

Introduction

This Annual Report highlights the work carried out by and through the Clondalkin Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (CDATF) in 2022. Established in 1997, CDATF is one of 14 local Drugs Task Forces which are local area responses to the causes and consequences of drugs use in the areas most badly affected by these issues.

The Task Force model was founded as a partnership response to the complex issues presented by drugs. The establishment of CDATF reflected the belief that problematic substance use and its associated problems are generated and intensify largely due to socioeconomic issues. Through the work of the CDATF the aim is to tackle these issues using a joined-up approach. This joined up approach is coordinated by the CDATF in collaboration with other projects funded to provide services and is crystalised in our strategic plan and three strategic goals. These strategic goals are progressed through the efforts of the CDATF, funded projects and other key stakeholders in the area.

After the global shock experienced through the Covid pandemic CDATF and funded projects enjoyed a return to more conventional ways of working in 2022. Whilst many lessons were hopefully learned from the pandemic it is also clear that the experience has led to an uptick in people seeking help and people experiencing increased levels of anxiety and substance use. Many services are beginning to operate waiting lists for some services due to these increases. This increase in demand has not been helped by a very challenging labour market situation. Many services in Clondalkin and beyond are reporting major difficulties in recruiting staff. In terms of substance use trends, the view from projects, treatment figures and most relevant research is that cocaine and crack cocaine use has risen dramatically.

In 2022 the CDATF set out some new work priorities and areas of work. Firstly, it was decided to put a major focus on recovery. Many initiatives were developed including recovery cafes, a recovery choir and an interagency effort made around September for recovery month. This reflects the changing nature of substance use and need to provide improved aftercare supports for all of those in the recovery community. Service User Involvement was a major area of work also in 2022. To this end the CDATF has worked with a volunteer service user to develop a service user strategy. The community itself are the most important stakeholders in our work and the CDATF Community Reps Forum went from strength to strength in 2022. All of this was in addition to the annual addiction studies Level 7 programme that ran throughout the year, various training events

The staff team of CDATF changed significantly in 2022. James Norman joined the team as the Coordinator of the YDAP project. This project seeks to provide a functional Tier 2 service in the area for under 18s experiencing issues with substances. Additionally, Nicholas Diez McKenna joined the team on a part time basis as a Service User Representative. We wish them both well in their roles. Tiernan Heaney and Grainne Finnegan departed from the board in 2022 and I would like to thank both for their service.