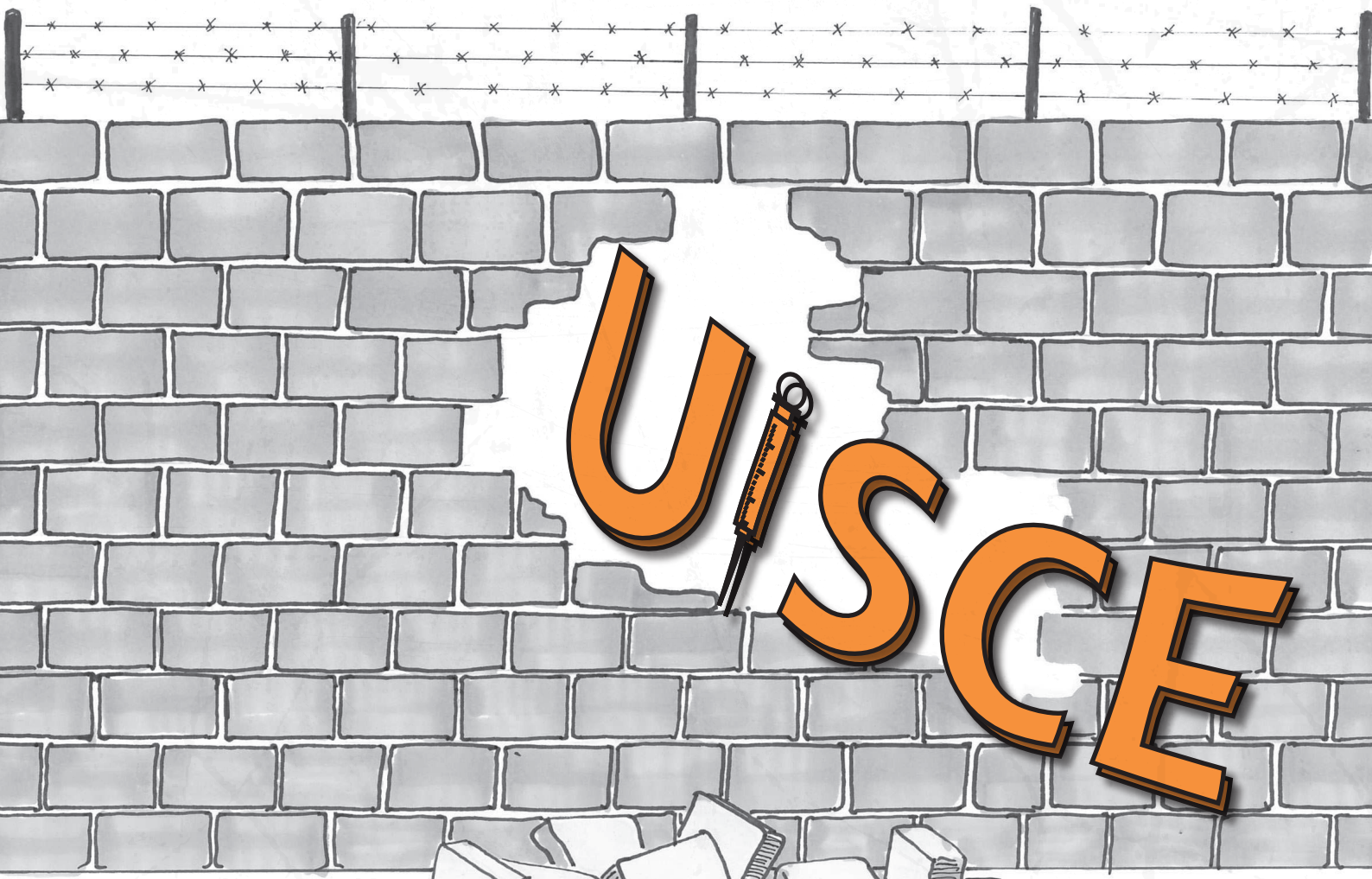


BRASS MUNKIE



Breaking
Barriers
& Building
Relationships for

25
years

ISSUE 31 – SPRING 2017

VOLUNTEER WITH UISCE

People often ask us what they get out of volunteering for UISCE. We don't have the funding to pay people and we don't have a CE scheme. When you read this issue, I hope that you will see that by joining the UISCE team you are making sure that you and the other people in our Community have their voice heard.

If you have a say then the services that you want should eventually follow.

There are other great opportunities at UISCE, when we are asked to go anywhere – volunteers come with us. That means that whether it's Carlow or Paris, you could have the opportunity to travel as some of the crew did since the last issue.

We have so many areas to grow to make sure we do the best job we can so there are loads of opportunities for volunteers including social media, writing for the Brass Munkie, art and of course outreach. If you have a skill that you think would be helpful, we'd love to hear from you!

All Brass Munkie readers are also welcome to stop by anytime and have a cuppa – we'd love to meet you and get your feedback.

Thanks for reading this rag for so many years – we hope you'll find it just as interesting for many more!

THE UISCE CREW



EVIDENCE OF HARM FROM FENTANYL-CONTAMINATED HEROIN

This alert advises of the availability of, and harms from, heroin that has been mixed with fentanyl or carfentanyl, both of which are highly potent synthetic opioids and very small amounts can cause severe or even fatal toxicity. Across the UK, there is significant evidence from a small number of postmortem results of recent drug user deaths and from police seizures that some heroin may contain fentanyl or carfentanyl added by dealers.

There is now evidence which indicates the potential presence of fentanyl/carfentanyl in heroin within Northern Ireland.

Those of you in contact with heroin users should be alert to the increased possibility of overdose arising from heroin cut with these synthetic opioids, be able to recognise possible symptoms of overdose and respond appropriately.

FENTANYLS

The fentanyls are a group of synthetic opioids; some have legitimate uses while others are illicit drugs. Fentanyl is about 100 times more potent than morphine and is a licensed medicine used to treat severe and terminal pain. Carfentanyl is 4,000-10,000 times more potent than morphine and principally used as an animal tranquilliser.

ACTIONS ADVISED

Those in contact with heroin users should advise them to:

- Be extra cautious about the sources from which they get their drugs, and about the drugs they take, maybe starting with just a quarter hit of a new supply
- Seek treatment for drug dependence if not already in treatment

Those with heroin users when and after they use drugs (including other heroin users) should:

- Watch carefully for the signs of an overdose, e.g. loss of consciousness, shallow or absent breathing, 'snoring', and/or blue lips or fingertips
- Be prepared to call immediately for an ambulance if someone overdoses and administer naloxone if available and competent to do so

SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY TO OPEN IN DUBLIN

Big News! The 7th February was a really important date for people who use drugs and UISCE sent the press release below out to everyone to let people know what we thought:

“We welcome the announcement from Minister Simon Harris today, announcing the government’s approval of the establishment of medically supervised injecting centres in Ireland.

We also welcome both Minister Harris’ and the Minister responsible for the National Drugs Strategy Catherine Byrne’s understanding of the issues and their belief in a health-led and person-centred approach to supporting people who use drugs in Ireland.

The purpose of this initiative is to save lives. More people die from drug overdose than from road accidents and most of these deaths are down to people not having access to proper medication and supports, which these centres will facilitate.

This pilot scheme, which will be located in Dublin city centre, is part of a package of measures, that the HSE, the Gardaí, with many other stakeholders including ourselves have been tirelessly working on. It’s the first step, but an important one. There is no location sourced or agency assigned to run the project, as this will have to go through a thorough consultation and tendering process.

UISCE are proud to be part of the Advisory Group set up to support the enactment of the legislation and make recommendations on programme design and governance structures. Our role in this process is to represent the end users to make sure that this facility is fit for purpose in practical terms.

Through our volunteer peer led programme we engage with people who are injecting on the streets, to make sure that their voices are heard and that the facility meets their purposes, which in turn means that the facility will have the greatest impact.”



SIF REPORT

So now you know the law was changed to allow a pilot medically supervised injecting facility to open in Dublin. This means, that a facility will open for a short amount of time (6 to 12 months) to see if it will help to reduce the number of drug related deaths and drug litter in the city centre.

We think it is important that people who will use the facility are included in working out how it will be run and are part of the Advisory Group set up to put this legislation into action.

Our role in this process is making sure the voices, opinions and concerns of people who use drugs, especially people who inject drugs (PWID) are fully represented so the facility meets their needs.

To get to know your opinion and what was important in a facility, we did what we do best, went out and asked you! We did this through our peer led OUTREACH.

UISCE volunteers (who are people who use drugs), designed a set of questions to work out what is important to the community in a medically supervised Injecting Facility. To everyone reading this that helped us out with their time and honesty in the responses here are a couple of the questions you asked and this is how we made your voice heard in the design;

Where on your body do you normally inject?

Which locations do you normally go to to inject?

How far would you travel to go to a Safe Injecting Facility?

What times of day do you use?



Where on your body do you normally inject?

Which locations do you normally go to to inject?

How far would you travel to go to a Safe Injecting Facility?

What times of day do you use?



The Information you gave us about where on your body you normally inject means that the space will be designed for your comfort and have all the equipment you need.

The Information you gave us about what was important in a location is also really important. You told us that lighting, privacy and having a trained professional nearby in case you need it was important and all of those things are on the top of the list for the development of the facility.

We even worked with people who inject in different places like arms, groin and legs, along with our designer to come up with a comfortable, dignified layout of an injecting space. Other information you gave us helps the people making decisions to know things like; how far you would they travel and the times of the day you would like the facility to be open.

As you know, we always make sure that we speak to a big group of people so we can make sure we have heard from as much of the community as we can.

For this, we spoke to 93 people who are currently injecting in public places. The people were male and female, aged between 19 and 53, homeless and not homeless, members of the Traveler community, Irish and non-Irish Nationals.

Despite all the differences in the group of people – age, gender, living situation, etc., most of you agreed that to feel safe while injecting you want trained professionals nearby. Other things like having privacy, good lighting or shelter were also very important so thanks to your help – we have made sure that this is what you can expect from a Supervised Injecting Facility.

HEP C WORKSHOP

Nicole Reddin, a first year student studying Community & Youth Work in Maynooth University recently did a placement in UISCE. Nicole had experience working in a youth project and brought a great energy with her. She said "I chose this degree as I have always had a great interest in youth work and helping people and am doing my work placement with UISCE for fourteen weeks. I really enjoy working with UISCE because I love what we do here. I love that we are a voice for people who use drugs and the work we do is so influential."

She attended a seminar on Hep-C run by Chrysalis. We know that you have a lot of knowledge about Hep-C, but may not have experienced going to a seminar so Nicole has written step by step what happened on the afternoon she attended:

As part of my work placement with UISCE, I got the opportunity to attend a workshop on Hepatitis

C in February at the Aisling Hotel. It was held by Chrysalis and there was people from many different organisations and services. The first lot of information was presented by the women from the SAOL Project who have an amazing training program for people with Hep-C.

We began the workshop by signing in and we were each given a number between 1 & 3. There was tea, coffee, and snacks available for everyone waiting to go inside. Everyone started to chat and get to know each other and their organisations during this part.

Firstly we worked in small groups directed by people from Chrysalis and the second half of the workshop was reserved for more in depth presentations.

When we went inside the conference room we all separated into three groups (from the number we were given on the way in) and sat in a circle facing one another. We had two people

from Chrysalis in each group; one to facilitate and one to take notes. Our facilitator, Dave, then proceeded to ask us questions on Hep C such as, What is it? What are the symptoms, treatments and side effects, etc. It was during this part when everyone became more comfortable as we got to know each other more and realised that this was a safe place to voice our questions and opinions without being judged, so we all started to engage more with the workshop.

In my group, Dave asked us each of the questions one by one and after each one it was an open field and we were given the opportunity to give our answers and opinions which I found very interesting and it was a good way of learning. It was interesting to hear the opinions of everyone in my group and we all were very different people from different places and backgrounds. We all engaged in conversation about Hep C and I found out a lot of information that I didn't know before. I thought this part of the workshop to be

“As part of my work placement with UISCE, I got the opportunity to attend a workshop on Hepatitis C in February at the Aisling Hotel. It was held by Chrysalis and there was people from many different organisations and services There. The first lot of information was presented by the women from the SAOL Project who have an amazing training program for people with Hep-C.”

the most informative as I find working in groups and informal education a very good way of obtaining information so this was good choice by Chrysalis.

After a small break we went back into the conference room for the second part of the workshop to listen to a presentation from people from Chrysalis and each person had a different topic to do with Hep C to talk about. Each person got up and spoke clearly and informatively. All the other people there were very interested and engaged with questions and answers. The information given to us by these people was very

well structured and not boring. I thought it very informative as it helped me develop a greater understanding into Hep C.

Each person that spoke gave a strong, interesting and detailed presentation on topics such as what it is, treatments and self-care.

Overall, I found this workshop to be very good. As a student, I found the information interesting and found myself learning a lot more than I thought I would. I learned a lot of valuable information that I can use in my work with UISCE and also my studies. I learned about how

Hep C is contracted and how to avoid catching it yourself. I learned a lot about how to treat hep c and how to go about obtaining help and treatment for it. I also found out a few things I didn't like; for example; how a person must be at a certain level of hep c before they can get treatment. I don't think this is fair and everyone should have the right to treatment.

Keep Reading to hear about my other experiences on the placement (that included getting a train fine!)



CHRYSALIS

THIS WAS THE DAY...

During the course of this week I spoke to a service user who had been coming to Chrysalis for the past 2 years. This is his story...

I had walked by Chrysalis loads of times and heard about it from me mates. One day I went in. I just didn't want to do this anymore. I wasn't thinking of getting clean. I self-referred myself to Chrysalis because I was just fed up with the way life was going. I was heavily into the life of addiction; there is no drug I haven't tried. My main drugs of choice at the time were methadone, Valium, street tablets (benzos) and weed. I came to Chrysalis for one to one counselling and over time engaged

with other services – key-working, MERG (Monday Evening Recovery Group) and the social night. Over time I developed a sense of hope. There's a good spirit in the place.

Although becoming drug free was at the back of my mind listening to people's stories and watching people become clean, motivated me to look at myself. Chrysalis helped me organise a detox with my doctor to come off the tablets. After 9 months of linking in with Chrysalis I went into Cuan Dara.

Cuan Dara might of gotten me clean but if it wasn't for Chrysalis not giving up on me I don't know where I'd be now. I still struggle as a lot of us do but I know if I have any setbacks I can get on



the phone and know that there is always someone at the end of the line to help. This is the place where shit gets done.

BY HOPE NOLAN

As I walked up the steps to Chrysalis for the start of a month's placement for college, I felt fear of the unknown and hope that I would come away with something of value. I wondered if this was how clients coming here felt while walking up those 10 steps. Chrysalis is a warm friendly clam place where clients and staff are treated with respect. Their ethos is one of support, non-judgmental and what is said here stays here.

Chrysalis operates a social night for clients which is peer led and has been shown to be very successful

in that it gives clients a space to just chill and to mix with others in their situation. You can be drug free or not, all are welcome. I found this night to be of great benefit as this is an opportunity for clients to become involved in the service and offer support to each other in a social environment rather than in a more formal setting such as AA and NA.

A client survey is conducted twice a year in order to get feedback to ensure services are still relevant to clients and this is fed back into service provision in order to improve outcomes. This is a real plus in my opinion as a lot of services don't do this but client opinion is valued very highly here and in turn this can only increase a person's self-worth and self-esteem.

WHAT IF

Take away the drugs, see the person inside

They are just like you, me and everyone else in the countryside

What if they had jobs and a loving home life for instance

What if the drug was not their whole life's existence.

What would you do if you walked in their shoes

Would you survive? Would you have a clue

On how to survive on cunning and wit

While all the while drowning, in a bottomless pit.



UISCE GOES TO CARLOW

During my work placement with UISCE we had the opportunity to attend a meeting in Carlow to introduce ourselves and give and let people in the local drugs and alcohol services know what we do. This was my first proper experience with an official meeting and, as part of our presentation, I was asked to talk about my experience with Outreach. It is fair to say I was very nervous about this, as I have always struggled with public speaking, but I powered through and presented my experience. This is, in summary, what I said:

“When I first came to UISCE and was informed of the outreach work that I would have to do. I will admit I was pretty anxious as I wasn’t sure what to expect and I didn’t know what kind of responses and welcomes I was going to receive from the people we met. Up to now in my life, I had little to no experience drugs or with people who use drugs, so I was afraid that people wouldn’t

I have found that I really enjoy outreach now. I’m still new to it but I can say that doing outreach allowed me to meet some really inspiring people.

be want to talk to me or wouldn’t take me seriously and want to engage in conversation with me.

I am aware I had some prejudice and preconceptions about the community. After working with UISCE for a while, I realised the importance of treating people with equality and respect. If you do, you will have the opportunity to learn from their experiences and getting to know their stories. I’d like to thank all of the people that I met on outreach and in the office. I now have a whole group of new friends and feel really honoured that you welcomed me more warmly than I ever could have expected. I also want to

acknowledge the importance of this side of the work that UISCE does, they don’t just walk around getting information, they use it to show how powerful you are as a community and to change the way people think.

I have found that I really enjoy outreach now. I’m still new to it but I can say that doing outreach allowed me to meet some really inspiring people.”

Speaking about this in front of so many people was easier than I thought. I wanted to get my point across in an understandable and brief way and I really think that I handled myself well. When speaking for these people I wanted to make sure to highlight what UISCE does. I wanted to give them an insight into what the volunteering part of UISCE was all about and how beneficial it really is. I was honoured to take part in this presentation and give my own personal experience on working at UISCE.

BY NICOLE REDDIN



DCR IN PARIS

If you're reading this you've probably seen the cartoons - I came to UISCE at the end of last summer and that's when I started to do my first issue of Brass Munkie. I was a little nervous as I really wanted to keep the stories of Gizmo and Spike going and hoped I would pick up where Tommy left off- but most of all keep the characters the same I just added colour and made them older. I really hope I did them justice.

UISCE is a great organization and is doing its best to improve the services that work with people who use drugs. We are working with others to get the new Medically Supervised Injecting Facility up and running, but in a way that will meet the needs of people who use drugs. The number one priority is to save lives. It will help to stop drug litter on the street and to stop people having to use in public.

At the end of February I had the opportunity to go to Paris with Hannah, UISCE's coordinator, to visit another project similar to UISCE that is a voice for people who use drugs in France called ASUD. We were welcomed by Fabrice Olivet, who runs this service and he fed us with all the information about the drug scene in Paris.



I have to say I was surprised to be told that most of the people used morphine and not heroin. It remind me of Dublin in the 90's where most people used mapps (Morphine tablets) which we used to suck the wax covering of and then crush on a spoon, cook up with water and then shoot up. He brought us to an injection facility in

Paris where we spoke to the staff that ran the place.

The facility was set up next door to a hospital, there was a massive train station down the road where trains went to all different places all around Europe. There was also a school nearby and there were also residents living all around the facility.



The place was ran really well- they had a camera at the door and one that could see the street outside. One security man on the door. They had a good interaction with the people who live around the project and people that use the service had an understanding not to hang around and leave the area



after they use. I think it ran so well because the people that used it really respected that they had a responsibility to make sure it could stay open by sticking to the rules – to be fair, there weren't that many though!

So when one opens in Dublin, I do hope it will be a success. It will save lives and help to stop the spread

of STI in the drug use community. In some cases it could be the first place a new person using (injecting) drugs comes to and with interaction with that person they could be told what options are open to them around their drug use.

BY JOHN DEVOY

These Are



YOU NEED
A REASON TO
HOLD ME



YOU CAN'T MAKE ME
DO ANYTHING I DON'T
WANT TO



MY LIFE IS
WORTH THE SAME AS
YOURS



If you want help to
rights, call UISCH

My Rights

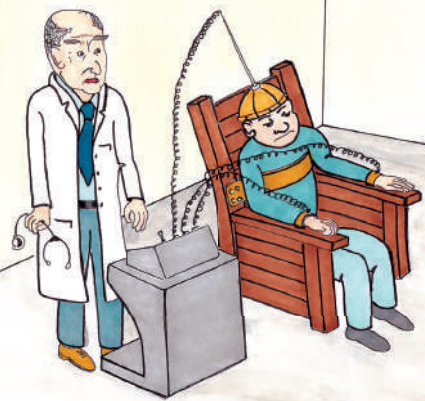
D HANG OUT WITH
D FORM A GROUP TO
NT ME

THE GARDAÍ SHOULD
GUARD ME



UISCE

YOU CAN'T BE CRUEL
TO ME

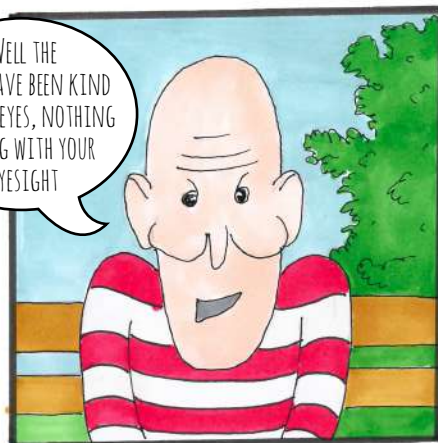
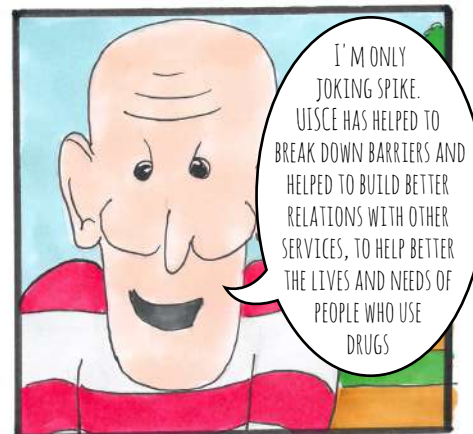
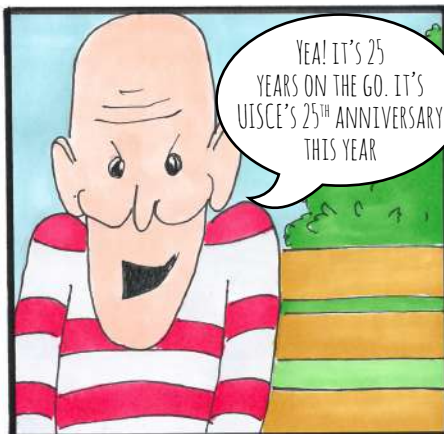


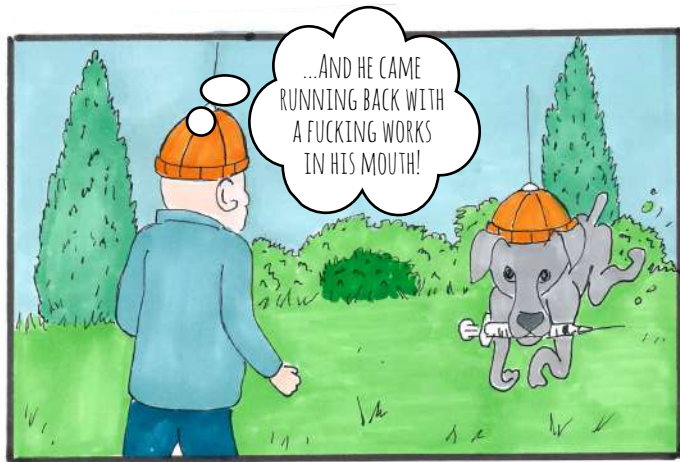
VEN THE DOG
N THE STREET
KNOWS

IT'S MY BODY AND
I'LL CHOOSE WHAT I DO
WITH IT

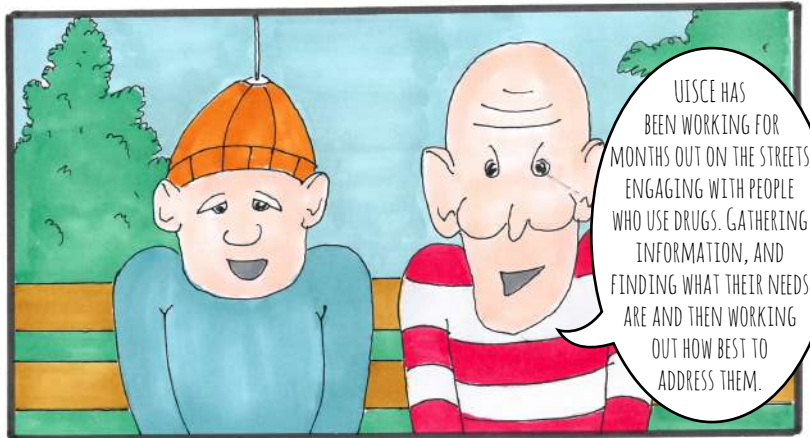


o stand up for your
E at **01 873 3799**





...AND HE CAME
RUNNING BACK WITH
A FUCKING WORKS
IN HIS MOUTH!



UISCE HAS
BEEN WORKING FOR
MONTHS OUT ON THE STREETS
ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE
WHO USE DRUGS. GATHERING
INFORMATION, AND
FINDING WHAT THEIR NEEDS
ARE AND THEN WORKING
OUT HOW BEST TO
ADDRESS THEM.



WHO WOULD
LISTEN TO THE LIKES
OF US?

WELL, UISCE HAS
BEEN WORKING WITH
OTHER AGENCIES, LIKE THE
MINISTER FOR DRUGS, GARDA,
HSE AND MANY MORE TO DEAL
WITH THE ISSUES



HAS ANYTHING REAL
COME OUT OF THESE
MEETINGS BESIDES A BELLY
FULL OF TEA AND
BISCUITS?



WHAT CLOUD HAVE YOU BEEN UNDER?
HAVE YOU NOT BEEN LISTENING TO THE NEWS?
THERE'S GOING TO BE A SUPERVISED
INJECTION FACILITY SO PEOPLE WHO USE
DRUGS CAN INJECT SAFELY



THAT'S GREAT. THERE
WILL BE LESS BANGING UP
ON THE STREETS, PLUS IT
WILL SAVE LIVES

YEA, AND LESS DRUG
LITTER AROUND



WELL IT'S THANKS
TO UISCE THAT THEY'VE
HEARD THE DRUG USERS'
VOICE. WE WON'T
HAVE TO CUT THROUGH
ALLEYS ANYMORE TO
BANG UP. NOW WE WILL
BE ABLE TO DO IT
SAFELY

IT'S TAKEN SO LONG.
BUT FEWER DISEASES
AND FEWER DEATHS.
HOORAY!

DCR IN BARCELONA



At the beginning of April, UISCE went to visit four of the nine consumption rooms that are currently available in Barcelona, Spain. To clarify, I wanted to go to see Ed Sheeran in concert and couldn't get any tickets for the Dublin show so I got them for Barcelona. When Hannah heard I was going she asked if while I was there, I could visit the consumption rooms to see what worked well (slave driver!).

By visiting these four different facilities, we saw what a huge variety of injecting facilities that Barcelona has to offer- we visited one inside an hospital, another one managed by Red Cross, one in the city centre and one that was located on the outskirts of Barcelona but had the highest attendance of them all (with 330 injections per day).

Although all of them follow similar protocols, it was interesting to see the differences in the way of working among the facilities and how they adapted to what was important to the group of people that were using each different service.

In Barcelona, Drug Consumption Rooms have been a reality since

the early 2000's so we have a lot to learn from their fifteen years experience. Being able to learn first hand from them how to deal with obstacles, difficult situations with the general community, and more, was really eye opening regarding what Dublin's first Safe Injecting Facility should look like and offer. However, we are aware of the differences between the countries and how we need to adapt all that we have learnt to Ireland's own characteristics and needs. And we also need time and experience to get to where they are!

We are really grateful that management team working on the Barcelona services were really keen to share all their knowledge and answer all the questions we had, visit the facilities and talk to the entire team (doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologist...).

UISCE has made amazing connections with different services in Barcelona thanks to this trip and we should say that everybody wanted to know more about our work; independently representing the voice of people who use drugs in Ireland!

None of the services we visited in Barcelona had the kind of engagement with the community

of people who use drugs prior to the opening of the facility and it was something everybody we talked to felt was really important!

We were also lucky enough bring back to Ireland- just for one day- the Director of one of the services we visited. Diego Aranega presented his work on a meeting with the advisory group for the development of the Safe Injecting Facility in Dublin. You can see below how happy we were to have him here!



Hi Brass Munkie fans. The folks at UISCE have asked me to introduce myself so here it goes; My name is John and I am really pleased to be doing the artwork for the mag, continuing the characters that Tommy Larkin created Gizmo, Spike, Annie Citric and "Phydo", Spikes dog.

I first met Tommy Larkin in the early 90's. When Brogan, my counselor (who many of the older guys might remember) brought me to meet him at Rialto Community Centre. I found Tommy to be very focused and know about all the issues around the drug scene. He was the kind of person that just wanted to fix all that was broken.

When I told him I was into art he was really interested in what I was doing. He also gave me some tips for me to try to let my personality come out in the art.

So when I got the opportunity to do the art work for the magazines.. Well, to say I was pleased would be an understatement, I was over the moon. I really love the characters Tommy came up with. To show the stories of what's happening around the drug scene. As an artist I hope I am doing them justice. They are on the go now for twenty-five years, so I try to make the characters a little older and wiser and added colour. Back in the day, Tommy drew in black in white, now I have introduced some colour and use up to date stories. I really hope you all like them.

I starting reading Brass Munkie back in the 90's when I was using and running a-muck. I was in and out off the Big house on the North Circular Road. I moved from Baggot

Street Clinic to go to Aisling clinic in Cherry Orchard.

I was getting fed up having to go to the clinic every day, seeing the same crap, hearing the same crap and basically being treated like you're a problem. I felt there had to be something better than this, so I decided to cut down using. After getting myself clean for some months the clinic started to give me weekly scripts. This was around 2002, 10 years after I started at the Aisling Clinic.

Going to RADE has helped me to turn my life around for the better.

Around this time, I felt I needed to find myself something to do, to get my head focused because I had a fear I would have a slip. I felt that if I wanted to succeed, I would need to get out of Ballyfermot, because I hung around with people that were active users and considered them friends. I knew that if I wanted to better myself I would have to find something outside Ballyfermot.

I found a C.E. Course called Down To Earth Theatre Group. It was in a building off New Street in Dublin 8. On the course I started learning how to act on stage and everything this art entailed. At the end of the first year, myself and others staged a small play called Mexico in the Project Art Centre.

It was the first time I performed in front of a crowd. It was a great feeling the buzz I got was even better than heroin. I was hooked.

Not long after that in 2003, the project director Mick Egan broke away from "Down to Earth" and started the Project now know as RADE (Recovery through Art, Drama and Education) back in 2003. RADE has grown to be an award winning project. It is a place of education and learning and has won many awards over the years and participants have gone on to perform on stage and in film. Over the years, I have been part of RADE as a participant and later got to teach art and Tai Chi classes there. RADE has been my saving grace.

Going to RADE has helped me to turn my life around for the better.

I have been in a number of plays and films with them and have even played a small part in Love Hate with other participants from RADE and what an experience it was! I have done college courses in art and have got distinctions in my exams. I have gone on to teach art in other projects. I have exhibited art in many of RADE's exhibitions around Dublin and Wicklow. I had a successful exhibition of my art in Ballyfermot Library. The work was of 1916's heroes and street scenes of the 1916 rising. This year RADE is shooting another film and I got to get my in it, they are going to show the film around May so look out for that.

RADE is looking for people to join the course so if you are interested give them a call, it could be just the thing you need to get yourself on the right road.

BY JOHN DEVROY



RADE is currently recruiting for it's Community Employment Programme

IF YOU ARE

- interested in receiving support around your drug recovery and education
- at a loose end Monday to friday from 10am - 2pm
- On a social welfare payment
- interested in learning more about art, drama, creative writing, music, dance and film



THEN LOOK NO FURTHER!

- No previous experience of art/dance/film or drama necessary
- One to one key-working offered
- Access to a counsellor
- Advice/support around health/addiction/housing
- Access to training of your choice 19½ hours per week
- Relapse prevention workshops
- Art/drama/creative writing/ film and dance workshops
- Educational and art related outings
- Yoga
- Acupressure

Contact Averyl at: (01) 4548733 for an assessment

Email: averyl@rade.ie

RADE (Recovery through Art Drama and Education)

www.rade.ie

BILLY'S BIT

Hey folks, I'm back and guess who got his own place! Yes that's right! Finally, they realized it would actually be cheaper to give me my own gaff rather than pay out for the hundreds of sleeping bags they've had to give me over the past 17 years!

I'm not gonna lie there's a big difference between living on your own and living around a bunch of people in hostels when you don't even know their names (let alone yours!) I mean when I first moved in I didn't have a clue what I was doing and I know you lot that have been through the same thing

know exactly what I'm talking about! You can start to feel a bit lost - I know I did!

Living on my own was so new, that I even ended up having a slip out of total boredom - but I guess that's down to me being about as strong as a roll of wet toilet paper!

Being serious, I suppose it all boils down to finding the right way to get settled and make it feel like your home. Because this is the first time I've had my own gaff, I don't really have anything to compare it to so I don't know if I'm really there or not but there is one thing I can tell ya, when you get that

first electricity bill for €205 the joy of having your own place tends to fade just that little bit!

But you know what - I shouldn't bitch, but then I suppose if I didn't bitch I wouldn't be me!

Anyway I've gotta go I've got someone coming around to show me how to use this washing machine, "are you sure the powder goes there, that's not the machine you know!"

Anyway, see ya on the flipside!

"FALLING" – BY BILLY WEEDON



*I'm falling, falling, falling as addiction pulls me down,
will I ever stop this falling, will I ever hit the ground?*

*As I keep on falling I look upon the light and as I keep
on looking I see a face I recognise,*

*" So you're gonna stop this falling, ha!
You don't have a clue, go on help me stop this falling,
tell me what to do!"*

*Well, it's up to you to take these steps,
I can only give you the tools, because this face that you
have looked upon, this face belongs to you.*

– B Weedon, 2017

R.I.P. – EOGHAN O'NEIL

It is a sad time for all at Rade. Eoghan O'Neil, the director of Rade passed away on the evening of the 16th of March. Eoghan was an artist, wood carver, sculptor but most of all he was a great teacher and a friend.

I am proud to have known Eoghan and I have worked on many projects with him over the years. He has included some of my drawing and paintings in group exhibitions that he was involved in. This exhibitions were shown around Dublin and Wicklow.

Eoghan was a very knowledgeable man. He was very interested in

history and Irish culture. Eoghan came from Belfast and there were times when I would laugh when he'd let a Dub know the answer to a historical question.

Yep, Eoghan the northerner, yet he could let any dub know a little about their Dublin history. With all that aside, Eoghan was a gentleman and it was a pleasure to have known him.

So Eoghan, if the Celtic gods allow you to listen, it's been a pleasure, thanks for sharing your knowledge and everything else you have done for me.

REST IN PEACE.

R.I.P.

MARK FARRELL

Always in our hearts. Gone but not forgotten
Whose birthday is on 31st of May.
Happy birthday dad, love you and miss you loads.
Your daughters, Kirsten, Amylouise, Kayleigh, grandkids, partner (Kizzy), Kathleen.
Gone on the 10th of June 2006, feels like it was only yesterday.
Always missed.
Mark, when we look up at the stars, your shine's the brightest.
We know that the shiniest star is you.
Love you loads, miss you every minute of the day.
Love always,
Your daughters.

MARGARET DUNNE

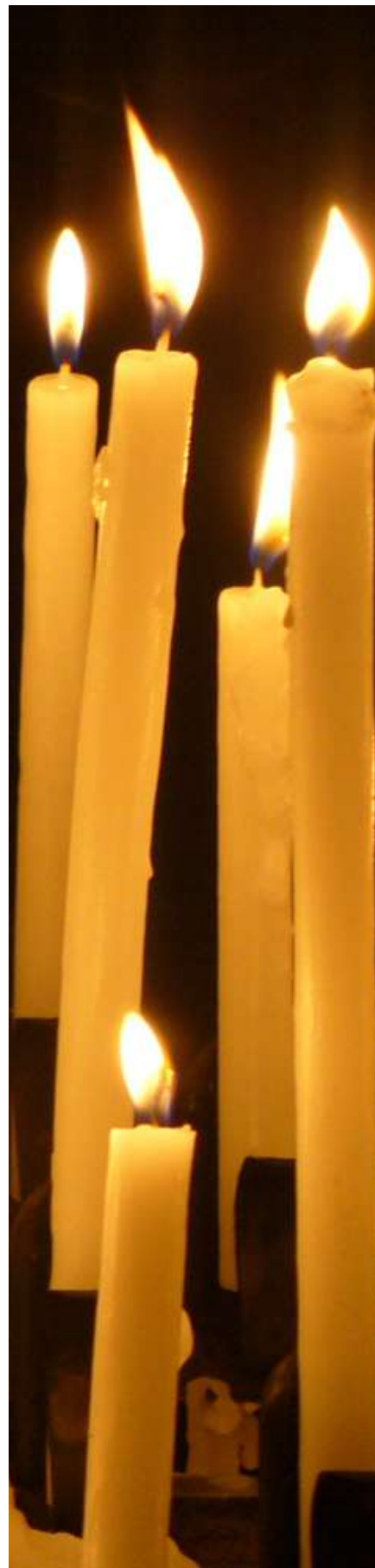
Mammy, missing you every day.
Always thinking of you.
Love you lots.
Daughter Kathleen, girls and grandkids.

PATRICK DUNNE SR.

Daddy, I miss you.
Gone but not forgotten.

PATRICK DUNNE JR

Love you brother, thinking of you.



STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH AT BAGOTS HUTTON

On Wednesday April 12th Minister Catherine Byrne TD launched UISCE's Strategic Plan for 2017 at Bagots Hutton, a really beautiful venue on Ormond Quay that let us have the event and served fantastic coffee!

UISCE's Strategic Plan for 2017 focuses on what we called the "5 P's": People, Partnerships, Policy, Potential and Principles and our main goal is ending the need for people to inject on the streets.

In the words of our own Hannah McHugh, we hope this event gave UISCE the opportunity to present its vision and direction on how, by working together, we can create a safer environment for people who use drugs and in turn a safer environment for the wider community.

We wanted to thank everybody who attended the event, specially

Mr. Gary Broderick, Minister Catherine Byrne TD, Dr. Brian Melaugh and Mr. John Devoy see the wonderful speech from the amazing artist- and UISCE member- John Devoy below, as well as some pics from the event.

Thank you all.

My name is John Devoy and I am a son, brother, husband, father and grandfather. I am also a person who uses drugs and a member of UISCE. I have maintained a drug free lifestyle with the support of OST for more than 10 years now.

I am speaking today as a person with lived experience not just of addiction but of the impact the stigma had on my life and that of my family and friends.

My use of drugs didn't destroy my marriage or leave me homeless.

In fact, I am still married to my beautiful wife Tina who has never used drugs. The biggest and most damaging impact was the stigma that is associated with addiction and the affect it had on my family.

Changing our language is the first part of breaking the stigma. We are people first and call ourselves people who use drugs. We are also part of the community of people who use drugs.

The pen is mightier than the sword and words can be powerful when used to inform, clarify, encourage, support, enlighten, and unify. On the other hand, stigmatizing words often discourage, isolate, misinform, shame, and embarrass.

We are not ex-users or addicts, we are people with lived experience of addiction. Addiction is a medical disorder and we will fight to be treated the same way any person with a medical condition is treated.



I am now at a stage in my life where through the brilliant support of the RADE programme, I want to contribute to make a positive difference to the community I have been part of for so many years.

My experience at RADE and through other courses in art has given me an opportunity to contribute to UISCE by breathing new life into the comics originally started by Tommy Larkin all those years ago.

I have kept the characters but to reflect the changing face of people who use drugs in this country they are older...though some would say they aren't any wiser!

There are elements of services that are working well in Ireland but when people who use drugs are included in a genuine way in their development evidence shows us that they are more effective.

This means that people will have a better chance of meeting their goals and services will have better outcomes.

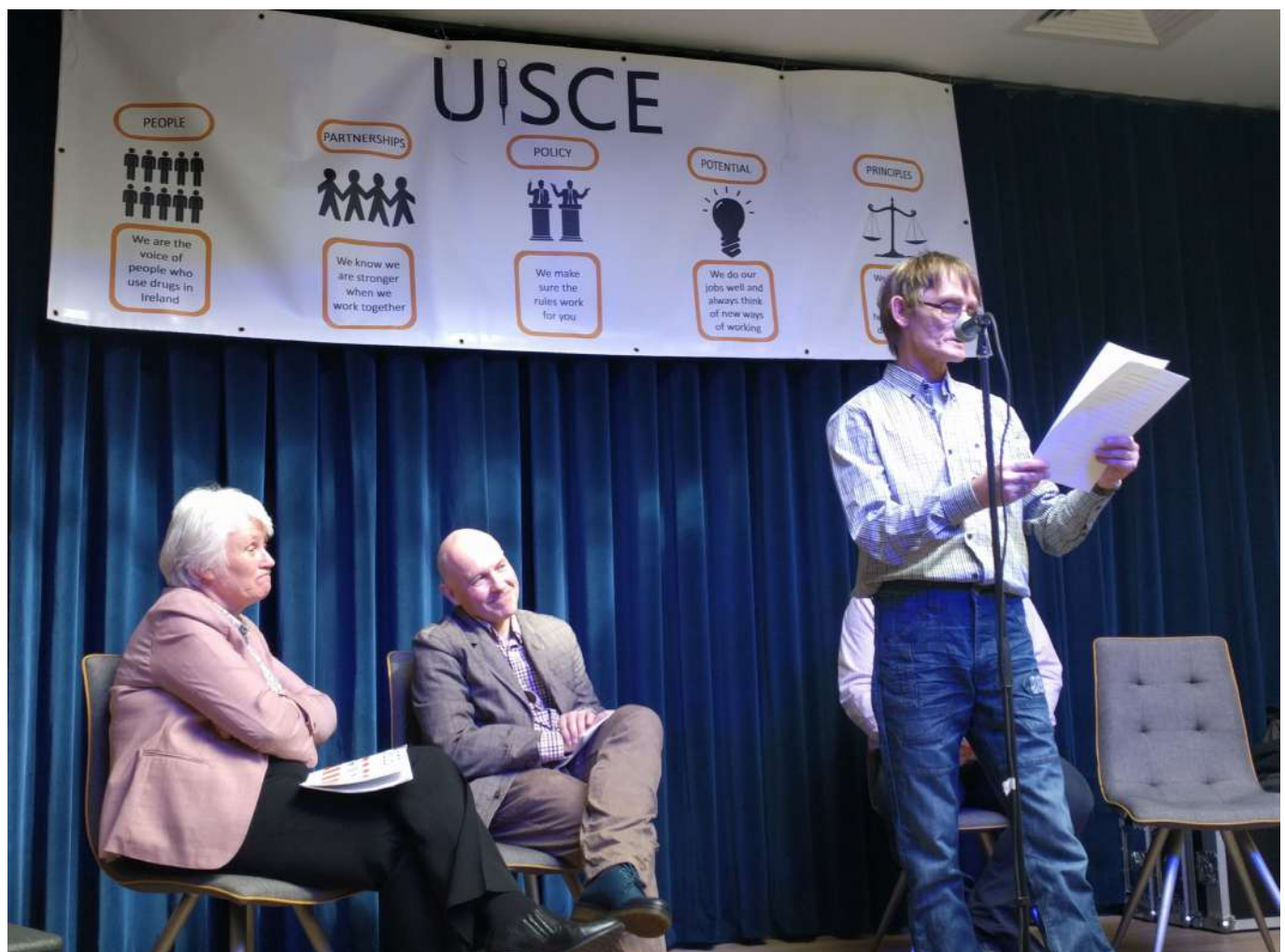
When I was a kid and dreamed about what I would be when I grew up, being addicted to heroin was never on my list. It's never on anyone's list. The interventions that exist don't work and that is why more and more people are developing addictions everyday in this country. Through UISCE we urge you to trust us as experts in ourselves and to know, from our own experiences what will truly support people to make informed choices

Trust that just like you, people who use drugs will make mistakes – keep your doors open when we do. We have the same rights and passions as you do. Ghandi said "what is the point of freedom

without the freedom to make mistakes"

I am an avid historian and a direct descendant of the great John Devoy of the rebellion. I hope that through my work in UISCE we can change the direction that our countries history is heading and honour the people that fought for our independence. In the 1916 Proclamation there was a "guarantee of religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities for all it's citizens."

Through UISCE I will keep this alive and continue the fight my ancestors started."





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2017 Strategic Plan

PEOPLE



We are the voice of people who use drugs in Ireland

PARTNERSHIPS



We know we are stronger when we work together

POLICY



We make sure the rules work for you

POTENTIAL



We do our jobs well and always think of new ways of working

PRINCIPLES



We treat all people equally and help others to do the same



**Union for Improved Services
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