

TALLAGHT DRUGS TASK FORCE

ANNUAL REPORT

(A) INTRODUCTION:

The Tallaght Drugs Task Force has seen a year of great change. We have said goodbye to several longstanding members, and we have welcomed in individuals with exciting ideas and views to move the work of the Task Force into 2004.

The continuing commitment of Task Force members has meant that throughout 2003 projects that are up and running have consolidated knowledge, expertise and resources whilst areas such as education/prevention and treatment have developed several new initiatives.

These developments are briefly outlined below using the format of the “four pillars” from the N.D.S.T.

(B) EDUCATION/PREVENTION:

The education/prevention sub-group of the Task Force continues to meet on a monthly basis and over the last year has concentrated mostly on the formal education system. Members of this group have been working closely with schools to develop substance misuse policies.

Through this sub-group the Task Force has run an art competition within the schools, in conjunction with the S.P.H.E. programme. There will be an awards ceremony for the prize winners of each age group in February 2004.

The development fund has given educational grants to numerous people/groups living and or working within the Tallaght area who are contributing in some way to overcome the drugs issue within this community.

The development fund also made contributions to the Tallaght Youth band; who are due to take part with the Crumlin Community band in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York and the Fettercairn Junior Folk Group who produced a C.D. of songs.

The Community Drug workers course saw its first group of students graduate with diplomas from U.C.D. in November and will be recruiting for the next intake in February 2004.

The Tallaght Drugs Education Initiative was successful in recruiting an education officer in June. This post has a Tallaght wide remit and has a brief to work with young people and their families who are not necessarily catered for within the formal education sector.

SUPPLY REDUCTION:

Whilst Tallaght has had no specific developments in this area over the last year the subgroup of the Task Force continues to meet monthly.

These meetings are well attended by stakeholders from Statutory and Non-Statutory Sectors who work in a collaborative way by exchanging information to reduce the supply of drugs and criminal activity within the community.

TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION:

2003 saw the development and implementation of 2 stabilization programmes in Tallaght; one based in St. Dominic's Contact Centre and the other in St. Aengus. The aim of these 2 programmes is to enable clients, who wish to attend and participate in other treatment options or training/employment to do so, once their drug use is less problematic.

A Health Promotion Work Group set up by the Task Force to look at the issue of Needle Exchange in the Tallaght area continued to meet and discuss ways of developing a service. As a result of this groups work, and the foresight of the management committees of two treatment centres in Tallaght- St. Aengus and Jadd; pilot services commenced.

These Needle Exchange Services have been evaluated by S.W.A.H.B. outreach workers and the findings will be released in February 2004.

RESEARCH:

A piece of research commissioned by the Task Force in 2002 was completed this year by the Trinity College, Addiction Research Centre.

Following anecdotal evidence that there were high rates of return to economic activity or training of clients attending community treatment programmes the aim of the study was to establish accurate numbers.

(C) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION:

The Tallaght Drugs Task Force has a communications and publicity section in its current plan. Quarterly reports are sent to the Tallaght Echo newspaper to inform the local community of developments and up-coming initiatives as well as the community representatives on the Task Force feeding back to local community network groups.

The Task Force has representatives on many working groups and local structures that shape services and policy, which include RAPID, Social Inclusion Measures Group of the County Development Board, School Completion Programme and a myriad of groups convened by Tallaght Partnership i.e. Early School Leavers Strategy Group and a C.E. review group. Whilst this list is not exhaustive it gives a flavour of the work Tallaght Drugs Task Force is involved in.

(D) CONTACT INFORMATION:

Addiction Services, Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.
Telephone: (01) 620 6400 ext. 6414. Fax: (01) 620 6401.
Mobile no: 087/6624729
E-mail: lisa.baggott@swahb.ie