



Drugs & Alcohol Ministerial Meeting, Dublin

26 January 2024

Communiqué

The British-Irish Council¹ (BIC) held a Drugs & Alcohol Ministerial Meeting today, hosted by the Government of Ireland in Dublin and Chaired by Minister Hildegard Naughton, Government Chief Whip and Minister of State with special responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy. A full list of Ministerial participants is attached.

Discussion on the recent activity of the Drugs & Alcohol Work Sector

Ministers reflected on a report on the recent activity of the work sector, covering a wide range of topics, including the approaches to reducing drug-related deaths, reducing alcohol related harms through the use of financial mechanisms, the linkages between homelessness and drug and alcohol consumption, and engagement with voluntary and community sectors and people with lived experience in the development of drug and alcohol policy and treatment services.

Ministers also considered the impact of Covid-19 in the design and delivery of drug and alcohol services, considering both immediate actions taken in the context of the pandemic and the longer-term impact on the delivery of services.

Ministers thanked officials for producing the report on the work sector activity, and agreed it demonstrated the value for all Member Administrations of participating through the Council as a forum for sharing information and experience in designing and delivering drug and alcohol policy. Ministers also agreed that the report should be published.

¹ The BIC, established under the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiation in Belfast on Good Friday 1998 is a forum for its eight Member Administrations to exchange information, discuss, consult, and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on policy areas of mutual interest.

Discussion on Forward Work Plan

In considering and approving the proposed Forward Work Plan of the work sector, Ministers agreed that focus should be on the following five themes:

- *Involvement of people with lived experience in drugs services;*
- *Drug use and drug services for people in prison;*
- *Health-led approaches for people in possession of drugs for personal use;*
- *Community action on alcohol (collaboration with the European framework on action on alcohol); and*
- *Peer reviews on topical drug and alcohol trends.*

Deliberative democracy and drugs policy

Ministers also received a presentation on the Irish Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use as a model for Deliberative Democracy and Drugs Policy by Paul Reid, Chair, Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use.

BIC Secretariat

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List of Ministerial Delegates

Government of Guernsey	
President, Committee for Health & Social Care	Deputy Al Brouard
Government of Ireland	
Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy	Hildegarde Naughton TD
Isle of Man Government	
Minister for Justice and Home Affairs	Hon Jane Poole-Wilson, MHK
Scottish Government	
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance	Shona Robison MSP
Welsh Government	
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing	Lynne Neagle MS