

NORTHERN AREA HEALTH BOARD

Report No 15/2001

Addiction Services

INTRODUCTION

The last report submitted to the Board in relation to addiction services was in November 2000. Developments which have taken place since are outlined hereunder.

Drug addiction is a complex illness. For many people, drug addiction becomes chronic, with relapses possible even after long periods of abstinence. Because addiction has so many dimensions and disrupts so many aspects of an individual's life, treatment for this illness is never simple. Drug treatment must help the individual stop using drugs and maintain a drug free lifestyle, while achieving productive functioning in the family, at work and in society. Effective drug abuse and addiction treatment programmes typically incorporate many components, each directed to a particular aspect of the illness and its consequence.

THE SERVICE

The addiction services within the Eastern Region consist of information and advice, education and prevention, treatment and rehabilitation/re-integration and aftercare to those who are affected by drug addiction. The services are provided both directly by the Area Health Boards and in partnership with community and voluntary organisations.

SERVICE ACTIVITY

Details of service activity in our Boards area as at 31st December 2000 are as follows :-

Number of Treatment Centres:	4
Number of Satellite Clinics:	15
Number of General Practitioners providing treatment:	47
Number of persons in treatment	1956

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS 2000/2001

- The treatment centre in Cabra has been renovated and the number of treatment places provided has been increased from 10 – 20
- A scripting clinic for stable clients was opened in Wellmount Clinic
- Premises for a new treatment centre in Finglas have been identified
- The building of a new treatment clinic in Darndale has been completed and commissioned and consequently a more comprehensive range of services is now being provided.

- A premises in Gardiner Street has been acquired for the provision of an early intervention programme for young people abusing heroin. The centre will be staff by a multidisciplinary team and will facilitate the provision of a comprehensive range of services to adolescents with addition problems.
- Staff development and training continues to be provided with additional training programmes being provided to senior management, outreach workers, counsellors, general assistant, nurses and clerical staff.
- A grade V11 was appointed for mainstreaming Task Force projects
- DAIS (Drugs/Aids Information System) was piloted in a number of centres in our Board's area
- An external evaluation and review of opiate addiction services has been carried out

FURTHER SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS IN 2001

Further service developments in 2001 for which funding has been provided include the following:-

- A pilot project in A & E Departments of acute hospitals
- A pilot project to utilise Community Pharmacists in the area of health promotion for persons with addiction and who are still using needles.
- The appointment of a Hepatitis C Co-Ordinator to ensure that links are maximised with the acute hospitals for drug users.
- The appointment of an additional consultant psychiatrist with particular expertise in youth and adolescent addiction problems
- The provision of specialist day programmes for young people who wish to access treatment
- To have the downstream unit, KELTOI at St. Mary's Hospital fully operational
- The provision of additional treatment services in areas of greater need
- The establishment of a clinic for women involved in prostitution who have a drug addiction.
- The provision of a number of research projects particularly in relation to outreach services and counselling services
- The mainstreaming of former National Drugs Strategy Team projects

GENERAL

Young Persons Residential Detoxification and Rehabilitation Service

There is an urgent need to develop a young person inpatient detoxification programme and a community residential rehabilitation reintegration programme.

Various options are being considered in relation to a residential detoxification facility including options in the voluntary sector.

A facility has been identified for the residential rehabilitation programme – discussions are ongoing with the Eastern Regional Health Authority regarding funding for this project.

- **Finglas Treatment Centre**

The development of the Finglas Treatment Centre will involve displacement of a range of health related services. Alternative accommodation is being sought for these services at present.

- **Service Review**

The Board has already been advised that a review of Services for Older Persons and the Addiction Services would be undertaken in 2001. The review of the Addiction Services is on hand – we anticipate that the Northern area Health Board Addiction Strategy will be completed before year end.

SERVICE EVALUATION

A number of evaluations will be conducted in the addiction services during the course of 2001. These include :-

- An evaluation of the drug treatment services including the investigations of adherence to prescribing protocols, assessment and referral procedures, methadone users perceptions of the quality of service and heroin users not currently in treatment.
- A review of the drug treatment waiting list to validate the numbers awaiting treatment, profile clients on the waiting list and assess treatment personnel's views of the efficiency of the waiting list procedures.

M. WINDLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

24th April, 2001