Speaking points for Minister Feighan at the NOC – 18th June 2021

* Today’s meeting has a single item agenda, the review of Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery. We will have some brief presentations, followed by an opportunity for discussion. It is hoped that this approach will ensure that we maximise the 90 minutes we have for our meeting.
* Firstly we have received apologies from:

Randal Plunkett, DoH

Eileen Leahy, DoJ

Peter Hogan, formerly of D/Transport

Pat Carey, chair of the DNEDTF

Dalton Tatton and Neville Kenny, D/Education

* I would like to welcome colleagues from IGEES, the Irish Government Economics and Evaluation Service - Lucy Bruton, Terry Hynes and Patrick Moran to the meeting today.
* Before we proceed to the minutes, I am aware that the National Family Support Network has closed with effect from the 26th April this year. I regret the unexpected closure of the organisation, and can report that officials in the Department have met with affiliated organisations recently.

The Department can give an update at the next meeting of the NOC.

Minutes and matters arising

* We will now proceed to the minutes of our last meeting on the 5th March 2021 – can we agree the draft minutes as circulated?
* In relation to matters arising from the last meeting, I propose that we follow-up on these at our next meeting in order to maintain our focus on the review of the strategy.

Review

* Dairearca and Jim will now present on the Review findings and Strategic Priorities for 2021-2025.
* Before I open the floor for discussion, I strongly welcome and endorse the strategic priorities for the next four years of the strategy, set out in the mid-term review. I also want to see a greater emphasis on outcomes, not just talking about problems.
* I note that EU member states recently agreed the EU Drugs action plan. It is important to have alignment between the contents of our national strategy and the EU approach.
* Furthermore, I would reiterate that the issues arising from drug and alcohol use cannot be addressed by any one Department or agency. It is by working together across Government and with partners in civil society that we can better address the issues.
* Finally, I wish to strengthen the health-led approach to drug and alcohol use, in line with the Programme for Government. To this end, it is vital that the strategy is strongly aligned with government policies that focus on health care reform, local and community development, tackling homelessness, and community safety.

Focused Policy Assessment

* I now want to introduce the presentation on the Focused Policy Assessment of Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: An analysis of expenditure and effectiveness in the area of drug and alcohol misuse. This assessment was undertaken by staff in IGEES and they are here today to present on the findings of their analysis.