

# A Road to Change

*Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy  
2010-2016*



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# Message from Minister Pat Carey

Widespread public concern was expressed about alcohol during consultation stages of the design of the new interim National Drugs Strategy (2009-2016), which was launched last September. This was in relation to alcohol use as a stand-alone public health issue and in association with illicit drug use. The new National Substance Misuse Strategy will address many areas aimed at reducing problem alcohol use at a national level.

This local project in Ballymun has the potential to provide a preview of the effect some of the actions anticipated in the new strategy could have. Therefore, I welcome this initiative of the Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force and Safer Ballymun.

I am very happy to launch the Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy, and I will be taking a keen interest in its roll-out over the next few years.

**Pat Carey TD**

**Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs**

(with special Responsibility for the National Substance Misuse Strategy)

# Foreword

Ballymun's<sup>1</sup> alcohol consumption levels match, and in some cases exceed, national consumption levels which have risen exponentially since 1989. Increasing consumption levels have led to a consequent rise in health and social harms, coupled with a sometimes fatalistic sense that little can be done to overcome their impact. The Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force and Safer Ballymun, who have worked together in the development of this Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy, reject the notion that increased alcohol consumption is an irreversible, uncontrollable tide. Our Strategy aims to bring about a change in the local environmental and community systems which currently facilitate harmful levels and patterns of drinking.

The Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy is the result of more than a year of consultation with local people, community leaders, statutory organisations and political representatives. It takes a public health focus which aims to reduce overall alcohol consumption levels and change harmful patterns of drinking in the community and, by doing so, reduce alcohol-related harm. In devising its overall approach and specific actions, the Strategy draws its recommendations from Irish and international expertise on public health and alcohol. The Strategy proposes that a number of areas must be addressed locally to achieve a reduction in harm; including regulating the numbers/density of alcohol retail outlets, policing and enforcement, community awareness and attitude change, education, treatment and harm reduction.

The Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy is a significant initiative in terms of future public policy on alcohol. The new National Strategy, which combines alcohol and drugs in a single policy response, is expected by the end of 2010. It is anticipated that this too will take a public health approach. The degree to which the Community Alcohol Strategy succeeds in Ballymun has potential to contribute learning to the national strategy, as well as providing a model for similar efforts elsewhere.

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of all those involved in the design and compilation of the strategy and would like to pay particular tribute to the work of Dr Ann Hope, the former National Alcohol Policy Advisor in the Department of Health. We look forward to working with all our partners to implement the Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy over the next three years.

<sup>1</sup> Ballymun is a suburb of North Dublin located five kilometers from the city centre and consists of a policing area of 2.6 sq kms stretching from Glasnevin to the M50. Prior to the regeneration programme which commenced in 1997, the majority of the population was housed in Dublin City Council flat complexes, which consisted of 2,814 flats within seven tower blocks, and 29 spine blocks. The focus of the regeneration project has been to replace all of the local authority accommodation with well-designed, high-quality housing, to create a town centre which is a focal point for the community and to develop mixed-use neighbourhood facilities which will meet the needs of local residents in terms of their social, commercial and leisure requirements.

# A Road to Change

## *Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy 2010-2016<sup>2</sup>*

### **MISSION**

To reduce the harm caused by alcohol in Ballymun by reducing overall community consumption levels, modifying local drinking patterns and changing community attitudes on alcohol and alcohol-related harm.

To organise and mobilise the community and local services in actions relating to reducing both alcohol use and related harm in our community through a focus on 6 key areas:

- i. supply reduction, availability and enforcement;
- ii. community awareness;
- iii. treatment and rehabilitation;
- iv. prevention and education;
- v. harm reduction;
- vi. policy and research.

### **AIMS**

- To increase local awareness of the social harms associated with alcohol use;
- To increase community knowledge around alcohol and risky drinking;
- To alter the general context and conditions within which alcohol is available; controlled and promoted locally;
- To promote a greater sense of community well-being and safety;
- To encourage positive health promotion activities;
- To actively seek to influence local and national policies.

### **KEY PRINCIPLES<sup>3</sup>**

The strategy will be underpinned by a number of key principles including community development, partnership, co-ordination, information sharing and monitoring. The Strategy should also fulfil the following:

- a. Recognise that alcohol is not an 'ordinary commodity' but a powerful intoxicant proven to be causative in a number of health and social harms;
- b. Be community wide and multi-component as opposed to one that is targeted at individuals or high risk groups only;
- c. Seek to bring about community level system change by mobilising the community;
- d. Endeavour to reduce alcohol related harm by reducing overall consumption levels.

## APPROACH

The strategy is informed by a Public Health approach which seeks to influence consumption levels of the total drinking population. The approach draws on a large body of evidence stating that alcohol causes or contributes to a range of social and health problems, and that the prevalence of these problems is directly related to the consumption levels of the population. Therefore, measures that reduce total consumption will reduce a range of social and health related harms.

## THE STRATEGY & OUTCOMES

The strategy consists of 14 objectives across the 6 key areas which will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Long term outcome measures will focus on the following:

- Reduced harmful use of alcohol;
- Reduced prevalence of underage drinking;
- Reduced alcohol-related harm;
- Reduced incidents of alcohol and violence;
- Reduced alcohol-related hospital admissions;
- Reduced family relationship problems due to alcohol;
- Increased access to alcohol treatment services;
- Reduced prevalence of alcohol at community events/activities;
- Reduced alcohol marketing in local areas;
- Increased use of responsible server techniques and skills.

<sup>2</sup>. The area of Ballymun referred to within this strategy is the Ballymun Regeneration area ([http://www.brl.ie/pdf/MASTERPLAN\\_2007.pdf](http://www.brl.ie/pdf/MASTERPLAN_2007.pdf))

<sup>3</sup>. The principles of this strategy are directly sourced from key literature in the area of alcohol policy by Babor, T et al, Holder, H; Hope, A and Thom, B.



# Context

Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force<sup>4</sup> and Safer Ballymun<sup>5</sup> have been concerned for some time about the impact of alcohol-related harm in Ballymun and local residents have frequently voiced their concerns at different community consultation events. In response to this in April 2009, a 'roundtable discussion' on alcohol was convened to explore the possibility of a collective response to alcohol-related harm. A number of statutory, community and voluntary agencies attended and shared their experiences of how they encounter alcohol-related problems in Ballymun. This group affirmed the need for a collective response via a collaborative strategy on alcohol-related harm.

In the year following the initial Roundtable discussion, a draft strategy was compiled based on both residents and agencies input, and facilitated through the structures of both Safer Ballymun and Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force. The second Roundtable discussion was held in March 2010 in order to review and discuss the draft Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy and to explore how agencies could participate in its implementation. In addition, a working group from Safer Ballymun and Ballymun Drugs Task Force further developed, refined and agreed various actions in collaboration with community agencies and residents.

Commitment to this multi-component, inter-agency strategy has been secured from a number of key agencies and local people's input continues to be sought and valued through a number of community consultation exercises. Dr Ann Hope, the former National Alcohol Policy Advisor in the Department of Health, has also volunteered her services as an external advisor for the first period of the strategy's implementation.

The Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy is the first of its kind in Ireland and through its public health approach seeks to reduce alcohol-related risk to the Ballymun community's health, safety and sense of well-being. Safer Ballymun and Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force look forward to working with the other partners to implement it in Ballymun.

Hugh Greaves.  
Co-ordinator  
Ballymun Drugs Task Force

<sup>4</sup> Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force (BLDTF) was established in March 1997. Its remit is "to assess the nature and extent of drug misuse in Ballymun and to develop and monitor the development of an action plan to respond to this identified problem (BLDTF 1997, 2000). BLDTF is a partnership between local, community, voluntary and statutory agencies and public representatives who support and co-ordinate a collective and integrated response to the drugs problem in the Ballymun Area.

<sup>5</sup> Safer Ballymun is an action-based problem solving forum which entails a partnership approach between Ballymun Regeneration Ltd., Dublin City Council, An Garda Síochána and local residents to make Ballymun a better place in which to live, work and visit.





# A Road to Change

## *Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy 2010- 2016*



# *1. Supply Reduction Availability & Enforcement*



# Supply Reduction, Availability & Enforcement

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
1.1 Develop a local policing strategy in relation to alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure prosecution of offending outlets regarding underage sales and serving</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Inspection and monitoring of outlets and record of any prosecutions on PULSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct retail sales surveillance of outlets to monitor underage sales (at peak times)</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Number of operations conducted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limit drinking in public places through consistent street patrols and confiscations (following up with parent/care giver in the case of a young person)</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Enforcement of all available powers and recording of confiscations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to enforce drink driving legislation by increasing "high visibility" random breath checks locally</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Number of Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) Checkpoints conducted and related detections
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and prosecute adults purchasing alcohol for minors</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Number of detections / prosecutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce existing legislation in relation to home delivery of alcohol</li> </ul>	An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Number of detections / prosecutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, monitor and promote the number of national identity age cards issued in Ballymun</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of cards issued
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively seek the enactment of the full provisions relating to alcohol test purchasing</li> </ul>	North West Area JPC, local representatives, Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of submissions and number of parliamentary questions

# Supply Reduction, Availability & Enforcement

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the provision of CCTV supervision in areas where high-risk drink-related behaviour/ violence occurs</li> </ul>	Dublin City Council, An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Regular feedback at Safer Ballymun meetings
1.2 Actively seek a level of control in the number and density of alcohol outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct 6 monthly assessments of the number, opening hours and density of licensed on/off sales in Ballymun</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of assessments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence the Dublin City Council development plan in relation to alcohol retail outlets</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of Local Authority reports/ meetings and/ or responses; Parliamentary questions, submissions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a local protocol where Dublin City Council informs other relevant partners about planning applications for alcohol retail outlets</li> </ul>	Dublin City Council	Ongoing	Local protocol established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide public information on any upcoming granting or renewal of licenses to enable members of the public to participate in the process</li> </ul>	Dublin City Council, Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of community briefings held, level of information disseminated via newsletters and media
1.3 Work with local alcohol retail outlets to develop and implement a voluntary code of practice in relation to alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local alcohol retail outlets and the Garda Licensing Inspector to encourage the adoption of and participation in a voluntary code of practice</li> </ul>	BLDTF, An Garda Síochána, local alcohol retail outlets	Ongoing	Number of outlets observing voluntary code

# Supply Reduction, Availability & Enforcement

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Time-frame	Indicators	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the use of responsible marketing and serving behaviour among alcohol retail outlets in the area</li> </ul>	Local alcohol retail outlets	Ongoing	Number of outlets monitoring implementation of voluntary code	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek identification as appropriate</li> </ul>	Local alcohol retail outlets	Ongoing	Reduction in alcohol sales to underage potential customers	
1.4	Ensure the provision of localised responsible training to alcohol retail outlets in Ballymun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise training for trainers to build capacity for ongoing locally-based responsible server training</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group, URRÚS	2010	Training delivered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and encourage participation in training among local alcohol outlets</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group, URRÚS, An Garda Síochána	Ongoing	Number of outlets and staff	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek provision of at least 2 responsible server courses per year</li> </ul>	URRÚS, An Garda Síochána, Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of courses per year	
1.5	Advocate for changes to current legislation on alcohol	Advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the cessation of all alcohol home deliveries and text sales</li> <li>cessation of alcohol price reduction promotions</li> <li>banning of alcohol sports sponsorships</li> <li>introduction of minimum pricing standards</li> </ul>	North West Area Joint Policing Committee, political representatives, Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of submissions; Number of parliamentary questions

# *2. Community Awareness*



# Community Awareness

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
2.1 Influence community perception and norms in relation to alcohol by promoting healthy living, lifestyle awareness and participative events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLDTF to offer grant funding for community events where there is promotion of family fun and healthy days/ events</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Annually	Number of proposals received & granted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host separate teen and adult 'Funky Seomra' events (<a href="http://www.dancefree.ie">www.dancefree.ie</a>)</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Levels & range of community participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community members in the planning and delivery of local alcohol-free and café nights</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of events organised. Feedback from participants; Feedback from community members involved in the planning and delivery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote greater awareness among adults of their responsibilities in relation to modelling behaviour</li> </ul>	BLDTF, Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Dissemination of promotional material
2.2 To use the media to gain support for community policy initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop thematic articles for local papers and newsletters (including BRL, Safer Ballymun, BLDTF, BWAP)</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of articles in local media
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise and undertake media activity for regional and national media outlets</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Number of references made to articles in other publications; Participation and follow-up rates of regional media outlets



# *3. Treatment & Rehabilitation*



# Treatment and Rehabilitation

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
3.1 Ensure a range of appropriate responses to engage those with problematic alcohol issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host a local seminar which explores and examines brief intervention options in relation to alcohol for use in both specialist and non-specialist community services</li> </ul>	BLDTF	2011	Delivery of seminar in 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide annual local training in brief advice and interventions</li> </ul>	YAP, URRÚS, DePaul Ireland, HSE	Annually	Number of trainings undertaken; Number of participants involved and completed training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of up to date information on referral options available</li> </ul>	HSE, DePaul Ireland, BLDTF	Ongoing	Information available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate appropriate information in the community on support options available to families affected by alcohol use</li> </ul>	HSE, DePaul Ireland	Ongoing	Information developed and disseminated; Feedback from community on information required and received

# *4. Harm Reduction*



# Harm Reduction

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
4.1 Seek the reduction of direct and indirect alcohol-related health and social harms to individuals who are unable or unwilling to stop using alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the ongoing provision of appropriate low threshold day/ evening outreach and drop-in services</li> </ul>	BLDTF, HSE	Ongoing	Service funding maintained
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote engagement with low threshold residential services for those engaged in habitual problematic drinking behaviour where they have housing difficulties or are at risk of homelessness</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Knowledge among staff and clients of the services available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage on-going provision of food services targeted at those involved in habitual problematic drinking behaviour</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Number of services locally where food is available to this group

# *5. Prevention & Education*



# Prevention and Education

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
5.1 Support and promote evidence-based alcohol/drug education programmes focusing on life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide and promote access to training in Quality Standards in Drug/Alcohol Education</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Annual delivery/ access to Quality Standards training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide and promote access to training in designing &amp; evaluating effective drug/alcohol education programmes, particularly for community organisations, training centres and other educational centres</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Annual delivery/ access to training on drug/alcohol programme design and evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote SPHE and other evidence-based educational programmes as good practice models of alcohol/drug education</li> </ul>	BLDTF	Ongoing	Levels of participation and completion of relevant programmes
5.2 Support and promote delivery of evidence-based family skills programmes to build protective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver and support evidence-based family skills programmes</li> </ul>	BLDTF, other relevant agencies	Ongoing	Numbers of families participating in programmes

# *6. Policy & Research*





# Policy and Research

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicators
6.1 Monitor and report on the implementation of the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a framework for the measurement of actions and their contribution to the overall Strategy</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	End of 2010	Measurement framework developed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and review the implementation of the Strategy annually</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Annually	Evidence collated on the effectiveness of each action in relation to the key outcome measures
6.2 Ensure that the Strategy effectively meets the needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain regular information on local practices, patterns of consumption, behaviours and attitudes in relation to alcohol use</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Annually	Local data available which will inform mid-term reviews and ongoing strategy development
6.3 Communicate and promote local experience to inform policy debates and agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek national support and recognition for the Ballymun Community Alcohol Strategy within the National Substance Misuse Strategy</li> </ul>	Alcohol Strategy Steering Group	Ongoing	Ballymun is designated as a national pilot area for a Community Alcohol Strategy

# List of abbreviations

<b>BLDTF</b>	Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force
<b>BRL</b>	Ballymun Regeneration Limited
<b>CCTV</b>	Closed Circuit Television
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>JPC</b>	Joint Policing Committee
<b>PULSE</b>	Police Using Leading Systems Effectively (Garda Data System)
<b>SPHE</b>	Social & Personal Health Education
<b>URRÚS</b>	Community Addiction Studies Training Centre
<b>YAP</b>	Youth Action Project

# Glossary of terms

## **AIM**

The aim describes the overall result that the intervention is intended to achieve<sup>1</sup>.

## **OBJECTIVE**

Objectives are directly linked to the aims, and have the same intention, but they refer to more specific results of the intervention<sup>1</sup>.

## **COMMUNITY ALCOHOL POLICY/STRATEGY**

Any established process, priority or structure that purposefully alters local, social, economic or physical environments to reduce alcohol problems<sup>2</sup>.

## **ALCOHOL STRATEGY STEERING GROUP**

An Alcohol Strategy Steering Group will be formed to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy and will consist of Ballymun LDTF, Safer Ballymun and key local agencies.

## **COMMUNITY MOBILISATION**

Community action is essential for increasing local awareness, changing attitudes regarding alcohol use and problems, and increasing support for local alcohol policies.

As part of community action, the process of developing and sustaining alcohol policy approaches encourages local organisations and citizens to participate in and support policies<sup>2</sup>.

## **TEST PURCHASING**

Refers to the purchasing of alcohol by persons under 18 years, subject to necessary safeguards, with a view to promoting compliance with licensing law<sup>3</sup>.

## **BRIEF ADVICE AND INTERVENTIONS**

Brief interventions are those practices that aim to identify a real or potential alcohol problem to motivate an individual to do something about it<sup>4</sup>.

## **LOW THRESHOLD**

The aim of "low threshold" is to consciously maintain the admittance requirements of a service at such a level so that as few as possible are denied access to that service [...] this approach recognises that those who are most difficult to work with are often those who need a service most [...]. The low threshold approach is crucial as the target group is often demonstrably incapable of meeting the expectations and demands of effective service provision in less specialised services<sup>5</sup>.

## **HARM REDUCTION**

Harm reduction refers to strategies which are aimed at reducing alcohol related harm where alcohol users are either unwilling or unable to stop using alcohol. This includes the reduction of health, social and other problems directly or indirectly related to alcohol use<sup>5</sup>.

## **MODELLING BEHAVIOUR**

This is the term used when young people generally model their drinking behaviour on the attitudes and actions of the adults that they see around them, as well as being influenced by their friends<sup>6</sup>.

## **MONITORING**

Monitoring is an ongoing process involving the continuous or regular collection of key information about the interventions inputs, outputs and outcomes. The main aim of monitoring is to assess whether an intervention is going as planned, and whether any change in focus and/or activity is necessary<sup>1</sup>.

## **SERVER TRAINING**

Servers of alcoholic beverages are regularly informed about local (and national) drinking laws, how to handle sales to already intoxicated patrons, and how to prevent intoxication and underage drinking<sup>7</sup>.

### **Definitions quoted in the following sources:**

1. Effective Interventions Unit (2002) Evaluation Guide 1 Substance Misuse Division Scottish Executive: Scotland.
2. Holder, H (2002) "The Role and Effectiveness of Alcohol Policy at the Local Level: International Experiences" Paper Presented at Debating Public Policies on Drugs and Alcohol, Second Annual Conference, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin. p 2 & p 8
3. Report of the government alcohol advisory group, March 2008
4. Babor, T and Higgins-Biddle, J (2001) Brief Intervention: For Hazardous & Harmful Drinking, World Health Organisation p 6 - p 7
5. Cassidy, F (2008) Where You're At: Low Threshold and Change. DePaul Ireland: Dublin. p 8 & p 11
6. Alcohol, children and young people: do we need be concerned? [www.alcoholireland.ie](http://www.alcoholireland.ie)
7. Babor, T (2003) Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity p. 283



