

ALCOHOL FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

A summary of the activities and
progresses of the Alcohol Forum's work in
tackling Alcohol harms.

2014

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Pat Harvey, Chairman

It gives me pleasure once again as Chairman, on behalf of my fellow Board members to report on the progress of the Alcohol Forum during 2014.

I want to commend the Staff, Volunteers, Board Members and Special Advisors for their excellent work during the year, as the Forum continues to build on the strong foundations laid in previous years.

I am delighted that National Alcohol Awareness Week, initiated by the Alcohol Forum last year has now developed and been adopted at national level with the involvement of partners from the HSE, Alcohol Action Ireland, Drugs.ie and the Royal College of Physicians Ireland. The establishment of a joint steering committee provides the basis for the development of further joint working to address alcohol harm in a co-ordinated way at a national level, and the Alcohol Forum fully supports this initiative. “Alcohol harms to others” was the theme for the 2013 Alcohol Awareness Week which saw national and local events with 39 organisations taking part.

The Alcohol Forum 2nd National Conference was held during Alcohol Awareness Week and brought together 166 delegates to hear some of the most influential international and national speakers on the topic of Harms to Others and I want to commend all those who took part, or helped organise this event. I know that planning is already underway for the 2015 conference and I’m very excited by the quality and scope of what is being planned.

A very significant development is the agreement reached with the Department of Health and the HSE to deliver a National Community Action on Alcohol Pilot project to Regional and Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces. This will be a challenging piece of work in 2015, but I’m confident that the expertise and experience gained locally will be transferable nationally.

Families Matters continue to deliver the successful Strengthen Families Programme in Donegal and has made a very positive impact on the families who attend. Unfortunately we were unable to secure funding to continue the programme in Sligo /Leitrim but will continue to work to bring this programme back there. I want to pay tribute to all the volunteers and agencies who support the programme without whose help it would not be possible.

The work of the Alcohol Forum in bringing Alcohol Related Brain Injury to the agenda of services continues with the development of key resources to support families and professionals, and increase awareness and understanding of the condition.

I want to pay tribute and thank Mr John O Kane Deputy Director and acknowledge his work over the last two years, and wish him well in the future, his contribution to developing and sustaining the work of the Forum is appreciated.

I want to welcome Mr Kieran Doherty who has joined the Alcohol Forum as Chief Executive Office and I look forward to working with him.

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I want to thank those who support the work of the Alcohol Forum, our funders from the statutory sector the HSE and Tusla, North West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Forum and our corporate supporters who help us with the important work that we do.

I want to sincerely thank the Board members, Special Advisors, staff and volunteers and all those that assist us in anyway.

Pat Harvey
Chairman



Kieran Doherty, CEO

Since joining the Alcohol Forum in September 2014 i have seen at first hand the quality, dedication, and commitment of staff and volunteers, to the work of reducing and preventing alcohol related harm at a local and national level.

I know this is not possible without the support and good will of the board, volunteers and our funders and i want to say a sincere thank you to them all.

During 2014 the Alcohol Forum has had a number of major achievements. The development of alcohol awareness week, initiated by the Forum in 2013 into a national partnership with other like-minded organisation is significant and can be built on.

The National Alcohol Conference goes from strength to strength, both in its quality and scope but also in its reach to delegates and is quickly becoming the leading conference for professionals and community leaders.

The work of Anne Timony Meehan in the area of Community Action on Alcohol continues to grow, and getting agreement with the HSE and Department of Health on a National Pilot Project for 2015 has been a real step change for transferring local action to the national agenda.

Donna Bulter work with the Families Matters division continues to deliver Strengthen Families Programmes and develop the advocacy service to families in Donegal.

Also making an impact at a national level is the work of Dr Helen Mc Monagle who leads on Alcohol Related Brian Injury, the development of resources, training and ongoing case coordination, paves the way for further development in 2015.

The work of Ciara Doyle, Youth and Family Liaison Worker in the area of Hidden Harm, is important in mapping out for the Alcohol Forum the service gaps and requirements to respond effectively in this critical area.

I want to thank Mr John O Kane Deputy Director for all his help, support and kindness and wish him well in his new role.

The Alcohol Forum can look forward to 2015 with clarity and confidence and continue to deliver on its mission to work with individuals, families and communities to reduce and prevent alcohol harms in Ireland.



Families Matter: by Ms Donna Butler, Regional Programme Manager

During 2014 Family Matters continues work to provide dedicated support to families through the Strengthening Families programme (SFP) and Families Matter Advocacy Service.

The Strengthening Families Programme has continued to develop as a whole-family multi-disciplinary approach which is supported by a dedicated management and operational team.

The International Fund for Ireland which had funded the pilot SFP programme in Sligo ceased and the programme was not in a position to continue. The Alcohol Forum remains committed to the reintroduction of the programme in Sligo /Leitrim and I want to thank Carol O Laughlin and Mary Mc Grath for their dedicated work in running the pilot programme successfully. It has certainly left a very positive impact on the families and services who were involved in Sligo Leitrim.

SFP in Donegal it is funded by the North West Regional Drugs Task Force (NWRDATF), HSE Mental Health services and Tusla the child and family agency, and the Alcohol Forum wishes to acknowledge and thank these agencies for their support in bringing this programme to families.

During 2014, forty four families were referred to the programme. Thirty two families commenced the programme involving **forty three** adults and **fifty three** children. The strength of the programme is reflected in the retention rates which was 90.6%. This is very significant for a whole family programme.

Strengthening Families Programme 2014

	Programme 15	Programme 16	Programme 17	Programme 18	Total
Age Group:	6-12 years	6-12 years	12-16 years	12-16 years	
Location:	Letterkenny	Letterkenny	Donegal Town	Letterkenny	
No. of Referrals:	8 Families	9 Families	13 Families	14 Families	44 Families
Started Programme:	8 Families	8 Families	9 Families	8 Families	32 Families
Completed Programme:	7 Families	8 Families	8 Families	7 Families	29 Families (90.6% retention rate)
Total Member:	25	24	22	22	96

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Again the strength and commitment to the programme of our partner agencies is commended. We would not be in a position to deliver these programmes one evening per week for 14 weeks, without the support and commitment of staff from other agencies. Each programme requires six trained facilitators per night.

During 2014 the agencies that supported the programme with facilitators included Donegal Education and Training Board, Tusla, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Donegal, An Garda Siochana, Clonleigh Family Resource Centre, Donegal Mental Services, Foroige, Letterkenny Youth and Family Service, Parent Stop, Lifeline Inishowen, Cara House and the Tusla Foster Support team. Our sincere thanks to all these facilitators and their agencies.

In the years to date, a total of 22 Strengthening Families Programmes have been rolled out throughout the North West, 18 of which were in Donegal and 4 in Sligo/Leitrim. In total 184 families (147 of which were in Donegal) have completed SFP North West, with a total of 521 individual participants (389 of which were in Donegal).

Implementing SFP North West continues to require the active support of our partner organisations, and during 2014 32 additional people attended our two day group leader training from a variety of partner agencies.

Development of Families Matter Advocacy Service

In 2013 a Bespoke FETEC Level 6 Certificate in Advocacy was developed between Families Matter and Carlow IT and following the attendance and successful submission and an assignment all 12 Advocates Graduated at a ceremony in June 2014. The graduation was hosted by Families Matter and attended by Funders, Carlow IT, Advisory and Board Members, graduates and their families.

In 2014 FM Advocacy Service promotional literature, Advocacy Toolkit booklet and suite of policies were developed, designed and printed. Families Matter Advocacy Service commenced implementation in 2014 and was made available to all families who have previously or who had currently being attending the in the Strengthening Families Programme.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all the Family Matters staff, our volunteers, funders and stakeholders. Without their time and effort we would not have been able to deliver such fantastic outcomes.



Community Action on Alcohol: by Anne Timony Meehan

The Alcohol Forum's Community Action on Alcohol programme in 2014 continued to reach out to various communities across the island of Ireland helping them to learn and understand more about the harms caused by alcohol misuse and strengthening their ability to identify and respond to alcohol issues locally.

Significantly in 2014 agreement was reached to establish a National Community Action on Alcohol Project pilot, in partnership with the Department of Health, the HSE and Regional and local Drugs and Alcohol Taskforces, to be implemented of a pilot in five task force areas in 2015.

Again the Alcohol Forum held a very successful national conference and continued to lead on National Alcohol Awareness week.

- 1. Community engagement through development and Training:** – In 2014 the Alcohol Forum delivered 30 training sessions to 749 participants on a number of themes, in Counties Tipperary, Carlow/Kilkenny, Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Fermanagh, Tyrone and Donegal.
- 2. The training included:** - “Streetwise4Life” for school pupils; Responsible Server of Alcohol; Alcohol Awareness Level One Training; Alcohol & Health for Women; Young people and substances; Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD), Training on Festival Care; Alcohol and Mental Health, Spirit of Sport, and Alcohol Awareness & Hidden Harms for the Nursing Studies course at LYIT.

In addition the Alcohol Forum participated in a range of community events attended by over 350 people such as Youth groups, Community action on alcohol groups, schools and community groups to raise awareness of the issue of alcohol harms in communities and support organisations and community groups to identify actions to reduce alcohol related harm at a local level.

A range of seasonal messages were developed and circulated to 24 Drug and Alcohol Taskforces 106 family resource centres and highlighted through social media. Specific campaigns on safety messages around alcohol were targeted at St Patrick day events, Halloween, Exam Results time and Christmas and the New Year.

3. Alcohol Forum National Conference 2014

The Alcohol Forum's 2nd Annual National Conference took place on the 2nd April 2014 in the Convention Centre Dublin. The conference was the flagship event of Alcohol Awareness week 2014 and was run under the umbrella of the National Healthcare Conference. The conference theme “Alcohol's Harm to Others” was chosen to compliment Alcohol Awareness Week, and key note speakers were chosen for their expertise in the area.

Pat Harvey Executive Chair of the Alcohol Forum welcomed the 165 delegates, guests and speakers who attended the conference, and introduced the Chairman Denis Bradley. We were delighted to welcome back to give the opening address Junior Minister for Health Alex White TD.

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Professor Robin Room, Director of the Centre for Alcohol policy and Research at the University of Melbourne and advisor to the World Health organisation since 1975, delivered the keynote address on “Alcohol’s harm to others”. Professor Moira Plant, Director of the Alcohol and Health Research Unit and professor of Alcohol studies at the University of the West of England spoke on “Women and Alcohol Harm”. Mr Joe Doyle National Planning Specialist, National Social Inclusion office HSE, gave a very comprehensive outline in his paper “Responding to the recommendations in the Steering Group report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy.”

Dr Anne Hope. Dept Public Health & Primary Care, Trinity College Dublin presented the report “Alcohol’s Harm to Others in Ireland 2014” Dr Michael Byrne Head of Student Health Dept UCC, presented on the innovative approach being taken at University College Cork to tackling Alcohol harms on campus. Dr Helen Mc Monagle Alcohol Related Brain Injury co-ordinator with the Alcohol Forum, outlined the impact of Alcohol related brain injury on the family and society.

The soapbox event again this year prompted lively discussion on the panel, contributors were, Ms Francis Black the Rise Foundation, Michelle Savage, founder of www.fasad.ie, Colin Regan GAA, Dr Frank Murray, Royal College of Physician’s in Ireland and Pearse Finegan Irish College of General Practitioners. The national conference gained widespread media coverage with 48 national and regional, press releases, articles, radio interviews and a TV news slot.



Pat Harvey, Denis Bradley, Cate Hartigan, Tony O'Brien, France Black, Anne Timony Meehan, Dr. Helen Mc Monagle, Dr Moira Plant, Dr Robin Room, Dr Ann Hope, Shauna Mc Cleneghen, Dr Michael O Byrne



Denis Bradley Chairman



Dr Robin Room



Dr Moira Plant



Joe Doyle HSE



Dr Michael Byrne UCC



Michelle Savage FASD.ie



Dr Helen Mc Monagle presents the
Newly launched ARBI Carers
Guide to Dr Robin Room

4. National Alcohol Awareness Week 2014

The Alcohol Forum piloted this initiative in 2013 as a way of stimulating a week long discussion and engagement process for communities and the media to look at Ireland's drinking culture. In 2014 we were delighted this initiative was adopted at a national level with the active involvement of key relevant national organizations including the HSE, Alcohol Action Ireland, Drugs.ie and the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, which culminated in the establishment of a national steering group.

The organization's all played a significant role in the 2014 AAW and took the lead on specific days, organizing events, and promoting these in the media on that day. Some of the key events included, the Launch of an Alcohol and pregnancy leaflet by AAI, the publication of the National Treatment data 2008- 2012 by the Health Research Board, the launch of a position paper and e-learning module by the Irish College of General practitioners, and the Alcohol Forum 2nd National Alcohol Conference.

The theme for Alcohol Awareness Week 2014 which was held from 30th March to 4th was "Alcohol's Harm to others, when *their* drinking becomes *your* problem" focusing on and seeking to enhance the increasing recognition that alcohol harm not only affects the individual, but also affects others around the drinker, including family members, friends, co-workers and the wider community.

The key area of focus being on:

- Family problems
- Assaults, Crime and anti- social behavior.
- Passengers travelling with a driver under the influence.
- Workplace/Study space accidents and loss of productivity.

During Alcohol awareness week the Alcohol Forum continued to act as the promoter and co-ordinator of events liaising with organisations nationally. Invitations were issued to organisations nationally to get involved in awareness week and 39 different organisations held events or contributed in a way that suited them and linked to their own work. An important part of maintaining the credibility and independence of

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awareness week was that organisations were welcome to participate and contribute on the basis that they had no connection with or received funding from the alcohol industry

A social media plan was developed for the week the Andy Osbourne Drugs.ie, Conor Cullen AAI, Marion Richard HSE, supported by Fidelma Browne HSE communications with key messages targeting, health care workers, policy makers, students, public representatives the general public and the media. The Alcohol Forum wish to acknowledge the significant support of the HSE for the conference and the corporate sponsorship once again from Archimedes Pharma.



Kerrykeel Workshop



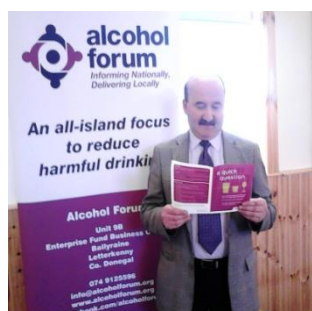
LYIT



LYIT



Level 1 Alcohol Awareness Training Tobecurry Men Shed 3rd December 2014



Milford Health Day 1



Milford Health Day2





Alcohol Related Brain Injury: by Dr Helen McMonagle

Awareness of Alcohol Related Brain Injury continues to grow and this is testament to the initial work of the ARBI co-ordination team. In 2014 this work continued. The poor identification rate associated with ARBI is partially linked to lack of professional and public awareness of the disorder.

Ongoing efforts in 2014 aimed to engage both professional and public audiences with evidence based information, delivered in a variety of modalities, with the aim of increasing understanding of the common signs and symptoms associated with ARBI as well as models of best practice.

Examples of the work undertaken to engage with professionals and the public included the publication of articles in publications with a professional readership. In April 2014 we contributed to “Safe Alcohol – Too good to be true?” for the *Medical Independent* which was distributed to registered doctors, and in September 2014 we produced an article “Alcohol-Related Brain Injury – Irelands Forgotten Condition” to *Hospital Pharmacy News* which was distributed to all hospital and community pharmacies nationally.

In addition Dr Helen Mc Monagle was asked to present at a number of conferences during 2014 including “Alcohol Related Brain Injury – Issues and challenges for the future” a best practice seminar for 123 professionals in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the National Alcohol Forum conference, attended by 130 professionals, the National Family Support Network conference attended by 600 family members affected by substance misuse, and the Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol task force conference attended by 164 professionals.

Resource Development

A principal aim for 2014 the development of two key ARBI resources for professionals and carers. To date there is an absence of accessible practice-specific information for various professionals outlining methods of adapting core skills to meet the needs of those affected and to guide professional rehabilitative endeavours for this client group.

Similarly there is an absence of information for families to guide their efforts to support someone living with this condition in the community. To address this gap in information two guides were developed one for professional’s and the other for carers, significant development work went into the guides facilitated by the financial assistance of Archimedes pharma which allowed us to commit dedicated time to this development in the

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second half of 2014, and ensuring the guides would be completed for official launch in 2015.

ARBI Care pathway development

Ongoing review and development of care pathways was a feature of 2014 and the establishment of an ARBI working group chaired by the HSE disability manager in Donegal led to the development of a service arrangement with a local private nursing home provider for the delivery of care in a dedicated area.

This new pathway also facilitated inpatient assessment for short periods and long term care if required.

This was a significant development in that it allowed ongoing case-coordination with clear service pathways for multidisciplinary assessment, funding for rehabilitation and long term care if required and was in effect the mainstreaming of the case –coordination service and in addition providing a care and resourcing model that could be replicated in other parts of the country.

In addition the ongoing weekly reviews with other professionals, and the provision of training to staff continued to provide an environment where expertise was increased for this group of clients.

Additional day service model developed, trailed and reviewed and subsequently expanded to additional clients.

The focus on early intervention continued with the continued delivery of screening and early intervention service with the local Addiction Services.

ARBI Case Co-ordination

The case co-ordination service is for those individuals who have received a diagnosis or presumptive diagnosis of Alcohol Related Brain Injury, it is for those individuals who are likely to require input from multiple services and require medium to high level support.

The aim is by working with local services such as community and acute hospitals, drug and alcohol organisations and voluntary agencies to implement a co-ordinated recovery focused rehabilitation service, which among its success this year saw an individual affected by ARBI regain a significant degree of cognitive skills and return to living at home, remaining abstinent, and reengaging with his family despite 25+ years of chronic alcohol dependency.

Local Hidden Harm Agenda: by Ciara Doyle, Youth and Family Liaison Worker

The Alcohol Forum continues to support the HSE / TUSLA in the development of the Regional HH agenda. The Alcohol Forum inputted into the HSE and Tusla stakeholder consultation on 28th January 2014 in Sligo. Also in attendance were commissioners, researchers, service providers and practitioners from the two named national practice sites i.e. North West and Midlands.

This consultation was guided by an existing scoping exercise and consultation report developed by HSE West Donegal, Drug and Alcohol Services. Full coverage of the consultation can be found on:

http://www.drugs.ie/features/feature/hidden_harm_children_living_with_and_affected_by_parental_substance_use

The Stakeholders through the consultation process identified three themes that must be addressed in a meaningful way if children are to be protected and families are to be supported in the tow named Practice change sites i.e.;

1. The extent to which the characteristics of alcohol and other drug use affects the capacity of the parent to care for the child. It *“Impacts on every aspect of family life, finances, parenting, relationships, health work, court appearances, criminal convictions, mental health.”* Pg.11 Stakeholder Consultation report
2. The impact on the child: *“physical, educational, mental and social needs. Poor hygiene/nutrition, poor school attendance and attainment, lack of self-esteem/ positive role models and poor self-management in relation to anger/behaviour and maintenance of positive relationships. Engagement in underage alcohol/substance misuse and increase in anti-social behaviour ... children as carers within the household”* Pg.11 Stakeholder consultation report.
3. The impact on services: *“Lack of understanding of the complexity of the issues associated with parental substance misuse leads to feelings of frustration”, “Training to recognise the hidden harm neglect. To have clear pathways for reporting this. Policy around hidden harm that can be used to support group and training how to use policy”. Pg. 28 Stakeholder consultation report.*

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Roundtable discussions highlighted the need for *Hidden Harm* learning and development; interagency working; and assessment frameworks. Inherent in this was the development of a protocol for communication between services and clear referral pathways

The Alcohol Forum will continue to support the HSE and TUSLA- Child and Family agency in developing this agenda in the North West

The area of maternal alcohol consumption is one that the Alcohol Forum have been leading out on regionally with the launch of the Prescription for a Healthy Pregnancy Practice Change Initiative.

The Prescription for a Healthy Pregnancy Practice Change Initiative is a multi-disciplinary multi-agency response to maternal alcohol consumption. It aims to provide pregnant women with information on the risks associated with alcohol use.

The pilot Practice Change Initiative recommends that health professionals provide screening for alcohol use in pregnancy, as well as the opportunity to offer appropriate advice to encourage pregnant women to stop alcohol use in pregnancy and where necessary onward referral to more specialist alcohol services.

Members of Short Life group:

- ✓ Sean Murphy – General Manager LGH.
- ✓ Evelyn Smith – Assistant Director of Nursing and Midwifery – Women and Children Services
- ✓ Dr Anne Flood – Director of Nursing LGH.
- ✓ Dr. Nadini Ravikuma- Consultant Obstetrician Letterkenny General Hospital Donegal.
- ✓ Cora Mc Aleer - Manager Addiction Services HSE West (Donegal).
- ✓ Moira Mills- Special Advisor to the Alcohol Forum.
- ✓ Ciara Doyle - Project Lead Hidden Harm NW HSE West (Donegal) & Alcohol Forum.
- ✓ Christina Murray McEleney - Coordinator NW10 Education Plan Donegal Education and Training Board / North West Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force.
- ✓ Mary Kelly - Health Promotion Officer, Letterkenny General Hospital



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In April 2014 a Master class for professionals from Maternity Services, Child and Family Services, Substance Misuse Services, Primary Care, Mental Health and CAMHS was delivered to support the launch of the pilot. This event formed part of a series of workshops for National Alcohol Awareness Week.

Speakers:

Dr. David Hayes: BA (Hons), MSc, PhD Queens University: Senior Lecturer [School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work](#) - [Family Policy and Child Welfare](#). Research interest in the interface between child, family and substance misuse services.

Professor Moira Plant: RGN, RMN PhD Professor of Alcohol Studies Co - Director, Alcohol and Health Research Unit. International renowned researcher; with prolific publications in the area of hidden harm, specializing in maternal alcohol consumption. It is the intention in 2015 to roll out the second phase of the Prescription for a Healthy Pregnancy Practice Change Initiative within another site in Sligo pending the evaluation.



We have taken every opportunity to progress the maternal alcohol consumption agenda. At the invitation of the Sean Doherty Show on Highland Radio in August this year we had the opportunity of communicating the essential public health message needed for addressing the sensitive and emotion area of alcohol and pregnancy.

We have been continuing to keep the issue on the policy maker's agenda with the recent submission to the development of the national maternity strategy. Pregnant women using alcohol and drugs problematically are at higher risk of maternal and prenatal mortality and morbidity.

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Alcohol and other drug use in pregnancy is often undisclosed or underreported by women, resulting in increased risk to the mother’s health and damage to the developing foetus. The submission to the development of a National Maternity Strategy was crucial to ensure the needs of mothers who are using substances and their babies are placed at the centre of maternity services.