



# THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

**NHS**  
**MEL(1998)31**

Public Health Policy Unit  
St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
27th April 1998  
Telephone 0131-244  
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Dear Colleague

## SCOTTISH DRUG MISUSE INFORMATION STRATEGY

### Summary

1. This letter informs those responsible for the planning and provision of drug misuse services about the Scottish Drug Misuse Information Strategy being taken forward by the Information and Statistics Division of the Common Services Agency (ISD Scotland). The strategy establishes ISD as the focal point for drugs information for all organisations involved in the multi-agency approach to tackling drug misuse. This includes information on prevalence and effectiveness. ISD is also the body responsible for the co-ordination of information tasks on behalf of The Scottish Office.

2. The strategy aims to establish a coherent structure for the long term availability of appropriate information in support of evidence based decision making. Priority has been afforded to information in support of the national objectives and key performance measurements contained in "Planning and Provision of Drug Misuse Services" issued by The Scottish Office Department of Health in November 1997 (NHS MEL (1997)77, SWSG CIRC 32/97). Other information priorities include local performance measurement and trend statistics, drug policies and local co-ordination, information on prevention, education, and care and treatment (outcome effectiveness and cost effectiveness) and drugs and the wider community (including community safety).

### Action

3. All relevant agencies should note that ISD Scotland is now the focal point for information matters including prevalence, effectiveness and key performance measures. A Drug Misuse Information Team has been established and inquiries should be directed to the contact number shown in this letter.

### Addressees

#### For action:

Chairmen, Drug Action Teams

#### For information:

General Managers, Health Boards  
Chief Executives, NHS Trusts  
Local Authority Chief Executives  
Directors of Social Work  
Chief Social Work Officers  
GPs, including GP Fundholders  
Providers of specialist drug services  
Appropriate professional, voluntary  
and training bodies  
Chief Executive, Health Education  
Board for Scotland  
Chief Constables  
Prison Governors  
Chief Executive, COSLA

### Enquiries to:

Mr Gregor McWalter  
Information and Statistics Division  
Common Services Agency  
Trinity Park House  
EDINBURGH  
EH5 3SQ

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NHS SCOTTISH HEALTH SERVICE COMMON SERVICES AGENCY INFORMATION AND STATISTICS DIVISION	
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4. A key concern within the strategy is the needs of Drug Action Teams (DATs). DATs, whose access to relevant information has recently been enhanced through the provision of new technology, should therefore consider their information needs in terms of the delivery of the national objectives and their local drug misuse strategies. ISD will be liaising with DATs and other organisations on the administrative arrangements necessary to enable regular contact and support. The development of electronic communications will also be a priority and ISD is currently working to establish an Internet site for drugs information.

5. Health Board General Managers, with Directors of Social Work or Chief Social Work Officers, should ensure that this letter is circulated to all those responsible for the planning and provision of care, treatment and prevention services for drug misusers including health promotion departments, those responsible for mental health services, acute medical services, alcohol services, and GPs including GP fundholders, within their area.

6. Local authority Chief Executives should ensure that this information is circulated appropriately, including to Directors of Education.

7. DAT Chairmen are asked to ensure that the information is circulated to all DAT members and to Drug Development Officers.

#### **Other Information**

8. It is recognised that there is a considerable amount of ongoing activity concerning drug misuse information, in relation for example to prevalence estimation, planning services and monitoring outcomes. It will be important that, wherever possible, this activity is consistent with the information strategy and, when in doubt, guidance should be sought from ISD on ways to ensure this. Where appropriate, local information developments should take into account existing or planned national information initiatives.

9. One important data source of information on drugs misuse is the Scottish Drug Misuse Database, which is managed by ISD. The further development of this Database is a key aspect of the Information Strategy. It is therefore very important that Drug Action Teams, commissioning authorities and those responsible for the delivery of services give ISD all the necessary support to ensure that the coverage and accuracy of the Database are optimised within their area.

Yours sincerely



**MRS NICOLA MUNRO**  
Under Secretary  
Public Health Policy Unit



# THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

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To all those on the  
attached list

27 April 1998

Dear Colleague

**LAUNCH OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WHITE PAPER *TACKLING DRUGS TO BUILD A BETTER BRITAIN: THE GOVERNMENT'S TEN YEAR STRATEGY FOR TACKLING DRUG MISUSE***

The publication of the above White Paper was announced in the House of Commons this afternoon by the President of the Council, Mrs Ann Taylor, followed by a launch of the strategy in London. I attach a Scottish Office News Release containing the Secretary of State's response to the publication of the White Paper. A copy of the White Paper, together with supporting documents, is attached.

The White Paper takes the form of a Ministerial Statement, a report by the UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator and the Government's anti-drugs strategy, with an introduction by the Prime Minister. The Ministerial Statement is signed by 10 Cabinet Ministers including the Secretary of State for Scotland. You will note that in the News Release the Secretary of State comments on the UK and international dimension reflected in the White Paper, and in addition there are detailed proposals for tackling drug misuse in England. The White Paper comments that "significant progress" has been made in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Strategy focuses mainly on England. The Co-ordinator comments in his report that he expects all other parts of the UK "to reflect on the implications of this Strategy for them and report back on relevant developments by February 1999". For Scotland, Scottish Office Ministers will in due course decide what form that response should take. The Secretary of State expects The Scottish Office, with advice from the Scottish Advisory Committee on Drug Misuse (SACDM), to look for aspects of the new UK Strategy which we should be picking up and building upon here in Scotland. Drug Action Teams, their constituent agencies and other agencies with an interest in the drugs problem should therefore give careful consideration to the Strategy's relevance to their circumstances. The Scottish Office will advise shortly on how these views should be fed back.

The detailed approach in the White Paper is relevant primarily for England, with Scotland having its own distinctive approach built on the Ministerial Drugs Task Force report.

## **UK DRUGS STRATEGY DISTRIBUTION**

Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland
Association of Directors of Social Work
Centre for Alcohol and Drug Studies
Chief Constables
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Drug Action Teams
Drug Development Officers
Drug Prevention Initiatives
Drug Training Project
HB General Managers
Health Education Board for Scotland
Information and Statistics Division, Common Services Agency
Local Authority Chief Executives
Prison Governors
Professional Bodies
Scotland Against Drugs
Scottish Advisory Committee on Drug Misuse
Scottish Drugs Forum



DONALD DEWAR LAUNCHES  
ATTACK ON DRUGS

Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar MP, today announced plans for a new £200,000 information strategy in Scotland to provide a clearer picture of drug misuse across the country.

Mr Dewar said:

“The Scottish Office is today issuing guidance to agencies on the implementation of a new Scottish Drug Misuse Information Strategy. The strategy will play a key role in improving the national and local response to drug misuse by opening up access to reliable information, strengthening decision making and measuring progress.

“The implementation plan for the Information Strategy covers significant themes touched upon in today's drugs White Paper - in particular in relation to performance measurement and evidence based decision making. Funding of £200,000 per annum will be provided to run the Information Strategy.”

Mr Dewar earlier joined Cabinet colleagues in launching the Government's White Paper on tackling Drugs teaming up with Keith Hellawell, the UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator, to announce a drugs strategy based on extensive research and consideration by the Co-ordinator and his Deputy, Mike Trace.

The UK strategy has four key elements:

- to help young people resist drug misuse so that they can achieve their full potential in society

- to protect communities from drug related anti social and criminal behaviour
- to enable people with drug problems to overcome them and live healthy , crime free lives
- to stifle availability of illegal drugs on our streets.

Although some of this activity is UK wide and international, the focus is on England. Scottish Ministers will be looking at the Strategy as they continue to shape their own distinctive approach in Scotland.

Mr Dewar said:

“The White Paper reflects the UK and international dimension to the drugs problem. Drugs do not respect national boundaries. Nor do drug dealers. We need a united approach not just in Scotland but across the UK.

“It is a substantial document which we can all learn from. While the detail in the strategy is primarily for England, I expect The Scottish Office, with advice from the Scottish Advisory Committee on Drug Misuse, to look for aspects of the new UK strategy which we should pick up and build upon here in Scotland.

“We have our own distinctive approach to tackling drug misuse in Scotland. We have shaped that further since we took office building on the Drugs Task Force agenda. We have introduced a number of initiatives aimed at broadening the approach, improving the management of drug misuse, and strengthening prevention efforts. Our public health Green Paper is canvassing views on drugs and health and will be a critical part of our Autumn Health White Paper.”

#### NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

1. Keith Hellowell, former Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, was appointed by the Prime Minister as the UK's first Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator in October 1997.
2. The publication of the White Paper - Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain: The Government's Ten Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse - was announced in the House of Commons today by the

President of the Council, Mrs Anne Taylor, and followed by launch of the strategy at the Trocadero Centre, Piccadilly.

3. The White Paper consists of a Ministerial Statement signed by 10 Cabinet Ministers - including Mr Dewar, The Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer - the report of the UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator Keith Hellowell, and the Government's anti-drugs Strategy.

4. Scottish Office Guidance, *the Planning and Provision of Drug Misuse Services* was issued in November 1997.

5. Detailed guidance on the arrangements for the implementation of the *Scottish Drug Misuse Information Strategy* is being issued today to all the agencies in Scotland with an interest in drug misuse.

6. Over £50 million is being spent in Scotland each year by all services on drug misuse.

Contact: John McCroskie: 0131-244 2951

News Release: 0849/98

April 27, 1998



President of the Council  
Leader of the House of Commons

## NEWS RELEASE

CAB 107/98  
27 April 1998

### NEW DRUGS STRATEGY PUBLISHED

Ann Taylor MP, Leader of the House of Commons, today unveiled a radical new long-term strategy to tackle the menace of drugs.

The White Paper "Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain" is a new cross-Government approach to a complex problem. It is a ten-year strategy precisely because of the complexity of the problem. The strategy was drawn up following recommendations in a report by Keith Hellawell, UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator.

The main new initiatives are:

- channelling seized assets from drug dealers into anti-drug work. Last year the value of assets seized was £5 million;
- all children aged 5 to 16 will receive appropriate drug education;
- piloting drug treatment and testing orders for offenders;
- setting tough targets for reducing drug misuse based on evidence and experience during the first year;
- shifting resources away from reacting to the problem to preventing it happening in the first place.





In his unique role, Keith Hellawell has been able to cut through traditional barriers, ensuring that all the anti-drugs work can be properly co-ordinated in future. His approach combines a mixture of tough measures with preventative work. He recommends a fresh new approach by Whitehall to deal with drugs problems, drawing in other agencies and linking with work on other social problems.

The facts are:

- almost half of under 25 year olds have used illegal drugs;
- at least half of all recorded crime has a drug related element;
- there are between 100,000-200,000 addicts in the UK;
- annual costs from the most serious drug misusers alone are well over £4 billion;
- the drug trade is big international business worth an estimated 8% (\$400 billion) of total international trade, the same as oil, gas and world tourism.

The strategy has four main themes: young people, communities, drugs treatment and drugs availability. Key objectives are:

- to reduce the proportion of people under 25 using illegal drugs;
- to reduce the level of reoffending among drug misusing offenders;
- to increase the participation of problem drug misusers, including prisoners, in drug treatment programmes;
- to reduce the access to drugs among 5-16 year olds.

The Prime Minister said:

"The fight against the evil of drugs is part of a wider range of policies to renew our communities and ensure decent opportunities are available to everyone. They are policies for the long term.

"The new strategy is a fresh approach to the problem. Keith Hellawell has taken a long, hard look at how we tackle drugs and has come up with hard-headed, sensible recommendations."

"I hope that this tough new package of measures in the White Paper will mean the end of a life of misery for many young people and will improve the quality of life for all those who currently suffer as a result of drugs."

He stressed that drug problems do not occur in isolation. The Government is tackling inequalities through the largest ever programme to get people off benefit and into work and a series of reforms in the welfare state, education, health, criminal justice and the economy. The new Social Exclusion Unit is looking at many of the problems often associated with drug taking, such as school exclusions, truancy, rough sleeping and poor housing.

Ann Taylor, in her statement to the House, said:

"This strategy is ambitious, but realistic. It sets out clear and challenging new objectives. But it builds on good practice and on what we know works in the fight against drugs.

"It has partnership and common purpose at its heart and provides an opportunity to make real progress over time against this destructive social problem."

Keith Hellawell will report annually on progress in implementing the strategy. Right away he will embark on a nationwide tour to explain the radical new measures to those in the field and ensure that everyone is working together. He and his deputy, Mike Trace, have done extensive research, interviewing over 2,000 people to assess the current situation.

Keith Hellawell said:

"Today's White Paper marks a real turning point in anti-drugs work. We now have a strategy. It's time for action. I am looking forward to travelling around the country in the coming months to discuss the way forward for people in the field."

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The White Paper "Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain - A Ten Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse", Cmd 3945, ISBN 0101394527, priced £6.50, is available from the Stationary Office. Press copies are available from the Cabinet Office Press Office.
2. The White Paper "Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain - A Ten Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse" is also available on the Internet at: <http://www.official.documents.co.uk/document/cm39/3945/3945.htm>
3. The appointment of a UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordinator to tackle the modern menace of drugs in our communities was a manifesto commitment. Keith Hellawell was appointed in October 1997, with Mike Trace as his deputy.

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