

***East Coast Regional
Drugs and Alcohol
Task Force***

***Strategic Plan
January 2017 – December 2019***

Foreword by Chairperson

The East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force was established under the National Drugs Strategy 2001 -2008 to work with communities who are experiencing issues of drug and alcohol misuse and to support projects in these communities which address an identified need.

The E.C.R.D.A.T.F. represents a partnership between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and has made a significant contribution to addressing drug and alcohol related issues in the East Coast region through the provision of locally based responses that complement existing or planned drug and alcohol programmes and services. The contribution of individual Task Force members in representing their particular sectors has been pivotal to its success.

This strategic plan for 2017 – 2019 presents the findings from extensive consultation between the E.C.R.D.A.T.F., Service Providers, Service Users and the Local Communities. Its aim is to describe a series of agreed, evidence-based strategic and operational actions that will be delivered over the next three years. These actions will enable the Task Force to build on achievements to date; more effectively engage and rehabilitate members of our community battling with addiction and offer practical support to their families.

The Strategic Plan 2017 – 2019 is the outcome of the work of many people and organisations committed to continuing, strengthening and further developing the work done to date in Prevention, Education, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Family Support.

I am very grateful to everyone who contributed to the review and planning process and look forward to the next phase of our journey together.

*Tony Dunne
Chairperson*

Executive Summary

The East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (ECRDATAF) operates using partnership principles and, in that regard, the ECRDATAF provides funding for 7 key projects in order to support challenges for individuals and the community in relation to Drugs and Alcohol misuse as well as operating its own operational budget.

The ECRDATAF currently provides funding to the following projects:

- Wicklow Child and Family Project
- Wicklow Travellers' Group
- ISPCC – Childhood Support Service
- Living Life Counselling Service
- Crosscare – East Wicklow Youth Service
- Tiglin Challenge - Residential Treatment
- Tiglin Challenge - Rehabilitation Integration Service

A review was conducted with external consultant Brian Lynch in early in 2015. This confirmed the projects listed above are an integral part of the ECRDATAF work.

This Strategic Plan offers the chance to build on the excellent work that is already in place within the above projects. By working with the existing skills, strengths and experience, the ECRDATAF has the ability to deliver the ECRDATAF Strategic Plan for 2017-2019 that will be fundamental to the longer term support for:

- (a) those already recognised as problem substance users;
- (b) those with the potential to fall into addiction, including young people;
- (c) creating awareness and educate service users, their families, other professional services and the community regarding the negative impact of illicit/ licit drugs and alcohol; and
- (d) strengthening the interagency relationships among the statutory, community, voluntary and other agencies connected with the ECRDATAF.

Whilst the ECRDATAF recognises that the current National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 is due to expire this year and discussions regarding a new strategy are under way, the Task Force members agree it is important at this stage to outline our future strategic aims for the East Coast Region. It is our intention that our annual review and planning process will be cognisant of including any new actions identified under any new agreed National Drugs Strategy. We are conscious to keep a clear link to national policy and local outcomes in our approach to combating drugs and alcohol misuse.

Introduction

Established in 2003, the East Coast Regional Drugs Task Force was the outcome of the government's initiative in response to the increasing Irish drug problem and the National Drugs Strategy 2001–2008. The role of the Task Force was to work with communities who are experiencing issues of drug misuse and to support relevant projects in these communities which address an identified need.

The Task Force currently operates under the National Drugs Strategy 2009 -2016 and, since January 2014, this role has been expanded to include Alcohol Misuse. To this end, the Drug Policy and Programme Unit in the Department of Health has renamed this Task Force as the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (ECRDATAF).

In 2013, the HSE appointed Maeve Shanley as Coordinator of the ECRDATAF. Maeve is employed by the HSE and, in conjunction with the ECRDATAF and its Chairperson, plays a pivotal role in assisting the Task Force in developing and implementing its regional drugs strategy. The ECRDATAF constantly assess the extent and nature of the drug and alcohol problem in the East Coast Region and, subsequently, responds and coordinates services to address these.

The ECRDATAF must adhere to the National Drug Strategy but it also has a local identity within the community and given the substantial geographical area and rural setting, ECRDATAF relies on statutory, voluntary and community sectors to work collaboratively; in order to have an effective integrated response to deal with substance misuse issues across the East Coast Region.

The ECRDATAF implement the National Drugs Strategy (NDS) in the context of meeting the needs of their region or local area using the 5 NDS pillars listed below:

- Supply reduction
- Education/Prevention
- Treatment
- Rehabilitation
- Research

In September 2014, the Task Force decided to commence the process of writing a new Strategic Plan as required by the Drugs Task Force Handbook. This would comprise a review of the current and future challenges of the ECRDATAF and creating a Strategic Plan for implementation over the next 3 years.

Processes and Methodologies

The development of this plan involved the following processes.

1. An initial focus workshop with all the ECRDATAF members was facilitated by the Coordinator to reflect on the overall vision and mission along with the requirements of a 3-year Strategy and how the Strategic Planning process would be best achieved.

2. An external consultant was engaged and held on site interviews with all the funded projects and reported back to the ECRDATF on his findings.
3. A short questionnaire was developed and issued to all members and personnel in funded projects regarding current drugs and alcohol issues in the region.
4. A subgroup of the ECRDATF membership assessed the answers provided and presented back a summarised account of the comments and views expressed for consideration and discussion by the ECRDATF members.
5. Subsequently a second workshop day was facilitated by the Coordinator where the ECRDATF members identified clear Strategic Goals and Actions based on the information collated.
6. The process was guided, at all times, with reference to relevant National policies and documentation.

Overall Direction of ECRDATF

Vision Statement

The vision statement of the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force is to operate with a number of partnership organisations and agencies to make a positive contribution to the service users and local communities and coordinate quality services and supports in the area of supply reduction, treatment, rehabilitation, education, prevention and research.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force is to work in partnership with statutory, voluntary and community sectors to significantly reduce the harm caused by substance misuse through a concerted focus on supply reduction, education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research.

Revised Terms of Reference of Drugs and Alcohol Task Forces (DPU, June 2014)

- To coordinate the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy in the context of the needs of the region/local area
- To implement the actions in the National Drugs Strategy where Task Forces have been assigned a role
- To promote the implementation of evidence-based local/regional drug and alcohol strategies and to exchange best practice
- To support and strengthen community based responses to drug and alcohol misuse
- To maintain an up-to-date overview on the nature and extent of drug and alcohol misuse in the area/region
- To identify and report on emerging issues and advocate for the development of policies or actions needed to address them
- To monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of the funded projects and their continued relevance to the local/regional drugs task force strategy and to recommend changes in the funding allocations as deemed necessary

Review/Evaluation of Existing Projects

The ECRDATF currently funds a number of projects/programmes and sought to have the 7 separate projects externally evaluated as to their:

- relevance to the priority and emerging needs in the East Coast Region
- value for money (VFM)

Key questions in relation to VFM included:

- Their use of resources
- Interagency work, with other relevant services (thus preventing duplication of services)
- The efficiency of their systems and activities
- Their effectiveness in terms of outputs and outcomes
- The evidence-base they are working from
- What criteria they meet in relation to relevant quality standards

Based on a review of the methods (2015 data) currently being use among the projects the current direction and needs were identified as:

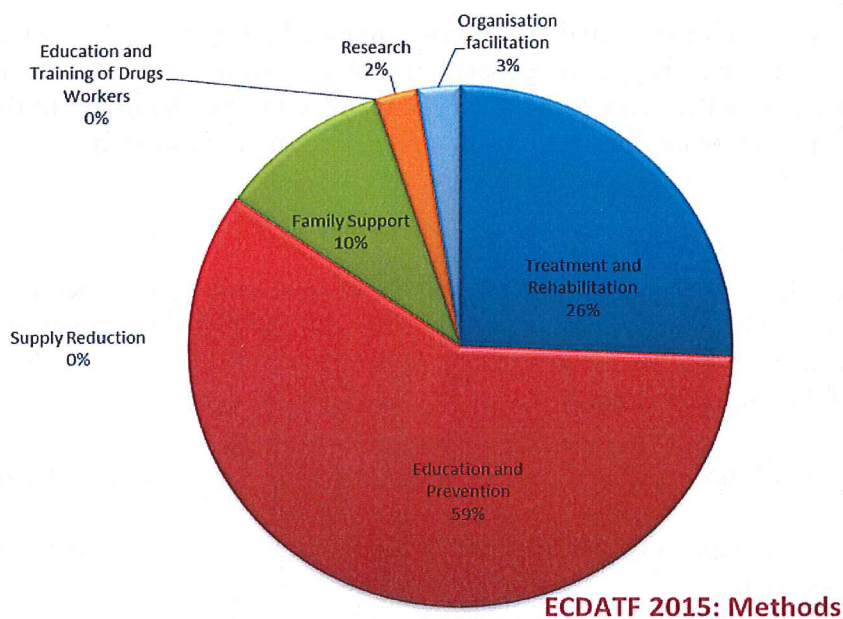


Figure 1

Figure 1 above highlights the following:

Organisation Facilitation

Track funding/spend effectively and use combined information to establish value for money and support the projects by sharing information on costs where we have identified synergies and possible overlap of service provision.

Research and Communications

Clearly define roles and responsibilities as part of the ECRDATF and establish one floating information hub for initial engagement for both the clients and the agencies and services. To provide consistent referral information, maintain interagency relationships and provide awareness/education within the community.

Create a system to capture all project information from objectives, client impacts, methods and outcomes and use this combined approach to establish gaps and opportunities. For example, a bi-weekly form to be completed and sent to the ECRDATF Coordinator for collation and dissemination, when appropriate.

Engage in research to support the challenges presenting in the East Coast Region and share effectively, using modern and impacting mediums, regarding findings, project updates, achievements and best in class practices.

Education & Training

Create a development plan for the ECRDATF to increase knowledge and skill sets. Utilise existing subject matter experts among the projects to bring awareness to the communities.

Supply Reduction

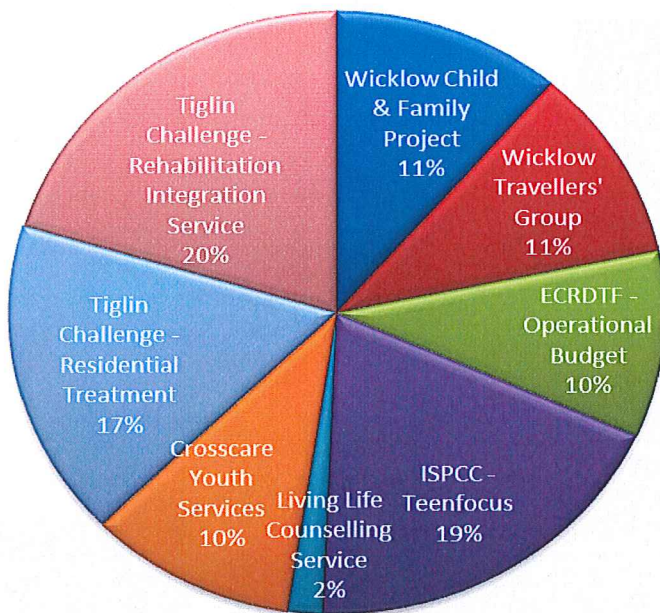
As per NDS Supply Reduction Pillar, (Introduction, P18, 2.6,) assessment of progress is defined by the following issues (and therefore not included in this document)

- Number of drug seizures and volume of drugs seized
- Legislative changes in regard to illicit drugs
- Garda resources in Drug Task Force areas
- Expansion of Community Policing Fora (CPF)
- Specialist training for the judiciary on drug related issues

Project Funding Review – The Task Force has a clear role in implementing a strategy and management system which contributes to its governance and use of financial resources.

Overall Funding 2015

Figure 2



From figure 2, the dispersal of funding across each stream is identified and it was evident that the expenditure on each of the projects is very relevant and although there may be scope to using buying power on some elements i.e., printing collateral etc. overall spending is specific to the project and appears to be well managed.

This spend is evenly balanced between employee costs of €273,398 or 48% of the global annual ECRDATF budget and other costs of €293,302 accounting for 52% of the annual budget and made up of programme and other costs associated with delivering each initiative.

ECRDATAF 2015:

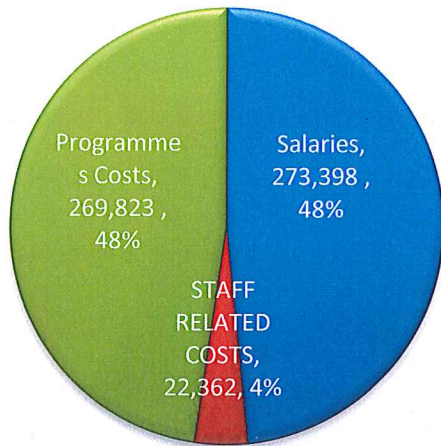


Figure 3

From figure 3 it is noted that the spend on Research and creating an Information Hub for the ECRDATAF that links all the project/agencies and supports may initially require additional funding, however, this will achieve long term benefits and cohesiveness for service provision for the region.

Figure 4 below, giving a summary of the programme costs, are of the project spends taken from the Income and Expenditure forms supplied at the end of 2015.

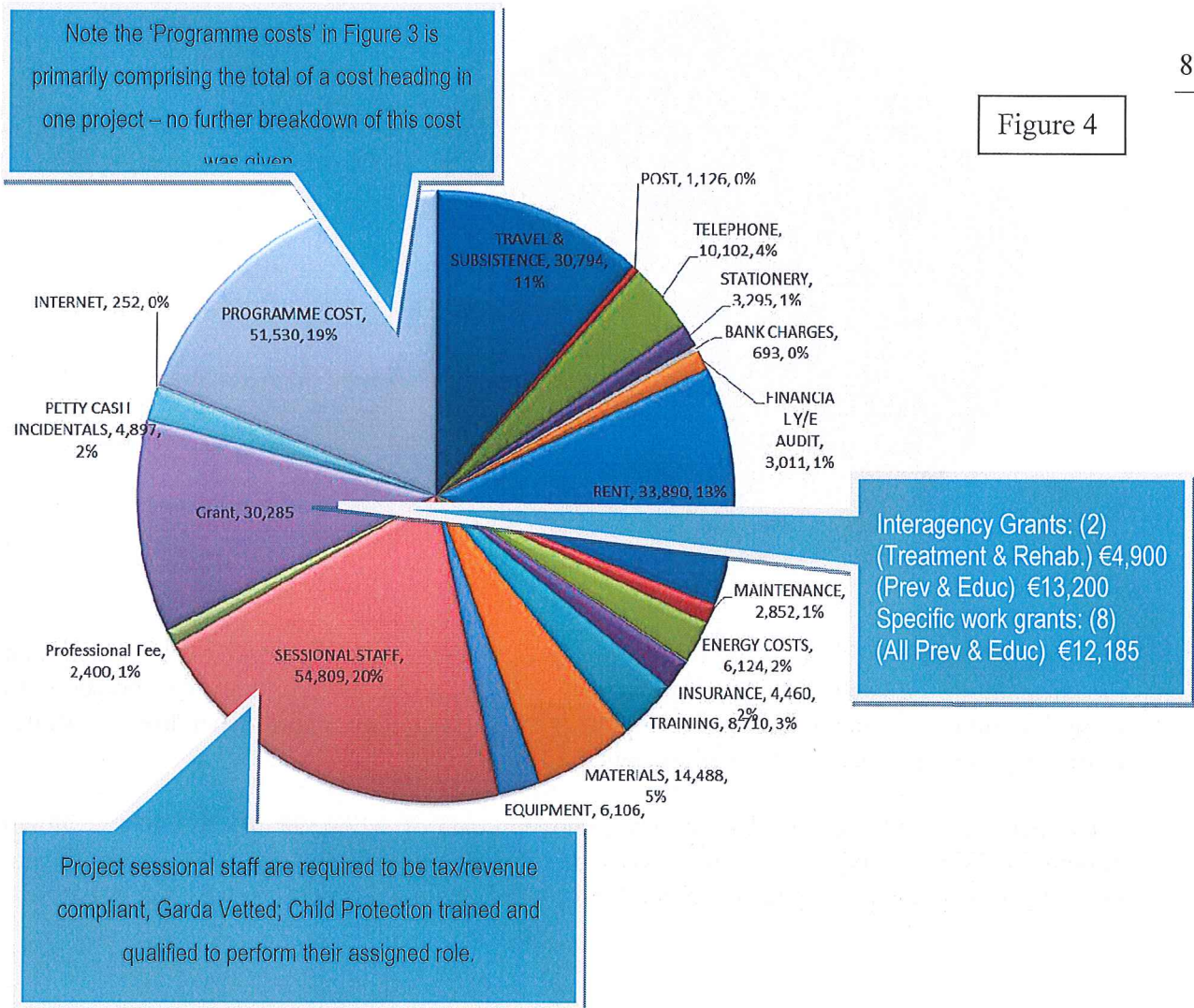


Figure 4

East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force Strategy 2017-2019 Strategic Goals and Actions

Supply Reduction Pillar

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
1.1	Ensure all Task Force members support and engage in the work of supply reduction	All members are engaged in the Dial to Stop Drug Dealing campaign All members assist in the Garda Referral System
1.2	Support agencies and services which deal directly with supply monitoring	Engage in communication with the Gardaí and Revenue services Ensure that the Task Force can interface with the local JPCs Monitor and report on unsafe prescribing practices Develop specific responses to the illegal supply of alcohol
1.3	Monitor and communicate drug use levels and emerging trends	Strengthen the channels of communication from all committees
1.4	Enhance communication across all areas	Encourage participation of committee members and the community by active engagement initiatives

Prevention Pillar

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
2.1	Strengthen and develop education prevention initiatives for all ages	Review membership of P&E committee Review objectives of P&E committee
2.2	Strengthen interagency collaboration in the interest of the service user	Identify and promote specific interagency projects Progress the service user involvement initiative
2.3	Take an active role in the promotion of healthier lifestyle choices	Provide a holistic approach to drugs and alcohol prevention activities
2.4	Strengthen the links with national and government health strategies	Engage with the Healthy Ireland strategy

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Treatment Pillar

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
3.1	Assess to ensure adequate appropriate treatment is in place in the East Coast Region to respond to the diverse requirements of drugs and alcohol service users	Monitor new trends and source sound evidence based data e.g. HRB data.
3.2	Maintain adequate resources to meet the identified needs of drugs and alcohol service users in the East Coast Region	Support existing services and continue to identify needs of services and service users
3.3	Monitor and evaluate treatment options in the East Coast Region	Source sound evidence based data e.g. HRB data
3.4	Strengthen interagency collaboration to provide the service user with a continuum of care plan to meet his/her needs	Strive to engage with and increase numbers accessing services
3.5	Develop and support service users forums	Progress the service users involvement initiative

Rehabilitation Pillar

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
4.1	Assess to ensure adequate appropriate rehabilitation and integration services are in place in the East Coast Region to respond to the diverse requirements of drugs and alcohol service users	Monitor new trends Source sound evidence based data e.g. HRB data
4.2	Strengthen interagency collaboration to provide the service user with a continuum of care plan to meet their needs using the National Drug Rehabilitation Framework	Strive to engage with and increase numbers accessing services Ensure targets are delivered
4.3	Develop and support service user forums	Progress the service users involvement initiative
4.4	Strengthen the links to 'wrap around' services	Develop and support family support services

Research

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
5.1	Increase the availability and dissemination of local and national data on the issues affecting service users, existing services and trends affecting drug and alcohol use	Strengthen committee participation. Formalise links with local JPC, CYPSC, homeless actions teams and other relevant groups
5.2	Ensure that data supplied and compiled is readily available and reviewed	Highlight gaps and blocks affecting service users
5.3	Participate in local and national research	Participate in consultations regarding the next national strategy
5.4	Identify and commission, if necessary, research that will add value and help inform service developments	Identify relevant data already available and commission research where data is needed

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Coordination

	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
6.1	Ensure the Task Force is informed in its work by the plans of other services and agencies in the East Coast Region	Ensure regular updates from Statutory members about their organisation's drug and alcohol plans in the East Coast Region
6.2	Monitor membership on all Task Force groups	Strengthen membership on the Task Force Review membership on T&R and P&E groups
6.3	Ensure that the Task Force works from a model of interagency and partnership to deliver on its actions	Identify gaps and blocks to the work of the Task Force and address them
6.4	Ensure that information is disseminated through the members of the Task Force and their organisations to the service users and the wider community	Strengthen the nominations process for membership on committees to ensure each member has a clear understanding of his/her role
6.5	Monitor trends and emerging issues	Ensure the Task Force constantly updates its information

6.6	Develop the capacity of the Task Force to coordinate integrated responses to drugs and alcohol use in the East Coast Region	Review the membership of all Task Force groups
6.7	Deliver value for money projects	Ensure there is no duplication in the projects and services delivered Ensure services are supported by the Task Force and work together to identify adequate resources to deliver the agreed service
6.8	Ensure that the Task Force demonstrates good corporate governance in all its dealings	Support and strengthen the structure of the Task Force Meet the requests for information from other services and agencies e.g. DPU, HSE
6.9	Raise the profile of the Task Force through enhanced communication and information dissemination	Progress initiatives which promote the Task Force and its work e.g. Information hub.
6.10	Expand the work to include alcohol as required by the DPU	Develop a plan to specifically address alcohol pending its inclusion in the next national strategy

Appendix I – Contributors

The East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force would like to thank the following for their contributions which have assisted in the development of this Strategic Plan.

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