

**MID TIPPERARY  
DRUGS INITIATIVE**

**Report on young people  
and drugs misuse in the  
Mid Tipperary region**

**Survey Analysis and  
recommendations**

# **Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.**

**Report on young people and drugs  
misuse in the Mid Tipperary region.**

**Survey Analysis and recommendations.**

*Perceived substances prevalent in the M.T.D.I. region.*

*Services Available.*

*Suggestions for the future.*

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Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative,  
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## **Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.**

### *Foreword*

The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative would like to thank all Participants, Schools, Youth groups, Community Organisations and Statutory Agencies for their time and input into the research.

The Initiative recommends that statistics and conclusions in this report should be read by all who work with young people in the Mid Tipperary region.

The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative will be seeking ways to ensure that the needs identified within this report will be acted upon and will form the basis for future strategy.

## **Chapter One:**

### ***Preface***

Drugs misuse amongst young people has become a serious concern for parents, agencies and the wider community, nationally and throughout Europe.

For this reason the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative decided to conduct research to establish the actual extent of drugs misuse amongst young people and do an audit of programmes, strategies and resources available in their communities.

Based on the findings of this research the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative was keen to develop a practical Action Plan which will include recommendations for Initiatives in Schools, Agencies, Youth Groups and Community Organisations.

The research concluded that young people are misusing drugs in the Mid Tipperary region.

Alcohol is the most widely used substance. Cannabis, ecstasy, speed and solvents were perceived to be the most common illicit drugs used. Participants surveyed also perceived an availability of cocaine and heroin.

Statutory agencies and community based organisations differ in their perception of the extent of the drugs situation in the region.

Peers were seen to be the primary influence on young people with regards to drugs misuse and drugs awareness. Participants felt that peers were a major factor in a young persons initial introduction to drugs and to their overall understanding of substances.

It was perceived that there is a need for more services and interventions for parents. This research shows that there is some confusion with regards to overall drugs knowledge amongst adults who are in contact with young people.

While the research shows that there are drugs interventions currently in place, research concludes that there is a need for more planning and standardisation of drugs work in organisations and agencies around the region.

M.T.D.I. recommends that organisations work in partnership in developing an overall drugs strategy to combat the growing rise in drugs misuse amongst young people.

## **Chapter Two:**

### ***Introduction***

The Tipperary Regional Youth Service (formerly known as Cashel & Emly Youth Service) was founded in 1970 to provide a response to the perceived needs of young people in the region.

Geographically this region extends across three counties, North Tipperary and the parts of East Limerick and South Tipperary that are within Cashel & Emly Diocesan boundary.

The core purpose of Tipperary Regional Youth Service is to provide young people with programmes, information and activities in co-operation with their communities, which enhance their social and personal development through their voluntary participation.

Since its inception, Tipperary Regional Youth Service has grown from virtual dependence on volunteers to its position at the present, employing nine full time staff along with fifteen part time community employment staff, who all work in close partnership with hundreds of volunteers.

The Organisation is a limited company with eligible charitable status. It is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors who have a wide range of experience in youth and community need and other management skills.

Currently Tipperary Regional Youth Service has youth projects in Tipperary, Thurles, Templemore and Cashel, an outreach team servicing the needs of young people in rural communities, a comprehensive Youth Information Service and a Drugs Project. The service also provides training and support to youth clubs through the Rural Development Team.

Presently Tipperary Regional Youth Service has a membership of eleven hundred young people and two hundred and thirty volunteers.

Funding for Tipperary Regional Youth Service comes primarily from the Department of Education - Youth Affairs Section and is granted and evaluated annually. It is also funded by FÁS through a Community Employment Scheme.

Funding comes from the South Eastern Health Board for The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative. Additional grants come from North Tipperary V.E.C., South Tipperary V.E.C. and County Limerick V.E.C. Grants have also been received from

the Mid Western Health Board, the Irish Youth Foundation and other organisations in the past.

### **Genesis Of The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.**

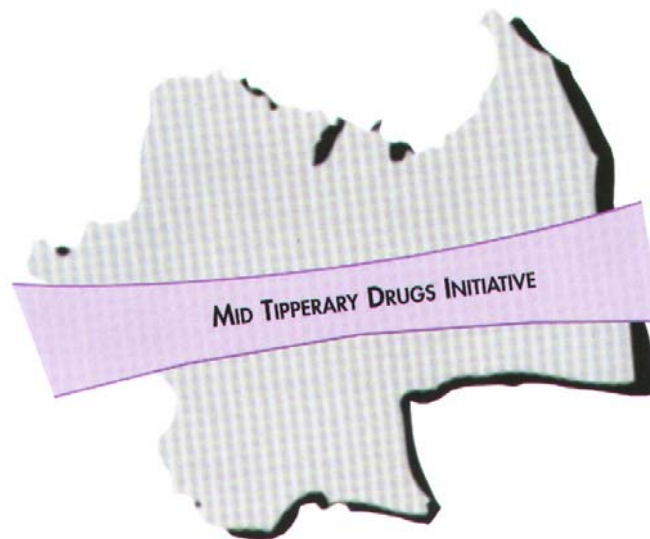
In recent years Tipperary Regional Youth Service has detected a growing trend in drugs misuse among young people in the community. The growing trend has developed an awareness amongst local statutory and voluntary agencies that work needed to be initiated. Although the drugs prevention work being done at a local level is of the highest standard, Tipperary Regional Youth Service in discussion with other agencies, felt the need for an integrated response to the issue.

## Chapter Three:

### *Background*

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL REMIT OF THE MID TIPPERARY DRUGS INITIATIVE.**

The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative is a community based drugs initiative for Tipperary Town, Cashel, Fethard and Hinterlands, funded by the South Eastern Health Board and administered by the Tipperary Regional Youth Service.



The Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative began in December 1999 in response to the concerns of all bodies in the Tipperary, Cashel and Fethard area. It is based in the Tipperary Regional Youth Service office in Tipperary Town. The project is multi-faceted working in partnership with relevant local statutory and voluntary agencies.

#### **Aims of the project.**

- ❑ To support young people in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes to make positive life choices in relation to drugs issues.
- ❑ To increase awareness of drugs related issues among parents and the wider community and to develop their competence to respond appropriately.
- ❑ To develop a community based strategy to identify and respond to local needs relating to drugs issues.



- ❑ To have the necessary knowledge and skills to address drugs related issues.

### **Administration.**

The Initiative is funded by the South Eastern Health Board and administered by Tipperary Regional Youth Service. A Steering Committee was formed and is made up of representatives from local voluntary and statutory agencies from both Tipperary and Cashel.

The role of the **Steering Committee** is to develop the overall strategy for the Initiative. The Committee is the vehicle for the implementation of the Project.

The Steering Committee comprises of representatives from;

- ❑ The South Eastern Health Board.
- ❑ The Tipperary Garda Division.
- ❑ The Cahir/Cashel Garda Division.
- ❑ St Ailbe's Secondary School, Tipperary Town/South Tipperary V.E.C.
- ❑ Cashel Community School.
- ❑ Community Council, Tipperary Town.
- ❑ Parish Council Cashel/Rosegreen.
- ❑ General Practitioner.
- ❑ Probation Services/Dept. of Justice.
- ❑ Youthreach.
- ❑ Knockanrawley Resource Centre.
- ❑ Bishops Initiatives on Drug Awareness, Diocesan Nominee.
- ❑ Board of Management Tipperary Regional Youth Service (Chairperson).
- ❑ Director of Tipperary Regional Youth Service (Secretary).

In December 1999 Sinead O'Mahony was employed as a full time Drugs Worker to co-ordinate the activities of the project.

### **Purpose and context of the research.**

The first action requested by the Steering Committee was that a community profile and needs analysis of young people and drugs misuse be completed. This report includes and synopses the findings of this research.

The steering committee recognised the need for;

- ❑ Information on the perceived nature and extent of drugs misuse amongst young people in the Mid Tipperary Region.
- ❑ The extent of drugs prevention and education work available in the Mid Tipperary Region.

- Recommendations for a drugs misuse prevention strategy.

The committee decided that the initial action of the project would be to do research on the perceived extent of drugs misuse amongst young people in the Mid Tipperary region. It was decided that adults in agencies and organisations who were in contact with young people would be consulted for their views.

This reports outlines the findings, and draws conclusions from the research.

## **Chapter Four:**

# ***Methodology***

## **Research.**

Research on drugs misuse amongst young people in the Mid Tipperary region began in February 2000. The preliminary task was to devise a comprehensive up-to-date directory of relevant local schools, community, statutory and youth organisations in the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative region.

When this information was compiled, the first action of the M.T.D.I. was to determine the extent of drugs misuse among young people in the region and the programmes available to young people and their parents. The Steering Committee felt it imperative to establish the nature and extent of mis-use of illegal substances amongst young people and if there was adequate support and training for young people, parents and groups working in the community.

As the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative is a community based initiative, the Steering Committee believed that staff and volunteers working in the community would be key to the collection of this information. Four distinct sectors of the community working with young people were identified:

**Schools** - Primary and Secondary, Youth Training Workshops.

**Community Groups** – Resource Centres, Focus Groups, Parents Groups, Parents Councils, Community Workshops, Parish Councils, Community Development Associations etc.

**Youth Organisations** – Youth Projects working with disadvantaged young people, Youth Clubs working with mainstream groups, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts etc.

**Statutory Agencies** – Probation Service, South Eastern Health Board, Gardai, Addiction Counselling Services Clonmel, Juvenile Liaison Officer.

## **Methods.**

Relevant queries and questions were devised in consultation with the Steering Committee. The research was targeted at a broad range of statutory and voluntary agencies. The Steering Committee felt that a broad based community response should be included in research findings to allow for a wide spectrum of answers.

This was developed in two ways; the first was a questionnaire and the second was by interviews with a broad sample of agencies and organisations operating in the region.

### **Questionnaire.**

A single questionnaire was developed which was designed for all agencies, groups, schools and organisations in the region. Questionnaires were assigned to staff/volunteers and these were filled in and returned to the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.

Twelve questions were asked in the questionnaire. Nine were in table form while the last three questions asked participants to give their own opinion.

### **Interview.**

The second methodology used was a structured, personal interview. M.T.D.I. contacted a broad sample of agencies, youth groups, voluntary organisations and schools. The interviews were conducted by the Drugs Project Worker. This information was collected and collated by sector.

The four different sectors were asked questions relevant to their own particular field of work. There were some variations in the questions asked of the four different sectors.

### **Response.**

One hundred and twenty five staff and volunteers working with young people received questionnaires and 87 (72.5%) returned completed forms.

All organisations and groups involved in the research findings will receive a copy of the completed findings.

Participants were assured of anonymity and that results would be published in statistical form only.

## Chapter Five:

# Comparisons and Analysis of Questionnaire Findings

## Purpose of the questionnaire.

The present survey was concerned with establishing the pattern and extent (if any) of drugs mis-use amongst young people in the Mid Tipperary region.

## Results of the questionnaire.

### ***Q.1***

#### ***Facilities.***

##### **1.1**

Question one showed that in general, those surveyed stated that they are not particularly happy with facilities available to young people. Although over 70% stated that they were satisfied with their sporting facilities, only 33% found their youth club facilities adequate.

##### **1.2**

The results of the survey shows that although schools, statutory agencies and youth organisations were relatively content with sporting facilities, only 40% of community groups were.

##### **1.3**

Schools and youth organisations were reasonably content with youth club facilities while community groups and statutory agencies were not. Only 9% of community groups stated that they were satisfied with youth club facilities available to young people.

#### **INTERPRETATION.**

*One possible interpretation of this is that the community groups who were not satisfied with facilities available to young people may not have had access to activities in their own communities.*

*The statistics collected in this particular section of the research suggest that there is a need for more facilities for young people in the Mid Tipperary Region.*

**Q.2.**

***Availability of legal and illegal substances to young people.***

Question Two. Are any of these drugs available in your Community?

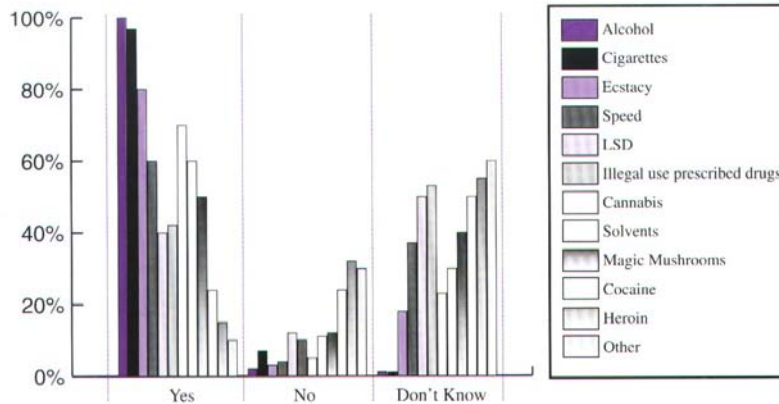


Table One Question Two.

**2.1**

100% surveyed felt that alcohol was readily available in the community and 95% of participants felt that cigarettes were.

The importance of this finding is highlighted in The Report on the State of Young Peoples Health in the European Union

*‘Experiments with smoking often start in childhood and because of the addictive properties of nicotine, most daily smokers continue to smoke regularly into middle age’.*

The Report also includes that *“regular alcohol consumption begins at a younger age than it used to, boys still drink more frequently and heavily than girls. Drinking to inebriation has become increasingly common among young people in all Member States”.*

*“Experimental substance misuse is common among early adolescence but only a minority will eventually develop addictive patterns of use”*

**2.2**

Ecstasy and cannabis were also seen to be available in the Mid Tipperary region. Of those surveyed, 80% perceived that ecstasy was available in the community and 70% felt that cannabis was. 60% noted that solvents and speed were available while approximately 40% suggested an availability of prescribed drugs illegally used, and LSD in the community.

### **2.3**

The survey highlights differences in participant's perceptions of the availability of cocaine and heroin in the Mid Tipperary region. 24% of community groups felt that heroin is available in their community but only 7% of statutory agencies believed this and 0% of youth organisations.

#### **INTERPRETATION.**

In this particular section the findings showed that all substances listed are perceived to be available but that alcohol and cigarettes are the main drugs of use in the Mid Tipperary region. Other illegal substances are used but to a lesser extent.

In the Report on Young Peoples Health in the European Union it found that *“early regular smoking is associated with an increased risk of both substance abuse and mental disorders”*.

*A reasonable comment to make is that there is a cultural acceptance of cigarettes and alcohol in Irish society. With this in mind the findings of the M.T.D.I. should address this issue.*

#### **Q.3.**

##### ***Social Factors.***

Question Three. Who do you feel introduces young people to their first drug?

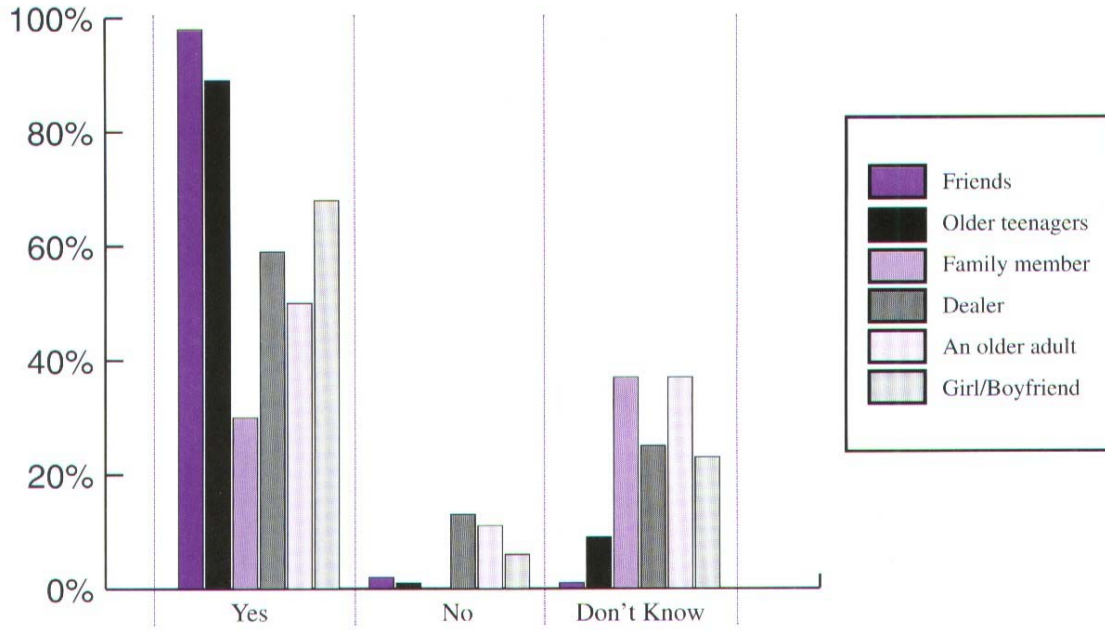


Table Two-Question Three

**3.1.**

99% of all those surveyed felt that friends introduce young people to their first drug. *This statistic highlights the fact that adults working with young people believe peer pressure plays a key role in young people's life choices.*

**3.2.**

A little over 60% of those surveyed felt that dealers are an influence on young people's initial drug taking. While 94% of community groups felt that dealers were the initial contact, only 27% of youth organisations felt so.

**Location/Socialising.**

**4.1.**

***Alcohol.***

When those surveyed were asked to comment on common places where young people take drugs, 95% felt that young people use alcohol at parties and 80% felt that they were served in pubs.

Other places include discos and public places at between 60% and 70%. Of those surveyed 50% felt that young people use alcohol on holidays and a little over 40% felt that young people drank alcohol in their own homes.

#### **4.2.**

##### ***Cannabis.***

On examination of cannabis use, over 50% felt that cannabis was used at parties and discos. 30%-40% perceived that public places and a friend's house were often common places where young people can take cannabis.

A report on the State of Young People's Health in the European Union concluded that *"throughout the European Union cannabis is the most common illicit drug. Most cannabis use seems to be occasional or intermittent"*.

This report also stated that cannabis experimentation among 15-16 year olds was ten times more prevalent in Ireland, England and Wales than in other member states.

#### **4.3.**

##### ***Ecstasy.***

Over 70% of those surveyed stated that they perceived ecstasy was used at discos and that parties were also a common place for young people to take drugs.

The Report on Young People's Health in the European Union felt that *a major issue in young people's drug use is the emergence of dance drugs dominated by Ecstasy. These drugs became popular within the broader evolution of youth culture and are particularly associated with clubs, raves and house parties.*

*In this, the Mid Tipperary region shows similar trends to its European neighbours.*

#### **Q.5.**

##### ***Why Young People Take Drugs.***

##### **Question Five.**

##### **What is the main reason for young people taking drugs?**

#### **5.1.**

The questionnaire listed in table form some of the main social reasons for young people taking drugs. The participants were asked to tick off the key factors for young people's drug taking habits. Taking into account that participants gave more than one response almost all interviewed felt that curiosity was a major factor for young people taking drugs.



Statutory agencies felt that curiosity was the main reason and 100% of schools concurred with this.

## **5.2**

*The other predominant factor was “because friends do it”. This finding relates closely to question three when participants felt friends introduce young people to their first drug. Again peer pressure seems to be a recurring finding in this research.*

## **5.3**

When stress was suggested as a possible reason why young people take drugs 64% of participants agreed that it was.

## **INTERPRETATION.**

*Overall there was very little difference in the findings of all groups surveyed in the question and participants surveyed felt that all reasons mentioned were important factors in why young people in the Mid Tipperary region take drugs. This implies that there are many social reasons why young people take drugs.*

## **Q.6.**

### **Concerns**

**Question six asked what concerns people would have with young people taking drugs?**

## **6.1**

Again taking into account that participants ticked more than one response all variables (listed in the appendix) were rated as being a concern for young people taking drugs by over 80% of those surveyed.

## **6.2**

100% of participants surveyed stated that fear of overdose and fear of addiction were the most serious concerns for and about young people taking drugs.

## **6.3.**

Poor performance in school and going on to harder drugs were also high up on the percentage charts.

## **6.4.**

Getting into trouble with a dealer was rated lower than some of the other statistics but still registered very highly on the overall chart at 85%.

*Following contact with targeted young people by Tipperary Regional Youth Service, it would appear that a growing trend amongst young people who get into trouble with a dealer is that they become a runner (a person who carries drugs for dealer).*

**INTERPRETATION.**

*The findings in relation to this question show that people do have a wide range of concerns and possible confusion about the issue of young people taking drugs.*

**Q.7.  
Attitudes.**

Question Seven. Do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

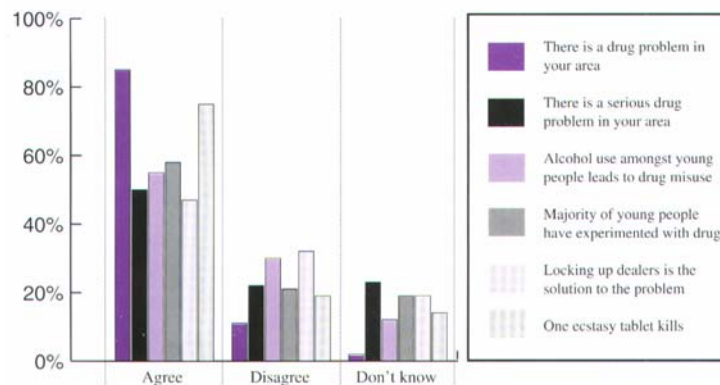


Table Three-Question Seven.

**7.1**

80% of those surveyed felt that there was a drugs problem in their area and 50% agreed that there was a serious drugs problem in their area.

**7.2**

There was disparity between the groups on this point where 80% of community groups felt that there was a serious problem in their area, while only 40% of schools and statutory agencies felt the same.

**7.3**

66% surveyed felt that one ecstasy tablet kills.

*“Although Ecstasy (MDMA) has proven fatal most of the deaths associated with ecstasy use appear to have been caused by a rare but fatal drug reaction that causes blood clots to develop in the lungs with heat stroke and dehydration as possible contributing factors”*

Johnny Casey, Drug Education Officer SEHB.

#### **7.4**

Over 50% stated that alcohol use among young people leads to drugs misuse and that the majority of young people have experimented with drugs.

The Report on the State of Young Peoples Health in the European Union stated *“Early alcohol debut is associated with an increased risk of alcohol problems in later adolescence and adult life”*

#### **7.5**

The European Report also goes on to say that there is ample evidence to show the association between alcohol abuse, smoking and the use of drugs.

#### **7.6**

54.4% stated that alcohol misuse amongst young people leads to drug misuse. Half of those surveyed didn't agree with this statement although 100% of participants perceived alcohol to be available in the community.

#### **7.7**

46.8% agreed that locking up dealers was a solution to the problem. 34% disagreed. The remainder stated that they didn't know.

### **INTERPRETATION.**

*This section shows a disparity in the perceived importance of alcohol as a factor in young peoples drugs misuse.*

### **Community Organisations.**

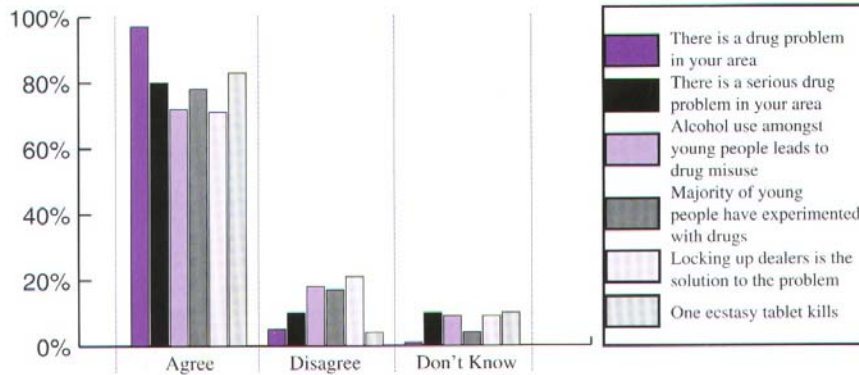


Table Four-Question Seven

**School.**

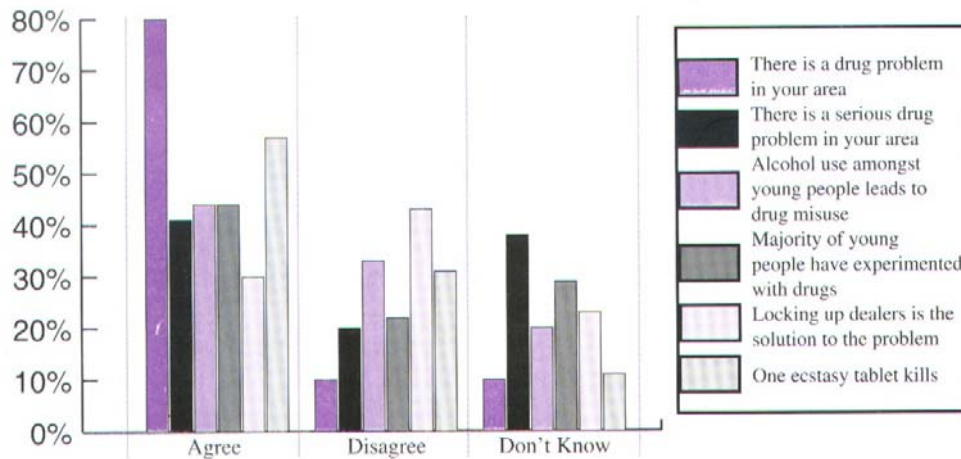


Table Five-Question Seven.

**7.8**

As discussed earlier 47% surveyed felt that locking up dealers is the solution to the problem of young people taking drugs. Contrasting findings showed that over 70% of community groups stated that locking up dealers is the solution to the problem where by comparison, less than 30% of the schools felt so.

**INTERPRETATION.**

By relating question three where participants were asked “who do you feel introduce young people to their first drug” to question six, 85% felt that getting into trouble with a dealer was a concern. However only 46% agreed that locking up dealers is the solution to the problem.

*Therefore although people agree that dealers are an initial influence and concern, only half of those surveyed felt that jail was the solution.*

## **Q.8.**

### **Education & Awareness.**

In question eight participants were asked who had an impact on parents awareness of young people's drugs misuse?

#### **8.1**

Almost 80% of those surveyed felt that ex-addicts would have an impact on parent's awareness of drugs misuse.

In comparison 88% (nearly 8% more) perceived that this source of information would also have an impact on young people's awareness of the dangers of drugs misuse.

### **INTERPRETATION A.**

*These findings suggest that first hand knowledge could be a possible deterrent and form of education for both young people and parents alike.*

#### **8.2**

Over 70% of those surveyed felt that drug education videos, Gardaí and other parents were seen as a means of impacting on parents awareness of trends of drugs misuse amongst young people.

### **Section A.**

**Which of the following sources have an impact on PARENTS' awareness of drugs misuse?**

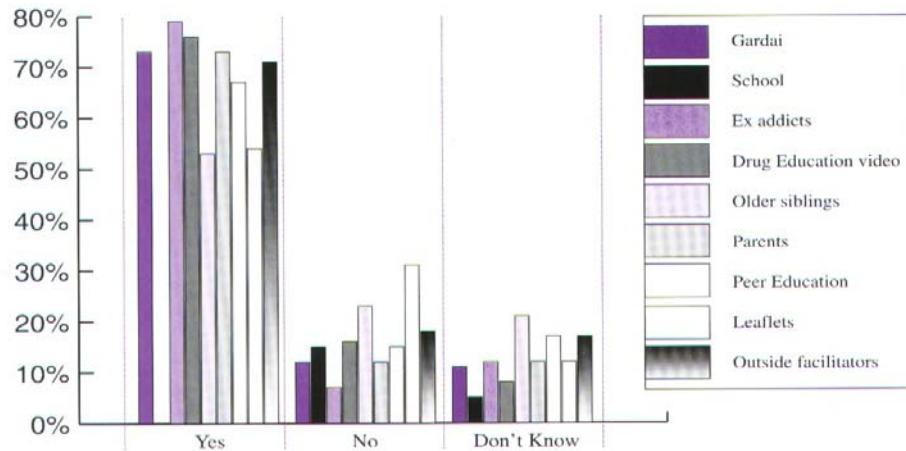


Table Six- Question Eight.

### Section B.

Which of the following sources has an impact on YOUNG PEOPLES awareness of drug misuse?

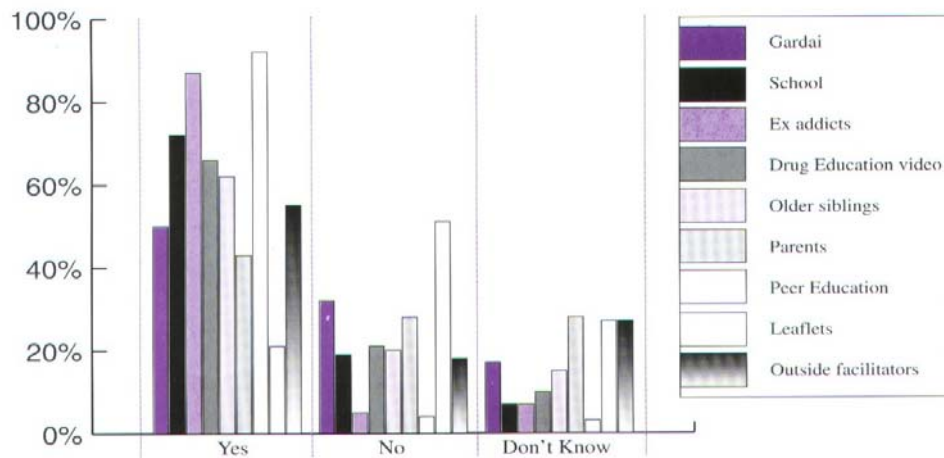


Table Seven-Question Eight.

### 8.3.

When participants were asked to tick which services they felt would have an impact on a young person's drugs awareness, the statistics showed many differences. In particular the Gardaí and other parents were seen to have a lesser impact on young People's awareness of drugs than on parents' awareness.

### 8.4.

Figures in this particular question showed that just 55.8% of participants surveyed, felt that parents did not have an impact on young People's awareness of drug misuse.

**INTERPRETATION B.**

*One possible interpretation at this point is that some parents are not adequately resourced and do not have a full awareness or understanding of the implications of drugs issues that could be a factor for their young people.*

One recommendation could be that parents need more structured drugs training and sessions in awareness.

When participants were asked further on in the questionnaire if they thought adults understood why young people take drugs, 70% stated no.

**8.5.**

In the B section of this question participants were asked to tick sources that had an impact on young people’s awareness of drug misuse.

Over 90% of those surveyed stated that peer education has the greatest impact on young people.

This statistic is interesting when compared with question three and five in which friends were seen as the first person that influences a young person to take drugs and the main reason for young people taking drugs.

**8.6**

A high percentage of participants surveyed felt that ex-addicts had a potential impact as a source of drugs awareness.

**8.7**

Although older siblings had little impact on parents as a source of drugs awareness, over 70% of those surveyed believed that older siblings did have an impact on young people’s drugs awareness.

**Q.9.**

**Services**

**What services would you contact if a young person was using drugs?**

	Yes	No	Don’t Know
Addiction treatment centre	71%	16%	13%
Hospital	26%	50%	24%

GP	67%	21%	12%
Drugs help line	82%	10%	8%
Gardaí	44%	44%	12%
Youth Service	52%	34%	14%
School	49%	35%	16%
Other	9%	9%	82%

Table Eight-Question Nine.

### 9.1

When participants were asked to tick what services they would contact if a young person was using drugs, over 70% of those surveyed stated that firstly they would contact a drug help line and secondly they would contact an addiction treatment service.

### 9.2.

A little over 60% stated that they would contact a G.P. if a young person was using drugs. Youth services and schools were also stated as being a possible point of call at 45-50%.

Findings showed that Gardaí (a little over 40%) and hospitals (over 20%) would be used less than any of the other services if a young person was using drugs.

Although over 40% of community groups would contact the hospital if a young person was using drugs, only 14% of those surveyed from youth organisations would do so.

### 9.3.

Agencies and groups showed different interpretations of whom they would contact. The most popular choices for different sectors were

95% of community groups said they would contact a drug help line.

85% of statutory agencies said they would contact an addiction treatment centre.

74% of schools said they would contact a G.P.

89% of youth groups stated that they would contact a youth service.

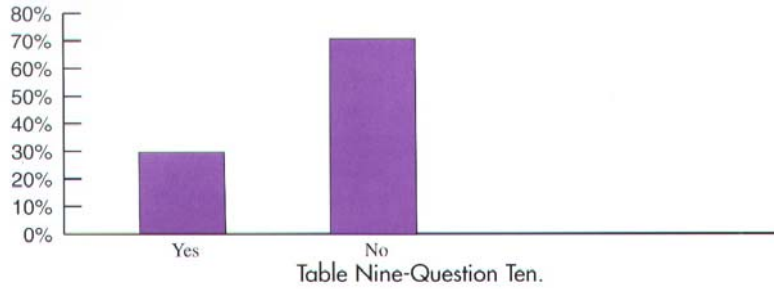
### 9.4

All involved in the questionnaire stated that they were willing to work in partnership with the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.

### Q.10.

#### Question Ten.





**10.1**

In question ten participants were asked if they thought adults understood why young people take drugs. Over 70% of those surveyed stated that adults do not understand why young people take drugs.

**10.2**

A breakdown of these findings shows that only 10% of community groups felt that adults understood why young people take drugs.

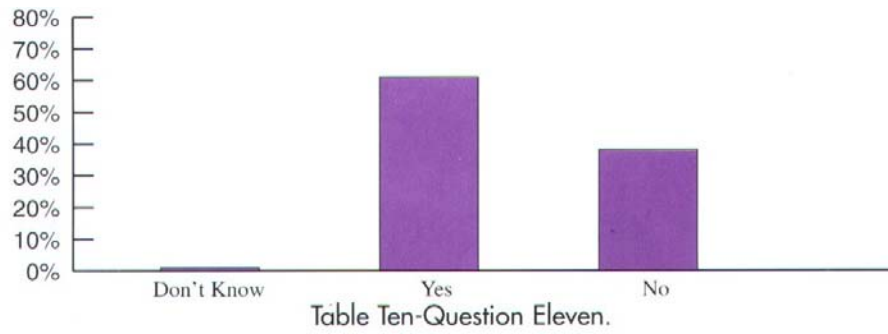
**INTERPRETATION.**

*The findings from this question could indicate that parents and adults working with young people need more information and training in drug awareness.*

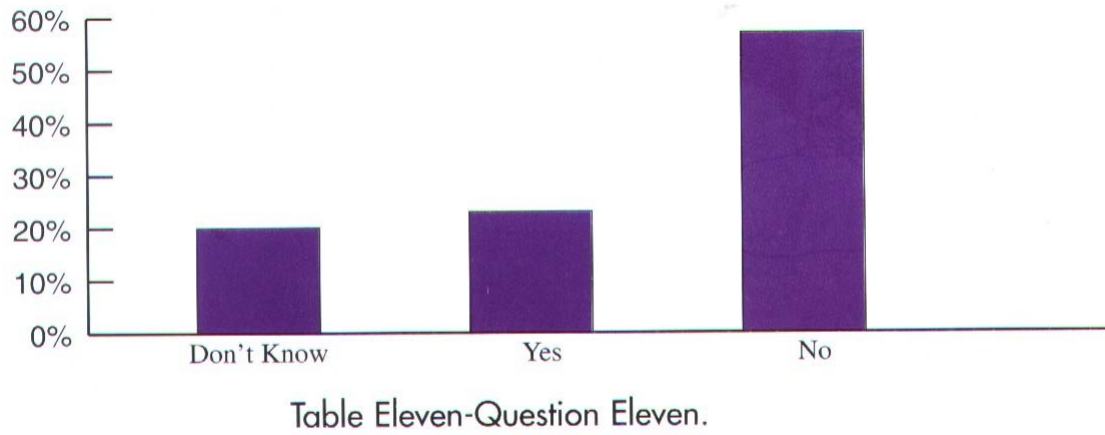
**Q.11.  
Question Eleven**

In question eleven participants were asked if young people grow out of using drugs as they get older. The findings showed a mixed reaction. 38.4% of those surveyed stated that young people do not grow out of using drugs as they get older, while 43.5% stated that they do agree and 17.9% stated that they didn't know.

**Statutory agencies.**



**Community organisations.**



Comparing the categories only 25% of community groups felt that young people do grow out of using drugs while 63% of statutory agencies felt the same.

## Chapter Six:

# Summary of Questionnaire Findings

### Question One.

- ⇒ In general those surveyed showed that they were not particularly satisfied with facilities available to young people in their communities. This applies in particular to responses from community groups.

### Question Two

- ⇒ 100% surveyed stated that alcohol and cigarettes were available in the community.
- ⇒ Participants perceived that ecstasy (80% of participants), cannabis (70%), speed and solvents (40%) were also seen to be available in their community.
- ⇒ A smaller percentage of participants perceived that heroin and cocaine were available in their communities. Although 24% of community groups felt that heroin was available only 7% of statutory agencies believe this.

### Question Three

- ⇒ 98% of those surveyed felt that friends introduce young people to their first drug.

### Question Four.

- ⇒ 95% of participants perceived that parties were a common place where young people take alcohol. 80% felt that young people drink alcohol in pubs while over 40% of those surveyed felt that young people use alcohol in the home.
- ⇒ Parties and discos were perceived to be common places for young people to use cannabis.
- ⇒ Over 70% stated that ecstasy was used most commonly at discos and parties.

### Question Five.

- ⇒ While the findings showed many social reasons why young people take drugs, curiosity and “because friends do it” were seen to be the two main reasons.

### **Question Six.**

- ⇒ Fear of overdose and fear of addiction were stated as the most crucial concerns that participants had for young people taking drugs.
- ⇒ Getting into trouble with a dealer was rated lower than other concerns but still registered very highly on the overall chart.

### **Question Seven.**

- ⇒ 80% of participants perceived that there was a drugs problem in their area.
- ⇒ 50% stated that there was a serious problem in their area.
- ⇒ 66% agreed with the statement that one ecstasy tablet kills.
- ⇒ Over 50% of those surveyed felt that alcohol use amongst young people leads to drugs misuse.
- ⇒ 46.8% of those surveyed agreed with the statement “locking up dealers is the solution to the problem”.

### **Question Eight.**

- ⇒ Over 90% stated that peer education has the greatest impact on young peoples awareness of drugs misuse.
- ⇒ 70% of those surveyed felt that older siblings also had an impact on young peoples awareness of drugs misuse.

Almost 80% of those surveyed felt that ex addicts would have an impact on parents awareness of drugs misuse amongst young people.

8% more (88%) felt that ex addicts would have an impact on young peoples awareness of drugs misuse.

Gardaí and other parents were seen to have a lesser impact on parents' awareness of young people's drugs misuse.

Just under 60% of those surveyed felt that parents do not have an impact on young peoples awareness of drugs misuse.

#### **Question Nine.**

Over 80% of those surveyed felt that they would contact a Drug Help Line or Addiction Treatment Service if a young person was taking drugs.

44% stated that they would contact the Gardaí and only 26% stated that they would contact a hospital.

#### **Question Ten.**

⇒ 70% stated that adults do not understand why young people take drugs. 90% of the community sector felt this.

#### **Question Eleven**

⇒ Findings of the survey show differences of opinion when asked if young people grow out of drugs as they get older. 39% stated that they do/43% stated that they don't and 18% stated that they didn't know.

⇒ Comparing the categories, only 25% of community groups felt that young people grow out of using drugs while 63% of statutory agencies felt the same.

#### **General Findings.**

Findings from this section show significant differences between the community and statutory sectors in relation to their perception of drugs misuse amongst young people in Mid Tipperary.

## **Chapter Seven:**

# **Comparisons & Analysis of Interviews**

### **List of Questions included in overall interviews.**

- ⇒ What client group does your agency/group/organisation/school work with?
- ⇒ Does your agency/group/school/organisation facilitate drugs awareness training?
- ⇒ Are you aware of drugs programmes/courses run in your area?
- ⇒ Does your agency/school/organisation/group have drugs information leaflets available?
- ⇒ Does your agency have a drugs policy in place?
- ⇒ Have staff/leaders had in-service training?
- ⇒ Do you have a structure in place in the event of a drugs incident arising?
- ⇒ Does your organisation/agency/school/group have a referral system in place in the event of an incident arising?
- ⇒ Has your agency/organisation/school/group had an experience with drugs misuse over the last two years?
- ⇒ Would your agency, group, school, group support an addiction counselling service in your area?
- ⇒ Is there a gap in services for young people and their parents in your area?
- ⇒ Will your agency/school/organisation/group support the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative?

## **Scope of Survey.**

There were 36 people from 30 different organisations/groups interviewed for this section of the research. Again similar to the questionnaire, interviews were broken up into four different sectors: Community Groups, Youth Organisations, Schools and Statutory Agencies.

## **Results of the Survey.**

All sectors interviewed were asked to give a brief description of the services they offer/the number of people they work with and what groups their service caters for.

The answers included:

- ⇒ **Young offenders.**
- ⇒ **Mainstream young people.**
- ⇒ **Parents**
- ⇒ **Alcohol and drug mis-users.**
- ⇒ **Criminal offenders**
- ⇒ **Social work client group.**
- ⇒ **Young people of school going age 8-18 years.**
- ⇒ **Marginalised young people**
- ⇒ **Wider community**

As shown in the bullet points, the sectors interviewed work with a broad base of young people. As the interviews were conducted with a broad base of the community, the answers received give a cross section of perceptions of people who work with young people in the Mid Tipperary region.

**Does your agency facilitate drug awareness training?  
Statutory Agencies.**

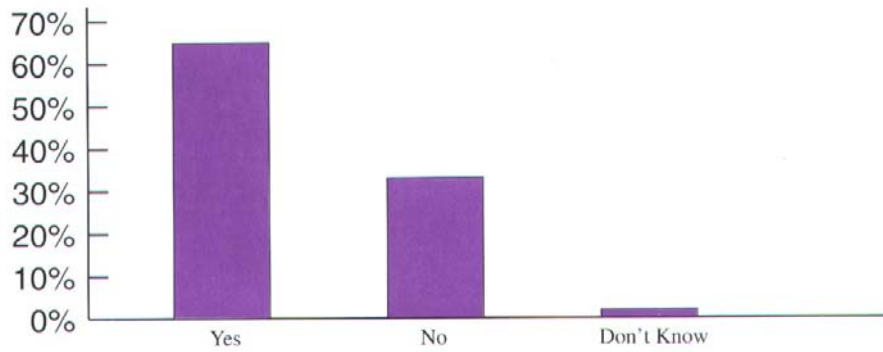


Table 12.

All groups, agencies, schools and organisations were asked if they facilitated drugs awareness training. 64% answered positively.

While 0% of community groups stated that they facilitate drugs awareness training, over 90% of schools did.

#### Schools

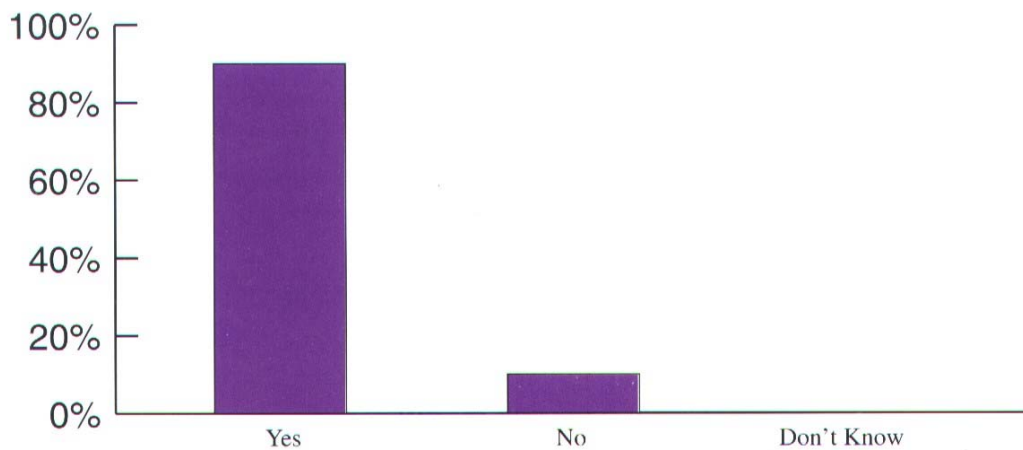


Table 13.

Statutory agencies and youth organisations were on a par with approximately 60% stating that they did facilitate drugs awareness training.

Some of the programmes that statutory agencies facilitated included drugs awareness training for young people attending school, drugs awareness training for parents, drugs awareness training for teachers and public talks.

The types of in-service training available to statutory agencies include in-service training by the addiction counselling service, Clonmel, and in-service training by the Gardaí.



Youth Organisations have worked with the Tipperary Regional Youth Service on drugs awareness training for young people.

Schools' programmes being run in the area include Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes, Social Skills Programmes and outside facilitation sessions. Although some primary schools had recently completed the Social Personal Health Education Walk Tall training, this course had not been implemented to students at the time of research.

Schools had used a variety of outside facilitators. Some of these included addiction counsellors, parental awareness sessions and the Tipperary Regional Youth Service.

The Gardaí were the most widely used outside facilitator for schools. However findings from question eight showed that only 50% perceived the Gardaí as having an impact on young peoples awareness and 44% of participants stated that they would contact the Gardaí if a young person was using drugs.

**Are you aware of drugs programmes / courses being run in your area?**

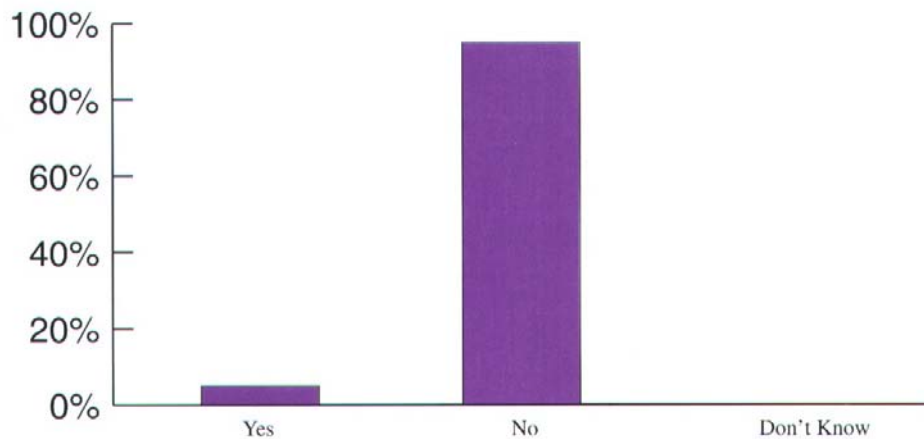


Table 14 .

When all groups interviewed were asked if they were aware of drugs programmes/courses being run in their area, 95% recognised that they did not know of any courses being run in the area although approximately 20% of community groups were aware of drugs programmes courses being run in their areas.

Although community groups do not facilitate drugs awareness training, they are the only sector who stated that they knew of other training available in the community.

When agencies, groups, schools and organisations were asked if their service had drugs information leaflets available, 100 % stated that they did.

However the result from the questionnaire found that only 22% of services perceived that leaflets had an impact as a source of drugs awareness for young people.

**INTERPRETATION.**

*Therefore one possible interpretation could be that although leaflets are readily available they are perceived to have minimal impact.*

Drug leaflets have been readily available to groups/organisations and include: Health Promotion Leaflets, Tipperary Regional Youth Service – “Drugs Your Choice” and leaflets designed by Garda Head Office.

**Does your agency have a drugs policy in place?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
23.75%	76.25%	

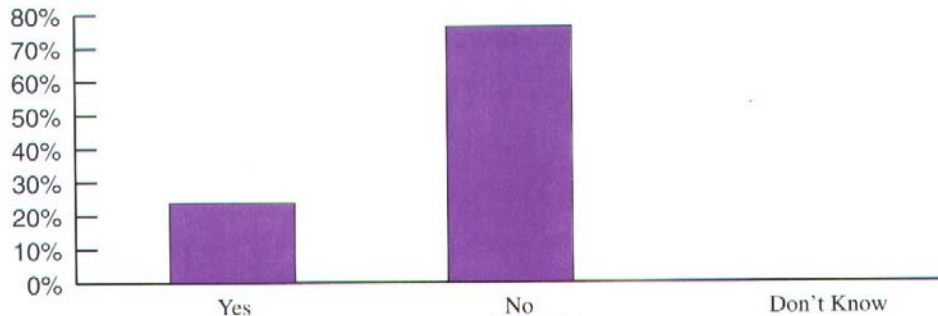


Table 15.

Although groups, organisations, schools and agencies interviewed stated that programmes and leaflets were available to young people in attending their service, only 24% had a drugs policy in place.

When this was broken down into the four different sectors, 75% of statutory agencies had a drugs policy while 10% of schools and youth organisations had a drugs policy in place and none of the community groups interviewed stated that they had a drugs policy.

Although only 24% of all groups interviewed have a drugs policy in place over 64% are facilitating programmes.

**INTERPRETATION.**

*This shows some irregularities in the standardisation and consistency of delivery and implementation of programmes.*

**Do you have a structure in place in the event of an incident arising?**

Yes	No	Don't Know
45.3%	54.4%	

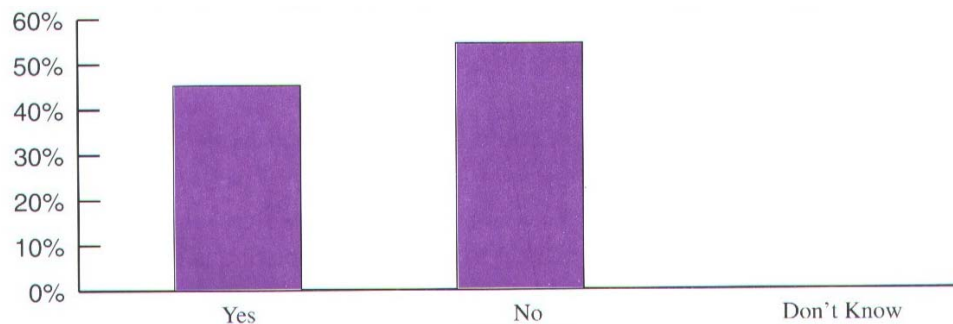


Table 16.

This question shows that although organisations interviewed do not necessarily have a drugs policy in place they do have some provision available to staff and leaders in the event of an incident arising.

Although one youth group did not have a specific structure in place it stated that nobody under the influence of drugs or alcohol is allowed attend events organised.

Some of the schools structures in place consist of

- Contacting parents
- Disciplinary procedures
- Counselling
- Advice from GPs
- Contacting the Gardaí

**Does your organisation/agency/school/group have a referral system in place in the event of a drug related incident arising?**

Yes	No	Don't Know
37.7%	62.27%	

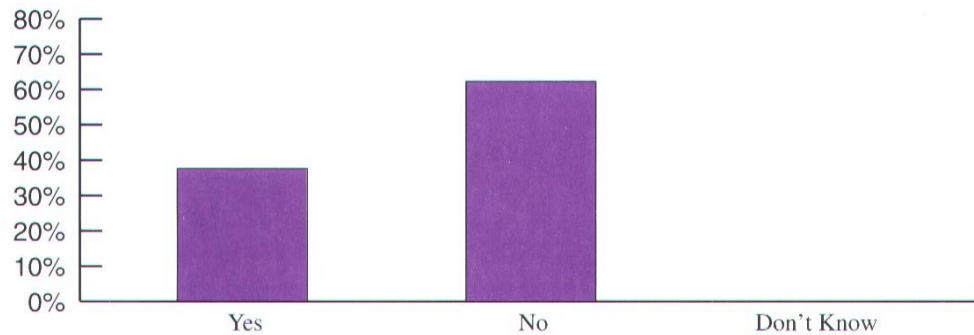


Table 17.

With regards to referral systems, in the event of a drugs related incident arising, almost 40% of organisations/groups did have an operational system in place. Although some services stated they did not have a referral system in place, some statutory agencies suggested that they have an informal referral system that is left to the discretion of the staff member dealing with the client. (This point was stated as a no on the bar chart.)

**Services were also asked**

Has your agency/organisation had an experience with drug misuse over the last two years?

Yes	No	Don't Know
50.4%	49.5%	

Table 18.

Approximately half of the services interviewed had had an experience with drug misuse. Community organisations and schools had quite low experiences at approximately 25% while statutory agencies and youth organisations had had greater experiences.

**Statutory Agencies**

Yes	No	Don't Know
90%	10%	

Table 19.

Statutory agencies described a wide range of experiences from the perspective of working with young people and parents. Some of these included solvent misuse, ecstasy and cannabis misuse and small quantities of speed amongst young people.

Agencies' perspective of experiences with parents included alcohol misuse, prescribed drugs misuse, records of babies with possible foetal alcohol addiction and issues of concern with regards to parents' lack of understanding of their own drug and alcohol misuse.

**Youth Groups.**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
<b>66.6%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	

Table 20.

Some of the different experiences youth groups reported were young people openly discussing their own personal experiences and young people requesting information on drugs misuse and its consequences.

100% of all sectors interviewed stated that they would support an addiction counselling service in their area and all participants interviewed felt that there is a gap in services for young people and their parents in the drug services area.

All agencies, groups, organisations and schools interviewed will support the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.

## Chapter Eight:

### Summary of Responses From Services Interviewed

- ⇒ 64% of overall groups, organisations, schools and agencies stated that they did facilitate drugs awareness training.
- ⇒ 0% of community groups stated that they facilitated drugs awareness training while over 90% of schools did.
- ⇒ 95% of overall groups interviewed did not know of drugs programmes/courses being run in their own areas.
- ⇒ Although community groups do not facilitate drugs awareness training, they are the only service in their area who stated that they knew of other training available.
- ⇒ 100% of overall groups have drugs information leaflets available.
- ⇒ 73.5% of participants believed that drugs leaflets have an impact on parents while only 21.9% felt that drugs leaflets have an impact on young people.
- ⇒ Only 24% of groups interviewed have a drugs policy in place.
- ⇒ While 75% of statutory agencies have a drugs policy in place, only 10% of youth groups and schools have a policy in place and 0% of community groups stated that they did have a drugs policy.
- ⇒ A high percentage of groups interviewed do not have in-service training available to their staff members/leaders.
- ⇒ Services interviewed were asked if they have a structure in place in the event of an incident arising and over 50% stated that they did not.
- ⇒ 40% of agencies/groups/schools/organisations have an operational referral system in place in the event of a drugs incident arising.
- ⇒ Although some groups/organisations do not have a formal referral system in place some statutory agencies leave the system of referral up to the discretion of the staff member dealing with the client.

- ⇒ Over 50% of groups/services interviewed have had an experience with drugs misuse over the last two years.
- ⇒ Community Groups and schools had quite low experiences at approximately 25% while statutory agencies and youth groups had a greater number of drugs related experiences.
- ⇒ 100% of all services interviewed stated that they would support an Addiction Counselling Service in their area.
- ⇒ 100% of agencies/groups/schools and organisations interviewed felt that there is a gap in services locally.
- ⇒ 100% of all groups interviewed stated that they would support the Mid Tipperary Drugs Initiative.

## **Chapter Nine:**

# **Overall Conclusions**

### **DRUGS.**

This research concludes that drugs are available in the Mid Tipperary Region. The most common illicit drugs used are cannabis and ecstasy, followed by speed and solvents. Cocaine and heroin along with other substances were also perceived to be available in Mid Tipperary.

### **ALCOHOL.**

All participants felt that alcohol was available in the community. Some of the questions asked in the questionnaire pointed away from alcohol, as the term “drug” was used.

The common places where young people use alcohol included the family home, discos, public places and in pubs.

### **COMMUNITY/STATUTORY.**

Community groups and statutory agencies differ in their perception of the extent and nature of drugs misuse amongst young people. Although some services facilitate drugs programmes, very few groups stated that they had a drugs policy.

### **PARENTS.**

Some participants felt that parents are socially tolerant about their own use of alcohol, therefore it is perceived that there is a lack of confidence and awareness amongst young parents with regards to drugs information and education.

Research showed that there is a gap in services for parents and young people.

### **FACILITIES.**

Overall, participants were not particularly happy with facilities available to young people in their region. Statistics suggest that there is a need for facilities for young people in the Mid Tipperary region. Youth club facilities were not adequate and participants feel that there is a need for more resources.

### **PEER EDUCATION.**



Peers were seen to be the main influence on young people. This is with regards to their first introduction to a drug and the reason why they take a drug. Drugs awareness was perceived to have the most impact when facilitated by other young people.

### **SERVICES.**

As Drugs Awareness training for staff and volunteers was not standard practice with all organisations, there is some confusion with regards to the overall knowledge of drugs amongst adults who come in contact with young people.

All participants felt that there is a need for an Addiction Counselling Service in the Mid Tipperary region.

### **DRUGS STRATEGY.**

Some resources and services, although commonly used, are perceived in this research to have little impact on young people. As this also displays a disparity between agencies and organisations in their implementation of programmes, the M.T.D.I. suggests that a drugs strategy needs to be implemented by groups.

Some participants felt that there is a need to test some of the results on young people.

The report wishes to conclude that the perceptions collated are those of adults who come in contact with young people, not young people themselves.

### **NEXT STEPS.**

The M.T.D.I. Steering Committee are presently in the process of taking recommendations from this document. The recommendations will be included in an action plan for 2001. The M.T.D.I. recommends that other committees including the Regional Co-ordinating Committee, Local Co-ordinating Committee and groups voluntary and statutory, will develop future strategies from some of the findings included in this research.

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## **Appendix**

# Questionnaire

**1. How satisfied are you with the facilities available to young people in your community?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Youth Club			
Sports Club			
Library			
Disco			
Cinema			
Swimming Pool			
Gym			
Any Other			

**2. Are any of these drugs available in your community?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Alcohol			
Cigarettes			
Ecstasy			
Speed			
LSD			
Illegal use of prescribed drugs			
Cannabis			
Solvents			
Magic Mushrooms			
Cocaine			
Heroin			
Other please state			

**3. Who do you feel introduces young people to their first drug?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Friends			
Older teenagers			
Family member			
Dealer			
An older adult			
Girl/Boy friend			

**4. Tick as appropriate common places where young people take drugs in the community.**

	Alcohol/Hash	E's	Pre Drug	LSD	Solvents	Other
Parties						
Discos						
Family Home						
Pubs						
Public Place						
Friends Place						
Holidays						
Other						

**5. What is the main reason for young people taking drugs?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Heard they were great			
Bored			
To Socialise			
Curious			
Need to cope with personal problems			
Because friends do it			
Stress			

**6. What concerns would you have about young people taking drugs?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Harmful substances in the drug i.e. rat poison			
Getting into trouble with dealers			
Fear of overdose			
Fear of addiction			
Going on to harder drugs			
Trouble with the law			
Family disputes			
Poor performance in school			
Poor Health			

**7. Do you agree/disagree with the following statements?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
There is a drug problem in your area			
There is a serious drug problem in your area			
Alcohol use amongst young people leads to drugs misuse			
Majority of young people have experimented with drugs			
Locking up dealers is the solution to the problem			
One Ecstasy tablet kills			

**8. Which of the following sources have an impact on young people and parents' awareness of drugs misuse?**

	Parents			Young People		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
Gardaí						
School						
Ex addicts						
Drug education videos						
Older siblings						
Parents						
Peer Education						
Leaflets						
Outside Facilitation						

**9. Which service would you contact if a young person was using drugs?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Addiction treatment centre			
Hospital			
G.P. Drug Help Line			
Gardaí			
Youth Service			
School			
Other			

**10. Do you think adults understand why young people take drugs?**

Yes	No	Don't know

**11. Do young people grow out of using drugs as they get older?**

Yes	No	Don't Know



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Tipperary Regional Youth Service**



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