

Responding to the issue of drugs within the Traveller Community...

At a **Community** level there is a need for:

- Awareness raising and a safe space for Travellers to discuss drugs and drug related issues, such as shame, stigma and denial
- The development of a community response to drug issues with Travellers acting as advocates and Traveller organisations playing a central role

At a **Service Provision** level there is a need for:

- Drug services to ensure that they are anti-racist, culturally appropriate and meeting the needs of Travellers through an equality framework
- The promotion and development of peer approaches with Travellers as deliverers of services where it is deemed appropriate

At a **Policy** level there is a need for:

- All drug related policy to be inclusive of the needs of Travellers and other ethnic minority groups i.e. equality proofing
- The principles of interculturalism and equality to inform and underpin all drug related policy development

PAVEE POINT

Pavee Point is a voluntary non-governmental organisation which is committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers. The group is a partnership of Travellers and the majority population working together to address the racism and exclusion Travellers experience in society. It has been involved in direct work with Travellers since 1985.



Traveller Specific
Drugs Initiative



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLERS CENTRE

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Traveller Specific
Drugs Initiative

THE TSDI IS CORE FUNDED BY
THE NORTHERN AREA HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE

Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative

Information leaflet

“*In my view the two biggest challenges facing Travellers over the next ten to fifteen years is the increase in drug use/drug addiction and issues of ‘cultural esteem’*”

(Martin Collins, Assistant Director Pavee Point, TSDI ‘Moving Forward’ Conference 2005)

TRAVELLER ANALYSIS

It is acknowledged and accepted in Ireland that drug issues are concentrated within communities that are disadvantaged and socially excluded. The current situation of Travellers as members of a minority ethnic group in Ireland is one of exclusion as a result of racism. The TSDI work from the analysis that the issue of drugs for Travellers should be responded to in a holistic manner, particularly in the context of the ongoing racism that shapes the lives and experiences of Travellers in Ireland.

The central focus of the initiative is the promotion of Traveller inclusion in national, regional and local responses being developed to address drug use and to support Traveller organisations in tackling the issue of drug use within the Traveller community.

BACKGROUND

The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative (TSDI) was established in 2000 at a time when the issue of drugs was arising with increased regularity within the Traveller community. Funding for the initiative was received through the National Drugs Strategy Team.

VISION

Travellers come together collectively to challenge drug issues within their community in a positive way which empowers the community and simultaneously promotes Traveller cultural identity. Consequently the voice of Travellers would be heard, respected and responded to at all levels of society concerning the issue of drugs.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative will advocate for and promote a Traveller analysis of drug issues that will inform the development of culturally appropriate responses to drug issues that concern the Traveller community.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

1. To strengthen Travellers participation in responding to drug issues
2. To continue to develop and support a Traveller analysis of drug issues
3. To ensure Traveller inclusion in all relevant drug policy and research
4. To develop, design and deliver a range of training modules and materials as appropriate for work with Traveller groups and service providers.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK

• Technical Support for Traveller Groups	• Inter-Agency Collaboration
• Drug Education Programmes	• Policy Work/Lobbying
• Developing Culturally Appropriate Materials	• Research
• Information Dissemination (e.g. newsletters)	• Anti-Racism Training
• Piloting Innovative Approaches	• Responding to Emerging Issues

WHO WE WORK WITH

- Traveller Groups
- Drug Services and Structures (across all pillars of the National Drugs Strategy)
- Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces
- National Drugs Strategy Team
- Community Based Organisations
- Other Relevant Bodies (Homeless Agencies, Prisons, Health Service Executive, etc.)

“*How do we raise awareness around the issue of drugs within the Traveller community without adding to stigma or without making life more difficult for Travellers?*”

(Participant at the TSDI ‘Moving Forward’ Conference 2005)