

Ana Liffey Drug Project

Report 1990

A preliminary report on the work of the Ana Liffey Drug Project for the year 1990. A full Annual Report 1990 will be available for the Project's Annual General Meeting to be held in June 1991.

Service Development

In line with its commitment to having an ongoing review of its work the Project throughout 1990 held a series of workshops to assess our effectiveness and to make appropriate adjustments. Underlying this commitment is our belief that the problems facing drug users result from the effects of public attitudes, drug legislation and policies and treatment services, as well as the physical and psychological effects of the drugs they use. Our concern has been that in the past too much attention has been given to the latter factors and very little to widening the debate on the former. The task of facing up to our own role in contributing to these complex problems is something which everybody - public, legislators, government, media and treatment services - needs to address. To confront this challenge, drugs services in particular, must engage in a process of constructive self-criticism, to analyse their own shortcomings and to make positive changes. We all need to break down our isolation and engage in more open dialogue. During 1990 the Ana Liffey Drug Project has made a number of changes in its service and there are many more which we need to make in the future. Overall however we are satisfied that we have initiated a constructive review process.

On a practical side one important outcome of our review was our decision to develop new responses to the drug problem in conjunction with personnel from other services. In this regard we have been directly involved in setting up a support group for parents of drug users who are affected by HIV and in developing an independent self-organised group for problem drug users. Furthermore, we worked closely with the welfare services in the prisons in order to improve overall coordination and effectiveness. We also maintain an involvement with Community Response - a joint statutory/voluntary response to problem drug use in the south inner city of Dublin and the Drug Workers' Forum an organisation which is in the process of being set up with the objective of uniting persons who work with and/or are directly affected by drug use.

The demand on the Project's services continued to increase in 1990 (see graphs). In November 1989 this increase was quite dramatic. Throughout 1990, as graph 2 shows, the level of client use of the Project's service was twice that of the previous year. This level of client use exceeds all previously available figures. It reflects positively on the Project's decision to continually review its work. It also reflects positively the increasing willingness of problem drug users to make use of counselling services.

Policy Developments.

In April 1990 the Project organised a seminar on Drug Treatment Policies in Trinity College, which was addressed by Judy Greenwood, consultant psychiatrist with the Edinburgh Community Drug Problem Service, Shane Butler of the Addiction Studies Course, Trinity College and Fergus O'Kelly, general medical practitioner. The three papers from this seminar were published in a pamphlet by the Project together with a submission which the Project made to the National Coordinating Committee on Drug Abuse on the need for changes in drugs policies. The Project's main recommendation was that Community Drug Teams be set up to manage the treatment of the drug problem in those small number of communities in Dublin which have been most affected.

Research

During 1990 the Project participated fully in the joint EC-Pompidou research study on first time users of drug treatment services which is being organised in Dublin by the Health Research Board. The Project remains committed to the gathering of relevant, objective information and statistics on the drug problem.

Funding

During 1990 the Project secured an important increase in its grant from the Department of Justice and continued to receive other grants from the Departments of Health and Education. We also received other major grants from important sources including People in Need, Jesuit Solidarity Fund, Irish Youth Foundation and the Ireland Funds. We are also grateful to the corporate and private sectors for their continued support to our work.

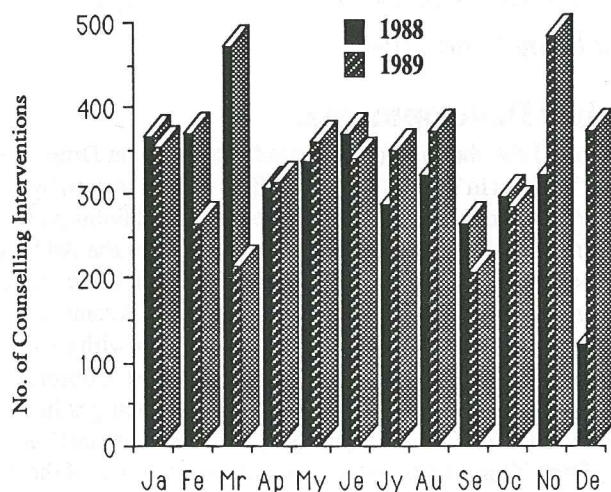
Priorities for the Future

Over the coming year the Project will continue to review and develop its service. We will be giving priority to the need to make effective links with personnel and agencies already providing other services to problem drug users in the community. We will also continue to develop our work with self-development groups and to improve coordination within the prisons. In June we will be organising another seminar, this time on the theme "The Worker Needs Support Too!" which will explore mechanisms for supporting drug workers. We will be making continued representations to government on the need to introduce a new drugs policy.

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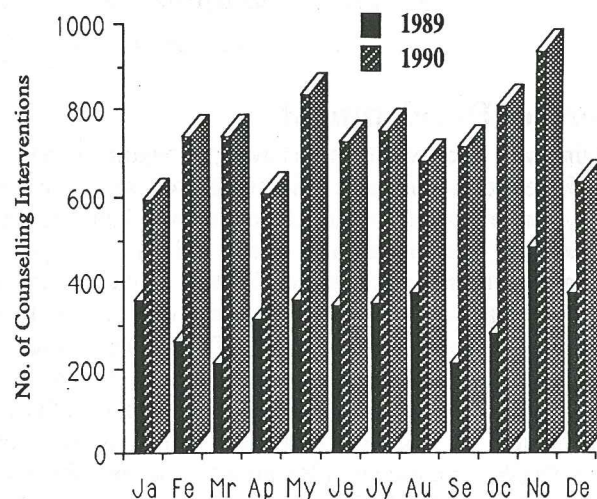
Use of Service

Counselling Interventions 1988/89



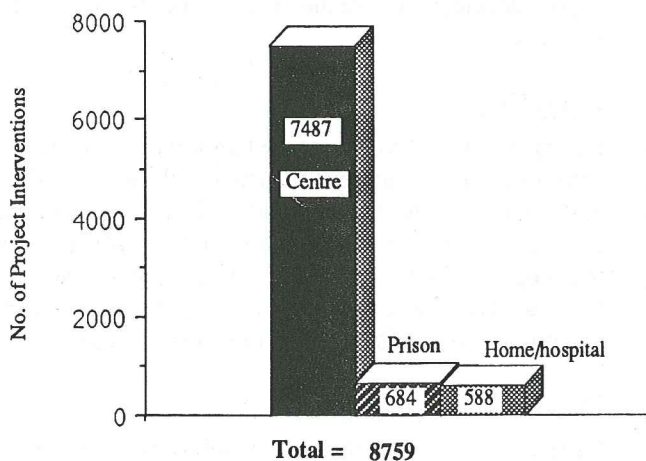
Graph 1: This graph shows the total number of counselling interventions, per month, in the years 1988 and 1989

Counselling Interventions 1989/90



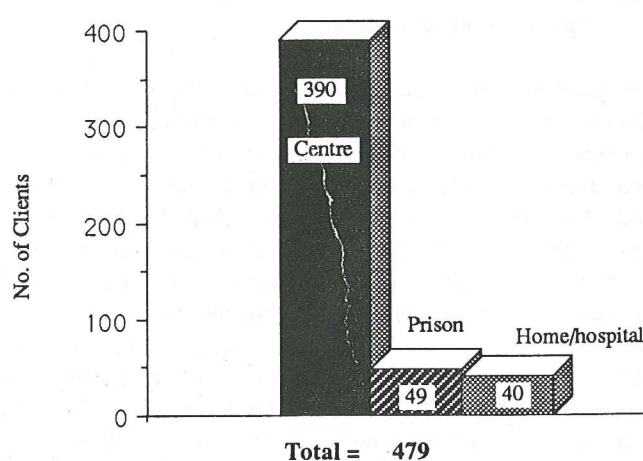
Graph 2: This graph shows the total number of counselling interventions, per month, in the years 1989 and 1990

Counselling Interventions 1990 - breakdown



Graph 3: This graph shows the breakdown of counselling interventions according to centre, prison, home and hospital visits, 1990.

Project Clients 1990 - breakdown



Graph 4: This graph shows the breakdown of project clients according to centre, prison, home and hospital visits, 1990.