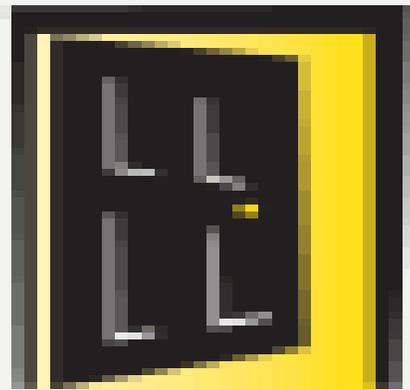


MAIN FINDINGS COUNTRY REPORT AND UPDATE LOCAL ACTION PLANS



Clark Simon
Community

Main Findings Country Report

- The quality of the data has improved significantly since the introduction of new data collection methods nationally from 2013.
- Homeless people are much more likely than the domiciled population to experience substance misuse problems and to have been in prison.
- Studies found high levels of drug use and houselessness in the main cities.
- Research found among homeless population in Dublin, the proportion who had ever used drugs increased from 29% in 1997 to 80% in 2013. The proportion of active drug users increased from 23% in 2005 to 54% in 2013.
- Key source of data on convictions for drug use and for public order offences comes from Irish Courts Service. 13,100 orders in 2016 re drug offences, a 6% increase from 2015.

Main Findings Country Report

- Rising homelessness has been clearly linked to structural and economic factors, rather than individual level factors. These would include shortage of available and affordable accommodation in private rented sector, lack of social housing provision and policy reliance on private landlords to assume social housing role.
- In Ireland the Housing Act 1988 remains the key piece of homelessness legislation. The Act did not clarify the relations between local authorities and other statutory providers, the Health Boards and voluntary providers.
- Strong reliance on NGOs to provide emergency responses. Regional local fora were set up to devise local action plans to progress the national goals. A target to eliminate long-term homelessness by 2010 was not met. 2016 was set as the new target, but this was also not met.
- Key legislation re drugs use are Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and 1984.

Main Findings Country Report

- The key national policy in shaping responses to drugs and alcohol was the National Drugs Strategy 2006 - 2016. It had five key themes - supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research.
- A new strategy entitled “ Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery - a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 - 2025”.
- The emphasis looks at drug and alcohol use as primarily as a health issue, rather than criminal justice issue.
- The key legislation re public nuisances are the Criminal Justice Act 1994 and the Criminal Justice Act 2011.
- An assertive case management pilot project in Dublin tries to provide long-term holistic approaches to reduce marginalisation and public nuisance. The approach is in identifying, approaching, engaging with and assisting those individuals with complex and multiple needs.
- Despite the progress at policy level, Dublin data points to limited impacts.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Lack of data on the homelessness drug use-public nuisance issue.
- Lack of progress on implementing numerous proposals that would have positive outcomes. The prevention and treatment of drug and alcohol addiction in homeless population has not been adequately addressed.
- Lack of evidence of the coercive approach to homeless persons in public spaces. The Criminal Justice Public Order Act 2011 suggests Ireland leans towards the controlled ordered space, the assertive case management project suggests otherwise.
- The overall results are positive because of attempts to address the issue of homelessness, public order, drug use in a constructive and non-punitive way.

Good Practice

- Improved training for staff working in Shelters and Emergency Accommodation.
- Implementation of wide range of harm reduction measures.
- Safe-injecting rooms.
- Specialist mental health and primary care services to supply in-reach services to all emergency accommodation.
- Targeted information campaigns.
- Improved rehabilitative pathways for those on methadone treatment.
- More integrated and interagency working - collaborative partnerships.
- Greater access to and provision of treatment options across Ireland.
- Overall the approach to viewing addiction and public nuisance in its public health and wider social context, rather than in narrow punitive terms, needs to be encouraged and deepened.

Aims and specific objectives of the local intervention

- We propose to develop a “Safer Saturdays” project aimed at homeless drug users in Cork aimed at promoting deeper engagement with services, reducing alcohol and drug related harm and street nuisance.
- This will involve running a Saturday Club from 8.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays offering a range of supports at time when no services are currently available in Cork for homeless drug and alcohol users. The 30 most frequent users of our Day Service are invited to participate. This also is a direct response to the wishes expressed by Cork Simons service users, through our independently facilitated focus groups and surveys, for the establishment of such services at the weekend
- The pilot will operate for two years until end Sept 2019. Report of outcomes will be produced by Nov 2019
- Two staff have been assigned to the project

Specific activities Oct-dec 2017

- Start date for Safer Saturdays Project is October 2017
- First operational Saturday is 7th October
- Cooked breakfast
- Needle exchange service and information on safer drug use
- Training on naloxone administration
- Training in First Aid
- Training in Methadone Induction Programme
- The programme will be updated and developed for each quarter based on the interests of participants and pragmatic considerations

Indicators (measurable)

- Numbers of rough sleepers engaged in Safer Saturdays service
- Numbers availing of Needle exchange service
- Number attending Workshops on safer injecting and safer drug use.
- Number availing of training in administration of naloxone
- Number availing of training in first aid
- Number referred to our activities programme
- Number referred to Cork Simon Education, training and employment programme
- Number accessing meals and shower facilities
- Number availing of training in Methadone Induction programme

Potential bottlenecks + solutions

Bottleneck	Solution
Poor range of Nx equipment in Cork	Liaise /Lobby HSE re “pick and mix” option
Delay in roll out of Naloxone programme	Liaise / lobby HSE
Availability of training providers on Saturdays	Arrange training for other days and refer participants
Staff availability	Draw on relief staffing panel if necessary

Timeline

- Develop detailed project plan - April – September 2017
- Recruitment / assignment of staff – September 2017
- Refinement of programme of activities – July - September 2017
- Commencement of “Safer Saturdays” pilot – October 2017
- Completion of Pilot – September 2019
- Data collection – October 2017- September 2019
- Report on Outcomes – November 2019

Involved partners and stakeholders

Joe Finnerty, School of Applied Social Studies UCC – Assisting with Research aspects

HSE Addiction Services – Offer training in Naloxone administration

Irish Red Cross provide training in First Aid for clients

Cork Simon Training, Education and Employment programme – links with employers and training providers.

Garda Siochana - participating in advisory group for the project.

Cork City Council - participating in advisory group for the project.

University College Cork - participating in advisory group for the project.