



BUDGET 2021

WE KNOW THAT COMMUNITY DRUG SERVICES SAVE LIVES

RESTORATION OF CORE FUNDING IS NOW CRITICAL

Over the last number of years politicians from across parties and groupings have been continuously raising their concerns about the inadequate level of funding received by the Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces (DATFs). There has been no process to begin restoring the budgets that were cut every year between 2007 and 2012, with no increase in the allocation in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016. Since 2017, the budget allocation to the Dept of Health for the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy RHSR has been increasing each year and yet still in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 there has been no increase in the core DATF budget.

We are all aware of the exceptional and vital work carried out by the Community Drug Projects that are funded through the DATFs and the failure year after year after year to restore budgets is incredibly frustrating, demoralising and challenging for them. As the drugs problem has become more widespread, complex and deep-rooted in our communities, Projects have been struggling to maintain existing levels of service and, in some cases, to survive, and to meet new and emerging challenges.

2020 has seen the Community Drugs Projects faced with an unprecedented challenge in adapting and reshaping their services to respond to the impact of Covid-19, and they have responded to this challenge with an exceptional effort and commitment, working with all of their partners in the community, voluntary and statutory services. The Dept. of Health has recognised and affirmed the crucial role of the projects for individual participants, families and the wider community by deeming them to be essential services.

- ✘ The experience during Covid-19 has reaffirmed very clearly that **drug services save lives**.
- ✘ These same services have been struggling for years with **inadequate budgets** due to a failure to restore and build on previous levels of funding.
- ✘ Responding to **Covid-19 has resulted in significant additional costs to projects**, both once-off and ongoing.
- ✘ Budget 2021 should include a **ring-fenced allocation to increase the core budgets of DATFs by a minimum of 10% (at a cost of €2.8m)** and also allocate an additional once-off Covid budget for 2021.