



Feedback to the Commission on the future of policing in Ireland May 2018

About TDATF

Tallaght Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (TDATF) is one of 14 Local Drugs Task Forces set up in March 1997. 2014 marked the addition of alcohol to TDATF's remit. TDATF facilitates an integrated response to alcohol and substance misuse in Tallaght and Whitechurch, South County Dublin. A key function of TDATF is to assess the nature and extent of alcohol and substance misuse in the area and to coordinate responses. Membership of TDATF includes representatives from the statutory, community, voluntary and political sectors. Through a partnership approach TDATF provides oversight for the implementation of TDATF action plans, which co-ordinate all relevant alcohol and substance misuse programmes / initiatives in the local area. Effective partnership is key to the effective work of TDATF

TDATF Vision & Mission

Vision: The vision of TDATF is to be the central coordinating body in Tallaght and Whitechurch advocating on behalf of individuals, families and communities in relation to alcohol and substance misuse and related harm.

Mission: Our mission is to facilitate and coordinate the effective local implementation of national alcohol and substance misuse strategies. We do this by:

- **Empowering families, communities and individuals** to proactively address alcohol and substance misuse in the home, the community and their lives.
- **Providing up to date information** and education on alcohol and substances - impacts, related harm, supports and services for individuals, families and communities in Tallaght and Whitechurch areas.
- **Leading interagency work** and collaboration to best support individuals, families and communities in addressing their needs in relation to alcohol and substance misuse.
- **Facilitating services** in the Tallaght and Whitechurch areas to work cohesively in responding to the needs of, individuals, families and communities impacted by alcohol and substance misuse through prevention, rehabilitation and family support programmes that reflect best practice.



- **Modelling effective governance** and regularly reviewing TDAF structures/performance with a view to maintaining the highest standards of best practice to service the Tallaght and Whitechurch areas.

Garda participation on Task Forces

For Local Drug & Alcohol Task Forces to work well, they are reliant on participation and commitment from all partners of the National Drug & Alcohol Strategy (currently: “Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery” July 2017). This applies not least in the case of our colleagues in An Garda Síochána who bring an irreplaceable perspective to discussions around communities impacted by substance misuse and related issues. While we appreciate that our Garda colleagues are formally required to participate in the drugs strategy nationally and locally, we also value a flexible attitude to working with us, and for this, approachability is key. Our Coordinator and Chair generally feel that should an issue arise outside of meetings, they can comfortably call a relevant Garda representative for advice or support. For us, this is the real value of having a good working relationship with our Garda colleagues; we can then confidently promote a similar relationship between communities and the Guards.

Since its inception in 2017, TDAF has always fostered a very positive relationship with members of An Garda Síochána. We have been quite lucky in that our view re: the importance of Garda representation and participation in Task Force work has been shared by our Garda colleagues locally. For our Task Force, this shared understanding and vision, requires promotion at a senior level; with national representation on the oversight committee and more locally, support from the designated Garda Superintendent. In Tallaght we have always had a good working relationship with our Superintendent who was always happy to nominate a Guard of appropriate grade to our board. Consistency in this has also proved useful; we had one Inspector on our board for 7 years who also chaired our Supply Reduction sub-committee. Following that, representation from Sergeant’s directly involved with the Drug Squad also proved useful. Eamon Dolan (Garda Superintendent, Tallaght 2007 – 2012) was most supportive of the work of Task Forces and after his retirement went on to serve as a very active Chairperson to TDAF 2012 – 2017.

Currently, we have representation on our board in the form of the Superintendent himself, participation at this level is most helpful, appreciated and demonstrates commitment and support for the work we are doing locally.

Intimidation

TDAF has supported the Intimidation Reporting Programme since it started in 2012. Intimidation was named as an increasing issue for our communities in 2012 so we partnered with the National Family Support Network, An Garda Síochána and South Dublin County Council to explore this issue



further. The findings of our 2012 seminar warranted more work in this area so an intimidation sub-group of the South Dublin Joint Policing Forum was established on which we worked closely with our Garda colleagues until it developed into a wider drugs sub-committee in 2017 (which the Guards still attend). Our work included an advertising campaign of the programme and the provision of training for community / family support projects. We were happy to promote the intimidation reporting programme and contribute to its review in recent years. Having a designated Inspector to contact around intimidation issues has been a really useful and practical resource for our family support groups. Our designated Inspector, Raymond Blake has been very helpful and flexible in assisting community services and meeting with family members where they are at, in plain clothes if necessary. We welcome the current review of this programme and are happy to continue to contribute to its sustainment and development.

Crimestoppers

TDATF were very active in promoting and supporting the 'Dial to Stop' campaign 2008 – 2011. We have repeated this support by significantly investing in the promotion of Crimestoppers 2017-present. For us, this campaign was timely, coming a time when communities were disheartened and basically just tired of open drug use / dealing, intimidation and related issues. We never want our communities or Task Force to become ambivalent to the issue of substance misuse in communities, we wanted communities to know that we're still fighting on their behalf to get substance misuse (& related issues) back on the government's agenda. Our campaign was very visual, the posters created a conversation and we had good feedback. Our posters are still displayed across our communities of Tallaght and Whitechurch. We are still promoting use of the line on our Facebook page, Website and various media sources.

The good news is that with the help of community people, Crimestoppers has made a difference. Last year's figures show that the numbers of reports from Tallaght were high.

- **July (Full Figures) - Total calls re drugs - 39 - 11 relating to Tallaght**
- **August - Total calls re drugs - 34 - 12 related to Tallaght**
- **September - Total calls re drugs - 13 - 6 related to Tallaght**
- **October – Total calls re drugs – 25 – 1 related to Tallaght**
- **November – Total calls re drugs – 22 – 7 related to Tallaght**



Crimestoppers is obviously supported by our colleagues in An Garda Síochana, Tallaght; they too believe it has been a positive campaign. We appreciate that the information received is Sometimes considered common knowledge, but at times the information is unique and has had positive outcomes. This is the message we try to convey and this is a campaign that in our view, should be sustained on an ongoing basis.

We urged people to call:

"If you have any information, however small, on drug dealing or related crime, please make the call! - It's completely safe and confidential. Together we can help make our communities safer and a happier place to live in" 😊

Community Policing

JPC: Our Chairperson sits on the South Dublin Joint Policing Committee. When the JPC's started there was a concern that they would duplicate in some way, the work of Task Forces. However, it is clear that the agenda for this group is much broader than community issues impacted by substance misuse.

JPC Drug Sub-committee: This group grew out of the intimidation sub-group of the JPC; it's now a group that makes recommendations to the JPC, re: interagency projects to reduce the impact of substance misuse and related issues on communities. Given the broad agenda of the JPC, the rationale and need for this group is clear. This is a group we are very happy to contribute to and would like to see continue; it provides an opportunity for Task Forces, Guards and the local authority to collaborate on priorities proposed by group and agreed by JPC

Local Policing Fora: TDATF is represented on the Management group for the West Tallaght Local Policing Fora and has been since its inception some years ago. We regularly participate in community and public meetings alongside the Guards, Local Authority, Community and political reps. This is a great opportunity for us to promote the work we do in communities most affected by substance misuse.

TDATF Alcohol Sub-group: TDATF agreed to formally include alcohol in their remit and title in 2014. We went on to develop our Community Action on Alcohol Strategy and have been busy implementing this since 2015. Garda representation on our alcohol sub-group has been critical and will continue to be. We recently commissioned a piece of research looking at alcohol trends and attitudes as well as completing a virtual map of all alcohol licensed premises. It is imperative that we have support from An Garda Síochana who ensures that licensing and other laws in respect of alcohol are adhered to.