North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force

Trends and Behaviours Online Survey
October 2013

Violence, intimidation and threats

This report shows the results of an online survey which looked at issues relating to violence, threats and intimidation experienced by the individuals and groups engaging with north inner city projects. The survey was issued on the 7th of October and closed on 7th of November 2013.

The survey was issued to 20 projects linked to the North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force. 14 projects responded - a 70% response rate. Of these projects 11 work primarily with adults, 1 mainly with youth (12 to 23) and their families, and 2 mainly with children and their families.

KEY POINTS

- Within North Inner City Drugs and Alcohol Task Force projects there is a significant level of engagement around violence, intimidation or threats. 18% of the service users of 13 projects expressed concern about violence, intimidation or threats within the last 12 months.

- The violence, intimidation or threats are most often directed at the individual raising concern (32%) or a family member (54%).

- Those most commonly affected by violence, intimidation and threats are between 26 and 35 years of age.

- The violence, threats and intimidation takes place in a wide variety of settings, most frequently on the street (17%) and at home (17%).

- Of the reasons most frequently cited by the individuals engaging with the projects, at least 28% of the violence, intimidation and threats specifically related to drugs.

- Violence, intimidation and threats affect the individual in a wide variety of ways. Money problems were the most significant (13%) single effect cited.

- According to the individuals expressing concern about violence, intimidation or threats, half (50%) of those affected would sometimes/often/always report it confidentially to the Gardaí.

- Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) said they were concerned at least some of the time about their own and a colleagues' safety when supporting individuals/groups with issues relating to violence, intimidation or threats.

- Almost three quarters (72%) of the projects who responded had a working policy in place to support staff when dealing with issues of violence, threats and intimidation.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

In **questions 1 to 3** the projects were asked to identify the number of separate individuals or groups they engaged with over the previous 12 months, and to identify how many of these individuals or groups expressed concern in relation to violence, intimidation and threats.

Q1 to Q3. **2753*** separate individuals engaged with 13 projects / services over the last 12 months - **Female 1398 (51%), Male 1355 (49%)**

Of these, **18% (501)** separate individuals expressed concern in relation to violence, intimidation or threats in the last year - **Female 285 (57%), Male 216 (43%)**

* Note: 8930 individuals/groups engaged with the 14 projects / services over the last 12 months, but of this number over 6,000 engaged with one single organisation where the primary focus is prevention and education and the level of engagement with this project in relation to violence, intimidation and threats was negligible (0.1%).

When the figures of this project are included in the overall figures, their disproportionately high numbers significantly mask the level of the engagement with the remaining 13 projects in relation to violence, intimidation and threats. For the purposes of this survey this project's figures were omitted, and so the numbers above relate to the remaining 13 projects.

In **questions 4 to 13** the projects were asked to rate the level or frequency of a particular issue from a range of weighted options, for example by selecting from five options ranging from 'Very frequently' (highest weighting) to 'Never' (lowest weighting).

The percentages shown in the resulting responses are based on the quantity of respondents who selected a particular option multiplied by the weighting of that option. They are an indication of the level of issues encountered do not represent an exact percentage of the numbers of individuals outlined in questions 1 to 3.

Q4. The individuals/groups engaging with the services say that violence, intimidation or threats are most often directed at:
1. Themselves (32%)
2. Partner (17%)
3. Friend (14%)

Family members (**54%**) were most frequently the target of violence, intimidation or threats (including partner 17%, parent 13%, sibling 13% and children 11%)

3 of respondents added that violence, intimation or threats were directed at **neighbours.**

Q5. The age group(s) that the individuals/groups engaging with the services say are most commonly affected by violence, intimidation or threats are:
1. 26-35
2. 36-44
3. 21-25

Q6. The intimidation takes place most often:
1. On the street (17%), At home (17%)
2. Via phone (14%)
3. Other community settings (12%)

Intimidation often takes place often in an individual's personal space (40%) including at home 17%, via phone 14%, via internet 9%

2 respondents added that violence, threats and intimidation occur in **hostels.**

Q7. The types of violence, threats or intimidation that the individuals/groups engaging with the services say occur most frequently are:
1. Verbal abuse (12%)
2. Antisocial behaviour (11%)
3. Harassment (9%), Threats of injury (9%), Bullying (9%), Domestic violence (9%)

Q8. The reasons the individuals/groups engaging with your service most frequently mention as the reasons behind violence, intimidation and threats are:
1. To frighten (12%), Combination of reasons (12%)
2. To humiliate (11%)
3. To reclaim drug debt – money owed for drugs (10%), Looking for money to buy drugs – to feed habit (10%)

At least 28% of the violence, intimidation and threats is drug-related:
o To reclaim drug debt – money owed for drugs (10%)
o Looking for money to buy drugs – to feed habit (10%)
o To enforce carrying/holding of drugs (8%)

Q9. Ways in which have violence, threats or intimidation have affected the individuals/groups engaging with the services, or the person/people they are concerned about?
1. Money problems (13%)
2. Mental health issues (12%)
3. Social isolation (11%), Family/relationship breakdown (11%)

When grouped together, **physical harms inflicted on the person** accounted for **21%** of type of violence, intimidation or threat affecting the person they are concerned about. This includes bodily injury 8%, sexual harm 5%, permanent disfigurement 3%, enforced disability 3% and death 2%.

13% of those affected by violence, threats or intimidation **had to leave home** - permanently 4% and temporarily 9%.

Q10. Have the individuals/groups affected by threats and intimidation ever reported it confidentially to the Gardaí?
1. Hardly ever / Never (43%)
2. Sometimes (29%)
3. Always / Often (21%)

Q11. Is your organisation able to help the individual/group who engages with your service with issues raised relating to violence, intimidation or threats?
       1. Sometimes (50%)
       2. Always / Often (43%)
       3. Don't know (7%)

Please explain some of the difficulties which would prevent an organisation responding as it might wish to issues of intimidation:

6 of 9 projects that responded that their client's fear was a difficulty, including fear of:
- retaliation
- increased intimidation / violence
- harassment of their family
- being seen seeking support
- being seen "ratting"

Other difficulties include:
- Children's fear (in child protection related situations)
- Women's fear of partner seeing them seeking support (in case of domestic violence situation)
- No confidence in Gardaí.
- Often clients do not want Gardaí involved.
- Projects cannot work against the wishes of their client.
- In cases of domestic violence, accommodation is an issue.

Q12. Are you concerned about your own and your colleagues' safety when supporting individuals/groups with issues relating to violence, intimidation or threats?
       1. Sometimes (43%)
       2. No (36%)
       3. Yes (21%)

Q13. Does your project/service have a working policy in place to support staff and clients when dealing with issues of violence, threats or intimidation?
       1. Yes (72%)
       2. No (21%)
       3. Don't know (7%)

Q14. Can you identify any training or external resources that you would recommend to assist with issues relating to violence, intimidation and threats?

Training for staff that would be useful:
- Training to manage vicarious trauma for staff
- Violence and intimidation training for trainers
- Anger management training
- Anti-bullying training
- Mediation skills training
- how to advise regarding drug debt collection
- Cognitive Behaviour Training for staff to deal with violence, intimidation and threats
- Training and assistance in policy-making in this area
- Education on available resources

Specific staff training identified:
- TCI – Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training
- Solas sa Saol – Domestic violence training
- Family Support Network/Progression Routes training and information on dealing with violence and intimidation

Client supports/training identified:
- Training about violence and intimidation for young people
- Confidence building workshops
- M.O.V.E – Men Overcoming Violence
- Providing safety groups within residential settings

Other comments
- Need for inter-agency collaboration on reporting structures re violence and intimidation
- More Gardaí needed on streets