

Coolmine addiction services provide value for Government funding

- **72% of Coolmine clients remain illicit drug-free two years after treatment**
- **98% of clients were not engaged in criminal activity at the 24-months follow up**
- **Client employment rose from 3% at intake to 25% after 24-months**
- **Engagement in education rose from 2% at intake to 17% after 24-months**
- **Significant improvements in all health outcomes, physical health, psychological health and quality of life**
- **23% of clients reported acute housing problems two years after treatment**
- **Coolmine's female residential facility, Ashleigh House, proved the only viable treatment option for mothers with children seeking treatment**

The first longitudinal outcomes study tracking Coolmine Therapeutic Community clients has found that seven in ten of those who commenced treatment remained illicit drug-free two years later. This included individuals who did not complete the programme and left early due to various reasons. This success rose to 85% of participants who completed and graduated from the programme

Coolmine's treatment and rehabilitation programme is a relatively lengthy programme in comparison to other treatment programmes and the study encouragingly demonstrates that 62 % of all clients whom entered Coolmine remained in the programme 6 months following intake.

Mr Alan Connolly, Chairman, said the evidence of this study clearly highlighted the value for money Coolmine Therapeutic Community delivered for those funders investing in treatment and rehabilitation

"The management, staff and volunteers provide essential care and treatment for over 1,200 clients every year. This has been possible thanks to the support from the Government through various State agencies and Departments.

"We believe that it is important that these funders can see the value of such funding. This independent evidence based research clearly shows that 72% of our clients remain drug-free two years after they commenced treatment," he said.

A total of 144 clients participated in the study ranging in ages from 18 to 50 years.

The study gathered data on treatment retention, substance use, physical health, psychological health, social functioning and criminal activity of men and women who commenced treatment at Coolmine to overcome their addiction to illicit drugs. The study also illustrates the unique personal circumstances and experiences of individuals overcoming addiction and the complex needs of those presenting for drug treatment. It also highlights the barriers presented in particular to women both entering and leaving drug treatment. For many women, Coolmine was a lifeline, allowing mothers to enter treatment with their children that otherwise would have had to go into foster care or mothers not getting any treatment at all.

Alan Connolly added that Ashleigh House, the women's residential service is the only mother and child facility in the country that allows mothers to enter treatment accompanied by their children.

More than half of the respondents (52%) reported problem use of more than one substance, although 71% reported opiates as being the primary problem drug use. Key factor in the success of the rehabilitation was the ability of those who remained drug free to find safe and secure housing, sourcing employment or a return to education.

The study found that employment rose from 3% for those at treatment intake to 25% at the 24-month follow up. Engagement in education rose from 2% at treatment intake to 17% two years later. Criminal activity among those surveyed fell from 9% at treatment intake to 2% at 24-month follow up. The report also highlights the importance of continued support in aftercare services.

“Their work highlights the need for further investment in the treatment and rehabilitation in order to make a real difference of thousands of people in all sections of our community struggling to overcome addiction,” Mr Connolly said.