

## **Community Healthcare West Drug Service: Request for Quotations (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/110155>)**



### **Request for Quotations to host the post of SAOR Health Diversion Worker**

#### **Scope**

Submissions are invited from established organisations in Galway, Mayo or Roscommon to host one post for a SAOR Health Diversion Worker.

#### **SAOR Health Diversion Programme**

The Irish Government has decided to implement the SAOR Health Diversion Programme, for people aged 18 or older found in possession of drugs for personal use. Previously, those found in possession of drugs could be prosecuted under the criminal justice system and acquire criminal convictions, making it difficult for these people to find work, travel abroad and access services such as housing and education. Additionally, the stigma associated with criminal conviction made it difficult to access addiction support services. Under this new approach, when a person is found in possession of drugs for personal use the Government has agreed to implement a health diversion approach whereby:

- On the first occasion, An Garda Síochána will refer them, on a mandatory basis, to the Health Service Executive for a health screening and brief intervention;
- On the second occasion, An Garda Síochána would have discretion to issue an Adult Caution.

Under the programme, a person found in possession of drugs for personal use is diverted to the SAOR Health Diversion Worker for a health screening and brief intervention, known as SAOR (Support, Ask and Assess, Offer Assistance and Referral). This approach will not decriminalise drug use; it is a mechanism to defer people to health and social services for help and support.

#### **The steps in the Health Diversion Programme:**

**Step 1** - Gardaí identify a person in possession of drugs for personal use.

**Step 2** - Gardaí refer the person to attend a SAOR screening and brief intervention provided by the SAOR Health Diversion Worker. This could be done online so appointments can be confirmed on the spot and happen in a timely fashion (a few days).

**Step 3** - The person attends the SAOR intervention with a dedicated healthcare worker.

**Step 4** - If a person is identified as having or at risk of problematic use, they are offered appropriate treatment or support. Their attendance at a treatment or support service is voluntary.

**Step 5** - Other referrals may be identified and facilitated, such as social services or harm reduction programmes.

**Step 6** - The person's attendance at the brief intervention is confirmed to the Gardaí (with the person's consent).

#### **Benefits of the Health Diversion Programme**

The Health Diversion Programme will offer three benefits for people found with drugs for personal use:

1. The opportunity to avoid a criminal conviction;

2. The support to avoid, reduce and recover from drug-related harm;
3. Referral to appropriate treatment or other support. Criminal sanctions can stigmatise the person concerned and can have far-reaching consequences, such as difficulties gaining employment and access to services, for example, housing, travel visas etc.

The host organisation must be based in Mayo, Roscommon or Galway and will receive the support and guidance of the HSE Community Healthcare West Drugs Service and the HSE National Social Inclusion Office to source appropriate candidates for the post, establish the operational aspects of the SAOR Health Diversion Programme and manage the rollout of the programme.

The successful organisation will receive funding for the salary of the SAOR Health Diversion Worker and an administration fee.

**Queries by email only to [brendan.murphy@hse.ie](mailto:brendan.murphy@hse.ie) (<mailto:brendan.murphy@hse.ie>)**

**Submissions by email to [brendan.murphy@hse.ie](mailto:brendan.murphy@hse.ie) (<mailto:brendan.murphy@hse.ie>) by 5pm on 13th September 2024.**

**Region**

Galway, Mayo or Roscommon

**Date Entered/Updated**

12th Aug, 2024

**Expiry Date**

13th Sep, 2024

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