



*North Inner City Drugs &
Alcohol Task Force
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NICDATF MINUTES 10.30AM 16TH FEB 2021, ZOOM.

2020 DATES AND VENUES

10.30am	Tuesday 16 th March 2021	Zoom
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Attendance: Joe Barry NICDATF Chairperson, Maria Otero Vázquez - Service Users Rep, Anita Whyte – HSE, Jan Alvey - Probation Services, Brian Mongey - DCC, Inspector Thomas Gormley - An Garda Síochána, Marie O'Reilly – DEASP, Belinda Nugent, Aisling Bruen – Community Reps, Cllr Anthony Flynn – Public Elected Rep.

Mel MacGiobúin - NICDATF Co-ordinator, Miriam Coffey - Project Resource Officer, Denise Carroll - Administrator.

Apologies: Bridie Flood, Karl Ducque - Community Reps. Máirín Kenny – CDET, Gary Broderick - Voluntary Services

Minutes and Matters Arising:

NICDATF Chairperson met with DPSIU Executive Officer, Dept. of Health. Four issues were discussed.

1. Replacement Chair
2. DCC representation
3. Premises
4. Restructuring of posts within NICDATF.

Chair noted attendance of Cllr. Anthony Flynn and the reference in minutes to lack of attendance and subsequent decision to write regarding his continuing membership on NICDATF. Cllr. Flynn indicated that he hadn't received any correspondence from the Chair. He has been receiving emails from the admin email address. He suggested that there has been a clash with Central Area Committee which generally takes place on 2nd Tuesday of each month and noted that this was previously raised by Cllr Janice Boylan. He noted that his correct address is anthony.flynn@dcc.ie.

The project resource officer stated that NICDATF meeting dates had been moved where possible to the 3rd Tuesday of the month for several years now, to facilitate attendance of public reps.

Community rep asked about current community representation from NWICN as there are currently none. There was concern that members of community may need to vote for the NICDATF chair.

NICDATF will confirm membership of all community reps.

CDYSB funded projects review: In the context of reviews over last number of years, NICDATF will begin by meeting the projects individually and conduct a review process as have been done in other NICDATF Projects. NICDATF will look at the particular role in current circumstances with a need for updated focus in relation to children and family.

Alcohol CHO9 – Work on-going to develop clear pathways and have a structure in place for referral and treatment of individuals whose primary issue is alcohol in the whole north city of Dublin area. It is hoped this will be rolled out in the third quarter of 2021.

Covid 19 – Vaccine available but will take time to roll out so public health advice still relevant. Gatherings are a big issue, with approx. 75% of cases now thought to be the ‘UK’ variant. Numbers are reduced at less than 1000 per day but Level 5 lockdown will continue in the short term. The Co-ordinator reported that there have been local outbreaks and clusters in over-crowded conditions in local authority housing and private rental housing with increased numbers reported which goes against the national trend. He stressed the importance of getting the message out of practicing social distance measures, avoiding group gatherings and of quarantining and isolation where necessary.

HSE Rep moving post, today will be her last meeting. The Chair thanked her for her all her hard work and participation as an NICDATF member.

The Chair met with DPSIU Executive Officer, Dept. of Health who stated that he would like to see a better relationship between the NICDATF and NEIC PIB. He met with NEIC Chair and subsequently met Executive Officer again.

1. **Replacement Chair:** Process is NICDATF will choose the new Chair. Current Chair announced he would be stepping down at the end of the first quarter of 2021. He wrote to all members seeking suggestions and agreed to communicate with those suggested. One person (named at the meeting) who was suggested came back to say they would be interested. A discussion took place in relation to the next steps and it was agreed that the chair would meet with the named person in relation to the role of the chair as outlined in the Task Force handbook. The Chair undertook to do this and revert to the March meeting with a recommendation. The chair had also been asked by the Drug Policy & Social Inclusion Unit of the Department of Health to link with the NEIC PIB board in relation to finding a new Chair. The PIB commenced that process on February 5th
2. **Action:** The Chair will meet the interested party for a discussion and explain what the role entails and will revert with a recommendation to the March meeting .
3. **Better collaboration between the NEIC PIB and NICDATF; strengthening staffing levels.** Currently there are 2.6. Roles (Co-ordinator F/T, Project Resource Officer 0.8, and Administrator 0.8) – Additional roles mentioned were Liaison Co-ordinator role between NEIC PIB/NICDATF , Community Participation worker, P&E officer and a Family Support worker. In relation to the Community Participation role, NICDATF no longer has funding and the Chair said to DPSIU, Executive Officer that the State should fund Community Participation and did so until last year.
Action: NICDATF has asked DPSIU, Executive Officer to clarify in writing exactly what is being offered as we have had no documentation on these points as yet. NICDATF are awaiting written clarification.
4. **Premises:** HSE and DCC may have a role in getting a suitable premises
5. **Links with DCC** – both at Public Rep level and with DRHE to have some input on what is happening in Homeless Services. DPSIU, Executive Officer will take this up with DRHE. Previously, councillor representation has been stronger with 3 members of the local authority and 3 members of Dáil Éireann which makes NICDATF stronger. Members of Oireachtas have been written to.
Action: Anthony Flynn will bring this back to Central Area and ask for nominations. DPSIU, Executive Officer will also take this up and address the issue of official representation.

Historically, there was a stronger state interest in the Local Drugs Task Forces, with much more support but the structure has been weakened. The drug issue needs a lot more

attention, and there is now a stronger need for collaboration by politicians, community reps and state agencies.

Drug use surveys – on-going, Chair noted these surveys are very useful to capture the huge amount of work being carried out across the NICDATF area and gather local information not otherwise available.

Covid-19: Covid-19 positive figures from HPSC taken on 14th Feb – 14 day incidence figures. National figure is 272.14, Dublin North City figure is 644.3 which is more than twice the national figure which is concerning. A concerted effort across the board to tackle this was called for

Action: Co-ordinator will provide relevant local figures to track the current trends.

Vaccination: HSE projects have been contacted to provide relevant staff information, prioritising those with more direct contact in either clinical or community settings to be included in the rollout of the vaccine to healthcare workers. The indications are that this will happen over the next 2-3 months. This was further raised at HSE project meetings regarding 2021 GAA / SLA meetings, with some questions relating to volunteers engaged in work, indicated that they should be included on the list.

UISCE rep enquired whether there is a specific initiative in place for vaccination of service users, those in homeless services and other vulnerable groups?

Action: The Chair will follow up with Brian Kirwan HSE.

NICDATF has raised the issue of vaccination for service users and for drug users at a national level, and will do so again next week. This has been noted by HSE and they are committed to accelerating vaccination within the risk groups.

Community Rep asked for advice re: Covid-19 vaccination for Hep C clients. Chair recommended that those with specific health concerns about vaccine ring their GP or contact Primary Health Care centre in Summerhill or Safety Net for individual advice.

Agreement for minutes of January meeting: DCC, Probation Service, Community reps agreed minutes.

Action: Chair will be meeting CDETb rep and will follow up

T&R

Meeting was held on 11th February; Chrysalis presented on Case Management; Dual Diagnosis training is on-going; Connect for Life sub-group is continuing to meet. Common Assessment Tool: Internal HSE Evaluation needs to be seen, considered, discussed before agreement; Recovery survey is underway and a Pilot survey around Mental Health was issued.

SCC

Committee is seeking additional members, particularly an input from community reps. Reviewed Divisional Drug Unit presentation at last meeting.

P&E

A short meeting was held on 18th January. Committee is seeking additional members. Priority is launch of final Report, developing and implementing a work plan, making local

links with City Connect (NEIC initiative – primary schools) and other local groups including YPAR. The importance of a focus on younger age groups and primary schools was raised.

T&R

UISCE –Recommendations to be made later this month, following the evaluation and assessment of the Case Management Tool based on feedback provided by service users.

DCC

Brian will speak to Chair directly to provide update on rep from DCC who will be responsible for providing more coherent information to NICDATF.

Discretionary Fund – councillors bringing applications from local groups etc. prioritised by them. Budget approx. 300,000 and funded initiatives include provision of CCTV, local events, and play facilities. Local groups can apply for this funding.

Draft programme of events being put together: bigger events moved to later in the year, but there are proposals for the summer with DCC concentrating on summer projects and events for young people.

Community Safety Programme (CSP). DCC have been inviting local groups/individuals to participate. Co-ordinator asked about the recruitment process and update re committee to oversee the programme. No update available but Brian will provide information as available. Service will be in office beside The Lab on Foley St. It was noted that NICCC was sent information that the chair has been selected and named, Cormac Ó Donochú. The coordinator and administrator are to be recruited and will be hosted by DCC. There has been no information on how they will select community representation.

Belinda Nugent noted that the Community Safety Programme Chair is contacting and meeting with community /attending local meetings to inform on his role and suggested inviting to him to meet with NICDATF.

DCC rep suggested that there should be on-going contact between NICDATF and the new CSP Chair.

Action: NICDATF will contact him and invite him to attend an NICDATF meeting to familiarise him with our work.

HSE – Anita Whyte

Public Health lead has acknowledged the need for local service users to be prioritised for vaccination. It is high on agenda locally and nationally.

As noted by the Chair this is her last NICDATF meeting. Moving forward, parts of her work have been re-allocated as follows: Noel Murphy looking after Case Management Team and Evaluation, Stabilisation, attending T&R. Dual Diagnosis supports, contact will be Octavia in the Community Assessment Unit and access to the Hub will also be through her.

Representation on NICDATF being worked on by CHO9 Social Inclusion Manager, HSE and should be available in advance of the next NICDATF meeting but if there are any questions contact Anita in the office.

Chair conveyed thanks to Anita Whyte on behalf of all the members of NICDATF for the huge amount of work she has done and noted that she will be missed.

Co-ordinator requested an update re expansion of stabilisation beds. HSE rep responded that work is being done on this at the minute, reviews have been done and a team has been appointed to look at this going forward.

She suggested that Belinda might bring this to NEIC PIB to do something in the short term. Belinda enquired if NEIC plan to review lack of stabilisation beds in March was still going ahead? HSE rep suggested that Belinda continue to bring this up to keep it on the agenda.

Probation Service:

Service continuing as before and appreciation of multi-agency work with local agencies in NEIC expressed. Welcomed the news that the work to appoint a new chair is on-going and concurred that NICDATF is a vital part of community and community functioning and needs to be strengthened by all bodies who participate in it. Good to hear Community Safety Partnership is coming on stream.

DEASP

Social Protection continues to support Community Employment participants by extending or retaining participants during Covid-19. Services providing supports to families, aim to keep people supported, delivering food parcels with direction from their Policy Unit. CE participants providing healthcare/frontline roles are being prioritised for vaccination.

Community Input:

To Garda rep: Amiens St Shop: any update?

HSE rep: Dual Diagnosis programme: any update?

Residents' issues:

Peadar Kearney House: dealing in car park ; Liberty House increase in people going in/out, constant partying & there was a break in over the weekend.; Ballybough House: Extreme levels of violence and intimidation; Sheriff St- Activity has moved from Noctor's pub to Mariners Port: Residents are requesting more resources and increase Garda presence; Gardiner St; Island Quay where there have been several knife incidents and residents are fearful; Cllr Flynn thanked for food hampers for senior citizen.

Pavee Point: high incidences of Covid cases reported in Traveller community: They are focusing on safety awareness & education around vaccines.

Pavee Point raised Dept. Health's review of the 'Standing Implementation Committee'; Review was to be of the Terms of Reference only, but now the whole structure is under review which is concerning for Traveller and other community reps as there already very limited opportunities to directly contribute and influence decision making.

Question for NICDATF: The potential funding for new staff: Will the Community Participation role be going to networks or how will this be put in place? Chair responded that there will have to be an open and transparent discussion and process on how this will be addressed if resources are secured.

Cllr Anthony Flynn: Discretionary fund has been approved by councillors Total of €561,000 applied for with only €331,000 available.

Cllr Flynn will contact Belinda around local residents' issues with Gardaí giving assurances in relation to response commitments in the local community.

It was stated that the NEIC has agreed to fund 'an anti-knife crime' campaign which will be rolled out over next 2-3 weeks.

Action: NICDATF will bring Issues raised by Community reps to the LDATFs' meeting with the Drug Policy Social Inclusion Unit next Monday

Co-ordinators Update

Due to time constraints this will be circulated with the minutes.

Action: Update to be attached to minutes for circulation.

Garda Divisional Drugs Unit

Garda Ciaran Whelan gave a presentation on the operations of the Divisional Drugs Unit and local trends and seizures.