

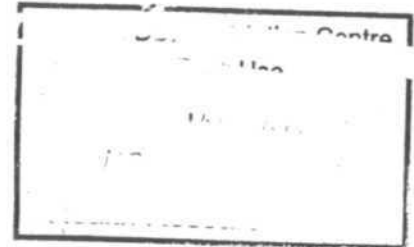
PAVEE POINT
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Health Research Board



ANNUAL REPORT (NOVEMBER 2000-DECEMBER 2001)

TRAVELLER SPECIFIC DRUGS INITIATIVE

- An Initiative to promote the inclusion of
Travellers in
the National Drugs Strategy *Building on
Experience 2001 -2008*

March 2002

INTRODUCTION

Pavee Point is a national non-governmental organisation which is committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers. It was established in 1983 and is based in Dublin. The organisation is a partnership of Travellers and settled people working together to address the needs of Travellers as a minority ethnic group who experience exclusion, marginalisation and racism.

Pavee Point has extensive experience in developing innovative and culturally appropriate responses to the needs of Travellers from its starting point based on a community development approach and on an intercultural model. The organisation seeks to combine local action with national resourcing, and direct work with research and policy formulation.

Pavee Point has worked directly with Travellers over the past fourteen years. This experience and our on-going analysis of Travellers circumstances and needs means the organisation is well placed to respond to the on-going and emerging needs of Travellers.

Pavee Point also has extensive experience in working with a variety of sectors in developing responses and analysis of issues effecting Travellers and their needs. These include statutory, community and voluntary sectors as well as partnership based structures. Our work programmes cover a wide range of issues and organisation structures, which have enabled us to highlight the need and potential to include Travellers into local, regional and national developments, as well as statutory, community and partnership structures. Our participation includes working within the Community Development Programme, the Traveller Economic and Social Inclusion Programme, the Primary Health Care Initiative and the Violence Against Programme.

It is against this background that the issue of drug use and its impact within the Traveller community was raised and the proposal for the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative developed. It is also within this context that Pavee Point are seeking to mainstream the pilot Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative in order to continue to develop a culturally appropriate response to drug issues within the Traveller community.

DRUG USE AND THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

One of the emerging needs which Traveller leaders, and Traveller women in particular, have raised in recent years is the developing drug problem within their community. What has also become particularly evident is the growing nature of this problem.

This is a relatively new issue for Traveller organisations to tackle. Conversely, responses to the drugs issue nationally and locally are also only beginning to acknowledge and respond to the needs of Travellers. *The Report of Task Force on the Travelling Community*, which was published in July 1995, makes no reference whatsoever to illegal drug use within the community. When the Ministerial Task Forces on Measures to Reduce the Demands for Drugs invited submissions in 1996 and 1997 not one Traveller organisation made a submission. There was no reference to Travellers and their needs in those reports and Travellers were excluded from the first reports and proposed actions of the Local Drugs Task Forces.

Therefore, for both Traveller organisations and responses developed to tackle drug use, a new issue and agenda has emerged/is emerging. Traveller organisations are seeking to tackle the drugs issue in a context where it has to compete with the more visible issues that they are engaged in, such as accommodation, health and education related issues.

DRUGS USE AND THE CONTEXT FOR TRAVELLERS

Travellers are widely acknowledged as one of the most marginalised and discriminated groups in Irish society. Travellers fare poorly on every indicator used to measure disadvantage: unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, health status, infant mortality, life expectancy, literacy, education and training levels, access to decision-making and political representation, gender equality, access to credit, accommodation and living conditions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Economic and Social Research Institute concluded that "*...the circumstances of the Irish Travelling people are intolerable. No humane and decent society, once made aware of such circumstances, could permit them to persist.*" The ESRI also stated that Irish Travellers are "*...a uniquely disadvantaged group; impoverished, under-educated, often despised and ostracised, they live on the margins of Irish society.*" (ESRI, July 1986, Paper No. 131)

Nearly ten years later the *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, 1995, once again highlighted the appalling living, social and economic circumstances of Travellers. "*The Task Force points to the sense of urgency involved in implementing its recommendations so as to*

enable the present level of social exclusion and disadvantage experienced by Travellers to be addressed, and at the same time, remove current causes of friction between the Traveller and 'settled' communities. In achieving these objectives, the Task Force believes that Travellers will be enabled to take their place and make their full contribution as citizens in Irish society."

Analysis and experience has also highlighted that drug use is concentrated in areas and communities that are marginalised and disadvantaged. The First Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Measures to Reduce Demand for Drugs 1996 concluded that social and economic disadvantage, unemployment and poor living conditions were predictors of drug misuse. *"They (drug users) are concentrated in communities that are characterised by large-scale social and economic deprivation and marginalisation."* First Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Measures to Reduce Demand for Drugs 1996.

Due to the established link between drug use and marginalisation and disadvantage, and Travellers' particular experience of social disadvantage and discrimination, we feel that Travellers are particularly at risk to increasing drug use within their community. Specific issues such as discrimination, poor educational status, and demographics give rise to particular concern.

BACKGROUND TO THE TRAVELLER SPECIFIC DRUGS INITIATIVE

As an organisation Pavee Point strive to respond to the issues and needs raised by Travellers themselves. Traveller women in particular were raising concerns about increasing levels of drug use within their community and the problems this was causing. Pavee Point focuses on promoting Traveller inclusion into policies and services developed to respond to issues that are pertinent to Travellers. As such Pavee Point started a process of facilitating an analysis of this issue with the aim of developing responses to the needs of Travellers and the Traveller community in relation to the growth in drug use.

This process was at an early stage, hampered by an almost complete dearth of information on Travellers and drug use. As such the process began with building on the experience of Pavee Point in working with Travellers and gathering information to facilitate our understanding and analysis.

The initial step taken by Pavee Point was to seek funding to look at the drugs issue. In 1998/1999 Pavee Point was resourced through the EU funded Youthstart Community Initiative. This initiative was promoted by Pavee Point in conjunction with the then Eastern Health Board, who provided the matching funding for the project.

The Youthstart Initiative included a variety of activities, one of which was:

- The undertaking of a research project to examine current and emerging trends in illegal drug use within the Traveller community.

In common with Pavee Point's overall objectives an intrinsic element of the Youthstart project was to impact on policy developments to ensure a Traveller dimension in any existing and emerging policies and provision.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research element of the Youthstart initiative identified some of the Traveller specific risk factors in relation to drug use, Traveller most at risk of drug use and mostly importantly the increase in drug use within the community. In summary, the research highlighted;

- There is a growing drug problem among the Traveller community throughout the country.

- Service providers identified the need to develop an outreach/targeted dimension to their work in order to facilitate Traveller access to and uptake of existing services.
- Owing to on-going discrimination of Travellers it is easier for Travellers to access cannabis and other illegal drugs than to gain access to public houses to purchase alcohol legally.

TRAVELLERS MOST AT RISK;

The research found that similarly to their settled peers, the Travellers who were most at risk of drug use were those who were often the most marginalised by society as a whole and those most marginalised or removed from their own community, i.e. Travellers in care or living in standard (settled) accommodation. Those at risk included:

- Young Traveller men who live in standard housing, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas. These young Travellers, along with their settled peers, are at risk of drug use.
- Young Travellers from families where there is an existing drug/alcohol dependency problem.
- Young Travellers who have been brought up in institutional/foster care.
- Homeless young Travellers.
- Young Travellers who have spent time in prison.
- Young Traveller women through their partner/husband who may be involved in drug use.
- Traveller women through drugs prescribed by GPs.

The Youthstart Initiative, and particularly the research, highlighted the need to continue the work in the area. Coupled with the work of the Initiative, this period also saw the continuing development of the partnership approach based in the Local Drugs Task Forces to respond to the drug issue in particular designated areas, and the initial stages in the development of a wider National Drugs Strategy.

It was felt that there was a need to develop a three year pilot initiative to continue some of the work of the Youthstart initiative, further Pavee Point's analysis and understanding of the issue, particularly through increased information and research and promote Traveller inclusion into the increasing body of local, regional and national policy being developed and proposed.

TRAVELLER SPECIFIC DRUGS INITIATIVE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central focus of the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative, in line with our policy as an organisation, is not to develop a separate and segregated service for Travellers but rather the promotion of Traveller inclusion in existing mainstream services. The specific aims of the initiative are:

- To highlight the issue of Travellers and drug use and sensitise the National and Local Drugs Task Forces, Health Boards and other relevant organisations to the distinct needs of Travellers and inform them of the implications of these needs.
- To promote the inclusion of Travellers in policy, development plans and the work of the Task Forces, Health Boards and relevant agencies, particularly in areas where there is a significant Traveller population.
- To work with Travellers and Traveller organisations to disseminate national and local drugs policies, and to support them in seeking to implement strategies and initiatives, which respond to the drugs issue, experienced within the Traveller community.

Centrally, to combat the exclusion, whether it is intentional or unintentional, of Travellers from national and local drugs policies, development plans, actions and services.

After the first year of work these remain the aims and objectives of the initiative.

THE TRAVELLER SPECIFIC DRUGS INITIATIVE NOVEMBER 2000-DECEMBER 2001- OVERVIEW

Funding was received in November 2000 to establish the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative and a co-ordinator was appointed. She took up the position in November 2000. The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative completed its first full year in November 2001.

This period also saw the launch of the Government's National Drugs Strategy for the next seven years, *Building on Experience. National Drugs Strategy 2001 -2008*. The government response to the drugs issue, directed through a variety of government departments is outlined in this strategy, including issues related to funding, service delivery, policing, education, prevention, research and policy development.

Generally, the work of the Initiative and the National Drugs Strategy- have lead to an increased inclusion of Travellers within the responses being developed to tackle drug use. They have also increasingly highlighted the need to continue to develop Traveller inclusion within the local and national responses, the continuing need to sensitise these structures and services to the distinct needs of the Traveller community and to inform them of the implications of these needs.

For Travellers and Traveller organisations this period has also highlighted the increasing levels of drug use within the Traveller community and the ongoing need to work with Travellers and Traveller organisations throughout the country in order to support them in seeking to develop and implement initiatives which responded to the drugs issues experienced within the Traveller community.

RESOURCES

The original funding proposal, which was submitted in September 1999, set out a specific programme of action to be completed over a three-year period for a team of four with a budget. Pavee Point received funding in October 2000 to employ one staff member. Therefore, for the first year the initiative was operated with one staff member, which required prioritising certain actions within the specific programme of action as outlined in the proposal of September 1999.

As stated, during this period the National Drugs Strategy was also launched, which itself has necessarily lead to particular priorities for the work of the Initiative. The National Drugs Strategy, which outlined the development of a focused, more coordinated, and comprehensive government strategy to tackle the drugs issue nationally, identified key areas that as an organisation we are keen to participate in.

During the first year funding was sought and secured from the Eastern Regional Health Authority to continue the initiative and to employ a Community Development Worker, to work along side the Coordinator to enhance the work programme. The second staff member has been employed but it yet to take up position, she is due to start in April 2002.

During the first year of the work of die initiative has concentrated on:

- Establishing the project
- Developing the analysis that had been started in the Youthstart Initiative
- Work with Travellers and Traveller Organisations

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- Traveller Inclusion
- Research
- Impacting on Policy

ESTABLISHING THE PROJECT

The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative was established in November 2000. The early period was spent introducing the Initiative to Traveller groups nationally and the drug related service providers and policy makers.

The initial phase of introduction to the Traveller groups was introducing the coordinator, the issue of Travellers and drug use and carrying out a small survey of needs identified by Traveller groups.

This early period also afforded an opportunity to assess the level of concern within Traveller groups and among Travellers in relation to the issue, and collate the minimal amount of information that was available.

The early stage in relation to the drug services and policy makers' concentrated on the work of the Local Drugs Task Forces as the Initiative started at a time when the second reports of the majority of the Local Drugs Task Forces were being finalised. It was unfortunate timing, (unavoidable due to the funding allocation and recruiting staff), as in many cases the work of compiling these reports had been completed and they were being finalised and sent in for approval, therefore, the capacity to impact on these reports and the work of these Task Forces was limited.

DEVELOPING THE ANALYSIS

From the start of the Initiative there has been a continuing emphasis on gathering information and developing analysis on the issue of Travellers and drug use, in order to further develop the work of the project, impact on policy development and develop appropriate responses.

Clearly this work is focused on a variety of arenas, both drug and Traveller specific and wider issues that impact both on the drugs issue and issues for Travellers. These issues include; drug policy in Ireland and international drug related policy issues, issues in relation to drug use generally, including service design and delivery, socio-economic factors, Travellers issues, both

specific to drug use and the issues that are part of the complexity of drug use and the Traveller community, i.e. health, education and accommodation related issues. This work is based on the assumption that tackling drug use is extremely complex and that in order to develop analysis and responses to the drug specific issue there is a need to develop a good understanding of the complexity of issues that affect Travellers. Issues that may put Travellers at risk of drug use, protect them from drug use and impact on their needs in relation to drug use, particularly in relation to service provision.

This work was informed by documentary research on the drug issue and issues relating to Travellers. Work with the other areas within Pavee Point to develop appropriate links in relation to responding to the drug issue, in particular the Youth Programme. Attending seminars on issues relating to drug use, website research and making contacts and gathering information from drug service providers and policy making including, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Citywide, the Health Research Board, Trinity, ICON Drug Support Service and Chrysalis.

This work was also supported by the direct work with Travellers and Traveller organisations, including feedback from seminars and information sessions. This included information and analysis of the experience of Travellers and Traveller groups on the ground on a day-to-day basis.

WORK WITH TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLER ORGANISATIONS

As outlined the issue of Travellers and drug use has relatively recently arrived onto the agenda of Traveller groups. This is not to say that the issue in itself is new, but rather new within the context of Traveller groups. This may be due to increasing levels of drug use within the community, increased capacity within Traveller organisations and increased willingness to discuss an issue which has, as an illicit activity, the capacity to further isolate and marginalise Travellers.

As a relatively new agenda, coupled with the resource limitations on Traveller groups and the urgency of many issues which are long standing and yet to be addressed, there is a mixed level of capacity and ability, to respond to the drug issue within Traveller groups. Many of the Traveller groups, by necessity, must prioritise the issues that they are going to address, with accommodation, health and education often taking centre stage. Therefore, issues like drug use,

where the information and analysis is at an early stage, needs to be promoted and resourced in order for Traveller groups to address them with any informed capacity.

Because of the newness of the issue itself the central task of this initiative at this early stage was to provide groups with information. This information took a number of forms including, seminars, training/information sessions, sending out information and responding to requests and needs of Traveller groups.

The work of the Initiative also involved providing advice to local Traveller organisations who are looking at developing responses to drug issues and supporting them in accessing and piloting initiatives in their local areas. A small number of Traveller groups have begun developing specific responses to the drugs issue within the Traveller community, these organisations sought the advice of the Initiative in some of the work they were carrying out. Information and advice was sought on issues such as; the national context in which they are working and on supports re funding etc. that may be available to support individual initiatives.

The experience of the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative is that more community development lead work is needed in order for Travellers and Traveller organisations to tackle the drugs issue within the Traveller community. This is in line with the National Drugs Strategy', which has since the first report highlighted the importance of community involvement and consultation in the development of drug strategies. To date Traveller inclusion in the process of consultation and active involvement in the development of strategies has been limited and urgently needs to be developed. In order to promote Traveller inclusion a two fold approach is required: support of Travellers and Traveller organisation as outlined, and, a recognition and acknowledgement of Travellers and Traveller needs by the policy makers and service providers.

TRAVELLER INCLUSION IN THE REPOSES DEVELOPED TO TACKLE THE DRUG ISSUE

The early work on the issue of Traveller inclusion, as with Travellers and Traveller groups, was introducing the issue and the initiative to the policy makers and service providers. The initial phase of the process focused on the Local Drugs Task Forces, as they were finalising their second reports and were the focus of the then national strategy and the Initiative.

This involved raising the profile of the Initiative and highlighting the issues of Travellers and drug use and the distinct needs of the Traveller community with the Local Drugs Task Forces.

Some of the Task Forces had some inclusion of Traveller within their plans, primarily to support the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative, but more work is clearly needed to focus on the second aspect of the above, a recognition and acknowledgement of Travellers and Traveller needs by the policy makers and service providers.

Promoting the inclusion of Travellers within the responses being developed locally and nationally, also involves working on promoting an equality, anti-racist inclusive agenda. This aspect of the work seeks to ensure that Travellers inclusion is not tokenistic and develops to be cognisant of the distinct needs of Travellers as a minority ethnic group. Therefore work looking at promoting the inclusion of Travellers has developed by establishing links with other key areas of Pavee Point's work, developing information resources and training/information to provide to service providers/policy makers. This has included working on developing "an anti-racist focus on information/training sessions that are being provided to ensure that the information is placed within a context of Travellers experience and that barriers to true inclusion and participation are challenged.

As such, we have delivered training to service providers via the training programmes run by the health boards. This involved training focusing on Travellers and drug use, looking at issues specific to Travellers and issues related to discrimination, equality, racism and diversity.

We are also looking at ways of promoting the Traveller agenda with the community representatives of the local and regional structures within the National Drugs Strategy. As such introductory work was done with some community representatives through CityWide. The initiative continues to work with CityWide on a variety of issues and is looking to expand training work with community representatives when resources have been expanded.

With increased resources the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative is looking to further develop and offer training to service providers and policy makers looking specifically at the issue of Travellers and drug use within an anti-racist/diversity context. It has been our experience of the last year that the boarder issue of diversity within drug use and service provision re drug use is not being addressed, and training providers are looking for inputs to enhance their programmes.

The larger issue of addiction is also of concern to the Initiative and one that has been raised over the last years work. As such the Initiative is looking to link into the work of any developing alcohol strategies that are being developed.

TRAINING/INFORMATION

A number of basic information sessions were designed and delivered to Travellers and Traveller groups. These included:

- Information on the National Drug Strategy itself, including the development of the strategy and the central priorities and issues for Traveller groups.
- Basic information on drugs. This session was an introductory information session, as at this stage the Initiative does not have the capacity to deliver longer training programmes. The information was aimed at Traveller women to provide basic information on drugs and drug use, signs of drug use and the context within which drug use takes place. This involved looking at the issue of drug use, poverty and marginalisation, and drug use and discrimination.
- An introduction to the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative, which was given to individual Traveller groups and at a seminar held in Pavee Point to introduce the Initiative and the issue of Travellers and drug use.
- Work is in progress with the Youth Programme in Pavee Point to develop a peer education package looking at the issue of drug use to deliver to Traveller youth leaders. The Youth Team has piloted the initial steps of this package.

INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative was involved in the development and dissemination of information on a number of areas key to the work of the Initiative in relation to Travellers and drug use. This included information on the Travellers Specific Drugs Initiative, the National Drug Strategy, issues relating to Travellers and drug use, and distribution of specific pieces of information of interest to Traveller groups and service providers/policy developers as they arose or were requested.

Specific information in relation to the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative was developed and disseminated to Traveller groups and service providers/policy makers working on the issue of

drug use. This information was also distributed to other groups upon request. This information included:

- Information on the role and work of the Travellers Specific Drugs Initiative.
- Fact sheets in relation to Travellers and drug use.
- Information within the Pavee Point Newsletter.

Information on issues related to drug use and developments with the National Drugs Strategy and drug policy/service developments. This included;

- Information on the launch and content of the National Drugs Strategy.
- Information on the Regional Drugs Task Forces and consultations.
- Information on the work of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs, including the launch on the Advisory Committees Community/Voluntary Sectors Research Grant Scheme.

The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative, as well as sending out information was also used as an information resource for Travellers groups and service/policy makers working on the issue of drug use. This aspect of the work involved responding to information requests from organisations such as; Health Boards, Traveller Groups, the Health Research Board, Drug specific Services and Drugs Task Forces.

A basic information pack is in the process of being developed for Traveller groups to use as a resource. This will include information on drugs, issues relating to drugs, service provision within a variety of areas, the policy context and issues specific to Travellers and drug use.

RESEARCH

The need for more research into drug use and the Traveller community has been a central concern of the Initiative to date. The almost complete dearth of information impedes the development of strategies and responses to what, anecdotally, is a growing problem. The central aims of the Initiative in relation to research for the first year were to collate available information and make links, seek funding for Traveller specific research and seek to include Travellers and Traveller issues into research that is being carried out on the issue of drug use.

Initially work consisted of gathering what information is available in relation to Travellers and drug use in Ireland, from Pavee Point's research to information included in the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. This minimal amount of information which

was sought via documentary work and contacts made with researchers including Addiction Studies Trinity was supplemented by carrying out desk research on the broader issue of drug use in Ireland. Outside of the Irish context, research was carried out via the Internet, documentary work and contacts established by Pavee Point into drug use and minority ethnic groups, particularly the Roma. Some useful research has been carried out to date on the experience of the Roma in Spain in relation to drugs. This material was gathered to improve our understanding of some of the issues that may be common to minority ethnic groups and look at the techniques employed to carry out research on drug use with marginalised groups.

In order to forward the aim of carrying out Traveller specific research the Initiative has been working with the National Advisory Committee on Drugs re the funding and development of research into Travellers and drug use. The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and Minister Ryan have highlighted the need for research of this kind. This work is at an early stage, but research into Travellers and drug use has been included in the work plan for 2002.

There has also been work looking at sensitising non-Traveller specific research to the inclusion of Travellers. This has also included working with the National Advisory Committee on Drugs, responding to specific requests from researchers, including the Health Research Board, and developing briefing and policy material on the wider issue of the collection and disaggregation of data on the ethnicity of clients within research and using services. The later issue is a central policy tenets of Pavee Point, i.e. the collection, maintenance and distribution of good quality information on the ethnicity of clients in order to develop and respond to their needs (Traveller Proof) and the Drug Initiative has been part of developing that policy focus and promoting its practice.

It is increasingly coming to our attention in Pavee Point that Travellers are continually over represented within the prison system. This is an area, which we feel requires more research and understanding. Due to the high number of prisoners who are drug users, and the documented high levels of drug use within prisons, particularly in Dublin, this is an issue, which the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative is concerned with. As such, the Initiative has been looking at ways to fund and carry out some research into Travellers and prison, and/or promote the inclusion of Travellers into any research that is being carried out into prison and the needs of prisoners.

IMPACTING ON POLICY

The central policy document, *Building on Experience*, developed by the government after a consultation process, which the Travellers Specific Drugs Initiative participated in, was a significant development. This document, which for the first time in a national government policy document, identified Travellers as a risk group re drug use, detailed the significant aims, objectives and actions to tackle drug use over the next seven years. As such, the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative has been working at disseminating this information to Traveller organisations.

Another central area of work in relation to the National Drugs Strategy document has been identifying areas within the strategy that are of specific concern to Travellers with the aim of ensuring Traveller inclusion in the developing policies and actions. Areas of relevance and concern include the Regional Drugs Task Forces, the development of service users charters, service provision, and education and prevention strategies.

The Initiative has also been involved in the wider policy development processes including sending in submissions to the Review of the National Drugs Strategy, the Urban Disadvantage Working Group of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the NESF Report on the Re-integration of Prisoners, Foaim report No. 22, working on data collection and collation policies in relation to data on ethnicity, policy re anti-racism and diversity within service provision, and working with the Primary Health Care Initiative in Pavee Point to support the inclusion of drugs issues in the Traveller Health Strategy.

Essentially the focus of specific submissions and the development of policy analysis has been to seek to *'Traveller Proof'* and ensuring the naming of Travellers and their needs in the area of drug policy to promote the inclusion of Travellers.

COMMITTEES

- The Coordinator is a member of the Management Committee of the ICON Drug Support Service.
- During 2001 the coordinator was a member of the Prevention & Education Sub-Committee of the Finglas/Cabra Drugs Task Force.

CONCLUSION

The areas of work that the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative has been involved in over the last year have not gone on in discrete vacuums. Each area of work overlaps and has been used to inform, develop analysis, gather information, re-inform and promote various aspects of the work. As such, information and training with Traveller groups has informed research needs and highlighted anecdotal evidence. Training work with service providers has sought to promote the issue of Travellers and drug use within an anti-racist context, provide information on the Initiative itself, make contacts and inform the Initiative of service provision and the barriers that exist to further developing that provision.

It is also important to note that the Initiative participates in and is informed by the wider work of Pavee Point. This includes policy development, inclusion strategies, promoting Travellers voices and inclusion within the organisation and learning for individual initiatives across the programmes of Pavee Point and for Pavee Point as a whole.

ONGOING AND EMERGING ISSUES

The work of the initiative over the last year has built on information, research and analysis developed prior to establishing the Initiative itself, and the complex range of issues identified. As the work develops, new issues emerge and focus of specific issues has developed. These issues are central to how the Initiative has worked over the past year, how future work will develop, what priorities will be addressed and to identifying barriers to work in relation to Travellers and drug use.

ISSUES FOR TRAVELLER WOMEN

Evidence from research carried out by the Youthstart Initiative in Pavee Point and from work with Traveller women have indicated that drug use is a serious issue for Traveller women, with indications that the level of drug use for Traveller women are proportionality higher than those for settled women.

Apart from the different needs that women as drug users have in relation to service provision there are issues for Traveller women, as Traveller women. Traveller women experience the gender discrimination that all women experience and the racism and discrimination that Travellers as a whole experience. But Traveller women also experience the interaction of racism and sexism, which results in disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of being a Traveller, a woman and a woman Traveller. Bearing this in mind there are specific issues when looking to tackle the issue of Traveller women and drug use, including Traveller women's roles, their capacity to access services, issues relating to domestic violence, the impact of poor socio-economic conditions and the further marginalisation of women who are perceived to be deviant, as those involved in an illicit behaviour such as drug use would be.

DISCRIMINATION

Travellers continue to experience ongoing discrimination both directly and indirectly, that is perpetrated by individuals and institutions, and is intentional and unintentional. Discrimination fundamentally impacts on the daily lives as well as life chances of Travellers and underscores many of the other factors; including poor education, economic and social status as well as complexities responding to the needs of Traveller women and children.

Direct discrimination, which is often the most visible form of discrimination, is experienced by Travellers daily when attempting to access goods and services.

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Indirect discrimination is more complex and less visible. This form of discrimination is more often practiced by institutions and is manifested in the design and delivery of services and policy. Essentially it manifests itself in service provision and policy that is designed with the settled majority in mind, which does not meet the needs of Travellers, or excludes them through inappropriate and/or inadequate provision.

Indirect discrimination is often unintentional, in that the service provision or policy just do not take account of the needs of Travellers, rather than set out to exclude them. Therefore, service providers and those responsible for developing policy that do not take into account the needs of Travellers and others from minority ethnic groups are likely to exclude them from the service or policy.

As the issue of drug use among that Traveller community has been identified as a relatively new issue to address, there is a pressing need to ensure that drug related service and policy, are made aware of the difficulties Travellers face accessing goods and service due to levels of discrimination, and the need to name and take into account their needs to promote the inclusion of Travellers into responses and policy developed.

POOR EDUCATIONAL STATUS- ISSUES RE YOUTH AND RESPONSE

Travellers educational experience is poor. While the majority of Traveller children are now attending primary school less than 12% of Travellers are transferring into post-primary education, while only 1.2% of this number remain in post-primary after two years. Despite the increased number of Traveller children in primary school and the marginal improvement in the rates of transfer, the educational outcome for many Traveller children remains poor. The education system is designed for settled children with little or no account of Traveller culture or the needs of Traveller children, this factor along with many other complex issues such as poor health and accommodation and a lack of education experience within the Traveller community, results in Traveller children leaving school with less than adequate literacy skills.

Travellers not only leave school early, but they tend to leave school earlier than their settled peers. Early school leaving has been linked to an increased risk of becoming involved in drug use, or conversely the longer a young person stays in school the less likely they are to become involved in problem drug use. The dynamics for this are obviously extremely complex, but it is

safe to assume that Travellers poor education status results in poor education attainment, literacy difficulties and an increased risk of drug use.

Travellers poor educational experience is generational, it is estimated that up to 90% of Traveller adults are illiterate. This has implications for drugs education and prevention strategies. These strategies need to be developed in a way that is accessible to Travellers as well as applicable to their needs; therefore, account needs to be taken of Travellers as well as their educational experience. Therefore it is not appropriate to simply use education and prevention strategies developed for the settled community.

The work of the Traveller Specific Drug Initiative is particularly cognisant of issues such as discrimination and diversity in relation to the needs of those accessing service provision, and in policy development, including ethnic and gender diversity, therefore the central tenet behind the work carried out by the initiative is to place it within the context of anti-racism, equality and the specific needs of Travellers, including Traveller women.

Therefore, there is an ongoing feedback, informing each area of work, between the proposed actions of the Initiative, priorities as they arise from external influences, and the information, research, analysis and issues that the work is throwing up.