

## To review harm reduction approaches aimed at Minimising the sharing of equipment used to administer drugs

### Background

The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) was established in July 2000 to advise the Government in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment/ rehabilitation and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland, based on the analysis of research findings and information. The Committee is overseeing the delivery of a three-year work programme on the extent, nature, causes and effects of drug use in Ireland. The Committee comprises representatives nominated from relevant agencies and sectors, both statutory and non- statutory. The Committee reports to the Minister of State responsible for the National Drugs Strategy.

### Commission

The NACD wishes to commission a literature review of harm reduction approaches aimed at minimising the sharing of equipment used to administer drugs.

### Background Information

The provision of sterile injecting equipment through needle and syringe programmes is recognised as an important harm reduction strategy for the prevention of the HIV and Hepatitis C viruses, in terms of minimising the harm associated with injecting drug use to drug users themselves as well as to the wider community.

In Ireland, the first needle exchange programme was established in 1989. Since then the service has been expanded to include approximately twelve sites, all located in the Eastern Regional Health Authority area\*. Services are mainly statutory run and located in health centres and drug-treatment centres around the city as well as through a low threshold mobile clinic. However, an external review of drug services in the Eastern Health Board area described needle exchange provision in Dublin as "patchy and not very comprehensive"\*\*.

The need to develop and expand existing harm reduction measures and to investigate scientifically based innovative responses appropriate to Irish circumstances has been noted in Building on Experience The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008\*\*\*. The NDS has also noted the importance of achieving a significant reduction in the reported level of sharing injecting equipment, a reduction which will be contingent on continued efforts to enhance harm reduction measures such as needle exchange facilities.

In addition, the very high levels of Hepatitis C among opiate drug users in Ireland, both smokers and injectors, indicates that harm reduction measures should target not just injecting behaviour but also smoking and snorting practices.

\* Moran, R., Dillon, L., O'Brien, M., Mayock, P., Farrell, E. and Pike, B. (2001a) A Collection of Papers on Drug Issues in Ireland Dublin: Health research Board.

\*\* Farrell, M., Gerarda C. & Marsden, J. (2000). External Review of Drug Services for the Eastern Health Board. London: National Addiction Centre.

\*\*\* Department of Tourism Sport and Recreation (2001) Building on Experience: National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008. Dublin: Stationary Office.

## The Brief

The NACD wishes to commission a review of initiatives aimed at minimising the sharing of equipment used to administer drugs (such as needles and tooters etc.). The research will:

1. The tenderer should provide an overview of the drug taking techniques such as booting and frontloading, other rituals and paraphernalia used
2. Provide an international literature review of harm reduction approaches in this field;
3. Identify existing harm reduction approaches in operation in Ireland and report, where documented, on the uptake, effectiveness and limitations of these services;
4. Review alternative and innovative initiatives which have been introduced in other countries and which may have potential application in Ireland for particular cohorts of the drug using i.e. young people, prisoners, homeless, sex workers etc;
5. Document the issues and difficulties involved in operating such schemes (e.g. national and international legal, community, financial) and give examples of how these have been addressed.

## Duration of project

The project is expected to commence in October 2002. An interim report will be expected six weeks from the award of the contract. The final report will be due three months from the date of the award. A liaison schedule will be agreed as part of the contract.

## Requirements

Tenderers must submit a written proposal detailing the following:

1. Research methodology to be employed;
2. Project management;
3. Personnel involved, their credentials, use of consultants and track record; and
4. Description of administrative and technical costs.

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the submissions be will based on the following criteria:

### Research methodology

Understanding of the project;  
Understanding of the work involved;  
Feasibility of the approach suggested.

### Project management

Ability to deliver key outputs on time;  
Clarity in description of milestones;  
Credibility of personnel and consultants involved;  
Track record.

### Value for money


Description of cost;  
Justification for proposed costs;  
Best use of resources.

The standard contract terms and conditions are available from the office. However, specifics with regard to the tender brief, schedule of liaison, reports and payments, intellectual property rights will be prepared separately on awarding the contract.

The budget for this study is in the region of €12,000.00.

**Closing date:** 2.00pm, Thursday 12th September 2002.

Tenderers will be required to sign a Declaration under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 (see link below). It will also be necessary to include an up to date Tax Clearance Certificate with the submitted tender.

 [link to Disclosure of Information under the Freedom of Information Act 1997 form](#)

Tenders should be submitted, addressed to:

Secretary  
NACD  
3rd Floor, Shelbourne House  
Shelbourne Road  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin 4  
**Tel:** (01) 667 0760 / 667 0765;  
**Fax:** (01) 667 0828.  
**Email:** [info@nacd.ie](mailto:info@nacd.ie);  
**Web:** [www.nacd.ie](http://www.nacd.ie)

**NOTE: TENDER RETURNS SHOULD BE MARKED:**

Ref: Ten/Harm Reduction