

CITYWIDE DRUGS CRISIS CAMPAIGN

CITYWIDE UPDATE



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Back to you, Taoiseach!

Citywide met with An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD on April 26th. Five key points were raised:

1. The current funding difficulties for drug projects that have experienced cut-backs needs to be dealt with.
2. An immediate commitment should be made to the future of the LDTF'S and budgets allocated to enable them to respond to the changing local drug problem.
3. Key actions in the National Drugs Strategy have not been delivered and there needs to be an immediate re-commitment by government to the delivery of the Strategy.
4. The issues for families of drug users and the need for family support were not recognised in the Strategy and need to be included now.
5. The Regional Drugs Taskforces need to have realistic budgets that can facilitate and support real involvement by communities.

◆ *Since the meeting, there has been no specific feedback from the Taoiseach or his office on any of the issues raised and there have been no specific commitments given as yet.*

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Cocaine

Citywide held its third cocaine information meeting on Wed July 7th in St Andrews Rialto. The meeting heard feedback from visits to crack and cocaine services in Birmingham and London arranged in the past two months by Citywide and projects from the South inner-city and Tallaght. Community drug workers and project managers outlined the problems cocaine is causing in their communities and there was a report back from the newly formed NDST cocaine sub-group.

◆ **“Unconditional positive regard”**

People need to be met with a welcoming and non-judgemental approach at all stages. This approach has been shown to hugely reduce the potential for aggression and can eliminate the need for barring.

◆ **Specific Cocaine Services**

Services for both heroin and cocaine use can be offered in the same premises but they need to be run as separate and specific services.

◆ **Harm reduction goals**

Some people will want to stop using cocaine, others will want to cut-down, while others again will want to use in a way that is less harmful. These options need to be looked at in the clients care-plan

◆ **Relationship between client and key-worker.**

The quality of the relationship between key-worker and client is key to a successful service

◆ **Cognitive behavioural therapy**

CBT is widely used in the treatment for cocaine use.

◆ **Care plans and assessment - partnership approach:**

Both the client and key-worker are entitled to give their views.

◆ **On-on-going training**

all staff have to have access to on-going training.

◆ **Range of supports and interagency work:**

Projects focus on their own specialty i.e. treatment of cocaine use and make referrals to other services e.g. HIV, Hep etc.

Meeting conclusions

The experiences of English service providers is very useful but needs to be adapted to suit the Irish context.

The NDST sub-group is very welcome as official recognition of the cocaine problem. Communities should continue to work locally with their taskforces to develop services.

Although it is a recognised that recreational cocaine use is increasing, community drug projects will continue to concentrate on the cocaine issues that affect the most disadvantaged communities.

NDST Cocaine Sub-group

The NDST has set-up a sub-group to look at the growing problem of cocaine. The committee is made up of representation from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. Citywide is represented by Graham Ryall, Rialto CDT.

The sub-group has been allocated €5 million from the DCR&GA to fund a number of cocaine focused projects on a pilot basis in the Dublin area.

Three areas have been broadly agreed for pilots:

1. Treatment - 4 projects (2 community, 2 statutory)
2. Training
3. Education

◆ LDTF's will be consulted in relation to all of these proposals.

Cocaine services in London & Birmingham

The following are the key points from the experience of crack/cocaine service providers:

◆ **Services have to be attractive:**

It can be difficult to attract people to cocaine services therefore services need to be in decent accommodation with relevant services to immediate needs e.g. cafeteria, launderette, complementary therapies etc.

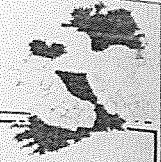
Central Treatment List Summary Report for period 01/09/04 to 30/09/04

THE DRUG TREATMENT CENTRE BOARD

CLINICS				
	Total Patients during period	Total Patients at End of Period	Clinics	New (1st time patient on CTL)
East Coast A.H.B. Clinics	418	408	14	0
Northern Area H.B. Clinics	1781	1740	31	10
South Western Area H B Clinics	1631	1567	31	14
Western Health Board Clinics	15	15	1	1
South Eastern H.B. Clinics	44	41	2	2
Mid Western H.B. Clinics	41	39	1	1
Midland Health Board Clinics	62	60	2	4
Prisons	385	340	7	9
Drug Treatment Centre Board	523	489	5	4
Totals	4900	4699	94	45
GENERAL PRACTITIONERS				
	Total Patients during period	Total Patients at End of Period	GP's	New (1st time patient on CTL)
ECAHB General Practitioners	314	302	32	3
NAHB General Practitioners	718	710	48	4
SWAHB General Practitioners	1255	1234	97	0
Western Health Board GP's	14	14	9	0
Southern Health Board GP's	23	23	7	0
South Eastern H.B. GP's	7	3	3	0
North Western H.B. GP's	5	4	3	0
North Eastern H.B. GP's	82	77	6	7
Mid Western Health Board GP's	38	37	8	0
Midland Health Board G.P.'s	11	11	6	0
Totals	2467	2415	219	14
Grand Totals	7367	7114	313	59
Actual Patients Attending	7235			

Compiled by CTL 12 October 2004

Family Support



The Citywide Family Resource Pack will shortly be available on the NACD website: www.nacd.ie

'The Granny Issue' - Families caring for the children of drug users

Adiós Phillip

We would like to extend our warm good wishes to Phillip Keegan as he takes up his new position as Development Co-ordinator of the Greater Blanchardstown Response to Drugs.

Phillip started working as a development worker with Citywide in 1998 focusing on family support and has been instrumental in developing the Citywide Family Support Network nationally.

Although he will no longer be in our employ, Phillip will continue to be involved with Citywide through the Family Support Network and in various networks and sub-groups.

Citywide FSN through its contact with people who care for the children of drug users became aware of a number of common issues and difficulties that this group experience. These include: confusion about entitlements for those caring for grandchildren etc., a need for clarity about different allowances and payment, the role of social workers and health board services in relation to carers own needs and the needs of the children, and what standing grandparents have if they wish to apply to foster their grandkids.

Citywide approached health board personnel to seek support to further examine these issues. Consultations with grandparents and extended family members living in a number of LDTF areas and who are caring for the children of drug users was carried out over a five month period. The consultations aimed to enhance existing information in relation to this groups needs and to inform future Citywide policy and to contribute to LDTF and Health Board policy.

The following synopsis the main recommendations of the report:

1. Access to locally based specialised support staff is essential for these families.
2. Local Community Welfare Services must be accessible and transparent.
3. LDTF'S should ensure representation of carers within their structures to make certain that their needs are moved forward.
4. Services at local level need to be integrated and developed in partnership between statutory bodies and communities.
5. Social work assessments for grandparents and carers must be sensitive and appropriate.
6. High quality childcare and crèche places must be available to carers when needed.

The report of this consultation is currently being edited and will be available shortly. Citywide FSN would like to thank the authors of the report, Dave Little and Patsy Moran, who also conducted the consultation and facilitated the focus groups.

Index of drug-related deaths

A scheme to set up an index of drug-related deaths is being proposed as a pilot for the Dublin area. It has been brought to the Inter-departmental Group and is now with the Dept. of Health. The proposal, if approved, will mean that the scale of deaths that are linked to drug use will become evident - currently official figures are highly inaccurate recording only deaths that can be directly attributed to drug use (i.e. overdose). The true picture of the tragedy of drug-related deaths is not seen, other than by families and local communities. "Establishing a register of drug-related deaths is crucial" according to Sadie Grace, Citywide Family Support

Network (FSN) chairperson "not just for the sake of compiling statistics, but as a first step to developing prevention strategies and to support the establishment of relevant services such as specialist bereavement services".

Sensitivities

Citywide FSN contributed to the development of this proposal ensuring that the sensitivities of families who have lost loved ones through drug-related causes are respected when the index system comes into use.

What do you think of the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy to date? Make your views known.

Submissions from interested individuals and groups are being invited as part of the mid-term review of the National Drugs Strategy 2001 - 2008. The objective of the mid-term review is to examine the progress being made to date in achieving the goals and actions set out in the Strategy. It will enable priorities for future action to be identified and a refocusing of the Strategy, if necessary, for the remaining period up to 2008.

Submissions should reach the Department by close of business on Tuesday 17th August 2004 to:

Email: drugsstrategy@pobail.ie or Fax: (01) 6670824

- Where possible submissions should be in electronic format.
- Submissions by email should be in Microsoft Word and attached to an email to the above email address.

Paper submissions should be sent to:

Una Ni Fhaircheallaigh, Drugs Strategy Unit, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
43 - 49 Mespil Road Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 6473061

Further information available at: Email: drugsstrategy@pobail.ie or on : www.pobail.ie

The following information is required in all submissions:

- Name of Organisation/Individual and address
- Contact name for organisations
- Telephone, Fax and e-mail address
- Indicate if the submission is a personal view or made on behalf of an organisation

All submissions may be made public and attributed to the author and/or organisation. Contact details will not be published but will be retained on the Department's database for future communication unless you request otherwise.

Guidelines for Submissions:- The following are issues for consideration under each pillar of the Strategy and some guideline questions. Not all points are relevant to everyone and you are, of course, under no obligation to respond to them all.

Guideline Questions

Consider the following questions in respect of each of the four pillars of the strategy: supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research and in respect of the co-ordination objectives.

1. What are the strengths and weakness of initiatives under this pillar of the Strategy?
2. How can they be improved?
3. Does the Strategy need to be refocused, in the period up to 2008, in order to strengthen each of the pillars, and if so how should it be done?

Supply and Reduction Objectives

To significantly reduce the volume of illicit drugs available in Ireland, to arrest the dynamic of existing markets and to curtail new markets as they are identified; and

To significantly reduce access to all drugs, particularly those that cause most harm, amongst young people especially in those areas where misuse is most prevalent.

Supply Reduction Issues

- Partnership with communities
- International co-operation
- Policing
- Customs
- Courts
- Prisons
- Legislation on tackling drug

Prevention Objectives

To create a greater societal awareness of drug misuse; and

To equip young people and other vulnerable groups with the skills and supports necessary to make informed choices about their health, personal lives and social development.

Prevention Issues

- Early intervention
- Schools Programmes
- Targeting of vulnerable young people
- The needs of young people and their parents
- General public awareness
- Creation of accessible, positive alternatives to drug misuse

Treatment Objectives

To encourage and enable those dependent on drugs to avail of treatment with the aim of reducing dependency and improving overall health and social well-being, with the ultimate aim of leading a drug-free lifestyle; and

To minimise the harm to those who continue to engage in drug-taking activities that put them at risk.

Treatment Issues

- Substitute treatment
- De-tox programmes
- Drug free approaches
- Harm reduction
- Polydrug use
- Changing nature of drug use
- Young people
- Rehabilitation/moving on opportunities
- Community concerns
- Family supports

Research Objectives

To have available valid, timely and comparable data on the extent of drug misuse amongst the Irish population and specifically amongst marginalised groups; and

To gain a greater understanding of the factors which contribute to Irish people, particularly young people using drugs.

Research Issues

- Quality and reliability of information
- Models of best practice
- International comparison

Co-ordination Objectives:

To have in place an efficient framework for implementing the National Drugs Strategy

Co-ordination Issues:

- Partnership of Government Departments, State Agencies and the Community and Voluntary Sectors
- Roles and functions of organisations involved
- Linkages between organisations



Notices

Drug project managers meeting

The first meeting of drug projects managers was held on June 9th. Although the attendance was small there was a great deal of discussion about the types of supports that managers would wish to avail of. The meeting identified the following areas as support priorities: Legal responsibilities of project managers and boards, employment legislation, developing staff policies, health and safety and staff supervision. Citywide will draw up a funding proposal for a training programme for managers, utilising expertise in the areas identified. For further information contact Ruth.

Review of the National Drugs Strategy - LDTF Community Reps to meet

LDTF Community Reps will meet on Friday July 23rd at 1pm in The Belvedere Hotel (Comfort Inn) Great Denmark, St Dublin 1.

The meeting will discuss submitting to the review of the National Drugs Strategy (see p3 for review guidelines) and will prioritise some of the 100 actions in the strategy as being essential for communities.

The recent meeting with the Taoiseach will also be on the agenda as will the recently produced NDST documents concerning supports needed for Local Drugs Taskforces.

Fergus McCabe, the community representative on the NDST will attend this meeting.

Regional Drugs Taskforce (RDTF)

Citywide will hold a meeting of RDTF community reps on Tuesday July 20th between 12 - 5pm in the Belvedere Hotel, Great Denmark Street (off Parnell Square East) Dublin 1.

The meeting will be an opportunity for community reps from regional drugs taskforces to discuss some of the key issues in the regions from a community perspective. This meeting will facilitate the RDTF community reps in making a submission to the Strategy mid-term review and can feed into individual submissions being made by RDTF'S.

RDTF reps who cannot make this meeting can forward written comments in advance to: info@citywide.ie or 175, North Strand Road, Dublin 1.



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Tel: 836 5090 Email: info@citywide.ie

NACD Report on Harm Reduction Approaches launched

This report, which was launched in May, reviews harm reduction approaches in Ireland and concludes that there is significant need to expand the role of drugs services in delivering flexible, responsive initiatives to target shared use of equipment amongst drug users. The NACD are recommending to the Government that:

Needle exchange services should be significantly expanded nationwide to operate outside normal working hours and at weekends.

Harm reduction services should be able to cater for the provision of a range of drug taking equipment.

Alternative approaches such as community pharmacy needle exchange could be developed with appropriate consultation.

There should be enhanced training for service providers

Service provision for drug users in prison should mirror the range of treatment and harm reduction approaches, which are available in the community

There should be on-going research in the area of supervised drug consumption rooms given that the review found the evidence of their effectiveness is inclusive.

The report is available from the NACD Tel: 6670760
Email: info@nacd.ie Web: www.nacd.ie

Hepatitis C - Awareness Conference

The Blood Borne Virus Forum (BBVF) hosted a conference on July 1st to raise awareness of hepatitis C and to inform people about how to avoid transmission and what treatments are available if infected.

Further information about BBVF can be obtained by contacting Derek Byrne - 086 6032817 or Olivia Carr 087 2489456