

St AENGUS



Community Action Group

2022 Annual Report

St Aengus Community Action Group CLG

St. Aengus Centre, Castletymon Green, Tymon North, Tallaght, Dublin 24. D24YX60

Company Registration No. 302205 CHY13842-20044169

Main client target group(s)

People, over eighteen years of age, suffering from drug addiction, from the Tymon (1) & (2) LEA and greater Tallaght area. People in recovery who wish to gain entry to employment or further education, from all areas. People who are active drug users, seeking Harm Reduction. Families or Individuals who are seeking supports and information, due to a family members drug usage. People from the general Community who access our service for advice or to address concerns about general drug usage within the Community. Local Second Level schools to provide drug awareness and prevention information.

Brief service descriptor

Community lead Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Project, founded in 1996, in partnership with the HSE, TDATF, DDLETB and DEASP, offering drug treatment and rehabilitation, free of charge, to those people suffering from drug addiction or in recovery from drug addiction. The Company is registered with the CRO, 302205 and the Charity Regulator, 20044169 and CHY 13842 and has an active Board of Directors, who meet every six weeks. The Chairperson of the Board is Christy Pollard and currently there are six Board members.

Services offered by St Aengus Community Action Group CLG.

Clinical Service twice weekly, offering methadone prescribing through two HSE provided General Practitioners. One to One Counselling via appointment with two registered Counsellors available. Daily Drop-In Service. Harm Reduction and Needle Exchange. Brief Interventions. Holistic Therapy. Referrals and Advocacy. Education and Training Programme, offered through our Community Employment Programme, including Personal Development, Group Work, Tai Chi, Wellbeing and Mindfulness, Relapse Prevention and Art Therapy.

Staff

Seven fulltime staff members, two volunteers and forty one Community Employment participants, including Special Category, Disability and Active Labour participants. Sessional Staff employed for various Modules for the Education and Training Programme, as required.

Number of clients, referrals etc.

The Clinical Service is offered services to twenty seven clients, seven of whom are female and twenty are males and in total have 24 children. One female and two males have no children and are still living in the family home, twenty clients attended Counselling services, one to one. Eleven participants attend the Special Category CE Scheme in St Aengus and other locations, five disability participants are placed in the Arts Studio CE Scheme, eleven participants are placed in SWAN, Three participants are placed in St Dominics, five clients are placed in WASP, three participants are placed in TASP and three participants are placed in Threshold, all on a daily basis. We have records of sixty clients for Needle Exchange. Drop-In Service has an average attendance of twenty clients weekly.

2022 seen a big improvement for the Project. With our own St Aengus Centre being refurbished after the fire in 2018, we were glad to have the building returned to us in November 2021. We continued to use St Aengus Community Centre in tandem with the St Aengus Centre while the fit-out continued.

We continued to prioritise Treatment services, Counselling and Harm Reduction in both Centres and Drop-in was resumed on a daily basis. The DSP continued to support the CE Programme in 2022 and -we are in the process of renewing a three year SLA with the DSP to bring the service up to 2026. We continue to provide employment and education opportunities for our service users.

Treatment Service

There are 1150 attendances at the two clinics provided on Tuesday and Wednesday, three hours each, to date during 2022. All clients attending are still observing public health recommendations before entry to clinics.

Two clients were transferred to services in the City due being housed in the City centre and it suited their treating doctor to see them in Castle Street to save them the journey of travelling to Tallaght every week. We were requested to accept a transfer of a client, at his own request and subject to the treating doctor and a local pharmacy agreeing, this transfer should proceed before the end of October.

Counselling

One To One Counselling requests resumed during 2022 and are facilitated by our Counsellors. Twenty clients attending on an appointment basis, usually three clients given appointments on a weekly or fortnightly basis. One of our Counsellors facilitates our Group sessions on Reduce the Use.

Needle Exchange

We distributed over 160 exchanges to date in 2022. We use two contact numbers for the exchanges and post information on our website and through other services. We offer an emergency pack service to clients, as required. Most of the requests for emergency exchanges come over the weekend, particularly on Saturday evenings or Bank Holiday Mondays. In the second half of 2022, we noticed an increase in requests for exchanges from Steroid users, which had diminished during lockdown, due mainly to Gym closures. There is a small increase in requests for Crack Pipes and we are aware of increased activity in our area in this regard and will promote an awareness campaign on Social media to highlight our services. We had no referrals to treatment, year to date, in 2022.

Drop-in

We resumed in person services, by appointment in June 2021 continue this service in 2022. Issues ranging from Court Supports, Treatment enquiries, Residential requests, Welfare information, assistance with filling out forms, Housing assistance and Homeless issues were some of the issues we dealt with. We referred three people to the Alcohol programme in TASP and dealt with Family support issues in partnership with SWAN.

Training and Education Programme (CE Scheme)

Our CE Scheme continued in person during 2022, unless there was a definite medical reason why the participant could not return. In these cases, payments continued to the participant throughout the period of absence. We continue to provide CE participants to St Dominics, WASP, TASP/SWAN, Threshold, TCA and Disability Services. Recruitment of Special Category participants continues problematic and while we have ten vacancies across all categories, we have successfully filled five vacancies year to date 2022. We continue to advertise our services and vacancies through JobsIreland, Social Media, on our website, in GP surgeries, Primary Health Centres, Tallaght University Hospital, Community Projects and South Dublin County Partnership. Active Labour participant vacancies are also difficult to fill and this is now common across the sector. We had four participants return to full employment, one participant go on to further education, we had 7 Major awards and 50 Minor awards given to participants during 2022, to date.

Service to Community and value of service to clients and their families

The St Aengus Service opened in 1996 in Tymon North and played a huge role in reducing the demand for heroin by the introduction of the Methadone service. The service expanded to a standalone premises, which is now the focal point of treatment, rehabilitation, prevention and awareness in our catchment area. We provide programmes to assist people with relapse prevention, mindfulness and wellbeing. We link into other Services in the Tallaght area, including the TDATF, DSP, DDLETB, HSE, other Community Drug Projects, Youth and Sports Projects, MABs, St Vincent de Paul, Barnardo's and Foroige. We are members of the PPN and link into local second level schools.

Challenges faced by the service in 2022/2023

Our biggest challenge faced by our service is the cost of living crisis in 2022/2023. Due to massive hikes in energy costs, Insurance costs and demands for pay restoration and increases, we struggle to meet the demands of the service out of a Grant Aid that has not increased in over twelve years. The restrictions on finance present us with great difficulties and we are striving to keep maintain the level of service, in face of this crisis.