

Submission HLT 01380-21: Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery - A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 - 2025 Revised Structures Supporting Implementation of the Strategic Priorities 2021-2025

TO:	MOS Feighan	AUTHOR:	Dairearca NíNéill
STATUS:	Completed	OWNER:	Dairearca NíNéill
PURPOSE:	For Decision	REVIEWERS:	Jim Walsh
DIVISION:	Mental Health, Drugs Policy, Social Inclusion, Food & Environmental Health and Corporate Legislation.		
DECISION BY:			

Final comment

Approved by Minister Feighan.

Action required

To approve revised structures to support the implementation of the RHSR strategic priorities 2021-2025, which will be presented to the NOC meeting on Friday

Executive summary

Arising from the mid term review of *Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery*, six strategic priorities are identified to strengthen the implementation of the national drugs strategy for the period 2021-2025. The strategic priorities are designed to reinforce the health-led approach to drug and alcohol use, as outlined in the Programme for Government.

New structures are proposed to support the implementation of the strategy for the period to 2025. These involve

- establishing 6 strategic implementation groups to drive the implementation of the strategic priorities
- appointing an independent chair to each group who will report on progress to the NOC
- rationalising the membership of the NOC, to allow for more engagement of members in the direction and implementation of the strategy
- creating a civil society group, to broaden involvement of community and voluntary groups in the NOC and the SIGs

Detailed information

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery -

A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 - 2025

Revised Structures Supporting Implementation of the Strategic Priorities 2021-2025

Arising from the review, six strategic priorities are identified to strengthen the implementation of the national drugs strategy for the period 2021-2025. The strategic priorities reflect the lessons and the stakeholder feedback from the mid-term review and capture the commitments in the Programme for Government. The strategic priorities are designed to reinforce the health-led approach to drug and alcohol use. In particular, they are consistent with the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023 and the Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025. The priorities also align with relevant priorities in the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan and UN policies on drugs, children and sustainable development.

Strategic Priorities

Arising from the mid-term review, six strategic priorities are agreed to strengthen the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy for the period 2021-2025. The strategic priorities are designed to reinforce the health-led approach to drug and alcohol use, as outlined in the Programme for Government.

The six strategic priorities are:

1. 1. Strengthen the prevention of drug and alcohol use and the associated harms among children and young people;
2. 2. Enhance access to and delivery of drug and alcohol services in the community;
3. 3. Develop integrated care pathways for high-risk drug users to achieve better health outcomes;
4. 4. Address the social determinants and consequences of drug use in disadvantaged communities;
5. 5. Promote alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug-related offences;
6. 6. Strengthen evidence-informed and outcomes-focused practice, services, policies and strategy implementation.

Strategic implementation groups will support the delivery of the strategic priorities and to reinforce cross-agency collaboration, a key value of the strategy. It is intended that specific actions will be associated with each of the priorities, including actions that are still relevant from the strategic action plan 2017-2020, and new actions required to deliver the priorities.

Strategic Implementation Groups

The Standing Sub-Committee is standing down in favour of Strategic Implementation Groups (SIGs). The SIGs will replace and refocus the remit of the Standing Sub-Committee, while building on its original terms of reference,

The proposed terms of reference for the **Strategic Implementation Groups** are:

- (a) to drive implementation of Strategic Priority (x) of Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery;
- (b) to develop an action plan to address the strategic priority;
- (c) to strengthen the links between the work of the DATFs and the strategic priority;
- (d) To improve performance, promote good practice and build capacity to respond to the strategic priority in line with the evidence-base; and
- (e) To ensure good governance, cooperation and accountability by all partners involved in the implementation of the strategic priority; and
- (f) To report to the National Oversight Committee on progress in the implementation of its action plan and to highlight any obstacles or issues arising .

Each SIG will have an independent chair, who will become a member of the NOC. The membership of the SIGs will reflect the partnership model underlying the NDS, with members drawn from statutory sector, task forces, civil society and experts. Each group will have between 10 and 12 members. The period of office for the SIGs will be 2021-2025. Appendix A outlines the proposed membership of the SIGs.

The SIGs will each meet between 4 and 6 times a year. To avoid duplication, members of SIGs will not be members of the NOC, with the exception of the chairpersons of the SIG.

ToR for the EWET are outlined in RHRSR, and can be considered by the subgroup. Terms of Reference will be developed for the Research Sub-Committee and could include "ensure the implementation of a prioritised programme of research to address gaps in knowledge".

The HRB and Controlled Drugs reps will be designated the chairs of the Research and EWET subcommittees respectively.

Proposed changes in the membership of the National Oversight Committee

RHRSR outlines that the **National Oversight Committee** will have a cross-sector membership from the statutory, community and voluntary sector, as well as clinical and academic expertise. Representation from the statutory sector will be at the level of Assistant Secretary. It will be a matter for the Minister of State to determine the final membership of the Committee.

The table below details the current membership of the National Oversight Committee, up to mid-term review. It is proposed that the membership of the NOC will change going forward. With the establishment of the SIGs and Subcommittees and their independent chairpersons becoming members of the NOC, it provides an opportunity to rationalise membership from various sectors. Feedback during the mid-term review indicated that the NOC was too big and didn't encourage or facilitate meaningful discussion among all members. The reporting from the SIG to the NOC via the chairpersons will reduce the duplication of membership on the SSC and NOC.

The proposal provides the opportunity to broaden civil society involvement in the strategy. It is intended to establish a Civil Society grouping, which will then nominate members onto the NOC and SIGs. This will provide transparency in representation for all involved at civil society level in the operation of the strategy. A process will be put in place to establish this grouping and for nominating onto the various committees. The Civil Society grouping will be provided with 4 places on the NOC, one of which should be for service user representation. It will have two nominees on each SIG.

The proposed configuration will make the NOC more manageable in number and will provide for meaningful discussion. It is intended that additional people can be invited to attend the NOC meetings with the agreement of the Minister and where it is relevant to the agenda.

The final column outlines the revised members post review and takes account of the chairs of the new Strategic Implementation Groups and the Subcommittees.

Sector	Body	pre review	post review
Statutory	Department of Health – Drugs Policy Unit	1	1
Statutory	Department of Health – Health and Wellbeing Division	1	
Statutory	Department of Health - Medicines Unit (chair of EWET)	1	
Statutory	Dept of An Taoiseach	1	1
Statutory	Health Service Executive	1	2[1]
Statutory	Health Research Board (chair of research ctte)	1	1
Statutory	Department of Justice and Equality	1	1
Statutory	An Garda Síochána	1	
Statutory	Irish Prison Service	1	
Statutory	Probation Service	1	
Statutory	Revenue Customs Service	1	1[2]
	An Garda Síochána		
Statutory	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	1	1
Statutory	TUSLA	1	
Statutory	Department of Education and Skills	1	1
Statutory	Department of Social Protection	1	1
Statutory	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	1	1
Statutory	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	1	0
Community	Citywide Drug Crisis Campaign	2	4
Community	National Family Support Network	1	
Community	Union for Improved Services Communication and Education	1	
Voluntary Sector	Voluntary Drug Treatment Network	2	

Task Force	Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force Chairs Network	1	2
Task Force	Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force Coordinators Network	1	
Task Force	Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force Chairs Network	1	
Task Force	Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force Coordinators Network	1	
Ministerial Appointees		4	3
Chairpersons of 6 SIG	chair person for each of the 6 SIG		6
Subcommittee	Chair of EWET (Controlled Drugs unit, DH)		1
Subcommittee	Research Subcommittee (HRB)		1
Total		31	28

Terms of reference

National Oversight Committee

Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery provides the terms of reference for the NOC. Following the mid-term review, the terms of reference for the **NOC** are amended to the following:

- (a) To give leadership, policy direction, prioritisation and mobilisation of resources to support the strategic implementation groups;
- (b) To measure performance in order to strengthen the delivery of drugs initiatives and to improve the impact on the drug problem;
- (c) To monitor the drugs situation and ensure that the lessons drawn from evidence and good practice inform the development of policy and initiatives to address the drug problem oversee
- (d) To ensure good governance and accountability by all partners involved in the Implementation of the National Drugs Strategy; and
- (e) To oversee the Strategic Implementation Groups and to convene Sub-Committees, as required.

The NOC will continue to meet quarterly.

[1] 2 HSE representatives– one from NSIO and one from H&W with remit for Alcohol

[2] 1 place shared between An Garda Síochána and Revenue's Custom Service

Related submissions

HLT 01472-21: Chairs of the Strategic Implementation Groups supporting the implementation of the Strategic Priorities of Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery

User details

INVOLVED: Dairearca NiNéill
Jim Walsh
SUB_DOH MOS Feighan
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READ RECEIPT: Dairearca NiNéill
Jim Walsh
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