****

**22nd March 2018**

**HSE Media Release**

**Launch of North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force - Sligo City Alcohol Strategy 2018 – 2023**

The Sligo Healthy Ireland project in conjunction with the North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force has developed an alcohol related harm reduction strategy for Sligo City.

The strategy can be downloaded from the following link <http://nwdrugtaskforce.ie/>

The support from the number and range of individuals, groups and organisations in the development of this strategy within the Community, Voluntary and Statutory sectors 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, we 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 strengthen support and 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, we welcome the Government’s intention to take action with the proposed introduction of the ***Public Health (Alcohol Bill)*** -the benefits of supporting the measures in this bill will provide a pragmatic means to achieving a reduction in alcohol consumption in Ireland.

The NWRDATF 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. We 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.

If you would like further information, please contact Sean O’Connor, Coordinator on 071 9151520/or email seanoconnor@nwdrugtaskforce.ie

**Media Queries to:**

Amanda Murray

HSE Communications Officer

Community Health Organisation Area 1 (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo)

Tel: 071 98 34641 Mob: 087 9050777

Email: amandam.murray@hse.ie

