



Northwest Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force

SLIGO CITY ALCOHOL STRATEGY

Prevent & Reduce Alcohol Related Harm
2018 – 2023



Foreword

The Sligo Healthy Ireland Project in conjunction with the HSE North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force has developed an alcohol related harm reduction strategy for Sligo City. The number and range of individuals, groups and organisations from within the Community, Voluntary and Statutory sectors who have supported the development of this strategy is a reflection of the strong desire to be proactive around an issue that is problematic across the island of Ireland.

There is no doubt that we need to reduce overall alcohol consumption levels – an approach which is supported by international evidence. Furthermore, I welcome the inclusion of alcohol in the new National Drug Strategy ‘Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – A health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 -2025’ and consider its inclusion as critical to an effective response to combatting alcohol misuse in our society.

This five year strategy will target the key areas of: prevention; supply, access and availability; screening, treatment and support services; research, monitoring and evaluation. The overall goals are to address alcohol-related harm; ensure factors influencing alcohol supply such as availability and marketing are regulated and controlled; advocate for a range of alcohol treatment and support services; and use evidence and research to inform decisions in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm in Sligo City. To this end, I welcome the Government’s intention to take action with the proposed introduction of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015. Supporting the measures in this bill will provide a pragmatic means to achieving a reduction in alcohol consumption in Ireland.

Finally, I would like to thank the various agencies and individuals around the table for their invaluable input, interagency and partnership working is key to ensuring the success of this strategy. I believe that our combined efforts in reducing alcohol consumption will no doubt limit the damage to our health, our society and our economy and in doing so, will make Sligo a safer and more welcoming city, attract more visitors and ultimately benefit our local economy.



Rosaleen O'Grady

Chairperson

North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force

Introduction

This five-year strategy has been developed to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Sligo City. It is informed by research on effective approaches to tackling alcohol-related harm and focuses on four key areas:

- A Prevention**
- B Supply, Access and Availability**
- C Screening, Treatment and Support Services**
- D Research, Monitoring and Evaluation**

This strategy has been prepared by the Sligo Healthy Cities Alcohol Sub Committee in partnership with a range of organizations and groups in the Community, Voluntary and Statutory Sector.

A wide range of agencies, groups, and individuals participated in the consultation process to develop this strategy. This included submissions, emails, and phone calls, attending meetings and providing feedback on the draft strategy. Sligo Healthy Cities Alcohol Sub Committee would like to thank everyone involved for their effort and support in developing this strategy.

Principles and Approach

The strategy is based on a number of principles including community development, partnership, collaboration, and advocacy.

This strategy is also informed by a whole-population approach and seeks to:

- Recognize that alcohol is not an ordinary commodity, but one that contributes to a range of social and health problems, the prevalence of which is related to alcohol consumption.
- Provide a community wide comprehensive approach as opposed to one that is targeted at individuals or high-risk groups only.
- Mobilize the community to take action to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm.
- Reduce alcohol-related harm by reducing overall consumption levels across the whole population.
- Use approaches and actions that research has shown to work.

Outcomes

The anticipated effect of implementing this strategy over the next five years is the following:

- (a) Improved health, wellbeing and quality of life for people living in Sligo.
- (b) Reduced harmful use of alcohol.
- (c) Reduced alcohol-related harm.
- (d) Reduced incidents of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour.
- (e) Increased access to support services for those affected by another's alcohol consumption.
- (f) Increased access to alcohol treatment services.
- (g) Reduced prevalence of alcohol at community events and activities; and
- (h) Reduced alcohol marketing in local areas.

Methodology

Many individuals and a range of community, voluntary and statutory agencies have contributed to this strategy. Communicating and engaging with individuals, groups, and agencies is essential for a public health approach, where the prevention and reduction of alcohol-related harm is everyone's responsibility.

PHASE I – Development

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| Stage 1
↓ | November 2016 - Consultation with Key Agencies and Groups to establish if we need a strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm and engage in a discussion as to the nature and extent of alcohol-related harm in Sligo city. |
| Stage 2
↓ | May 2017 - Public Consultation - Public submissions via online survey, phone, email and group consultations. |
| Stage 3
↓ | June 2017 - Roundtable Discussion on how best to address alcohol problems in Sligo city. |
| Stage 4 | November 2017 - Draft Strategy.
Review draft strategy and develop actions. |

PHASE II – Implementation & Review

Sligo City Alcohol Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Alcohol Related Harm

Annual Review and Yearly Action Plan, **2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023**

Implementation

The Sligo Healthy Cities Alcohol Sub Committee will oversee the implementation of this strategy. Annual action plans will be developed and will outline in detail how we can collectively prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Sligo. At the end of each year, a progress report will be compiled, along with an action plan for the following year, which will include a commitment from a range of partners, groups, and organizations for each proposed action.

Through maintaining and further developing this partnership approach, we are confident that together we can make a real difference in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm across Sligo City. We look forward to working with you to make this happen.



A. Prevention

AIM: To communicate and engage with policy makers, stakeholders and the general public on how best to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Sligo City.

Goals

Strategic Actions 2018 - 2023

Public Awareness

1. Raise public awareness of the burden of alcohol-related harm to the people of Sligo City.

2. Raise public awareness of the benefits of effective action to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm.

1a. Develop and implement a communication plan in relation to harm caused by alcohol;

1b. Communicate the link between alcohol and health issues such as cancer, obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;

1c. Communicate the link between alcohol and family relationship difficulties;

1d. Communicate the link between alcohol and social harms, such as crime, violence and public disorder;

2a. Communicate effective measures to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm and the benefits of undertaking same;

Policy Development

3. Educate & Inform local communities on influencing policy to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm.

4. Support organizations and workplaces to develop and update alcohol policies in line with best practice.

5. Continue to lobby for the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015.

3a. Communicate/disseminate local regulations in relation to alcohol and the mechanisms in place to influence policy in addition to addressing concerns regarding the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm;

3b. Integrate and link this strategy to existing policies, strategies and plans within Sligo City;

4a. Develop and deliver policy development workshops targeting all community and voluntary groups, workplaces and sporting organizations;

5a. Support the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015 and its local implementation in the following areas:- **Labelling, Availability, Price based promotions, Marketing, Minimum unit pricing;**

Protecting Children and Young People

6. Protect children and young people from alcohol-related harm and alcohol promotion.

6a. Develop and implement actions to safeguard children and young people from alcohol related harm and alcohol promotion;

Support Alcohol Free Events

7. Encourage activities in Sligo City that are alcohol free.

7a. Encourage activities in Sligo City that are alcohol free. Identify and support the development of sport, recreation and cultural activities in Sligo city that are alcohol free.



B. Supply, Access & Availability

Aim: To ensure that key factors influencing alcohol supply, such as price, availability and marketing, are regulated and controlled to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Sligo City.

Goals

Strategic Actions 2018 - 2023

Alcohol Availability

8. Limit the availability of alcohol in Sligo City.

8a. Review the density of alcohol outlets in Sligo City and seek to strengthen zoning regulations to reduce the availability of alcohol in the town;

8b. Limit the availability of alcohol at civic, sporting and public events;

8c. Work with festival organizers to promote understanding and implementation of existing Festival Care Guidelines;

Alcohol Marketing

9. Reduce the marketing of alcohol in public places.

9a. Reduce the exposure of children to alcohol in public places and sporting events;

9b. Monitor and strengthen local alcohol marketing practices and sponsorship in public places;

9c. Advocate for statutory regulations at a national level in relation to alcohol marketing to protect children;

Drinking Environment

10. Promote responsible practices within the drinking environment to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm.

10a. Communicate to consumers and licensed traders information on the rights and responsibilities in relation to selling, purchasing, consuming alcohol and server liability;

10b. Communicate current bye-laws in relation to alcohol, focusing on roles and alcohol related harm responsibilities of the community, licensed traders, Co Council and An Garda Siochana;

10c. Assist licensed traders to be aware of regulations in relation to the sale of alcohol and underage drinking;

10d. Develop a guide to safer pubs and clubs based on best practice;

C. Screening, Treatment & Support Services

Aim: To provide a range of services and supports to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Sligo City.

Goals

Strategic Actions 2018 - 2023

11. Increase the availability of screening and brief advice.

11a. Promote the range of alcohol screening tools available and advocate for increased use of these tools by relevant agencies and groups;

11b. Encourage the use of appropriate screening and brief advice tools across a range of services;

12. Promote the existing treatment services to meet the needs of people affected by alcohol misuse.

12a. Provide up to date information on alcohol treatment, support and rehabilitation services in Sligo City;

12b. Assess and strengthen referral systems for existing alcohol treatment services in Sligo City;

13. Promote and advocate for the development of treatment and support services to meet the needs of people affected by alcohol misuse.

13a. Advocate for additional services where gaps in service provision have been identified;

13b. Promote recognised quality standards in the provision of alcohol treatment support services;

13c. Examine the support and service needs of identified vulnerable groups who are at risk of encountering alcohol related harm;

13d. Provide training and facilitate the development of family supports for those affected by alcohol;

13e. Support the development of a range of services for young people affected by alcohol;



D. Research, Monitoring And Evaluation

Aim: To use information and research in decision making to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm in Sligo City.

Goals

Strategic Actions 2018 - 2023

Research

14. Survey.

14a. Assess behaviours, attitudes, awareness in relation to alcohol use in Sligo City;

Monitoring/Evaluation

15. Monitor & evaluate the progress and impact of this strategy.

15a. Develop systems to track the progress of the strategy;

15b. Evaluate the impact of strategic actions within this strategy at appropriate stages;

15c. Monitor the level of public support for this strategy.



Northwest Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force

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