

CITYWIDE UPDATE



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How you can make the Drugs Crisis in local communities an election issue

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Since the last general election in 2002, Citywide has been voicing the concern of local communities that the drugs issue is no longer a political priority. Local and European elections take place on June 11th. This is an opportunity to ask local candidates who call looking for your vote what they and /or their parties plan to do about the drugs crisis in your area. Citywide has produced a leaflet outlining the commitments made to communities about treatment, policing and young people in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 which have not been met. We are asking you to use the information in this leaflet to get answers from your local candidates about how they will ensure that the National Drugs Strategy is implemented.

Citywide is meeting with An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to discuss the current situation regarding the drugs crisis and will keep you up-dated on the outcomes of this meeting.

The following commitments were given in the National Drugs Strategy and have not been met - ask your local candidates what they or their party intend to do to deliver on these commitments to your community

Treatment

- **Action 48**
To have in place, in each Health Board area, a range of treatment and rehabilitation options as part of a planned programme of progression for each drug misuser, by end 2002.
- **Action 51**
To have a clearly co-ordinated and well-publicised plan in place for each Health Board area by end 2002 for the provision of a comprehensive and locally accessible range of treatments for drug misusers.
- **Action 55.**
To explore immediately the scope for introducing greater provision of alternative medical and non-medical treatment types, which allow greater flexibility and choice.

Action on cocaine.

Since the publication of the National Drugs Strategy, the increasing use and availability of cocaine and the need for services to respond to this has also become a big issue in our communities.

Policing

- **Action 7.**
To increase the level of Garda resources in LDTF areas by end 2001, building on lessons emanating from the Community Policing Forum model.
- **Action 10.**
To continue to target dealers at local level by making additional resources available to existing drug units and for the establishment of similar units in areas where they do not currently exist.

Young people

- **Action 49.**
To develop a protocol for the treatment of under 18year olds presenting with serious drug problems, a Working Group to be established to develop this protocol and to report by mid 2002.
- **Action 51.**
To have a clearly co-ordinated and well-publicised plan in place for each Health Board area by end 2002 for the provision of a comprehensive and locally accessible range of treatment for drug misusers, particularly for young people.
- **Action 59.**
To secure easy access to counselling services for young people seeking assistance with drug related problems.

Citywide is meeting with An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, to outline concerns about the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy and the Drugs Crisis in local communities.



"the drugs problem and emerging problems such as cocaine use are recognized by the government as a critical issue"

An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern

5th Annual Service of Commemoration and Hope,

Almost 1,000 people gathered in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sean McDermott Street on February 1st for the 5th annual Service of Commemoration and Hope. The event, organised by Citywide Family Support Network, was attended by the President, Taoiseach, Dublin's Lord Mayor, local politicians, church and Garda representatives as well as family members from 50 support groups from across the entire country and beyond with a group from Glasgow in attendance.

In her opening speech, Network chairperson Sadie Grace outlined the achievements of the Network over the past 5 years but added that drug related deaths are continuing to happen all too frequently and described how in a 10 week period last year, eight young people in the north inner city died from drug related causes. She warned that "this drugs crisis is too deeply rooted to be turned

around in a couple of years ... the progress we have made to date must be sustained".

The Taoiseach in his address put on record his commitment to tackling the drug problem and stated that "the drugs problem and emerging problems such as cocaine use are recognised by the government as a critical issue". He referred to partnership as an effective way in dealing with the drug issue and acknowledged that there was "some concern that some State Agencies may have lessened the priority given to this issue". He stated that "[this] is in no way in keeping with the policy of the Government" and gave assurances that he would take "immediate steps to ensure that any doubt about the issue is removed".

The Annual Service is funded by the Drugs Strategy Unit of the DCRGA.

Family support resource pack and directory

Citywide Family Support Network has just launched a resource pack and directory. The pack provides information on topics ranging from the process of addiction, health, what the most common drugs used look like and how they impact on the user and the supports available to families. It is a mixture of practical information including contact names and numbers of family support groups right across the country and contains a brief description of the

experiences families can go through when they discover a loved one using drugs.

The pack can also be used by groups as a tool to enable them to develop networks locally and nationally and is available from Citywide.

Funding for the production of the pack came from the Combat Poverty Agency and the printing costs were covered by the David Kendrick Memorial Fund.

'Go tell your Ma' - A Men's Conference

A men's conference held by the Citywide Family Support Network heard one father's perspective of having a daughter who was a drug user. Derek Jennings spoke of the gift he now has, a gift he never wanted - his experience as a father of an addict and the understanding that has grown from that. "A lot of men suffer in silence - we are the Mr. Fix-its, we are supposed to be able to fix things, not admit weakness or failure". Derek facilitates a men's group and has the support of psychologist Ian Birtwhistle, who also addressed the conference. The conference

broke into two workshops - one where all the participants were fathers of drug users and the other was a mixture of men and women involved in drug services.

Conference Recommendations: a) the existing core group of men should draw up material directed at and relevant to men, b) look at new models of support that can be developed for men.

The conference was funded by the DCRGA.

Contact Derek @ 086 602 7896

Closing date for applications for funding under the Dept of Social and Family Affairs Special Award Scheme is April 30th. Once-off awards of up to €2,000 will be available to local groups to celebrate the role of the family.

Citywide Cocaine Survey

92.6% of
Community
Drug Projects
are seeing
clients that are
using cocaine

Twenty-five out of twenty-seven community drug projects from across Dublin city when recently surveyed said that they are seeing clients who are using cocaine and estimated the numbers to be between 10% and 50% of their existing clients.

Citywide conducted the survey in response to a statement made by Minister Noel Ahern TD that additional guidelines were unnecessary for cocaine as only 1% of people being treated for drug abuse were presenting with cocaine problems.

The survey illustrates the extent to which local communities and local community drug projects are dealing with the problem of cocaine use. It illustrates the significant levels of availability and use of cocaine right across Dublin city and points to some of the consequences of that use for users, projects, families and communities

Survey Findings

Clients

Cocaine is a destabilising factor in many client's progress according to most projects. Clients are getting into debt and some are becoming involved in crime

to cover the costs of their cocaine use.

Families

Domestic rows and conflict in families caused by cocaine use is a serious problem. Some families have had to leave their homes because family members have got into debt due to their cocaine use.

Communities

Projects in all twelve areas represented in this survey noted that petty crime, dealing and other anti-social behaviours were on the increase.

Cocaine Services

Most projects (81%) attempt to provide some services for cocaine users. These services include counselling and elements of complementary therapies: acupuncture, yoga, and reiki in addition to specific cocaine harm reduction information.

Developing Services

Projects are interested in developing a range of complementary therapies and in learning from the experiences of people working with cocaine use in other countries. All projects identified the need for training, information and resources/funding to develop services.

Copies of the survey are available in the Citywide offices.

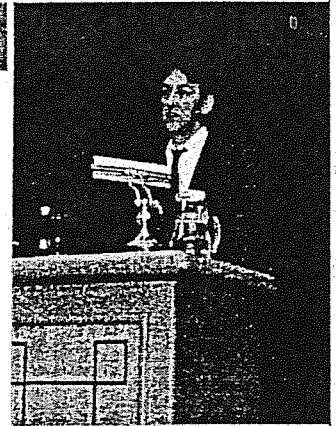
Citywide has contacted the NDST and the Dept of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in relation to funding for the development of services in local communities and for proper training for project staff.

Cocaine - the impacts on Communities

- 58% of drug projects surveyed said that there was an increase in petty crime and dealing directly linked to the increase in cocaine use in their community.
- 16% of projects know of residents that are afraid in their communities, these projects also reported significant levels of noise pollution is keeping people awake at night

Tommy Larkin

Citywide would like to add our voice to the many tributes paid to Tommy Larkin following his death in January. Tommy, through his work with UISCE, his artwork, the publication of 'Brass Monkey', his involvement in the North Inner City Drugs Task Force and his work with the Citywide Family Support Network, communicated his deep commitment and dedication to people whose voices are seldom heard. His support for Citywide's work was always appreciated. He achieved and contributed much and will be greatly missed for his humour, knowledge and humanity.



Make
sure
you
vote
on
June
11th

Local and
European
Elections



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CE Drug projects

Special CE drug projects have developed as a key part of rehab and aftercare services for drug users. FAS is currently engaged in an evaluation of the Special projects, which is being carried out by Alan Bruce. The FAS NDST representative met with managers of Special CE projects in November to discuss concerns about the current delivery model. A sub-group facilitated by Citywide was set-up which set-out the concerns of the wider group and held a meeting with FAS Senior Management to address these concerns. As a result of this meeting, joint workshops will be held with FAS staff and CE special drug projects to look at improving communication and delivery.

Prisons focus group

Citywide is involved in the Prisons Liaison Group which brings together prison staff and workers from community projects to look at more effective co-operation and collaboration in their work.

Citywide has also played a role in setting up a sub-group which has been working to develop a joint training programme for

prison and community workers.

The Citywide Prisons focus group meet regularly so that issues raised in the wider community can be fed into the Prisons Liaison Group.

For more information on this focus group contact Sadie.

Mid-Term Review - National Drugs Strategy 2001 - 2008

The National Drugs Strategy 2001 - 2008 provides for an independent evaluation of its overall effectiveness to be carried out by the end of 2004. It is proposed that work on the evaluation will commence within the next few weeks. A steering group will be set-up to oversee the mid-term evaluation. The participation of the Community Sector is seen as important to the success of this review and a nomination has been sought from Citywide to the Steering Group. Fergus McCabe has been nominated. We will keep you up-dated on the progress of this review.

Drug Project Managers meet- ing.

Citywide will facilitate a meeting of managers of community drug projects to look at the type of support they may need around staff policies, employment legislation and project management.

If you are interested in attending this meeting contact Ruth