

Minutes of the East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Public Meeting

Strand Arts Centre, Belfast
Thursday 30th November, 2017

Designated Organisations

CI D Moore, PSNI

Gary Ballantyne, NIHE

Sgt F Jackson, PSNI

Staff Present

Glenn Thomas, Safer City Coordinator

Brad Macauley, Project Officer

Andy Claydon, Partnership Support Officer

Apologies

1. Welcome from the

- i. welcomed DPCSP Members and members of the public to the East Belfast DPCSP Public Meeting on the subject of Drugs Awareness.

2. Presentation 1 – CI D Moore & F Jackson (PSNI)

- i. Chief Inspector Davy Moore spoke of the most prevalent drugs being used in East Belfast, namely Cannabis, but stated that the rise in the abuse of prescription drugs was massive.
- ii. CI Moore informed that deaths from prescription drugs were now more common than road deaths.
- iii. The guests were informed of a worrying development concerning a mixing agent called Benzo which was known to give a numbing effect to the user and is widely used with Cocaine.
- iv. Prescription drugs are now the main drugs being seized in the East, Lyrica, Buds and Tramadol being the most prevalent.
- v. F Jackson then spoke of the issue of reporting and the difficulties faced by the PSNI. He acknowledged that trust is very much an issue but also suggested that communities need to be encouraged to report drug dealing to the Police.
- vi. F Jackson then relayed information about the extent of the problem of Postal deliveries of drugs and how effectively the Royal Mail had become the largest dealer of drugs in the country.

- vii. F Jackson stated that it was his belief that the Drug & Alcohol forums were under represented and it was now, more than ever, that a partnership approach was necessary to tackle this problem as the PSNI were only part of the solution.
- viii. The Guests were informed that Crimestoppers still played an important role as it was an anonymous service and referred cases to the PSNI.

3. Questions and Comments

- i. How does the problem in the East compare to the rest of Belfast?
 - It is fairly representative of Belfast as a whole although the big problem in the City Centre is Heroine and in the North they have a big problem with postal orders for drugs
- ii. How are Postal Seizures acted upon
 - Mallusk is the internal Centre that identifies contraband. The PSNI adopt the investigation following a successful seizure. Any international interceptions are made by UK Border Force.
- iii. Are the Postal Companies taking any measures to combat this?
 - They X-Raying packages but impossible to X-ray everything. There needs to be clear guidelines.
- iv. An enquiry was made as to the drug problem in Titanic Halt?
 - Following the initial Police report and subsequent actions, it appears to have been 'policed out' of the area.
- v. What is the level of tolerance in terms of arrestable offences?
 - There is a certain threshold level that we work to but it depends on the quality of the intelligence we are receiving and whether or not it is actionable.

4. Presentation 2 – James Scott, Extern

- i. James listed the most common forms of drugs in terms of seizures in order of significance:
 - Herbal Cannabis
 - Cocaine
 - Cannabis resin
 - MDMA
 - Cannabis Plants
 - Opiates – Heroine etc
 - Amphetamine Powder
- ii. In the statistics for deaths, the number one substance is alcohol.

- iii. Externs current priorities include Young People, Poly drug use, injected drug, online purchasing and dual diagnosis.
- iv. James outlined current initiatives as undertaken by Extern, namely:
 - An integrated service crises package, funded by the PHA
 - Directories for Support Services
 - New programme, Community responders

5. Questions and Comments

- vi. No questions were forthcoming from the audience.
- vii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that each of the speakers would be available to answer specific queries after the meeting
- viii. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.