



**NORTH WEST INTER-AGENCY DRUG GROUP**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1998**

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## North West Interagency Drug Group: Annual Report 1998

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**An information Form is enclosed at the end of this report. If you would like further information about any of the contents of the report, or would like to give information about other relevant activities, please fill it in and return it.**

## **1 Summary.**

The North West Interagency Drug Group was formed in 1995 to co-ordinate the region's response to problems around drug and alcohol misuse. The group commissioned a survey 'Young People and Drug Misuse in the North West', and the results and recommendations of this report were published in 1996.

Following on from the recommendations of this report the interagency group expanded its representation to include other relevant groups and agencies. A strategy co-ordinator was appointed in 1997 to facilitate the work of the group and to provide support and highlight concerns in the region.

This annual report summarises the activities that the group was involved with in 1998. The North West Interagency Drug Group has an overall brief to co-ordinate activities in relation to supply reduction, demand reduction and treatment.

The report looks at these areas of activity, covering seizures of drugs in the area and the range of responses aimed at reducing demand. The treatment figures for 1998 as well as developments in treatment in the area are also included. Research is a necessary component of supporting current and developing new practice. The report summarises the research carried out in 1998 and outlines the main findings.

No single group or service can deal with the problems arising from substance misuse. The North West Interagency Drug Group is putting into action the idea of interagency links and co-operation. The activities covered in this report reflect the broad range of initiatives and organisations involved in dealing with drug and alcohol use in the region. The benefits of working together are evident in formal and informal relationships formed and in joint action at community level.

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## **2 Introduction.**

### ***2.1 Co-ordination of the response to the misuse of drugs in the North West.***

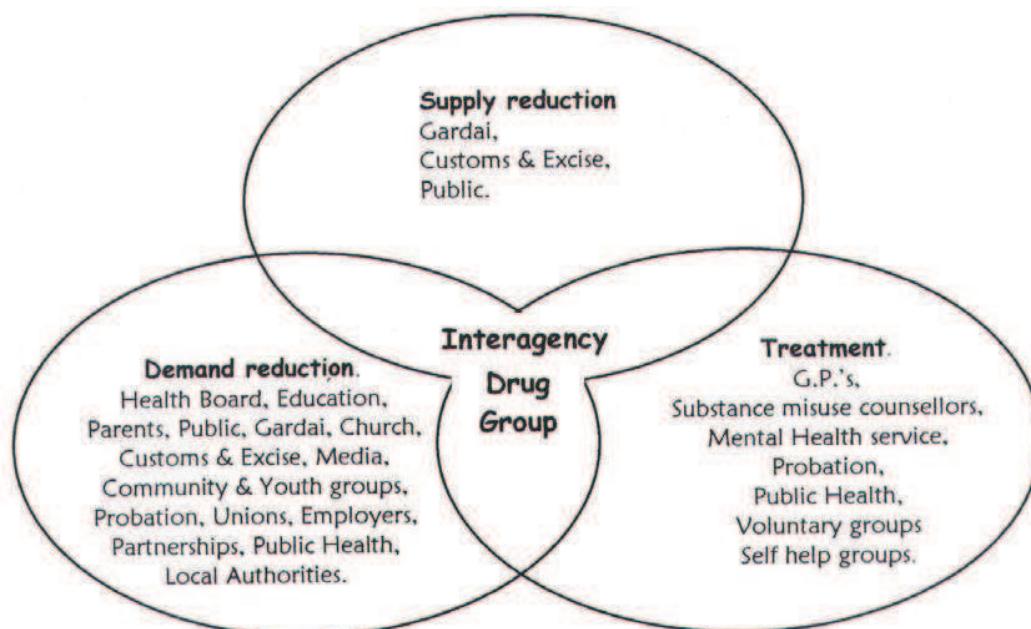
The North West Interagency Drug Group was set up in October 1995, and originally comprised representatives of the Health Board, Gardai and Customs & Excise. The group was extended in 1998 to include representatives from Parents, Youth services, Education and the Probation service.

### ***2.2 Overall aim of the North West Interagency Drug group.***

- To initiate and co-ordinate a range of interagency measures in relation to drug misuse and prevention.
- To collate and summarise information on drug misuse in the region.
- To facilitate and support contact and co-ordination of action between Health board services, statutory and voluntary organisations.
- To develop a data base of approaches to drug misuse prevention which may be used as a resource for the region.
- To liaise and plan with the relevant health professionals in relation to the development of a treatment strategy.



- To initiate and support research on drug use and approaches to treatment and prevention in the area.



### ***2.3 Delivering a response to issues around drug use.***

A range of individuals, groups, services and agencies are involved in activity aimed at prevention of supply, demand reduction and/or treatment of drug misuse. For example;

- The Customs, in preventing the entry of substances to the region and in their contribution to education through their participation in community initiatives.
- The Gardai, in implementing the law in relation to illegal substances and in their community work through the Juvenile Liaison Officer and other Gardai.
- G.P.s, Community Substance Misuse Counsellors and other Health Board services, which provide support and treatment for those concerned with, or involved in taking drugs.
- Schools and teachers in addressing the issue through information and the teaching of skills which help young people to resist the pressure to experiment.
- Community and youth groups, who take initiatives locally to inform and support parents, and get involved in providing appropriate and acceptable leisure alternatives for young people.

A Drug Strategy Co-ordinator was appointed in Oct 1997 and works from within the Health Promotion Service of the North Western Health Board with the relevant agencies and the public to facilitate a comprehensive response in the Region.

### ***2.4 Links with other services and organisations.***



An effective strategy to address the issues around drug misuse is dependant on linkages and co-ordination between the many organisations and individuals contributing to the area, as well as a good relationship with the people who need support.

Below are some of the groups who are involved in this process.

Health Board Services	Women's Groups
Customs & Excise	Voluntary organisation
Gardai	Commercial groups
Schools	Staff organisations
Church	Unemployed groups
Community Groups	Vintners association
Parenting organisations	Media
Youth groups	Cross border groups
Local authorities	National groups

Forming links and working in partnership is an ongoing task. The group aims to increase the level of contact with groups working in the region and to involve them in planning and informing work being carried out.

### **3 North West Interagency Drug Group, 1998.**

#### ***3.1 Membership of the North West Interagency Drug Group.***

Dr Philip Tyndall	Consultant Child Psychiatrist	Sligo
Dr Tony Sharkey	Consultant Psychiatrist	Donegal
Mr Michael McMenamin	Customs & Excise	Donegal
Mr Brian McRory	Customs & Excise	Sligo/Leitrim
Ms Sally Banner	Education Centre	Donegal
Ms Janet Gaynor	Executive Officer, Health Promotion	Regional
Supt Jim Gallagher	Gardai	Milford
Insp. W J Fletcher	Gardai	Sligo
Dr Eileen Caulfield	GP	Sligo
Ms Evanna Schorderet	Parent	Donegal
Ms Mildred Gilmore	Probation Service	Donegal
Ms Bernie Hyland	Regional Drugs Strategy Co-ordinator.	Regional
Ms Celia Keenaghan	Researcher, dept of Public Health	Regional
Ms Josephine Stewart	Substance misuse counsellor	Donegal
Ms Liz Sheridan	Substance misuse counsellor	Sligo
Ms Fiona Wall	Youth worker	Donegal

Each member comes to the group with his or her own area of interest and expertise and there is a sharing of knowledge and skills towards the aim of delivering responses in our area that are co-ordinated and effective.

**Members of the North West Interagency Drug Group, 1998.**



### **3.2 Terms of Reference**

- To act as a forum for co-operation between the various agencies involved in demand reduction for drugs.
- To agree an appropriate range of education and prevention measures to facilitate the maintenance of a drug-free community.
- To recommend strategies for the treatment, rehabilitation and on-going support of persons who misuse drugs.
- To consider trends in substance abuse and, in the light of this, to review the effectiveness of current policies and responses.
- To advise on appropriate areas of research aimed both at understanding the underlying causes of drug misuse and the effectiveness of the responses.
- To make regular reports to the Health Board and the Demand Reduction Subcommittee of the National Co-ordinating Committee.

### **3.3 The Executive Group**

Senior members of the Gardai, Customs & Excise and Health Board meet three times annually to review ongoing work and to advise on priorities within the region. In 1998 the members of the group were: Chief Superintendent Denis Fitzpatrick. Chief Superintendent Bill Donoghue, Mr Manus Ward (until his retirement in Sept) and Mr Pat Harvey (from Sept), Chief Executive Officers North Western Health Board. Mr Michael Donnellon, regional manager Customs & Excise, Ms Maura Me Nally, Health Promotion Officer and Ms Bernie Hyland Regional Drugs Strategy Coordinator. This group has been involved in driving the work agreed and setting the agenda for future projects.

The biggest challenge is to present an agreed approach to the issues that are arising and to use the partnership which has been established, to provide support for all agencies and groups involved in responding to the problems.

#### **4 Cross Border Work.**

##### ***4.1 Joint meetings of drug law enforcement groups.***

Cross border police co-operation between An Garda Siochana and the Royal Ulster Constabulary is an ongoing process. Several meetings have taken place in which the Drug issue was discussed and intelligence and information relating to the movement of illicit drugs was exchanged, resulting in a number of operational successes. Regular meetings between the Irish Customs & Excise team and HM Customs & Excise take place to share information and experience.

##### ***4.2 Joint meetings of interagency drug groups.***

It is recognised that there are many common experiences on the Southern and the Northern side of the border in relation to managing issues around drugs. The Drug Strategy Co-ordinators in the North Western Health Board and the Western Health and Social Services board in Northern Ireland work closely together and share information and experiences. The two Interagency Drug Groups met together in 1998 and decided to meet biannually in future. It is intended that the groups will oversee a joint project as a means of maintaining their working relationship.



Members  
of the  
WHSSB  
Drugs  
Team.

### **4.3 Border area co-operation.**

Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) is a steering committee which has been set up to co-ordinate and share information between the four border area health authorities.

Under the auspices of this group the Drug Strategy Co-ordinators from the four bordering Health Authorities, the North Western Health Board and North Eastern Health Board in the South, and the Western Health and Social Board, and the Southern Health and Social Services board in the North, meet on a regular basis.

## **5 Increasing awareness.**

### **5.1 Working together to make a difference, conference April 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

As part of the program of work of the Regional Interagency Drugs Group, a one day action conference was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1998. The conference brought together people who are involved in responding to the issues around drug misuse to look at the assumptions that underpin our work and the messages we give about drug use.

#### **5.1.1 Recommendations from the conference.**

##### **Interagency work:**

- Promote a broad definition of the word 'drug', to include alcohol;
- Publicise the interagency approach;
- Engage with a broad range of partners;
- Organise opportunities for different agencies to share information and experience.

##### **Young people:**

- Consult with young people;
- Investigate the usefulness of peer education;
- Deliver substance misuse education at primary level;
- Consider giving harm reduction education;
- Training together for those involved in giving joint presentations;
- Support enjoyable alternatives.

**Information/awareness:**

- Plan educational inputs together so that approaches are agreed;
- Look at alternative ways of putting a message across;
- People giving information should be well informed;
- Co-ordinate with other interventions which may be relevant e.g. smoking;
- Promote more co-operation between the agencies in their information and awareness work.

**Parents:**

- Co-ordinate the supports and services offered to parents;
- Involve parents in the relevant groups in their area
- Be proactive in communicating with parents;
- Co-ordinate strategies in relation to parents;

A document covering the full proceedings of the conference was published in October and is available from the Health Promotion Service in Ballyshannon.

**5.2 European Drug Prevention Week.**

European drug Prevention Week was co-ordinated by the Department of Health and Children for Ireland, and involved events across the country dealing with drugs and alcohol issues.

Events in the North West region included:

- **Work shops**, which were held for people providing a response to issues around drugs and alcohol in Donegal Town, Buncrana, Glenties, Letterkenny and Sligo.
- **A helpline**, which operated for the week from 9.30am - 5.00pm each day, to answer questions and address concerns about drugs and alcohol.
- **Interactive drama** dealing with use of drugs was presented by the Pyramid Theatre Group in three schools and involved participation by parents and children.
- **Information stands**, which were erected in supermarkets at selected sites to provide information about drugs to the public.
- **A directory of the services** which are relevant to drugs and alcohol.

**5.3 Gardai Youth Achievement Award**

This award provided an opportunity to capture the interest and energy of young people in the area. Focusing on drugs and alcohol, the award gave young people the opportunity to use their own words and ideas in order to influence their friends and to inform their family. It rewarded innovation and commitment among Voluntary organisations and Youth Groups.



Young school children were invited to write an Essay or design a poster using the Theme 'Why I should not use Drugs'. Gardai involved in visiting National Schools called into all schools in the region and gave a talk on the use of drugs and their dangers in early September 1998. The children of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class were then invited to take part in the competition, which was kindly sponsored by Donegal Creameries in Donegal and Abbotts Ireland Ltd, in Sligo/Leitrim.



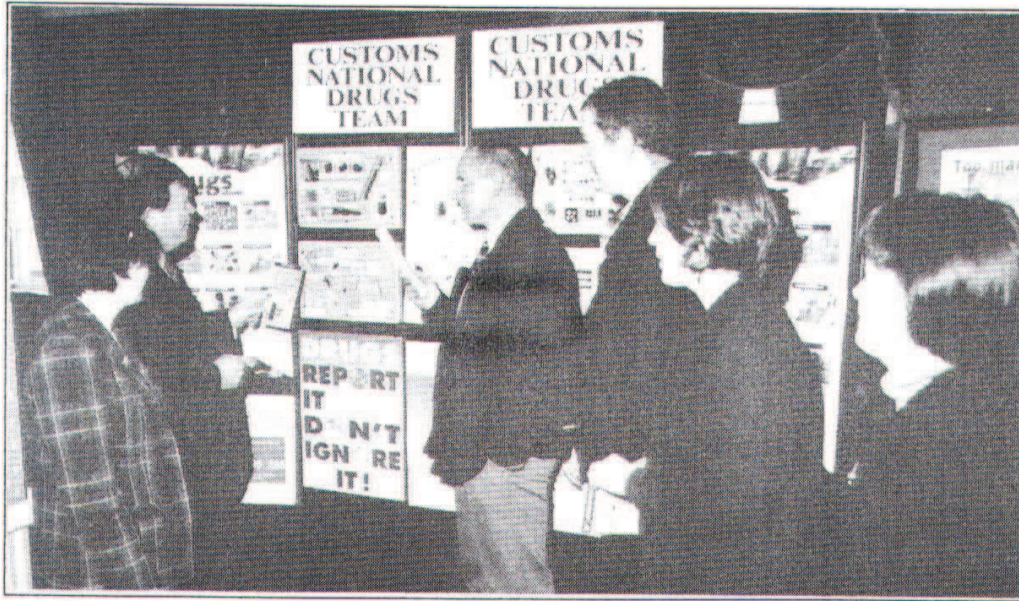
Mark Scanlon, Junior World Cycling Champion and Patricia Mulligan competition judge at the Gardai Youth Awards in Sligo.

Prize giving functions were held in Ballybofey and Sligo on November 17<sup>th</sup> and prizes were presented to the winning individuals and schools.

#### **5.4 Information sessions.**

There were many requests for information sessions during the year. The North West Interagency Drug Group recognise that a co-ordinated response benefits all involved and worked in 1998 to provide support and training for agencies working together.

The Gardai, Customs & Excise and Health board were involved in information sessions and awareness programmes as well as the peer parent trainers and the DQLA trainers. Over one hundred sessions were held in the region in 1998. These varied widely from talks in schools, to work with GAA clubs, to inputs to seminars for county councillors.



Feedback from sessions indicates that parents in particular are seeking information that they can understand and apply in relation to their young people. Agencies are, where possible, including a peer parent tutor in the information sessions and this has been very successful.

Short information sessions cannot adequately meet the need to deal with issues around drugs and alcohol in any detail. Where possible these sessions are used to promote other programmes available within the region, such as the Fas le Chéile parenting programme and the Drugs Questions, Local Answers (DQLA) programme. These can offer a more in depth look at the issues involved.

## **6 Information: Seizures, Prosecutions and Treatment.**

It is evident that the systems that are in place for gathering and interpreting information in relation to drug use and the resulting problems in our locality need to be improved.

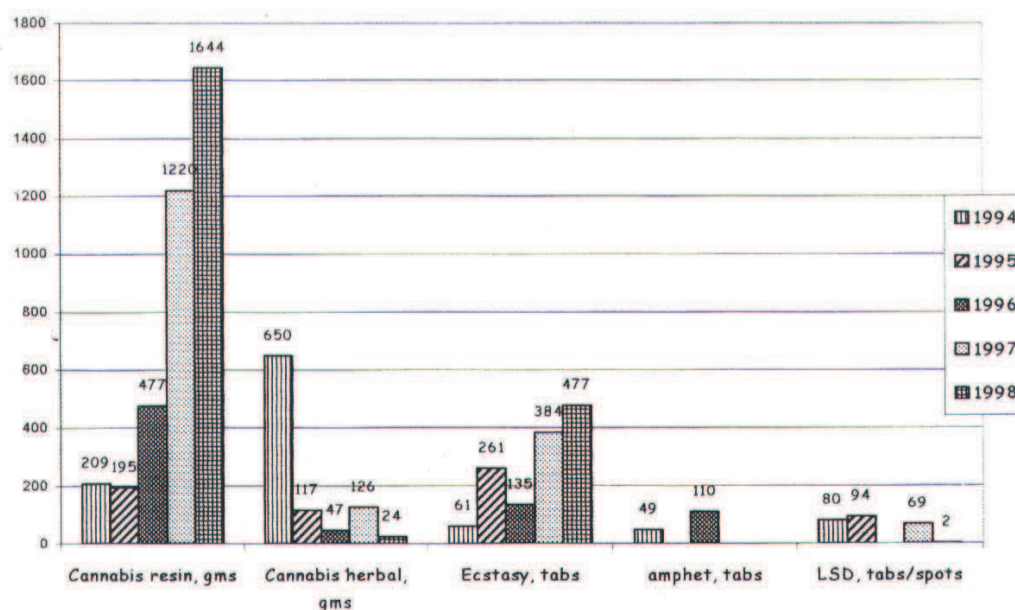
Currently we rely on statistics from the Gardai and Customs & Excise, which inform us of the amount of illegal drugs seized and prosecutions for drug offences. The statistics gathered for the Health Research Board on people treated for drug problems provides information on problems encountered because of drug use.

### **6.1 Drug seizures.**

The following chart shows the amount of drugs seized by the Gardai in the area over the past five years.



## Drug Seizures by the Gardai and Customs & Excise in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal.



As well as seizures within the area the Gardai were involved in seizing 700 ecstasy tablets and 3.3 kg of cannabis in Dublin, en route to the North West.

It is not possible to accurately state how much of the drugs seized within the area were for use by residents, were in transit, or were for personal use by non residents. The figures do show, however, a rise in the amount of cannabis resin and ecstasy tablets seized over the past two years.

In 1998 4.95kgms of cannabis resin (each joint contains an average of .1 of a gram of cannabis resin so this equals 34,400 joints; *ref. State Forensic Laboratory*) and 1177 ecstasy tablets were seized, either in the area or bound for the area. This indicates a need for continued co-operation in reducing the amount of drugs available in the area.

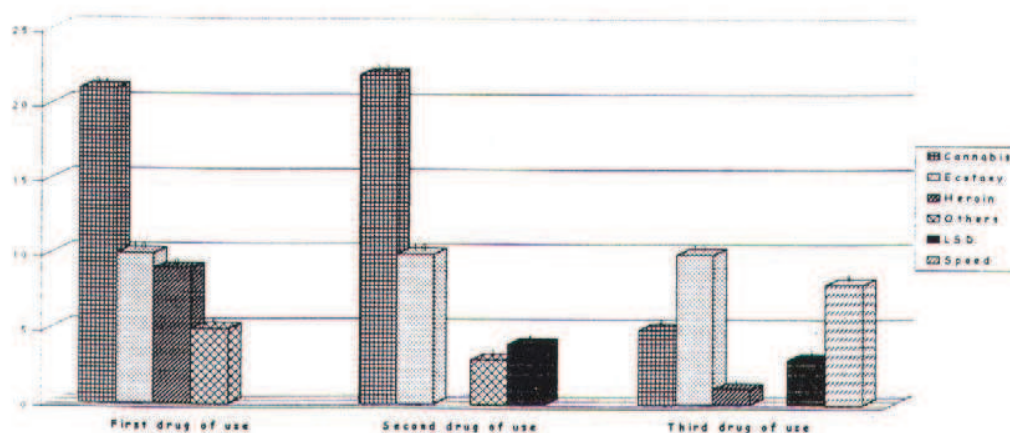
### 6.2 Prosecutions.

The number of people prosecuted in the North West region for drug use in 1998 was 161.

### 6.3 Treatment figures for 1998

Information gathered for the Health Research Board tells us the numbers who present for treatment because of drug use. In total 45 people sought treatment in 1998 from the Community Substance Misuse Counselling service. This is an increase in numbers as compared to previous years. The counsellors feel that this is partly due to greater visibility of the service and more willingness to seek help.

### 6.3.1 Drugs used by people presenting for treatment.

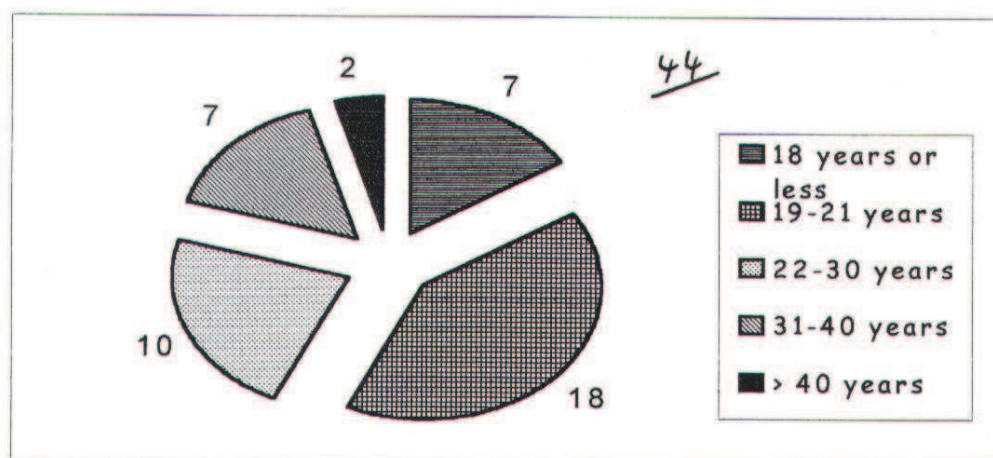


Cannabis emerges from these figures as the drug most likely to be used by those seeking assistance. The details of the problems associated with use which cause people to seek help are not readily available in our data collection and this is an area which would be interesting to follow up in 1999. Ecstasy is the second drug used by those in treatment.

### 6.3.2 Age profile of those presenting for treatment.

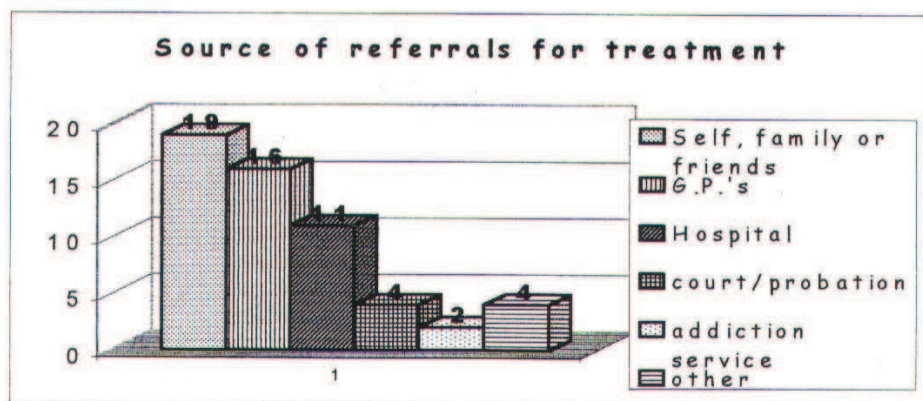
Although concern is focused on our young people in relation to the use and problems associated with mood altering substances, the profile of those seeking treatment for problems is a reminder that older people need attention and support to deal with problems.

**Age profile of people in treatment in 1998.**



### 6.3.3 Referrals for treatment for problems caused by drug use.

There is direct access to the substance misuse counselling service and the self-referral or referral by family and friends was the largest referral source in 1998. This was closely followed by referrals by G.P.s and other health professionals.



Neither the seizure, prosecution or treatment figures give a full picture of the extent or nature of substance use in our area.

It is our intention in 1999 to address this problem as a priority and to investigate a method of gathering information that will assist in our response.

## **7 School Programmes**

Research carried out in relation to drug and alcohol education show that the most effective method of delivering it is in the context of a broader. Lifeskills-based health education programme.

The NWHB has supported such a Lifeskills model of health education for almost 20 years - initially in post-primary and more recently in primary schools. Health promotion staff, working with schools, has developed teaching materials and training programmes for teachers, school co-ordinators, principals and full staff groups. An evaluation of the Lifeskills programme by the Department of Health Promotion in UCG (1994) showed that consistent exposure to the programme during a young person's school career had a positive and statistically significant impact on their drinking patterns.

School health education is not yet compulsory, although the Department of Education has made a commitment to introduce its Social. Personal. Health Education Programme within the next two years. Representatives from the Board have been closely involved in this development and we hope that the programme will be introduced on a partnership basis between the Board and the Department of Education and Science. Schools in this region that have taken on and supported the Lifeskills programme over the years are to be commended for their foresight in making this commitment to the health of their students.

### **7.1 Primary Schools**

The Lifeskills Health Education programme in primary schools deals with drugs and alcohol in a cross-curricular way, and spirals through the school years in age appropriate stages. The programme is available to all schools in the region.

Some specific work has been carried out with schools in Inishowen in a cooperative project with the Department of Education and Science. This comprised specific training for a group of teachers in the area on 'Drugs Awareness in the Primary School Curriculum'.

16 primary teachers also attended a training course in the Department of Education and Science's Substance Misuse Prevention Programme over 50 hours.

The Board has also co-operated with the Garda Síochána in the development of its primary schools programme. This programme is divided into five modules and begins in September each year. Gardai who are specially trained in working with young people

use the materials to inform children on a range of issues including drugs, road safety and crime.

## **7.2 Post-primary schools**

The Lifeskills programme is available to all post-primary schools in the region. Drugs and alcohol become a very real issue at this stage in a young person's life. and the classes are designed to be interactive and participatory to encourage self-learning. The work carried out on the 'Young Persons and Drugs' project (see under 'Research') will be used to inform materials and training which are being developed.

Gardai met with First Year students in 1998 to examine the drugs and alcohol issues, and this input will be developed in 1999.

## **7.3 Third-Level Institutions**

There are several Third Level Institutions in the North Western region - the Sligo and Letterkenny Institutes of Technology, the Tourism Training College in Killybegs and St. Angela's College of Education. Young people at third-level have different needs and different issues.

The North West Interagency Drug Group initiated contact with the Institutes of Technology with the aim of assessing student needs and offering support for on-going work around drugs and alcohol. In particular, work looking at college policy development and services for students presenting with problems is ongoing.



Students of the Institute of Technology, Letterkenny, receiving their prize for a quiz during European Drug Prevention week.

# **8 Youth Work.**

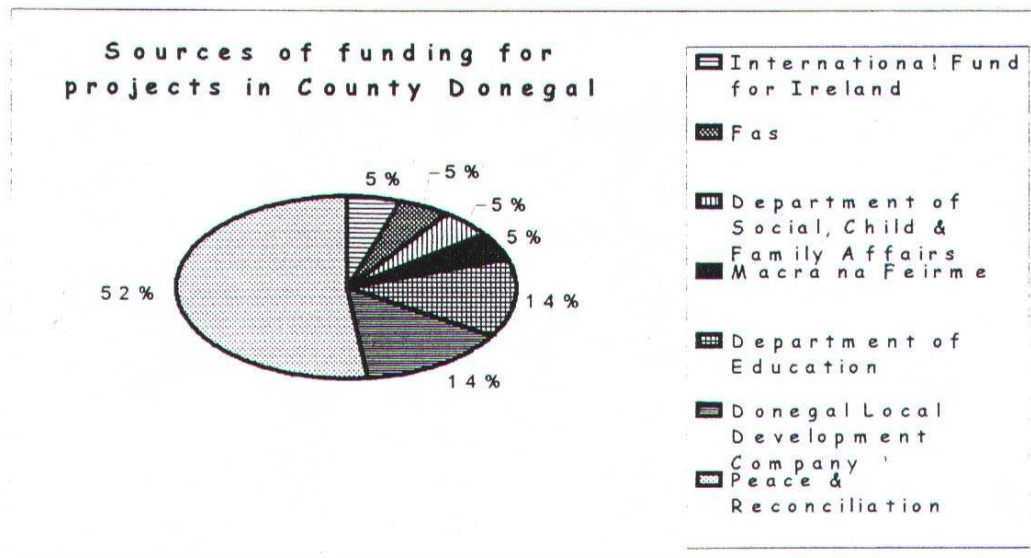
## **8.1 Youth Developments in County Donegal.**

A Youth worker's Network was set up in 1994, to bring together staff from the Donegal Youth Service and Foróige with 2 locally based projects in Ballyshannon (NWHB) and

Lifford/Clonleigh (Department of Social Welfare). The purpose of the Network was to support each other and share relevant information on current youth work developments.

The Network carried out research with young people in the county, in partnership with Donegal Local Development Company, to identify their perceived needs. A one day conference, 'Youth View', was held, run by young people. A report of the day was launched in Letterkenny. Some of the key recommendations made by the young people are as follows:

- A call for extra people working face to face with young people;
- A call for centres for young people to meet;
- More peer education projects based in urban and rural areas, dealing with issues such as drugs, alcohol, sexuality and **sex** education;
- And an increase in the amount and quality of programmes that contribute to the self-confidence and development of young people.



Youth work has changed dramatically since 1994. There are more youth projects employing full time and part-time workers – thanks to the welcome arrival of funding from Europe through agencies such as I.F.I., Peace & Reconciliation, Partnership Companies (ADM) and also a number of Government Departments.

#### **8.1.1 County organisations for young people.**

- ◆ Foróige National Voluntary Youth Organisation
  - Community Based Foróige Clubs which are located throughout the County (Department of Education)
- ◆ Schools Development Programme in the Finn Valley Area (DLDC)
- ◆ Community Youth Programme in South Donegal (DLDC)
- ◆ Tir Boghaine Youth Project in South West Donegal (IFI)
- ◆ Donegal Youth Information Centre (P & R)
- ◆ Donegal Youth Service

- Youth Clubs and Drop In Centres located through out the County (Department of Education)
- Community Youth Programme in Letterkenny (DLDC)
- Letterkenny Youth Information Centre (P A R)
- Cross Border Disability Awareness Programme (P & R)
- Peer Education Project (DLDC)
- Disadvantaged Outreach Project (Department of Education)
- ♦ Macro na Feirme (P & R) Co-ordination & Development of Macro clubs throughout the County.

### **8.1.2 Locally based Youth Projects.**

- ♦ Lifford/Clonleigh Youth Project (Department of Social Welfare and Fas)
- ♦ Ballyshannon Youth Project (NWHB/ PAR)
- ♦ Glenwood Park Youth Project, Letterkenny (P & R)
- ♦ Inishowen Youth Programme (PAR via Inishowen Partnership)
- ♦ Raphoe Youth Project (P A R)
- ♦ Falcarragh Part-time Youth Project (FAS/NWHB)
- ♦ Heartlands Youth Project - Glenties - Research Phase

Most Youth Projects at present are pilot initiatives. The Youth Workers Network is very well placed to work in partnership with statutory bodies in meeting the needs of young people throughout Donegal (as highlighted in the Youth View report and the findings of the recent 'Mental Health' project carried out by the NWHB Health Promotion Unit).

There will be ongoing liaison with the Regional Inter-Agency Drugs Committee in addressing the needs of young people and providing positive interventions for them, particularly regarding drugs education programmes.

## **8.2 Youth activities in Sligo and Leitrim.**

### **8.2.1 North Connaught youth and Community service.**

This service works with youth groups in the Sligo and Leitrim areas. It runs and supports many programmes of which the most relevant to drugs and alcohol are:

- The Drink Awareness for Youth Programme;
- The Solvent Abuse Programme;
- The Youth Work Support Pack for dealing with drug Issues;
- Get Into Life resource Pack;
- Aids Education;
- The Peer Education Programme.

**A group at the Pyramid drama production in Summerhill College.**





### **8.2.2 Home Youth Liaison Service Sligo and Leitrim.**

The Home Youth Liaison Service developed from the recognition that increasing numbers of young people were dropping out of school and not availing of training opportunities.

The aim of the service is to provide a range of services to young people in Sligo/North Leitrim who are experiencing difficulties in the school, training, home or social situations.

The objectives of the service are to provide one to one supports and counselling for the young people referred. In addition to this to provide peer support for young people to work in group situations. The service has also established, maintained and developed contact with schools, training centres and other agencies, statutory and voluntary who have helping relationships with young people. The service is in existence for 10 years and has two officers - Michael Hedigan in Sligo, and Gabrielle Early in North Leitrim the contact number is (071) 44416.

### **8.2.3 Special Youth Project 1998, St Anne's Youth Club, Sligo.**

It is recognised that low morale in early school leavers leads to many problems including an increase in drug taking and alcohol abuse. Parents have expressed their concerns about the risk of their children becoming involved in drug abuse. The Gardai and Home Youth Liaison service are also concerned about increased use of mood altering substances among early school leavers.

St Anne's has developed an after school service for primary school children aimed at preventing young people leaving school early. There are two groups currently being supported. Ten 6-8 year olds and ten 9-10 year olds meet twice weekly.

The programme is achieved through:

- Allowing the development of children in accordance with the individual child's needs, their level of ability and temperament.

- The provision of certain basic physical and psychological needs including a warm comfortable room and a nourishing meal.
- Caring adults create a secure, safe and nurturing environment where the child's experiences are positive.
- Work is carried out in a stimulating and enthusiastic manner that maximises participation and enjoyment.
- Providing a support to parents and children through building strong relationships where both children and parents are listened to.
- Through role models with clearly defined standards by reference to which a child can develop.
- Providing help with homework - introducing learning through new experiences, praise, recognition and a sense of responsibility.

## **9 Parenting Programmes.**

### ***9.1 Fás le Chéile.***

Fás le Chéile (Growing Together) is a programme for parents developed by the North West Health Board. The North Western Health Board have offered training which has allowed a group of parents to complete the Certificate in Parent Support Work. This qualifies them as group leaders in parenting and, supported by the Health Promotion Service, they run parenting programmes in conjunction with their local primary schools.

In 1998 the peer parent trainers in Donegal completed 50 hours of further training to enable them to facilitate courses to parents in primary schools called 'Drugs: Parents and the Primary School Child' and fifteen facilitators in Sligo/Leitrim and South Donegal completed 30 hours training for Prevention of Substance Misuse (including Alcohol and Smoking).

Visiting experts from the Gardai, Addiction Services and Customs and Excise were involved in the training which aimed to equip the parent facilitators with skills to include Drugs and Alcohol Prevention as part of the Fás le Chéile programme. Parent facilitators continue to be

in demand for work with schools and with parents in other locations. They have been involved with research carried out in the region in 1998 and developing interventions for use with schools and parents.

The North West Interagency Drug Group has identified the continuing work with adults, to increase awareness of the issues around drugs and alcohol, and the provision of support to parents, as a key objective for 1999. Having the resource of skilled and motivated parent trainers is invaluable in carrying out this work. The contribution made by the parenting group is very important and their ongoing commitment and energy is a tremendous asset to the area.

**Some members of the Fas le Cheile and DQLA trainers group.**



## **10 Community Led Responses**

### ***10.1 Drug Questions, Local Answers (DQLA)***

Drug Questions, Local Answers is a community programme introduced as an integral part of the on-going drugs and alcohol awareness campaign. It is designed for adults and is of special interest to local groups such as residents associations, sport and social clubs and drug awareness groups. It is available for anyone who wants to know more about the drug and alcohol problem.

There are 43 trained facilitators in the region who are now available to run programmes in their local communities. DQLA is presented over ten hours, the group actively participates in the sessions and there are no speeches or lectures. All that's needed to run a programme is a suitable venue and up to 15 people who want to find answers and are interested in looking at what they can do in locally.

# Drug Questions

## Local Answers

### **10.2 Brief summary of DQLA course.**

*Who are we? What do we think?*

The members of the group get to know each other, voice any concerns they may have about the course and share views on the extent and type of local alcohol and drug abuse.

*What can we learn about alcohol?*

Group participants discuss some aspects of alcohol and alcohol use. They also examine a range of problems experienced by individuals, families and society as a whole, which can be attributed to alcohol consumption. Are there any easy answers?

*What is our view of other drugs?*

They look at their own attitudes to drugs and drug users and consider how problems with mood altering drugs can be treated and handled.

*How do we cope with drug related problems?*

The group takes part in a role-play exercise which gives participants an experience of the feelings and the practical issues involved in dealing with local drug related problems. This is followed by a discussion on how different groups in a community can work together. The session ends with a look at of local and national resources.

*Can we find local answers to drug questions?*

The course ends with a discussion on future plans and looks briefly at ways in which the community can continue to work together.





### **10.3 CAD Group Inishowen.**

The North West Community Awareness on Drugs (NWCAD) is a cross border group located in Donegal and in Derry with the aim of creating and maintaining an awareness of the dangers and impact of the misuse of drugs, alcohol and solvents through an education process. The primary target groups are:

- young people who have not yet used these substances;
- people who are users;
- parents.

In 1998 the group organised a poster competition for young people up to the age of 18. Over 400 entries were received from all over the Inishowen and from Derry. The winners in the two age groups (up to 12 years and 12 to 18 years) each received a new personal computer.

The group also participated in a community information night in Moville where they met with local people and other community groups. All members of the group took part in a DQLA programme during the year.

## **11 Employee assistance programme**

The National Health Strategy "*Shaping A Healthier Future*" sets as one of its targets the promotion of moderation in the consumption of alcohol and to reduce the risks to physical, mental and family health that can arise from alcohol and substance misuse.

In 1997 the North West Health Board adopted an Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy for all board employees. This policy not only provides information on support services available through the Health Board to employees for alcohol and substance misuse but also acts as a guide for employees on how the Policy works.

The Alcohol/Substance Misuse Policy explains the Health Board's commitment to reduce alcohol related problems in their workplace. It promotes good practice and the awareness of

safe and moderate drinking, and it provides support and information to those employees who misuse alcohol and may need skilled help in dealing with this problem. It offers training and education to key members of staff with responsibility for identifying or advising employees who may have alcohol/substance misuse work related problems. It encourages employees to seek early assistance for alcohol/substance misuse work related problems. This in turn helps the Board retain valued employees.

#### **11.1.1 Evaluation of the programme.**

The employee assistance programme was initially piloted by the North West Health Board in Fruit of The Loom. Evaluation there showed a positive response. Some structured interviews have taken place with Board Managers prior to their training. As part of the future evaluation process, questionnaires were completed by a number of trainees. A more in-depth evaluation of the programme is planned for 1999, one year after implementation of the Policy.

#### **11.1.2 Future developments.**

Donegal County Council have expressed an interest in developing an Employee Alcohol / Substance Misuse Policy. Training with their Managers and Supervisors commences in January 1999. Work is ongoing to expand the Policy into other employers in the North Western Health Board area.

## **12 Treatment.**

### **12.1 Community counselling service.**

The substance misuse counselling service provides information, counselling and advice around problems arising because of alcohol, drugs, smoking and gambling. Through its open referral system it facilitates early intervention and offers a wide range of treatment options. The service is involved in promoting public awareness through educational programmes and in particular plays an important role in promoting sensible drinking.

#### **The substance misuse counselling services in the North West.**

<b>Area of Service</b>	<b>Location of Service</b>	<b>Day of Service</b>	<b>Times available</b>	<b>Contact No</b>
North West Donegal	Falcarragh Nursing Unit.	Friday	9.30am-5pm	074-35104
<i>Main Base</i>	Falcarragh Nursing Unit.	Monday	2-5pm	074-35104
<i>Dungloe</i>	Dungloe Mental Health Centre.	Tues & Thurs	9am-5pm	075-21044
	Glenties Health Centre.	Wed	9.30am-1pm	075-51329
	Ardara Health Centre.	Wed	1 pm-5pm	
<b>North East Donegal</b>	Nursing Unit, Buncrana.	Monday	Afternoon	077-61500

<i>Main Base</i>	Moville Health Centre.	Monday	Alternate Monday's	077-84029
<i>Buncrana</i>	Nursing Unit, Buncrana.	Tuesday	Morning	077-61500
	Cardonagh District Hospital.	Tuesday	Afternoon	077-74164
	Nursing Unit, Buncrana.	Wednesday	All Day	077-61500
	Nursing Unit, Buncrana.	Thursday	Mornings	077-61500
	Lifford Health Centre.	Friday	All day	074-41024
<b>South West Donegal</b>	East End Hse, Donegal Town.	Tues & Wed	9am-5pm	073-21933
<i>Main Base</i>	10, Donegal St, Ballybofey.	Monday	9am-5pm	074-32042
<i>Donegal Town</i>	10, Donegal, St Ballybofey.	Thursday	9am-1pm	074-32042
	General Hospital, Letterkenny.	Thursday	2.30pm-5pm	074-23567
	Health Center, Killybegs.	Friday	11am-4pm	073-31419
<b>Letterkenny</b>	Addiction & Counselling Services, St Eunan's Court, Letterkenny.	Mon-Fri	9.00am-5pm	074-28769
<b>Sligo Town</b>	12, Johnston Court, Sligo.	Mon-Fri	Phone for appointment	071-43316
<b>Sligo/Leitrim and</b>	12, Johnston Court, Sligo.	Monday	9am-1pm	071-43316
	Manorhamilton Hospital	Monday	2pm-5pm	072-56181
<i>Main Base : Manorhamilton</i>	Summer Hill Lodge, Carrick-on-Shannon.	Tuesday	9am-5pm	078-21215
	Dr Burke's Surgery, Ballinamore.	Wednesday	9am-5pm	
	Manorhamilton Hospital.	Thursday	9am-5pm	072-56181
	Sheil Hospital, Ballyshannon.	Friday	9am-5pm	072-51300
<b>West Sligo</b>	Day Centre, The Rock, Ballymote.	Mon-Tues	9am-5pm	071-83002
<i>Main Base:</i>	Day Centre, The Rock, Ballymote.	Wed	9am-5pm	071-83002
<i>Ballymote</i>	Easkey Health Centre.	Thursday	9am-5pm	096-49186
	Day Centre, The Rock, Ballymote.	Friday	9am-1pm	071-83002
	Tubbercurry Health Centre, Room	Friday	2pm-5pm	071-85967

The approach to providing help for those who develop problems because of substance misuse through treatment is a community one in the North West region. It is evident that nobody is immune from the consequences of drug use. The services aim to provide an open and user friendly service to give appropriate support as early as possible.

### **12.2 Methadone Protocol.**

In anticipation of amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act governing the supervision of prescription and supply of Methadone, a working group met over the summer to consider how we could best respond to demands as they arose. Consequently we identified key personnel within the Health Board who would require various levels of training.

A series of awareness sessions for dissemination of information about the guidelines and related issues were run for General Practitioners. Pharmacists. Nurses, the Gardai. Community Welfare Officers and Administration staff. The aim of these sessions was to inform staff on:

- The background to the recent amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- The Protocol itself.
- The implications for the North Western Health Board.



- The Support Services available to this client group.

More intensive training was delivered to those professionals already providing a service to clients with an opiate dependency. The Addiction Studies Department in Trinity College, Dublin, facilitated a training day for the Addiction Counsellors in October. In January the I.C.G.P. conducted a Level 1 training day for GPs, Pharmacists, Social Workers and other professionals in Sligo. This training aims to equip GPs with the skills to assess and treat a client who has been previously stabilised on a Methadone Maintenance Programme.

## **13 Research**

### ***13.1 Young People, Alcohol and Drugs, CAWT project.***

The 'Young People, Alcohol and Drugs' is a one year, North Western Health Board/Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) project which commenced in January 1998. The aim of the project is to look at how services can best work with 12 & 13 year olds to promote the non-use of alcohol and drugs.

A central part of this project is to engage in consultation with a range of people to explore their needs, ideas and views on what are effective interventions. The groups consulted were 12 & 13 year olds, early school leavers, parents, voluntary groups, and service providers.

The project is set in four sites and used a model of consultation called 'planning for real'. Within each site a design team steered the project. The team included the key people involved in responding to drug and alcohol issues within the school and the community.

#### **13.1.1 The main outcomes from the consultation process were:**

*11 & 12 year olds* have sophisticated levels of information about drugs but only a small number. 11% identified alcohol as a drug. They want parents, teachers and health professionals to deliver information about drugs and alcohol to them.

*Seventeen year olds* identified alcohol as main drug of abuse and suggested drugs are available and easy to get. They also said that parental monitoring is of major influence on their decision to use or not use drugs

*Service providers* identified alcohol as main drug of misuse but are also concerned about physical availability of drugs. They see parental involvement as being central in prevention and recognised the need to engage marginalised parents.

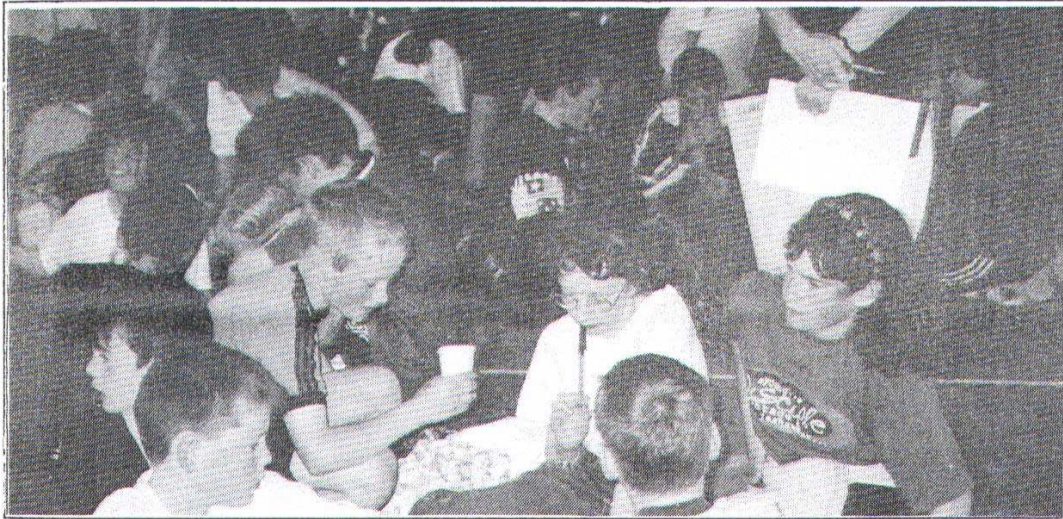
*Parents* showed a level of ambivalence towards alcohol and they expressed a lack of knowledge around other drugs. There was a “fear element” about illicit drugs, which was significant. They did not fully appreciate their own role in influencing the behaviour of their children around drugs and alcohol.

New Lifeskills materials for 1st year pupils, ‘What’s the buzz’ have been developed and a visitor approach is being piloted in some schools. There has been cross agency training people involved in delivering education. The peer parents involved in Fás le Chéile have received special training around drugs and alcohol to be used on their parenting programmes.

### ***13.2 Smoke Free Leitrim.***

Smoke Free Leitrim is a five-year smoking prevention and education undertaken by the North Western Health Board Health Promotion Service and the primary schools in Co Leitrim. The aim is to prevent or delay smoking among a target group of 400 young people in Leitrim and to promote health active lifestyles among this group.

The project was launched in September 1996. Pupils who were in fourth class at that time form the project group and they will be followed for five years. At present the group are preparing for the transition to post-primary school. ‘Health Kicks’ an award for Action on Health in Schools’ has been developed by a working group within the project. This was launched in November 1998 and over three years will deal with smoking, alcohol and drugs and the environment. Schools who meet the targets set will receive a reward at the end of each year.



### **13.3 Youth Research in Sligo.**

The Sligo Local voluntary Youth Council commissioned a report, with the financial support of the Sligo Leader Partnership 'A Profile and Evaluation of Voluntary Youth Services in Sligo 1998 —Towards the development of a Sligo Youth Strategy'.

This gives a profile of the current services, outlines plans for future development and identifies gaps in service provision. The report makes recommendations to tackle the needs identified. A recurring theme in the report is the need for coordinated and interagency co-operation. This is a theme supported fully by the North West Interagency Drug Group, who also support the aim of developing a youth strategy.

### **13.4 G. P. Action on Alcohol: Research project**

The aim of this project is to develop, implement and evaluate Brief Interventions for Alcohol problems to be used by General Practitioners. In light of the current treatment and referral situation the objectives are; to explore possible models of intervention; to develop a model of brief interventions for use in the North Western Health Board; and to assess the effectiveness of the model. The participating GPs have received 3 training sessions covering:

- Identification of level/stage of alcohol problem
- Assessment of problem
- Brief Interventions
- Referral procedures

A G.P. pack has been developed and is now at the implementation stage. It is hoped to begin evaluation shortly.

### **13.5 Gardai research: Links between alcohol/drugs and crime.**

The Gardai Research Unit is currently completing a report on links between alcohol/drugs and crime based on crime incidents reported to the Gardai in selected Garda Districts over a three-month period in 1998. The results will be available in 1999.

**Information Form.**

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

**CONTACT PHONE NUMBER:**

**Brief summary of your interest in issues around drugs and alcohol, if relevant.**

<b>Areas you would like more information on:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Primary school parenting programme:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Drug Questions. Local Answers community programme:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Treatment:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Drugs information leaflets:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>(please state which ones you are interested in)</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Other, please specify:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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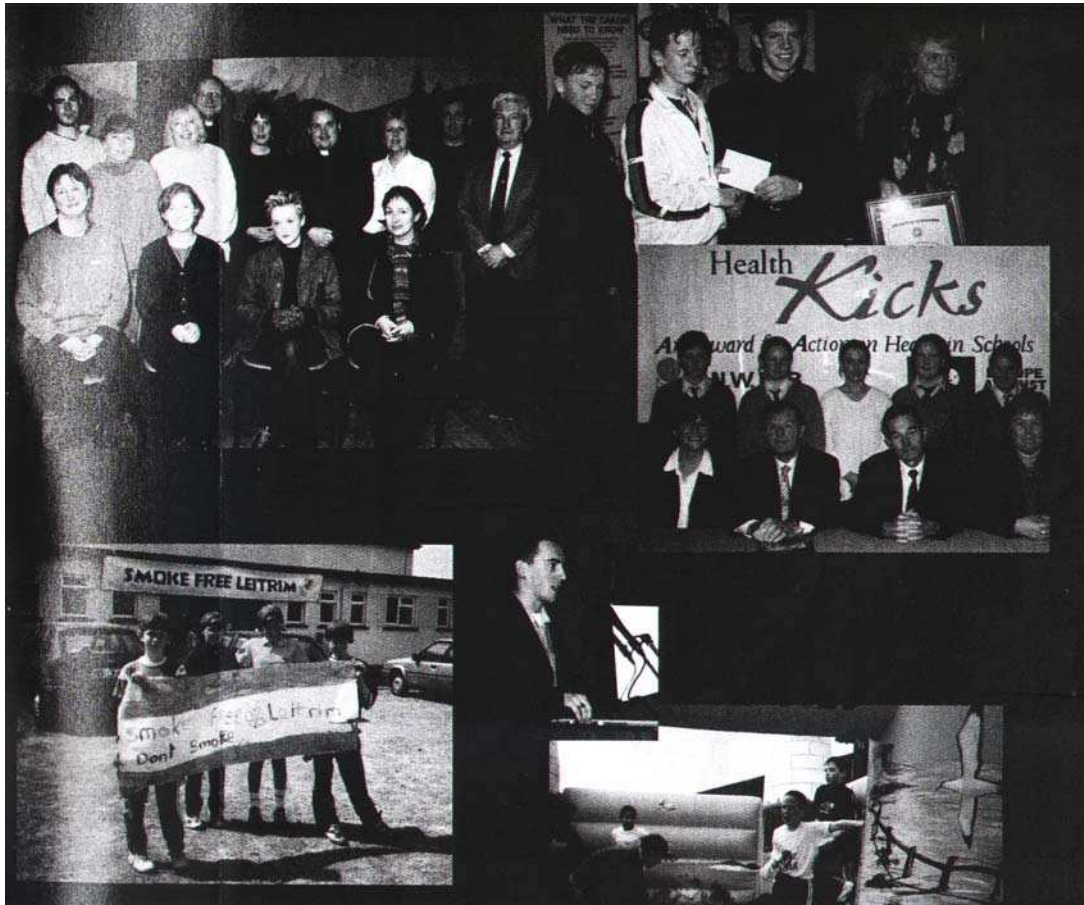
**I would like to be placed on a mailing list for further information:**

**on drugs and alcohol** ☐

**on general health promotion** ☐

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete and return to the Health Promotion Service. Main St.  
Ballyshannon, Co Donegal. Phone (072) 52000, Fax (072) 51287.**



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**Areas you would like more information on:**

☐

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☐

**Drug Questions. Local Answers community programme:**

☐

**Treatment:**

☐

**Drugs information leaflets:**

☐

**(please state which ones you are interested in)**

**Other, please specify:**

☐

**I would like to be placed on a mailing list for further information:**

**on drugs and alcohol**

☐

**on general health promotion**

☐

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_**

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