

## Drug Dependence Treatment Service

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The Drug Dependence Treatment Service consists of a number of units, working as a continuum. These are the Out-patient Detox, In-patient Detox, Residential Long Term Detox divided into two units: Unit A and Unit B.

Patients attend the Out-patient out of their own free will or are referred from other centres e.g. voluntary organizations such as Caritas or doctors. They are offered a drug substitution treatment by being given alternatives for their drugs of abuse, which substitutes are slowly tailed off. For example methadone substitutes heroin. Patients are also assessed physically.

Those who show motivation for change are encouraged to enter the In-patient Detox. This is a strictly closed ward, lasting for 15 days during which time acute detoxification is started, and physical status of patient is monitored. At this stage they are usually cachectic - tire very easily, and are unable to concentrate for more than a few minutes.

After this stage they are transferred to Unit A in St Mary's Hospital, Luqa. Here they are helped to attain physical well being. This is done through groups dealing with physical aspects of their addiction, and also a slowly increasing involvement with physical awareness.

After four weeks they are assessed and transferred to Unit B. In this unit they are expected to intensify their recovery by:

- learning to live a structured day (time management),
- being given work experience in various areas such as in the kitchen or maintenance departments. Residents are also given the opportunity to function as heads of the house, with the aim of acquiring skills in leadership and responsibility,
- by the use of special groups they are taught the basic skills of communication, coping effectively, and caring for the self both physically and mentally,
- again by the use of groups they are taught relapse prevention as well as Rational Emotive Therapy. This helps them to become aware of thought processes and how to control them,
- an adult education centre has been set up in St Mary's to upgrade education - teaching literacy to some, but also computer skills to others,

- occupational therapy with the use of clay therapy and drawing as well as other classes to develop creativity are held.

After three months in this unit they are assessed again and if possible they are given an aftercare treatment plan in which they slowly start to be effectively reintegrated into society. This may include long term rehabilitation treatments in centres such as that of San Blas run by Caritas.