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**CONFERENCE ABSTRACT****Youghal Community Action on Alcohol**17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Integrated Care, Dublin, 08-10 May 2017Maria O'Malley<sup>1</sup>, Kate Gibney<sup>2</sup>

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**Aim:** To build the capacity of communities to identify alcohol issues and develop local action plans to reduce alcohol harm.

**Youghal community Action on Alcohol:** On average, Europeans are the highest consumers of alcohol in the world. The Irish are among the highest consumers of alcohol in Europe. We consume on average 11.9 litres of pure alcohol per capita per annum (Anderson et. al. 2012). Using the World Health Organisation's classification, 54.3% of people living in Ireland are harmful drinkers, i.e. there are approximately 1.4 million people in Ireland consuming alcohol at harmful levels (WHO 2009). Alcohol is responsible for 88 deaths every month in Ireland. Alcohol related harm extends out from the drinker and affects many other people besides the drinker. In fact the harm experienced by the drinker due to their own drinking is only part of the story of alcohol related problems in Ireland (Hope 2014).

The World Health Organisation (WHO 2010, 2014) emphasises the need for strengthened partnerships, increased multidisciplinary work, better co-ordination among stakeholders and increased mobilisation of resources to prevent the harmful use of alcohol. This integrated approach to service delivery is reflected in the Health Service Executive's National Service Plan (HSE 2016) and regional plans including Community Healthcare Organisations and Drug and Alcohol taskforces. In the region of Cork and Kerry the alcohol strategy (HSE, CLDATF, SRDATF 2016) included actions to promote an integrated approach to increase awareness of alcohol harms and to provide Community Action on Alcohol training. Community Action on Alcohol addresses the recognised impact of alcohol on communities. By building support, knowledge and skills at a local level, with a broad range of stakeholders (Gardai, mental health services, public health, health promotion, community health, drug and alcohol task force, public representatives) an action plan is developed to increase awareness, reduce access and impact at an "upstream" level. Youghal is one of three areas regionally that have completed the training and developed local action plans, the content of which includes an official launch of the local action plan including the performance of a play related to alcohol use and dissemination of survey results regarding community concerns in relation to alcohol. Other actions include the organisation of a local conference on alcohol, to develop, maintain & distribute a Directory of Services to local communities, to provide screening and interventions (SAOR training and Strengthening Families programme) and to undertake a mapping exercise

of alcohol outlets across Youghal, the first step in supporting the reduction in the availability of alcohol in the local community. Raising awareness of the impact of advertising and exposure to alcohol through reducing the use of alcohol as prizes in raffles, festivals etc. are also envisaged.

Youghal Community Action on Alcohol is an exemplary illustration of an integrated, cross border approach where a diverse group of individuals from a variety of settings and backgrounds have come together to address alcohol use at a community level, sharing services, knowledge and expertise.

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**Keywords:** reduce alcohol harm; local action plan; public health framework

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