



Welcome to the National Family Support Network Newsletter, a way for us to promote events and spread news throughout the network.

Address from NFSN CEO, Sadie Grace

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and I hope that it finds you all safe and well in these strange and challenging times. The aim for this edition is to give you all a brief update on what the NFSN and some of our affiliated services have been working on throughout the Covid 19 lockdown. From mid March to the start of June NFSN staff were working tirelessly from their own homes. We returned to the office at start of June to ensure we could continue to offer the high quality services and supports to our affiliated members and family members. We will highlight some of the major changes and pieces of work we have undertaken, throughout the newsletter.

I would like to thank the staff and the management committee for their hard work throughout this strange situation we find ourselves in and commend them for stepping up when it was really needed.

NFSN Updates



NFSN Events

The NFSN are working strictly to government guidelines when it comes to large gatherings and social distancing which means for now we cannot commit to hosting any large events. We are monitoring the situation closely and will assess individual events when and if guidelines change.

Updated list of Nominated Garda Inspectors now available

We now have the latest, most up to date list of nominated Garda Inspectors trained in Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme across Ireland. These inspectors are available to meet with and advise people affected by drug related intimidation in both an informal and formal capacity, providing a much needed resource for families in a very

difficult position. Please share widely and replace any old lists, and if you or someone you work with is affected by drug related intimidation, please get in touch with us. You can find the list at the following link: [list of DRI Garda Inspectors](#)

Policy Work



National Drug Strategy

With social distancing measures in place and the government encouraging people to work from home where possible, the National Drug Strategy meetings have continued online via Microsoft Teams. NFSN have continued to attend and represent the voice of family members. In the latest meeting of the strategy, an update was given from [drugs.ie](#) on Nitroxide, as cases of young people using this substance rise. Nitroxide, or 'laughing gas', can be very risky to use, especially in terms of brain development for younger people. The HSE encourage parents who want to talk to their children about Nitroxide or any other drug to use their [Parent's Guide](#) available at [drugs.ie](#) and to contact the National Family Support Network for support.

Kinship Care

Supporting families caring for children/young people as a result of parental substance misuse has always been a key issue for NFSN. We have been working with new initiative - Kinship Care Ireland- since 2018 to try and improve supports for families. We are so excited to share the news that Kinship Care Ireland have been supported by Tusla to resource a dedicated development worker for the project. This is a huge step forward for kinship carers in Ireland and we will continue to update you when this support is up and running.

National Family Support Network Strategic Plan

If you attended our Annual Work Conference in November of last year you will remember that we were asking all attendees to input into our new strategic plan. We asked you to tell us what the most important issues in family support are and what we should focus on for the next five years. Families raised issues such as the need to have accessible, resourced and evidence-based supports, and supports for issues such as drug related intimidation, dual diagnosis and bereavement among other issues. We are so grateful for this feedback and are using it to write our next plan. We will keep you posted!

5-Step Method

Unsurprisingly we have heard great reports about how well the 5-Step Method works over phone and video calls. This has meant we are working harder than ever to increase the availability of this training through an online format. We are in the process of running a couple of pilot sessions to ensure that participants will get as much from online delivery as face to face. We are also going to be running some shorter refresher courses which will focus on the 5 steps. This refresher course will be aimed at people who have been accredited but might not have used the method much, or those who have not come for accreditation yet and want to have a more focused session to support their accreditation process.

Non-Violent Resistance

We have been working with our external partners in NVR Ireland about delivering NVR Training as an online session. NVR is already offered by several practitioners on Parentline and lends well to being delivered over the phone or through video call. Eileen Lauster from NVR Ireland is working on some other sessions for people in different positions, such as managers of services, members of the Gardaí or family members in groups. These will all focus on NVR but will have a different focus depending on the group.

Young Person's Support Programme

Before lockdown we were in touch with some rural services, such as KDYS, who were already offering the YPSP on a 1:1 approach through phone and video format. There's no denying that younger people are much more comfortable with using technology for a lot more than previous generations have been which increased accessibility to this programme and are excited to see how it continues to develop.

Quality Standards

We reviewed our Quality Standards during lockdown to consider how the Principles and Standards worked with remote support and groups. We put together a supplementary document to go through how to consider applying the principles. This document is available on our [website](#) or you can email the Education Officer and ask for a copy. We also encourage feedback from facilitators about this so please don't hesitate to send comments or queries to us. We are going to resume our roadshow event through Zoom to support facilitators to use the QS Manual and encourage discussion about how they are applied during the current way of working.

Drug Related Intimidation Report Programme

We have run an information session on Zoom about the Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme to the Navan area and the Nominated Inspector for Meath, Brian

Dunne, presented and discussed this issue with the attendees. We are considering bringing groups who have attended information sessions together again after they have applied the principles and responded to reports of DRI. These follow-up sessions will promote peer learning, problem solving and networking. Watch this space!!!

If you are interested in any of these events or just want more information about what we can offer and how please email or call the Education and Outreach Officer on training@fsn.ie or 01-898 0148.

Updates From Around the Country



The Dublin 15 Family Support Service team were redeployed to a residential drug treatment service which was of huge benefit both in terms of learning and building links with treatment services in the community. Both staff had the opportunity to run group workshops on parenting strategies and circle of security with the residents.

Despite these changes, BLDATF Dublin Family Support 15 continued to offer the service through the COVID 19 pandemic through various methods of communication. Since completing the redeployment D15 Family Support have phased the 1-1 service back to full capacity whilst operating under amended procedures, which is working extremely well for family members.

The service has resumed with face to face contact to facilitate family's members to attend in house sessions while adhering with new forms of practice to ensure safety measures.

Interventions been offered through 1-1, telephone, email, video calls

- Information and support
- New referrals and assessments
- Drug related intimidation reporting programme
- 5 Step Method – primary focus of service
- Triple P and TUSLA Parenting 24 seven

Issues arising:

- Continued to work with existing family members to offer support

- Increased number of new referrals accessing family support
- Most common substances used – cannabis, alcohol and un-prescribed tablets.
- Increased reports of alcohol use within families and relapse
- Increased reports of drug debt related intimidation
- Profile of FM's are parents, siblings and adult children
- Source of referrals – self referral, TRP, D15 CAT, Sassy, NFSN and local addiction counsellor.

Some of the peer led groups have continued to meet through zoom and some are still awaiting their group meetings to resume. However, group members have continued to support each other by telephone throughout these difficult times.

On reflection, the last few months have been a huge opportunity for D15 Family Support with regard to networking, sharing experiences and innovative practices with both local and national services.

If you are living in Dublin 15 and are affected by another family members substance misuse, please contact D15. Family Support Service on 087 9574215/ 0868058785 or sarahjane@bldtf.ie / mary@bldtf.ie.



Dublin 15 Family Support is an initiative of Blanchardstown Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force



The Family Addiction Support Network (FASN) is a voluntary organisation covering the four counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Meath and Louth. It grew organically from the needs of family members who were impacted by a loved one's addiction behaviour. Family Members are involved at the core of development, management and servicing of the project.

FASN truly believes that by supporting families to have their needs met, families are then able to change the outcomes for themselves. To do this, we create an environment where people can learn for themselves and are supported in the choices they make, we then respond to family's needs by developing services.

Services include:

- 24/7 Out of Hours Telephone Helpline

- 1-1 Support
- Peer Group Support
- Access to Counselling
- Access to Respite
- RISE Educational Programme
- NFSN & An Garda Siochana Drugs Intimidation Reporting Programme

Because of Covid-19 the centre closed its doors and we couldn't have family members, facilitators, counsellors, or management enter. As a result, the facilitators divided the family support group members up between them and made phone calls to help them get through the week (or day sometimes) using their own phones at their own expense. counsellors did phone support for their family members. The Intimidation Garda support made calls to family members without calling to them. The Board of Management kept in touch by phone and our weekly team meetings continued.

With the increased worry and psychological stress, strain on family relationships, domestic violence and intimidation FASN were forced to develop online services to help alleviate the stress family members were experiencing as a result of the lockdown.

As a result of this, there has been a significant spike in in the amount of extra work on volunteers. Support statistics have increased from 98 for the whole of 2019 to 240 interactions with Family Members for April-June 2020 as well as from other Community groups looking for information and support.

FASN has recently taken part in Covid19 training to develop a Return to Operations plan where physical meetings are now resuming on a phased basis in order to keep everyone safe.

For support in this area please contact Gwen or Jackie on Phone: 042 9355251 / 087 9046405 or Email info.fasn@gmail.com Website: <https://fasn.ie>



Hope Cottage is the family support service for Kildare and West Wicklow. Due to government guidelines regarding Covid-19, we have been working remotely since March and so we have had to adapt our service. As a result, we offer one to one supports to clients over the phone and on Zoom if they have access to this. Any forms which require signing such as our Confidentiality Policy are emailed to clients for them to read and they

respond stating their consent.

We still provide the Five Step Method intervention and we post the handbook to the family member in advance of commencing Step 1. Where this is not possible, we scan the relevant chapters and exercise sheets to them as we work through each step. This has been working well and we have noticed an increase in referrals in recent weeks, with the impact of Covid-19 being a contributing factor no doubt. Attendance has also increased – we have noticed fewer cancellations and no shows whilst working remotely. Perhaps the removal of child care, transport, and time to travel to and from the service has removed a lot of barriers for people for accessing support? It's also possible that feelings of anxiety about physically attending a service have been eliminated as a result of receiving support online and over the phone.

Our Family Support Group is facilitated through Zoom on a weekly basis in the evening and this group has been attended exceptionally well each week. We appreciate that remote working has its disadvantages too. One being our pro-social and self-care groups, respite days and activities are postponed for the time being, so family members do not have an opportunity to engage socially like they would have before. To help meet that need as best we can right now, we host a Drop In morning on Zoom every Friday morning. This is an informal meeting where family members can literally 'drop in' for as little or as long as they like, with a cuppa for social interaction with staff and other family members. Conversations in this group can range from discussing themselves, to what they are watching on TV - anything goes!

There are a small number of family members who do not have access to zoom and who would have previously attended groups regularly so we are aware that they are missing that additional support and interaction with other family members. We appreciate that they are eager for us to return to Hope Cottage so they can attend the meetings again as well and we look forward to that day too. Nevertheless, this has been a great opportunity for learning and development as this new way of working has taught us that sufficient and helpful support can be provided remotely going forward as an option for people who may have no way of physically attending the service, but whom are in need of family support. Overall, it is working well and the feedback has been positive!

For more information on Hope Cottage Family Support Service please call Clare or Noreen on 045-877991 083- 3796852



Hope Cottage is an initiative of South Western Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force



Over the lock down, KDYS were able to maintain my groups, 1:1 and family support via What's App, Zoom, telephone. We got very creative and had workshops on poetry, drama, puppet making, makeup, virtual nature walks, virtual treasure hunts, riddles, plant identification and leaf pressing, virtual card games, short stories and career planning. The young people continued to engage until the end of May and that natural progression that happens in rural communities when the summer arrives, happened and the young people started to engage in other ways.

For more information on KDYS's family support services please see their website <https://kdys.ie/resources/family-support-resources-online/>



During lockdown some of our staff redeployed to assist the emergency response to COVID-19, we continued to offer family support services. Fingal Families is committed to supporting family members impacted by drug or alcohol use in North County Dublin. In these difficult times our priority is to ensure that we continue to keep family members safe from COVID-19 and still provide supports that are so desperately needed. Supports are presently being provided via a range of platforms, video call, phone, email, etc. Our intention is to gradually resume normal services in time, however for the moment we are providing online services.

One positive outcome has been some family members have said they prefer to engage in this way, so we do intend to continue to offer e-interventions and supports post covid-19, we will then provide a combined approach to best meet all family member's needs. We have found a huge increase in requests for support due to COVID-19

Support being offered currently:

- Family support groups (zoom)
- Family support knowledge and understanding workshops (zoom)
- 5 Step 1-1 (zoom, phone)
- Steps to Cope (zoom, phone)

- Information and advice 1-1 (zoom, phone)
- New referrals (zoom, phone)
- Initial assessments (zoom, phone)
- Parents Comhrá – 4 week online programme for parents of teenagers (zoom)
- Parents Under Pressure (zoom, phone)
- Drug related intimidation and violence support (zoom, phone)

Trends:

- Alcohol remains the main problem substance, followed by cannabis then cocaine use.
- Increased reports of relapse by drug or alcohol using family members
- Increase in reports of DRI and Violence

NEW REFERRALS	MAIN SOURCES OF REFERRAL	PRIMARY SUBSTANCE
80% FEMALE	COMMUNITY CARE SERVICE	ALCOHOL
20% MALE	SELF	CANNABIS
	GARDAI	COCAINE
	TUSLA	BENZO'S
	HSE	OPIATES
	ASTER FAMILY SUPPORT	
	COOLMINE	

If you are living in North County Dublin and need support with regard to someone else's drug and/or alcohol use please contact us on; 01 2233493

or siobhan@ndublinrdtf.ie or katie@ndublinrdtf.ie



NORTH DUBLIN
Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force

Fingal Families is an initiative of North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force

**Help for yourself can
help the whole family**



The South East Region Family Support Network provided family members and group facilitators with self care packs and posted to them in May to help and support them during COVID-19. We also provided 5 step brief intervention, meditation and self care twice a week and a family support group meeting once a week for family members to join. All of which were all provided through zoom sessions.



For support in this area please contact Breda or Catherine at [051 357767](tel:051357767) or [086 604 5805](tel:0866045805) email info@serfsn.org

Reminders



Re-affiliation Forms

Back in April all groups were sent the re-affiliation forms so we could update our database of family support groups and services around the country. If you have completed and returned the form, thank you very much. If not we would really appreciate if you could do so at your earliest convenience. The following is the link to the form(s), there are 2 types, one for family support groups and one for organisations that offer support but not in a group setting. <http://www.fsn.ie/news-events/news/membership-affiliation>

Please return completed forms to development@fsn.ie or by post to Development Worker, National family Support network, 5 Gardiner Row, Dublin 1, D01 R3K1

If you have any events or information that you would like to be shared in future newsletters, please contact us by emailing info@fsn.ie or call 01-898-0148.

***Best Wishes and stay safe,
The NFSN team***

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