



# *The most comprehensive conversation on the drugs issue in the history of the state...*

- The Citizens' Assembly on Drugs was set up to consider the legislative, policy & operational changes Ireland could make to significantly reduce the harmful impacts of illicit drugs on individuals, families, communities and wider Irish society.
- The Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Drug, published in January 2024, contains 36 recommendations, and this was followed by the Interim Report of the Oireachtas Committee on Drugs Use in October 2024.
- In line with Programme for Govt, Oireachtas Committee on Drugs has been re-established, with first public meeting in September.

## Programme for Government 2025 - Drug Use

*This Government is committed to a health led approach to drug addiction. The Government will:*

- Assess the outcomes of the national drugs strategy, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017- 2025, and publish a successor strategy.
- Divert those found in possession of drugs for personal use to health services.
- Increase funding for drug addiction services including local drug and alcohol taskforces to improve their effectiveness.
- Launch a major awareness campaign of the impact of drugs on society.
- Re-establish the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Drugs Use.
- Explore the establishment of mobile medically supervised injecting facilities in areas of need.
- Increase the availability of naloxone and train relevant individuals on its use.

*Challenges with drugs and substance abuse are experienced in every town, every city across Ireland, but the drivers and catalysts for these problems can vary substantially from community to community. That's why the community development approach is so vital as it focuses on listening to the community members themselves – supporting them to identify their own unique challenges and working to address them.*

*In my view, the work of Citywide and others like you is absolutely critical in terms of developing long-lasting supports and resilience in communities dealing with substance and drugs issues.*

*It is our ambition and commitment as a Government that the successor National Drugs Strategy will further strengthen the health and community-led approach to drug use by addressing the health and social needs of people who use drugs, reducing the harms for individuals, families and communities associated with drugs and supporting recovery from drug addiction.*

Taoiseach Micheál Martin

1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2025

# *National Steering Group re next NDS*

| Name                               | Position           | Organisation  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <b>Dr Sarah Morton</b>             | <b>Chairperson</b> | <b>University College Dublin</b>  |
| <b><i>Mary O'Regan</i></b>         | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Department of Justice, Home Affairs &amp; Migration</b>                                |
| <b><i>Moira Flanagan</i></b>       | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Department of An Taoiseach</b>   |
| <b>Jim Walsh</b>                   | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Department of Health</b>   |
| <b><i>Prof. Eamon Keenan</i></b>   | <b>Member</b>      | <b>HSE Clinical Lead Addiction Services</b>   |
| <b><i>Brian Kirwan</i></b>         | <b>Member</b>      | <b>General Manager in Social Inclusion &amp; HSE Regional Health Areas representative</b> |
| <b><i>Brian Galvin</i></b>         | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Programme Manager - Health Research Board</b>  |
| <b><i>Chleo Power</i></b>          | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Civil Society</b>  |
| <b><i>Pauline McKeown</i></b>      | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Civil Society - CEO, NVDAS</b>   |
| <b><i>Prof. Paul Griffiths</i></b> | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Curtin University Perth, Australia &amp; Former EUDA Director</b>                      |
| <b><i>Prof. Edward Day</i></b>     | <b>Member</b>      | <b>Professor in Psychiatry University of Birmingham</b>                                   |

# The Right to Dissent

The EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs has produced a *Document on Quality Standards for Civil Society Involvement In Drug Policy* which sets out this key principle of EU Drug Policy

“Involving civil society is not a cherry-picking and box-ticking exercise and it should not be used to rubber stamp decisions. **The autonomy and right of dissent of civil society actors is an essential and integral part of meaningful engagement in democracies and should be both expected and respected as part of the process.** The purpose of dissent is to ensure that policy is informed by views and experiences that are wider than those of the state actors alone and it should be seen in this light as a constructive contribution to the policy-making process.”

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