

# Multi–Agency Parents Drug Education Initiative

Western Region

WESTERN REGION DRUG AND ALCOHOL TASK FORCE

2015

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## SECTION 1: Introduction and Background

### Introduction:

This initiative commenced in 2009 as a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach to substance misuse education for parents within the school context.

It began in Galway as a response to schools requesting various agencies and individuals to deliver drugs education talks. In line with good practice in substance misuse education, a more holistic and co-ordinated approach was developed, culminating in an initiative which involved the WRDATF (as co-ordinating body), the HSE (Drug Service), an Garda Síochána and the Department of Education and Skills (SPHE Regional Manager) delivering a programme for parents in the school setting that focuses on substance abuse prevention.

It was subsequently rolled out in Roscommon and Mayo in 2010. Secondary schools were offered the opportunity to run an initial one-night introductory evening at which presentations are made by the four agencies, followed by a three-night parenting course. The education support workers in each sub-region (Galway and Mayo/Roscommon), hosted by two different organisations (AIDS West in Galway and Foróige/South Mayo Development for Mayo/Roscommon) were given the responsibility of implementing the initiative within their area.

This initiative has proved to be very successful both in terms of the demand from schools and the interagency working with the organisations involved. In 2013 an independent evaluation of the initiative was undertaken and the recommendations are outlined in Section Three.

This report outlines the background to the initiative and its fit within a drug policy context, the roll-out of the initiative in the western region, the recommendations from the independent evaluation; the standardised initial evening of the initiative; the key components of the follow up parents programme and appendices relating to the delivery of the programme.

### Background

The foreword to *Shared Solutions* (WRDTF, Dec 2005) the first strategy of the Western Region Drugs Task Force stated

*Shared Solutions implies 'joined-up' thinking, mutual values, and complementary ways of working and collective action.*

With this in mind the multi-agency drug education initiative was developed as one response to an evident need for Drug & Alcohol Education for parents of children between the ages of 12 to 18 years.

With both statutory and voluntary agencies being requested to work within the school setting (parents talks & school programmes) and in line with best practice and value for money An Garda Síochána, HSE West Drug Service and the Western Region Drugs Task Force (WRDTF) decided to embark on a joint initiative in relation to this matter.

As the SPHE programme is available (and mandatory in junior cycle) in all post primary schools, it is the intention of this initiative to further encourage and support the SPHE programme within schools.

The aim of the information evening is thus to inform parents and teachers about the effects and consequences of substance misuse and inform them about available services

#### *Objectives:*

- Increase awareness around substance misuse
- Increase awareness around the availability of services within their area
- Inform parents about the legal consequences of drug use
- Inform parents about the availability of parenting courses being offered by the WRDTF Education Workers
- Inform the school that training is available for all school staff
- Support schools in developing school drug policies in line with the Dept. of Education and Skills guidelines.

#### *Projected outcomes:*

- Parents will participate in the three week parenting course.
- The school will be able to enhance its delivery of the substance use module within SPHE
- Parents will be more aware of early sign of substance misuse
- Parents and schools will become aware of available services in their locality

#### **Fit with regional and national drug strategies**

#### *Shared Solutions (WRDTF 2006) states (p.29):*

##### **Parent support programmes**

Parents are a crucial influence in the behaviour of their children. Most parents recognise the growing number of issues that can impact on the wellbeing of young people today, including binge drinking, smoking, illicit drug use, antisocial behaviour, bullying, suicide, eating disorders, road safety and others. Parents need to be knowledgeable about how to tackle these issues, and should be encouraged to seek help early if problems are suspected or identified.

There are a growing number of parenting programmes and education programmes available that can assist parents to address such problems. These are not as successful if done in an ad hoc fashion, however. Parent support is essential in prevention efforts: “the benefits of parent education have been shown to be effective [and] parent education is therefore one of a range of family support interventions”. It is also important that parent support programmes link in a cohesive way with education and prevention efforts in schools.

*The role of family support services in drug prevention. 2004, NACD*

*The Foreword to the National Drugs Strategy (2009–2016) states:*

“I look forward to a renewed emphasis on prevention in the strategy. It is very important that the number of people who decide to experiment with drugs is reduced. Such experimentation can lead to significant problems for many.”

(Brian Cowen T.D, Taoiseach)

*Action 29 of the National Drugs Strategy (2009–2016) states (p.106):*

Develop a series of prevention measures that focus on the family under the following programme headings:

- Supports for families experiencing difficulties due to drug/alcohol use;
- Parenting skills; and
- Targeted measures focusing on the children of problem drug and/or alcohol users aimed at breaking the cycle and safeguarding the next generation.

*Relevant Actions within the second strategic plan for the WRDTF THE WAY FORWARD*

**Action 5:** Support and encourage delivery of SPHE within post primary schools through the Regional SPHE Service. Lobbying where appropriate to ensure the success of its implementation

**Action 6:** Expand the existing drug & alcohol parenting programmes to the wider community

**Action 15:** Review and evaluate the on-going drug & alcohol awareness parents initiative

**Action 31:** Develop a series of prevention measures that focus on the family under following programme headings

- Support for families experiencing difficulties due to drug/alcohol use
- Parenting skills
- Target measures focusing on the children of problem drug and/or alcohol users aimed at breaking the cycle and safeguarding the next generation

## Section 2: Delivery of the Multi-Agency Parents Drug Education Initiative

### Timeline

#### 2009

**Jan 2009:** Members of Garda Drug Units in Galway and Mayo completed the DEWF Quality Standard Training in Carrick-on-Shannon along with members of the Western Region Drugs Task Force. The Gardaí began reviewing their current method of information delivery in schools.

**June 2009:** Gardaí, SPHE Support Service and WRDATF met to discuss current practice of work with schools within the region. It was agreed that the Gardaí would stop going into schools for one off talks and that they would work with the SPHE Support Service and WRDATF to deliver drug/alcohol information evenings to parents via the schools.

**August 2009:** All post primary schools in Galway City and County were written to and offered the opportunity to run a parents evening.

14 schools responded immediately and evenings were booked.

WRDATF Education Support Workers offered a 3 night parents programme in follow up to the information evening.

#### 2010

**September – December 2010:** 14 Schools ran parents evenings in Galway City and County.

**January 2010:** The Roscommon team (Garda Drugs Unit, HSE Drugs Service, SPHE & WRDATF) gathered in late 2009 and began work on the roll out in Roscommon. In January 2010 all schools in Roscommon were written to and offered the programme.

The Galway roll out continued from January to April.

**June 2010:** In June an evaluation of the work-to-date in Galway City & County was carried out and schools were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire. Those involved in the delivery reviewed their inputs and made recommendations for the continued roll out of the programme.

**August 2010:** The three county teams (Galway, Roscommon & Mayo) met in Parkmore with the aim to:

- Bring everyone up to speed on the roll out to date
- Work on the presentations to ensure continuity in the three counties
- Worked in county teams to agree a schedule (days, times, etc.) for the roll out for the forthcoming school term.

Members of the HSE Drug Service, Gardaí, SPHE Support Service and WRDATF were present.

All schools in Co. Mayo were written to and offered the parents evening. 18 schools were engaged in organising an evening between September 2010 and February 2011

**November 2010:** A seminar for schools principals “Substance Use and the School Community” was organised by the WRDTF and the SPHE Support Service. Presentations were given by the Garda Drugs Unit and the Education Support Workers on the Parents Drug Education Initiative

**December 2010:** On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010, the three teams gathered to review and evaluate the process to date and plan for 2011.

**2010:** Roll out continued in the three counties (7 in Mayo/Roscommon and 14 in Galway City and County)

**2011:** Roll out continued in the three counties (9 in Galway City & county and 18 in Mayo and 3 in Roscommon)

**2012:** Roll out continued in the three counties (9 in Galway City & county and 3 in Mayo)

**2013:** Roll out continued in the three counties. (8 in Galway City & county and 1 in Roscommon)

**Independent Evaluation** of the Parents Initiative was tendered and completed. (See attached report and recommendations in next section). A working group was established to progress the recommendations in the report

**2014:** Continue the roll out in the three counties (9 in Galway City & County and 2 in Mayo)

Standardisation of the Initiative began and a training day/presentation of the standardised initial night of the programme was delivered in February.

**2015:** Working group completed their objectives and came to an end in January 2015. The final report on the standardised version is completed.

## SECTION: Independent Evaluation of the Multi–Agency Parents Drug Education Initiative

In 2013 an independent evaluation of the Multi agency parents initiative was commissioned by the Western Region Drugs Task Force. Dr Louise Kinlen was awarded the tender for the evaluation, which was completed in April 2013. A full copy of the independent evaluation of this initiative can be found on the WRDTF's website [www.wrdtf.ie/publications](http://www.wrdtf.ie/publications)

### Evaluation Report Recommendations:

Various recommendations were made by stakeholders (parents/schools/agencies) throughout this report. Below is a summary of the key recommendations, based on an overall analysis.

1. The Parents Initiative has been **very successful at a number of levels**, has addressed most of the objectives as set out, addresses an identified need; and it is recommended that it should continue. Some particular issues may need to be addressed, as outlined in the recommendations below.
2. If the initiative is to be replicated elsewhere or questions arise in relation to its on-going funding, it is recommended that a **programme budget** should be allocated, taking into account time (including a percentage of the salaries of the relevant personnel), travel and administration costs.
3. The issue of **travel restrictions should be addressed**, especially within the context of the importance of the initiative as a holistic inter–agency approach to substance misuse education and prevention and its wider health promotion remit.
4. The next phase of the initiative should have a **greater focus on the engagement of schools**, with more onus placed on them to (i) embed it within the SPHE Curriculum (with potential for new programmes through Junior Cycle reform) and (ii) address their overall substance misuse policy and school environment and (iii) adopting a whole school approach through bringing all relevant stakeholders on board.
5. **More systematic and co–ordinated training, pre–planning and review meetings** should be organised for multi–agency delivery partners. Where meetings are held, the objectives and roles should be clear. Communication between the various agencies could be improved in some instances.
6. Where feasible, it would help to **standardise some of the materials being used and ensure that consistent messages are given**. This would also help where a stand–in person was required to cover at short notice. It is still important however to keep the



training embedded within a local context, with information on local support agencies or the current 'drugs scene' of the locality.

7. The possibility of **staff burnout and the high administrative burden** should be addressed, possibly through greater administrative and logistical support.
8. **More focus could be placed on ensuring that the initiative is valued and supported at all levels within the delivery agencies.** All agencies involved could play a role in embedding the learning from it within their own organisation. Key strengths and lessons learnt from the initiative should be mainstreamed at regional and national policy levels.
9. In future school-based evaluation questionnaires, **more questions could be included on the impact of the initiative** and steps it has since undertaken or intends to undertake, such as the role of the initiative with regards to SPHE, its substance misuse policy and a whole school approach. A one-off review focusing specifically on schools could help to address their role going forward and suggestions they may have for future programmes.
10. As the involvement of schools is a crucial aspect of the programme, the **possibility of including principals or school SPHE co-ordinators in occasional planning or review meetings** to address the overall aims and objectives and approach within the sub-region could be explored.

Following the completion of the independent evaluation of this initiative a working group was established to progress the recommendations above. The group was comprised of representatives of the organisation involved. The group progressed the actions and reported to the WRDTF in January 2015. The group has since been disbanded as it had achieved its identified objectives.

## SECTION 3: The Initial Parents Information Night (Standardised Presentation)

In early 2014 all parties involved in the delivery of the programme worked on the standardisation of the presentation delivered on the initial night of the initiative. This had been highlighted as recommendation in the independent evaluation (recommendation 6).

The following slides represent the agreed standard version of the initial night of the multi-agency parents' initiative. All those involved and some new representatives attended a meeting where the standardised presentation was presented. This also provided a training opportunity for those interested in getting involved in the delivery of the programme.



### PARENT Drug and Alcohol Education Initiative

School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_






## INTRODUCTIONS

Drug Education Support Worker: WRDTF & SWMDC

SPHE Service Regional Manager

An Garda Síochána

HSE West Drug Service Counsellor


## National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016

“To continue to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on the five pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation & research”



## What is a drug?

A chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions, either mentally, physically or emotionally.  
(Corrigan, 1996)









Therefore incorporating legal, prescription, illegal and 'over-the-counter' substance groups

## A standard drink...



1 SD = 1/2 pint beer = single measure spirit = small glass wine

### Usage by type in western region (Aged 15-34)

Legal drugs	Ever Used	Used in last year (10/11)
Alcohol 	91	88
Tobacco 	48	31
<b>Any illegal drugs</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>
Cannabis 	31	8
Cocaine 	6.5	1.4
Solvents 	3.1	0
Heroin 	0.3	<0.1

### World Health Organisation (WHO)

Recommended limits on weekly intake are:

- 21 Units for Men (Over 20yrs)
- 14 Units for Women (Over 20yrs)
- At least one 'alcohol free' day
- Consumed gradually over the week not in one sitting
- Over 5-6 units at once is considered 'Binge' i.e. about 3 drinks at any one occasion
- Binge = alcohol use that has damaging short/long-term effect on health (mental, physical & emotional)



51% of 15-17 year olds say they are personally concerned that they might "do more" sexually than they planned to because they were drinking or using drugs  
- Kaiser family foundation

### Workshops:

#### First Workshop:

- Drug education (types & categories)
- Drug facts versus myths
- Reasons for use
- Signs & symptoms of use
- Parenting role

Facilitated by:

#### Second Workshop:

- Activity: Know your Child
- Communication barriers
- Commonly used drugs
- Drug use in Mayo
- Personal implications
- Legal implications

Facilitated by:

### Workshops:

#### Third Workshop

- Family issues/impact
- Risk & protective factors
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Positive Parenting Feedback
- Local Supports/Services
- Evaluation & Questions

Facilitated by:



## SPHE Post Primary

Martha Sweeney  
Regional Manager  
SPHE Support Service

## Why might people drink/use drugs?

- **Coping**...drink to cope with stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety, to escape problems
- **Enhancement**...drinking for the effects (the buzz) or to enhance an activity
- **Social**...drinking as part of a social ritual
- **Conformity**...drinking to conform/fit in



## What is the General Aim of Education?

It is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual... for personal and family life, for living in the community, and for leisure...



## SPHE and The Health Promoting School



Environment   Policy   Curriculum   Links

## Aims of SPHE



### Builds on SPHE at primary level:

- To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self esteem and self confidence
- To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

## SPHE Skills Focus

- Listening Skills
- Assertiveness Skills
- Decision-making skills
- Co-operation with others
- Reflection skills
- Thinking skills



## SPHE Modules

- Belonging and integrating
- Self-management
- Communication skills
- Physical health
- Friendship
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and decisions
- Substance use
- Personal safety



## Elements of effective drug education programmes

- Based on good research & sound theory of what works.
- It is age and stage appropriate and based within a broad curriculum
- Addresses attitudes & behaviours plus knowledge and incorporates social skill
- Employs interactive, dynamic teaching methods
- Ensures support and training for teachers
- Links to family and community programmes

(Alcohol Education & Research Council 2005)

## Effects of fearful messages

- They do not contribute greatly to prevention and elicit defensive reactions : "It won't happen to me." They are generally ineffective in preventing experimenting with substances.
- There may be increased desire for the "forbidden fruit."
- Some people become excited by negative messages and seek to do more of the risk-taking behaviour.
- People become de-sensitised to health warnings and end up paying no attention at all.
- Scary messages can be so pervasive that the message that is given is that there is nothing anyone can do to protect self from harm.

## Substance Use Module

### Year 1

- Why use drugs?
- Alcohol: the facts.
- Smoking and its effects. Smoking: why, why not?

#### As a result of participating in this module students should:

1. Have examined the place of medicines & drugs in human life
2. Be aware of how medicines and drugs can be misused
3. Have an understanding of implications of alcohol use for personal health and social interaction
4. Have explored reasons why people begin to smoke
5. Have examined ways of avoiding smoking

## Substance Use Module

### Year 2

- The effects of drugs: Why, Why not?
- Alcohol and its effects.
- Cannabis and its effects.

#### As a result of participating in this module students should:

1. Have reviewed their understanding of the physical and psychological effects of drugs
2. Have an awareness of the personal and social implications of alcohol and cannabis use in the life of the young person
3. Be aware of some of the reasons why some people use cannabis
4. Have a clear understanding of the dangers of cannabis use

## Substance Use Module

### Year 3

- Ecstasy: the realities
- Heroin: the realities

#### As a result of participating in this module, students should:

1. Have an understanding of the personal and social dangers associated with the use of ecstasy
2. Have an understanding of the personal and social dangers of heroin, including addiction
3. Be able to apply their increased awareness and understanding to decision-making in relation to substance use

## Substance Use Policy

### All schools are required to have a Substance Use Policy

#### Aim:

Welfare, care and protection of students in line with Education Act (1998) and Education Welfare Act (2000).

#### Policy should:

- Address substance use education within school
- Set out procedures for managing incidents

## Whole school approach to Substance Use education

### Substance Use education needs to be multi-faceted and supported by:

- Principal and management
- Guidance counsellor
- Pastoral care teams
- Home school liaison personnel
- Teachers
- Parents
- Students
- Community

## School & Home-based Prevention

- Developing a caring school/home climate
- Helping adolescents understand their uniqueness and worth
- Providing opportunities for self development and creativity
- Integrating prevention strategies and concepts into all curricular areas
- Organising a comprehensive SPHE Programme
- Strengthening co-operation between parents, school and the community.

## Who teaches the module on Substance Use?

- The SPHE class teacher is the most appropriate person as he/she will have built a relationship with students and will have sensitivity to their needs.
- Students with concerns about drugs will approach those they trust – not necessarily the experts.
- External agencies can be a resource for teachers and provide support and information for parents.



## Drugs, Alcohol, Young People & The Law

Presentation by  
An Garda Síochána



## Introduction

- Legislation re: Drugs, Alcohol and Public Order
- Parents concerns
- Travel/Employment opportunities
- Follow-up Garda presentation evening



## *Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994*

- Section 4** – Intoxication in a Public Place
- Section 6** – Threatening, Abusive or Insulting Behaviour in a Public Place
- Section 8** – Failure to Comply with Direction of a Member of An Garda Síochána



## Age Card – Order Online



## Dealing with offences

- Dealing with Gardaí/Arrest
- Contacting parents/guardians
- The Juvenile Diversion Programme (JLO)
- Adult caution



## Misuse of Drugs Act 1977/1984

- **S.3 Simple Possession:**  
Conviction for possession – fine ranging from €100 to €1,500 and/or 12 months imp.
- **S.15 Possession for sale or supply**  
On Summary disposal fine up to €1,500 and or 12 months imprisonment  
On Indictment – open ended fine and up to 14yrs imp.  
Value about €13,000, 'mandatory' 10yrs imprisonment.
- **S.23** Power of Gardaí to request person to allow Garda to search them. May happen on the spot or can be done in Garda Station.



## Warning Signs

- New friendship patterns
- Lack of interest in hobbies
- Money and valuables going missing
- Physical Evidence – Burn marks on clothes, small plastic bags, cigarette papers & filters



## Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme

- Practical safety information (Informal and/or formal contact)
- Advice in relation to threats or intimidation
- Information on appropriate drug support services
- Outline the process of formal complaints



## Other Considerations

- Employment Prospects reduced
- Garda Certificates of Character
- Garda Vetting Unit
- Travel Prospects Curtailed / Visas

**GARDA CONFIDENTIAL**

1800 666 111

**CRIMESTOPPERS**  
**1800 25 00 25**  
 Make the right call. Now.  
ALL CALLS ANONYMOUS AND FREE.

# HSE West Drugs Service

## HSE West Drugs Service

**Services we offer :**

- Counselling for individuals & families affected by drug use
- Drug Awareness Courses for the community
- Drug Policy Workshops for schools
- Skills training for professionals
- Counsellor for homeless persons in Galway

## HSE West Drugs Service

Our Service is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Open to everyone – you can contact us directly.

## HSE West Drugs Service

We operate on an **outreach** basis, i.e., we will visit you at a time and place that is convenient to you.

We work on a **harm reduction** model of intervention and support.



## In addition we can help you with:

- Advice
- Information
- Support
- Assessment
- One-to-one counselling
- Referral
- Education and training
- Access to treatment

## HSE West Drugs Service

**Contacting us:**

Galway City	(091)561299
Galway County (North)	(087) 9059222
Galway County (East)	(091) 847088
North Mayo	(087) 9059222
South Mayo	(087) 4196468
North Roscommon	(087) 2220380
South Roscommon	(087) 6538201
Homeless Persons	(091) 560182

## SECTION 3: The Follow up Parents Programme:

As the programme was rolled out across the region the follow up programme being delivered in the various areas evolved differently, primarily with regard to the number of evenings involved. The follow up parents course in Galway City and County was being delivered in two follow up evenings by the Education Support Worker while in Mayo it was delivered over three evenings with the HSE Drug Service and Gardaí partaking in the delivery of the programme with the Education Support Worker. As part of the objectives of the working group standardisation of this programme as well as the presentation of the initial evening took place. See below.

The table lists all the elements that Education Support Workers (ESWs) will include in the follow up evenings of the multi-agency Parent Initiative. ESWs will use their professional judgement as to the relative weight that is given to a component and the manner in which it is presented. Typically a mixture of activities, group discussion and presentations are given. The involvement of personnel from other agencies to co-deliver the material is also managed by ESWs.

References to the evidence base are to be regarded a ‘work in progress’ as typical of academic work within the given content area. They may not necessarily be outlined in detail and other appropriate sources may be used.

Content area	References	Optional approaches & Notes
Motivations for drug use	Group generated. Activity: ‘ <i>Putting the pieces Together</i> ’. (2009) WRDTF.	Brainstorm and/or group discussion Diamond 9 activity exploring risks and Reasons why young people choose to use substances
Zinberg’s Triangle of drug use / effects	Zinberg, N (1986). <u>Drug, Set, And Setting: The Basis For Controlled Intoxicant Use</u> . Yale University Press	
General consequences of drug use	Health Research Board, Irish Focal Point. (2014). 2014 National Report (2013 data) to the EMCDDA by the Reitox National Focal Point. Ireland: New developments, trends. Health Research Board, Dublin.	
Prevalence rates	Hibell B, Guttormsson U, Ahlström S, Balakireva O, Bjarnason, Kokkevi A, Kraus L, The 2011 ESPAD Report – Substance Use Among Students in 36 European Countries <u>Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland: First Results</u>	



from the 2010/2011 Drug Prevalence Survey – Bulletin 1

<b>Maslow’s hierarchy of needs</b>	Maslow, A. (1954). Motivation and personality. New York, NY: Harper.	Can be related to possible risk and protective factors and how they affect parenting
<b>Risk and protective factors</b>	Haase, Trutz and Pratschke, Jonathan. NACD (2010). Risk and protective factors for substance use among young people: a comparative study of early school leavers and school attending students. Stationary office. Dublin.	Brainstorm used. Can be applied as an exercise to child of concern. <b>Note:</b> Can focus on a) the child b) the family c) community/environmental factors.  Positive approach taken looking at building resilience and using supports.  Discussion may be focussed on use/misuse of alcohol.
<b>Principles of positive parenting</b>	Quinton, D. (2004) Parenting Support. Wiley. Chichester.  Biddulph S & Biddulph S. (2003) The complete secrets of Happy Children. Thorsons. London.	Focussing on the parental role, parents and teachers, building upon the work of SPHE  Assertive parenting and its correlative skills of consistency, discipline and behaviour modelling have been found, time and time again, to be essential to raising children who are happy, confident and have good self-esteem.
<b>Positive parenting scenarios</b>	Produced by ESWs	Range of scenarios used depending upon previous discussion/concerns, teaching appropriate parental response
<b>Self esteem</b>	Maslow, A (1987). Motivation and Personality (3 <sup>rd</sup> Ed.) Harper & Row, New York. Rogers, Carl (1951). Client-centred therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory. London: Constable	Activity around ‘knowing you child’  <b>Note:</b> Focus on ways of building self-esteem
<b>Sexual activity</b>	Information provided by <a href="http://www.aidswest.ie">http://www.aidswest.ie</a>	Link to alcohol – loss of control/decision making. Areas to cover: Risk taking, STIs, Condom use, emergency contraception, consent, pregnancy, supports available.
<b>Cannabis</b>	Information drawn from a number of relevant resources including:	Use of presentation / quiz

	<a href="http://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/drug/cannabis">http://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/drug/cannabis</a>	
<b>Focus on particular drugs: May be varied in line with local use patterns. Alcohol, Cocaine, Ecstasy, Mephedrone</b>	Information drawn from a number of relevant resources including: <a href="http://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/">http://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/</a>	Covers details on : Risks, effects, costs, harm reduction, legal implications, warning signs of use, appearance, recent developments.
<b>Dealing with an emergency</b>	Information drawn from a number of relevant resources including: <a href="http://www.drugs.ie/resources/files/guides/HPM00053.pdf">http://www.drugs.ie/resources/files/guides/HPM00053.pdf</a>	Use of '112' and 'ICE' your phone.
<b>Summary</b>	Major areas of sessions noted : Reducing supply Parental example Developing your own attitude Establishing boundaries and appropriate consequences Encouraging teenage involvement Social life of teenagers Harm reduction Communication skills	
<b>Evaluation</b>	See attached	

## Acknowledgement

The Task Force is very thankful to all those who have been and are currently involved in the delivery of this initiative. It has been a major piece of work and we are very grateful for the dedication, time and commitment that has been demonstrated.

We also wish to acknowledge the support of the management of the partner organisations. Without this support this initiative would not have developed and expanded to the extent it has.

Thank you.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Information Leaflet

### Useful Numbers and Contacts

 **Gillian Conway**  
D&A Education Support Worker  
086-7814779

 **Neil Wilson**  
D&A Education Support Worker  
091-566266  
086 7274888

 **An Garda Síochána**  
1800 666 111

 **HSE Drugs Service**  
091-561299

 **Martha Sweeney**  
SPHE Regional Co-ordinator  
087-9972770

 **Health Promotion**  
091-548419

 **WRDTF**  
091-480044  
www.wrdtf.ie

### When teens go out at night:

- Know who they are with and have the other parents' details
- Ask them to make sure their phone is "not on silent"
- Remind your child that he/she can ring you at any time of the night
- Know how they are getting to the event and how they are getting home
- Know where they are going - is the event supervised?
- Instruct them to always stay with friends and never leave on their own
- Collect them yourself if possible
- Know how much money they have going out
- Does their phone have credit, is it charged?
- Do they have a phone in the case of an emergency?
- Do they know how to manage a crisis in the case of an emergency?
- Make sure they have an ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in their phone
- Make sure they have eaten
- Agree a return time

Western Region Drugs Task Force  
Unit 6, Galway Technology Park  
Parkmore, Galway

T: +353 (0) 91 480044  
F: +353 (0) 91 480058  
E: Info@wrdtf.ie W: www.wrdtf.ie

 **Western Region**  
drugs task force  
Méitheal Drugál an Iarthair

## Regional Parents Drug Education Initiative

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In June 2009, the WRDTF began working with An Garda Síochána and the SPHE Regional Support Service to explore their engagement regarding substance use with schools in the region. From these discussions the regional substance use initiative for parents was developed.

The aim of the regional substance use initiative is to inform parents and the school community about the effects and consequences of substance misuse and inform them about available service in their area.

**Objectives:**

- Increase awareness around substance use
- Increase awareness of the availability of services within the local areas
- Inform parents about the legal consequences of drug use
- Inform parents about the availability of drug education courses being offered by the WRDTF Drug & Alcohol Education Support Workers
- Inform the school that training is available for all school staff (through the Regional SPHE Co-ordinator)
- Support schools in developing a school's drug policy in line with the Dept of Education and Skills guidelines

**Sample Evening**

Introduction by school principal and/or designated staff. Outline of evening from the Drug & Alcohol Education Support Worker:

- WRDTF Drug & Alcohol Education Support Worker - The drugs scene: an overview of arising issues and an outline of the drug education workshops on offer.
- SPHE Support Services or Health Promotion service - SPHE policy and practice with reference to substance use and misuse.
- An Garda Síochána - Your child and the Law: how An Garda Síochána deal with public order offences committed by young people with reference to substance use & specific issues arising.
- HSE Drugs Counsellors - Overview of counselling and support services.

Followed by informal Q & A session and refreshments

Information will also be available for participants to take away. Parents may sign up for a three-evening Drug Education programme.

**Parents' Drug Education Programme (optional)**

The course is a follow-on from the initial information evening and is planned to run over three evenings at the school. Ideally, parents who wish to participate should attend all sessions.

The Drug & Alcohol programme is conducted in an informal manner. The emphasis is on interaction with participants in the form of group-work, activities, discussion, scenarios, questions and answers.

The sessions are run with the approach that personal details about participants or their children do not need to be made public in any way. Confidentiality of anything said within the sessions is also highlighted as a fundamental working principle of the group.

Further details and more detailed course notes are available from the WRDTF Education Support Worker.

If you are interested in booking a Parents' Drug Education Programme for your school or community please contact:

For schools in Mayo & Roscommon contact Gillian Conway : 086-7814779

For schools in Galway City & County contact Neil Wilson : 091-566266 / 086 7274888

## Appendix 2: Sample Letter to schools

Re: Parents Drug Education Multi-Agency Initiative

Dear Principal,

As you are probably aware the Western Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF) in conjunction with the An Garda Síochána, HSE Drugs Service and Western Region Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of a joint initiative are offering substance misuse awareness/information evenings for parents to schools and community groups. The parties mentioned above have been working together over the past few years to deliver information evenings to parents groups to address the issue of drugs from a legal, informational/educational and school perspective.

We are now in position to offer the programme again to all schools within the region.

An evening talk will include the following:

- The Gardaí will present the current situation with drugs in the region, the legal situation and what to look out for.
- The WRDTF Education Worker will look at communicating with your children about drugs and about the 2 session drugs education programme on offer
- SPHE will present on what is happening in the school in SPHE re drugs/alcohol and how this happens
- The HSE Drugs Service will present on the services they provide in the area.

We are in a position to offer these evenings to schools in the Western Region on a first come first served basis. The initial talk is available on Wednesday evenings and will generally take place from 8–9.30pm (This can be negotiated with ESW for varying areas of the region). If there are a number of schools in one area interested in the talk we would try and organise a central venue in the area.

After running the event we would be in a position to offer the parents and school the following:

- A two session drugs education programme for parents
- Support for SPHE within the school
- Support in developing the school's drugs policy in line with the Department of Education and Skills Guidelines

If you are interested in organising such a night please contact Neil Wilson, Education Support Worker for Galway City and County on 091–566266 or, for counties Mayo and Roscommon contact Gillian Conway ESW 0867814779.

We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

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## Appendix 3: Practical considerations for the school

### What will happen before the initial evening?

The Education support worker (ESW) will aim to meet with you to look at any issues arising out of this document and finalise dates and all practical arrangements. The ESW may also take this opportunity to discuss the local situation within the school and the community at large. Whilst confidentiality must be maintained it is beneficial for the effectiveness of the initiative if current incidents, trends, and concerns are discussed. This may be from the point of view of parents, teachers, pupils or others. The session can therefore be tailored to meet local requirements as appropriate.

### How do we promote the initial evening and the 3-session parenting course?

The ESW will also provide the format of a letter that can be sent out by the school / organisation to all parents and any other interested parties. This should be sent out about two weeks before the event. It is also useful to promote the event in newsletters and other means within the school and the local community.

You may wish to gather a list of names beforehand or just leave it to people to turn up on the night.

Following the initial evening a second letter can be sent out by the school/organisation to inform parents/guardians of the parenting course.

### Which dates should we book?

A date for the initial evening is bookable with the ESW. These possible dates are fixed at the start of the year to allow the different organisations to work together. The '3-evening parenting course' is booked in negotiation with the ESW. Ideally this should be on three evenings spaced a week apart following the initial evening.

### What do we need to provide?

The venue, usually the school hall or a larger classroom. A screen or white wall is useful for visual presentations and a power supply. Some schools provide tea and coffee after the event, and the WRDTF is willing to make a reasonable contribution towards that provision.

### Who should be invited?

The primary audience is parents/guardians of children currently attending the school. You may also wish to invite teachers (especially those who teach SPHE), members of the board of management and any other interested parties in the community.

### Is this an 'open' meeting'?

That is at the discretion of the school. You may wish to restrict entry to those listed above or you may wish to allow entry to the general public. Similarly, whilst pupils are not specifically invited, you may wish to allow them to attend with their parents/guardians. The content of the meeting is however clearly pitched towards adults.

### Are there a minimum/ maximum number of participants?

The maximum is only dictated by the venue size. We would hope to have a minimum group of 10 participants at each session. Whilst we would endeavour to run all the planned sessions, we reserve the right to cancel / postpone any session due to low numbers.

### Apart from Drugs and alcohol, what other areas may be mentioned?

As the sessions focus upon parenting skills it is inevitable that other areas of life will be brought into any presentation / discussion. In particular sexual health, which has a strong connection with alcohol use, may be considered. Views expressed in this area may be at variance with the ethos of the school.

### Will a harm reduction approach be taken?

The WRDATF in line with national policy sees the principle of harm reduction as part of a package of differing methods that can be used within drug education. The approach can be summed up by a leading exponent of the approach thus:

“Over the past few decades various approaches have been tried as drug education. Early methods emphasized information provision and scare tactics. In the 1980s America embraced "Just Say No" campaigns. The success of any of these approaches has been questionable at best. We feel that a major limiting factor of these approaches has been a faulty assumption – namely, that all drug use is unhealthy and therefore that the goal of drug education should be the elimination of all drug consumption. A harm reduction approach could offer a greater chance of mitigating the negative consequences of drug abuse in the future, because it considers the realistic dynamics of human drug consumption in our past.”

*Harm reduction: an emerging new paradigm for Drug education – David F Duncan. Brown University*

### Initial evening presentation

The presentation would normally begin at 8PM (or 7.30). We would aim to finish before 10PM.

How a typical evening works is shown below:

- 8.00–8.05:** Introduction from the Chairperson (Principal/head of Parents' Assoc. or similar), outline of evening from the Education Support Worker (AIDSWest/WRDATF)
- 8.05–8.25:** SPHE policy and practice with reference to substance use and misuse. Presented by SPHE Support Services (or Health Promotion staff)
- 8.25–8.50:** Your child and the Law: how the Gardaí deal with public order offences committed by young people with reference to substance misuse. Presented by the Gardaí
- 8.50–9.10:** The Drugs scene: an overview of the situation and an outline given of the parenting course to follow. Presented by the Education support worker from the WRDATF
- 9.10–9.20:** Counselling and support services Presented by HSE drug and alcohol counsellors (or equivalent)
- 9.20–9.40:** Questions to presenters
- 9.40–10.00** Tea & coffee (and more informal questions)

Information will also be available for participants to take away. Parents may also wish to 'sign up' at this stage for the three-evening parenting programme.



## Appendix 4: Follow up Parents Course Evaluation Template

## Appendix 5: Sample Parents Evening Costing Template:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Work Hours	ESW	€
	HSE	€
	Garda	€
	SPHE	€
Expenses (mileage)	ESW	€
	HSE	€
	Garda	€
	SPHE	€
Admin	Photocopying	€
	Refreshments	€
	Miscellaneous	€
Other		€
<b>TOTAL COST</b>		<b>€</b>