



## The 2008 drug strategy: one year on



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**The Government published the new drug strategy on 27 February 2008. In the year since its publication there has been a great deal of progress, with drug use now down to its lowest level in more than a decade. However, there is still much more to be done, and the Government is determined that the action it takes should meet the priorities and needs of local communities.**

In developing the drug strategy, the Government held a public consultation to find out what you, the public, wanted to see. You told us that you wanted us to:

- target the drug-misusing offenders who are the source of so much crime in communities, and take away the proceeds of criminal activity;
- focus on the people at the top of the drug supply networks;
- make sure that the police listen to community concerns, and take action to address them;
- offer more support to families at risk of developing serious problems, particularly where there are parents who misuse drugs;

- provide better information on drugs to parents and young people, with compulsory drug education in schools and effective local information campaigns; and
- make drug treatment work better by providing services to help drug users to reintegrate into society and to help them to stay drug-free.

All of these priorities are included as key actions in the drug strategy. We invest in support for young people and families because this not only helps to prevent drug use, but also helps families to stay together and prevents anti-social behaviour. We invest in drug treatment because this not only reduces health risks

and helps people to get their lives back on track, but it also cuts crime. We invest in tough enforcement of the law because this not only reduces the availability of drugs on our streets, but also helps to make communities safer, more confident and more able to resist the harms caused by drugs.

The strategy is making a real, positive difference in communities across the country. This booklet describes some of the progress that has been made over the last year, with examples of its real impact on individuals, families and communities. It also tells you what our next priorities will be.

## Enforcing the law and protecting communities

### In the last year, we have:

- seized more of the cash and assets that dealers and other criminals have gained through their criminal activity, to be reinvested in crime reduction and community projects. During a recent case, in which eight people were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to supply controlled drugs and money laundering, a BMW X5 with a value of £50,000 was seized, along with three other cars, cash and drugs. Following another case, Thames Valley Police gave £15,000 that had been raised from the sale of criminal assets to the Tall Ships Youth Trust. This charity helps disadvantaged young people who have faced difficult circumstances to remain out of trouble by teaching them to sail, living and working in a unique on-board environment;

The value of assets seized from criminals in England, Wales and Northern Ireland has increased year on year. It has risen from £54.5 million in 2003/04 to £135.7 million in 2007/08.

- continued to roll out the Street Level Up approach to enforcement. This approach, which is now operating in seven police force areas, works by bringing together the police and other agencies to build a comprehensive picture of local drug markets and supply networks. It allows action to be better targeted, so that drug supply chains can be more effectively dismantled or disrupted;

The police and other enforcement agencies are taking more drugs off the streets. In 2006/07, there were a record 186,028 drug seizures in England and Wales, 15% more than in 2005, and the purity of drugs seized from street dealers is falling.

- reclassified cannabis from a Class C to a Class B drug. This was because of potential long-term risks to health, and recent increases in the market share of higher strength cannabis. At the same time, we strengthened the penalties for repeated offences of cannabis possession, or where cannabis is smoked in a public place or near young people; and

The police are cracking down on cannabis farms: in the year to the end of March 2008, 501,905 cannabis plants were seized, which would have had a wholesale value of more than £60 million.

- put in place Neighbourhood Policing teams in every area of England and Wales. These allow the police to respond more directly to any issues of concern identified by the community. Where drugs are an issue for communities, Neighbourhood Policing enables the police and other agencies to respond promptly and appropriately.

Acquisitive crimes, such as burglary, shoplifting and robbery, are the types of crime usually committed by drug misusers to feed their habit. Since we launched the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) in 2003, recorded acquisitive crimes have fallen by 28%, and they are continuing to fall.

In the four years from October 2003 to September 2007, 1,151 closure orders were issued in England and Wales, bringing relief to communities blighted by the crime and anti-social behaviour associated with crack houses. The police are continuing to increase the use of these orders.

## **Engaging the community to cut drug use and crime**

Sussex Police and Brighton and Hove City Council met residents and local businesses in the London Road area of the city to listen to their concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result of those meetings, the police launched Operation Reduction, which targeted drug dealing in the area.

The latest phase of the operation has resulted in 82 arrests, with 37 people being charged with a total of 88 offences, mainly relating to the supply or possession of heroin. Other offences included possession of a knife, possession of Class B drugs, breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, and driving offences. Nineteen warrants were executed across the city, with heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, cannabis resin, cannabis plants and methadone being seized.

The operation has not only been about targeting the supply of drugs, but also cutting demand, by getting the identified drug users into treatment. Since Operation Reduction was launched in 2005, there have been nearly 500 arrests and almost 300 people have been referred into drug treatment.

By working together with the local community, the police and the council have achieved longer-term results, with the area becoming a safer and more pleasant environment.

## **The Drug Interventions Programme – reducing drug use and offending**

Brian had a total of 46 convictions spanning a 20-year period and was responsible for 125 criminal offences including burglary, theft, fraud, assault, and firearms and drugs offences. He served several prison sentences and was released from his last in July 2007. He had caused the local community a great deal of harm and distress.

Brian had a long history of Class A drug misuse and had been addicted to heroin and crack cocaine for several years. When he was arrested in July 2004 he tested positive for drugs.

Under the DIP the police team have continually enforced the treatment conditions applied to him, and have ensured his access to drug treatment through DIP treatment providers. As a result, Brian has not been arrested since July 2007 and has been in drug

treatment since his last release from prison. He is prescribed methadone through local drug services and has engaged in the 12-step treatment programme. Brian has not taken illegal drugs throughout this time. He is now being removed from the case list, and his whole attitude to life has been changed. His health is much improved and he has recently completed a sponsored run in aid of a local charity.

## **Our future priorities**

- There are Neighbourhood Policing teams in place in all areas, but we now need to make sure that they are providing the best service to the communities they serve. Our priority now is to support teams to engage communities more effectively, and to form better links with local partners, so that issues of concern to the community can be better and more rapidly addressed.
- For drug-misusing offenders, we need to make sure that prison offers a real chance to address their drug use, so that following release they can stay off drugs and away from crime. We will continue to make improvements to the quality of prison-based drug treatment and to the support for offenders being resettled into the community. We are also designing new ways to further restrict the supply of drugs within prisons.
- The number of areas that are able to drug test offenders on arrest will be extended. From April 2009, some 174 police custody suites across England and Wales will offer drug testing under the DIP, getting more offenders into treatment and helping to drive crime down further.

# Preventing harm to young people and families

## In the last year we have:

- piloted the successful Family Intervention Projects in ten areas. These provide intensive support for chaotic families affected by issues such as substance misuse or domestic violence. The first Family Intervention Projects targeting substance misuse are under way. They help drug-misusing parents to improve

Regular drug use among young people has fallen since 2001. The number of schoolchildren aged 11–15 reporting the use of drugs in the last year fell from 20% to 17%, and the number using them in the last month fell from 12% to 10%. Reductions in drug use among vulnerable groups of young people have been even greater.

their parenting skills and they offer protection to their children. Links between these projects and drug treatment providers are being strengthened, to allow up to 20,000 families to access support;

Results from the pilots of the Family Intervention Projects show that they led to dramatic falls in risks to children and anti-social behaviour: the proportion of families committing four or more types of anti-social behaviour fell from 49% to 4%.

- established a national network linking services that focus on safeguarding children and supporting families. This provides information, resources and support for all those working with children, young people and families where there is a substance misuse problem;
- increased the number of Positive Futures projects. Positive Futures targets young people in some of

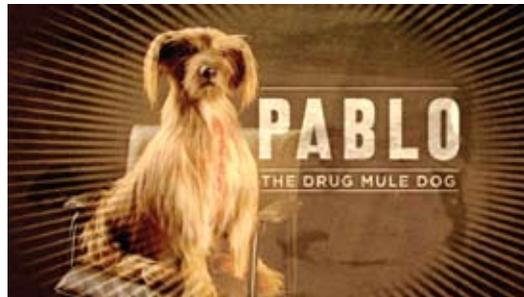
More young people than ever before are able to get the help and treatment they need, with 23,905 under-18s accessing specialist services in 2007/08. Among young people, addiction to Class A drugs is rare, so treatment is different to that for adults. The majority of young people are treated for cannabis and alcohol use: of all the young people in contact with specialist treatment services in 2007/08, more than half were being treated primarily for cannabis use and 35% for alcohol. By comparison, only 3% primarily used heroin or cocaine, 2% ecstasy, and 1% crack.

the country's most disadvantaged areas. It uses sports and arts-based activities to engage them and to give them the confidence to take control, change their behaviour and aspire to make something of their lives. The programme provides pathways

into education, training and employment and informs young people about the dangers of substance misuse and crime; and

123 Positive Futures projects work with young people in disadvantaged communities. Nearly 58,000 young people took part in 2007/08, and more than 15,000 qualifications and other positive outcomes were recorded as a result of young people's involvement in the programme.

- launched two successful FRANK campaigns, on cocaine and cannabis. The advertisements in the cocaine campaign, which feature Pablo, a dog used to smuggle cocaine into the country, have been viewed more than 700,000 times on the YouTube website.



## **Reducing drug use and providing a positive future**

When Tommy joined the Positive Futures Penzance programme, known locally as Treyla, he was living in a family where there was domestic violence, and had serious drug problems, mainly related to heroin. Over the years, the project has worked with Tommy using a range of activities, but it was an uphill struggle to build a relationship of trust. This all changed when the project introduced him to cookery.

Sam Coates, Positive Futures manager, says: "It was immediately clear that cookery had captured his imagination. All he wanted to do was cook and learn more and more. Within weeks he was baking cakes and leaving them on the doorstep of his project workers as a token of thanks. Alongside his catering he attends a gym programme three times a week,

to keep him physically healthy and motivated. He has now kicked his drug habit, and what's more he has just found out he is soon to be working at Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Restaurant in Newquay."

The future is now very bright for Tommy, as he embarks on a prestigious career as a chef.

## Supporting families through Family Intervention Projects

An article published in *The Guardian* newspaper on 25 January 2009 described the impact of a Family Intervention Project on the Walker family, from Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire.

The family had been a source of trouble for many people and agencies in the local area: the police were called to the house on an almost daily basis, the council had to carry out 60 repairs to the family home in one year, their anti-social behaviour caused misery for their neighbours, and school staff struggled to keep their children engaged and out of trouble.

The family entered into an agreement and were assigned a key worker who worked with them intensively to improve their skills and address the underlying problems. The support on offer comes with a challenge to

unacceptable behaviour, and the terms are non-negotiable: a failure to comply can result in eviction from the home.

After 15 months the family has been transformed. *The Guardian* reports: “Now there are few reported problems. The new house is kept in good order, one of the elder boys is back at school, there is 100% attendance among the youngest four, and Walker is paying off her [rent] arrears.”

## **Our future priorities:**

- We know that it is not enough to respond when problems have developed, and when young people are already experiencing harm. One of our priorities is to expand our provision of services for families at risk, to prevent problems from developing and escalating. We will roll out Family Intervention Projects to all areas, offering intensive, non-negotiable support to up to 20,000 families facing complex problems, such as drug and alcohol misuse.
- In the coming year we will introduce a Youth Rehabilitation Order, which will allow the courts to require young offenders to obtain treatment and support as a condition of their order.
- We know that parents and others with caring responsibilities can face barriers to treatment and other services, and that is why one of our priorities for the future is to encourage the provision of more family-friendly services, so that parents can get

the treatment and support they need, and families can be helped to stay together. Parents with drug problems are now being prioritised in local treatment plans.

- We are committed to ensuring that every young person receives good-quality drug education. We will therefore consult the public this year on proposals to make Personal, Social and Health Education statutory for all schools.

# Improving drug treatment and helping people to reintegrate into society

## In the last year we have:

- helped increasing numbers of people to access treatment. Drug treatment is extremely effective at reducing the harms caused by drug misuse, and it is also cost effective, leading to significant savings in crime and health costs;
  - improved the effectiveness of the treatment that people receive: more people are successfully completing their course of treatment, or staying in treatment long enough to get real benefit from it;
- In 2007/08, more than 202,000 people accessed drug treatment services, well in excess of our commitment to double the numbers in drug treatment by 2008. During the course of the year, 82,000 people started new courses of treatment and, of those, more than three-quarters remained in treatment for 12 weeks or more, making their treatment more likely to be effective in the long term.
- further joined up the planning and provision of services, so that Jobcentre Plus offices, local authorities and primary care trusts work together to help people with drug problems to come off drugs and reintegrate into their communities. A network of drug co-ordinators is being recruited for every Jobcentre Plus office, to manage this support more effectively; and
  - provided comprehensive guidance to all service providers so that there is clear information available on which approaches to treatment are the most effective.

## Overcoming problems through treatment

Jamie, aged 28, was referred to treatment at a Phoenix Futures service in January 2008 and was prescribed Subutex. He says: “Before I entered treatment I had a heroin addiction and I was spending around £50 a day. My life was chaos and my family life was messed up. I had tried a number of times to get clean and do methadone detox, but I would always go back to heroin. I was lost, I felt depressed and one day I decided to do something about it.”

He attended the treatment service daily and built up a positive relationship with his key worker. Group therapy sessions provided a safe and confidential environment for him to explore and challenge himself and his peers. It was also an opportunity to establish himself within his peer group and offer his support to others. Jamie received weekly key sessions to discuss his recovery and progress and to get support.

Jamie says: “Over the next few months I started getting a routine back. I got support and I did a lot of group work which I found really useful and interesting. The support of my key worker helped me get stronger and look forward to my future.”

He received support to focus on re-establishing his life. He developed an action plan for the next six months and his key worker helped him to enrol on various courses at the local college.

He expressed an interest in youth work and began volunteering at a local youth club. After two months, his supervisor recognised Jamie’s potential and offered him paid training and employment opportunities. Jamie has now begun reducing his Subutex prescription, reinforcing the positive progress he has made throughout the last year.

Jamie adds: “I started doing courses and voluntary work as a youth worker, which I love. I am also

involved with a service user forum and peer mentoring group and I've started at college on different courses too. This has changed my life; it's made me a much stronger and more confident person. I didn't have much of a life before but now I do. I am a much happier person and can see a positive future out there for me. I am trying my hardest to get that life now."

### **Our future priorities:**

- Our future priorities focus on recovery and reintegration. Having improved access to drug treatment, we now need to make sure that it is effective for the individual, their family and the community. We will continue to drive improvements in the co-ordination of services to help drug users to re-establish their lives and to reintegrate into society. We are supporting a number of pilot programmes throughout the country that

will look at how this can be most effectively achieved, whether through changes to the commissioning of services, or the innovative use of budgets, such as personal budgets.

- Most people who come into drug treatment want to end their dependency on drugs. For some, this can be achieved in a relatively short time; for others it can take years. Our priority is to continue to provide treatment that prevents harm to the individual and to the community, with an overall aim of helping them to overcome their dependency.

## Drug treatment – helping families to stay together

The Brighton Family Service is a Phoenix Futures service providing a six-month residential rehabilitation programme for single parents, couples and pregnant women who want to address their substance misuse issues while continuing to live with and care for their children. It enables parents and children to rebuild family relationships, and helps parents to tackle their substance misuse and develop their parenting skills.

Linda had an 18-year history of substance misuse. She started with alcohol at the age of 12 and by 16 she was using heroin and crack cocaine. She was unable to care for her 18-month-old daughter Sarah, who was placed on an Interim Care Order and into foster care. In February 2008, mother and daughter were reunited at Brighton Family Service.

On arrival, it was clear that Sarah's behaviour could be difficult, and she would lash out and throw tantrums. The crèche staff helped Linda to

set much-needed boundaries for her daughter, and their relationship changed dramatically: Sarah had a set routine and Linda was successfully attending to Sarah's physical and emotional needs.

Linda's self-esteem and confidence improved, and she was able to explore her past issues. She rebuilt relationships with her family and now has regular contact with her parents and one of her siblings. On graduating from the service, a package of support was provided to help Linda to reintegrate into the community. She is now in regular contact with Brighton Unemployed Centre and does voluntary work while Sarah attends nursery.

Linda has now been drug-free for over a year and has found a secured tenancy for her and her daughter. Sarah regularly attends a nursery and her behaviour has changed dramatically, becoming settled and emotionally secure. Sarah is now off the Interim Care Order and Child Protection Register, and is on a 12-month Supervision Order which gives Linda back all her parental responsibilities.

## Communications and community engagement

### In the last year we have:

- provided young people and their parents and carers with honest, credible information about drugs, so they can make informed decisions. The FRANK campaign ([www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)) offers advice and information through its website, telephone helpline, and advertisements broadcast online and on TV and radio. In the last year, two new, high-profile campaigns, on cannabis and cocaine, have been launched. These have been very well received by the young people who are the target audience;

In 2008/09, the Government invested £6.6 million in the FRANK campaign, using TV, radio and online advertising to reach young people. Research found that 89% of young people recognised the campaign and it achieved a 12% increase in the number of 11–21-year-olds who agreed that it was likely that cannabis could damage the mind of someone using it. The same research showed that 53% of the young people interviewed would turn to FRANK for information on drugs, compared with 36% who would ask their mother and 23% who would ask their doctor.

In 2008 the FRANK helpline received 348,355 calls – an average of 954 every day. Some 53% of callers rated their experience of the helpline as excellent. In the same year, there were more than 5 million visits to the FRANK website.

- worked closely with the Colombian government on the Shared Responsibility campaign. Over 80% of the cocaine used in the UK comes from Colombia, and the campaign aims to make users rethink their use, and to consider the social and environmental harm caused in Colombia by the production of cocaine;
  - supported the police and other partners to develop local communication campaigns, to reassure communities and to gain useful information about drug dealers. Successful campaigns have included ‘Rat on a Rat’ (see case study on page 23) and ‘Too much bling? Give us a ring’.
- Many police forces have used this campaign, which encourages the public to contact the police if they know of someone living on the proceeds of crime. These campaigns help the police to gather information about criminals, and to make sure that they can’t flaunt the proceeds of their criminal activity; and
- held the third annual Tackling Drugs Changing Lives Awards event. The awards recognise, reward and celebrate the work being done by drug teams and workers across the country. The 2008 awards recognised the achievements of people and services working with the children of substance misusers, black and minority ethnic communities and women prisoners with substance misuse problems, among others.

National Tackling Drugs Week provides local agencies and police forces with a platform to publicise the work they do to tackle drugs and reduce drug-related crime and to highlight the significant efforts that are being made to keep our communities safe. The last campaign week saw:

- over 1,500 people arrested for drugs offences;
- 31 firearms, 21 imitation firearms and 89 other weapons seized;
- 89 cannabis farms and 19 crack houses closed down;
- Class A drugs with a street value of more than £300,000 seized;
- over £800,00 cash seized from criminals; and
- over 400 news articles in local and regional media.



## Rat on a Rat

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary used National Tackling Drugs Week 2008 to relaunch their 'Rat on a Rat' campaign – urging residents to help to put drug dealers behind bars. The campaign was run in conjunction with Crimestoppers to enable callers to give confidential information through their free telephone number. A large number of Rat on a Rat posters were displayed across the force area to encourage the public to call in with information.

Detective Constable Mike Bradley, force drugs intelligence officer, said: “The Rat on a Rat campaign is an important initiative to increase intelligence on drug dealers and ultimately lead to drug dealers being convicted and the drug supply market disrupted.

“It is part of the ongoing fight against drug misuse in Devon and Cornwall. Drug-related crime causes misery to victims and has a

significant impact on communities.”

The force ran the campaign following the success of similar initiatives in the past in Plymouth and Exeter. During a three-month campaign in Plymouth in 2003, 275 arrests were made and opportunist crime committed to feed drug habits – such as house and car break-ins – dropped by 30%.

The arrests were based on some 400 calls made to Crimestoppers by the public. During the campaign, £73,840 worth of drugs was seized. Much of this was cannabis but at least £17,000 worth of the haul was Class A drugs. Stolen property worth around £10,000 was also recovered, along with £17,400 in cash.

### **Our future priorities:**

- Although we have made a great deal of progress across the drug strategy, too many people still feel that drug use and drug dealing are a problem in their area. This is something we want to address because, where people don't feel safe, communities lack confidence and cohesion, and this allows crime and other problems to flourish. That is why we will be targeting efforts on those communities, putting in place police teams to listen to – and act on – their problems, and letting people know what is being done to reduce drug use and to make their communities safer.
- The FRANK campaigns that we have developed for young people this year have been extremely successful and well received. Our next priority is to develop communications for parents, as parents, when they feel fully informed themselves, can really help to prevent their children experimenting with drugs. In the coming year, we will be looking into what works and what parents need.

This booklet shows the difference that is being made in communities across the country. For more information on what is being done in your area, or for more information about drugs, please contact:





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