

Update from Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh

The City of Edinburgh Council

1 February 2007

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for the last quarter of the work of Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh. The period covered refers to October – December 2006.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh (the Action Team) is an integrated partnership between the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian & Borders Police, Procurator Fiscal Service, Capita City Partnership, Jobcentreplus and the voluntary sector. It provides strategic direction for tackling substance misuse in the city and allocates funding to the agencies working with people who have alcohol and/or drug problems.

3 Main report

Abstinence Funding

- 3.1 In October, Edinburgh/Lothian received £800,000 over two years to establish Scotland's first community based abstinence-based drugs project. This pilot is based on the tried and tested Minnesota model and will offer medical, housing and social support and assistance with training, education and employment.
- 3.2 Aimed at opiate, stimulant and cannabis addiction, it will also deal with poly-addictions including alcohol. The package will comprise a core therapeutic programme for twelve weeks, and will cater for more than eighty patients a year, working in partnership with existing agencies. Crucially it offers alternative to substitute prescribing.
- 3.3 The project will be operational by April 2007. If successful, it will substantially augment our drug services.

Scottish Executive Stocktaking Review

- 3.4 The Scottish Executive is carrying out a stocktaking review of all the drug and alcohol action Teams (DAATs) across Scotland. The purpose is to look at the current performance of DAATs and examine their capability to deliver Ministerial priorities on drugs and alcohol. Edinburgh was the first to be inspected and although any official report will take some time, verbal feedback on Edinburgh's performance was very positive.

Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2007-10

- 3.5 A first draft of an alcohol and drug strategy for Edinburgh has been drafted and circulated to the Action Team Policy Group for comment and development. It is planned to have the strategy finalised in the early spring.

Metro Newspaper – Christmas Alcohol Campaign

- 3.6 In partnership with NHS Lothian Health Promotion, the Action Team ran a series of quirky adverts targeting young women and their drinking in the week before Christmas in the Metro newspaper. The adverts had national coverage, and ran with the message, 'Enjoy the party season, but think about how you drink'. Reaction to the campaign was good and the approach taken was seen as innovative and effective.

Alcohol Matters in Edinburgh

- 3.7 The first edition of the quarterly publication 'Alcohol Matters in Edinburgh' was issued to councillors. The leaflet provided statistics on drinking in Edinburgh and provided an update on initiatives that are tackling binge drinking.

Edinburgh Fear of Crime Survey

- 3.8 Results for the Edinburgh Fear of Crime Survey conducted by Ipsos MORI Scotland, showed that drug sales or substance abuse was ranked as the sixth most perceived common crime in Edinburgh overall. As a comparison, the Lothian and Borders Police data of actual numbers of recorded crimes for 2005/06 had drugs ranked in fourth place.
- 3.9 The recorded crime figures for offences related to drugs from Lothian and Borders A Division (Edinburgh) were 3,246 for 2005 and 3,576 for 2006, an increase of 10%.
- 3.10 When asked what their top three priorities for improving safety in their areas were, forty five percent of residents in 2006 mentioned reducing problems associated with drugs and alcohol. However, only 2% suggested 'improved access to treatment for drug users' as a way of addressing the problems. Almost three out of ten respondents wanted to see more facilities for young people as a solution.

Waiting Times Report

- 3.11 The Action Team receives monthly reports from alcohol and drug agencies. These report on the times that clients have to wait until there are assessed and then referred for treatment. Twelve are now reporting regularly, thus providing us with a more consistent and regular picture of what is happening in the city. Such intelligence is useful when developing our Corporate Action Plan for 2007-08.
- 3.12 It is noticeable that the two specialist alcohol agencies have much longer waiting times than the other agencies. Typically a person with a drug problem will wait no longer than 28 days and it could be less than 7 days. By contrast, somebody with an alcohol problem will typically wait 5-8 weeks to be assessed. In the light of our current knowledge of alcohol abuse in the city, it is hoped that more funding will be allocated to this priority area in the near future so that we can reduce these figures and have more and better services for those with an alcohol problem.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no additional financial implications beyond those already stated in the Corporate Action Plan for 2006/07.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The following aspects of the work of the Action Team in Edinburgh have been reported:
- Abstinence funding
 - Scottish Executive stocktaking review of the Action Team
 - Edinburgh alcohol and drugs strategy 2007-10
 - Metro newspaper – Christmas alcohol campaign
 - Alcohol Matters in Edinburgh
 - Edinburgh Fear of Crime Survey
 - Waiting times report

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the quarterly update of the work of Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh



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Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Background Papers	Review and Restructure of Alcohol and Drug Services in Edinburgh – Progress Report – 23 rd February 2006 Update from Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh: Quarterly Reports – April – June; July-September 2006