



# ANNUAL REPORT 2007

**National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD)**

Dublin

Published by the Stationery Office

To be purchased directly from the  
Government Publications Sales Office,  
Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2,

or by mail order from

Government Publications, Postal Trade Section,  
Unit 20 Lakeside Retail Park, Claremorris, Co. Mayo  
(Tel: 01-6476834/37 or 1890-213434; Fax: 01-6476843 or 094-9378964)  
or through any bookseller.

PRN A8/1886

ISBN: 978-1-4064-2241-2

€5.00

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Designed by First Impression

ISBN 978-1-4064-2241-2



# VISION, MISSION, VALUES

## Vision

To provide a national focus for all knowledge related efforts that inform Irish policy in relation to drug misuse.

## Mission

**The NACD has undertaken to:**

- Support the Government in significantly reducing the health, social and economic consequences of drug misuse through the provision of timely data and analysis of research;
- Review its knowledge base, identifying gaps which can be addressed through research;
- Ensure that evidence from scientific research forms the basis for policy formulation, development of services and continuous improvement in all its approaches to tackling drug misuse in Ireland;
- Work closely with the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit of the Health Research Board, providing advice, co-ordinating research efforts and maximising the use of resources;
- Support the establishment of a National Documentation Centre;
- Liaise with the relevant agencies nationally in order to co-ordinate research and resources;
- Ensure participation nationally of a broad range of parties in fulfilling its research needs and dissemination of findings;
- Serve all drug misuse reduction activities in providing for an effective dissemination of research findings, information and other data thus linking research to practice.

## Values

**The NACD agreed that the following values would guide the implementation of its work programme. The NACD will:**

- Manage the diversity of its membership and commit to a consensus approach in decision-making;
- Foster a culture of respect, dignity, transparency and fairness in all its operations;
- Advocate dialogue as a means of balancing the diverse views on and experiences of drug misuse in Ireland;
- Be objective in the collection and dissemination of information in line with its commitment to the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008;
- Commit to the highest possible standards of excellence and ethical conduct;
- Seek out collaborations and partnerships where there is greater benefit to achieving its goal and co-operate with everyone who can benefit from its knowledge base.

# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chairperson's Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1 Background and Functions of the NACD</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Origins	9
1.2 Functions	9
<b>2 Structures and Work Programme</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Structures	10
2.1.1 The NACD	10
2.1.2 Sub-Committees	10
2.1.3 Terms of Reference	10
2.2 Work Programme of NACD	10
2.2.1 Summary of 2007	10
2.2.2 The Research Process	10
2.2.3 Commissioned Research	11
2.2.4 Ongoing Research	11
2.2.5 Collaboration	12
2.2.6 NACD/NDST Collaboration	13
2.3 Performance Management	13
2.3.1 Staff	13
2.3.2 Balanced Scorecard	13
2.3.3 Freedom of Information (FOI)	13
2.3.4 Drugs Strategy Unit (DSU) Support	14
2.3.5 Participation in Training	14

<b>3</b>	<b>Communications</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1	Advice to Government	15
3.2	Media Relations	15
3.3	NACD Website	15
3.4	Seminars/Briefings 2007	16
3.4.1	Seminars hosted by NACD 2007	16
3.4.2	Seminars/Conferences attended by NACD staff in 2007	16
3.4.3	Presentations given by the Director during 2007	17
3.4.4	Presentations given by the Research Team during 2007	17
3.5	Publications and Submissions	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Finance</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1	Research – Funding Allocations	19
4.2	NACD Expenditure	19
	<b>Appendix 1</b>	
	Membership of NACD Committee at 31st December, 2007	20
	<b>Appendix 2</b>	
	Table of Sub-Committee Membership at 31st December, 2007	22
	<b>Appendix 3</b>	
	Actions Required of the NACD under the National Drugs Strategy	24

# FOREWORD



I am delighted to welcome the second annual report of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD). The Government places particular importance on having good quality data and information to facilitate the formulation of evidence-based policy in relation to drugs and the NACD fulfils a major role in that regard.

It is encouraging to see from the 2007 outcomes of the ROSIE study on treatment of opiate addiction that investment in drug treatment services is paying dividends. Also the NACD report 'The Experience of Families Seeking Support in Coping with Heroin Use' and the associated DVD, provided real insights into the problems faced by families, beneficial information for those families and sound recommendations for future action.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Des Corrigan in his seventh year as Chairperson of the NACD. He continues to lead the Committee in an efficient and professional manner. I am also very grateful to the NACD Director Mairéad Lyons and all the NACD members and staff for their commitment and diligence.

**John Curran T.D.**

*Minister of State with responsibility for the  
National Drugs Strategy*

October 2008

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



2007 was a challenging year in which much important research was commissioned and completed by the NACD. Perhaps the most noteworthy publication during the year was the report on Cocaine Use in Ireland II which drew attention to the increasing prevalence, increasing availability and consequent problems of cocaine use problems which are experienced by families and communities nationwide. This report was a joint venture with the National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST) and the resulting combination of talents and resources resulted in very concrete recommendations that have subsequently been advanced by various stakeholders in the National Drugs Strategy. The actual implementation of NACD recommendations and advice is a key performance indicator for us as an Advisory Committee.

The publication of research into how families cope with heroin misuse was another highlight of our work. In particular, the launch of the report in both print and on DVD enabled a wider and more varied access to NACD research. The DVD has become a useful information tool for those who are working with families in educating them on the stages of coping so that they might learn from the experiences of others.

It was particularly satisfying to see from the ROSIE study, the outcomes for opiate/heroin misusers who sought drug treatment. Many improvements were achieved in the first year after entry to treatment with reductions in drug use overall as well as in the frequency and quantity of drugs used across all treatment "modalities". Reductions in involvement in crime were achieved across all modalities and social and personal functioning improved.

The varied and extensive work of the NACD would not be possible without the expertise and hard work of the members of the Committee, its Sub-committees and Research Advisory Groups. They gave unstintingly of their time and knowledge, for which all of us should be grateful. The NACD works with a small and committed core staff who consistently produce high quality work, usually with very tight deadlines. My colleagues and I are indebted to them for their dedication. In particular the Director, Ms Mairead Lyons continues to play a pivotal role in ensuring that our outputs are on time and of high quality.

I welcome this opportunity to thank the Minister of State and his officials in the Drugs Strategy Unit at Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for their continued support for the work of the NACD and for giving me the opportunity to be part of such an effective and hardworking committee.

**Dr Des Corrigan FPSI**

*Chairperson*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



There is no doubt that the collective wisdom and expertise of the NACD creates a unique synergy that drives its achievements. It is a committee whose collaborative endeavours continue to inspire. Whilst its membership changes from time to time, every member is wholly committed to the goals and functions of the NACD giving an average of 20 days per year to its work. The NACD met on seven occasions and held 21 sub-committee meetings. Twenty four team meetings were held to manage the flow of work and maintain the high levels of productivity from a very small staff. In addition, there were 82 internal meetings and 60 external meetings, indicative of the participative working style of the NACD.

In 2007, there were six ongoing research projects, four new research projects were implemented, the NACD delivered 17 publications (six were web-only) and 11,000 reports were disseminated over the year. Communications targets in terms of publications and reach were exceeded for the third consecutive year. Over 70 interviews were given to print and broadcast media; the NACD received coverage on more than 200 occasions on national and local radio stations and in 35 newspaper articles. Our website continues to be a useful resource with 47,071 visits and 290,805 hits. Irish translations of press releases and research summaries are available and there is an Irish section to the website.

The NACD provided briefings and advice to the Minister on several occasions on a range of issues including the increasing prevalence of cocaine use in Ireland and the consequences for individuals, families and communities. This resulted in high level action on recommendations from the joint NACD/NDST Report. Furthermore, NACD research showed that drug treatment for opiate users works and drug users are showing positive outcomes in the first year of treatment. Research on families' experiences of coping with heroin use has resulted in resource allocation to the National Family Support Network.

Dr Des Corrigan, Chairperson, continues to give great leadership to us all. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to a small and incredible staff who show great commitment, flexibility and enthusiasm to fulfilling the NACD mandate: Mary Jane Trimble, Alan Gaffney, Gemma Cox, Teresa Whitaker, Justine Horgan, Sheena Duffy and Catherine Darmody.

## **Mairéad Lyons**

*Director*



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>ADRU</b>	Alcohol and Drug Research Unit of the Health Research Board (formerly known as the DMRD)
<b>C&amp;AG</b>	Comptroller and Auditor General
<b>DSU</b>	Drugs Strategy Unit
<b>DTMS</b>	Drug Trend Monitoring System
<b>ED</b>	Electoral Division
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>HRB</b>	Health Research Board
<b>IAAAC</b>	Irish Association of Alcohol and Addiction Counsellors
<b>IDG</b>	Inter Departmental Group on Drugs
<b>LDTF</b>	Local Drugs Task Force
<b>MQI</b>	Merchants Quay Ireland
<b>NACD</b>	National Advisory Committee on Drugs
<b>NDST</b>	National Drugs Strategy Team
<b>NUI</b>	National University of Ireland
<b>OJEU</b>	Official Journal of the European Union
<b>PHIRB</b>	Public Health Information and Research Branch
<b>PQ</b>	Parliamentary Question
<b>RAG</b>	Research Advisory Group
<b>RDTF</b>	Regional Drugs Task Force
<b>RIWG</b>	Research and Information Working Group
<b>ROSIE</b>	Research Outcome Study in Ireland evaluating drug treatment effectiveness
<b>UCD</b>	University College Dublin
<b>VDTN</b>	Voluntary Drug Treatment Network

# BACKGROUND AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NACD

## 1.1 Origins

The NACD was established in July 2000 to advise the Government on problem drug use in Ireland in relation to consequences, prevalence, prevention, and treatment including rehabilitation, based on its analysis and interpretation of research findings and information available to it. It also provides 'early warning' advice to Government. The Committee comprises representation from Government Departments, Academia, Community, Voluntary and Statutory sectors and reports to the Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy. Further information can be obtained from the website [www.nacd.ie](http://www.nacd.ie).

Arising from a Government decision to renew the NACD mandate in 2004, a further work programme was developed. A consultation process was undertaken with key interest groups and stakeholders to explore further research and information opportunities. The business plan developed incorporates the continuation of the current programme and identifies ongoing gaps in knowledge. Two new priority areas for development in line with Government priorities were *Rehabilitation* and *Drugs and Crime* research. The business plan was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and is published on the NACD website ("Business Plan 2005-2008").

Over the years the NACD has worked closely with other agencies and organisations to optimise skills and resources in gathering information and filling gaps in knowledge. In particular, the NACD works closely with the Health Research Board's Alcohol and Drug Research Unit on meeting the information needs of the EU Five Key Indicators of Drug Use. The NACD is engaged in ongoing collaborative work with colleagues in the Public Health Information and Research Branch of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland, gathering information on drug prevalence amongst the general population on the whole island.

The work programme and *modus operandi* of the NACD is an evolving process and further information can be obtained on the NACD website. However, its core functions were set down by Government in 2000 and these have not altered – see below.

## 1.2 Functions

On its establishment in 2000, the functions of the NACD (the Committee) were set out as follows:

- Based on the Committee's analysis and interpretation of research findings and information available to it, to advise the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and, through it, the Government, in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland;
- To review current information sets and research capacity in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland and to make recommendations, as appropriate, on how deficits should be addressed including how to maximise the use of information available from the community and voluntary sector;
- To oversee the delivery of a three-year prioritised programme of research and evaluation as recommended by the Interim Advisory Committee to meet the gaps and priority needs identified, by:
  - a) using the capacity of relevant agencies engaged in information gathering and research, both statutory and non-statutory, to deliver on elements of the programme;
  - b) liaising with these agencies with a view to maximising the resources allocated to delivering the programme and avoiding duplication;
  - c) co-ordinating and advising on research projects in the light of the prioritised programme;
  - d) commissioning research projects which cannot be met through existing capacity;
  - e) commissioning additional research at the request of the Government into drug issues of relevance to policy;
    - to work closely with the Health Research Board (HRB) on the establishment of a national information/research database (in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment and consequences of problem drug use) which is easily accessible; and
    - to advise relevant Agencies with a remit to promote greater public awareness of the issues arising in relation to problem drug use and to promote and encourage debate through the dissemination of its research findings.

# STRUCTURES AND WORK PROGRAMME

## 2.1 Structures

### 2.1.1 The NACD

The NACD comprises 19 members who, with the exception of the Chairperson, participate on a voluntary basis. Since 2005, the Chairperson receives a small honorarium. Members serve at the invitation of the Minister of State and their participation requires them to sit on the NACD main committee and at least one sub-committee. NACD meetings are generally scheduled to take place every six weeks excluding July and August. In 2007, seven meetings were held. Full membership is detailed in Appendix 1.

### 2.1.2 Sub-Committees

Due to the complexity of the drugs issue the NACD manages its work programme through sub-committee structures including research advisory groups. There are five sub-committees in operation: Consequences, Early Warning Emerging Trends, Prevalence, Prevention and Treatment/Rehabilitation. Each committee meets as required and according to the needs of the NACD work programme. In 2007, there was a total of 21 sub-committee meetings as follows: Consequences (4), Early Warning Emerging Trends (4), Prevalence (4), Prevention (4), Treatment/Rehabilitation (5). Full membership is detailed in Appendix 2.

### 2.1.3 Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for each sub-committee are available in previous publications and on the NACD website.

## 2.2 Work Programme of NACD

In 2001, the NACD published its first work programme and in 2002 a business plan was published. The NACD was externally reviewed in 2004 by Talbot Associates and the Government approved a renewed mandate to the end of 2008 as a result. In 2005, a three-year business plan was published setting out a new work programme and incorporating projects from earlier work programmes that still needed completion and research that needed to be repeated. At the beginning of each year the NACD agrees actions for the year towards achieving work programme goals.

In 2007, there were six ongoing research projects, five new research projects were planned and four of these were implemented. A total of 17 publications was achieved, six of which were web-only publications with the remainder printed and disseminated.

### 2.2.1 Summary of 2007

The ongoing work programme in 2007 comprised the following:

- Further analysis of data from the 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey;
- Completion of the 2006/2007 Drug Prevalence Survey;
- Continuation of the ROSIE study to complete 3-year follow-up interviews;
- Further analysis and publication of the 1-year data;
- Completion of the evaluation of the National Drug Awareness Campaign;
- Preparation of an advisory document on Workplace Drug Testing;
- Development work on Community Drug Indicators.

New commissions were as follows:

- A repeat of the 2001 capture recapture study on problem opiate use;
- Seek expressions of interest in implementing a drug trend monitoring system;
- Research into drug markets in Ireland;
- A comparative study of drug use amongst early school leavers and school attendees;
- Explore the risk environment of problematic drug users who engage in prostitution.

### 2.2.2 The Research Process

All research has the support of a Research Advisory Group (RAG). The Terms of Reference for these RAGs have been noted in previous reports and are now available on the website. The RAG comes together once the research question has been decided and a commissioning process must be

embarked upon. Most research is externally contracted via requests for tenders, direct engagement or internal action. In 2007, the NACD decided to act as the Principal Investigator in two research projects (see 2.2.3(iv), (v) below). The RAG, which generally comprises relevant stakeholders or experts, oversees the research process, coaching and mentoring the researchers, advising and guiding when appropriate and reviewing written output before finally signing off on a report for consideration by the NACD.

### 2.2.3 Commissioned Research

In 2007, five research projects were commissioned and a brief outline is provided below:

#### (i) Repeat Capture Recapture Study:

After a tender process, Dr Alan Kelly from the Small Area Health Research Unit (SAHRU) in Trinity College was awarded the contract to carry out a capture recapture study of problem opiate use in Ireland. This is a repeat of the previous 2001 study and will examine data for the year 2006 from three data sources: the Central Treatment List, Garda PULSE data and the HIPE (Hospital In-Patient Enquiry) data. A report is expected in mid-2008.

#### (ii) Drug Trend Monitoring System:

An expression of interest notice was published in the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) to determine if capacity existed in Ireland to establish this unique information system. There was a poor response with only two expressions of interest received. Given the expected value of the project, the limited capacity and no confirmation of the availability of funds, it was decided to postpone the issue of a tender and to keep the situation under review.

#### (iii) Drugs and Crime:

The NACD commissioned research into drug markets in Ireland and agreed with the Health Research Board and with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to jointly undertake research in this area. Shared funding and contract arrangements were nearing finalisation at the end of 2007. The project is due to start in 2008.

#### (iv) Comparative Study of Drug Use Among Early School Leavers and School Attendees:

The NACD is acting as Principal Investigator in this internally designed study. The NACD received ethical approval for the study implementation from the Drug Treatment Centre Board Research Ethics Committee. The study will examine drug use among early school leavers and school attendees in the context of risk and protective factors. A tender was issued for the fieldwork which was awarded to Ipsos MORI and the pilot study was completed by December 2007. The main study will get underway in 2008.

#### (v) A Study of Problematic Drug Users who Engage in Prostitution:

The NACD is acting as Principal Investigator in this study also. It has been designed internally and has received ethical approval for its implementation. Fieldwork being carried out by NACD researchers is due to finish in early 2008 and a report is expected by the end of 2008.

### 2.2.4 Ongoing Research

#### (i) 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey:

Work was completed on Bulletin 5 Polydrug Use Results and on Bulletin 6 Sedatives, Tranquillisers or Anti-Depressants Results and both reports were published on the website, printed and disseminated to a core stakeholder audience.

Alcohol data was analysed for 2002/3 and a draft bulletin was prepared for the Department of Health and Children. This draft examined prevalence of alcohol use across gender and age groups, frequency of use, age of first use, binge use, socio-economic factors and attitudes to drinking including knowledge of risk or harm. The draft Bulletin was submitted to the Department of Health and Children Working Group on Alcohol and Drug Synergies in September 2007.

Collaborative work with Trinity College Department of Public Health on Small Area Health Research on further analysis of the Drug Prevalence data was undertaken. However, once data was fully explored, pressure of other work commitments in both organisations resulted

in deferring completion of this project. The goal was to develop a joint scientific paper.

**(ii) 2006/2007 Drug Prevalence Survey:**

Effort was concentrated on completing this survey and ensuring that data collection, data cleaning and data analysis was to a high standard. Close collaboration with colleagues in Northern Ireland took place to ensure matching standards and to develop joint publications of the data for both jurisdictions. The first publication is due in January 2008.

**(iii) ROSIE Study Completion of 3-year Follow-Up**

**Interviews:**

The Research Outcome Study in Ireland Evaluating Drug Treatment Effectiveness study was extended in 2006 to track the progress of study participants three years post treatment-intake. Interviews were completed in 2007 and a first draft of the final report was presented to the NACD in December 2007. The NACD will study the findings in 2008 and publish outcomes at 3-years.

**(iv) ROSIE Study Publication of the 1-year Data:**

Ongoing analysis of the ROSIE data for outcomes at 1-year post entry to treatment was carried out and a further three "ROSIE Findings" publications were achieved. A Report on the ROSIE Baseline Data was also published on the website.

**(v) National Drug Awareness Campaign –**

**Complete Evaluation Report:**

Whilst the Campaign and the research were complete by 2007 and the first draft of the final report was received, the lengthy process of verifying the information from a 3-year study began. Gaps were identified and filled, validation of interview quotes took place and, finally, editing and proof reading. The report was prepared for publication. It was decided that the full report would be published on the web in December 2007 and a summary report would be printed for dissemination in early 2008.

**(vi) Workplace Drug Testing:**

The report with recommendations for Government prepared by the NACD was published on the website only.

**(vii) Blood-Borne Viruses Briefing Paper:**

For several years the NACD has been considering the issue of blood-borne viruses in order to understand any gaps in knowledge. In 2007, a briefing paper was prepared that examined all the available information on blood-borne viruses in relation to drug use and made recommendations for Government. The paper drew on the work of the HRB in its Overview Series and on best practice information from other countries. At the same time the NDST was reviewing the availability of Needle Exchange in Ireland arising from recommendations in the joint NACD/NDST report on Cocaine Use in Ireland. In December 2007 it was agreed that the NACD and NDST should prepare a joint paper to the Inter Departmental Group on Drugs (IDG) on Needle Exchange and incorporate the information on blood-borne viruses. This will take place in early 2008.

**(viii) Interagency Working Briefing Paper:**

Literature from Ireland and other countries was examined together with the experiences of those working in the drugs field and the briefing paper on Interagency Working was drafted. A submission was made to the Secretaries General of all Government Departments in November 2007 as they prepared their Statements of Strategy. The report will be completed in early 2008 and subsequently published on the web only.

**(ix) Development Work on Community Drug Indicators:**

Discussions were held with the Central Statistics Office with a view to progressing a comprehensive approach to gathering data centrally. Some preliminary work was carried out on the crime data to review it by regional area and this proved very interesting. Further work is ongoing. The NDST has used the template developed by the NACD with the Local Drugs Task Forces to assist them in structuring a planning review. This will highlight to what extent local area information can be gathered both informally and formally.

## 2.2.5 Collaboration

Collaborative working is a core principle of the NACD and every endeavour is made to involve stakeholders at various levels in relevant discussions, research projects and

research activities. Over the last year the NACD has been very active in collaborating with colleagues in Northern Ireland on the All Island Drug Prevalence Survey. This joint working relationship has continued since 2002. In addition, the NACD convened relevant stakeholders in the various research advisory groups to support other research projects. They involve officials from the Departments of Education and Science, Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Health and Children, The Health Research Board, The Drugs Strategy Unit, The Drug Treatment Centre Board, Trinity College, National Addiction Centre London, Ruhama, Chrysalis, UISCE, Women's Health Project, Gay Men's Health Project, An Garda Síochána, Forensic Science Laboratory and Customs and Excise Drug Law Enforcement Unit.

### 2.2.6 NACD/NDST Collaboration

The NACD works closely with the the NDST in providing technical support and advice to Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces (L/RDTF)s. The NACD prepared a joint report with the NDST on Cocaine Use in Ireland which was published in March 2007. In December 2007 the NACD agreed to work on another joint report for the IDG on Needle Exchange in Ireland. L/RDTFs were supported in considering research needs in their areas, commissioning and managing research projects through telephone, email and face to face meetings. The NACD hosted a briefing seminar for L/RDTFs on headshops and their products at the request of the NDST. The Chairs and Directors of the NACD and NDST held joint meetings during the year.

## 2.3 Performance Management

### 2.3.1 Staff

The NACD has four core posts supported directly through secondment and contract by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. The Director and Research Officer are contracted to the Department and the Higher Executive Officer (HEO) and Clerical Officer (CO) are seconded from the Department. Whilst the HEO post is full-time the CO post was reduced to part-time, term-time which means the NACD has a substantial administrative deficit given the demands of the work programme.

This deficit is met through the use of contract workers employed through an agency to provide the administrative support required from time to time. In addition, in the summer months a temporary clerical officer is provided to replace the term-time summer vacancy.

Two researchers have been contracted to work specifically on two of the research projects commissioned in 2007: the comparative study of drug use among early school leavers and school attendees; and the study of problematic drug users who engage in prostitution.

### 2.3.2 Balanced Scorecard

In 2007 the NACD had an efficiency rate of 88%. This is in line with our targets for the year. There were 82 internal meetings of which 24 were team meetings held to manage the flow of work and maintain the high levels of productivity from such a small team. The remaining 58 meetings related to the work of sub- committees, research advisory groups and visitors to the NACD.

Briefings to the Minister were provided on eight occasions and whilst over 60 external meetings were attended, they related to the provision of support to the L/RDTFs, to other agencies and to the research programme of the NACD.

In addition to commissioning and managing its research programme, the NACD work programme generates a range of other activities which adds another project management dimension to the operations of the NACD. Internal work includes organising events, managing the publication process (which involves proofing and checking in great detail all drafts going to and coming from the design house), media relations, planning and organising the dissemination of each publication and in 2007 over 11,000 reports were disseminated to key stakeholders. Each wave of dissemination also generates a set of activities.

### 2.3.3 Freedom of Information (FOI)

The NACD makes most of its information available on-line. Nonetheless, it receives FOI requests from time to time. A reference book has been published on the website in accordance with the requirements of Sections 15 and 16

of the FOI Acts. In accordance with Section 15 of the Act, the purpose of this reference book is to facilitate access to official information held by the NACD, by outlining the structure, functions and details of the services provided by the NACD, how they may be availed of, information on the classes of records held, and information on how to make a request to the NACD under the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003. Section 16 of the FOI Act requires the NACD to publish a book containing the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the NACD. Copies of this publication are available at [www.nacd.ie](http://www.nacd.ie) and upon request from the offices of the NACD.

The FOI Officer at the NACD is Mary Jane Trimble. Alan Gaffney is the FOI Decision Maker and internal appeals are dealt with by Mairéad Lyons. The NACD processed two FOI requests in 2007

#### **2.3.4 Drugs Strategy Unit (DSU) Support**

The NACD provided information in response to Parliamentary Questions (PQs) to the DSU and provided other information in response to general queries on drug issues throughout 2007. The DSU supported the NACD in the preparation and signing of contracts and in the administration of financial resources allocated to the NACD.

#### **2.3.5 Participation in Training**

Ongoing professional development of staff continued in 2007 through participation in various seminars and conferences, listed on pages 16 and 17, and through participation on specific courses agreed through the professional development plan. These courses covered the areas of:

- Time Management;
- Freedom of Information;
- Data Protection;
- Gaelige;
- Addiction Studies;
- Familiarisation with PULSE by CSO;
- Information Technology specialised for research in SPSS, QSR NVivo.

# COMMUNICATIONS

The core functions of the NACD require a commitment to communications in its broadest sense to promote and encourage debate and discussion of drug issues internally and externally amongst the wide range of stakeholders who interface with it. The publication and dissemination of NACD research is a further dimension to using communications tools in achieving goals. The objectives of the communications strategy are:

- To provide timely advice and briefings to the Minister on key issues and emerging trends;
- To advise service providers and practitioners across sectors of relevant research findings that may inform current thinking and practice;
- To promote the research agenda amongst key influencers in those agencies and bodies that promote, commission, fund or undertake drug-related research and/or have access to relevant data in this field;
- To represent the NACD and Ireland at international fora.

## 3.1 Advice to Government

The NACD provided advice to Government on several occasions during 2007 through its participation on the IDG, in its briefings with the Minister and through the recommendations made based on research or information it had considered. In 2007 this advice covered the areas of drug treatment outcomes, workplace drug testing, challenges in relation to cocaine, drug trends, drug prevalence and the experiences of families coping with heroin use. It provides ongoing advice and support to the Drugs Strategy Unit in responding to parliamentary questions and general queries.

In addition to the above the NACD provided advice through submissions it made to the HSE on its Intercultural Strategy Consultation; to the Road Safety Authority on the development of its strategic plan and to the Health and Safety Authority on the development of regulations on workplace drug testing.

## 3.2 Media Relations

Throughout the year various media representatives attended media briefings and sought information or clarification from the NACD on drugs issues. Over 70 interviews were given to the media. Thirty five articles appeared in the print and web based media and 30 interviews were given in broadcast media in relation to publications released by the NACD or research carried out by the NACD.

The release of an NACD publication generates instant news coverage and in 2007, the NACD was mentioned in news bulletins across 28 local radio stations including six independent stations in Dublin, and on RTE One, 2FM, Today FM and Newstalk Radio on more than 200 occasions. Some 24 interviews were given in current affairs programmes over the year and television coverage was achieved in news bulletins.

However, the NACD is often contacted when there is a large seizure or when the tragic consequences of drug misuse such as a fatality or serious harm relating occur. On these occasions, the NACD provides factual responses on the drug prevalence, treatment and prevention of drug misuse thus contributing to general awareness among the population.

## 3.3 NACD Website

The website contains all you need to know in relation to the NACD, including its mission and values, functions and membership. Information on the sub-committee structure and the NACD's programme of work is also included.

The site has been restructured to make it more user-friendly and has been updated to include the research projects, events and seminars which took place in 2007 and in previous years. Additional links have been added to the website.

All NACD reports are published simultaneously on the website and can be downloaded free of charge. The site is maintained by an external contractor as the NACD does not have the staff resource for this purpose.

The website is in bilingual format, thus Irish versions of annual reports, business plans, press releases and research



summaries dating from 2003 can be downloaded. The NACD ensures that press releases relating to research are translated and that each report has a research summary in Irish and English.

### 3.4 Seminars/Briefings 2007

The hosting of seminars is considered a valuable way of disseminating information to the wide audience of the NACD. In addition, the NACD encourages Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces to convene research seminars with a view to encouraging the sharing of knowledge and information so that practice is in line with the evidence available. In 2007 the NACD hosted a small number of key seminars.

#### 3.4.1 Seminars hosted by NACD 2007

##### Apr

Seminar held launching the research report entitled “The Experiences of Families Seeking Support in Coping with Heroin Use”. Over 100 people from a wide range of disciplines and services including family support groups attended.

##### Jun

Research and Information Working Group UK and Ireland Government Researchers network “Sharing the experience of implementing longitudinal studies”.

##### Dec

Information seminar on psychoactive substances available through Head Shops.

#### 3.4.2 Seminars/Conferences attended by NACD staff in 2007

##### Feb

Public Affairs Ireland – Data Protection Seminar Dublin.

##### Mar

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Navan by NERDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

##### Mar

National Treatment Agency annual Drug Treatment Conference, London.

##### Mar

Seminar on Harm Reduction hosted by Ana Liffey Drug Project (their 25th Anniversary) and Trinity College Addiction Research Centre.

##### Mar

Seminar on Feasibility Study for a Local Poverty Index hosted by Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin.

##### Mar

Seminar on Young People and Substance Misuse hosted by Ballymun LDTF.

##### Apr

MQI Pre-election public debate on drug issues with all party representation.

##### May

Seminar “Belong to Youth” launching new research on drug use among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community.

##### Jun

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Kilkenny by SERDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

##### Jun

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Bundoran by NWRDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

##### Jun

Seminar on Drug Treatment Courts.

##### Jun

Cocaine Conference.

##### Sept

Strategic planning seminar for NWRDTF.

##### Oct

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Limerick by MWRDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

**Nov**

AGIS Programme 2007 Conference “Establish a Threat Assessment for the Increase in Availability of Methamphetamine within the EU”.

**Dec**

Seminar hosted by Homeless Agency “Working Together to Make It Happen”.

### 3.4.3 Presentations given by the Director during 2007

**Mar**

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Navan by NERDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

**Jun**

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Kilkenny by SERDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

**Jun**

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Bundoran by NWRDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

**Jun**

Conference in Croke Park on Cocaine Use in Ireland.

**Sept**

Senior College Ballsbridge presentation on Drug Use in Ireland to PLC students.

**Sept**

Strategic planning seminar for NWRDTF presentation on Drug Use/Issues in Ireland.

**Oct**

Seminar on NACD study of Drug Use among Traveller Community hosted in Limerick by MWRDTF and Pavee Point Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative.

**Dec**

Seminar hosted by Homeless Agency “Working Together to Make It Happen”.

### 3.4.4 Presentations given by the Research Team during 2007

- Presentation on proposed study on Early School Leaving and Drug Use to stakeholder group invited to form a Research Advisory Group;
- Presentation on a proposed study of Risk, Drug Users and Prostitution to stakeholder group invited to form a Research Advisory Group;
- Presentation on proposed study on Drug Markets in Ireland to Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Research Committee with a view to obtaining funding support. This was achieved.

### 3.5 Publications and Submissions

1. Cox, G, Comiskey C, Kelly P, Cronly, J (2006). **ROSIE Findings 2 Summary of 1-year Outcomes Detoxification Modality**. Published by NACD in January 2007.
2. O’Gorman, A., Doyle, M., Crean, D. (2007). **Drug Trend Monitoring System Pilot Study Summary Report**. Published on the web only in January 2007.
3. **NACD Progress Report August 2003 – December 2005**. Published in January 2007.
4. Research Summaries published in January 2007 with Progress Report.
5. Cox, G, Comiskey C, Kelly P, Cronly, J (2007). **ROSIE Findings 3 Summary of 1-year Outcomes Abstinence Modality**. Published by NACD in February 2007.
6. Horgan, J. (2007) **Cocaine Use in Ireland Update II**. A joint report from the NACD and NDST. Published in February 2007.
7. NACD Submission to HSE Intercultural Strategy Consultation. Published on the web only.
8. NACD Submission to Road Safety Authority Strategic Plan. Published on the web only.
9. Cox, G, Comiskey C, Kelly P, Cronly, J (2007). **ROSIE Findings 4 Summary of 1-year Outcomes Methadone Modality**. Published by NACD in April 2007.

10. Duggan, C. (2007) **The Experiences of Families Seeking Support in Coping with Heroin Use.** Published by NACD in April 2007.
11. **Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland. 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey. Poly Drug Use Results.** Bulletin 5. Published in March 2007.
12. **Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland. 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey. Sedatives, Tranquillisers or Anti-depressants Use Results.** Bulletin 6. Published in March 2007.
13. NACD Submission to H.S.A relating to new regulations on drug testing in the workplace. Published on the web only.
14. Cox, G, Comiskey C, Kelly P, Leckey, Y, Sheehy, L and O'Duill, B. (2007). **ROSIE Baseline Findings.** Published on the web only in November 2007.
15. NACD (2007) **Annual Report 2006** published in December 2007.
16. Research Summaries published in December 2007 with Annual Report.
17. Ennals, K. (2007) **Evaluation of the Community and Voluntary Sector Research Grant Scheme.** Published on the web only in December 2007.

# FINANCE

## 4.1 Research – Funding Allocations

(for Research Projects Commissioned in 2007)

(includes VAT where applicable)

### Prevalence

*Repeat Capture Recapture Study*

SAHRU Ltd

€65,185.73

### Research Advisory Groups

*A Comparative Study of Drug Use Among Young People*

Ipsos MORI/Dr Justine Horgan

€384,350.00

*A Study of Problematic Drug Users who Engage in Prostitution*

Dr Teresa Whitaker

€140,000.00

### Supporting Actions/Activities

*Public Relations*

Montague Communications

€32,676.57

### Total Allocated

**€622,212.30**

## 4.2 NACD Expenditure

An annual budget of approximately €1.3 million is set aside by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs towards the operation of the NACD. Seventy per cent of this budget is allocated to research funding and the remaining 30% to general administration.

The figures presented are a description of NACD expenditure on research and general administration for 2007.

NACD finance is integrated within the general accounts of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

NACD expenditure on new and existing research projects, including external expert support, for 2007 **€856,104.92**

NACD expenditure on general administration, including pay, public relations and legal services for 2007 **€376,376.13**

# MEMBERSHIP OF NACD COMMITTEE AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2007

## Chairperson

Dr Des Corrigan, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Trinity College

## Vice-Chairperson

Dr Mary Ellen McCann, Academic Appointment

## Members

Prof Joe Barry, Academic Appointment

Ms Jackie Blanchfield, VDTN

Mr Michael Conroy, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Ms Maria Corrigan, Clinical Psychologist

Mr Joseph Doyle, HSE Eastern Region

Ms Sunniva Finlay, Community Sector

Mr John Garry, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

Ms Mairéad Kavanagh, VDTN

Dr Eamon Keenan, Consultant Psychiatrist, HSE South Western Area

Dr Jean Long, ADRU, Health Research Board

Mr David Moloney, Dept. of Health and Children

Supt Barry O'Brien, Garda National Drugs Unit

Mr Liam O'Brien, Community Sector

Ms Patricia O'Connor, NDST

Ms Mary O'Shea, IAAAC

Dr Máirín O'Sullivan, Dept. of Education & Science

## Retired NACD Members (2007)

Mr Willie Collins, HSE Southern Area

Mr Cathal Morgan, HSE Eastern Region

## Members of Sub-committees throughout 2007 (Not sitting on Main Committee)

### *Consequences*

Mr Gabriel Staunton, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Ms Margaret O'Gorman, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

### *Early Warning/Emerging Trends*

Mr Gabriel Staunton, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Dr Daniel O'Driscoll, Forensic Science Laboratory

Dr Bobby Smyth, HSE South Western Area

Ms Siobhan Stokes, State Laboratory

Dr Richie Maguire, Drug Treatment Centre Board/Medical Bureau of Road Safety

Ms Noreen Quinn, Dept. of Health & Children

Mr Pdraig Mc Mahon, Revenue Commissioners

Ms Breda O'Shea, Revenue Commissioners

Mr Gerry Hayes, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

Ms Pauline Leavy, Medical Bureau of Road Safety

Det Garda Pat Davis, Garda National Drugs Unit

Ms Anya Pierce, Toxicology Department, Beaumont Hospital

Mr Michael McDonagh, Crosscare Drug & Alcohol Programme

Ms Niamh Arthur, Irish Medicines Board

Ms Jean Burdette, Drug Treatment Centre Board

### *Prevalence*

Mr Eddie Arthurs, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Mr Barry McGreal, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

### *Prevention*

Ms Cathy Lyons, Dept. of Health & Children

Ms Ruby Morrow, Church of Ireland College of Education

Ms Mary Johnston, Walk Tall Programme Support Services

Ms Sinead Copeland, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Ms Linda O'Rourke, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

### *Treatment/Rehabilitation*

Ms Anna May Harkin, Dept. of Health & Children

Mr Martin Kestell, Dept. of Health & Children

Dr Íde Delargy, Irish College of General Practitioners

Ms Frances Nangle-Connor, Irish Prison Service

Ms Sinead Copeland, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Ms Linda O'Rourke, Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

# TABLE OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2007

		Consequences	EWET	Prevalence	Prevention	Treatment
Dr Des Corrigan	School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Trinity College	✓	✓	✓		
Dr Mary Ellen McCann	Academic Appointment	✓			✓	
Prof Joe Barry	Academic Appointment			✓		✓
Ms Jackie Blanchfield	VDTN		✓			✓
Senator Maria Corrigan	Clinical Psychologist				✓	✓
Ms Sunniva Finlay	Community Sector	✓		✓		
Ms Mairéad Kavanagh	VDTN	✓			✓	
Dr Eamon Keenan	HSE, South Western Area	✓				✓
Dr Jean Long	ADRU, Health Research Board	✓	✓	✓		✓
Mr David Moloney	Department of Health and Children		✓	✓		
Mr Joseph Doyle	HSE, Eastern Region			✓		✓
Supt Barry O'Brien	Garda National Drugs Unit	✓		✓		
Mr Liam O'Brien	Community Sector	✓				✓
Ms Patricia O'Connor	NDST		✓	✓	✓	
Ms Mary O'Shea	IAAAC	✓				✓
Dr Máirín O'Sullivan	Department of Education and Science				✓	
Mr Gabriel Staunton	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	✓	✓			
Ms Margaret O'Gorman	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	✓				
Mr Gerry Hayes	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform		✓			
Det Garda Pat Davis	Garda National Drugs Unit		✓			
Ms Siobhan Stokes	State Laboratory		✓			
Dr Daniel O'Driscoll	Forensic Science Laboratory		✓			
Ms Noreen Quinn	Department of Health and Children		✓			
Ms Anya Pierce	Toxicology Department Beaumont Hospital		✓			
Dr Bobby Smyth	HSE, South Western Area		✓			
Dr Richie Maguire	Medical Bureau of Road Safety		✓			
Ms Breda O'Shea	Revenue Commissioners		✓			
Mr Michael McDonagh	Crosscare Drug & Alcohol Programme		✓			
Ms Niamh Arthur	Irish Medicines Board		✓			
Ms Jean Burdette	Drug Treatment Centre Board		✓			
Mr Eddie Arthurs	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs			✓		

		Consequences	EWET	Prevalence	Prevention	Treatment
Mr Barry McGreal	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform			✓		
Ms Cathy Lyons	Department of Health and Children				✓	
Ms Ruby Morrow	Church of Ireland College of Education				✓	
Ms Mary Johnston	Walk Tall Programme Support Services				✓	
Ms Linda O'Rourke	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs				✓	✓
Ms Anna May Harkin	Department of Health and Children					✓
Dr Íde Delargy	Irish College of General Practitioners					✓
Ms Frances Nangle-Connor	Irish Prison Service					✓



## ACTIONS REQUIRED OF THE NACD UNDER THE NATIONAL DRUGS STRATEGY

In the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008, the NACD was requested to undertake the following actions.

- 98 To carry out studies on drug misuse amongst the at risk groups identified e.g. Travellers, prostitutes, the homeless, early school leavers etc. including de-segregation of data on these groups. It is essential that the individuals and groups most affected by drug misuse and those involved in working to reduce, treat and prevent drug misuse have immediate access to relevant statistical information.
- 99 To commission further outcome studies, within the Irish setting to establish the current impact of methadone treatment on both individual health and on offending behaviour. Such studies should be an important tool in determining the long term value of this treatment.
- 100 To conduct research into the effectiveness of new mechanisms to minimise the sharing of equipment e.g. non-reusable syringes, mobile syringe exchange facilities etc. to establish the potential application of new options within particular cohorts of the drug using population i.e. amongst younger drug misusers, within prisons etc.