

## **Drugs Awareness Training for Health Action Zone neighbourhoods**

The Northern Neighbourhoods Health Action Zone (NNHAZ) in partnership with Coleraine Rural & Urban Network (CRUN) has recently held a '**Community Drugs Awareness**' residential training event for the HAZ neighbourhoods within the Northern Health and Social Services Board (NHSSB) area.

Newly appointed Drug & Alcohol Training Co-ordinator for CRUN, Rebecca Roberts, delivered this Open College Network (OCN) Level 1 accredited course. Twenty delegates from NNHAZ neighbourhoods in Bawnmore, Longlands and New Mossley in Newtownabbey; Antiville and Craigyhill in Larne, Parkview & Riverside in Castledawson; and Ballycastle attended the event.

The 'Community Drugs Awareness' course is one part of the 'Substance Misuse Training & Awareness Programme' that CRUN is delivering in the NHSSB area with funding from the Northern Drug & Alcohol Co-ordination Team (NDACT).

Speaking at the residential Colette Rogers, NNHAZ Co-ordinator, said that:

“I am delighted that so many NNHAZ neighbourhoods are represented here today. The course has provided a unique learning opportunity for participants to gain knowledge and understanding on issues relating to drugs & alcohol and has also provided information on how they can recognise and support people at risk within each of their own communities. This joint-working to deliver training in the area of ‘Community Drugs Awareness’ supports the implementation of the NNHAZ key theme of *‘promoting opportunities for education and empowerment’* for local communities, as outlined in the HAZ Strategic Plan.”

Seamus Kelly, Chairperson of Bawnmore Residents Association, said that:

“The course gave us a broad overview of the current issues relating to drugs & alcohol. We learnt about the categories and classification of drugs and were updated on current law and legal issues. We all came away with a greater knowledge and understanding of the topic and hopefully we can signpost vulnerable and at risk people within our communities to the appropriate support networks.”

Ballycastle resident, Ann Marie McAuley, commented:

“I found the training to be extremely beneficial and relevant to the work I do in the community. I hope to build on the basic knowledge I have gained from this residential by registering for level two of this course.”

Representatives from the NNHAZ neighbourhood, Parkview & Riverside in Castledawson also attended the event. The Chairman of the Lower Castledawson Community Association, Mr Terry West said:

“All of the participants have really enjoyed this residential event. As well as getting the opportunity to undertake the accredited training, the event has provided an opportunity for the HAZ neighbourhoods to network with each other to discuss progress in each of our neighbourhoods.”

To download the Mini Directory of Substance Misuse Services please visit the NDACT website at

[www.nhssb.ni.nhs.uk/partnerships/ndact.php](http://www.nhssb.ni.nhs.uk/partnerships/ndact.php)

**ENDS**

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

NNHAZ is a community led partnership initiative that aims to improve the health and social well-being of people and communities living within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area.

NNHAZ currently operates in 14 neighbourhoods within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area.

The 14 NNHAZ areas include:

- Antiville (Larne Borough Council area)
- Armoy (Moyle District Council area)
- Ballee (Ballymena Borough Council area)
- Ballycastle (Moyle District Council area)
- Ballysally (Coleraine Borough Council area)
- Bawnmore (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- Craigyhill (Larne Borough Council area)
- Glebeside (Ballymoney Borough Council area)
- Glenfield (Carrickfergus Borough Council area)
- Longlands (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- New Mossley (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- Parkview & Riverside (Magherafelt District Council area)
- Rathen, Greenvale & Sullenboy (Cookstown Borough Council area)
- Rathenraw (Antrim Borough Council area)