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Malta

Country Drug Report 2018



Prevention

The current National Drugs Policy defines a number of actions in the area of drug prevention and puts an emphasis on the promotion of healthy lifestyle.

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the Foundation for Medical Services implement prevention activities in close cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Sedqa, the Maltese government's executive agency in the drugs field, has established a number of prevention interventions. The NGOs Caritas and the OASI Foundation run a range of prevention programmes targeting specific groups or settings, such as schoolchildren, peers, parents, the community and the workplace, while the Anti-Substance Abuse Unit within the Education Division also carries out interventions in the school environment. Few interventions are evaluated.

Prevention interventions

Prevention interventions encompass a wide range of approaches, which are complementary. Environmental and universal strategies target entire populations, selective prevention targets vulnerable groups that may be at greater risk of developing substance use problems, and indicated prevention focuses on at-risk individuals.

The environmental prevention activities in Malta are mainly limited to tobacco control policies and restrictions on smoking in public places.

Universal prevention is primarily implemented in school settings, where interventions begin at primary school level and continue into secondary schools. Prevention activities in primary schools focus on friendship and peer pressure, with some introductory information on the problems that tobacco and alcohol use can cause. Interventions in secondary schools are designed to develop life skills, self-esteem,

decision-making and problem-solving skills and resistance to peer pressure. The messages focus on encouraging abstinence from tobacco, alcohol and drugs, with the aim of preventing the development of any long-term harmful use.

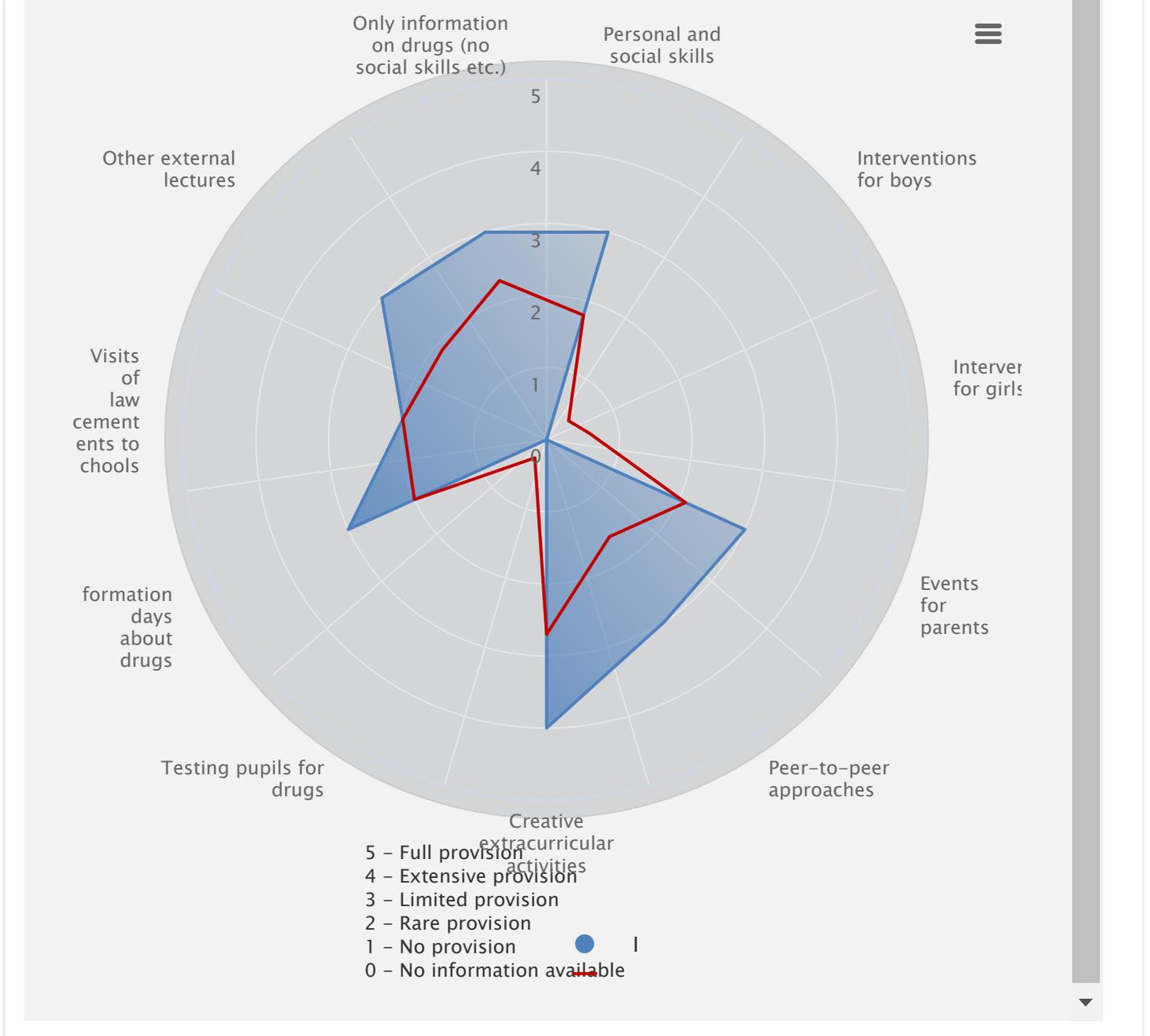
Universal family-based prevention programmes in an interactive environment generally tackle topics related to parenthood, such as leadership styles, communication and child development, and include discussions on drug and alcohol misuse. Community-based prevention programmes primarily target families and young people in local councils, youth organisations, religious societies and social and political clubs.

Selective prevention interventions are mainly school based and focus on students with high levels of absenteeism and those who have dropped out of school. Other interventions include outreach work targeting young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A new nationwide initiative, the Leap Project, funded through the European Social Fund, was launched in 2014 and aims at consolidating community resources and networks to address social exclusion issues. Other target groups are young people in schools in deprived areas, juvenile prison inmates and young offenders. Interventions for these groups occur mainly as a result of referrals to drug treatment agencies. Appogg, the national agency for children, families and the community, and Sedqa have brought together professionals from several fields and have developed a project that aims to offer individual guidance and counselling to adolescents who are referred for support. The support offered by this project is also available to the parents and partners of the young people referred to the services.

The unit also offers crisis intervention when homelessness or abuse is involved. The programme aims to build a network of support by joining forces with other institutions and professionals involved with the young person in question.

Provision of interventions in schools in Malta

NB: Year of data 2015



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