

Programme Evaluation Report

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Programme Title	Soilse Addiction Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Vocational Guidance Programme		
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Timeframe covered by Evaluation	From (mm/yyyy) September 2006	To (mm/yyyy) September 2007	

Gerry Mc Aleenan

3/10/2007

Manager / Principal / Director

Date

Bernadette Sproule

3/10/2007

External Evaluator

Date

Programme Summary

The Soilse Programme

Soilse is the Health Service Executive's (Northern Sector) Addiction Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Vocational Guidance Service. Employing an adult education methodology, Soilse seeks to address the personal, social, educational and vocational needs of participants, people at various stages of recovery from drug addiction who typically have experienced significant marginalisation, disadvantage and disempowerment.

Aims and objectives of the Soilse programme:

Aims

- To provide a holistic needs based addiction rehabilitation service.
- To break the spiral of dependency and social isolation, boredom and peer pressure that accentuate the drug spiral.
- To help former drug users achieve independence and self-direction through personal development programmes.

Objectives

- To introduce people to recovery from addiction.
- To broaden personal horizons.
- To create new peer networks and lifestyles.
- To provide vocational guidance
- To open avenues to ongoing learning, training, and education.

As a FETAC registered centre Soilse participant-learners have an opportunity to achieve a major FETAC level 3 award or minor FETAC awards in a range of level 3 and level 4 modules:

Level 3: Communications, Maths, Computer Literacy, Art and Design, Craft, Personal and Interpersonal Skills, Personal Effectiveness, Office Procedures, Drama, Preparation for Work.

Level 4: Communications, Personal effectiveness, Painting, Drawing, Woodcraft, Information Technology

Programme Statistics

No. Learners who started in period:	Between August 2006-August 2007 98 participant-learners continued in existing full time programmes or started new full time programmes in Soilse.
No. Learners who achieved an award in period:	Of the 98 participant-learners who attended Soilse during this period: 11 received a Major FETAC Level 3 Award 25 received a Minor FETAC Award (between 1-6 modules at Levels 3&4) 39 completed or are compiling portfolios to be presented for assessment in Autumn 2007

Progression of Learners in period:	<p>Of the 98 participant-learners who commenced Soilse during this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 Still on programme 16 Dropped out 9 Asked to leave 19 PLC course 8 FAS/CERT 12 Further Education/Training/BTEI 3 Third Level 3 CE 3 FT Employment

Evaluation Methodology

The information sought through our programme self-evaluation concerned:

- The relevance of the original aims and objectives of Soilse's Addiction Rehabilitation programme to current participants-learners.
- The value of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process to learners participating in Soilse's Rehabilitation Programme
- The quality of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process pursued in Soilse
- The extent to which procedures documented in Soilse's FETAC QA manual are practicable.

The criteria used to measure success in these three areas were:

- those outlined in the evaluation checklists and report templates provided by FETAC
- programme retention rates
- award achievement rates
- participant-learner progression routes

The programme self-evaluation was conducted using a broad based approach and an inclusive, adult education methodology. Using the self-evaluation checklist provided by FETAC and Soilse's own programme evaluation templates, the views of participants-learners (past and present) were included through group evaluations, individual reviews and review questionnaires. Those of Soilse staff were included through dedicated meetings, staff reviews and review questionnaires. Those of Soilse stakeholders were included through programme development meetings (VEC, HSE, BTEI). External evaluator involvement commenced following the initial programme self-evaluation conducted by Soilse's QA team. A meeting was then held with the external evaluator to discuss the compilation of a draft report based on the findings of the programme self-evaluation and to agree time frames for the external evaluation

process. A review of the draft report and the findings of the self-evaluation was then conducted by the external evaluator and Soilse's FETAC Coordinator. Reasons for the grades assigned in each area of the programme self-evaluation were discussed and, as requested by the external evaluator, sample evidence in the form of documents, resources, locations and descriptions were provided. Some grades were adjusted in the course of this process and recommendations for development were made and documented.

Executive Summary

Grading Scale:

- 3 = Strength There is plentiful evidence to indicate that achievement in this area is above average. This is an area where practice should be disseminated elsewhere.
- 2 = Acceptable There is evidence that achievement in this area meets expectations. With further development, this could become an area of strength
- 1 = For Improvement There is little or no evidence that achievement in this area meets what is expected. Improvement is needed.

Policy Area	Average Grade
Communications	2.75
Equality	2.50
Staff Recruitment and Development	2.60
Access, Transfer and Progression	2.75
Programme Development, Delivery and Review	2.80
Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners	2.80
Protection for Learners	N/A
Sub Contracting / Procuring Programme Delivery	N/A

Strengths

- Assessment and identification of participant-learner needs
- Identification of gaps/weaknesses in service provision
- Programme development and related planning
- Learner and staff communication systems and feedback mechanisms
- Adult education methodology and learning techniques
- Integrated programme evaluation systems
- Participant-learner care planning, education planning, and vocational guidance
- Soilse Code of Practice

Areas for Improvement

- Skills base of sessional facilitators
- Back up planning
- Participant-learner induction documents
- Document management systems
- Childminding support for programme applicants and participants with children
- Soilse website
- Equality training
- Health and Safety measures

Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the evaluation process are:

- To devise and resource a recruitment and training plan to address sessional facilitator skill deficits in the areas of FETAC assessment and adult education.
- To further develop contingency/ back-up arrangements to minimise programme interruption due to staff absence. This will involve recruiting a facilitator panel in advance of vacancies arising, securing agreement on locum cover arrangements with funding providers, securing a funding line to support short notice interventions, revising and revamping our speaker panel, and making greater use of educational technology and multimedia resources than at present.
- To compile a learner handbook detailing all aspects of the Soilse programme
- To compile a statement for inclusion in Soilse's administration systems handbook detailing how and where reports, evaluations, meeting agendas and minutes etc. are documented and stored.
- To provide a half-time follow on programme to sustain participant learner progress.
- To continue advocating with stakeholders about adequate funding for childminding support for participant-learners.
- To conclude revision of Soilse website and forward to HSE for inclusion as link.
- To ensure all staff receive equality training and updating.
- Conduct a health and safety audit following our upcoming move to new premises.

Detailed Findings

Programme Design and Content

Strengths

- Soilse Code of Practice
- Soilse programme continuum
- Clear service specific access criteria (recent changes are proving effective)
- Learner-Participant needs assessment

- Holistic six strand needs based programme
- Individual care planning and education plans
- Integrated programme review and evaluation systems
- Satisfactory retention rate
- Satisfactory award achievement rates
- Programme adaptation re learner needs
- Vocational Guidance and Educational Development supports

Areas for Improvement

- Participant-learner induction documents
- Repetition of material within different sessions and/or at different stages of the Soilse programme continuum
- Participant-learner transfer and transition planning.
- Access to Dept. of Education examination results records

Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the evaluation process are:

- To devise a participant-learner handbook outlining all aspects of the Soilse programme. The handbook will draw together a number of the documents participant-learners receive at present and will also include information which to date has not been provided in documented form.
- To revise module content where repetition is occurring and to maximise the use of cross module material for integrated learning and assessment purposes. The recent recruitment of a full time literacy development worker has already brought about improvements in this area. Further improvement should occur by increasing the frequency of sessional/FETAC facilitator meetings and the opportunity to discuss module content. New facilitator attendance at FETAC assessment training should also contribute to improvements.
- For RPL purposes and to improve participant-learners opportunity to combine prior and present learning, continue to advocate for direct access to Dept of Education examination results records and/or to establish a funding mechanism re cost of retrieving examination results.
- To conclude discussion and write up plan for a half-time follow on programme for inclusion in Soilse's BTEI application 2008. The aims of this programme are as follows:
 - To sustain participant learning and educational progress made in Soilse
 - To prepare participant-learners waiting on/planning to move on to further educational and training options for the real demands/ challenges they will encounter.
 - To bridge the time gap between concluding Soilse's full time programme and commencing further education and training courses.
 - To enable people to maintain eligibility for financial entitlements for further education and training.
 - To contribute to relapse prevention by the provision of a structured intervention.

Programme Delivery

Strengths

- Rationale for adult education methodology and techniques outlined in Soilse's Code of Practice
- Programme adaptations to participant-learner needs/profiles
- Participant-learner progress reviews
- Learner evaluation mechanisms
- Use of resources
- Group led, peer learning approaches
- Opportunities for self directed learning
- Regular programme reviews

Areas for Improvement

- Staff training in adult education, addiction rehabilitation, FETAC assessment
- Specific learning difficulties training
- Back up planning
- Participant-learner induction
- Learning environment
- Over reliance on written work in some sessions
- Greater use of technology
- FETAC/Facilitators meetings

Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the evaluation process are:

- To continue developing and implementing integrated literacy interventions
- To establish a panel of tutors/facilitators in advance of vacancies arising
- To review recruitment, induction and training of sessional staff to ensure their capacity to employ adult education techniques and their familiarity with best practice in FETAC assessment. To this end:
 - To resource and deliver a Soilse specific adult education induction training programme for sessional facilitators.
 - To compile and provide sessional facilitators with accompanying Soilse specific adult education training pack.
 - To discuss with FETAC the need for more frequent and more substantial FETAC assessment training
 - To increase frequency and improve programme delivery staff attendance at FETAC/facilitators meetings

Assessment of Learning

Strengths

- Administration of FETAC assessment and learner registration systems
- Pursuit of adult education assessment strategies suited to learner needs and interests
- RPL systems
- Learner accommodation procedures

Areas for Improvement

- Adult education and FETAC assessment training for new/inexperienced staff
- Reduction of paper based evidence in some modules
- Cross moderation practice
- Time frames for assessment (recent changes in length of programme have led to improvements)
- Use of educational technology and multimedia resources
- FETAC external examiner feedback
- Range and number of FETAC accredited options available to participant-learners

Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the evaluation process are:

- To discuss with FETAC our view on the need for more frequent and more substantial assessment training provision and to ensure all programme delivery staff involved in the assessment of learning in Soilse receive adequate training and induction in appropriate assessment strategies.
- To continue tailoring assessment levels to learner ability and learning time frames.
- To review areas of learning not accredited at present with a view to increasing accreditation options available to learners, in particular, Soilse's social analysis, recovery education and care planning modules/interventions. If a correspondence cannot be established between the learning content of these aspects of the programme and existing FETAC module descriptors, begin process of devising locally developed modules for FETAC approval.
- Soilse values external examiner site visits and feedback. We recommend that the present system continue and that even more substantial feedback reports be provided to our centre by the external examiner.

Associated Services and Resourcing

Strengths

- Advocacy practice with funding providers
- Advocacy practice with referral and follow on services/agencies
- Service specific learner resources/supports (care planning, vocational guidance, literacy, educational development)

- Facilities and resource development
- Materials budget

Areas for Improvement

- Facilities
- IT resources for staff
- Health and Safety
- Contingency/back up planning budget/resources
- Childminding support
- Equality training
- Specific learning difficulties training

Recommendations

- To use upcoming move to new premises as an opportunity to make significant improvements in the learning environment.
- Following the move to new premises it is recommended that resource audits focused on identifying improvements and deficits in the areas of Health & Safety, and Materials and Equipment be undertaken and a new improvement plan drawn up.
- To ensure all staff receive equality training and updating.
- To continue advocating with stakeholders about adequate funding for childminding supports for participant-learners. To review and document existing provision for inclusion in Soilse's Code of Practice.
- Continue to advocate with VEC about need for relevant staff to participate in SLD (specific learning difficulty) training.

Attainment of Programme Objectives

Conclusions:

This evaluation process has established that the clearly defined original aims and objectives of Soilse's addiction rehabilitation programme (see pg 2) are relevant to current service users. This is borne out by programme application, participation and retention rates, by the personal, social and educational gains made by participant-learners during their time on the programme, and by the progression routes to further education, training and employment options being pursued on conclusion of the programme. In light of developments in the addiction treatment and rehabilitation field, both within and external to Soilse, and the substantial resources invested in supporting participant-learners sustain progress made on the programme, it is recommended that a new objective describing this post-Soilse intervention be defined and agreed.

Concerns about the impact of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process on programme balance, learner experience, adult education practice and indirectly on programme attraction and retention rates were raised in the course of this evaluation.

The following conclusions and recommendations regarding the attainment of programme objectives were made:

The opportunity to pursue FETAC assessment and accreditation for learning accrued in Soilse is of value to participant-learners for the following reasons:

- Positive impact on esteem and confidence levels, particularly for those with no prior qualifications
- Development of transferable skills which support sustainable progression to further education, training and employment options.
- Recognised award which can be used in CV's, college applications etc.

The quality of the FETAC assessment and accreditation process in Soilse is generally of a high standard with room for improvement in a number of areas.

- Programme developments since 2005 have resulted in incremental improvements in the integrity and quality of the Soilse programme. These developments include changes in programme entry criteria (corresponding to readiness for programme engagement), changes in participant-learner induction procedures, a reduction in the emphasis on FETAC in the early stages of participant engagement, and the employment of a dedicated educational development worker and a full time literacy development worker.
- FETAC award achievement rates are consistent. While opportunities for achieving awards have improved further development in this area is recommended.
- Review module content with view to maximising learning and increasing accreditation opportunities.
- Strategic development of contingency/back up planning.
- Development of a dedicated post-Soilse needs based intervention/ programme.

Soilse's FETAC QA procedures were reviewed in the course of this evaluation and found to be operative and practicable in most instances. Where shortfalls were identified they were documented and are being addressed as part of Soilse's ongoing improvement planning and in line with the rolling out of HSE and VEC policies, procedures and protocols.