

## Department of Health Prevention and Education Funding Programme - Information Document

The purpose of this document is to outline the Department of Health's new Prevention and Education Funding Programme and the policy and guidance that informs it. The aim of the funding programme will be to increase the focussed delivery of prevention programmes, supported by the best possible evidence, amongst the school/university age population. This funding programme is part of a wider suite of work the Department is undertaking to enhance the area of prevention and education in Ireland.

The Department is today advertising a call for applications to a new funding programme which has been designed to strengthen the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and the associated harms among children and young people. This funding programme will be open to Drug and Alcohol Taskforces, HSE/Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs), the community and voluntary sector, and academic bodies.

More details can be found on this funding programme on the following page.

The Funding Programme application form can be found [here](#).

### Policy Rationale

#### **The National Drugs Strategy and Mid-Term Review**

The National Drugs Strategy '*Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery*' adheres to the belief that prevention is a collaborative effort, which involves a **range of stakeholders**, including parents and families, those working in education, Drug and Alcohol Task Forces (DATFs), family support networks, youth services, student unions, sporting organisations and networks of people who use drugs. The Strategy also states that prevention programmes **should be evidence-based, adhere to quality standards and involve participants in programme design and implementation**.

Six **strategic priorities** have been identified within the recently conducted mid-term review of the National Drugs Strategy. These priorities aim to strengthen the implementation of the Strategy for the period 2021-2025 while also reflect the lessons and the stakeholder feedback from the mid-term review and capture the commitments in the Programme for Government. The first strategic priority aims **to strengthen the prevention of drug and alcohol use and the associated harms among children and young people**.

#### **Programme for Government**

The new **Programme for Government also** reaffirms responsibility in this area, as it specifically commits to:

- Build on recent initiatives at junior and senior cycle and support secondary schools in introducing drug and alcohol awareness programmes, particularly in relation to the hazards of casual drug use.

## EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025

The new **EU Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs 2021-2025** focuses on three policy areas, one of which aims to reduce drug demand by implementing prevention, treatment and care services. Strategic Priority 5 of the EU Drugs Strategy Action Plan includes action 26, 27, and 28 which speak specifically to this area. Action 26 commits to expand and promote educational campaigns targeted at families, teachers, social workers and local decision makers, to increase their knowledge and support them in increasing health literacy and promoting positive behaviour, a healthy lifestyle, and a safe environment for young people and other groups. Action 27 aims to increase the availability of reliable information on effective prevention measures. While Action 28 focuses on the promotion of effective prevention messages in communication and social media channels, including rapid risk alerts on emerging threats as they arise.

### Adherence to International Standards

The interventions and framework to be developed and implemented as part of this programme will need to adhere to international prevention standards. This includes the [European drug prevention quality standards \(EDPQS\)](#), the UNODC/WHO [International Standards on Drug Use Prevention](#) and the [European Prevention Curriculum \(EUPC\)](#). These standards compile the latest scientific evidence regarding prevention and will ensure that all work under the remit of this programme will promote evidence-based prevention and training.

### Funding Programme (Open Call)

This funding programme will support up to five prevention initiatives, up to €100,000 a year, for a period of three years. These will be initiatives for delivery at local level across Ireland and will contain key targets within their deliverables. The funding programme is aimed specifically at introducing effective, evidence-based programmes, or building on current evidence-based initiatives already in Ireland within school, youth work or community-based settings.

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction hosts a registry ([Xchange](#)) that lists useful and thoroughly evaluated prevention interventions.

Applications for funding under this programme are encouraged to cooperate with various other stakeholders. Drug and Alcohol Taskforces, Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs), the community and voluntary sector, and academic bodies will be eligible to apply to this funding programme.

Applicants will need to have a member of their organisation successfully complete the EUPC course within the first year of funding. Applications will also need to meet a standard set of criteria, in order to be considered for award.

There will be 5 funding streams within the programme.

- **School based:** This funding stream will support the implementation of *Know the Score* for senior cycle SPHE and *Healthy Choices* for Junior Cycle SPHE and other resources related to substance misuse education supported by the DOH/HSE and DOE. Applications should focus on providing implementation support, as teachers are best placed to deliver substance misuse education in schools as part of the SPHE Programme. Applications will also be welcomed that focus on reviewing implementation levels of Know the Score, how it is viewed by teachers and students, and how it is used by schools

- **General youth:** This will be a funding stream that aims to resource prevention and education programmes that are delivered in youth work or community-based settings, especially for those who are particularly vulnerable and/or early school leavers.
- **Family based:** Recognising that socialisation begins at home for children, family-based prevention initiatives will be funded by this stream. This will aim to assist parents in improving their skills and to positively influence how children learn their group's norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours.
- **Environmental prevention:** Initiatives under this stream will aim to limit exposure to unhealthy and risky behavioural opportunities and promote the availability of healthier opportunities. This is achieved by modifying the context where the behaviour, such as substance use, takes place in society or in specific places, such as alcohol retailers, public spaces or entertainment venues.
- **Higher Education settings :** In this stream, initiatives that aim to tackle substance use, particularly addressing the overestimation of peer use and those that tackle social norms will be considered for this cohort. The publication of the report [on Drug Use in Higher Education Institutions](#) published earlier this year, provided comprehensive, and valuable information about drug use amongst those attending 3rd level institutions, participants overestimated the percentage of their peers they believe had used drugs in the last year; they thought around 60% had used drugs in last year. The actual figure is 37%.

### Deadline

The deadline for this call is the 11th of November 2022. Details of where the proposal should be sent to can be found in the application form.

### Assessment criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on 6 assessment criteria - more details can be found in the application form.

- About the Applicants: Demonstrating suitability and experience
- Project Implementation Plan: Outlining a clear plan for the work,
- Scientific Quality and Relevance: Ensuring adherence to the evidence base and relevant prevention standards
- Benefits of the Project: Outputs, deliverables, and outcomes. Including the planned impact on the relevant cohort.
- Costing of Proposal: A full detailed breakdown of costings, timescales & dependencies.
- Evaluating, Monitoring and Reporting: Each proposal must include a component which ensures adequate evaluation, monitoring and reporting.