

PUBLICAN RESPONSIBILITY: People liked the proposal about an 'alcohol harm reduction' Qmark for publicans that they only get awarded if they satisfy a number of conditions such as promoting no drink driving, safe server, etc

'ITS ALL OF US': People wanted to be clear that the alcohol issue is not a young people specific problem and actually a lot of the harm is caused by adults. It was noted that if we are serious about addressing alcohol harm we can't keep 'scapegoating' young people with a comment that a lot of the hidden harm (FASD, domestic violence, injuries, drink driving, neglect etc) is actually related to alcohol consumption by adults and that we need to take responsibility for this and stop blaming young people.

Q3. What have we missed – any other actions?

POSITIVE MESSAGE CAMPAIGN: Instead of negative campaigns about harm: one idea in the written feedback was to do a 'Mind your Mate' campaign for the community: to reduce alcohol related physical and sexual assault by highlighting never leaving someone on their own at the end of a night and not buying any more drinks for your friend if you can see they are already very drunk for eg. Also look at ways to get people to look at the value of healthy alternatives to drinking through linking weight gain to alcohol consumption for instance or having alcohol free nights/events. Our messages need to be 'smart and simple' if we want people to remember them and buy in to them

CHAMPIONS: Following the huge success of people like 'brezzie' in opening conversations about mental health it was suggested to get well known local people who are viewed positively with big social media followings to support us. Some examples from Swords included the band 'Kodaline' and GAA player Paul Flynn

POLITICAL BUY IN: People felt that we needed to have political leadership on this if it was to be successful. This would help reduce impact of drinks industry interference and help attract potential 'community champions. It was felt we needed leading politicians from all parties rowing in behind this work and actively promoting it

EDUCATION/PREVENTION: People wanted a real emphasis on this and wanted to involve young people more in the community conversations about alcohol. People thought the obvious place to do some targeted work on this was through the schools

NOT ANTI DRINK: People wanted to find a mechanism to ensure we don't turn people in the community off getting involved because they think we are trying to prevent them from enjoying a drink so care needs to be taken in branding

SOCIAL MEDIA: It was felt we need a really good high profile campaign for this particularly in relation to the Drinksmeter app rollout and to get other partners like the County Council for example to help us.



Swords Roundtable Community Feedback 21st June 2017



INTRODUCTION

The North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force is one of a number of Task Forces approved to implement the National Community Action on Alcohol Programme. This programme recognises the power of the community in reducing alcohol related harm. It is not an anti-drink campaign and recognises that most people enjoy alcohol safely. The Task Force is rolling out this programme in North County Dublin and selected 3 pilot areas in which to develop a local action plan on alcohol. Balbriggan, Skerries and Swords were chosen. The following report was developed from written and verbal feedback taken from community representatives in roundtable discussion with approx 40 community representatives from various residents, community groups and agencies in Swords. This roundtable discussion represents the first conversation about alcohol harm in our community and the start of a local plan for our area. I would like to thank the following people for their support; Darragh O'Brien TD (Chair of the Task Force), Peter Conway (Regional Community Alcohol Forum Chair), Brid Walsh (Regional Task Force Coordinator) and Paula Leonard (National lead) for their work in support of the programme locally and nationally. Finally, I would like to thank the people who attended on the night without whom it couldn't have happened and the Task Force team and other facilitators. We hope this is the beginning of a really meaningful journey for all involved. Brigid Manton (Chair, Swords CAF)

SWORDS COMMUNITY ALCOHOL FORUM. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK, ROUNDTABLE 1. June 21st 2017

We asked... you spoke... we listened... the following is a summary of the feedback from a range of community representatives who attended the Swords Community roundtable on alcohol harm on the 21st June 2017. This is a collation of the notes taken on the day by the facilitators along with the verbal feedback. This will be used as the first step in a process to inform the development of the Swords Community Alcohol Plan

Question 1. How is alcohol harm experienced by individuals, children and families in our community?

PARENTAL INFLUENCE: People talked about how parents can create a 'drinking culture' (1) buying alcohol for their own children from a young age (2) allowing underage drinking in their homes by other people's children (3) drinking to excess around their children (4) organising family events in pubs. There was not universal agreement as some present felt that parents know that their children are safe if they are drinking at home as they are supervised but others cited that this was conditioning children to drink alcohol and felt that parents had a responsibility to model healthy behaviours for their children

DISTANCE SALES: Being able to order alcohol over facebook or by 'dial a drink' 24 hours a day that can be delivered to your home was seen as a massive problem particularly as there seems to be no age limit. People were concerned about the availability of alcohol. Youth reps present talked about 'facebook' parties which can end up with a lot of people present and huge amounts of alcohol consumed

NIGHTLIFE: Specific clubs were mentioned in swords where there was regular issue with alcohol related public disorder. There was talk about the real issue of alcohol related public disorder that happens 'after everyone else is gone to bed' on the street and in homes. Some 'hot spots' were talked about 'PREDRINKING'; 'prinking' was cited as a huge and a new problem with people now being very drunk before they even get to their destination.

'BEHIND CLOSED DOORS': This term was used to describe (1) drinking at home by adults and in particular women (termed 'wine O'Clock') who are on the surface functioning very well but the shopping basket is full of bottles of wine and are drinking heavily in their own home (2) domestic disputes and violence which may be hidden to a large extent.

MARKETING: Feedback was that this has a huge impact on young people and indeed adults and it is difficult for health promotion messages to compete with 'sexy' alcohol marketing campaigns. **SOCIAL MEDIA:** the rapid growth of social media in event organisation was seen as an issue with examples like 'Facebook parties' and online drinks

orders being cited. Again it was agreed this would be a very difficult challenge to combat. A suggestion was to have 'sexy' 'health promotion messages via social media to compete.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: The vulnerability of people with Intellectual Disabilities who are particularly at risk in the community in relation to alcohol problems was cited as a growing concern which was seen as likely to escalate without a response

PRICING: Different opinions on this with some people citing that higher priced alcohol in pubs increases the amount of drinking in homes where it is more difficult to monitor the volume of alcohol being consumed (measures would rarely be used). Others said that making alcohol too cheap makes it easy for young people to access

CULTURAL INFLUENCES: People talked about a cultural shift in Ireland where once visitors would be offered a cup of tea and now it is a glass of wine or another alcoholic drink. People talked about the influence of popular shows on TV where drinking wine (particularly by successful women) is glamorised and there is no evidence of the harmful effects. Many soap operas centre around the local pub and also shows full of 'glamorous' women who resolve issues over glasses of wine.

HIDDEN HARM: People talked about the impact on children when their parents /carers are drinking to excess in terms of neglect, not being 'present' in their children's lives, not being able to support them with emotional and educational development

AFTERMATH: There was talk about the effect of heaving drinking on a night out the following day and how this impacts on employment and education with the next day being described as a 'write off'.

PREVENTION CHALLENGES: The value of the SPHE programme which could help inform young people about the facts, harms and impacts of alcohol use was seen to be undermined by the subject not being an exam subject meaning it does not have the same gravitas as other subjects with SPHE classes sometimes being used to study exam subjects instead, particularly coming up to the leaving cert.

Q2. What is your response to what you have heard here tonight?

GOOD START: Those present agreed that this conversation needed to happen and that engaging with the community is really important. They liked the overall plan and welcomed the opportunity to have one just for Swords that was specific to the area.

COMMUNITY PENETRATION: It was felt that the biggest challenge for this work would be getting meaningful community penetration. It was noted that the people who attended today came because they have an interest in this area and so was an 'easy sell' but getting buy in from those that are not already convinced would be harder.

POSITIVE MESSAGE: Members were very assertive that they did not want to be part of an 'anti-drink' campaign to stop people from drinking or make them feel bad about it. To make it realistic the plan needed to be really clearly focussed on health promotion and reducing public related alcohol harm not 'ruining everyone's fun'. A representative noted that people should not be made feel bad about socialising with friends over a few drinks particularly after a hard week in work. There was quite a bit of discussion about maintaining this balance and assuring people that we are not saying that 'alcohol is bad'.

DRINKSMETER: Those present really liked the idea of the Drinksmeter alcohol and brief advice 'app' and worried that it might be very hard to get enough people to use it to have a widespread reach. Counter to that some members said that even if only a few people used it and it made them drink a bit more safely it was a result. People liked that it is free and confidential. Members would have liked to have other minority groups apart from Travellers included in the app.

