

## **Responding to Drug-Related Intimidation Reporting Programme**

The Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force in conjunction with an Garda Síochána in Galway, relaunched the information campaign on the National Responding to Drug-related Intimidation Reporting Programme. A poster giving information on the programme and the contact details for the nominated Gardaí in the western region has been developed and will be circulated throughout the area.

This programme was established by the Garda National Drugs Unit and the National Family Support Network. The purpose of this programme is to respond to the needs of those experiencing drug-related intimidation.

Inspectors have been selected by the Garda Commissioner to respond to this serious issue of drug-related intimidation. Individuals experiencing intimidation can make contact with the inspector for their area for an informal or formal meeting. Detective Inspector Michael Coppinger is the nominated Garda for Galway and is working closely with the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force (WRDAFT) regarding this matter.

Ms Debbie McDonagh, Family Support Training and Development Worker with the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force, provided training to community based workers from Galway City Partnership and emphasised the importance of this programme for those who may be experiencing intimidation due to their own or a loved one's drug debt.

Ms McDonagh says that intimidation can take many forms and may include threats, violence, damage to the family home / property, sexual violence, financial difficulties. The experience of intimidation may be very frightening and may pose a serious risk to the individuals involved and their loved ones.

It is important that family members are informed about this programme and are aware that they can contact Mill St. Garda Station directly (091 538000) and request to speak to Detective Inspector Michael Coppinger. Alternatively, family members can contact a local family support worker or drugs worker to speak in confidence and to seek more information about the programme.

Ms McDonagh also states that it is very important that the services in the city are aware of the programme and how to support those experiencing intimidation.

Training is available for groups and organisations interested in finding out more and can be accessed by contacting the WRDATF on 091 480044. Posters on the initiative are also available from the Task Force Offices.