

Press Release: Wednesday 1st June, 2016

Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force

Family Support Strategy

Launch Event

The Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force is holding a launch for their new: *Drug and Alcohol Family Support Strategy* on Wednesday, June 15th at 10am in the Ard Rí Hotel, Tuam.

Family Support is an approach to working with children, young people, parents and families which is based on a style of work which emphasizes prevention, early intervention and a focus on the strengths of family members. It aims to reinforce positive informal social networks and build on individual resilience.

Deirdre Hurney, Chairperson of the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force, welcomes the completion of this strategy and signifies the importance of this Regional Family Support Strategy when she highlighted “it is well documented the distress and destabilizing effect caused by addiction to the family unit. This strategy aims to develop a co-ordinated plan to improve and enhance support for individuals and family members living with such distress. It is the first of its kind in the country and reflects the commitment of the Task Force to supporting both users and their family members affected by substance misuse”.

Speakers at the event will include Ms Debbie McDonagh, WRDATF Family Support Coordinator, Ms Marion Rackard, Hidden Harm National Project and Dr Carmel Devaney, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway.

Co-author of the strategy, Ms. Debbie McDonagh emphasizes the need to support families due to the stress and chaos that substance misuse has on thousands of families in the West of Ireland and the need for a strategy that focuses on the wider family context. “Children, parents, carers, siblings and extended family members are impacted by substance misuse and we must develop targeted prevention, intervention and ancillary supports for them”. Ms McDonagh states that “this strategy was developed through an extensive consultation process with service providers and family members. She further iterates that “this strategy strives to be a cohesive and integrated plan for the WRDATF and its partners aimed at meeting the needs of families affected by drugs and alcohol”.

This strategy sets out the future direction for the Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force regarding its work on Family Support within Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. The Task Force has established its twenty four goals for the next four years and aims to work with all relevant stakeholders to achieve these goals. The strategy will be overseen by the Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force Family Support Working Group and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The launch is free but places must be booked in advance. To book a place or for further information contact the WRDTF office on 091 480044 or email debbie.mcdonagh@wrddf.ie