



FACTSHEET - Breaking the link between drugs and crime (Aug 03)

In the updated Drug Strategy, published in December 2002, the Home Secretary set out plans to break the link between drugs and crime by targeting drug using offenders at all stages in the criminal justice system and getting them into treatment. By treating their addiction which fuels their offending, we are aiming to get offenders away from a life of crime and thereby reducing acquisitive crimes such as burglary, theft and vehicle crime.

A range of services have been developed which make up an end to end, joined up process which will support, treat and help offenders from the moment they are identified to resettlement and beyond.

This is an ambitious, radical programme that has been phased in to 30 areas - these areas have been identified using national figures for those recorded crimes which have the strongest link with high levels of drug misuse - namely burglary, robbery and theft of and from vehicles. £447 million has been made available through SR2002 to fund roll out and support existing provisions over three years. This includes £46.2 million which supports the 30 areas this financial year.

Work involves a major expansion of services within the criminal justice system and taking forward work already started on Arrest Referral and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders, building on the pilot Drug Testing projects by extending this approach more widely, and developing better systems for throughcare and aftercare.

Treatment is not a soft option. Orders imposed by the courts usually involve a strict monitoring regime and some drug users will be directed to treatment in addition to prison rather than instead of it. Treatment works for every £1 spent on treatment, £3 is saved on criminal justice costs.

Key elements of the package are:

Enhanced Arrest Referral – is a development of arrest referral and focuses on case management and plugging the gap between referral and treatment. Arrest referral uses the point of arrest as an opportunity for drug workers (independent of the police) to make contact with arrestees with drug problems while they are in police detention and refer them to appropriate treatment to address their drug use. This is a voluntary service and offenders are not obliged to go into treatment. AR is available in all police forces with enhanced AR in the 30 areas.

Drug Testing – police have the power to test anyone charged with a trigger offence (i.e. vehicle crime, robbery, theft, burglary etc) for class A drugs. A positive drug test will not be used to bring a prosecution for unlawful possession or consumption, or to support further police investigation into the offence, but will be used in court to aid sentencing. Drug testing is now available in the 30 start areas and continues in 13 other original pilot areas.

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders - The Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) is a community sentence aimed at breaking the link between drug use and offending. Those made subject to the Order are persistent offenders aged 16 or over who commit a high volume of acquisitive crimes (such as burglary, fraud, shoplifting and car crime) to fund their drugs habit, show a willingness to co-operate with treatment and are before the court for an offence that is sufficiently serious to attract a community sentence. The order also includes mandatory drug testing and an innovative court review of progress. Available nationwide.

Throughcare – provided to a drug misuser from the point of arrest – or wherever the user enters the system – through to sentence. Integrated teams in the DATs will support this by adopting a case management approach.

Aftercare system - the package of support that needs to be in place after a drug misusing offender is released from prison, completes a community sentence or leaves treatment. It is not one simple discrete process which involves only treatment but includes access to additional support with issues which may include housing, managing finance, family issues, learning new skills and employment.

Key partners to the Home Office are the criminal justice agencies such as the police, probation officers and the courts, along with the Department of Health, the National Treatment Agency and treatment service providers and those who provide linked services such as housing and job-seeker support. Also on the front line are Drug Action Teams, who are provided with the funding and take responsibility for implementation, co-ordination and delivery on the ground.

The 30 areas to be included in the initial roll out which began in April this year are:

Lambeth	North Liverpool	Central Bristol
Camden	Southwark	Haringey
Middlesbrough	Bradford South	North Bristol
Waltham Forest	Bradford North	South Bristol
Millgarth	Calderdale	Killingbeck
Nottingham	South Manchester	Kingston Upon Hull
Newham	Hackney	Salford
Bolton	Ealing	Reading
North Manchester	City of Westminster	Islington
Tower Hamlets	Wandsworth	Rochdale