

NOTES ON VISIT TO OPEN MEETING OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

2nd June 2004

In attendance: Deputy J. Dorey, Deputy M. Dubras, Mike Haden

These notes were put together after the meeting to try to summarise the main points that were raised. It was not appropriate to take notes during the meeting itself.

FA members spoke about the importance of Step One in the Twelve Step programme common to AA, Al-Anon, NA and FA - that is, recognising their powerlessness: they can't force change on the addict; they have to let go responsibility for them.

In the open part of the meeting FA members were asked to identify improvements they would like to see in provision for addicts -

- More detox beds available to enable rapid response when addicts are ready to make a change in their life - currently there appears commonly to be a three week waiting time. Home detox does not appear to work as there are too many temptations - considered to be a waste of resources
- More public awareness of treatment/support options available in the Island - parents reported on not knowing where to turn to for help. ADS appeared to give little support.
- Greater awareness among GPs of the treatment options for addicts - it appears to be something of a lottery to find a GP knowledgeable and willing to help addicts
- Better co-ordination and communication between the various agencies contributing to support for addicts.
- More financial support to rehabilitation units such as Silkworth - not everyone has the ability to pay for the cost of keeping someone there for the 14 week programme. Silkworth has to scrape together resources to support those unable to contribute.
- Better use of current resources - cost of custodial sentences is huge compared to the cost of rehabilitation
- Need for half-way house for those coming out of prison to enable former inmates to stay clean and provide support in finding jobs
- Allow NA members to hold meetings in prison
- Change of attitude among the public towards addiction - recognition that it is an illness. Many people may use drugs without permanent harm but 2 out of 10 people are likely to become addicted and have chaotic consequences.
- Importance of positive examples provided by recovered addicts who have changed their lives