

Beverly Oliver
Regional Director
National Treatment Agency
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Dear Beverly

RE: Meeting the requirements of the 2008 Drugs Strategy

Discussions have taken place at the Safer Stockton Partnership, the strategic group that oversees the Drug & Alcohol Action Team, and the Adults Commissioning Group, regarding the above.

As you are aware, in Stockton we have recently re-commissioned the majority of drug treatment services to ensure the treatment system in Stockton is fit for purpose to meet the requirements of the 2008 national Drugs Strategy. This means the treatment system has a strong emphasis on moving people through treatment with the ultimate aim of being drug free and reintegrated into society.

The concern of the Safer Stockton Partnership is whether the measurement of numbers in treatment as a tool for determining budgets is now consistent with the philosophy of the Drugs Strategy. In Stockton we know from the Glasgow prevalence data and other local research/projects that we have a high penetration into the problematic drug using (PDU) population. Historically, we have been good at engaging PDUs into treatment and keeping them there. As stated above, our aim is to progress from this. However, should our treatment system work as we hope, it is likely our numbers in treatment will fall. This will leave us with two scenarios:-

1 – More clients requiring the need for aftercare support to prevent relapse and to further support reintegration;

2 – A greater requirement for assertive outreach to engage those clients not in treatment. As previously mentioned, as we have a high penetration into the PDU population, this would indicate those not in treatment are the most hard to reach requiring more intensive outreach.

For both points a consistent approach to funding would be required to enable the response our clients need. There would also be a continuing and potentially increased need to focus on the prevention agenda.

In addition, a fall in numbers in treatment could result in the NTA perceiving that the partnership is not performing well, despite the local emphasis on striving to meet the requirements of the drugs strategy and the national recovery agenda. Locally we are

measuring the priorities service users, carers and wider stakeholders identified for drug treatment, in addition to the performance requirements of the NTA. (Please see enclosed performance report).

In conclusion, the Partnership has welcomed the aims and philosophy of the 2008 drugs strategy but it feels the funding of drug treatment should be reviewed to give a stronger emphasis on supporting its aims.

We would welcome an opportunity to consider how these arrangements might operate nationally and would be happy to participate in any discussion on the issues highlighted.

Your views on the content of this letter would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Lee
Chair
Safer Stockton Partnership