



*North Inner City Drugs &
Alcohol Task Force
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NICDATF MINUTES 10.30AM 27TH APRIL 2021, ZOOM.

2021 DATES AND VENUES

10.30am	Tuesday 18 th May 2021	Zoom
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Attendance: Joe Barry NICDATF Chairperson, María Otero Vázquez - Service Users Rep, Máirín Kenny – CDETB, Jan Alvey - Probation Services, Inspector Thomas Gormley - An Garda Síochána, Marie O’Reilly – DEASP, Brian Mongey – DCC, Gary Broderick = Voluntary Services, Anna Quigley – local resident, Belinda Nugent, Bridie Flood, - Community Reps, Donal Cassidy - HSE
Mel MacGiobúin - NICDATF Co-ordinator, Denise Carroll - Administrator

Apologies: Aisling Bruen – Community Rep, Miriam Coffey - Project Resource Officer

Chairperson’s Address: The Chair indicated his intention to step down in Dec 2020 and the process of selecting a new Chair began in Jan 2021. This process has been well documented and correspondence from the Dept. of Health along with the Directors’ response was circulated to all members. Some of the statutory reps who are members of NICDATF received communications from their management expressing support for the Dept. of Health’s position. The AGM took place this morning and having discussed this with the members it was considered not appropriate to make the appointment of the new Chair at the AGM. The Chair noted that it is not the culture or ethos of NICDATF to have votes but rather that all sectors represented work together. There is an impasse in relation to the appointment of the new Chair as a result of the Department of Health’s position and all relevant correspondence has been sent to the members of NICDATF. This issue needs to be sorted out outside of the process we normally use.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Membership

Donal Cassidy will try to attend as HSE rep until a replacement is appointed for Anita Whyte who has moved to a new position in the HSE National Office.

The chair has been in touch with Grainne Foy and they will be looking for a replacement for Noeleen Jennings following her retirement last year.

Anna Quigley clarified that she is attending in the capacity of a local resident with a long standing commitment to the area. She acknowledged that there is no discussion around the selection of Chair process but as the other person involved she wanted to thank the Chair for the professional and courteous manner he has dealt with and engaged with the process of selecting the new Chair.

Covid-19 Update

Better news locally with covid-19 positive numbers being reported lower than recently with the sense of a more stabilised situation. Regarding vaccinations, a considerable number of NICDATF project staff has had vaccinations which have helped considerably with delivery of services. Updates

have been sought in terms of vaccinations for those who have not received them. There is good news in relation to priority of vaccination for those in homeless accommodation as it has been noted that homeless accommodation and crowded settings generally have experienced a number of outbreaks. Plans are being put in place by NICDATF projects to adapt services in line with new guidelines and relaxing of restrictions. The Chair noted that this year is different in that services are better prepared and more confident than last year in dealing with Covid, along with people being vaccinated which should make it easier to provide services and avoid the difficulties experienced previously.

Prevention & Education: P&E sub group met with John Peelo of TUSLA in relation to possibility of him joining the P&E Sub Committee. He would like to see a synergy with other NIC programmes e.g. City Connects and YPAR. The sub group are also looking for someone from the teaching profession and City Connects to come on board. They decided to employ a writing designer to do a short brochure on the outcome of the NICDATF's drug awareness programme run in local schools. It is hoped that this can be launched via Zoom, with several targeted consultations planned. There was a presentation on the "Iceland model" and they are hoping to bring in someone who has implemented the model in another urban area to inform whether it is something to look at doing locally.

Supply & Control (S&C): Met 26th April. Additional suggestions for actions were agreed. With the agreement of NICDATF, Drug Related Intimidation (DRI) to be included in the Supply Control group. Tom is the designated Inspector in NEIC for DRI and is trying to promote a co-ordinated approach across the area to encourage reporting (leaflet presented to the meeting). People and projects will be able to get in contact with Tom on a confidential basis who along with 3 other sergeants from adjacent districts will deal with DRI issues. He proposes doing a leaflet drop in areas where they believe there is an issue with DRI to give people an avenue to report confidentially. Belinda noted that the community reps need to be involved as residents will talk to the reps and that communication needs to be kept going. The Community Safety Partnership is welcomed but communication needs to be kept open between agencies.

Anna Quigley noted that it might be useful to link in with the DRIVE Initiative, funded through Dept. of Health which is developing an evidence informed Intervention model to support communities to respond to drug-related intimidation and violence. They currently have a consultant, Finbarr Fitzpatrick, talking to stakeholders

SC Chair to contact the NICDATF office to arrange a request for an input from the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Chairperson at an NICDATF meeting as per actions agreed at the April NICDATF meeting.

The issue of Nitrous Oxide locally was raised. The sub-committee is looking at how to address this locally, perhaps through an awareness campaign. Belinda reported that the DWG agree that an awareness programme/campaign to address the use of Nitrous Oxide, Cannabis jellies and different weed is needed. The DWG is looking at this issue and will provide an update at the next NICDATF meeting. Anna Quigley reported that there was a presentation on this at a national meeting. Clondalkin Task Force and D12 Task Force have produced information and the HSE made a presentation on the dangers of Nitrous Oxide. Anna will send on the contacts for this. A discussion around the legal side of this also took place where it was noted that there were difficulties as there is a legal market for this product. It was decided to keep this situation under review. Huge issues were noted across Tallaght, Clondalkin, Dublin 12 and Crumlin. Donal Cassidy noted that that Nitrous Oxide has been raised at a national social inclusion level and at a statutory level. There is information from the HSE and the issue is not unique to NIC. It's important that any information circulated is appropriate based on best evidence in line with the national

guidelines and not locally generated. Donal sits on the NAGG and the Social Inclusion Governance Group and is happy to offer any assistance.

The Co-ordinator noted that NICDATF circulated information including that from the HSE and Clondalkin before Christmas. He suggested organising a Zoom meeting with presentations from the HSE, the National Social Inclusion Office, other Task Forces and community groups who are concerned.

The Chair asked the Garda Rep and the HSE Rep if the national social inclusion office still had the messaging system in place where warnings / alerts were issued as this would be a structured way of getting real time information out. Belinda felt it would be beneficial to have a think tank on how to get the HSE information out to the local hotspots and local youth.

The Co-ordinator noted that the HPRA and HRB may be approached in relation to addressing this issue from a legislative point of view but that this is a lengthy process.

Anna Quigley noted that NICDATF projects, local community networks and youth projects are central and key to getting information out to 'hard-to-reach' groups.

Treatment & Rehabilitation (T&R): There was a presentation of the HSE local evaluation of the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) Pilot which highlighted the benefits and challenges which emerged from the pilot with ideas for changes identified. It is unclear where this process will go next when it goes back to statutory members so it's good to have Donal Cassidy from HSE here in relation to this. The software development continues and it is hoped a short pilot will begin with 6 different sites over the next weeks. There was a lot of supportive talk at the April meeting in relation to fatigue and the practical difficulties with the on-going lockdown and keeping safe as we emerge and gradually reopen with concern about the vaccination process. Discussion about overdose/suicide fatalities is on-going. Discussion about preparation for recovery month and in relation to training including Training on Trauma Informed Practice pilot which will take place in June for 12 to 16 people (members invited to contact Miriam in NICDATF to nominate individuals who might benefit). Update on status of upcoming national review of the Common Assessment Tool and how T&R feedback put together by Mark from HSE and Lynn from UISCE will be used was sought from HSE rep.

DEASP Representative: DEASP continuing to ensure payments are processed quickly and noted that feedback from projects is that structures and supports provided by her Dept. have assisted them in getting through the lockdown. She would like to link in with HSE rep about connecting people from the 10 Bed Steps programme on to CE as it's a structured support in bringing people closer to the workforce.

CDET B Representative: Schools are back. More vulnerable groups and people experiencing homeless are back into class. Co-ordinator noted that a number of projects have expressed concern about proposed changes and costs in relation to retaining their QQI status. CDET B is working with groups across the NIC. There are two types of provision, the first where CDET B fund the teachers directly so there is no problem because it's coming under CDET B Quality Assurance. The issues lie with groups who have their own Quality Assurance. The demands are very high to re-engage and validate programmes. CDET B can now share their curriculum which will help a bit, but there are considerable obstacles to some of the smaller groups but CDET B is working with local groups to see where they can help. They are very keen that people keep their own autonomy. There is a new childcare programme which creates different obstacles which mean it is difficult for childcare groups to meet the requirements. The DEASP rep noted that they run a Level 6 childcare training programme which meets the requirements in terms of placements in different age group settings.

Probation Services Representative: Continuing to work with their clients using a hybrid model of phone and office appointments but welcome the return of in person service provision, especially for

those more vulnerable as on-going remote services are creating fatigue among clients and staff. She supported SC reps' initiative to deliver information around DRI and reiterated that they are very keen to encourage community involvement and secure a community rep to join the sub-committee.

HSE rep: Covid update: Still a very high level of Covid within the north Dublin area with 193 per 100,000 as opposed to 113.9 nationally. There are pop up sites for testing in several communities across CH09 area. There is a cautious opening up and COVID19 and COVID19 testing will remain with us. In relation to Homeless services they are working out a vaccination programme for that group. Community vaccination programme has begun which is focusing on Group 4 and also 60's and 70's. The issues with Astra Zeneca have impacted on the roll out of the staff vaccination programme which needs a re-adjustment. HSE will be opening a vaccination site at Croke Park in the coming days and weeks. From a broader HSE perspective, the Community Response to Alcohol initiative for the CH09 area involving all statutory entities, hospitals and Task Forces as well as all HSE funded projects to look at an integrated response to alcohol is on-going.

HSE is continuing to enhance the Case Management services in the NIC area with significant additional case management in both homeless and addiction services. HSE is looking at pilot to develop the Case Management Tool. The HSE rep has no more information on the national review of Case Management but noted that the feedback provided has been taken on board. HSE have upgraded their clinics in Tolco and the Mews and services have moved back in. A similar enhancement of City Clinic is planned. The SASSY service is moving to Lisburn St Centre which is a new facility and the Community Response to Alcohol will be based in the old North Clarence St Health Centre. He noted the phenomenal amount of inter-agency work around the homeless area involving all entities, the HSE and the DRHE over the past months which has been quite remarkable. Early alerts for drugs are still in place at a statutory level and Donal will bring today's discussions back to them.

Re: Stabilisation beds, concerns that demand is increasing. Stabilisation service established within NEIC has been established with nine people being seen. At a HSE level it is a key priority and they are looking at how they can enhance stabilisation services.

An initial Dual Diagnosis programme has been put in place in a number of areas in North Dublin. There is a lot of work happening at a higher level and is not specific to the NIC.

A number of agencies are being funded to work in Case Management and there are five agencies with SLAs who HSE will engage with.

DCC Input: A number of significant changes within DCC office with a new temporary role of Director of Services to deal with the regeneration and reactivation of post COVID19 Dublin City taken up by Coilin O'Reilly. He will be dealing with issues including outdoor dining, street-scaping with major investment programmes around the Markets in Smithfield and the Parnell Quarter which are hoped to enhance the fabric of the city, create jobs, encourage footfall and have a positive impact on the city. Karl Mitchell is now executive manager for the whole north city. Ursula O'Donnell is now Interim Area Manager.

Community Safety Partnership up and running with Paddy Craig as co-ordinator currently based in the area office but will move to James Joyce Street, his email is communitysafety@dublincity.ie.

The NEIC programme office is announcing the Small Grants Scheme for the NEIC area. Brian will forward links when available. DCC Community Grants Scheme will also open soon. Work will commence locally on 22 playgrounds and 12 multi-use games areas. Sports programmes etc. will be going ahead restrictions allowing with marquees being available to facilitate.

Belinda thanked DCC rep for work being done and flowers provided to flat complexes.

Congratulations to Karl Mitchell and Ursula on their new roles.

DWG asked if there are any plans to look at providing housing with wrap around services for people with Dual Diagnosis as this keeps coming up at meetings? The DCC rep indicated that the Housing

Dept. would be responsible for dealing with such an initiative so recommended she contact the Assistant Chief Executive Brendan Kenny seeking information.

Anna Quigley enquired if the Community Safety Programme office in James Joyce Street would be accessible to the public. The DCC rep indicated that he feels it will be.

The Probation rep requested that the Community Safety programme Co-ordinator be invited to attend an NICDATF meeting. Anna Quigley asked if there was a place on the committee of the Community Safety Programme for NICDATF. The NICDATF Co-ordinator responded that to his knowledge there is a place for the NICDATF, Probation and the HSE. There has been no official correspondence from the Community Safety Programme to date.

Community Input:

Main hotspots for drug activity reported are Rutland St, Ballybough, Hardwicke St, Island Quay, Sherriff St and Gardiner St with an increase of Nitrous Oxide in Ballybough, Sherriff St and Liberty House.

General updates: DWG discussing trends including Nitrous Oxide, Cannabis Jellies and different kinds of weed. They take on board what the HSE rep said in terms of information and will link in with him if they need further information. In relation to DRI, they hope that the Community Safety Programme will be effective and build and develop a relationship with the community and hope that it will be effective.

The NEIC has been doing Fitness for Life activities which has been a very positive mental health and well-being support.

Healthy Communities community health workers programme starting tomorrow.

Anna Quigley noted that SWAN Youth Service's outreach team are working with young people in the hotspots mentioned by the DWG and are launching their Strategic Plan on Friday at 10am.

Garda inspector rep noted his thanks and compliments to the community reps on real time critical information sharing which benefited the community and reinforces the ethos of NICDATF of sharing information to benefit all stakeholders.

UISCE

Still carrying out naloxone training for people at risk of overdose and they are working with volunteers to do outreach as weather improves. Brass Munkie magazine is being finalised but still time for inputs if anyone has any. Copies of the magazine will go to libraries countrywide which will provide access to information. They are strengthening links with organisations working with people in prison/leaving prison around overdose prevention etc. and will contact the Probation rep in relation to this.

Co-ordinators Update

The Co-ordinator presented the Co-ordinator Update. He noted reduction in the number of COVID19 cases in the area with measures being taken by projects having a positive effect. As a result greater easing of restrictions is coming and can be maintained if people remain vigilant and follow guidelines which will enable the provision of improved services to service users. He noted that there is a lot of vulnerability within the community in terms of mental health due to isolation/restrictions with an increase in recent months of deaths of people with known issues around drugs. NICDATF continues to monitor through Connecting for Life to see that appropriate services are rolled out to assist.

Pay restoration process concerns. GAA projects not to receive restoration despite being subjected to the same national instruction measures of pay reduction as SLA's and being aligned with HSE scales consistently as was the instruction from national level. There are a considerable number of

projects affected by this. Questions have been raised in the Dáil and further clarification may be needed to see if this can be redressed through engagement with the relevant structures.

In relation to QQI changes, it's good to hear that work is on-going to support this, but there is considerable worry about how changes will affect the long term sustainability of childcare projects and the knock on effect for some day programmes which rely on community childcare.

An initial conversation was held with the consultant rolling out the research stage of the DRIVE initiative who indicated there will be initial feedback and a plan to further engage with various target groups.

Mental Health training survey issued to projects to assess training and need for further training. Recovery Activity survey on-going. Dual Diagnosis Programme continuing.

Community Premises is an issue for a lot of projects, additional support in relation to what might be available will be sought.

Alcohol Reduction Response: Team covering north Dublin is being recruited. Assessment of harder to reach residents is to be carried out. Minimum unit pricing on alcohol sales is making progress. Assessing the impact that this will have locally will be necessary.

Addiction sub group 5. Case workers noted that the space they are operating in is limited and not accessible for some clients making it difficult to engage.

Premises are an issue for NICDATF office. There is water damage in current premises due to damp and leaks. DCC rep indicated that Edel Whelan DCC would be the relevant person to contact for repairs/premises Ph. 2224727 / email: edelwhelan@dublincity.ie

Members invited to sign up to NICDATF CLG.

AOB

The link for the launch of SWAN Strategic Plan on Friday will be circulated by the NICDATF office.

Crinan are involved with SWAN around outreach and are finding this collaboration very beneficial.

National Family Support Network ceased business as of yesterday 26th April 2021

Next Meeting

The next NICDATF meeting will take place on **Tuesday 18th May at 10.30am.**