



Ms. Susan Scally
Drugs Policy and Social Inclusion Unit
Dept. of Health
Hawkins House
Dublin 2

14th November 2017

Dear Susan

RE: MEMBERSHIP OF SSC

We are writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Standing Sub Committee as a follow-up to the comments made by our NOC representatives at the first NOC meeting on the proposed membership of the SSC.

In our view as Community Sector reps, it is inexplicable that the DSP is not included as a full member of the SSC. The DSP has responsibility as part of its overall Community Employment Programme for the Drug Rehabilitation Projects, which are the main providers of drug rehabilitation and recovery services on the ground in our communities, and in some communities the only provider. The DRPs are at the heart of a partnership approach at local level that engages with ETBs, HSE, Local Authorities, an Garda Síochána, Túsla and a range of other agencies in the implementation of the rehabilitation and recovery objectives of the NDS.

The DRPs have been facing significant ongoing challenges in delivering and integrating these vital services under the new CE Social Inclusion framework as set out by DSP. It is important that solutions to these challenges be discussed at the appropriate level of the NDS structures to ensure that these services are enabled to deliver the most appropriate interventions, as well as maximise the best overall outcomes for participants and the range of other interested funders and stakeholders.

The SSC has now been set up as a new and reinvigorated implementation structure within the NDS; it is essential that issues relating to the major drugs rehabilitation programme in the state should be an ongoing part of its agenda and that DSP should be a full SSC member.

We also believe it is very important that the Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government should be a full member of the SSC and that local authorities should be represented. Local authorities have significant responsibilities across a number of key drug related issues, including housing, homelessness, JPCs, management of housing estates, anti-social behaviour etc. In particular, the issues of housing and homelessness are currently having a major impact on the implementation of the NDS at all levels, local, regional and national.

We welcome the involvement of the Dept. of Justice as a full member of the SSC, but we would also point out that, as it is an implementation committee, it would be appropriate for the justice implementation bodies i.e. the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service, to be full SSC members. Similarly, the involvement of the Dept. of Education is welcome but it would also be appropriate to include the ETBs, as the implementation bodies on the ground, on the full SSC.

All of the above comments are made with a view to ensuring that the SSC operates as an effective and pro-active structure in overseeing and supporting the implementation of the new NDS.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Fergus McCabe

Anna Quigley

National Community Representatives