**Speaking points for Minister Feighan at the NOC**

* There is a small number of issues on the agenda today. We have also provided written updates. This is to ensure that we maximise the 90 minutes we have for our meeting.
* Firstly we have received apologies from:

Caroline Jordan (Tusla), Ben Ryan (Justice), Eileen Leahy (Justice), John Clancy, Randall Plunkett (DoH)

Minutes and matters arising

* We start with the minutes and matters arising. ( Hamish Sinclair, HRB has proposed amendments which are accepted by secretariat but not circulated)
* There is a list of actions arising from the last meeting which Jim Walsh will quickly go through.

EU drugs strategy

* We will first hear about the new EU drugs strategy. I issued a statement welcoming the agreement of the new strategy – I understand that this has been circulated to members of this committee.
* The drugs phenomenon affects communities across Europe in different ways, from health, family and social relations, to violence and money laundering. These are problems that no Member State can tackle alone. The EU drugs strategy provides the tools to address these problems collectively
* I welcome the enhanced focus on addressing drug-related harms for people who use drugs in the EU strategy, which is reflective of the health-led approach in our national strategy.
* Ireland strongly advocated for the inclusion of harm reduction in the strategy – I want to thank Jim Walsh and Karen O’Connor in the Dept of Health and colleagues in the Dpet of Justice for their work on this matter, and to thank members of the NOC for their contributions in the development of the strategy
* The EU Drugs Strategy and the forthcoming action plan are timely as they will inform the mid-term review of actions in the national drugs strategy. I want to ensure that there is a synergy between the EU and national strategies and to avail of the opportunities provided in the EU strategy to share learning and good practice between Member States

Mid-term review

* The review of our own strategy is an opportunity to reflect the priorities for a health-led approach to drug use set out in the Programme for Government.
* I am aware that our own strategy is a living document and provides for flexibility to refocus efforts to address emerging issues, and on build on the progress already achieved.
* I would like to see a focused set of actions for the next four years of the strategy, organised around a number of cross-cutting themes. I also want to see a greater emphasis on delivery and outcomes, not just talking about problems.

Updates

* Finally, we have circulated written updates on two topical issues prior to this meeting. The first is the health diversion programme. The second is on the restoration and continuation of drug and alcohol services at level 5.
* Are there any questions arising from these updates?