



EastCoast
Regional Drugs &
Alcohol Task Force

Annual Report 2023



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Regional Drugs &
Alcohol Task Force



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Overall Drug/Alcohol Usage in the East Coast Region

- Persons seeking treatment and support have increased across the services in this region.
- The HRB record 1001 new contacts receiving treatment in 2023 which does not include any of the 1072 clients from HSE CHE on OST recorded by the Central Treatment List.
- While the majority seeking assistance are Irish born currently, there are growing numbers coming forward from other countries of birth.
- The numbers of females coming forward is increasing year-on-year as a result of the enhanced focus on female specific interventions and supports available.
- As in previous years, Alcohol, Cocaine, Cannabis and Heroin remain the most prevalent drugs identified as causing problems at assessment in this region.

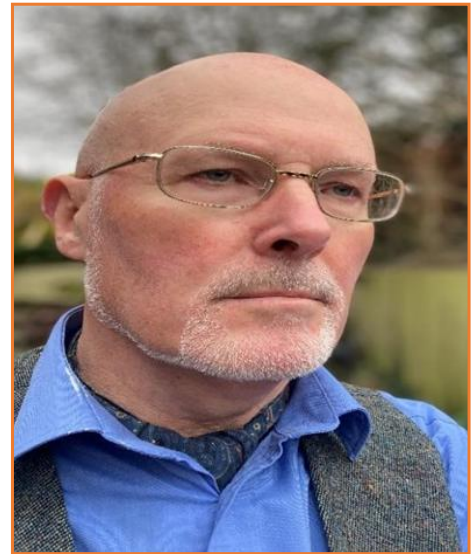
Emerging Trends

- Initial Client Assessments indicate more clients with greater complexities, poly drug use and diverse needs.
- Drug use co-existing with mental health difficulties and/or homelessness continues to require greater interagency cooperation to assist this vulnerable group.
- Drug Related Intimidation in a number of forms reported as a result of high levels of drug debt owing. This is affecting all social groups and areas causing high levels of fear and anxiety in families and communities who find themselves exposed to this.
- Community supported detoxification is proving difficult to establish without better and more formalised medical engagement and support.
- Follow on for clients, after positive change has been established, is an area which needs more inter-agency work so that better pathways to career guidance, training, education and work is available.

Specific Challenges to be addressed in 2024

- The new clients coming from a variety of locations across this region need to be monitored to keep all waiting lists to a minimum.
- The increase in those using cocaine specifically has caused more strain on our existing resources and services.
- Requests for support, assistance and practical information for family members where a drug/alcohol client is also receiving services has increased in this region.
- Continued support of the development of the new pilot Under-18 Tier-2 drug/alcohol services and identifying of channels from which funding of these developing services can be continued.

I present the Annual Report 2023 for the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (ECRDATF). The funded services that the Task Force now oversees have evolved with the input of time and commitment from the Task Force members and project workers to identify the core needs in this region and to deliver a suite of services which best meets these needs.



This year we continue to deliver core adult services through Living Life Counselling, Merchants Quay Ireland and Tiglin Challenge Ltd. These services combine to provide a range of individual client and group supports along with family member supports across the Region. The numbers presenting have increased each year, and the range of needs continue to widen, but we are monitoring this situation to mitigate the use of waiting lists and to continue to meet needs as they arise.

In 2023, we set up two pilot Tier 2 programmes to deliver services to Under-18 year olds who are experiencing drug and alcohol problems along with their families. We are delighted to work with and enhance the services of Arklow Family Centre and Wicklow Child and Family Project with funding to situate a worker in each service with a specific focus on drugs and alcohol. This service has been developed alongside the HSE YoDA Under-18 service (Tier 3) and provides a very valuable and much needed intervention for the youth in the East Coast Region.

In regard to prevention, we have commenced a new initiative with Planet Youth Iceland to deliver a primary drug/alcohol prevention programme for this region over the next 5 years. The Task Force is delighted to have partnered with Wicklow County Council, Wicklow CYPSC and HSE Health and Wellbeing for core funding for this work and have focused our Development Worker to progress the engagement of all secondary schools and YouthReach centres across the region.

Our Task Force members and staff attend regular meetings of the main committee along with meetings of subgroups who are tasked with specific work. On behalf of everyone concerned I thank them for their expertise and commitment, without which we could not have progressed and achieved as much.

We continue to engage with the communities living and working in the East Coast Region through seminars and events which provide education and raise awareness of our work and showcase the services we provide. We continue to progress our strategic goals and deliver a person-centred response to drug and alcohol issues across the East Coast Region.

Frank Gallagher
Chairperson, ECRDATF

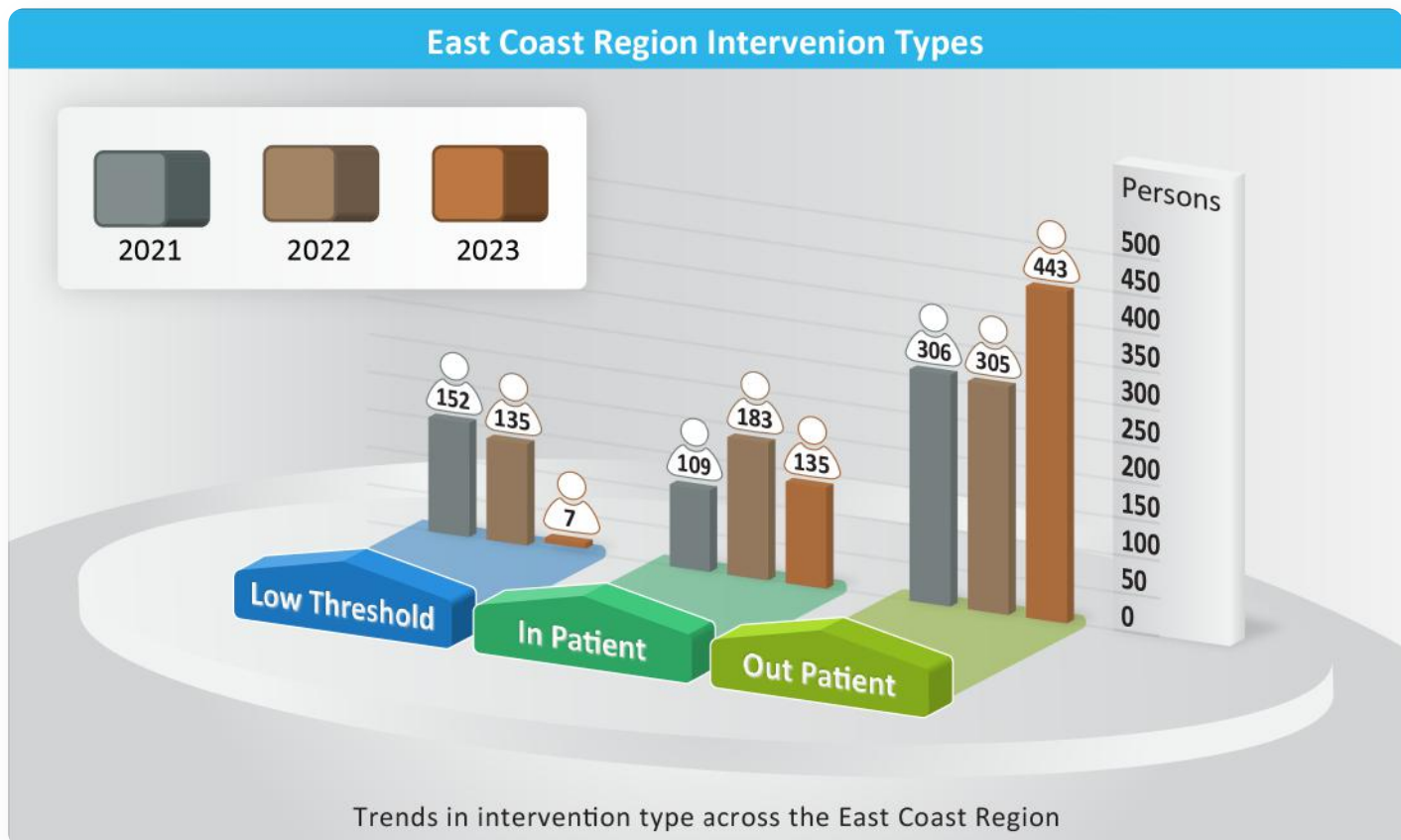
Evidenced Treatment Data

The population of HSE Community Healthcare East (CHE) is recorded as 421,375 from the 2022 national census (an increase of 7.15%). This region spans County Wicklow and South and Southeast Dublin. The East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force is modelled within CHE along with 2 local Task Forces (Bray and Dun Laoghaire).

The Health Research Board (HRB) collect data on behalf of all publicly-funded providers on the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) across the entire year. This is a condition of the funding agreement (HSE Service Level Agreement). Currently, treatment episodes are recorded here as a direct result of services identified and supports delivered with Task Force funding in 2023.

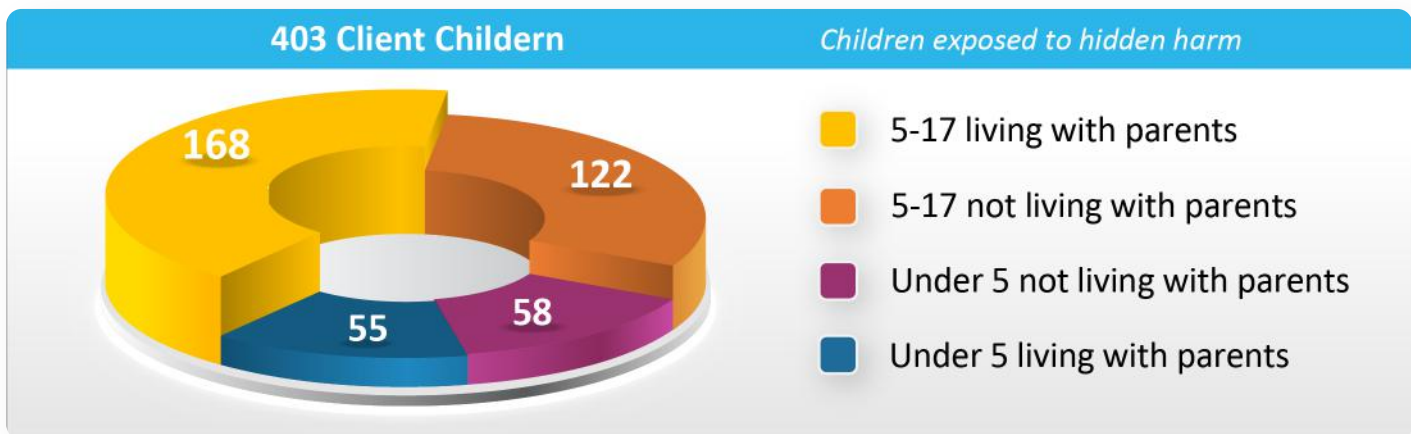
Further to the data recently provided for 2023, 1031 treatment interventions given with 591 new clients (resident in this region) having commenced treatment in 2023. Of the new clients who were referred, they stated a primary problem with drugs (293, 50%) and alcohol (239, 40%) and the remainder were mostly those seeking help due to being directly affected by the alcohol/drug use of another.

Interventions for 2023 were an increase on previous years with a more diverse range of services requested and provided as per Figure 1. As with previous years, outpatient services remain the most prevalent and sought after by clients who engage with our services. No services were recorded by GPs being the primary service provider even though the HSE Central Treatment List shows 1,072 clients on OST (Opioid Substitution Treatment) in HSE CHE. Further work on the connections between this statutory treatment provision and the community services remain a challenge.

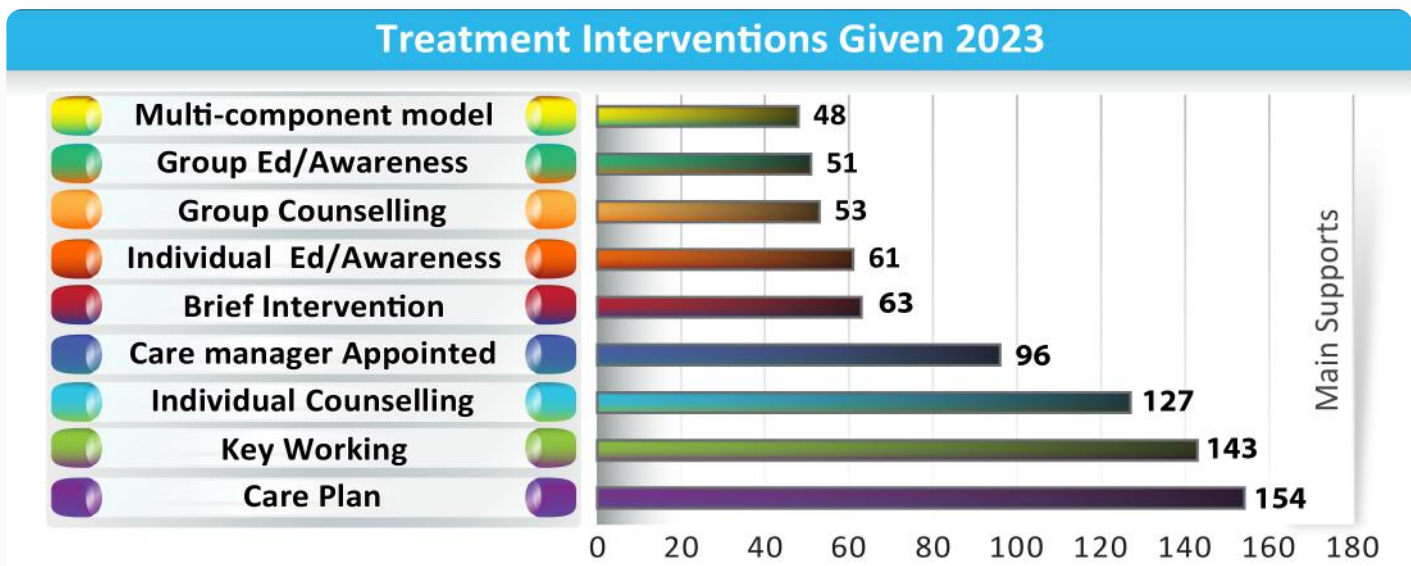


Additional NDTRS data for 2023 identifies the following information

- 525 (89%) commenced treatment following assessment and agreeing a personal care plan under a case management process
- 215 (36%) were never previously treated and identified drugs (112) and alcohol (97) issues mostly, on assessment
- 232 (39%) were returning clients and identified drugs (135) and alcohol (97) issues mostly, on assessment. The primary problem drugs in order are alcohol, cocaine, cannabis and heroin.
- 368 (62%) were males with females attending in increasing numbers; 22 were minors and nearly one in five (105) under the age of 25 years.
- Over 73% (434) were living with parents, partners and/or family unit



- 211 (42%) of service users identified having children with 116 (20%) currently living with their minor children which comprised 55 children under the age of 5 years and 168 children aged from 5 to 17 years (see Figure 2). Children experiencing drug use in their home or environment remain a group which require further attention. A number of initiatives have been developed to add resources to this cohort.
- 509 (86%) are living in stable accommodation, however, 48% remain unemployed. This remains a challenge for the better engagement of clients in career guidance, training, education and work experiences to assist their re-recovery journey.
- Most referrals (47%) were identified as by the client themselves with other centres, social services and family playing an important role also. The Task Force place a high emphasis on speaking to potential clients on the possibility of attending services in the future in the hope that, when the clients decides to seek help, the path to services is clear.
- A range of approaches and supports are available to each client (see Figure 3) so that each client has an individual assessment, care plan which is closely managed by the service operator.



Interagency Drug/Alcohol Initiatives delivered

The Task Force members, staff and funded service workers delivered a number of inter-agency initiatives across 2023 which were identified in this region in line with the actions of the National Drugs Strategy and its own Strategic Plan. Further work was accomplished by interagency work with a number of other services, agencies and projects. Resources of the Task Force, its operational budget and from other sources are identified.

Agencies	Purpose/Development/Outcome	Resources
ECRDATAF, HSE YoDA Service, WC&FP and Arklow Family Centre	Development and delivery of 2 new workers to work with Under-18 year olds with drug and alcohol problems and their families as a Tier 2 service. Interagency protocols established to provide a full service with clients transferred from Tier 3 to Tier 2 and vice-versa as needed.	Coordinator, YoDA CHE team, 2 project representatives
ECRDATAF, WC&FP and MQI	Clear transition of clients from WC&FP to the new tender awarded brief counselling service with MQI. Clarify remit of work and potential further transfers.	Coordinator, project staff
ECRDATAF, MQI	Quarterly review of the delivery of all components of the tender awarded with early identification of blocks and gaps. Development of new initiatives to avoid waiting lists and increase group programmes, as appropriate.	Coordinator, project staff
ECRDATAF, BLDATF & DLRLDATAF	HSE CHE initiative to deliver one Stabilisation Programme in each DATAF in this region annually on 3 days per week across 12 weeks with a Graduation ceremony at the end	Coordinator [funding held by BLDATF]
ECRDATAF, BLDATF & DLRLDATAF	Hidden Harm to young person service delivered by Barnardos across Bray and North Wicklow with one-to-one sessions delivered at age appropriate levels.	Coordinator [funding held by Barnardos]
ECRDATAF, BLDATF & DLRLDATAF	Hidden Harm Worker and programme to be delivered across CHE to all services eventually. Commenced in DLR and to be further expanded to Bray and ECR.	Coordinator [funding held by DLRLDATAF]

Interagency Drug/Alcohol Initiatives delivered

Agencies	Purpose/Development/Outcome	Resources
ECRDATAF	Monitoring of website, emails and phone to make appropriate referrals to all services in East Coast Region resulting in 55 client requests met.	Coordinator
ECRDATAF	Proposal to deliver on Hidden Harm directly to those affected in this region as a specific and currently not delivered service in this region	Coordinator
ECRDATAF members and staff	Selection of best Strategic Plan proposal and support and steering of the delivery of the core outputs and pieces so that the plan builds on the work achieved in the previous plan and gives a direction for future work	ECRDATAF members and staff with funded projects
ECRDATAF	Updating and re-editing of the many pages on the website along with information update and new initiatives and direct contact to Task Force.	Coordinator, Development Worker, TUS
ECRDATAF, MQI	Search and securing of new premises to host and give facilities for the new staff agreed. Legal input on lease.	Coordinator, MQI staff
ECRDATAF	ELS Funding proposal written and submitted to HSE. Lack of HSE Manager in position stopping progress of proposal.	Coordinator, projects
ECRDATAF and all funded projects	Compilation of the work of all projects across 2023 into an Annual Report for design and production	Chairperson, Coordinator
ECRDATAF and others	Development of the idea of putting together a group to deliver a PY initiative across this region over the next 5 years	Coordinator, Dev Worker



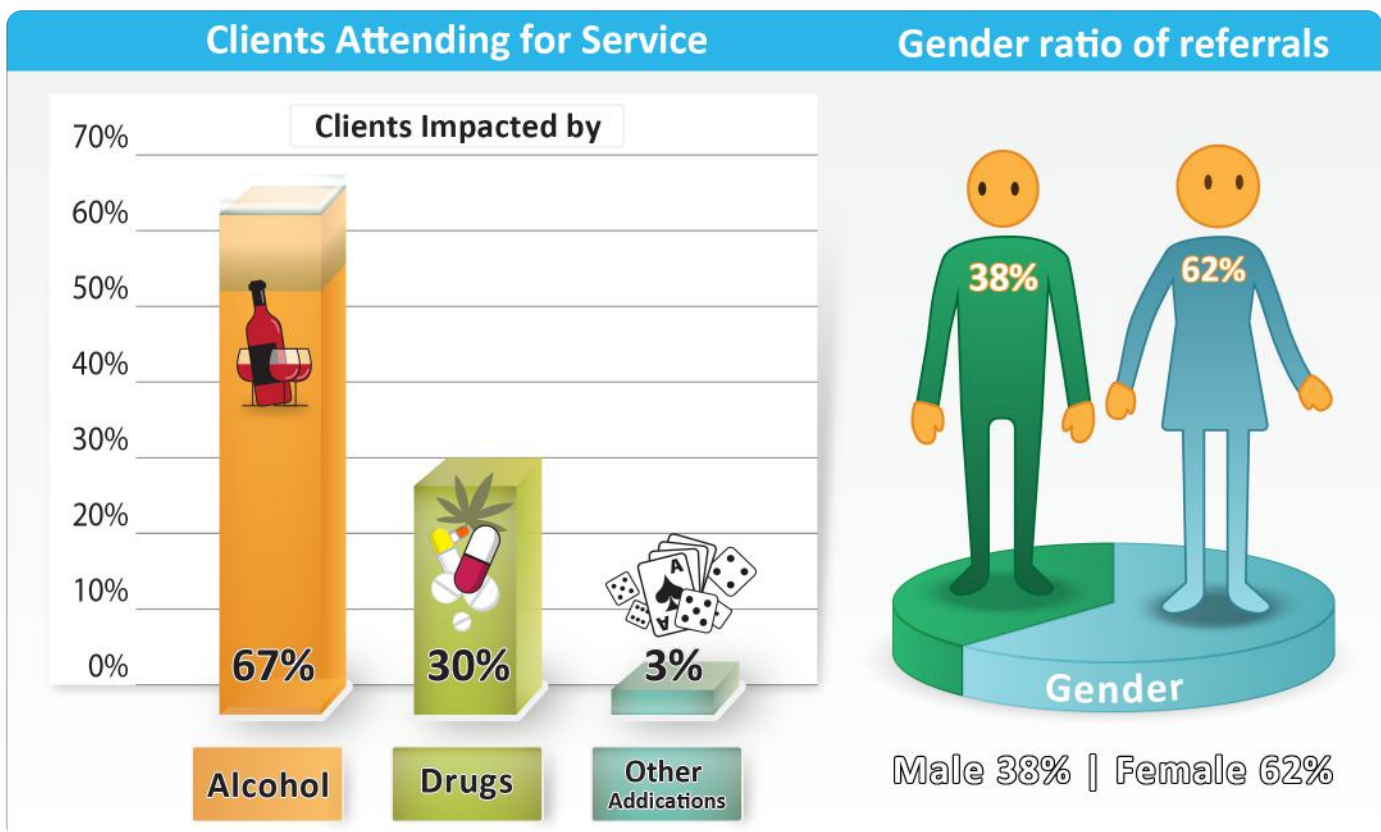
Living Life Voluntary Counselling is a low-cost affordable and accessible counselling service available to persons in our community impacted by addiction. Those availing of our service may be in receipt of social welfare payments, unemployed, on a low income, or simply unable to afford private counselling services. Our service provides one-to-one general counselling for

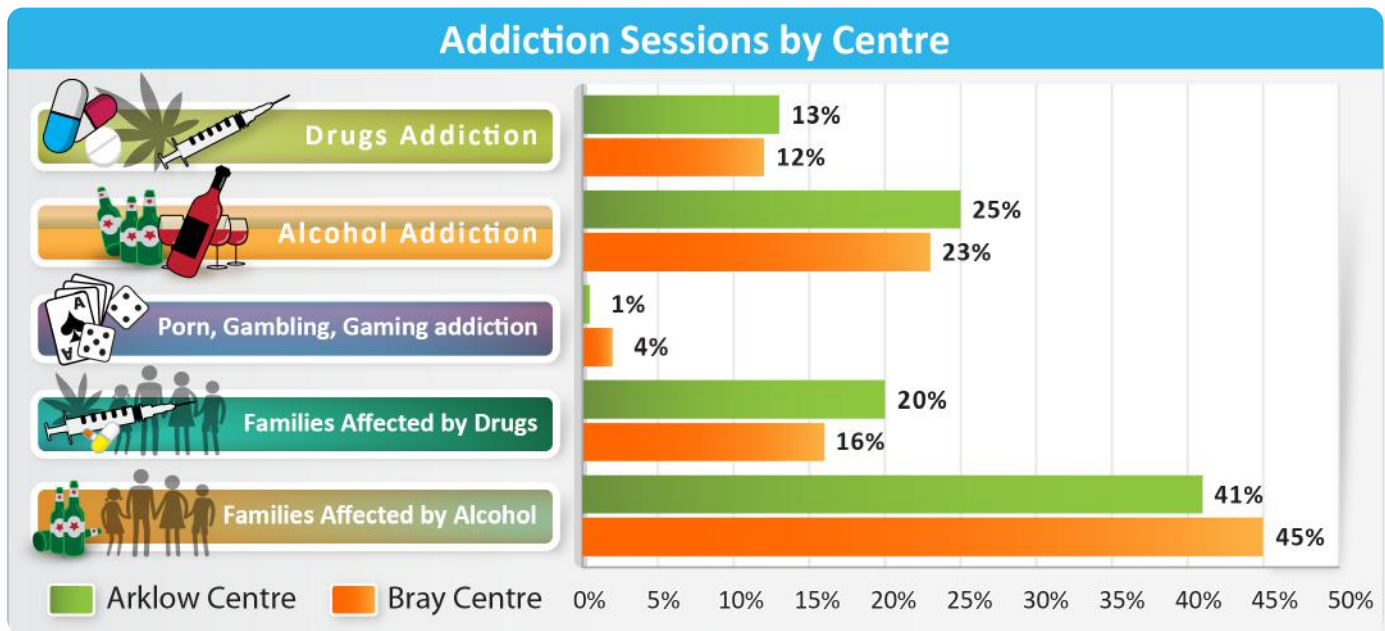
individuals attempting to remain drug or alcohol free, or friends/family members of those who are in active addiction. This includes supports for couples and young persons under the age of 18. In certain instances, we can also incorporate working with younger clients (aged five years and over) through a number of mediums such as play therapy.

An initial assessment of need is provided, in conjunction with the client, to ascertain if counselling is an appropriate therapy for them at the specific time when they present. One of our part-time accredited staff counsellors will allocate up to fifty minutes of face-to-face contact to complete this process with each a new client. Occasionally, this meeting may necessitate follow-up contact with a professional third party who is actively and currently working with the client in another therapeutic framework (usually a GP or psychiatrist). The client’s permission is always sought before any such 3rd party contact is taken.

When this process has been completed, the client is matched with a volunteer counsellor who is qualified to work with them on their specifically named issues. The usual duration of client engagement offered is six months with exceptions made only if the staff counsellor feels that the client requires longer intervention.

During 2023, we provided support to 278 clients within the Wicklow area who have been impacted by addiction to drugs, alcohol, or another addiction. 186 clients were dealing with issues related to alcohol and 83 clients were dealing with issues related to drugs and 9 clients were dealing with issues related to gambling, porn, or gaming.





Funded Service – Brief Initial Counselling

Following a successful tender campaign in 2022, Merchants Quay Ireland were tasked with establishing the CRIS counselling Service. The service provides brief counselling support to clients that are struggling with their mental health by providing up to seven one to one sessions. The counselling support is designed to complement a client starting out on their addiction treatment with the East Coast CRIS service or the HSE Addiction service.



Following an extensive recruitment campaign, Geraldine Hanlon was appointed as the counsellor in December 2022. Geraldine is an accredited member of the Addiction Counsellors or Ireland and the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Geraldine previously worked for Merchants Quay in their Riverbank service and went on to work in other addiction service in Dublin and Wicklow. The service commenced in January 2023 and operates on a part time basis, three days per week in Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow.

Referrals were received from the community addiction team in the East Coast CRIS Service and the HSE Addiction services. A total of 110 unique referrals were received in 2023. The overall gender ratio was positively evident with 56% of all referrals for males and 44% for females. The majority of referrals were for clients that are were actively working on an addiction treatment programme and a small number were for Family support clients. Due to capacity limitations, a waiting list was necessitated for each location. This was a very regrettable development but through weekly reviews, clients time on the waiting list was kept to a minimum.

37% of clients were aged between 35 to 54 with 31% in the 26 to 34 are range. Clients aged between 18 to 25 made up o12% of all client referrals. Referrals from Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow made up the majority (62%). The remainder (38%) were from clients in rural Wicklow. Over 75% attended successfully completed all of their sessions and exited the service without onward referral to other counselling supports. 8% of clients decided not to take up the offer of support while 17% of clients, that began the process, decided not to follow it through to the end.

2023 was the inaugural year for the CRIS counselling service and very quickly became embedded within its operation process. Having achieved such a high number of very successful outcomes, the service is in a very strong position to provide the necessary support to clients in their early stages of addiction treatment.



PREPARED BY: TIGLIN CHALLENGE LTD
CHARITY NUMBER: 11596
CHARITY REGULATORY
NUMBER: 20032173

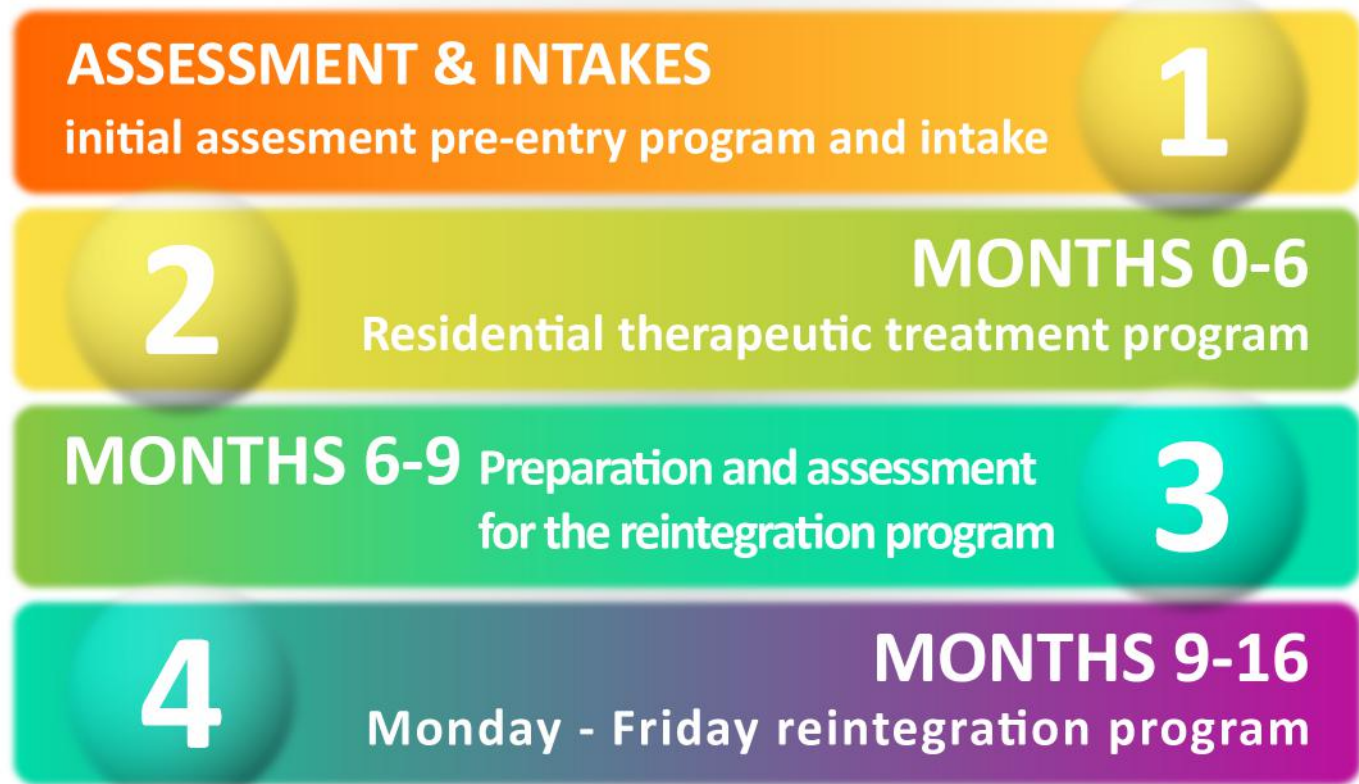
Tiglin Challenge Ltd - Overview

Two rehabilitation centres in Co. Wicklow continue to deliver a 16-month long program (men’s centre to 30 men and women’s to 14 women) with welcoming 129 individuals across the two centres. Recovery program consists of the nine months as part of residential rehab and a newly introduced “aftercare program” whereby upon finishing the 3 phases in the centre (which includes the recovery groups and one-on-one supports but also therapeutic supports (such as counselling) the “student” moves into the transitional housing facility in Greystones and attend the aftercare on a Mon-Fri basis. Each student receives a high standard of care at Tiglin, which includes pre-entry medical supervision, one-on-one professional counselling, key working sessions, various life skills and training opportunities, ongoing personal development plans,

Since 2022, South East Technological University has used this centre as a satellite campus for delivering educational courses. This means that those in our care can now obtain a leaving cert (secondary school diploma) while on this 9-month program. Our women’s residential rehab was started in 2010 after we obtained the property as a private donation; prior to this move, our women’s program existed in the same building as the men’s program.

It is a centre for women (18 years and over) who struggle with drug and alcohol problems and for people needing life skills training. The programme is a faith-based programme with a model of complete abstinence. The women enjoy a range of taught modules in horticulture, cookery lessons, money management skills and crafts, and daily/ weekly counselling sessions.

Program Structure



Treatment Options

Tiglin offers a holistic addiction treatment program underpinned by evidence-based treatment models such as the community-reinforcement approach, SMART Recovery, and Motivational Interviewing that helps each individual recover within its treatment programs. All treatment options are available to each individual accessing the service. Tiglin offers separate men’s and women’s residential centres; individual counselling; group counselling; crisis intervention; key working/care planning; therapy groups; education, training and employment upskilling; and housing support.

Referrals

Referrals are received mainly by self-referral as each person is looking for an abstinence based treatment option to help them with their recovery. We accept referrals from services and individuals.

Models of Care

BIOLOGICAL

Biological Health: supporting individuals’ physical health through healthcare, nutrition, fitness classes, gym, sports facilities and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Psychological Health: supporting mental health and well-being through services such as counselling, psychotherapy, therapeutic groups. hydrotherapy + breathwork and promotion of self care.

SOCIAL

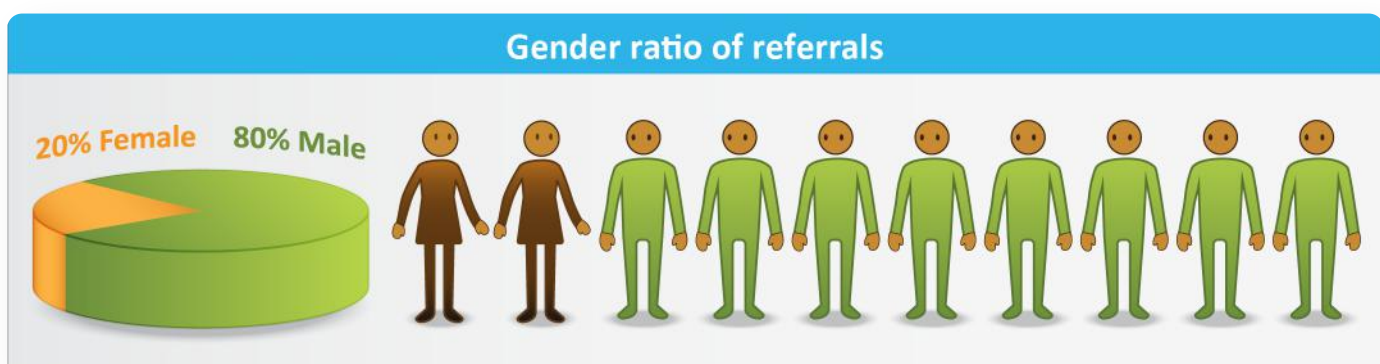
Social Health: improving social health through housing support, advocacy, family support, educational opportunities, work experience, mentorship, coaching and reintegration.

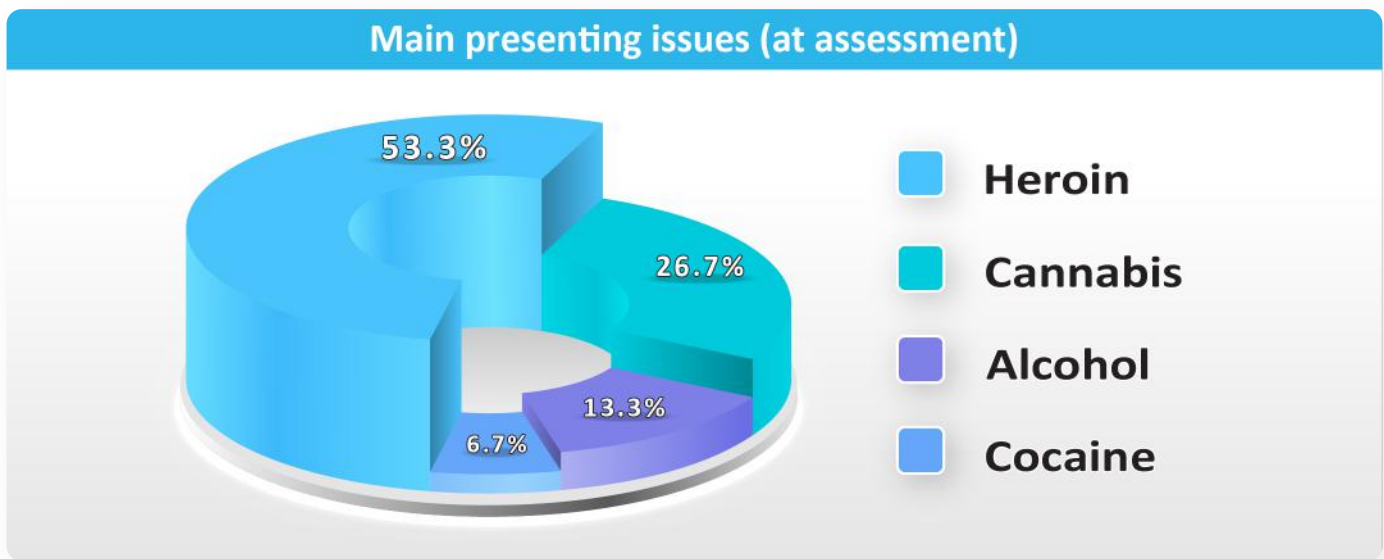
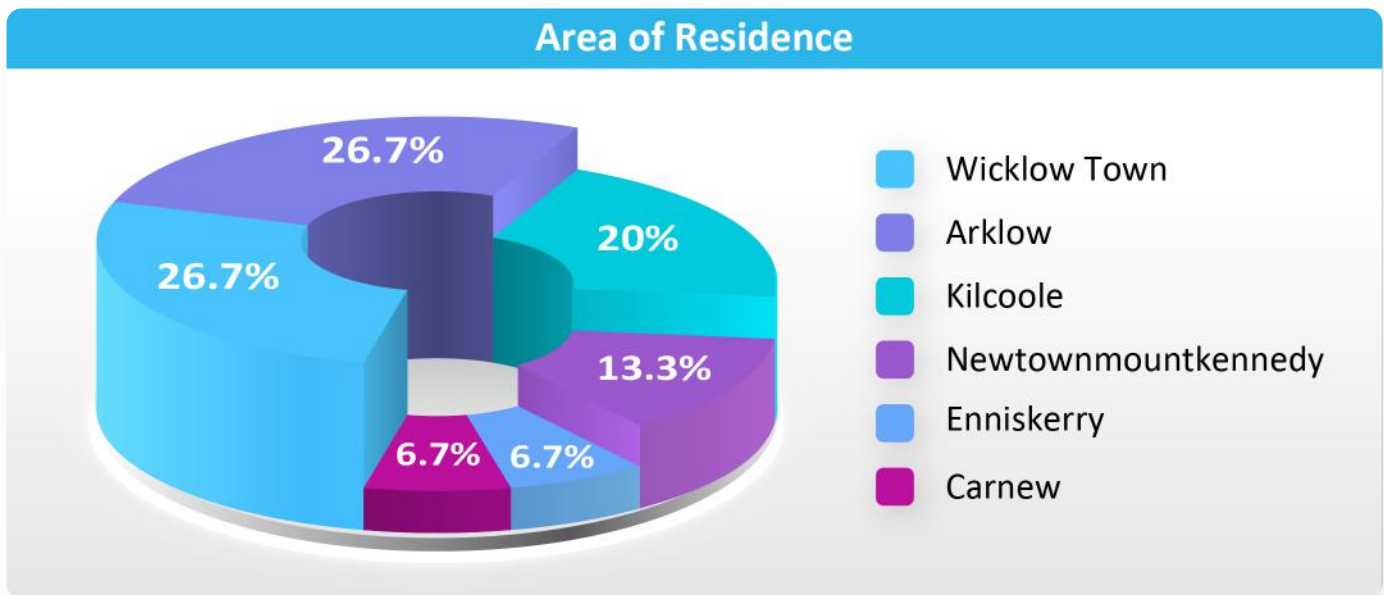
SPIRITUAL

Spiritual Health: supporting spiritual health through chaplaincy services, prayer, meditation and recovery groups.

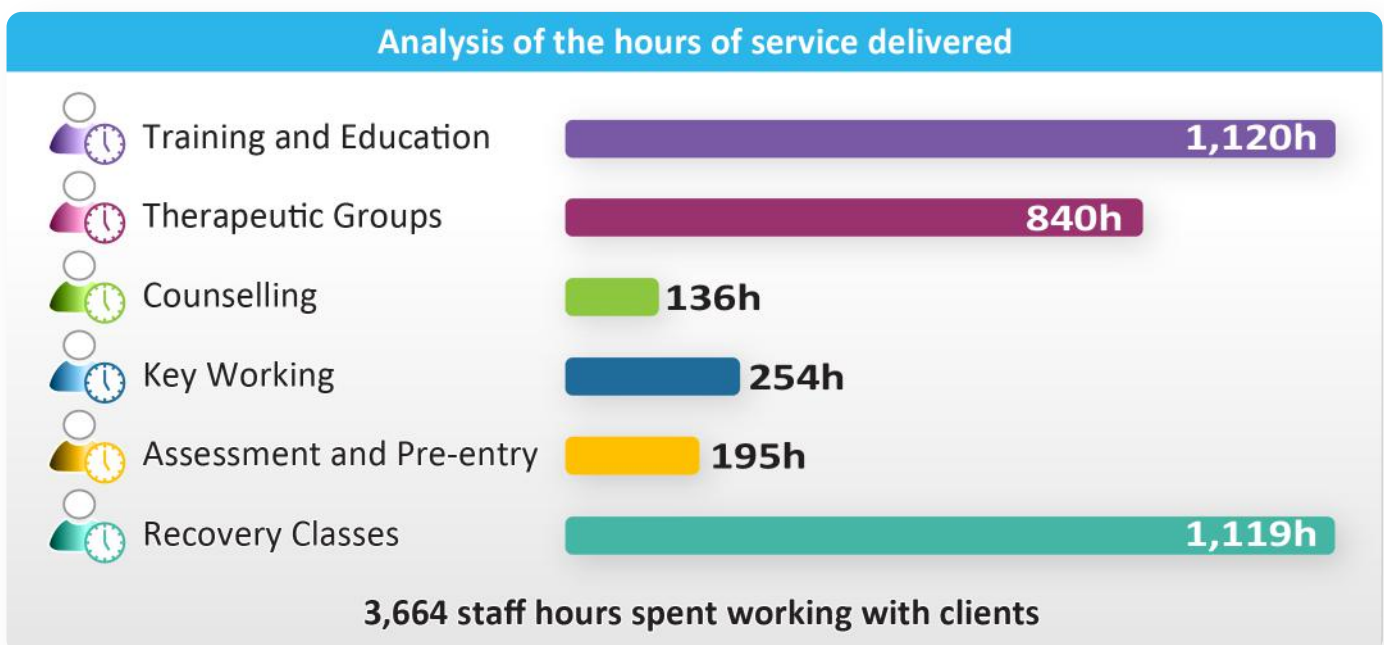
Demographics

In 2023, breakdown of gender ratio in treatment with Tiglin residential treatment centres was approximately eighty per cent male, and twenty per cent female. Majority of those accessing the Tiglin services were aged between 25-50 years old.





For every 15 clients that attend the Tiglin Service, the following is an analysis of the hours of service delivered:



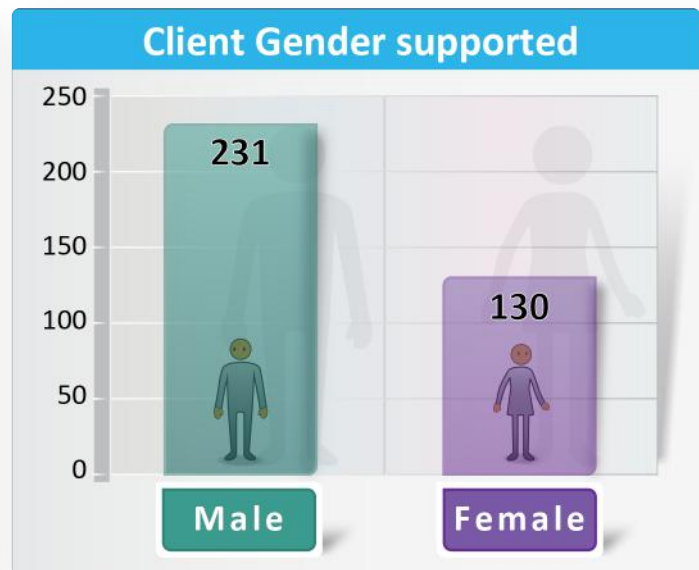
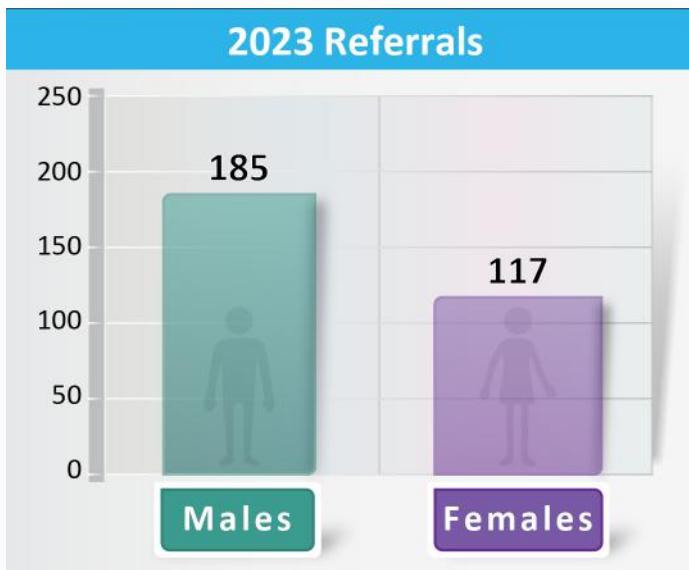


**Community
Recovery &
Integration
Supports**

MQI East Coast Service

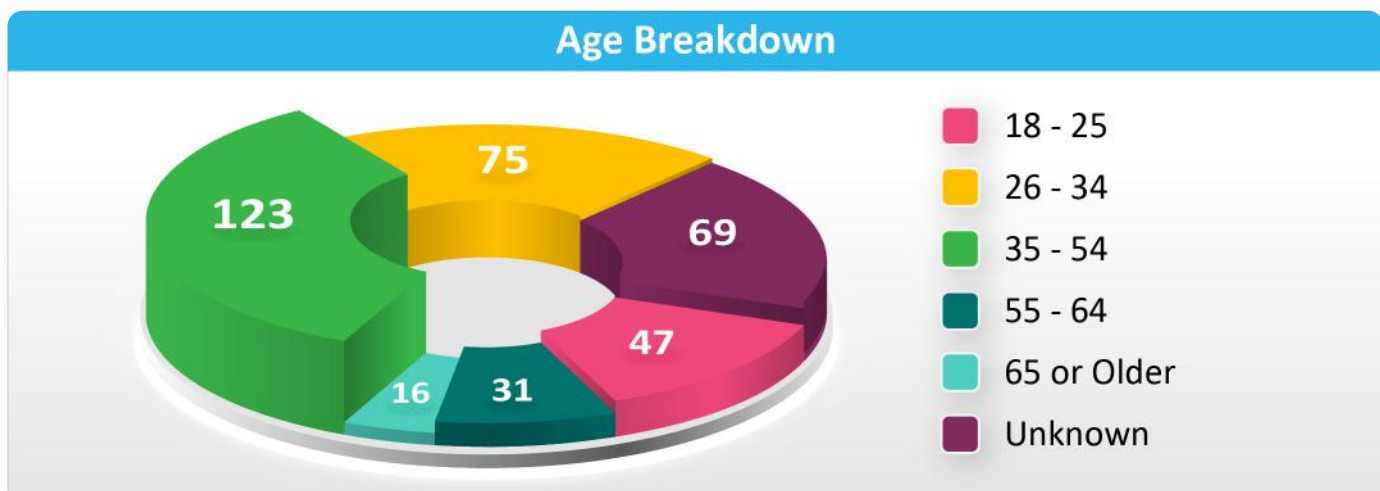
Referrals

The MQI CRIS service received a total of 302 new referrals in 2023 which was a 56% increase on the 2022 figures. The CRIS team worked with 361 clients over the full year which comprised about two thirds male and one third female and has remained as such ratios since 2021.



Demographics

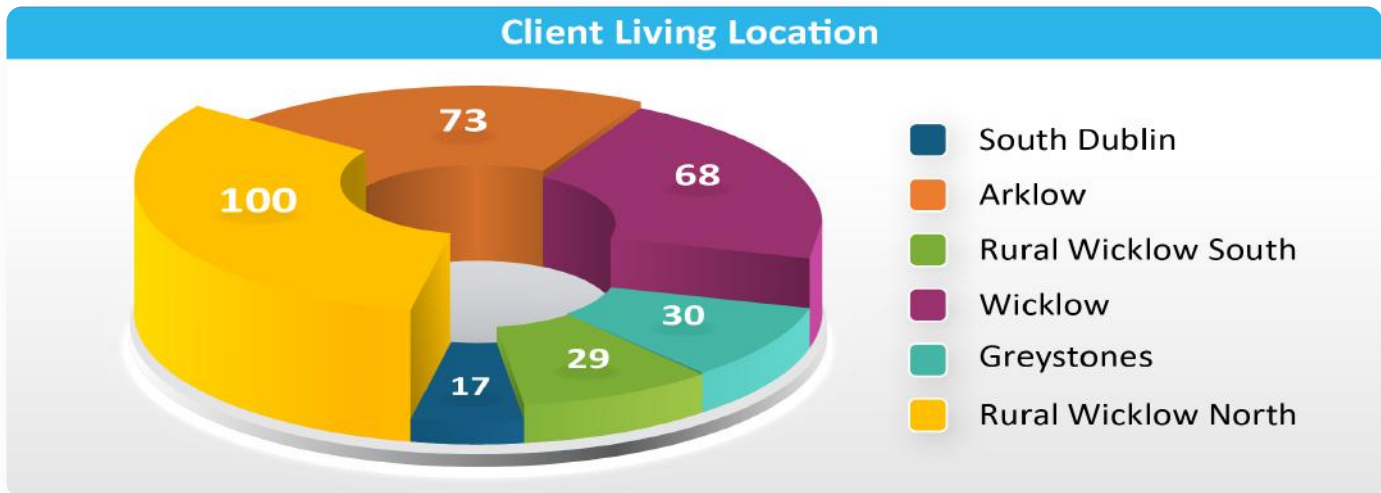
The age profile of clients in treatment with the CRIS service range for 18 to over-70 years. The majority of clients range in age from 18 to 54 years old as shown in the graph below. Within this group, we have 13% (n=47) from 18-25 years old; 21% (n=75) from 26 to 34 years old; and 34% (n=123) from 35 to 54 years old.



Living Area

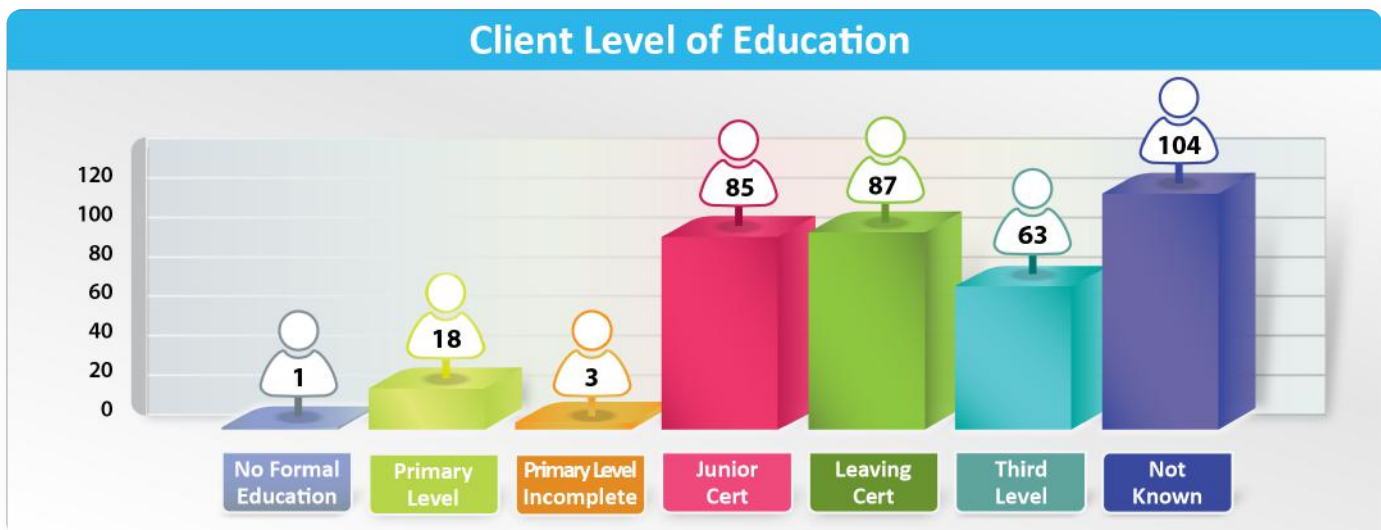
The key areas where clients live remain largely unchanged from previous years. Most clients come from areas in and around the key towns of Arklow, Wicklow and Greystones where serviced offices exist. Targeted networking was undertaken in these 3 key towns during 2023. The CRIS Service presented to the County Wicklow GP forum and engaged in a number of follow up calls.

Fortunately, the CRIS service has partnered with Co. Dublin and Co. Wicklow GAA clubs to utilise their already established network with a view to raising an awareness of the supports available from the service. Both the Addiction and Family Support Services were promoted here. It is also noted that the numbers of clients from South Dublin has increased again this year. The team continue to deliver interventions by outreach appointments. These are usually held in public spaces such as hotel lobbies, coffee shops and open public spaces. These are necessary as some clients are not able to attend in person at a CRIS office.



Education Level Attainment

While data is collected on levels of education achieved by clients, the data only measures for the education system in Ireland and does not always align with other countries. This makes it more difficult to clearly outline the highest level of education achieved for all. Therefore, this explains the higher number of 'not knows'. In Ireland, it is compulsory to attend education until the age of 16.



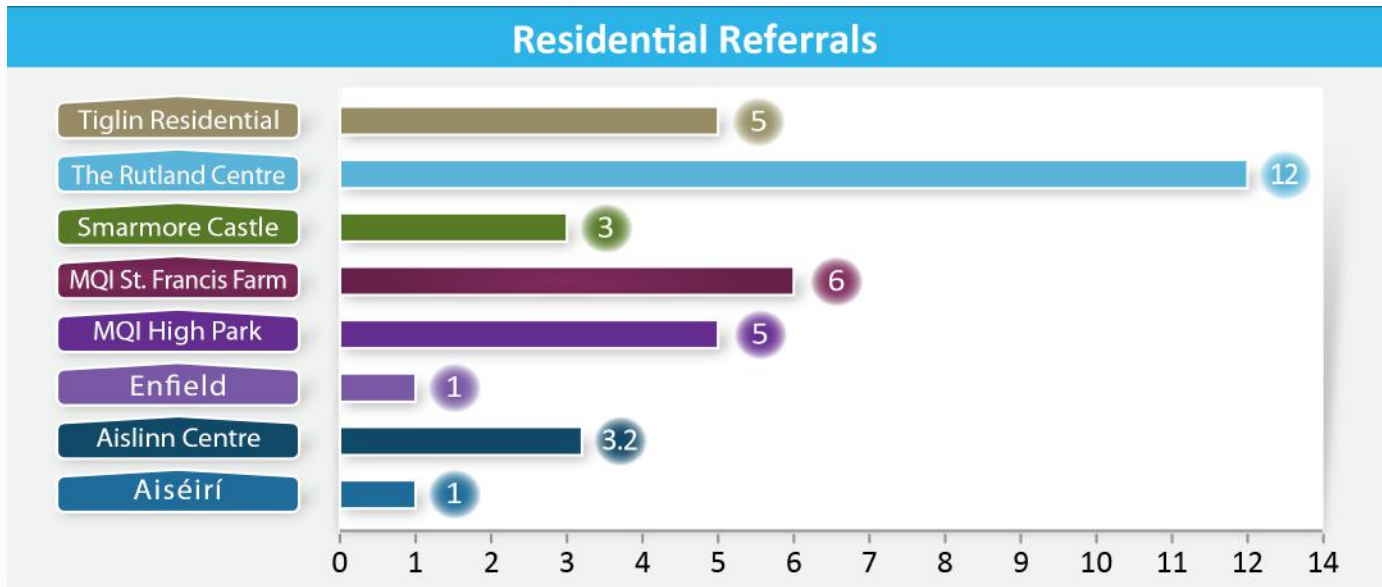
Onward Referrals to other services

Only about one in ten persons seek a residential placement and are assessed as suitable for such. The range of residential centres found suitable for such clients are outlined below. Both pre and post client work is carried out with each client in this group to better support the residential placement and after care needs.

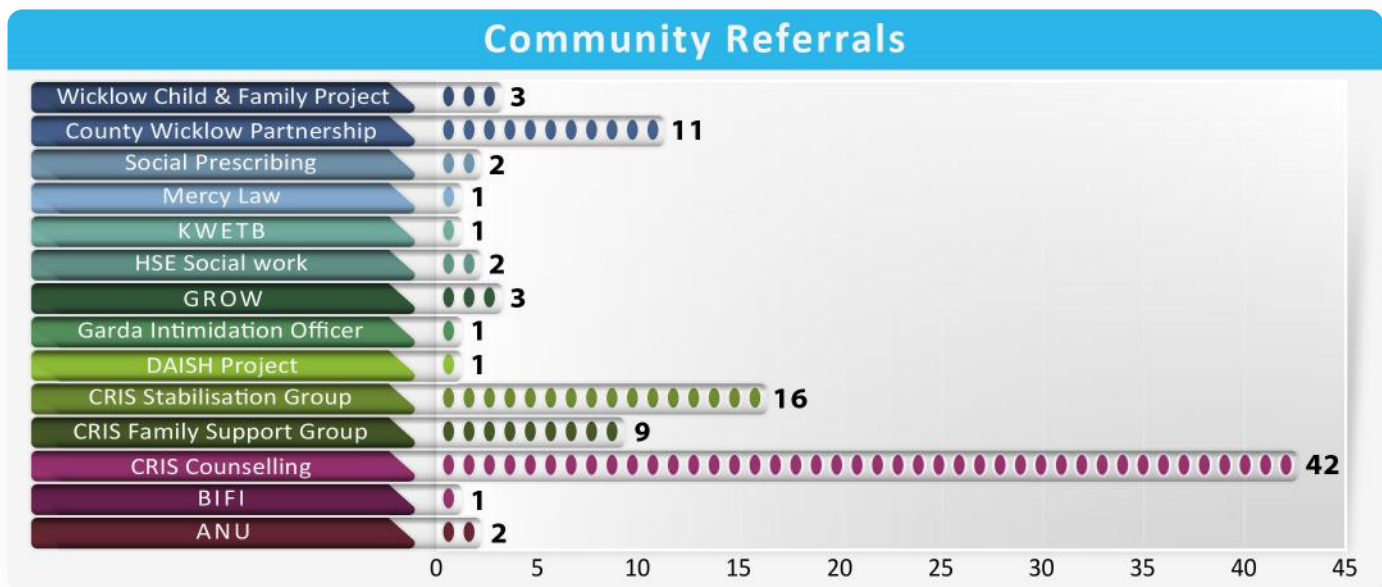
All interventions are delivered on a low threshold basis. In 2023, 16 clients were referred to the East Coast Stabilisation programme which is delivered in three locations each year. In total, 32 clients were referred into Tier 4 (residential) services based on assessment and need.

Funded Service- Merchants Quay Ireland

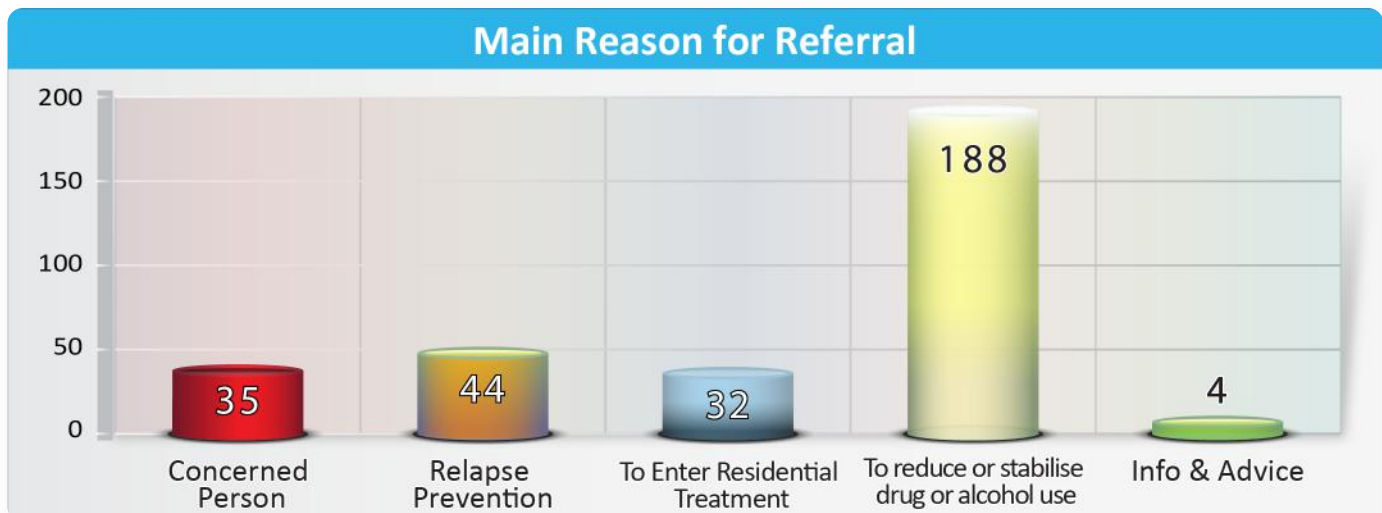
A range of holistic interventions were identified and a plan was developed to begin specific responses for women who seek support. At referral stage, female clients are offered a choice of male or female keyworker. The service has also contacted the Social Work Department at Hollis Street Maternity Hospital with a view to supporting clients from this region that have been identified as needing additional support.



As part of the client care plan, a large number of referrals and supports are provided with local community based services and agencies. The main ones are shown in the graph below.

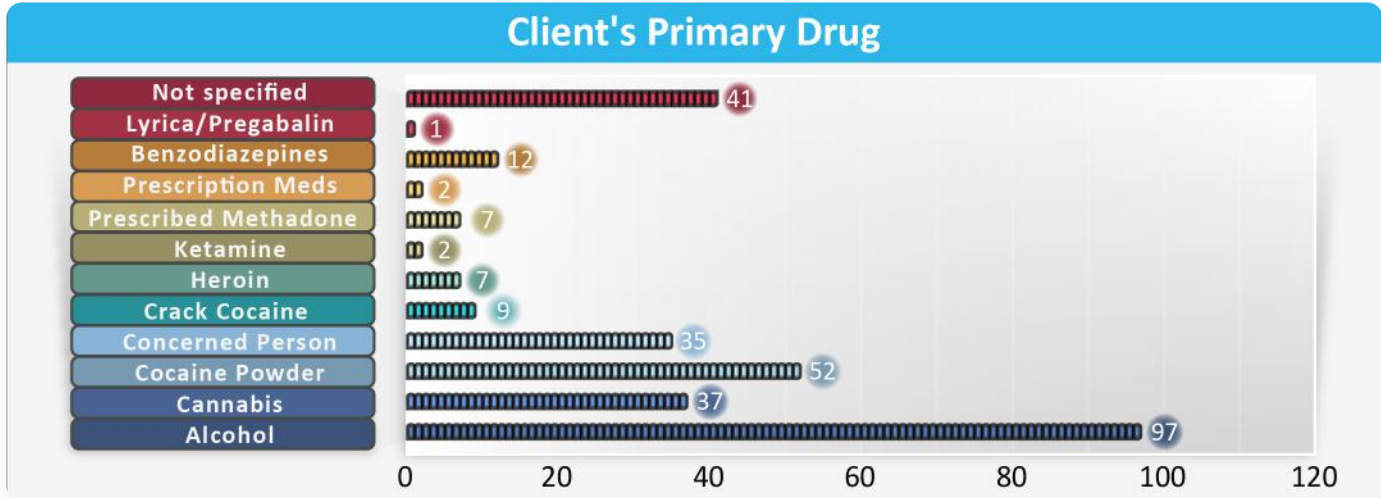


The main reasons identified, on assessment, for contacting the CRIS service and seeking support is outlined below.

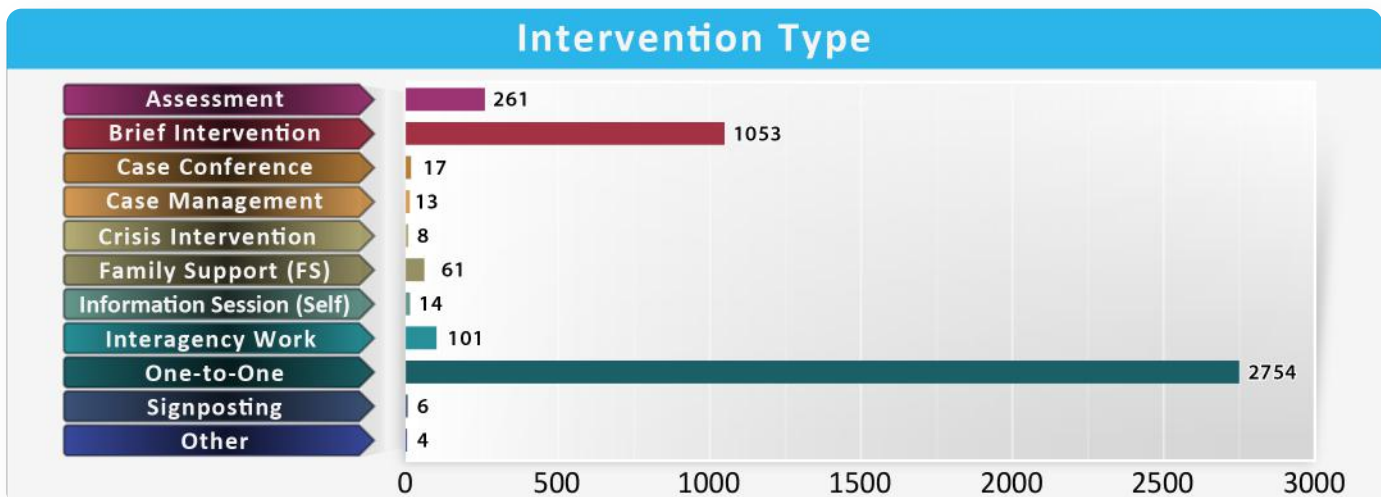


Funded Service- Merchants Quay Ireland

Alcohol continues to present as the main primary substance used by clients in 2023 as in previous years. This accounts for almost a third of all referrals. Following alcohol, cocaine and crack cocaine are the primary substance for more than one in five clients with cannabis recorded for just over 12% of clients.



A whole range of interventions are offered and delivered to the clients by the CRIS team. Most prominently is 2754 hours of one-to-one work followed by 1053 hours of Brief Intervention, 261 assessments, 101 interagency work, and 61 hours of family support. A smaller number of sessions are provided for a range of other work.



The work of the MQI CRIS service continues despite a number of challenges including the geographical spread of the region it covers; the necessary introduction of waiting lists and the management of same; the limited space in certain offices and Greystones in particular and the need to increase support workers to input on the treatment data so as to free up staff to meet more clients.

MQI CRIS Service plans for 2024 delivery

- Delivery of women's initiatives

- Introduction or rolling Family Support groups in Wicklow and Arklow

- Introduction of SMART Recovery group in Shelton Abbey prison

- Reintroduction of SMART Recovery fellowship meetings in Wicklow and Arklow

- Introduction of Resonance Factor (Cocaine specific) 12-week group programmes in Wicklow and Arklow

- Development and implementation of a Prison In-reach programme

- Development and implementation of educational support programmes through collaboration with KWETB & CDET

- To develop a range of events for Recovery month (September) that will involve clients and other community-based addiction services in the CHO6 area.

ECRDATF Development Worker

Further to a number of recruitment drives, this position was eventually filled from the beginning of April 2023. The Development Worker (DW) role is funded by the Task Force and hosted by County Wicklow Community Partnership Ltd. The post holder was requested to deliver a number of initial projects so that future work could build on this.

Community Services Mapping

A baseline measure of the services and facilities of the many towns and communities across the East Coast Region was sought. This was to inform and help develop future delivery of a number of initiatives across these communities. The mapping was to look at the totality of public and private services which either directly or indirectly could be used to address drug and alcohol strategic goals in this region.

Unfortunately, the national census data (collected April 2022) was not available at the time of the mapping but a number of key findings were apparent. The key findings were:

- Publicly funded services were not distributed evenly across the region
- Publicly funded youth services were particularly few with some communities, (despite data on deprivation and other needs) with no provision at all despite the number of young people (identified by the number of schools) in these communities.

Planet Youth project for Wicklow

The DW was tasked with progressing the idea of evidencing a need for drug and alcohol prevention services in this region. Thus, the Icelandic Prevention model (IPM) also referred to as Planet Youth was identified and explored as to its suitability to deliver this goal. The IPM has 10 core steps for delivering on this and the DW was tasked with progressing a number of these to see if this project was viable. The DW held multiple meetings around the county with the youth services, schools, adolescent psychiatrists and the partnerships. A steering committee was formed, now called the Planet Youth Wicklow Team. Three key services were approached to help with the funding need for this service under local strategies in the County Council, Wicklow CYPSC and the HSE Health & Wellbeing Division.

The first three steps of the IPM were progressed in 2023. The DW attended the first Planet Youth Ireland conference event in Galway (where the IPM is already in place) to see first-hand how this has worked in an Irish context. This initiative aims to particularly address the National Drugs Strategy Actions 1 to 5 and others along with the ECRDATF Strategic Action 1.

East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force website

It was identified that the look and contents of the website (www.ecrdatf.ie) had become dated and needed refreshing. Thus, a team comprising the Development Worker, Coordinator and a website professional was convened. A number of new contents pages and service pages were developed by the team and replaced existing dated documents. New components which include women specific services, youth services and the new DRIVE programme were introduced. This has refreshed the look and information available to the public. Further development work is to be progressed in 2024. This links with the National Drug Strategy Actions 13-24 and the ECRDATF Strategic Plan Action 23.

Specific Initiative for women who use drugs and alcohol

The DW along with team members of the MQI CRIS project got together to help develop and deliver an event to support women who use drugs in this region. This links with the National Drugs Strategy Actions 19-21. A half-day event was organised and held in Arklow library. It was well attended by the identified target group and was successfully evaluated. Women were delighted with the event and the take-away packs linked to their needs. Further work of this type will be delivered in the future.

Community Event – focus on Alcohol

Under the pillar of prevention and awareness, it was determined that a community event/seminar be held to discuss alcohol and its problems. A further objective was to engage with all services and the community to allow for clear communication between all about the range of services available. Five speakers were organised with a clear theme and each with a different perspective on the overall aim so that the speakers content complimented each other. A successful event was held and lessons learned to assist with future productions of this nature. It was agreed that more could be done via social media and promotion to better engage with the wider community members and to run separately to other such like events to increase attendance. This is linked to NDS Action 2 and the ECRDATF Strategic Plan Action 3.

Progression of DRIVE nationally

The DW was tasked with attending the initial meetings and webinars of the national DRIVE project to see what was required of each DATF in order to engage in this work. The project seeks a DRIVE Worker in each DATF (half-time) and a DRIVE liaison (part-time) to help develop and deliver on the key objectives of supporting victim of drug related intimidation and/or violence. A picture of what is required was formed and the DW prepared and delivered a presentation on this to the Task Force members as well as answering questions and queries on this work. A clearer picture of what is being requested nationally will emerge as funding and personnel are expanded and a fuller plan and roll-out of this service is developed. This links with the NDS Action 42 and the ECRDATF Strategic Plan Action 12.

Representatives to sit on Task Force

It was identified that there were a number of vacancies for community representatives on the DATF. The DW and Coordinator created an advertisement that was posted on local sites seeking members. Two new representatives were recruited from Avoca and Wicklow. North Wicklow remains a gap presently and also a way of incorporating the voice of service users to inform the work.

Business Cards

Further to requests from Task Force members asked about services in this region, the DW and Coordinator worked together to develop business card size documents containing the key phone and email contacts of our services. A number were printed and distributed among the Task Force members. These have proved very popular with all concerned.

CSEF Funding

The three Task Forces of the former CHO6/CHE were allocated three-year funding to deliver a number of key interventions including Stabilisation programmes, Barnardos young persons programme across North Wicklow and a Hidden Harm worker. This work now needs to be reviewed as the funding ceases at year end.



Following a number of recruitment drives across 2023, Wicklow Child & Family Project successfully employed a Youth Addiction Project Worker who joined their team in October 2023. The worker covers the same region as the project which is Wicklow town with north to Newtown, west to Roundwood and Laragh and south to Ashford, Rathnew and Rathdrum. This report highlights the work undertaken within the first three months of the role.



Examples of the type of clients engaged with (age, gender, etc.)	
Male aged 17	Client referred from YoDA Under-18 Tier-3 service Initial issue addressed – problematic Cannabis use Full treatment given by YoDA team Further care planning and case management provided Goals identified, set and supported
Female aged 15	Client referred from YoDA Under-18 Tier-3 service Initial issue addressed – problematic Cannabis use Full treatment given by YoDA team Further care planning and case management provided Goals identified, set and supported
Female aged 13	Mother concerns about daughter Client presenting with problematic vaping Full care planning and case management provided Goals identified, set and supported

The number and range of services provided.

1. Male 17, 1 to 1 work. Met for two sessions prior to Christmas. Completed applications for Youth Reach, identified sleep routine and keeping busy as areas to work on. Spends a lot of time gaming which effects sleep routine. Linked in with the Youth reach co-ordinator and he is due to attend meeting with them in January.
2. Female 15, reluctant to engage. It has been difficult to gain parental consent from her mother. Has missed a number of appointments, I have linked in with the Way Project in order to try build a relationship with the mother, as she has a relationship with this organisation.
3. Female 13, Mother made an enquiry to the service about her daughter, worried about school engagement and vaping. Set up an appointment to meet the mother and daughter to complete intake forms – consent. The family cancelled the appointment and stated they did not wish to engage at this time as they were now getting support from another service.

Under-18 Drug and Alcohol Tier-2 Service – pilot

The geographical spread of the clients

- The clients are predominantly from Wicklow town and Rathnew.

The main sources of referral

- Yoda – 2 referrals
- Self referral

Some measure/evidence of the outcomes of your intervention

Linkage of your work to the NDS and particularly the 10 actions where DATFs have been given a role (see enclosed list)

Challenges in your work

- Parental Consent, I have received a referral in regard to a client who is 16 but have not been able to obtain parental consent. The client's mother has engaged with me over the phone and has agreed to meet on two occasions but has not shown up. I have utilised other services that engage with the family in order to obtain consent, but this has not been successful to date. I feel that this may present as an issue in the future, parents may not consent when referred in by another service.
- Name of the service – A parent mentioned that the word "Addiction" was harsh. On reflection this could be a barrier to some parents engaging as they may not want to think of their children as having an addiction. Using an acronym (YDAS) or using the term Drug & Alcohol service may be an option to consider.
- Connecting with schools – schools may not want the stigma of being associated with an addiction service. There has been some difficulty in getting responses from schools and service linked to schools such as the Tusla School Completion Service.
- Receiving referrals from external agencies – as the service is new and although promotion of the service has been ongoing, it may take time for services to engage with us and to refer their clients in.
- One enquiry was from members of the travelling community, despite contacting the service initially they did not wish to attend the intake appointment or to engage in supports. They informed WC&FP that they had received support from another service.

Plans for 2024 delivery

- Continued promotion of the service through networking, poster/flyer advertising, through social media, local newsletters and through contact with schools and external services.
- Continue to work closely with Yoda and Arklow – Daughters of Charity.
- Attend relevant trainings.
- Continue to support the young people who have linked in with me.

National Drugs Strategy

Support the SPHE programme.

- I have been contacting schools in the area and making them aware of the service. I have also met with the local Youth-Reach Co-ordinator and plan to arrange meetings with school Principals, Home School Community liaison officers (HSCL) and school completion officers.

Improve services for young people.

- Delivery of 1:1 project work to young people, focusing on substance use, assisting young people to re-engage with education.

Expand the range, availability and geographical spread of problem drug and alcohol services for those under the age of 18.

- Promotion of the Youth addiction service in Wicklow, Rathnew, Ashford, Glenealy, Rathdrum, Laragh, Glendalough and Brittas Bay.



Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service Arklow Family Centre Youth Drugs & Alcohol Diversion Project Annual Report 2023

In September 2023, Arklow Family Centre (part of Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service), in collaboration with the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, launched its Youth Drugs and Alcohol Diversion Project which offers support to young people under 18 years involved in substance misuse. The funding allowed for the provision of a full-time dedicated Drug and Alcohol Family Worker. The Project also supports family members impacted by the young person's issues. This initiative complements the Centre's existing support provision to young people and their families.

Therapeutic support interventions are offered to youths and their family members in relation to alcohol/drug misuse, impact of the substance misuse on family/others, harm reduction, family relationship building, personal development and empowerment and advocacy. Appropriate support will be provided through one or a combination of individual sessions, family sessions or group programmes.

The Project is available to residents of Arklow and the surrounding areas of South County Wicklow including Avoca, Aughrim, Tinahely, Carnew and Shillelagh. A family may self-refer or ask another professional service to make the referral e.g. GP, school, etc.

As this is a new initiative it had to be promoted within the community and professional agencies. The Project was promoted by meeting with School Principals and HSCL's, GP's, Primary Care Psychologist, Community Gardaí and JLO's, and through the existing Child and Family Support Network and CYPSC (Children and Young People Services Committee) connections with which the Family Centre is involved. We designed promotional pamphlets

Under-18 Drug and Alcohol Tier-2 Service – pilot

and fliers and distributed these widely throughout our Catchment Area, to professionals and agencies working with young people and their families.

The Project works in close collaboration with the HSE YoDA (Under-18 Tier-3 Youth Drugs and Alcohol Service) regarding the referral of cases and care plans for the young people. The Project and YoDA meet monthly to discuss cases using a multidisciplinary approach. The Management of YoDA and Arklow Family Centre are in the process of drawing up an operational Memorandum of Understanding to guide inter-agency collaboration in best serving the Project's target population.

Referrals to Date				
Age	Gender	Referral Source	Reason for referral	Geographical Area
12	Female	School	Alcohol misuse with smoking/vaping	Arklow Town
12	Male	GP/YoDA	To support regarding the impact of substance misuse of a family member and drug intimidation	Arklow Town
16	Female	YoDA	To support regarding the impact of substance misuse by a family member and drug intimidation	Arklow Town
16	Female	School/Tusla	Substance misuse	Arklow Town
16	Male	YoDA	Substance misuse	Arklow Town
16	Male	YoDA	Substance misuse	Coolgreany / Arklow
17	Male	YoDA	Substance misuse	Avoca
45	Female	GP/YoDA	To support younger child regarding the impact of substance misuse by a family member and drug intimidation	Arklow Town

Measures/Evidence of the Outcomes of the Interventions

The interventions are designed to meet the needs of the young person, parent or sibling based on the identified issue. The main objective is to support the young person, building on their strengths, resilience, and ability to manage their day-to-day challenges. The approaches used include therapeutic support, motivational interviewing, solution-focused based therapy, CBT, and psycho-educational work. As the Project is in its infancy, as it were, with many of the cases in the initial stages of the work, it is too early to speak definitively about outcomes. Having said that, the regularity of attendances in general and the attitude of those attending, showing a real commitment

to make positive changes in risk-related behaviour, are particularly good indicators of positive outcomes and the realisation of the identified goals of the work. There is early evidence of improved family relationships, better school attendance, reduced risk-taking behaviours, all good indicators of positive outcomes that can be sustained over time.

Challenges in our Work

As this is a new Project, the first three months were used to promote the Project within the already well-established Arklow Family Centre's Catchment Area. The challenges to date have been getting referrals from services other than the HSE YoDA service.

There is clear evidence of a significant increase in the number of enquiries being made to the Service by parents concerned about the impact of their teenager's use of substances or by professionals on their behalf. This has not yet resulted in equally high numbers of referrals to the Project for direct work with these teenagers. Having said that, however, it is as though the awareness of the Project has made families more conscious of the Centre as a possible support to help them better manage dealing with the impact of substance misuse on the family. From the conversations we have had with these parents, their view of the teenager's substance use as problematic is a view often not shared by the young person. This, obviously, is a major challenge to any effort at a directly targeted planned early intervention for harm reduction with the young person. It does highlight, at the same time, the need to work more closely with the significant others in the young person's life so they are educated about substances young people are using, and their impact, and so better equipping them in their efforts to support the young person, thus increasing the likelihood of their accessing the direct support at the earliest possible stage.

While our Centre is based in Arklow, our Catchment Area reaches rural areas where transport can often be an issue for young people, and getting to the Centre can be a challenge. The lack of a central hub for the more rural areas can impact on the young people getting to the Centre, and a more accessible appropriate venue would be desirable. Having said that, we can rely on schools (if the young person is attending) to offer us a space to meet with the young person, though we are open to meeting with the young person and their family in other appropriate locations of their choice. We have good working relationships with the schools in our Catchment Area who are more than willing to do whatever they can to assist the young person accessing the support. We also offer "Walk and Talk" meetings as an option, where appropriate. This all requires a significant level of travel for the Family Worker that is built into the working week.

Plans for 2024

The plan for 2024 is to continue to promote the Project, building on the existing collaborative relationships with other agencies and professionals working in this area. It is hoped the Project will see a significant increase in the numbers of young people attending the Service in the months ahead as it becomes more established in the community and as the partnership with HSE YoDA service and the Wicklow Child and Family Project's designated Drug and Alcohol Support Worker develops and grows.

The Project would like to facilitate group sessions/outings for the young people attending to help them develop positive connections, relationships, independence, self-efficacy, and mastery skills. The Project would like the young people to help with a community project, if possible, such as the Tidy Towns, beach clean or volunteering in a nursing home etc., to increase their sense of connection and belonging to their local community. Obviously, any such activities will be led by the young people involved with the Project, their suggestions as to what they would like to do, as this would give the young people ownership of the activity, which it is hoped would encourage them to participate more fully. These young people are often viewed negatively in society or have not had positive experiences/relationships. These young people are often considered to be "Youths at Risk." It is hoped these activities will incorporate the Youth Development Model the Circle of Courage (Reclaiming Youth at Risk, M. Brendtro & L. Brokenleg, 1990). The Circle of Courage model represents four universal growth needs for children: Generosity, Belonging, Mastery and Independence. These are the foundations to develop resilience and positive youth development. Similarly, it is hoped that the planned team-building activities will enhance the young people's self-confidence and socialisation skills, while increasing self-awareness and self-efficacy that will help them maintain and build upon positive changes in behaviour and lead to sustained harm-reduction while engendering a greater sense of connection to their community, one that is hope-filled for a better future.

Conference Event: Alcohol and its effect on the Community

A conference was held on November 16th 2023 to present speakers on the harms of alcohol misuse on the individual, family and community. Speakers included:

Prof. Frank Murray, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians/Consultant Physician/Gastroentologist and Associate Professor of medicine at Royal College of Surgeons.

Anne Doyle, Researcher, Health Research Board

Paula Leonard, CEO, Alcohol Forum Ireland

Paddy Creedon and Val Ward, Recovery Advocates

The Drug and Alcohol funded services, along with some HSE services and other regional agencies, displayed and discussed their projects with the attendees during the event making clear connections and networks for future interagency collaborations.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent and passionate speakers who were informative and to the point. • Speakers complimented each other in their presentations nicely. • Planet Youth was indirectly promoted via the speakers who mentioned its value and utilised its data. • Speakers kept the attention of the room. • Positive event for task force which creates awareness. • Appropriate amount of coffee/tea breaks, i.e. One before event for introduction and during to break up the event and assisted networking and a relaxed environment. • Reasonable cost with good service. • Good facilities. • Reasonable turn out. • Nice, warm environment. • Very good feedback following event. • Photos of the event can be added to the website and social media to create further awareness of ECRDATF and their services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple events happening for awareness week; three on the same day, meant that speakers were under pressure and potential attendees couldn't go due to other event commitments. • Lack of marketing via social media limited attendee numbers. • Only discussed on East Coast FM radio the day before. • One speaker did not communicate that they were not going to stay the night prior to the event which resulted in an unnecessary cost to the task force. • Last minute decision to add coffee/tea between 10.00am and 10.30am, while important, added extra cost that was not initially accounted for. Although low numbers of attendees meant the cost was ultimately low. • Easier sign up mechanism needed with reminder notification
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of 13 task force members, five members attended. • Facebook/social media campaign. • Better links to social media, particularly linking to Instagram, could create further attendees. • Radio campaign more than once and earlier. • Potential to pay small amount for social media platforms to boost sales at the final stages. • Potential to extend the event into the afternoon. • For Task Force: discussions around products (like vape produces) funded by the alcohol industry • To join with other task forces to lobby for the removal of certain products and for the removal of alcohol in places such as Burger King in the airport, creating more cohesion and networking with our fellow task forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited funding to hold and promote events. • Costs of events increasing in line with higher cost of living. • Limited availability of community places to run such event (clashing with need for IPAS centres and other housing for new ex-patriots) • Clashing with other national or regional events during Alcohol Awareness Week • To make better contact with the community and ensure better attendance at future events

East Coast Regional		
Goal 1 :	Promote and protect health and wellbeing	
DATF objective :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of evidence-based approaches to addressing youth needs and gaps in the community Improve supports for young people at risk of early substance use Improve services for young people at risk of substance misuse in socially economically disadvantaged communities. Promote continued effective communication with local schools and other similar facilities working with the community Enhance visibility and support of this Task Force and its projects to the communities across the region 	
Outcomes :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of targeted work and direct linkages with existing youth and community services across the region Direct communication of the HSE YoDA East Coast team service to all secondary schools, HSCL and School Completion programmes across the region Support and manage referrals from the HSE YoDA East Coast team to the pilot Tier-2 services in this region and vice versa. Pilot two Under-18 Tier-2 Drug and Alcohol Worker projects Progress the Planet Youth Model programme in this region Organised a public information day with all projects presenting and en-gaging with the communities of this region along with a range of complimentary services who provided staff to advise and identify displays of their work and supports. 	
Category **	Project Code	Project Name
Treatment and Family Support	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Organisation Facilitation	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Education & Prevention	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Family Support	EC 7	Living Life Counselling
Treatment and Family Support	pilot	Arklow Family Services Centre
Research	EC 16	Development Worker
Project changes/ terminations in 2023		
Category **	Project Code	Project Name & Reason
Youth Addiction Work	EC 17	Continued piloting of Under-18 specific work to address and evidence the need in the region (2 sites)
CHE wide		Hidden Harm initiative – to be delivered
Development Worker		Barnardos services – to be expanded into North Wicklow
		To lead out on the Planet Youth Model in this region

Drugs and Alcohol Task Force- Form A: NDS Goal 2

East Coast Regional		
Goal 2 :	Minimise the harms caused by the use and misuse of substances and promote rehabilitation and recovery	
DATF objective :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the availability and geographical spread of relevant quality drug and alcohol services and improve the range of services available based on identified need • Improve relapse prevention and aftercare services • Identify the needs of families of service users • Identify the specific needs of female service users and older/long term service users 	
Outcomes :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the website and guide to Addiction Supports in the Region. • Implement the Strategic Plan for the commissioning of tendered services across the region and over a specified period of time • Continued to monitor and support the referrals to services and align the evidence with the commissioned services • Consolidate the new and expanded services across the region 	
Category **	Project Code	Project Name
Rehabilitation/Recovery	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Family Support	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Coordination	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Administrative Support	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Counselling	EC 7	Living Life Counselling
Rehabilitation/Recovery	EC 13	Tiglin Teen Challenge Services
Rehabilitation/Recovery	EC 15	MQI CRIS Service
Research & Development	EC 16	Development Worker
Rehabilitation/Recovery	New	Arklow Family Centre
Family Support	new	Arklow Family Centre
CHE Working Group	Multi	HSE CHE wide representative group to discuss and seek additional funding when provided
Project changes/ terminations in 2023		
Category **	Project Code	Project Name & Reason
Rehabilitation/Recovery	new	Two pilot Under-18 tier-2 Drug/Alcohol Workers providing both rehabilitation/recovery and family support

East Coast Regional		
Goal 3 :	Address the harms of drug markets and reduce access to drugs for harmful use	
DATF objective :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain an up-to-date overview on the nature and extent of drug and alcohol misuse in the region To identify and report on emerging issues and advocate for the development of policies or actions needed to address them Monitor drug related crime, intimidation, debts and deaths 	
Outcomes :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report giving specific details on the current situation and changes to the use of drugs and alcohol across the region A presence is maintained at the Wicklow JPC meeting The EWET group is contacted and information sourced and exchanged as needed Drug crime rates are noted and monitored in conjunction with a Garda representative on the Task Force Monitoring of the reduced Garda Drugs Unit for Wicklow/Wexford Drug relates death rates are identified and monitored Identification of the increasing use of vaping particularly by the younger members of the communities 	
Category **	Project Code	Project Name
Drug/Alcohol Reporting	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Drug/Alcohol Reporting	EC 4	ECRDATF
Garda Drug Unit Support	EC 4	ECRDATF
Drug/Alcohol Reporting	EC 7	Living Life Counselling
Drug/Alcohol Reporting	EC 13	Tiglin Teen Challenge Services Ltd
Drug/Alcohol Reporting	EC 15	MQI CRIS Service
Drug/Alcohol reporting	EC 17	Development Worker
Drug /Alcohol reporting	new	Arklow Family Services Centre
Project changes / terminations in 2023		
Category **	Project Code	Project Name & Reason
Garda Data		Changes in new Garda Divisions – now Wicklow/Wexford combined division Unable to get Garda data for S/SE Dublin specifically

East Coast Regional		
Goal 4 :	Support participation of individuals, families and communities	
DATF objective :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote community participation in all local, regional and national structures • Identify and monitor all reports of Drug-Related Intimidation • Promote a quality standards approach for all projects • Support and promote Service User participation • Enhance consultation to enrich our new Strategic Plan • Enhance community development across the region 	
Outcomes :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced the membership of the Task Force with additional community members from across the region and communities of interest • Supported community members' training and education with external agencies including Carmichael Centre • Provided training related to Task Force membership and processes for all members including all new community members • Monitored all reports of Drug-Related Intimidation and debt requests • Further to capacity building measures, supported a structure for Service Users to contribute to the Task Force structure. • A presence is maintained on other local structure to identify linked synergies and initiatives e.g. CYPSC, JPC, ICAAN • Consultation was held with all project promoters, staff and their service users along with external consultation with stakeholders in order to develop our new Strategic Plan • To regularise the Task Force Development Worker for the region 	
Category **	Project Code	Project Name
Consultation	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Consultation	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Consultation	EC 7	Living Life Counselling
Consultation	EC 13	Tiglin Teen Challenge Services Ltd
Consultation	EC 15	MQI CRIS Service
Consultation	new	Arklow Family Services Centre
Project changes / terminations in 2023		
Category **	Project Code	Project Name & Reason

East Coast Regional		
Goal 5 :	Develop sound and comprehensive evidence-informed policies and actions	
DATF objective :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the reporting of all drug and alcohol treatment episodes provided by direct funding to provide sound evidence-based data Identify new and potential referral sources and provide Addiction Support information for the region to all Identify and seek to access other sources of data to inform our work in-cluding the census, HSE data, Planet Youth Model data To compile all data sources and make evidence-informed decisions on new services and initiatives 	
Outcomes :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and training provided to all funded projects to enter reports to the NDTRS/HRB/Link System to be used for planning purposes Complete the editing of the Addiction Support booklet to all funded projects along with agencies and referral sources in/to the region Clarity to projects that evidence needed for any/all future expansions 	
Category **	Project Code	Project Name
Reporting enhancement	EC 2	Wicklow Child & Family Project
Reporting enhancement	EC 3	WTG Prevention & Education Outreach Project
Coordination	EC 4	ECRDATF Operational Budget
Reporting enhancement	EC 7	Living Life Counselling
Reporting enhancement	EC 13	Tiglin Teen Challenge Services Ltd
Reporting enhancement	EC 15	MQI CRIS Service
Reporting enhancement	new	Arklow Family Services Centre
Project changes/ terminations in 2023		
Category **	Project Code	Project Name & Reason
Under-18 D/A Worker	EC 2	New Under-18 Tier-2 Drugs/Alcohol Worker providing case management and family support in Wicklow Child & Family Project
Under-18 D/A Worker	new	New Under-18 Tier-2 Drugs/Alcohol Worker providing case management and family support in Arklow Family Services Centre

National Drugs Strategy

Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
1.1.1.	Ensure that the commitment to an integrated public health approach to drugs and alcohol is delivered as a key priority	a) Developing an initiative to ensure that the commitment to an integrated public health approach to drugs and alcohol is delivered as a key priority; and b) Promoting the use of evidence-based approaches to mobilising community action on alcohol.	DoH	HSE DATFs

Living Life Counselling is funded to deliver low-cost affordable and accessible counselling and therapy services to those in the community affected by addiction. One-to-one services are provided from bases in Bray and Arklow to persons attempting to remain drug or alcohol free and those adults in their families that are most affected.

The **ECRDATAF** is a member of ICAAN (facilitated by the Alcohol Forum) and has conducted its own local research on alcohol use across our communities. It is working to establish specific alcohol reduction measures in towns across the region with the assistance of our community representatives and others.

All services in the East Coast Region work together and with other services, projects and agencies to provide as seamless a service as possible to our client cohorts. A range of these interagency initiatives are listed in this report.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
1.2.3	Support the SPHE programme.	a) Promoting continued effective communications between local schools and Drug and Alcohol Task Forces given the importance placed on the continued building of strong school community links;	DES DATFs (joint)	

The **ECRDATAF** has provided information to the HSE Health Promotion staff currently directed to giving SPHE training to teaching staff in this region. While not delivering any school based education, the ECRDATAF has made available clear information on services and supports for school community staff and students to avail of in this region and to form part of the Health and Wellbeing Framework policy in each school.

The **ECRDATAF** is progressing a localised version of the Planet Youth model in this region in conjunction with a large number of interested groups and agencies, to help inform and evidence an approach needed.

The **HSE YODA East Coast** service regularly receives direct referrals from schools and colleges across this region to help and support students who have been identified as requiring assistance with a drug/alcohol issue. In 2023 we have piloted two Under-18 Tier-2 drug and alcohol workers to support YoDA and deliver services to this vulnerable group and their families.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
4.2.44	Promote the participation of service users and their families, including those in recovery, in local, regional and national decision-making structures and networks in order to facilitate their involvement in the design, planning and development of services and policies.	capacity building measures using evidence-based models of participation in line with best practice	DoH	Relevant Departments & Agencies, C&V sectors, DATFs, Networks of people who use drugs and alcohol, Networks of people who use services and/Family Support Networks

Tiglin Ltd have regular Service User Meetings, a nominated Service User representative and conduct regular Service User Evaluations. They have a Charter of Rights, use a rights based approach and have a National Charter.

The **ECRDATF** maintains a position for a Service User (SU) representative on its committee.

MQI CRIS is about to commence a survey to capture the experience and feedback of clients from its service, as it did a number of years ago.

Tiglin Ltd has commenced an Evaluation of its service including the service user perspective and feedback. All research conducted, whether funded or not, is obliged to get a SU perspective on the issues for consideration.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
2.1.21	Respond to the needs of women who are using drugs and/or alcohol in a harmful manner.	<p>a) Increasing the range of wrap-around community and residential services equipped to meet the needs of women who are using drugs and/or alcohol in a harmful manner, including those with children and those who are pregnant; and</p> <p>b) Developing interventions to address gender and cultural specific risk factors for not taking up treatment.</p>	HSE	DoH DATFs

Tiglin Ltd are currently involved in an expansion of the Women's Aftercare Service; children's play therapy; and family support. A women's only pre-entry programme is also offered. A separate womens residential centre is provided and the programme is developed on the specific needs of women.

MQI CRIS has prioritised the engagement with women in addiction and numbers accessing services have increased year on year. Further facilitated women's group work is planned to explore the needs and gaps in services to this group.

The **ECRDATF** has developed arrangements with the GP Primary Care Clinic (run by EDOC) for the medical care of new ex-patriot communities living in this region and has started to receive referrals.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
2.1.13	Expand the availability and geographical spread of relevant quality drug and alcohol services and improve the range of services available, based on identified need.	<p>a) Identifying and addressing gaps in provision within Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 services;</p> <p>b) Increasing the number of treatment episodes provided across the range of services available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Threshold; • Stabilisation; • Detoxification; • Rehabilitation; • Step-down; • After-Care; <p>c) Strengthening the capacity of services to address complex needs.</p>	HSE	C&V sectors, DATFs

Living Life Counselling is funded to deliver low-cost affordable and accessible counselling and therapy services to those in the community affected by addiction. One-to-one services are provided from bases in Bray and Arklow to persons attempting to remain drug or alcohol free and those adults in their families that are most affected.

Tiglin Ltd delivers pre-entry groups for men and women; Community Employment schemes, SETU educational courses; and Family Support services. They also deliver pre-entry stabilisation support and are expanding their aftercare services (with new funding provided). Complex needs are addressed with a children’s play therapist; family support services and a sensory room.

The **ECRDATF** has developed a new base in North Wicklow where a need has been identified and, once fully established, will move to establish a base in South/Southeast Dublin to spread our services better across the region and according to need.

The **ECRDATF** has worked with the other two DATFs in HSE CHE to set up and develop a new stabilisation programme to assist clients in their recovery. Currently this is a programme delivered over 3 days per week for 12 weeks in each DATF region annually.

The **ECRDATF** and its services are working hard to establish better inter-agency protocols for the benefit of our client group and their many and complex needs.

An arrangement with two consultant psychiatrists in Newcastle Hospital and the MQI CRIS service has helped transfer co-diagnosed clients between both services during in-patient and out-patient periods.

The **ECRDATF** is keen to develop further outreach work and services to the many persons and towns across the region who have little or no transport links and, from where, clients have difficulties travelling to our main centres. Arrangements have been put in place with some GAA premises and some HSE PCCC premises to this end.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
2.1.22	Expand the range, availability and geographical spread of problem drug and alcohol services for those under the age of 18.	<p>a) Identifying and addressing gaps in child and adolescent service provision;</p> <p>b) Developing multi-disciplinary child and adolescent teams; and</p> <p>c) Developing better interagency cooperation between problem substance use and child and family services.</p>	HSE Tusla	C&V sectors DATFs

The **ECRDATAF** has organised the hosting of a Family Therapist to work with the HSE led YODA CHE team – a tier-3 service working with young people who have a drug/alcohol problem until the HSE was in a position to directly employ this person. This team is Consultant Psychiatrist (specialising in adolescents) led and has an addiction and mental health approach.

The **ECRDATAF** has engaged with two providers to deliver Under-18 Tier-2 drug and alcohol services in this region but had run into some difficulties filling the positions, initially. Thus, the Task Force will now look to monitor and evaluate what service is needed. All services will link with and provide services in conjunction with the YoDA East Coast team.

The **ECRDATAF** wishes to identify further Family Support services to address other adult and child family members who require assistance and aim to deliver this in a holistic way.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
2.1.23	Improve the response to the needs of older people with long term substance use issues.	Examining the need for the development of specialist services to meet the needs of older people with long term substance use issues.	HSE	C&V sectors DATFs

The **ECRDATAF** is working closely with Wicklow County Council (WCC) to address housing and mental health issues with this cohort. Due to the long term nature of their substance use, they are in higher danger of homelessness and to also suffer from a (un) diagnosed mental health issue. The ECRDATAF is supporting the new Tenancy Support Service team in WCC to better support such tenants in conjunction with relevant services.

MQI CRIS service has identified the network of supports and services (including Public Health Nurses, Community Social Workers and Vulnerable persons' social workers) who work with this cohort and to raise awareness of the additional support it can offer.

MQI CRIS service has presented to the Social Work Department in St. Vincent's Hospital with a view to supporting vulnerable clients from this region.

MQI CRIS service has partnered with the older persons charity Alone with a view to supporting their clients in the community.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
2.2.30	Continue to target a reduction in drug-related deaths and non-fatal overdoses	b) Expanding the availability of Naloxone to people who use drugs, their peers, and family members	HSE	C&V sectors, UISCE, NFSN, DATFs

Tiglin Ltd have trained their outreach team in the use of Naloxone.

The **ECRDATF** has funded CPR training to a range of its services and projects and is currently sourcing a trainer/specialist to deliver Naloxone training.

The **ECRDATF** has funded the provision of AEDs in all service locations across the region along with full training to staff on the devices.

Services have been offered and taken up Naloxone training and are working towards Naloxone being available in service locations across this region. Ongoing training in the use of Naloxone is also being offered.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
4.1.39	Support and promote community participation in all local, regional and national structures.	Supporting and promoting community participation in all local, regional and national structures.	DoH	Community Sector, LAs, DHPLG, DATFs

The **ECRDATF** has worked with local services and agencies to identify suitable persons to sit on its committees and engage with the work and make a clear difference.

The **ECRDATF** has supported one or more Service User Representatives to become full members of the Task Force and engage and inform its work.

Members of the **ECRDATF** also sit on other specific groups in the region and are a conduit for information to both groups. Examples of such groups are Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) groups; Children and Young Persons Services committee (CYPSC); Joint Policing Committee (JPC).

The **ECRDATF** Chairperson and Coordinator are members of their respective national groups and regularly attend meetings both online and in person.

No.	Strategic Action	Delivered by	Lead	Partner
1.2.8	Improve services for young people at risk of substance misuse in socially and economically disadvantaged Communities.	Developing a new scheme to provide targeted, appropriate and effective services for young people at risk of substance misuse, focused on socially and economically disadvantaged communities.	DoH	DCYA, HSE DATFs

The **ECRDATF** has piloted two projects to deliver Under-18 community based services for young people having problems with drugs and/or alcohol so as to intervene early and prevent further problems and issues while supporting the young person to progress in their life. These pilots will become part of the evidence to see how this work continues.

The **ECRDATF** has worked with the local Sports Partnership and a full steering group of agencies to deliver direct interventions in two large social housing estates in this community where issues and anti-social behaviour have been identified. Further to the evaluation and success of this initiative, it is hoped to further deliver similar work in other identified communities.

East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force

Ten regular and two extra meetings of the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force were held during 2023. The dates were January 18th, February 15th, March 14th, April 18th, May 16th, June 13th, September 12th, October 17th, November 14th and December 5th with special meetings held on July 31st and August 4th. Changes in the membership were also made and recorded over the year.

Name	Sector	Agency	No. of meetings
Pat Kerr ¹	Chairperson	Independent	1
Frank Gallagher ²	Chairperson	Independent	9
Tommy Annesley, Cllr	Elected Representative	Wicklow County Council – Arklow Municipal District	4
Eileen Brassington	Community	North Wicklow/Greystones	7
Shiela Busher	Community	South Wicklow/Arklow	4
Michelle Byrne, Insp ²	Statutory	An Garda Síochána	2
John Craven	Statutory	HSE Addiction Service	10
Dolores Goucher	Community	Mid-Wicklow/Wicklow town	6
Deborah Jordan ¹	Community	Deputy Chairperson	2
Winifred Kelly ¹	Voluntary	Mid-Wicklow/Wicklow town	0
Kirsty Kirkwood ²	Voluntary	Simon Community/Wicklow County Council Housing Dept	6
Peir Leonard, Cllr	Elected Representative	T&R Subgroup representative	10
Kay O'Connor ³	Voluntary	Wicklow County Council – Arklow Municipal District	4
AnneMarie O'Leary	Community	County Wicklow Partnership Ltd	1
Niall O'Shea	Independent	Avoca Community Representative	7
Martina Robinson ²	Community	Financial Advisor	2
John Snell, Cllr	Elected Representative	Wicklow Town Representative	6
Deborah Jordan ²	Staff	Wicklow County Council – Wicklow Municipal District	8
Maeve Shanley	Staff	ECRDATF Development Worker	12

- (1.) **Members who left the ECRDATF during 2023**
- (2.) **Members who joined ECRDATF during 2023**
- (3.) **Member who took extended leave during 2023**

The Task Force have a number of agreed subgroups and, when required, set up additional subgroups to deliver on specific tasks and projects agreed in its workplan.

The Finance, Audit and Risk Subgroup

This group reviews funding issues and work and gives full consideration to funding of one-off pieces submitted. It also goes through the annual funding of projects to appraise the work achieved and make full and clear recommendations to the Task Force members in regard to ongoing funding as per the Task Force terms of reference.

Name	Sector	Agency
Pat Kerr	Independent	Chairperson
Eileen Brassington	Community	North Wicklow
Catherine Byrne	Statutory	KWETB
John Craven	Statutory	HSE Addiction Service
Kay O'Connor	Voluntary	County Wicklow Partnership Ltd
Niall O'Shea	Independent	Finance Lead/Advisor
Maeve Shanley	Statutory	Task Force Coordinator

The Treatment and Recovery Subgroup

This group comprises members of each of the funded projects along with other identified services to assist the development of a range of treatment and recovery options based on a holistic approach to care planning and case management of our service users. The group met five times in 2023 along with a community event where the projects were encouraged to meet each other and the community members in attendance, particularly any new staff and/or project to help encourage interagency cooperation in the interests of the service users.

Name	Sector	Agency	No. of meetings
Anne Bolger	Statutory	HSE YoDA East Coast	3
Clodagh Flanagan	Community	Therapist assigned to YoDA team	2
Christine Keegan ¹	Voluntary	Wicklow Child & Family Project	3
Kirsty Kirkwood ¹	Voluntary	Living Life Counselling	4
Phil Thompson	Voluntary	Tiglin Teen Challenge Services	2
Angela Tierney	Statutory	HSE Addiction Rehabilitation Services	5
Shane Von Metzradt	Voluntary	MQI CRIS Project	5
Maeve Shanley	Statutory	Task Force Coordinator	5
Deborah Jordan ²	Voluntary	Task Force Development Worker	2

- (1.) Member left the T&R group during 2023
- (2.) Members who joined the T&R group during 2023

ECRDATAF Strategic Plan and Evaluation of Projects (2020 reports)

Tendering for the Adult Drug and Alcohol Service and the Adult Counselling (Initial) service were very successful and both these services were ready and able to commence work at the start of the year and take in new clients immediately.

Group 2 was set up to award a tender for Under-18 Tier-2 drug and alcohol problematic users in the East Coast Region. This group comprised:

Name	Sector	Agency
Pat Kerr	Independent	Chairperson
Eileen Brassington	Community	North Wicklow area
Deborah Jordan	Community	Wicklow town area
Dolores Goucher	Community	Wicklow area representative
Maeve Shanley	Statutory	Task Force Coordinator

The group met on a large number of times to compile and design the service parameters required to deliver this service. Whereas the adult service was in existence and information on what worked and was needed was somewhat available, this was not the case with this service. The group was able to finalise the tender documents and publish on a local platform. The documents required comprised the main tender document, a tender document checklist and a tender assessment sheet which were scrutinised and re-edited a number of times. The tender was then made 'live' for 4 weeks. All applications were acknowledged and the group reconvened to make an assessment. Unfortunately, none of the tenders met the minimum criteria specified and thus, none were chosen. This was then conveyed to the main Task Force members who ratified the decision. All tenderers were notified.

The group continued to meet and agreed that, as it was unclear what numbers of Under-18s were expected, one or two pilot sites would be chosen to help identify the need and evidence the parameters of a service for this cohort. Two services were approached to provide the pilot sites for this work. Both eventually agreed, but due to personnel changes, time was lost in progressing this work. Recruitment from the beginning of 2023 proved very difficult and one project had to re-advertise three times until a suitable candidate came forward. Work in delivering on the key objectives of this work was greatly delayed and only commenced in October 2023 when the two workers were in place. The HSE YoDA East Coast team proved invaluable in mentoring and assisting with the referrals of a number of new clients to get the services up and running at this time.

Following the poor delivery of a Family Support Service report and unclear understanding of the brief, it was decided to put this report aside. The further compilation of current provision of Family Support Services and gaps identified has now been allocated to the Development Worker within their role.

Proposals submitted for enhanced funding of services in 2022.

Second Cocaine proposal (June 2023) €500,000 over 4 new initiatives + enhancements

An enhanced proposal was developed for a HSE CHE initiative to address the Harm from Cocaine and 'Crack' Cocaine in this region. Despite the very short timeline, it was developed across the 3 Task Forces of HSE CHE (East Coast Regional, Bray Local and Dun Laoghaire Local) with inputs and data provided by the funded services in each. Although addressing and scoring highly in each category of the proposal, it was deemed 'unsuccessful'. Little was offered by way of explanation as to how subsequent proposals could meet the needs of the assessor/panel

Staff of the Task Force

There are two staff members of the Task Force – a Coordinator and a Development Worker.

The ECRDATF Coordinator is employed directly by the HSE as a Grade VII worker. The Coordinator is currently without line management but was previously line managed by the HSE Addiction Services Area Operations Manager (or acting Area Operations Manager) from the CHO7 base at Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Dublin 10.

The Development Worker is hosted and directly employed by County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) Ltd. The Development Worker is employed under the Community Development Worker pay scale and is line managed by the CWP SICAP Coordinator and has a role and job description agreed between the SICAP Coordinator and Task Force. Funding is provided for this role by the Task Force. Regular meetings are held between the SICAP and ECRDATF Coordinators to track progress and advance the projects agreed. The Development Worker has been in place since April 2023.



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