



National and Global Affairs





Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers



SCHOOL

Public Health & Primary
Care, School of Medicine

PARTNER AGENCIES

Health Service Executive 
Department of Health 
Health Research Board

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North East Inner City
Initiative  National Office
of Social Inclusion

From Addiction to Recovery

Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers has become one of Ireland's most influential voices in shaping the future of national drug policy.






As Associate Professor in Addiction at Trinity College Dublin, her work blends academic research, highlighting lived experience, and championing cross-sectoral engagement as a way to challenge traditional approaches and push for a more compassionate, evidence-driven response.

At a time when Ireland is rethinking how it addresses substance use, Professor Ivers' work has positioned her at the

centre of the debate, whether through advising national policy, presenting research that exposes critical service gaps, or amplifying the importance of recovery and harm reduction.

Her contributions are not confined to Ireland; from the Citizens' Assembly in Dublin to the United Nations stage in Vienna, she is helping to reframe the conversation around dignity, inclusion, and health-based solutions. Her research, advocacy, and leadership on areas such as non-fatal overdose, harm reduction at festivals and recovery capital are directly influencing the evolution of Ireland's National Drugs Strategy.

SUBJECT AREAS

Addiction Recovery 
Recovery Capital  Non-Fatal Overdose  Harm Reduction in Drug Use  Long Term Recovery from Addiction  Stigma Reduction in Drug Use

This work showcases how Trinity is changing public attitudes to a social issue through multiple approaches including evidence-based programmes, deliberative processes and media engagement.

Prepared by Trinity Civic Engagement for Societal Impact, September 2025



Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use

In 2023, Professor Ivers joined the Advisory Support Group for Ireland's Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use, helping to create a broad set of perspectives for the deliberative process, through sourcing expert contributions, including those with a lived experience of addiction.

The Assembly agreed a series of 36 recommendations to reform the country's approach to drug use—pivoting from criminal justice toward a more health-based model, moving away from a focus on criminalisation and prosecution and towards treatment.

United Nations

In March 2025, Professor Ivers was invited to travel with a Department of Health delegation to a UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna to speak on the topic of deliberative democracy as a process to inform drug policy. She was joined on a three-person panel along with delegates from Cyprus and Columbia.

She spoke about how deliberative processes such as the Citizens' Assembly had the ability to move beyond a discussion about what should appear in a policy, to seeing ways in which dignity, inclusion, and a balanced approach to drug policy that prioritises harm reduction, prevention, and recovery can be reflected by in a national response to drugs.

Non-Fatal Overdose

In February 2025, Professor Ivers co-authored 'Non-Fatal Overdose: A Decade-Long Analysis of Inner City Hospitals and Nationwide Trends Across Ireland (2011-2021)'.

The report highlighted socio-economic drivers of non-fatal overdoses. It also identified significant service gaps, particularly in psychological and social support in inner-city Dublin hospitals. It offered timely recommendations for policy, such as expanding naloxone distribution, improving

care coordination, and integrating harm reduction services. These recommendations are under consideration as the Department of Health's National Drugs Strategy is developing its next iteration.

Reducing the Drug Harm at Music Festivals

Professor Ivers has been spearheading the 'What Are You Taking?' study, in association with HSE National Social Inclusion Office. This study tracks the drug trends and harm-reduction behaviours among festival goers. The project, unique in the Irish context, aims to inform strategies for emerging drug use scenarios. It aligns with the HSE Safer Nightlife Programme and with the broader National Drugs Strategy's agenda.

“When you see recovery in action, it is very hopeful, it's very heartening.

We've looked at [addiction] so long through the lens of disease and hopelessness and 'no way back' and then to flip the switch and see it in terms of that hopeful recovery and that second change is terrific.”

*Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers,
Hooked, RTÉ One Television
May 2025*

Outputs



Commentary on Day et al.: Systemic solutions for recovery support services in Ireland's National Drug Strategy (2025)

In a public commentary on the development of recovery support systems in Ireland, the piece champions evidenced-based recovery-oriented systems of care while also cautioning on the need for those systems to be adapted to the Irish health services.

Oireachtas Joint Committee on Drugs Use (2025)

Professor Ivers was invited to the convening of the Joint Committee on 13 Jun 2024 to discuss drug use as it relates to the discussion which emerged at the Citizens' Assembly. She was joined by Mr Paul Reid, chair of the Assembly, Mr Cathal O'Regan, secretary to the Assembly, Mr Brian Galvin from the Health Research Board, and Ms Céire Moynihan and Mr Graham O'Neill, who were members of the Citizens' Assembly.



Hooked: How Addiction Hijacks your Brain (2025)

This three-part documentary series, produced by RTÉ One with support from Research Ireland, was developed with the aim of challenging stigma, opening up honest conversations about the nature and extent of addiction in Ireland, and offering a deeper understanding of addiction, and the real, hopeful possibilities of recovery. The series, led by Dr Brian Pennie, featured Professor Ivers speaking about neuro behavioural effects of addiction.

Let's Talk About Recovery (2023)

This action planning event for mobilising addiction recovery in Dublin's North Inner City was held in Trinity College Dublin, international experts from the US and UK and local public policy and service delivery stakeholders, including people in recovery, to explore the establishment of a recovery community in the North East Inner City.





Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers is an Associate Professor specialising in addiction, holding the only academic post in Ireland dedicated exclusively to this field. She is also the inaugural Associate Dean of Civic Engagement for Societal Impact at Trinity College Dublin, reflecting her commitment to bridging research and community need. Within the Department of Public Health and Primary Care, she leads the Neurobehavioural Addiction Research Group and directs the MSc in Addiction Recovery.

Over the course of her career, Professor Ivers has been appointed by successive ministers and government representatives to sit on national taskforces and expert review groups examining drug and alcohol use. Internationally, she serves on the Scientific Committee of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA). Her research spans biological, social and environmental factors influencing vulnerability to addiction, with an emphasis on developing recovery pathways that can range from harm reduction to much longer-term abstinence, while also working with families, communities and wider society.

For More Information

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