

Q3. Are we missing any actions / new actions?

1. Hold a Skerries CAF Roundtable specifically for young people to feed into the Skerries Local Alcohol Action Plan.
2. Develop an 'alcohol action parents workshop' to promote the role of parents in (1) having conversations with their children about alcohol (2) be aware of not modelling unsafe alcohol use (3) encouraging alternative ways to celebrate events.
3. Work with publicans with view to developing a Skerries CAF 'Q Mark' initiative to incentivise them to be an 'alcohol responsible venue' (think of better name for initiative) - maybe have a range of initiatives they sign up to if they wish to be awarded the Q-mark from the Skerries CAF (e.g.: safe server training, free soft drinks for designated drivers, anti-drink driving messages displayed, etc.).
4. Develop a social media presence for the Skerries CAF to get information out about health promotion events and messages and to signpost people to supports.
5. Develop a partnership with the Skerries Community College (and Possibly Transition year) to develop targeted workshops for
 - Students,
 - Parents,
 - Teachers.
6. Develop a community wide campaign to encourage use of the drinksmeter (free & confidential alcohol health promotion app).
7. Develop a community message about the CAF and the alcohol action plan that is very positive and promotes Skerries.
8. Explore alternative sponsorship avenues for sporting clubs to drinks industry sponsorship.
9. Identify a CAF 'Champion' or ambassador like a sports person for example to model a health promotion approach to alcohol.
10. Develop workshops on alcohol and services for sports clubs in the Skerries area
11. Work on reducing the stigma of 'non-drinkers' through health promotion messages. Use links to fitness, health and sports.
12. Explore the role of law enforcement in relation to distance sales such as 24hour online alcohol sales and advocate for routine alcohol test purchasing in Skerries.

If you would like further information please contact Brid Walsh or JP Browne at brid@ndublinrdf.ie “

SKERRIES

Community Alcohol Forum

Roundtable Discussion June 1st 2017



Skerries Community Feedback

On June 1st 2017 key community representatives in Skerries were invited to come together to talk about how they have experienced alcohol related harm in their community; and what they would like to see happening to reduce and prevent such harm. This was not an 'anti-alcohol' meeting. We all acknowledge that alcohol can play a part in our lives for relaxation, enjoyment and celebrations. This meeting was held as part of a wider North Dublin Regional Community Action on Alcohol Plan. The North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force was successful in its application in 2016 to be an implementation site for the National Community Action on Alcohol Programme.

As part of an approval process it agreed to pilot community action in three target areas. Skerries was selected as the first pilot community, and will be followed by Balbriggan and Swords. The ultimate aim is get local people involved in reducing the overall public harm associated with the abuse of alcohol in their own communities. We realise that this will take time, but that the first step is to listen to what the community has to say. This report is literally just that. This is a summary of the feedback, both written and spoken, from that lovely evening on the 1st June in Skerries Rugby Club. The fantastic and unique community spirit of Skerries was once again evident by the superb attendance, and engagement, at the meeting. This is just the beginning and I look forward to working closely with you all over the coming years on this project.

I would like to thank Brid Walsh and all the team at the North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force for their help, determination and guidance in getting this project started. I would also like to thank Darragh O'Brien TD (Chairperson of the North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force) for opening the roundtable meeting, and Peter Conway (Chairperson of the Regional CAF) for all his work in progressing the project for North Dublin. I would like to thank Paula Leonard (Lead, National Community Action on Alcohol Programme) who not only drove all the way from Derry to facilitate the discussion, but has been a huge support in driving the project forward. A big thank you to all the public representatives that attended, to the community groups and organisations that were represented, and to all the individuals that participated and contributed to what was a very informative and successful evening.

JP Browne (Chairperson, Skerries Community Alcohol Forum)



We asked You said...

Q1. How is alcohol harm experienced by individuals, children and families in Skerries?

- 1. 'nature drinking'** large groups drinking as much cheap alcohol as possible. Potential harms: (1) sexual assault risk if young people are incapacitated or 'semi-conscious' (2) young people risk not developing a sense of 'self' or individual identity (3) risks to young people's mental health by drinking large amounts of really strong cheap alcohol in one sitting regularly (4) alcohol related litter was seen a massive issue and particularly for Skerries which is certifiably the 'tidiest town in Ireland'!
- 2. 'Hidden Harm'**: to loved ones/family: (a) parents unable to mind their children because of their drinking. May lead to childhood neglect, development problems, poor school attendance, parental attachment issues, escapism or generational substance use (b) also concerns re potential domestic violence.
- 3. Specific events:** Halloween, St Patrick's Day, junior cert, leaving certificate and even very sunny days could be problematic for e.g.: (a) public drunkenness of young people (b) anti-social behaviour (c) alcohol related risky sexual behaviour (d) perception of an 'intimidating' environment for older people and residents if large groups of visitors are drinking in large groups in the town.
- 4. Parental influence:** people talked about (a) parents 'legitimising' or 'conditioning' children to drink from a young age by offering them alcohol at occasions (b) children 'modelling' their parents drinking behaviour that they see in everyday life (c) parents allowing other people's children and their own to drink in their home on the basis of 'at least I know where they are, who they are with and what they are drinking' (d) on the flip side of this was the other extreme and the harm caused by parents being so militantly 'anti-drinking' that their children may be afraid to phone and look for help if they find themselves drunk and alone or in an unsafe situation.
- 5. 'Prinking' or pre drinking/preloading:** this was a problem that was talked about a lot in the groups. Members talked about the harm associated with the relatively recent but very common practise of drinking huge amounts of very strong alcohol in groups in a home before going out and it was noted that this applied to both adults and young people alike and meant that far more alcohol was being consumed than in previous years when the drinking would only start on arrival at the social event.
- 6. Alcohol Pricing:** there was a lot of discussion about pricing and 2 seemingly conflicting themes emerging (1) people said alcohol is too cheap in many off licenses and outlets meaning huge quantities of high strength alcohol can be purchased even with a very limited income and cheap drinks promotions targeting young people in clubs creates a culture of heavy drinking (2) conversely quite a few people linked the increase in 'prinking' and 'nature drinking' with the price of alcohol in pubs being so high meaning that some people are effectively priced out of 'socialising' in the more traditional social setting of the pub environment (3) people said that there is a danger if alcohol prices are too high that not only will people resort to buying cheap alcohol and drinking at home but they may be tempted to purchase alcohol on the black market which can be very dangerous given the absence of regulation in terms of the ingredients used in the products.

7. Distance sales: the ability to purchase alcohol online at any time was seen as hugely harmful. (1) with some sites delivering 24hours a day people said that where a drinking party might naturally have reached a conclusion when it ran 'dry', now there is no limitation creating a very high risk situation (2) buying alcohol via distance sales facilitates underage drinking as currently there does not seem to be age proofing required for the person the alcohol is delivered to.

8. Alcohol marketing: it was agreed that it was difficult to counteract the harm caused by constant drink promotions. For example small sports clubs might be reliant on the sponsorship of a pub for their kits. Also if students don't have an income they may attend pubs that advertise very cheap 'shots' or 'student specials'.



Q2. What are your responses to what you have heard?

- 1. Shock!:** the 'dial a drink' and online drink delivery services (24hour availability) was seen as shocking with many people unaware it existed. Youth reps on the day said that young people are aware of and use these services. They noted with the purchases being made online, a chip and pin bank card would be required meaning perhaps an adult being involved. People were surprised at the statistics presented especially the number of alcohol related deaths.
- 2. Buy in:** the consensus was that this project was worthwhile and would work well in Skerries because there is already such a strong sense of community and a history of people working together on issues of common concern.
- 3. Make the plan relatable:** This meeting was held to begin conversations in Skerries about alcohol related harm in the area to feed into a dedicated Skerries local Alcohol Action Plan that would be informed, led and implemented by the local community. However, people were given a draft of the regional plan. People wanted the Skerries local plan to have less 'business' jargon and be more relatable so anyone in the community picking it up would understand the actions and what we are trying to achieve.
- 4. Representation:** there was feedback that (1) women were under represented in the roundtable discussion on the day (2) young people themselves needed to be consulted to give them an opportunity to feed into the local plan.
- 5. Parents buy in:** universally it was agreed that parents had a huge role to play in the response to alcohol related harm in the area and that there should be actions in the plan around this.
- 6. Involvement of Publicans:** there was feedback that having a conversation in the local community about alcohol related harm without the publicans involvement didn't seem to make sense. People wanted them to be included in a separate consultation in recognition of the role they play and the knowledge and experience of alcohol related harm they have in the community.
- 7. Web based support:** very positive feedback about the 'drinksmeter' 'app' which people can use to reflect on their own drinking and an agreement that a communication campaign to get the message out so people actually use it is really important.
- 8. The message is not 'anti-drink'!:** People wanted us to be careful not to be seen as the 'anti-alcohol brigade'. Concerns that people who have a positive relationship with alcohol may perceive this work as judgemental. People wanted to be clear that our message is not that 'alcohol is bad'. But is clearly about reducing harm caused by alcohol in the community not trying to create an 'alcohol free world'!
- 8. SAMH:** people were happy that the SAMH (Substance Abuse & Mental Health) groups had been set up by the task force and in particular in Skerries but noted however that although represented at this event the gardai do not sit on the SAMHs currently and it would be important for them to be involved.
- 9. Schools/students:** the consensus was that with Skerries having one large secondary school with a big student body, there is an opportunity to engage students, teachers and parents from the school in this work. For example: Transition Year projects etc.
- 10. Sports groups:** similarly the consensus was that with so many great sporting groups in Skerries that there is huge scope to engage the sports clubs to help with the work. This could be in the form of health promotion (the drinksmeter & talks) but also to explore the issue of drinks industry sponsorship of sports clubs and events.
- 11. Health promotion:** people talked about different health promotion initiatives such as (1) drinksmeter (2) workshops on alcohol harm (3) alcohol free events for all ages but also targeted events for young people particularly on junior cert/leaving cert results nights (4) parents sessions on their role in keeping their children safe in relation to alcohol related harm (5) targeted workshops 'how to be a good friend' for example which emphasises harm reduction messages about helping a friend who is drinking to point of being unsafe, not leaving a friend who is drunk alone, making that call to their parent, spouse, friend or loved one if you are concerned that they are unsafe etc.
- 12. Positive messages:** It was really stressed that Skerries is a beautiful place to live and visit with great shops, restaurants, pubs, scenery and of course people! People wanted the work to have a positive health promotion context rather than a negative one (so to ensure we are not problematizing Skerries). This work should further enhance an already great town and make it a 'healthy Skerries'. Maybe think of a better name than this (Healthy Skerries) to indicate our health promotion approach to alcohol!