

Minister Naughton Better Together Launch



Minister Hildegarde Naughton will launch an online peer empowered recovery community organisation and support service for the south east.

Better Together is a peer led recovery support service operating 7 days a week online. Better Together offers daily support programme's and organised social events for people with substance use and mental health challenges.

In partnership with the South East Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce and South East Technological University, the minister will launch this innovative co-produced online service for the South East. This event will take place in **St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall, Kilkenny on Thursday February 22nd at 12pm.**

The launch event will include a presentation on the findings and recommendations from a co-produced community based research initiative carried out in partnership with South East Technological University over a 2.5 year period. There will be a demonstration on Better Together's new co-produced website which was co-created with the South East Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce. The website offers a self empowered approach to choosing and accessing supports, and showcases the future for Better Together.

This event will raise awareness of the value of peer empowered and experience informed supports and peer leadership programme's, including community research projects.

Event Details:

St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall, Butts Green, Kilkenny, R95 VK7X.

Thursday February 22nd from 12-2pm.

Please RSVP to Aisling.Ennis@hse.ie by Monday 19th February.



Minister Naughton Better Together and SETU Research Launch Invitation

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Better Together is a peer led recovery organisation providing a programme of daily support online. We offer individual and group peer support, recovery education, social 'togetherness' and wellness events. **Better Together** is centered around the principles of co-production and all supports are experience informed, working toward a social model of recovery. We operate seven days of the week with all support delivered by community members who give their time and expertise voluntarily.

Better Together was set up in March 2020 by Jim O'Dwyer, development worker for the South East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, in partnership with HSE Substance Misuse Teams, peer experts and Special CE Schemes. This initiative began as a direct response to COVID-19, with the aim of providing an innovative model of co-produced online support for people with experiences of mental health and/or substance use challenges.

Since being established Better Together community members have provided 100,000 hours of online peer recovery supports.

Better Together in partnership with South East Technological University and lead by researcher Susan Barnes, have completed a research project on the effectiveness of **Better Together's** online support model.

As a result of the research findings and recommendations, the HSE funded the Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre to employ a full time peer coordinator to help develop and expand Better Together services.

Some of the key findings taken from the research paper:

- 86.4% participants reported a decrease in the incidents of relapse or self-harm.
- 97% of participants expressed improved social and emotional connection.
- 92.5% of participants reported diminished internal stigma since joining Better Together.
- More than 90% of participants reported the 7 days a week 365 days a year online space, as safe and accessible.

Minister of State, Hildegard Naughton will officially launch this project at our event on Thursday 22nd February in St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall, Butts Green, Kilkenny at 12.00pm.

I hope that you or a member of your team and service can join us on the day of the launch to hear about this important research project, and in recognition and support of the work of our organisation.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Hardiman

Better Together Peer Coordinator

On behalf of the South East Drug and Alcohol Task Force

South East HSE

Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre