

THE BALLYFERMOT DRUGS TASK FORCE

Set up in 1997 following ministerial recommendation, the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force is a community response to the growing drug problem in the area. Members include local residents (nominated by local networks), voluntary groups and statutory agencies (the Eastern Health Board, VEC, Dublin Corporation, Probation and Welfare, Gardai and FAS). The chairperson was nominated by the Ballyfermot Partnership. Based on local input, an action plan was drawn up under the following key areas:

- A Increasing Awareness
- B Reducing Drug Supply
- C Treatment
- D Rehabilitation
- E Filling Gaps in Voluntary/Statutory Provision
- F Support for Drug Users, Parents, Families and Communities

This report documents progress to date.



A INCREASING AWARENESS

The following outcomes have been achieved in terms of increasing awareness of the drug problem:

1. Schools Programme

The Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force has funded drug prevention activities now running in all local schools involving workshops, guest speakers, trainers, resource packs and personal development activities. A wide range of cultural, physical and recreational activities have also been funded. Eight leaders have been trained in the Substance Abuse Prevention Programme, "On My Own Two Feet", aimed at building students' communication skills, confidence and self-development. Two community theatre workers, two community

project workers and two youth leaders have also received training in order to further support teachers.

2. Information Programme For Parents

More than twenty community members, mostly parents, have received certificates in the Crosscare Programme: Training for Leadership in Drug Prevention. They have now begun to train further parents and to run prevention initiatives such as drug prevention workshops.

3. Youth and Peer Leadership

Ten young volunteers have completed the Crosscare Peer Education and Leadership Programme and are now eagerly developing contacts with others involved in similar projects throughout Dublin. They have also attended peer education seminars in Northern Ireland and Wales. Already, they have co-ordinated several workshops involving young people in Ballyfermot. Feedback from people attending the workshops has been very positive and a feasibility study is underway to examine the further development of peer education in Ballyfermot.

4. Raising Awareness in the Community

Awareness Campaign

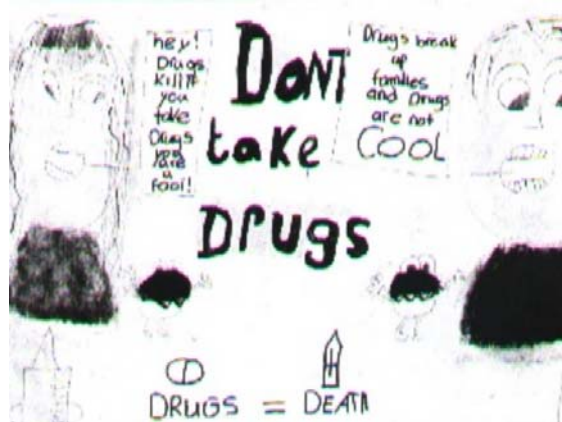
A theme character appealing to both children and adults has been created to represent the Task Force. An awareness campaign using this character was then developed featuring leaflets, posters, stickers and children's competitions. The leaflet, explaining the work and aims of the Task Force and a more detailed eight-page document entitled "The Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force - A Community Response" were circulated in every Ballyfermot household in 1998. 500 posters and 15,000 stickers also featuring the theme character are distributed on an ongoing basis. The Task Force is sponsoring a video on drug issues and services in Ballyfermot, has been produced by students at Ballyfermot Senior College.



Pat Dolan, Manager of St Patrick's Athletic Football Club and local young sports people show off their new sports kits. Most football and GAA teams in Ballyfermot have had their full kits sponsored by the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force. The aim is to target young people not already using drugs, to raise awareness of drug issues among them and their parents and to increase the profile of the Task Force. Managers, coaches and club volunteers have enthusiastically requested drug prevention training which will take place by the end of 1999. This initiative has the potential to open up a whole new avenue for drug awareness education with the possibility of involving parents in the future.

Music and Crafts

The Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force is also supporting young people with an interest in music by funding The Ballyfermot Theatre Workshop to develop an all schools choir involving over two hundred children. CEOL, a music project set up by a voluntary group of local people, has received a grant towards the purchase of musical instruments for young people who will receive free music lessons. The Ballyfermot Youth Federation have received funding to develop craft skills with young people.



One child's perception of drugs following the Drug Awareness Production

Drama

Ballyfermot Theatre Workshop held two productions locally, focusing on issues relating to drugs such as early school leaving, literacy, drug dealing, peer pressure, AIDS, saying "no" to drugs and friendships. These proved to be extremely successful and well received with estimated attendances of about 300. The production was also brought to seven local primary schools where fifth and sixth class students attended and to secondary schools where over 1,000 pupils attended. Students took part in workshops to discuss the play and drug issues. Evaluation forms returned by students highlighted their enthusiasm and interest in hearing these messages but also sadly their lack of knowledge in this area.

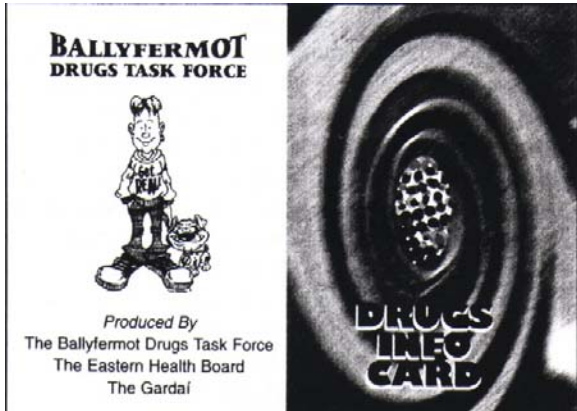
B READING SUPPLY

1. Facilitating the Role of the Gardai

Garda Familiarisation

The Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force has developed a unique new programme aimed at building relations and reducing tension between the Gardai and the community. The first training day of Garda Familiarisation, took place in May 1999 and involved an induction course for new Garda recruits to Ballyfermot. Co-ordinated by Task Force representatives, its aim was to create an understanding of community issues such as attitudes, prejudices and examples of positive participation in community activities. The reaction of the Gardai who attended the course was extremely positive and suggestions were made that such programmes should be carried out on a regular basis. The Task Force plans to run a similar event for Gardai already stationed in Ballyfermot.

Information Card



Gardai, Probation & Welfare Officers and Youth and Community Workers are distributing pocket-sized information cards produced by the Task Force which feature essential telephone numbers of drug services in the area. The concept has proven so successful that it has been replicated elsewhere in Dublin.

Research Into The Impact of Community Policing Approaches

A review of the impact of intensive community policing approaches on the community has been undertaken and a report will be published in January 2000. Preliminary results show that while intensive policing may help to reduce fear in the short term, it can have a long term and significant negative impact on the community. This research will prove important in improving relations between the community and Gardai. The Task Force plans to hold community workshops with the published document and to seek to influence national and local policing policy.

2. Controlling the Supply of Methadone

The Task Force aims to support GPs in Ballyfermot to manage addiction in their practice. The needs of GPs in this regard are currently being examined.

3. Responding Locally to The Scale of the Problem

Community representatives From the Task Force are actively involved in Dublin City Wide Drugs Crisis Campaign, which supports communities in developing local response to drug issues and facilitates exchange of information across communities on supply, treatment and other issues.

4. The Methadone Protocol

In October 1998, legislation, entitled The Methadone Protocol, was introduced to respond to street availability of methadone. As a result of this protocol, only licensed GPs can prescribe methadone on special prescriptions. GPs must undergo addiction training before they can treat drug users in their practice. They have also been restricted in the number of drug users they can treat to a maximum of thirty-five per practice. All people receiving treatment are issued with a treatment card which they must present to a named pharmacy in the community.

C. TREATMENT

1. Role of the Eastern Health Board

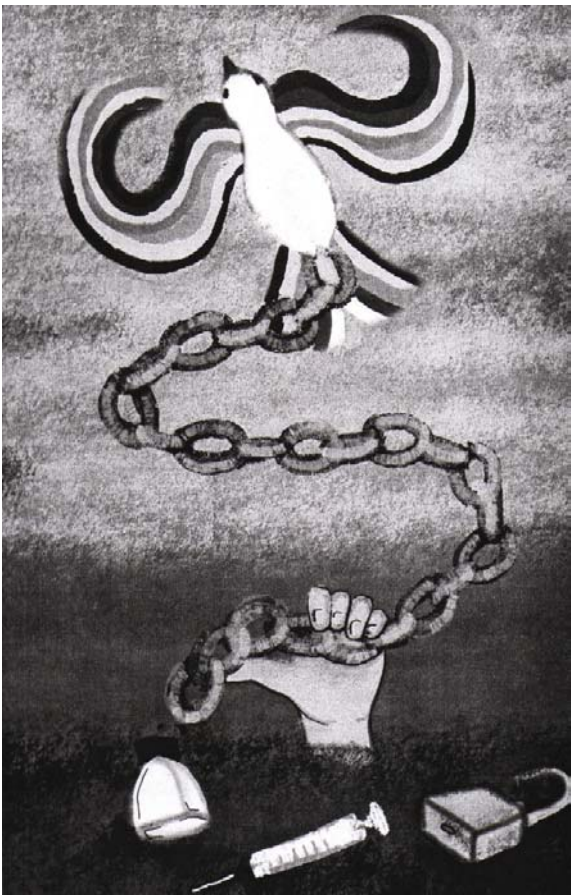
The overall capacity to deliver treatment in Ballyfermot has doubled during the lifetime of the Task Force. However, such is the growing demand for services that even as they expand, waiting lists remain. This will be a priority for the Task Force in the year 2000.

- A **Family Care Centre**, financed by the Eastern Health Board and run by The Daughters of Charity, has been opened for one year now. The centre works with families on a sessional basis, providing counselling and family therapy as well as art and play therapy for children, according to the needs assessed. Referrals are taken from a wide range of community groups and agencies. Self-referral is also possible.

- A **Drug-Free Rehabilitation Centre** will be opened in January 2000 providing places for up to 12 people. The aim is to facilitate people with addiction to make a successful transition from dependency to managing their own lives both socially and economically. A variety of skills training will be provided including literacy, numeracy, computer skills, catering, personal development and individual/group therapy.

- A **Stabilisation Unit** with twelve beds will be opened on the grounds of Cherry Orchard Hospital. This unit will provide a short-term, residential, concentrated service for unstable drug misusers.

- Over 200 people from Ballyfermot are now attending the **Aisling Centre** which is open seven days a week providing a methadone maintenance programme, a six-month interim programme towards detoxification, emergency assessment, HIV testing, needle exchange as well as GP, nursing, counselling, outreach, community welfare and creche facilities. A waiting list exists.



From The Heart. A painting depicting one man's journey from drug addiction to recovery.

- **Fortune House** has introduced a non-residential detoxification programme for people under 18, the first such service in the area. It provides similar service for people over eighteen, which now has a small waiting list. Both services are open to drug users regardless of whether they are injecting or smoking. Fortune House also provides an emergency assessment service. GP, nursing, family therapy and community welfare services are also offered.
- **Cuan Dara**, the residential detoxification centre in Cherry Orchard Hospital has increased its beds from twelve to seventeen.
- Locally, a number of GPs and pharmacists are participating in the **Methadone Protocol**.

- An **Education Officer** works with local community groups, schools and agencies in providing specialist drug education training (beginners and advanced). A local Drug Education Network has been established and meets quarterly.

2. Family Support

The Social Work and Child Care Team, a specialist team to provide family support was set up in 1997 by the Eastern Health Board. In 1998, the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force added their support. Two social workers, Irene Christie and Aoife O'Connor and one childcare Worker, Glenn Perry are working with families with chronic heroin dependency where children may be at risk. The team strives to help family members access treatment services. Every effort is made to keep families together. Only five out of over forty children have been taken into care with non-family members and in each case a high level of contact with parents is maintained. Both children and the drug-using parent receive intensive care and support leading to more stability in their lives and the family unit. Service users have expressed great satisfaction with the service. A full evaluation has taken place and has been published. The Task Force is now negotiating with the Health Board for the continuation of this project through usual Health Board Service Delivery.

3. Skills Training For Community Members

Skills Training for Community Members is being organised by the Task Force to support a wide range of local people involved directly or indirectly with the drug issue:

- 25 people have attended the Merchant's Quay foundation and advanced drug working skills course
- 12 people are attending the NUI Certificate in Addiction Studies in Maynooth
- 7 people have completed the Eastern Health Board NUI Certificate in Addiction Studies
- 4 people have completed training in Counselling Skills at the Senior College Ballyfermot and an additional seven people are receiving further training in this area
- 1 person has completed two years of Psychoanalytic Studies

Some of the people who have benefited from this training have received employment in the community in Task Force supported projects delivering on the local drugs strategy.

4. Research Into the Culture of Drug Use

Research has been carried out in Ballyfermot to learn more about the drug problem, its causes and effects. Issues highlighted include:

- the high percentage of children in certain areas of Ballyfermot
- the lack of a clear pathway to drug use
- the complex social problems at the heart of the issue
- the sense of alienation felt by drug users
- the growing divide between the haves and the have-nots

These issues highlight the need for resources, imagination and dedication over the long-term to break the cycle of deprivation, drugs, poverty and anti-social behaviour. A report will be published in January 2000.



Local graffiti depicting drug culture

D. REHABILITATION

1 "Fusion"

The Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force has teamed up with FAS and the Eastern Health Board to create "Fusion", an exciting new project to recruit people with a drug using history on to Community Employment Projects to improve their employment opportunities. Additional places are being provided on FAS initiatives in Ballyfermot for former or current drug users stabilised on methadone maintenance. A Liaison Support Worker, Elaine Forsyth, has been employed to work with individuals on a one to one basis, developing rehabilitation plans including placement in suitable training or work projects.

Elaine liaises with the relevant treatment and rehabilitation services and supports all projects, trainers and employers involved. A Steering Group has been set up to manage the project comprising representatives from the Eastern Health Board, FAS, the Task Force, the Ballyfermot Theatre Workshop and the Candle Community Trust. The Task Force believes that the project has identified a gap in service provision and in the needs of the target group currently not being met in any meaningful way. Already over 20 people have been placed.



Media training is just one of the rehabilitation opportunities available through Fusion.

2. 'Saol Nua'

Some young men from Ballyfermot have successfully completed programmes at Saol Nua, an independent drug-free residential rehabilitation programme in Portarlinton for males recovering from drug use. The Task Force has provided some support to Saol Nua to improve its facilities and has also provided additional guidance and backup.

E FILLING GAPS IN VOLUNTARY/STATUTORY PROVISION

1. Young People

The Task Force has supported the publication of research on youth needs in Ballyfermot. The research has been published and used as a basis to inform the Youth Development Plan. This plan was submitted under the Young Peoples' Facilities and Services Fund. Through this fund Ballyfermot achieved £1.6m towards the development of initiatives aimed at young people at risk. These include:

- 6 youth centres
- 2 sports clubs

- employing 2 youth/outreach workers to work with young people at risk from drugs, linking them with relevant services
- employing a sports worker to encourage young people to participate in sports activities and to develop a strategy for Ballyfermot
- the employment of a youth worker to co-ordinate the work of all the youth workers in Ballyfermot, to develop a synergy of service
- sports services
- after school services
- two mini-buses for relevant youth projects

2. Investing In Facilities

Ballyfermot Star Ltd. is preparing to open the planned Community Support Centre. This is discussed under section F2.

3. Community and Prison Link Service

An exciting new project, Community and Prison Link Service, established by the Task Force in 1998, links Wheatfield Prison with the community. A Community and Prison Liaison Worker, Bob Swords, has been employed to work with Ballyfermot people in Wheatfield with a drug problem who would like help with their transition from prison to community. A treatment plan is developed for each individual and access to treatment or rehabilitation is prepared on release. A support system is set in place involving families and support services. Already up to twenty people have enrolled for regular meetings with Bob.



Bob Swords, Community and Prison Link Service, in conversation with a client.

4. Extension of Matt Talbot Community Trust

The Task Force is supporting The Matt Talbot Community Trust in building an extension to its premises to provide a training workshop for people with a drug problem who have been in a place of detention. A variety of craftwork, artwork and other skills training will be available. The premises will also be used during the summer months to give families coping with drug-related problems a 24-hour break.

5. Tailoring Training to the Needs of Recovering Drug Users

The Ballyfermot Local Employment Service is being supported to train all its staff on drug related issues, to develop policies and plan initiatives for those with a history of drug use who come in contact with their services.

F SUPPORT FOR DRUG USERS, PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

1. Reducing Stigma

Community based training on drug addiction and sponsorship projects are helping to break down barriers, stigma and prejudice. Further training will be provided. A leaflet for women drug users is being produced dealing with issues such as pregnancy and childcare.

2. Providing Local Centres

Ballyfermot Star, a limited company with charitable status was set up by the Task Force to run a much needed local Community Support Centre. For over two years, community members have been meeting fortnightly and have trained extensively in preparation for managing such a centre. Ballyfermot Star Ltd, which is wholly funded by the Task Force, has developed an innovative model for managing drug addiction in the community which includes providing support for people who have used or are currently using drugs, their families and the community.

In a safe, listening environment, staff and volunteers at the centre will provide practical assistance and information across a broad range of issues from drug use to health to eviction. Counselling and personalised rehabilitation programmes will be available. A holistic approach will be taken and a range of accredited training in areas such as computer skills, art, et cetera will be provided to help clients re-enter the workforce or education centres. Ballyfermot Star Ltd currently employs a community development family support

worker, Bernie McGrane, providing a support service for families affected by drug use; and a community development drug education worker, Evelyn Leonard, providing community drug education and prevention service.



3. The Advance Project

In 1998 the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force commenced the Advance Project to manage the creation of over twenty full-time jobs supporting the local drug strategy in the areas of community development, information, media, family support, physical/recreational activity, administration and others. Twenty local people have already been employed and funds have been allocated for their training and personal development.



A Liaison Support Worker, Blaitnaid Dunne (above), has been employed to develop the project and to support staff. All of those employed are over thirty-five who have been on the live-register for at least five years. Most have first-hand experience of the drug problem, which is important in terms of the empathy and understanding they bring to the positions

KEY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE

Key areas for the Task Force in the year 2000 include:

- supporting 8-15 year olds
- influencing public-policy
- supporting families under stress
- building on ways of working in partnership

APPRECIATION

The Task Force would like to extend a warm thank you to Ballyfermot residents and other community members for their valuable involvement in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan. We are grateful to community projects and local agencies for their continued support. A special word of thanks to past and present Task Force members who have worked hard to see this plan implemented.

Financial Report – Money Spent To Date

	£
INCREASING AWARENESS	
Schools Drug Prevention Activities	11,800
Crosscare Parents & Teachers in prevention	7,000
Youth Peer Education Training	10,000
Advertising Brochures, Leaflets, Posters	7,000
Drug Awareness – Craftwork with Young People	2,000
Repairs to minibus WHAD	2,000
Instruments for CEOL	1,000
Soccer and GAA Kits (1998)	1,200
Video Production	13,000
Drug Awareness Theatre Production	1,000
Youth at Risk Publication of Report	1,500
Young People in Drama	1,000
All School Choir	1,500
SUB TOTAL	60,000
REDUCING SUPPLY	
Community Policing Research	3,000
Local Drug Information Card	1,400
Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign	600
SUB TOTAL	5,000
TREATMENT	
Community Development Workers Ballyfermot Star, Family Support & Drugs Education (star up equipment and salaries since June '99)	20,000
Management Committee Skills Training	3,000
Counselling & Addiction Skills Training	42,820
Research on Drug Use	5,000
SUB TOTAL	70,820
REHABILITATION	
Fusion since July '99	8,500
Support to Work Facilitators (Fusion)	7,000
SUB TOTAL	15,500
GAPS IN STATUTORY & VOLUNTARY SERVICES	
Community & Prison Link Service since June '99	12,000
Matt Talbot Community Trust Building	10,000
Local Employment Service	9,000
Purchase Local Building For Ballyfermot Star	25,000
SUB TOTAL	56,000
SUPPORT FOR DRUG USERS, PARENTS & FAMILIES	
Childcare & Social Work Service, since May '98	70,800
Advance (Task Force Wholetime Jobs Initiative)	15,000
Reducing Stigma, Sponsorship of Football Kits To all teams (1999)	14,800
SUB TOTAL	100,600
ADDITIONAL EXPENSES	
Administration	10,000
Progress Report	6,200
Development Budget	
- Training Recruitment	1,675
- Youth Club Adult Leaders Training	2,000
- Saol Nua Residential Drug-Free Project	3,000
- Leaflet for Women Drug Users	2,000
SUB TOTAL	24,875
TOTAL	332,795