

EDACT NEWS

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The Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team (EDACT), based within the Public Health Agency (PHA), is responsible for implementing the Northern Ireland alcohol and drugs strategy across the Belfast and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust areas.

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Review of the *New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs*

The *New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs* (NSDAD) was launched in 2006, and is due to run until 2011. Previous alcohol and drug strategies in Northern Ireland have had a five year time span, and the current NSDAD was developed against that background, hence it is also a five year strategy. However the time involved in a formal review and then developing a new strategy using current protocols and addressing expectations means that a strategy rarely reaches its medium and long-term objectives. This would appear to be counter-intuitive in respect of developing and delivering a long-term strategic view and plan, and in particular against the current financial climate.

Therefore the Health Development Policy Branch of DHSSPS have proposed that rather than carrying out a full formal review and developing a new strategy the existing one should be reviewed, revised, updated and then extended for a further five years.

The time frame for this process is as follows:

- Discussion and assessment of current outcomes
February – May 2010
- Discussion and assessment of aims and objectives
May – June 2010
- Formulation of additional outcomes/extension of existing outcomes
July – November 2010
- Discussion/Consultation on revised and updated NSD
November 2010 – January 2011
- Publication of revised and extended NSD (2011–2016)
January - March 2011

The initial stages will involve key stakeholders such as the PHA, drugs and alcohol coordination teams, NSDAD advisory groups, NSDAD steering group and liaison group and the Independent Sector Forum.



TATI Coordinator appointed

Talking to your Children about Tough Issues (TATI) is a three-session programme aimed at helping parents communicate better with their children about risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol and drug misuse. The workshops are designed to help parents understand and build protective factors into their family life that may help prevent problems across a range of risky behaviours.

Carla Smyth has just been appointed TATI Coordinator in the EDACT area (based in Lisburn YMCA) and will be responsible for promoting the scheme and supporting both facilitators and parents during the delivery of the project. It is hoped that the programme can be expanded through more individuals becoming facilitators and then passing on their knowledge to parents in the local community. Both the training to become a TATI facilitator and the actual workshops for parents are free to attend.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Carla on Tel: 028 9267 0918 or by emailing tatiymca@yahoo.co.uk

Workforce development training

ASCERT have been commissioned by EDACT to develop a range of practitioner training programmes to enable all those working with clients with alcohol and drug issues to be more effective and to feel more confident in their working practice.

All courses are **free of charge** for those working within the Belfast or South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust areas.

As well as providing bespoke and in-house training ASCERT offers the following accredited courses:

- Educating and supporting individuals about the effects of alcohol and drug misuse (2 days)
- Understanding brief intervention approaches and how to use them with drug and alcohol misusing clients (2 days)
- Practical ways of working with substance misusing clients: assessment to referral (5 days)
- Groupwork facilitation skills for practitioners working with substance misusers (5 days)
- Understanding approaches to effectively working with and treating substance misuse (5 days)
- Managing and developing practitioners and teams working with substance misusing clients (5 days)
- Planning and evaluating prevention programmes (2 days)
- Putting prevention into practice – developing and delivering effective prevention programmes (5 days)
- Taking the lid off: a course aimed at those in roles where they encounter substance misuse within a family (2 days)

For a registration pack for any of these courses contact Noel Kennedy, Training Administrator, on training@ascert.biz or register online at www.ascert.biz

Community Drug Awareness Training (CDAT)

EDACT has funded a consortium made up of ASCERT, FASA and Falls Community Council to provide a range of training options to those working in the community/voluntary sector. All courses are **free of charge** for those working in the Belfast or South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust areas.

Course options:

Non-accredited options

One day bespoke training or one day modular options:

- Basic drug awareness
- Substance misuse and young people
- Understanding substance misuse: a guide for parents
- Understanding addiction
- Substance misuse and risk-taking behaviour
- Reducing substance misuse related harm
- Developing community based responses to substance misuse
- Understanding risk and protective factors
- Drugs and alcohol in the workplace: developing and implementing a workplace policy

Accredited options

- OCN Level 1
- OCN Level 2
- OCN Level 3 'Train the Trainer'
- NCFE Certificate in mental health awareness (Level 1)
- OCN Level 3 Community drug awareness 'Train the Trainer'
- OCN Level 3 Masterclass: The origins and implications of a substance
- OCN Level 3 Addiction studies

For more information on any of these courses contact:

- Jeanette at ASCERT on Tel: 028 9260 4422
- Benny at Falls Community Council on Tel: 028 9020 2030
- Alex at FASA on Tel: 028 9080 3040

Alternatively talk to your local community support worker (see contact details on page 6).

Parental awareness campaign

EDACT, in partnership with the Community Safety Unit (NIO), Belfast Community Safety Partnership and the Parents Advice Centre has been running an advertising campaign to ensure that parents who want help to address their children's drinking can access the support provided by a range of local agencies. The current campaign ran in November 2009, and then from January to March 2010, and will be repeated again in late 2010 and early 2011.

The advertising materials (posters and credit cards) direct parents to the Parents Advice Centre's freephone helpline which is staffed by trained employees and volunteers, and to a website www.alcoholparentsupport.com which gives information and advice as well as contact details for a range of local agencies that can provide support to parents.

When the campaign was run last year it resulted in a 62% increase in the number of substance misuse related calls to the Parents Advice Centre.



Intensive support pilot

In addition to the mainstream Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service for Youth (DAISY), funded by EDACT, a pilot multi-agency response has been established to address the needs of young high risk chronic substance misusers. The pilot is running from September 2009 until March 2011. The following agencies are involved on the multi-agency referral panel:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service for Youth (DAISY)
- Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team (EDACT)
- Loughshore Education and Resource Centre
- South Eastern Education and Library Board
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Youth Justice Agency

Members of the multi-agency panel identify high risk young people within their services whose substance misuse is deemed to be a significant problem in their lives. A selection of these young people are then able to avail of a range of intensive support services, in addition to the

mainstream services provided by DAISY, such as:

- Initial contact/assessment made within 24 hours
- 24/7 telephone support
- Individualised wraparound service plan
- Fast tracking into services
- Intensive case management
- Daily contact (first two weeks)
- Robust engagement/re-engagement policy
- Crisis response

It is anticipated that each young person in the service will receive on average six months' intensive support with the recognition that for some clients this may need to be extended. There are weekly case review meetings for each young person, continuing until the panel determines that the intensive service is no longer necessary for the client. The role of DAISY is to add value to the current services the young person may be receiving. DAISY will maintain close contact with the referring agencies to ensure that as much cross fertilisation takes place as possible with the aim that the 'all agency support approach' is maintained throughout the life of the ISP intervention.

Regional Initial Assessment Tool (RIAT)

The Regional Initial Assessment Tool (RIAT) for substance misuse in young people involves



training non-specialist (in terms of substance misuse) staff working at Tier 2 level who would have regular contact with children and young people who may be using alcohol and/or drugs. Once they have completed the RIAT training, these staff will be able to use the tool to assess the level of risk and need regarding the young person's

substance misuse and will be enabled to either intervene themselves (if Tier 1 or 2 needs are identified) or to make an appropriate referral to a more specialist substance misuse service (Tier 3 and/or mental health issues also identified).

The RIAT has been successfully piloted within the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) community services projects and is now being rolled out across the whole of the YJA, ie into youth conferencing and secure accommodation. Discussions with social services are ongoing and consideration is being given to targeting either the education sector or the youth work sectors in 2010/11.

Drugs accommodation support project

In October 2008 Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI) held a seminar on 'Drugs, housing and the law: guidance for accommodation providers' in response to issues raised around the difficulties of accommodating active drug users, particularly IV users.

Following on from concerns expressed by hostel staff at this seminar, a working group was established with representation from the PHA's Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team (EDACT), CHNI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service (PPS), Extern's Multidisciplinary Homeless Support Team and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Having considered examples of good practice from elsewhere, the working group felt that the best way forward would be a specialist low threshold accommodation project with strong links to treatment services and agreement with the PSNI and PPS on how the project is to be managed. The group felt that a member of staff was needed to support the project and, in particular, liaise with treatment services. This individual, who will be employed by Extern, will work to ensure that those accommodated within the project are provided with support in changing their drug using behaviour and in engaging with and maintaining contact with treatment services. The project will begin this year and will be reviewed in 2011 to assess whether it is meeting the needs of the stakeholders.

Evaluation of GP brief interventions on alcohol training

The 'How much is too much' course took place on 11 March 2009 in the Wellington Park Hotel in Belfast. It was a training programme for primary care clinicians on delivering brief alcohol interventions. The course was designed locally, by a steering group made up of GPs and some of the materials were designed by Professor

Eileen Kaner and colleagues from Gateshead Primary Care Trust and Northumbria University.

The programme provides a simple way of determining which patients are sensible drinkers, which patients should be offered simple structured advice or a more extended brief intervention, and which may require referral because of possible alcohol dependence. An invitation to participate in the training programme was sent to all GPs in the former Eastern Board area with 25 expressing an interest, and subsequently attending the course.

Perceptive Insight Market Research evaluated the training and produced a report in early February 2010. The general opinion of all interviewees was that the course was useful, insightful and interesting, highlighting a sensitive yet important issue. This was demonstrated in their unanimous recommendation of the training to colleagues, their unanimous application of the tools since the course, and the positive scoring they gave each of the tools.

A high number of interviewees felt that they were already using the skills discussed at the course in their day-to-day approach with patients for whom alcohol may be a problem. This is likely to be because the GPs interviewed had expressed an interest in attending the course, thus it is likely that they had prior interest and knowledge in dealing with these patients. It is positive that clinicians with prior awareness were unanimous in their recommendation of this course to other colleagues.

However, there were a number of issues raised throughout the research that indicate potential improvements which would enhance the course. The steering group will be meeting to look at these recommendations and it is likely that the training will be offered again in 2010/2011.

Community support service

The community support service can help communities assess the nature of the substance misuse problems in their areas and can work alongside groups and individuals to develop and deliver local initiatives in response to these identified local needs. Contact details for the community support workers and the localities they cover are given below, along with an example from each Trust area of the type of work they have undertaken with communities in the past.

Down and Lisburn: Alison Holdsworth and Susan Bateman who are based in ASCERT Tel: 028 9260 4422

North Down and Ards: Aislinn Quinn who is based in FASA (Bangor) Tel: 028 9127 1322

Belfast: Diane McMullin (covering North and West) and James Scott (covering South and East) who are based in FASA (Belfast) Tel: 028 9080 3040

Loughside Invitational EDACT CUP 2009

When examining what would motivate young people to avoid or reduce substance misuse, the two community



support workers (CSWs) covering Belfast identified that sport was a major intervention. With the summer months approaching and a lot more free time available for young people, the CSWs decided that a football tournament would be a way of

discouraging them from using drugs and alcohol.

Although this would only be a week-long intervention, it would also give the CSWs access to both parents and coaches from each club, to provide information on services available and encourage enrolment for the free courses through CDAT.



With help and direction from North Belfast Loughside Football Club's manager Philip McCann, the tournament was held in Grove Playing Fields between 24 and 27 August 2009. The senior teams (14-18 year olds) played a match each night with the two top teams competing for the EDACT Cup while the two bottom teams competed for the EDACT Plate. A similar format was used on Saturday 29th for the junior teams (10-13 year olds). A total of 24 teams attended the tournament.

The CSWs provided an information stand and took the opportunity to inform all the coaches and parents in attendance of the free courses available under the CDAT programme, as well as about support and services available locally. To date, on the back of this event, three drug awareness programmes and three First Aid Save a Life programmes have been run.

'No Proof – No Party' initiative

An initial community consultation was held by the community support service to assess the need within the Newcastle area. A planning group was then formed with key representatives from both the community/voluntary and statutory sectors and an action plan was developed. Underage drinking and easy access to alcohol within Newcastle were deemed a priority.

As a result the 'No Proof – No Party' identification scheme and accompanying promotional campaign

were officially launched on 25 June 2008 at the Newcastle Centre. The campaign was run in partnership between ASCERT, Down Community Safety, Down District Council, local licensees, the PSNI and the Newcastle Cares community group.

In addition thirty-two employees of the Newcastle licensed trade received alcohol awareness training for the 'No Proof – No Party' initiative with over 90% reporting that the training had improved their knowledge and confidence, and that it had been relevant and beneficial.

'No Proof – No Party' has now been integrated into the Newcastle Sustainability Planning Forum's ongoing strategy. The planning group which was helped initially by the community support service continues to meet and work towards the priorities identified in the action plan.



Emerging trends or issues

Four of the five locality-based drug and alcohol forums have commented on the increased awareness of and use of legal highs, particularly by young people. Mephedrone, also known by slang names such as 'M-cat, meow, magic, bubbles' or simply as 'plant food,' was causing particular concern but has since been classified as a Class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act (as of 16 April 2010) making it illegal to possess or supply.

However, service providers have stated that some of their clients are already reporting taking 'new legal highs' such as naphylone which is once again being marketed as plant food or by the snappier brand name of 'NRG.' As was the case with mephedrone, substances such as this one can be bought on the internet or in head shops and people are taking real risks with their health by using a drug about which

there is very little knowledge in relation to both the short and long-term effects.

In response, the Public Health Agency has produced a factsheet for parents on legal highs and a specific bulletin on mephedrone (Bulletin 1), which are available to download from the 'publications' section of the PHA's website www.publichealth.hscni.net and a number of the community substance misuse providers are developing either information sessions or leaflets on the topic to raise awareness within local communities.

Statutory and community providers in the Belfast area are also reporting a rise in the number of people (in their late twenties to early thirties) attending their services who have returned to glue sniffing due to the credit crunch.

Service user involvement

In late 2009 EDACT invited local organisations providing treatment and/or structured support to individuals with substance misuse problems to apply for funding to run initiatives which would involve their service users in the planning, delivery and evaluation of their services. Funding has now been allocated to three organisations: Carlisle House, Extern and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, all of which are implementing projects which will develop the capacity of their service users and involve them in decision making about the services.

Website update - www.edact.org

The following documents can now be downloaded from the Publications section of our website. You can also obtain hard copies by either calling or emailing Marianne.

(Look under EDACT Publications/EDACT Reports)

- EDACT Statistical Overview for 2007/08
- EDACT Directory of Services for Substance Misuse in the Eastern Area 2009-2011

(Look under Local Publications/Local Materials)

- Services in the Belfast Area
- Services in the South Eastern Area

Please note that in the case of the documents above (which are A3 size, at a glance directory wall charts in hard copy format) you should contact your

local community support worker who will be able to give you a small supply – contact details on page 6.



One Stop Shop service

On Saturday 28 November 2009, FASA One Stop Shop workers, Denise Thompson and Karl Williams along with Karl Egan, (FASA volunteer) worked together with a group of young people from the Harbour Ward area, removing graffiti from the Royal British Legion building in Bangor. Members of Bangor YMCA, local residents and members of the Royal British Legion had joined together to address the anti social behaviour issue of graffiti.



As part of the incentive, money was provided by North Down Borough Council's Cleaner Neighbourhood Programme for the young people to

work with artists from Blaze FX to produce a piece of artwork on the theme of drugs, to be sited at the rear of the Queen's Parade Methodist Church in Bangor.

The young people came up with the 'Meph Mouse' idea, as all of them had experience, either directly or indirectly, with the drug mephedrone.



As we worked, the discussion was all about their experiences: their curiosity, reasons for taking it, how it made them feel and how they might act in the future. As there had been quite a large article in the local press about the drug, we read this and discussed it as well. This was a very worthwhile exercise for all involved with everyone sharing experiences and knowledge.