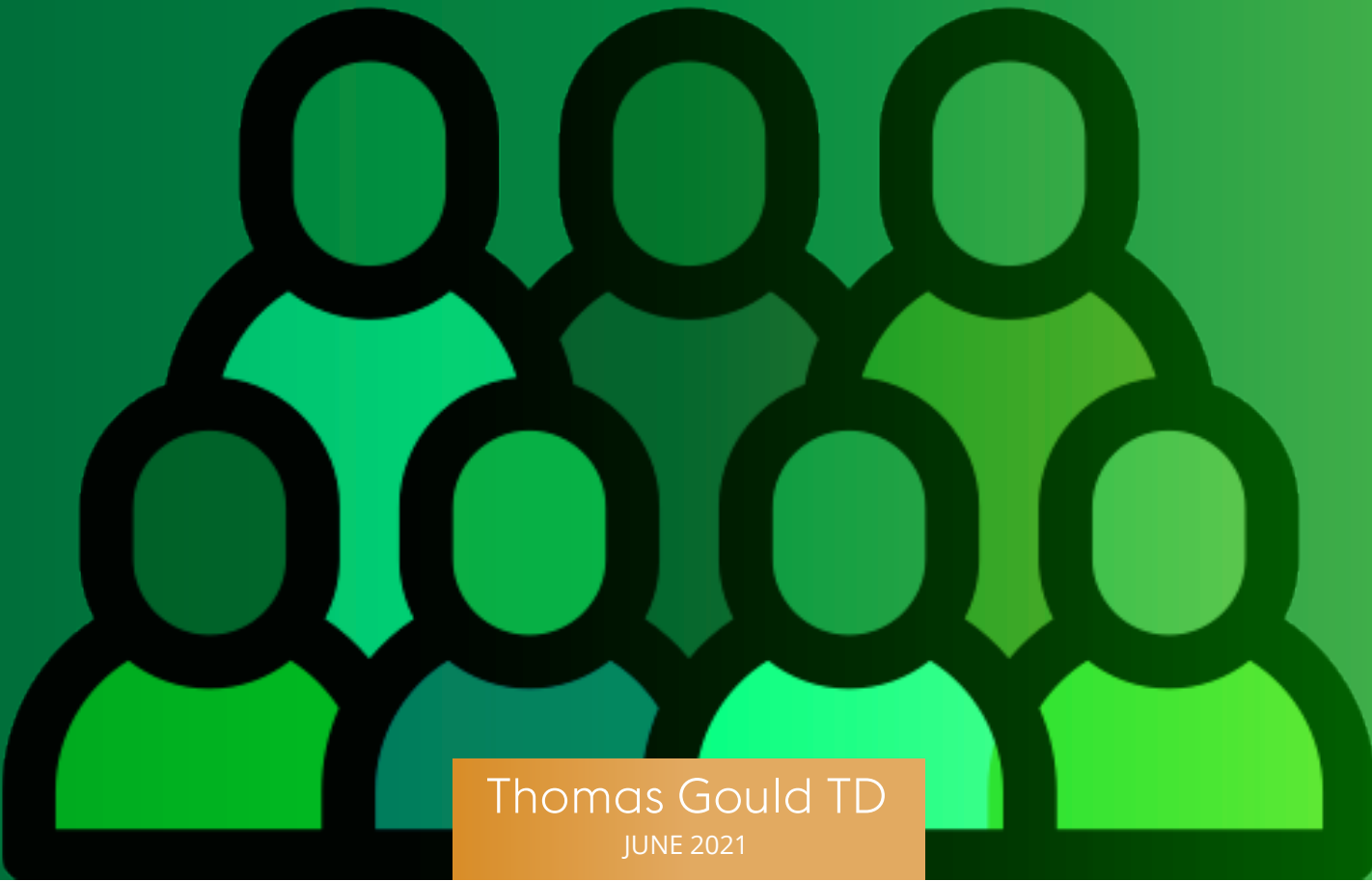




Sinn Féin

COMMUNITY ADDICTION AND RECOVERY STRATEGY



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Between 2009 and 2014,
**DRUG-RELATED
EXPENDITURE**
in the state
**DECLINED
BY 16%**



On average
**3 PEOPLE
A DAY DIE**
from alcohol-related
harm in this state

6th HIGHEST
prevalence of
**HIGH-RISK
OPIOID
USAGE**
in EU

7,546
CASES
treated for
**ALCOHOL
ADDICTION**
in 2019

OVER
55,000
PEOPLE
engaged in
**PROBLEM
GAMBLING**

Addiction services have
**3rd HIGHEST
TURNOVER**
of
**SOCIAL CARE
STAFF**
in this state

Sinn Féin – Vision for Recovery

Sinn Féin recognises the harmful impacts addiction has had on individuals, families and communities across the state. In government, Sinn Féin would support recovery. Recovery for individuals from addiction, recovery for families who have suffered at the hands of addictions and recovery for communities who have for too long been locked out of services.

Between 2009 and 2014, drug-related expenditure in the state declined by 16%¹. The funding has never been properly restored and academics have pointed to previous government policies as having a detrimental impact on vulnerable individuals, communities and the services and DATFs that support them².

Community-led approach

Sinn Féin believes that those working on the ground in the addiction sector are best placed to identify and resource programmes and initiatives that will benefit individuals and families within their communities. We would ringfence funding specifically for Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforces. We would move away from over-governance and towards a model of community-led sustainability and recovery that would allow the identification and tackling of area-specific issues.

Recognising substance misuse as a community, and not individual harm is at the core of Sinn Féin's approach to addiction. We will be there to support communities to recover from the harm addiction has caused to them. We have listened to services and we know that the people on the ground, day in and day out, are the experts.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Increase ringfenced funding for Drug and Alcohol Taskforces to give them greater autonomy to make their own financial decisions on the ground
- ▶ Employ an additional Community Development worker in each Taskforce
- ▶ Increased focus on youth services and community-led approach to youth services

¹ EMCDDA Drugs Report 2018

² O'Gorman, A., Driscoll, A., Moore, K. and Roantree, D. (2016) *Outcomes: Drug harms, policy harms, poverty and inequality*. Dublin: Clondalkin Drug and Alcohol Task Force.





- ▶ Work with Department of Education to explore drug and alcohol misuse education programme for post-primary and third level
- ▶ Ringfence a percentage of money from CAB seizures to support Drug and Alcohol Taskforces in establishing and maintaining community services and supports and ensure that the funding returns to the communities most affected by the illicit drug trade
- ▶ Greater focus on Gardai addressing the harmful impacts of drugs on communities
- ▶ Work with the Department of Health Social Inclusion Unit and stakeholders to develop Traveller community-specific projects

Harm Reduction

Sinn Féin believes that a humane, compassionate approach focused on harm reduction which recognises substance misuse as a healthcare issue is best for communities and their families. Harm Reduction has been shown to save lives³. We need to recognise, and reduce, the harm addiction has caused to communities and families across this state.

MEASURES:

- ▶ Festival recreational drug monitoring scheme
- ▶ Monitor pilot safe injection facility at Merchant's Quay and explore further rollout
- ▶ Consistent standardized needle exchange service rolled out across all CHOs

Recovery supports

Sinn Féin believes that people in recovery need to be supported in every way possible. We would focus on putting in the short- and long-term supports and services necessary to help people in recovery flourish and become part of the solution.

We would work with existing services to establish a Women's Centre which would provide a 'one stop shop' for access to information and support across health, addiction, violence and abuse, legal issues, education, and employment. Services within the centre would include: One to one holistic support, Drug and Alcohol support, Counselling, Domestic Abuse Programmes, Group Work, Courses and Workshops, Access to nursing and GP services, Drop-in sessions, Signposting to other services/source of support. This is badly needed as women often present to services at a crisis point, with complex needs coinciding with deteriorating physical and mental health.⁴

Many leading Recovery Programmes recommend sport as a key component of recovery because of the stress relief, structure and socialisation opportunities it provides. Sinn Féin would provide an incentive to sporting organisations to become inclusive of those in recovery and ensure that they can begin to rediscover their place within their community.

³ Saving Lives in the time of COVID-19 Case Study of Harm Reduction, Homelessness and Drug Use in Dublin, Ireland July 2020 – London School of Economics and Political Science + Ana Liffey Drug Project

⁴ National Women's Council of Ireland, 2018



Key to our programme for supporting those in recovery is the provision of Recovery Housing. This would be a wraparound service for those leaving residential treatment to support them in their transitional period and ensure they are set up for success. The programme would start as a pilot scheme with 3 initial bases across the regions. Each person utilising these services would have access to an addiction counsellor and support worker. Providing wraparound, holistic services to those who have newly entered recovery will be at the core of this project.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Sports grants for clubs and organisations inclusive of those in recovery
- ▶ Women's One-Stop Shop
- ▶ Recovery-specific housing programme with wraparound support
- ▶ Work with Dept of Health to explore the provision of free transportation service for people living in rural communities to access community treatment service

Dual Diagnosis

Dual Diagnosis is a diagnosis whereby people have both a mental health diagnosis and an addiction diagnosis. For too long now, these people have struggled to access services in this state. Lip-service has been played to the need for dual diagnosis services, but no government action has been taken. A Dual Diagnosis Working Group was established in 2017 and yet still there is no state-wide service.

We believe that Dual Diagnosis should be included in the National Service Plan and that a State-wide Clinical Programme must be developed immediately.

Many groups on the ground have established dual diagnosis supports. Using their own initiative, groups have ensured that people with a dual diagnosis are not overlooked. Sinn Féin believes that these localised services need to be supported alongside the development of a State-wide Clinical Programme for Dual Diagnosis.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Include Dual Diagnosis in the National Service Plan
- ▶ Support continued development and running of localised dual diagnosis services





Addiction Services staff

Sinn Féin recognises that staff in addiction services are often overlooked and under supported. We note reports finding that those working in addiction had 3rd highest levels of stress and burnout in the social care field after only child protection and adult mental health services⁵. We recognise that supervision is a key aspect in the social work and social care in mental health fields yet is often overlooked in addiction services.

We understand that pay restoration to Section 39 workers is only one step in reducing staff turnover and increasing the quality of employment offered to staff in addiction services.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Establish supervision support services for addiction staff

5 The Retention of Social Workers in the Health Services: An Evidence-Based Assessment (Redmond et al, UCD)

Alcohol Addiction

Alcohol remains the most common drug requiring addiction treatment in the state with 7546 treatment cases in 2019 alone⁶. Successive governments have failed to address the harm felt by those engaged in harmful alcohol consumption.

Sinn Féin believe that resourcing taskforces to rollout Community Action on Alcohol programmes needs to happen. For too long now, discourse on addressing alcohol-related harm has been all talk and no action.

People with Alcohol-Related Brain Injury (ARBI) have not been included in any government policy or strategy – they exist in a policy vacuum which presents major barriers to the development or provision of services to meet their needs. This is despite international evidence of growing numbers of people developing this condition as a result of chronic alcohol dependency. Sinn Féin would establish a Working Group on ARBI and work with existing service providers to rollout a residential and community-based rehabilitation service commencing with a pilot programme.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Fund and resource Community Action on Alcohol Programmes
- ▶ Establish working group on ARBI
- ▶ Commence ARBI pilot residential and community service



6 A study of the trend in alcohol treatment in Ireland 2013-2019 (HRB, 2020)



Gambling Addiction

Sinn Féin believes that it is now time to address gambling addiction in this state. 55,000 people are estimated to be engaged in problem gambling across the state⁷ yet without a full gambling prevalence survey we do not know the extent of this problem.

We believe that the Gambling Control Bill, promised since 2013, needs to be brought forward immediately alongside the much-needed Social Fund which would see gambling addiction services finally receive secure and comprehensive funding.

Sinn Féin recognises that gambling addiction is a health issue. We would highlight this by including gambling and behavioural addictions specifically in the proposed 'Addiction and Recovery Unit'. This would finally see gambling addiction fall under the remit of the Minister for Health.

SINN FÉIN WOULD:

- ▶ Establish a Gambling Prevalence Survey
- ▶ Move gambling addiction to the remit of the Minister for Health
- ▶ Bring forward a Gambling Control Bill that would establish a Gambling Regulator and Social Fund

⁷ Gambling Awareness Trust (2020)



Issued by

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