



Cavan and Monaghan Drug and Alcohol Service

(Formerly Cavan/ Monaghan Drug Awareness)

2017 Annual Report

Chairperson's Foreword

Through 2017 CDA Trust CLG has continued to provide a high level of support to those across Cavan and Monaghan living with the impact of drug or alcohol issues. Demand for support has consistently outstripped our ability to supply it, particularly with regards to our counselling service. As well as consolidating and expanding our existing range of supports, the provision of additional counselling hours must be our first priority. The Deis Nua Community Employment Scheme has come to be a key aspect of the support programme we offer and our focus for the coming months will also be to expand the range of training and work experience options available to our participants.

Padraig McBreen

Chairperson, CDA Trust Ltd

Mission Statement

CDA Trust LTD is a community based project which aims to address the issue of drug and alcohol misuse through the provision of information, support, training and services to individuals, families and the wider community.

Key Objectives

- To reduce drug and alcohol related harm for all service users
- To provide a range of evidence based interventions that help individuals move away from problematic drug and alcohol use
- To assist other support organisations address drug and alcohol use amongst their service users through training and advice.
- To support the families of those affected by drug and alcohol, use.
- To highlight the impact of drug and alcohol use in the local community
- To provide confidential advice and support to concerned members on the local community.

Range of Services

CDA Trust Ltd has provided a range of services over the years with a growing emphasis on providing direct support to individuals with drug and alcohol problems. The range of services on offer currently include:

- Assessment and One to One support.
- Key-working/ Case management
- Individual Counselling (12-18 weekly counselling hours)
- Family Support Counselling.
- Drugs Awareness Education.
- Alternative Therapies
- Deis Nua Community Employment Scheme
- Onward Referral.
- Family Support

Locations and Opening Times

- Cavan Drug and Alcohol Service, Acot House, Farnham Road, Cavan. Open 9:30 – 5:30 Monday to Friday on a drop in basis.
- Monaghan Drug and Alcohol Service, 1 Oriel Way, Mullaghmatt Estate, Monaghan. Open Mondays to Fridays 9:30 to 5:30 on a drop in basis.
- Evening appointments by arrangement in all locations subject to availability. Outreach clinics operating in Ballybay, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Bailieborough and other locations as required

Board of Management CDA Trust Ltd:

- Padraig Mc Breen (Chairperson)
- Emer Jones (Secretary)
- Sheila Comiskey (Treasurer)
- John Ed Sheanon (Director)
- Jimmy Markey (Director)
- Dessie Harrington (Director)

Board of Management for Deis Nua (CE Scheme)

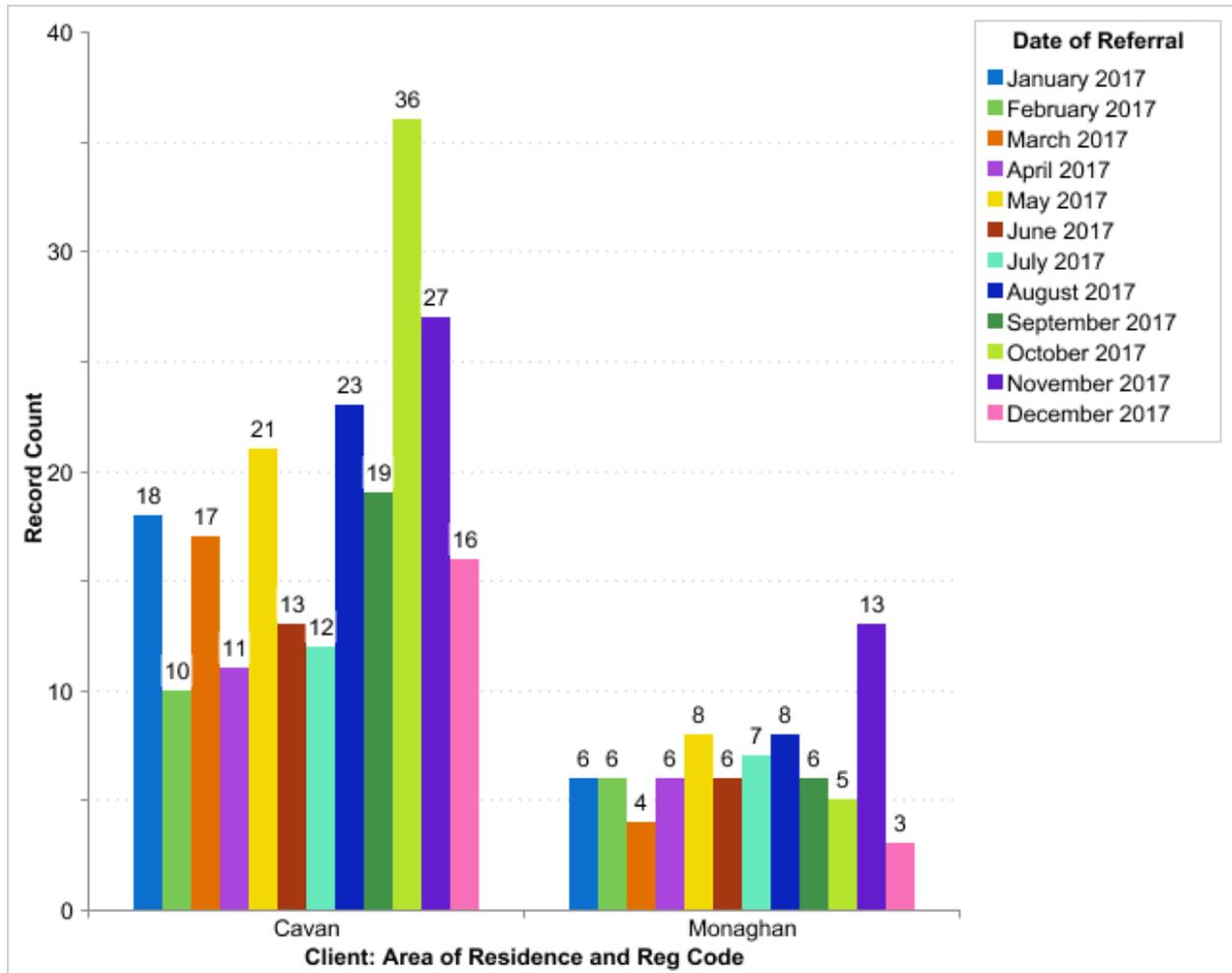
- Padraig McBreen (Chairperson)
- Larry Flynn (Vice Chair)
- John Ed Sheanon (Secretary)
- Sheila Comiskey (Treasurer)
- Jimmy Markey (Director)
- Emer Jones (Director)
- Tim Murphy (Director)

The Staff Team:

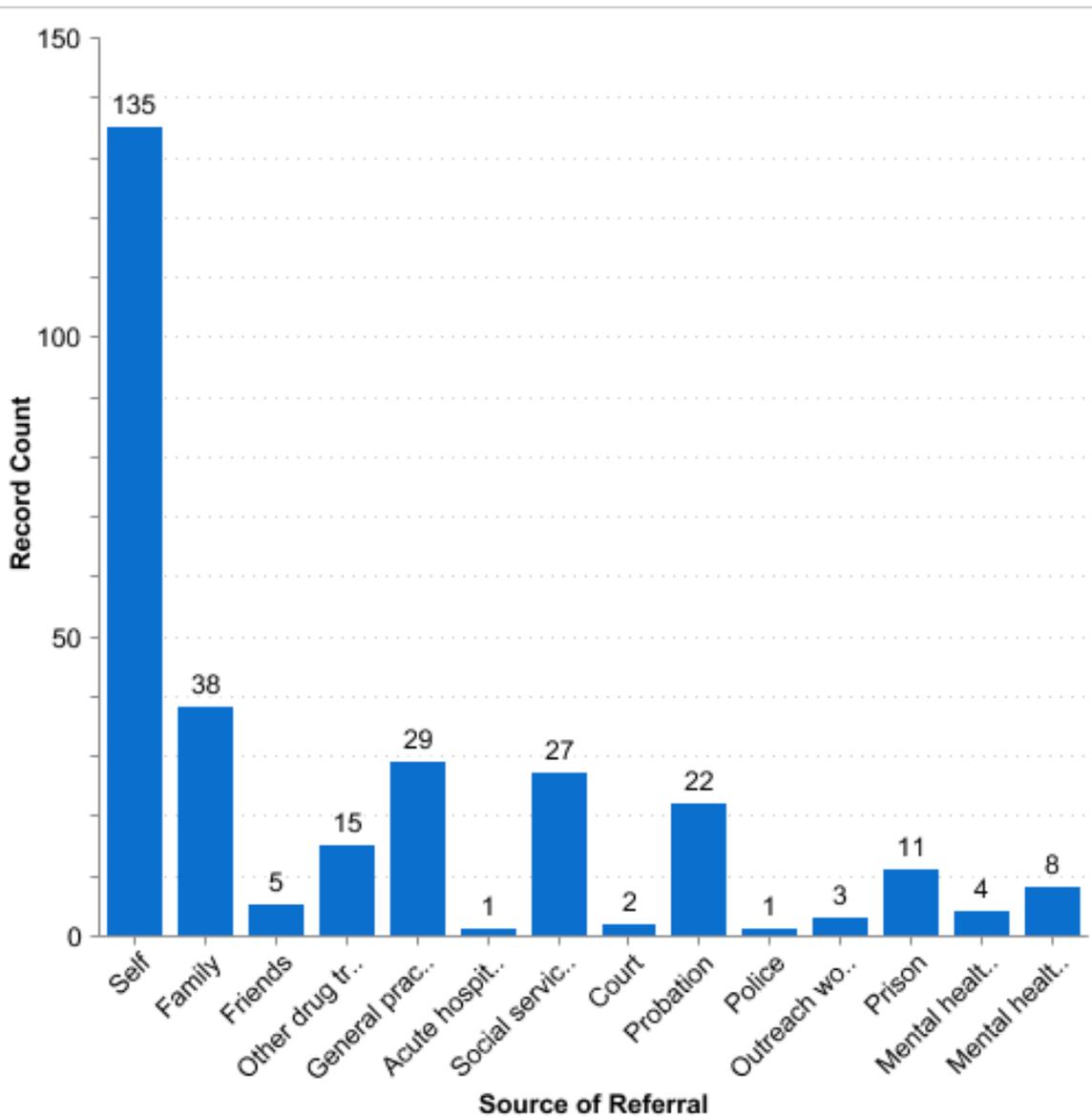
- Tim Murphy (Service Manager)
- Frank Fitzpatrick (Project Worker)
- Steven Shields (CE Supervisor)
- Zoe Wells (Project Worker)
- Sean Pouch (Project Worker)
- Mary Cullivan (Counsellor)
- Trish Mulcahy (CE Assistant Supervisor)
- Emer Jones (Company Secretary).
- Sid Kavanagh (Counsellor).
- Mary Flood (Family Support Counsellor).
- Sinead McCabe (CE Project Worker)
- Geraldine Duffy (CE project Worker)
- Sarah O'Callaghan (CE Administrator)
- Phil Smith (CE Project Worker)

Service Statistics

In 2017 we received 301 referrals to our service (Cavan 223, Monaghan 78):



The referrals to our Service for 2014 came from the following Sources:



Almost one half of referrals for both services come from individuals seeking help for themselves. As in years gone by, Tusla Child and Family Services also utilised our service a great deal in both locations accounting for approximately one tenth of overall referrals. In many cases, Tusla encouraged individuals to engage with our service rather than making a direct referral. The relationship we have developed with Tusla has gone from strength to strength over the last twelve months, with a number of training, knowledge exchange initiatives and we look forward to working more closely with this key strategic partner in the future. The probation service also made a significant number of referrals and encouragingly, community GPs continue to refer into our service in increasing numbers in both locations. There have been a small, but increasing number of referrals from local mental health services and over the past year, we have developed strong links with the local mental health services. CAMHS also made

a number of referrals to our U18's counselling service and developing a closer working relationship with young persons' services (including ISPCC, Bounceback and Foroige will be a priority for 2018)

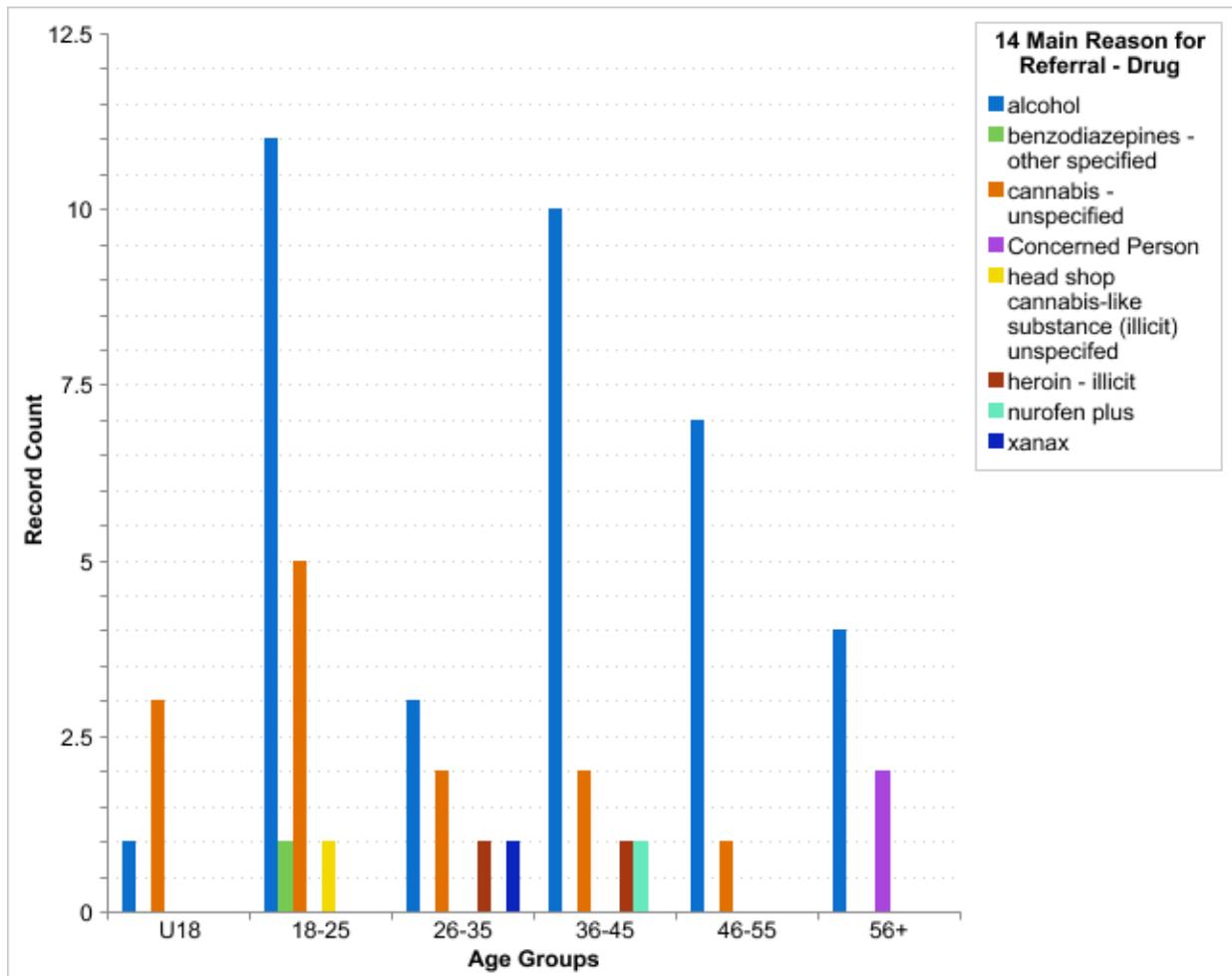
Waiting times:

In 2017 we reoriented our service to ensure individuals presenting in crisis could access support quickly. 70% of individuals referred to our service accessed structured support within 7-14 days (where the individual was able to access a range of interventions and supports).

However an increasing demand for counselling presented increasing challenges and extended waiting times. From our independent service user consultation (Quality Matters 2015) our counselling service emerged as the most highly valued support and extended waiting times to access counselling emerged as a key frustration (peaking at 60 days waiting time in 2017 towards end of year). Our service delivered over 1000 hours of counselling in 2017 to over 54 individuals with approximately 40% of these sessions funded by independent charitable donations or delivered by volunteers working towards IACP accreditation. However this is still not meeting demand, and a priority for the coming year will be to explore ways of expanding capacity for this service

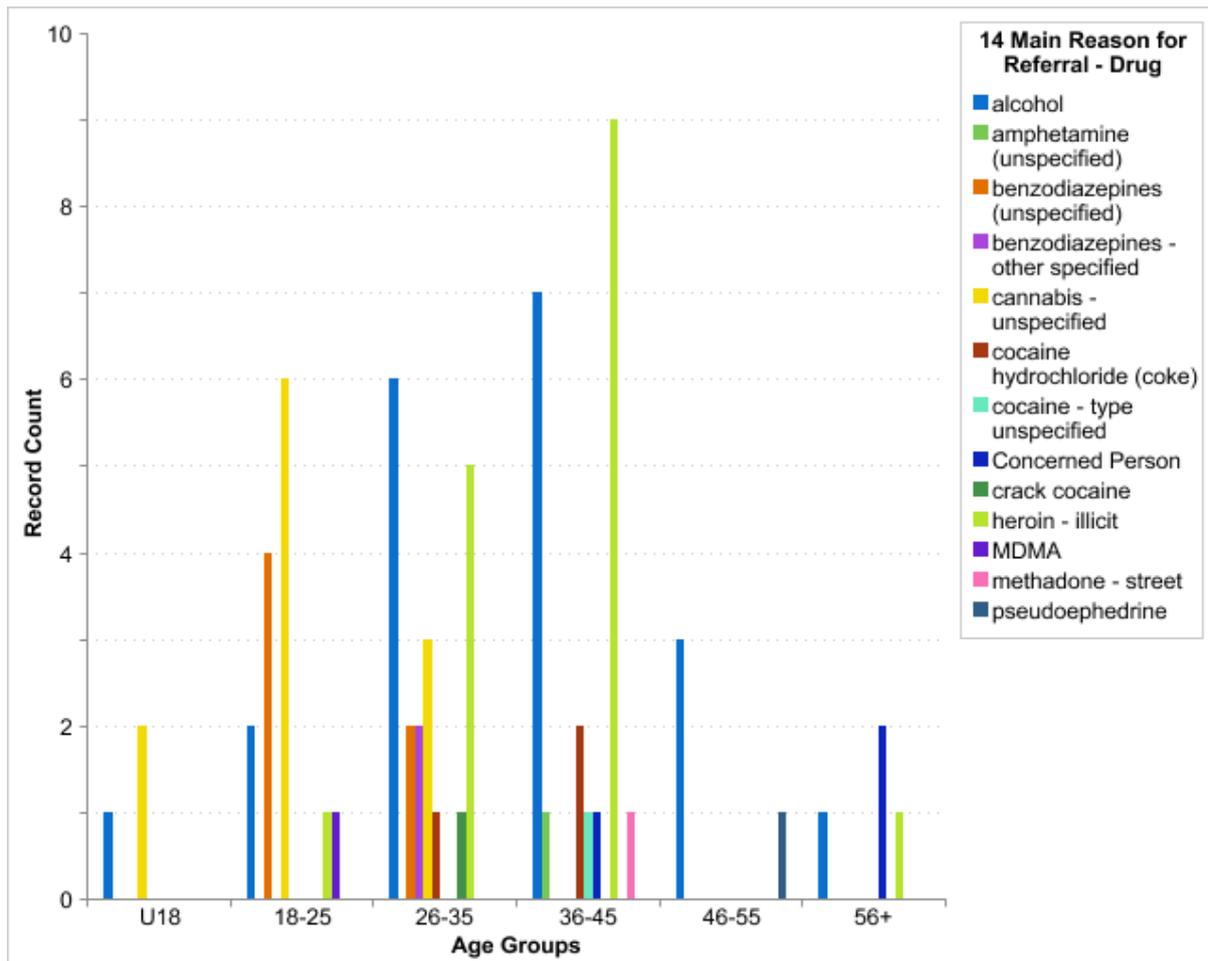
Presenting Issues:

Service Users in Monaghan by Age and Primary Substance (2017)



NB: “concerned person” refers to cases where a concerned relative, partner or friend made the initial referral but a specific substance could not be identified due to early disengagement or other factors.

Our Monaghan service saw a steady rate of referrals throughout the year, with alcohol cited as the most common problem amongst presenting individuals. The heroin issue within Monaghan seems to be of a much lower order than that within Cavan, though as there are no methadone/ opiate substitution therapy prescribing doctors in the county, those living in Monaghan with opiate issues are probably under represented.



Cavan:

In 2017 our service saw a significant increase in the number of individual using illicit benzodiazepines like “Xanax bars” particularly amongst younger service users and primary opiate users. We also saw significant increases in the use of crack cocaine, again predominantly amongst primary opiate users with reported widespread availability. Addiction to “over the counter” (OTC) medication, particularly those with a codeine content (Solpadeine/Solpadol) continued to be a presenting issue as did a handful of individuals reporting addiction to new opiate derivatives like Fentanyl or Oxycodone. Reported “MDMA” use continued to be a cause for concern, again primarily amongst a younger cohort, though urinalysis, saliva screens sometimes revealed pills available in the region to contain substances other than MDMA. Alcohol continued to be a significant issue across all age categories and cannabis use again amongst a younger cohort. The availability of New Psychoactive Substances was reduced to some degree due to the introduction of new

legislation in the UK (with cross border trade being reported as one of the primary routes of supply in 2014-2015).

Heroin continues to be a significant issue in county Cavan, with in excess of seventy individuals attending the on-site methadone prescribing GP's. Waiting times for this service have at times exceeded five months which gives us grave cause for concern for their well-being. Individuals unable to access methadone treatment are either forced to travel to Dublin services (who may not accept them) or go without entirely. The risk of immediate and long term drug related harm (including overdose) cannot be overstated. At this stage, our organisation feels it has done all it possibly can to develop and expand this essential life-saving treatment intervention. Our priority for the coming year will be to continue to draw attention to this critical issue and explore new partnership models.

Priorities for Future development: Responding to Changing Needs and Gaps in Service Provision.

Re-Establishment of Needle Exchange Programme:

Due to governance and funding issues, there has been no development of this initiative other than that which is offered through the local pharmacy based needle exchange programme. Our organisation remains committed to the principles of harm reduction and any assistance it can provide to any future initiative (through project worker outreach support and providing premises).

OST/ Methadone treatment:

Our organisation remains committed to campaigning for more local resources to deal with the lack of OST across the region.

Community Employment Scheme: The CE scheme has continued to develop and offer an increased range of educational initiatives, employment supports and addiction specific interventions. The achievements of the participants, both academic and personal, are difficult to quantify. During 2017 our participants were awarded:

- 7 level 4 (QQI) Minor awards
- 9 level 4 (QQI) Minor awards
- 1 level 5 (QQI) Minor awards
- 2 Level 6 (QQI) Minor Awards

And of the 15 individuals who left our scheme during this period, 6 progressed to employment, 1 entered full time education.

It is fair to say our participants exceed our, and their own expectations. We were also particularly delighted to see their commitment to the successful development of our service user group (SUST), and an informal network of peer support. Two of our participants became learning ambassadors for the local ETB with one of them attending Áras an Uachtaráin to celebrate National

Adult Literacy Week with President Michael D Higgins. A priority for 2018 will be to expand the availability of DRP CE placements, to increase the range of courses available to those on our scheme and to address some of the transport issues that exist across the region.

Family Support Service: The family support service offered by CDA has continued to be an essential part of our service. All those seeking addiction support are routinely made aware of this service and we hope to expand this part of our service in the coming year through the provision of additional dedicated family support counselling and new training initiatives for our existing team.

Prevention/Education Initiatives:

CDA will continue to provide training and information to local interested groups, individuals and organisations on the issue of substance use. Through membership of the Cavan Drug and Alcohol Forum, we have built strong links with An Garda Síochána and delivered bespoke information/awareness sessions to local schools. A priority for 2018 will be the development of a suite of such initiatives to suit presenting needs.

Other Issues/ Gaps in Services:

Outside of CDA, there is a general lack of dedicated addiction support across Counties Cavan and Monaghan. There are no dedicated residential stabilisation/ detoxification units for adults or young people, no homeless shelter other than what St Vincent DePaul society are able to provide and there is a continuing disconnect between mental health services in the region and addiction support services. There are also inadequately developed referral pathways between addiction support services and the Irish Prison Service.

Under 18s:

We will continue to offer counselling support to under 18's as part of an agreed interagency careplan. At present we have established partnership working arrangements with Tusla, Garda 365, CAMHS and the ISPCC.

And finally a word of thanks:

The work we do would not be possible without the kind support of the following partners:

- HSE
- Department of Social Protection
- North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force
- Cavan Court Service
- Breffni Integrated
- Cavan and Monaghan ETB
- St Vincent DePaul Society
- Teach Na nDaoine FRC
- An Garda Síochána
- TUSLA Child and Family Agency
- The Probation Service
- The Joshua Project
- The Beckscourt View Centre
- Sosad
- Chuan Mhuire
- LES Monaghan
- ISPCC Bounceback
- Garda 365 Project
- Foroige
- Cavan County Council
- Cavan Arts Council
- Cavan Arts and Culture Centre
- Brendan Smith TD
- Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD