategy Areas (SA's) and Action points (AP's) of UCC's Alcohol Action Plan

SA1. Provide education, information and training for students and staff	SA2. Put in place effective screening, referral and treatment services
AP 1.1 Alcohol information session to be provided to all incoming 1 st year students at orientation	AP 2.1 Develop, disseminate and promote guidelines for staff as to how and to whom to refer any student whom they believe may be at risk from alcohol related harm
AP 1.2 Alcohol awareness events to be held at least once annually on campus outwith orientation	AP 2.2 Provide Screening and Brief Intervention Therapy by Student Health department and Student Counselling and Development department professionals.
AP 1.3 Promote ePUB UCC, the on-line brief intervention tool for all incoming 1 st year students	AP 2.3 Develop and increase links with local voluntary and statutory services, such as AA and the Southern Region Drugs Alcohol Task Force
AP 1.4 Embed ePUB UCC into the curriculum for Programmes on a voluntary basis	
AP 1.5 Train Peer-Support Leaders and Student Leaders to encourage Peer-Led alcohol education	
AP 1.6 Deliver workshops and training for frontline staff on alcohol use and abuse	
SA3. Make the campus and the local environment safer from alcohol related harm	SA4. Influence local, regional, national, and sectoral alcohol policies and practices
AP 3.1 Encourage and monitor a zero-tolerance policy to anti-social behaviour through Student Patrols, Campus Watch, and liaison with local Gardaí	AP 4.1 Establish a local Forum including students, residents, landlords and local Gardaí to help reduce alcohol related harm and anti-social behaviour
AP 3.2 Encourage reporting of abuse of local licensing laws and inappropriate marketing/selling of alcohol through development of a recording and reporting mechanism.	AP 4.2 Lobby local and National Politicians alone or in conjunction with the IUSSN or the IUA on matters relating to national alcohol policy such as marketing and selling of alcohol
AP 3.3 Develop the role of the Student Patrol to use as a preventative and deterrent at times of higher risk e.g. Orientation, Fresher's week, R&G week and end of term	AP 4.3 Promote a sectoral wide approach to alcohol related problems through sharing best practice at least annually through the CSSI, ISHA and IUSSN
AP 3.4 Promote increased awareness of the UCC Student Alcohol Policy and the UCC Student Rules	
AP 3.5 Increase provision for alcohol-free social spaces and alcohol-free activities/social events	
AP 3.6 Explore possibility of the provision of alcohol/substance free housing	
AP 3.7 Review measures that may reduce risks in the local environment in Cork esp. River risks.	
SA5. Research alcohol use and monitor progress and effectiveness of strategies	
	AP 5.1 Develop a dashboard of Key Performance indicators (KPIs) for each Action Points
	AP 5.2 Provide funding for a PhD level Thesis on alcohol use by our students

Results

Status of Action Points (AP's)/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from UCC Alcohol Action Plan as of April 2012

SA1. Provide education, information and training for students and staff	KPI (if available)	KPI or Status
AP 1.1 Alcohol information session to be provided to all incoming 1 st year students at orientation	% Classes given presentation	100%
AP 1.2 Alcohol awareness events to be held at least once annually on campus outwith orientation	No. events/academic year	1
AP 1.3 Promote ePUB UCC ¹⁰ , the on-line brief intervention tool for all incoming 1 st year students	No. 1 st years completed ePUB	2,144
AP 1.4 Embed ePUB UCC into the curriculum for Programmes on a voluntary basis	No. of Programmes	0
AP 1.5 Train Peer-Support Leaders and Student Leaders to encourage Peer-Led alcohol education	No. PSLs trained	4
AP 1.6 Deliver workshops and training for frontline staff on alcohol information and Brief Intervention	No. Staff attended	Numbers awaited
SA2. Put in place effective screening, referral and treatment services		
AP 2.1 Develop, disseminate and promote guidelines for staff as to how, where and to whom to refer any student whom they believe may be at risk from alcohol related harm	Guidelines developed and disseminated	In development
AP 2.2 Provide Screening and Brief Intervention Therapy (SBIT) by Student Health department and Student Counselling and Development department professionals.	No. of Students given SBIT	Numbers awaited
AP 2.3 Develop and increase links with local voluntary and statutory services, such as AA and the Southern Region Drugs Alcohol Task Force	Annual report/contact with AA and SRDAT	Link with SRDTAF
SA3. Make the campus and the local environment safer from alcohol related harm		
AP 3.1 Encourage and monitor effectiveness of zero-tolerance policy to anti-social behaviour through Student Patrols, Campus Watch, and liaison with local Gardaí	At least once annual review of rate of anti-social behaviour	Completed
AP 3.2 Encourage reporting of abuse of local licensing laws and inappropriate marketing/selling of alcohol through development of a recording and reporting mechanism.	Develop recording and reporting mechanism	Not started
AP 3.3 Develop the role of the Student Patrol to use as a preventative and deterrent at times of higher risk e.g. Orientation, Fresher's week, R&G week and end of term	Establish Job description, Training and Job Spec.	On-going
AP 3.4 Promote increased awareness of the UCC Student Alcohol Policy and the UCC Student Rules	-	At Orientation
AP 3.5 Increase provision for alcohol-free social spaces and alcohol-free activities/social events	Annual review and report	On-going
AP 3.6 Explore possibility of the provision of alcohol/substance free housing	-	Not Started
SA4. Influence local, regional, national, and sectoral alcohol policies and practices	KPI (if available)	KPI or Status
AP 4.1 Establish a local Forum including students, residents, landlords and local Gardaí to help reduce alcohol related harm and anti-social behaviour	At least twice yearly meetings	Completed
AP 4.2 Lobby local and National Politicians alone or in conjunction with the IUSSN or the IUA on matters relating to national alcohol policy such as marketing and selling of alcohol	-	Delegation from IUSSN met Minister for State
AP 4.3 Promote a sectoral wide approach to alcohol related problems through sharing best practice at least annually through the CSSI, ISHA and IUSSN	-	On-going
SA5. Research alcohol use and monitor progress and effectiveness of strategies		
AP 5.1 Develop a dashboard of Key Performance indicators (KPIs) for each of the Action Points	Dashboard developed	Completed
AP 5.2 Provide funding for a PhD level Thesis on alcohol use by our students	PhD started	Completed

Conclusion

This Project demonstrates that it is possible to engage with the challenge posed by Alcohol related harm amongst our students.

The issue of alcohol use and misuse is a society wide problem in Ireland and other Northern European countries.

Our future leaders of society may be positively influenced by the efforts undertaken by the University community **UCC Alcohol Action Plan**, and so shape social, political and public health policy. This will hopefully ensure Ireland has a much healthier relationship with alcohol than that which operates at the moment.

References

1. Hope A, Dring, C, Dring J (2005). College Lifestyle and Attitudinal National (CLAN) survey. In *The Health of Irish Students*. Dublin: Department of Health and Children.
2. Cahill L, Byrne M (2010) Alcohol and Drug Use in Students attending a Student Health Centre. *Irish medical Journal* 103. 230 -233

Acknowledgements

The members of the Healthy Living Group UCC.

Contact and further information

m.byrne@ucc.ie or tweet us at @uccstudnhealth