

'HIV, Stigma, Social Inclusion and Addiction in Ireland'

Tony Duffin - CEO, Ana Liffey Drug Project

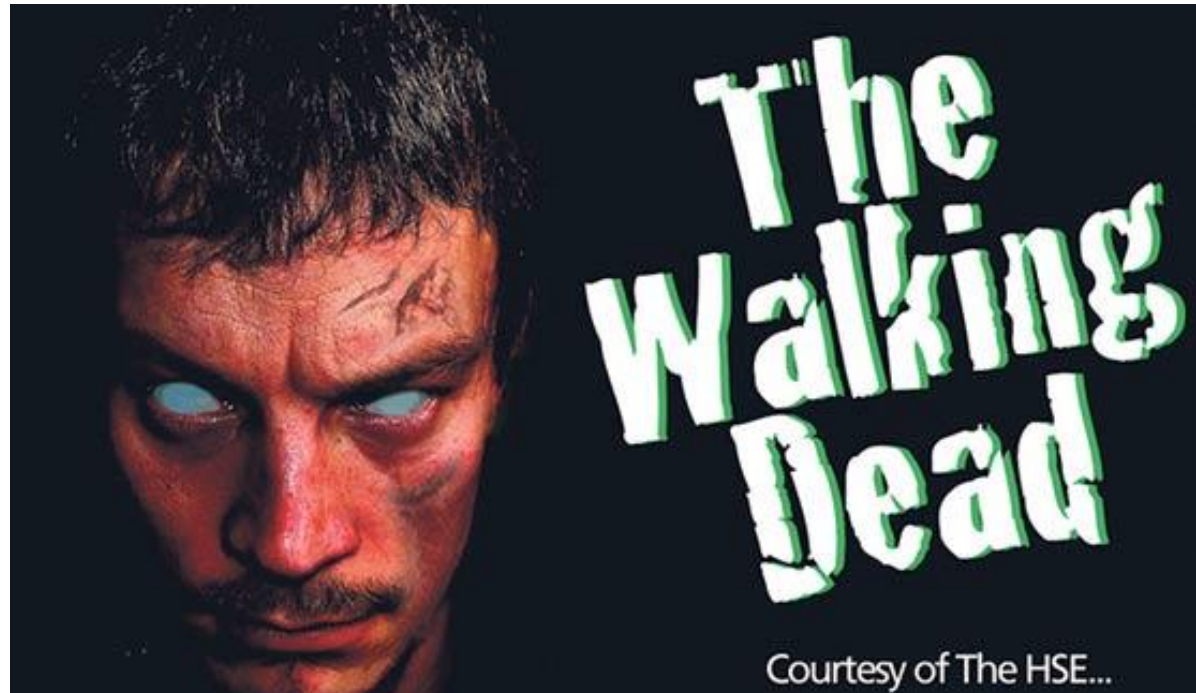
National HIV Conference

Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin

28th September 2017



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Overview:

- Focusing in on Street Based Injecting
- Feedback from staff and people who use Ana Liffey's services
- “Zombies” & “Junkies”
- A Harm Reducing and Rehabilitative approach to the possession of small amounts of illegal drugs in Ireland



Focusing in on Street Based Injecting...

Street Based Injecting is unsafe and carries elevated risk for a range of health harms. For example sharing of injecting paraphernalia is a leading cause of BBV transmission.

Do you use
SNOW BLOW?

People who take snow blow may take more risks. People who inject snow blow are likely to inject more often, therefore increasing the risk of sharing injecting equipment. Using snow blow may also enhance your sex drive, increasing the risk of unprotected sex.

REDUCE THE RISK OF HIV INFECTION



ASK

Ask for enough needles, cookers, water and filters.
Ask for safer injecting information.
Ask for a free HIV test.
Ask for free condoms.

ASK

For more information visit drugs.ie/snowblowhiv
For information and support on drugs and alcohol visit drugs.ie
HSE Drugs, Alcohol and HIV Helpline: 1800 459 459



DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support



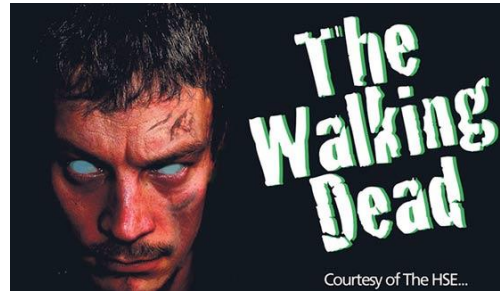
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Feedback from staff and people who use Ana Liffey's services

1. HIV treatment is generally accessible.
2. Access to testing for HIV is good.
3. More people are comfortable with getting tested for HIV, but there are still some who are not.
4. There is less stigma attached to a HIV diagnosis nowadays.
5. People refer to HIV as 'the virus'.



“Zombies” & “Junkies” 1



“POSTCARDS depicting drug users as ‘the Walking Dead’ have caused uproar as a local business group launched a campaign to close a methadone clinic. The Dún Laoghaire Ratepayers Association (DLRPA) defended its cards, which it gave out to local businesses, asking them to send them to Minister for Health Leo Varadkar, saying ‘their graphic nature underlines an unfortunate graphic situation.’”



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‘Zombie’ card bid to shut drug clinic

POSTCARDS depicting drug users as ‘the Walking Dead’ have caused uproar as a local business group launched a campaign to close a methadone clinic. The Dún Laoghaire Ratepayers Association (DLRPA) defended its cards, which it gave out to local businesses, asking them to send them to Minister for Health Leo Varadkar, saying ‘their graphic nature underlines an unfortunate graphic situation.’

DLRPA chairperson Peter Kerrigan told Metro Herald: ‘This campaign is about getting the HSE to take action and admit that how they treat drug use in this country is a complete failure. We’re not attacking users. We’re attacking a broken treatment system that has failed them as much as it has failed our local community. Every Friday, there’s nowhere for the 100-plus people that come into Dún Laoghaire for their treatment, and they are left to wander the streets completely dazed to everything around them. The leaflet – which depicts a zombie figure with the title ‘The Walking Dead’ – criticises the HSE and the provision of methadone to patients at its clinic on Patrick Street, just off the town’s main street, claiming it is excessive and nothing more than

by DAVID KEARNS

‘the State’s own drug’.

Condemning a lack of programmes at the centre, Mr Kerrigan said almost a third of those it treated had been attending for more than ten years. However, local Fianna Fáil councillor Jennifer Cuffe, a member of the Dún Laoghaire Drugs Task Force, described the ‘negative tactics’ employed by the DLRPA as ‘absolutely disgusting’.

‘This is an attempt to place the blame of Dún Laoghaire town’s issues squarely at the feet of a small minority by dehumanising and scaremongering,’ Ms Cuffe said. ‘DLRPA and others may not agree with the presence of a Drug Treatment Clinic in Dún Laoghaire but their attempt to pin blame through demonising those unable to defend themselves for Dún Laoghaire’s problems is pathetic.’

Speaking on RTE’s Liveness yesterday, a number of residents backed the campaign, if not quite its method, to close the drug treatment clinic. ‘These people need help, and while these postcards aren’t the answers, neither is having a treatment centre in the middle of a shopping area,’ said one caller.



THE LIFE OF BRIAN: Brian Farrell hosts the Today Tonight Election Debate – featuring Charles Haughey and Garret Fitzgerald – in 1982. President Michael D Higgins led tributes yesterday to the longtime RTE presenter and political analyst, who passed away at the age of 85

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Keep Dublin tidy – Please recycle this Metro Herald when you are finished with it

“Zombies” & “Junkies” 2

"Sterilising junkies may seem harsh, but it does make sense"

Irish Independent. 18th February 2011

"Press body upholds 'vermin' complaint"

The Irish Times. 14th June 2011

THE PRESS Ombudsman has upheld a complaint against a column in the *Irish Independent* earlier this year which described drug users as “vermin” and “feral, worthless scumbags”.

The article by the newspaper’s columnist Ian O’Doherty was headlined “Sterilising junkies may seem harsh, but it does make sense” and commented favourably on a suggestion by a doctor that such people should be sterilised.

It also voiced the writer’s opinion that “if every junkie in this country were to die tomorrow, I would cheer”.

Campaign groups including Harm Reduction International, the Irish Needle Exchange Forum and the City Wide Drugs Crisis Campaign complained that the article was likely to stir up hatred against drug users on the basis of their illness.



“Zombies” & “Junkies” 3

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LATEST NEWS MOST READ MEDIA IRELAND

Inquest told that caller phoned ambulance for ‘just another junkie’

Robert Keyes (23) from Drogheda found dead at St Audeon’s Park in Dublin in 2015



Louise Roseingrave
Wed, May 3, 2017, 16:33

A Harm Reducing and Rehabilitative approach to the possession of small amounts of illegal drugs in Ireland.

Decriminalisation is not a silver bullet, but consider Portugal:

- better health outcomes for drug users (Home Office, 2014)
- a model of best practices (INCB, 2015)
- destigmatising (Dublin Drug Policy Summit 2017)



Decriminalisation in Portugal

“Sixteen years on the results have been dramatic. Portugal now has the second lowest rate of overdose deaths in the EU. **HIV infections are down significantly.**”

☰ **THE IRISH TIMES** 👤

LATEST **NEWS** MOST READ MEDIA IRELAND

Decriminalising drugs: could it work in Ireland?

Campaigners hope we might be about to turn a corner. The reality is more nuanced

Video Image



Familiar sight: people use a Dublin laneway to take drugs. Photograph: Cyril Byrne

Conor Gallagher

Sat, Sep 23, 2017, 03:00

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[#SaferFromHarm](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SaferFromHarm)



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