

NDN NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

NDN's informal newsletter and notice board for
communicating throughout the alcohol field

ISSUE 17 February 2002

Please circulate to ALL staff

NEWS

- News from the field
- Alcohol Concern and NDN news
- National Networks update
- Resources
- Funding

FEEDBACK

- Alcohol, Children and Families Seminar, Peterborough
- Alcohol East's 21st AGM
- National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Younger Adults
- Work, Drink and Drugs
- National Treatment Agency Background & Information

PRACTICE

- Alcohol Misuse – Older People Project, Wandsworth
- Sustaining Drinkers in their Tenancies – how support is offered to drinkers at Framework Housing Association, Nottingham
- Next Choice – structured day care programme in Scarborough
- Community Alcohol & Drug Services Work Placement – medical student reports back

DIARY DATES

- Courses and Conferences

ENCLOSED

- NDN Practice Database form
- Boundaries: Self, Client, Treatment, Profession – New Directions in the Study of Alcohol
- Quality Treatment: the challenges ahead – EATA



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If you require any information about the NDN project, please contact the NDN team at Alcohol Concern, Waterbridge House, 32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EE, tel: 020 7928 7377, fax: 020 7928 4644 or email ndn@alcoholconcern.org.uk

PAPERS AND REPORTS AVAILABLE

NDN project briefing papers currently available:

- Best Value
- Falling through the net? (a resource guide for: multiple needs, outcome monitoring, young people/children of problem drinking parents, medical effects and complementary medicine)
- Influencing the Implementation of a National Alcohol Strategy
- Integrating Alcohol and Drug Services - Myths and Misunderstandings
- Arrest Referral Schemes: The place for alcohol
- Reform of the Mental Health Act 1983: Issues for people with Alcohol Problems
- A Guide to Lobbying: How you can influence the policy making process
- Multiple Needs Reader
- A Guide to Screening Questionnaires
- Alcohol Services and Primary Care Groups
- Lesbian and Gay Men Network Updates 1, 2 & 3
- Producing Literature on Alcohol for Young People
- Families and significant others and alcohol. National Network Updates 1 & 2
- Women and Alcohol Network Update
- Alcohol and Rural Communities Briefing Paper
- QuADS Case Studies

Background papers and reports:

- Under age and Under the Influence – Conference on Young People and Alcohol
- Women and Alcohol – a cause for concern? Conference
- Trouble Within - Conference on families and significant others
- Lesbian and Gay Men and Alcohol Conferences x 2
- Rural Issues Conference
- Alcohol and Mental Health: Chasing the Blues Away Conference
- Dual Diagnosis Training Day
- Women & Alcohol Training Day
- Keeping the Child in Mind Training Day
- National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Younger Adults
Government publishes Care Standards for Registered Homes
- Various seminars on alcohol-related issues (details from the NDN team)

Your contributions requested:

In this edition of the newsletter you will find articles from the Older People Project, Wandsworth; Framework Housing Association, Nottingham; Next Choice, Scarborough; and Community Alcohol & Drug Services, Leeds.

If you have attended a conference that you found particularly useful and may be useful to others in the field or have an example of targeted, innovative or unusual work to exchange we are keen to hear about it

HOW THE NEWSLETTER COULD BE USEFUL TO YOU

**To make best use of this newsletter please
circulate to all staff**

Neighbourhood Watch:

The Practice Database form enclosed (and also on the website – feel free to photocopy it, copies can also be faxed/emailed/posted to you) enables Alcohol Concern to build a database of current practice in the alcohol field, especially unusual, innovative or targeted work. The information on the database can be accessed through the NDN team.

Our aim is to make this a networking tool for alcohol service providers across the country to communicate with each other.

We want you to use it in a way that best suits you.

The practice database form is also used to promote current practice through the newsletter.

How the newsletter could be useful to you:

- Request advice and help, e.g. funding strategies, setting up new pieces of work
- To share examples of practice, both positive and negative (pieces of work that failed/struggled can sometimes be very useful)
- Share information
- Share ideas
- Keep you up to date with NDN activity

Keep sending us your:

- Articles – particularly about pieces of work (specific projects, targeted work, new interventions, new service settings etc)
- Letters
- Notice of relevant events

If you do not have time to write, phone us and we will commit your words to paper.

We are keen to hear from you on anything you care to write about; whether it is a new piece of work, or your views on news, feedback or practice covered in this newsletter.

We hope this will stimulate discussion within the field as well as feed into Alcohol Concern's views and inform national debate.

Please note that articles printed in the bulletin are the opinions of their authors and do not necessarily reflect Alcohol Concern policy. Listings in the news and diary dates sections are not necessarily Alcohol Concern endorsed.

WELCOME TO THE NEW NDN TEAM



Due to a second round of funding from the Community Fund and an additional successful bid with Lloyds TSB we now have 3 project officers and 1 team assistant. **Hollie Venn** is covering Carole's 6 months maternity leave and specialises in agency practice. Hollie has come from working as Deputy Manager in a 'wet' day center and hostel in Nottingham. **Sheryl Hobbs** is project officer for developing effectiveness, dealing with issues of quality, human resources and training. Sheryl will be undertaking a survey of services' training needs with a view to developing and commissioning relevant training modules. **Ted Fawcett** will be joining the NDN team at the beginning of February 2002, his role being to provide expertise regarding regional development. **Bethany Williams** will provide a first point of contact for NDN and will be facilitating all the work of NDN in her role as team assistant.

The NDN team aims to develop and build on what was achieved in the first three-year project. The external evaluation of the first three years was very positive. As well as the production of briefing papers, this newsletter and the steady flow of information to the field already in place, the project will:

- *Continue to facilitate networking among services and ensure a sideways flow of information by enabling the sharing of good practice between services*
- *Establish four new national forums: 'Children and Families'; 'Black and Minority Ethnic Groups'; 'Service User Issues'; and 'Residential Issues'*
- *Attach the new look reference groups to seminars in 9 regions (which tie in with the Regional Development Agencies regions), with issues from the NDN reference groups being taken to form the basis of national conferences*
- *Advise on policy developments by disseminating information out to services and provide guidance to the field on how to respond to imminent and distant changes*
- *Provide a possible avenue through which Alcohol Concern informs, advises and attempts to influence government and policy makers*
- *Promote training modules for project managers and workers in alcohol services, drawing on the existing expertise of staff in local agencies*
- *Maximise the benefits of the Internet*
- *Increase the emphasis on trying to work with services to attempt to shape the environment in which they operate as well as supporting services in working within a given environment, which the project has always done*

Suggestions of regional issues that you would like to be covered in future reference group meetings and/or seminar topics are welcome – please send them to ndn@alcoholconcern or call 020 7928 7377

NDN REFERENCE GROUPS



Networking Distant Neighbours @ Alcohol Concern

What is NDN?

Calling all interested parties.....

As part of our quest to improve collaboration, cooperation and information sharing between alcohol services nationwide the NDN team takes to the road twice a year in April/May and October/November.

We hold meetings in nine venues around the country. These meetings are linked to a seminar or discussion topic and are straightforward meetings to exchange information.

The aim of these meetings (Reference Groups) is for the NDN team to be a conduit for information to pass between services around the country and between services and Alcohol Concern. The NDN team feeds back to Alcohol Concern the issues that are of concern and interest to the field, and carries news of issues from Alcohol Concern and other agencies to the wider field. It is also an opportunity for services to showcase their work.

Who can attend?

A wide range of people from services attend the meetings: managers, team members, sessional workers et al.

The more people we get at the meeting, the more viewpoints are heard and the more information gets exchanged.

The next round of Reference Group Meetings will be in April 2002.

Please come along to the next meeting of your choice with the topic most relevant to you; just contact the NDN team at Alcohol Concern on tel:020 7928 7377, fax: 020 7928 4644, email: bwilliams@alcoholconcern.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Note: for those viewing this newsletter on line, web addresses operate as hyperlinks

London Drug and Alcohol Network (LDAN) news

With the aim of informing its *Good Practice Guide on User Involvement*, LDAN held focus groups for service providers and service users in November. LDAN are also involved in the planning of the two National Treatment Agency (NTA) consultation events for service users being held on 6th February in Brighton and 21st February in Liverpool. *Please contact Ruth at LDAN (details below) for further information.*

LDAN's *Interim Bulletin 6* carries network news from London alcohol and drug agencies, the announcement of an additional £300,000 funding for London voluntary sector services, news of LDAN's continued close involvement with the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA), diary dates and notices. *For further information contact LDAN at 30-31 Great Sutton Street, London EC1V 0NA; tel: 020 7704 0004; email: ldan@ldan.demon.co.uk*

Breakeven project at GamCare

This project aims to work with well-established voluntary alcohol and/or drug agencies to enable them to provide counselling facilities for problem gamblers and their families. The last training weekend was held in Melrose Abbey, Scotland with attendance from Renfrew Council on Alcohol, Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Service (CADAS) and the North East Council on Addictions (NECA). Aquarius in Birmingham is also joining the Breakeven project and will be the first agency to offer a GamCare/Aquarius counsellor. *For further information contact:*

GamCare, Suite 1, 25-27 Catherine Place, Westminster, London SW1E 6DU; tel: 020 7233 8988; fax: 020 7233 8977; website: www.gamcare.org.uk.

London Alliance of Service Users (LASU)

LASU has received in the region of £8000 start up funding from the Greater London Drug and Alcohol Purchasers Group. The money will be used to establish LASU as a credible force representing and reflecting a range of views on service user-related issues. *Contact LASU at: LASU c/o BAT, Old Balmoral Ward, St Bernard's Hospital, Uxbridge Road, Southall UB1 3EU; tel: 020 8354 8983; fax: 020 8354 8985; email:*

Lasusers@aol.com

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Children and Young People Consultation

Consultation on a new draft circular from the Welsh Assembly on Substance Misuse: Children and Young People has been launched. The circular covers developing a substance misuse policy, substance misuse education and dealing with incidents involving substance misuse. The closing date for responses is 28th December 2001.

Further information from:
www.wales.gov.uk/subieducation/training/content/schoolperformance/health/submisuse-consultletter-e.htm.

95.8 Capital FM's Help a London Child

Alcohol East was presented with a cheque for £2,500 in December 2001 from Help a London Child. The grant is one of 416 awarded in 2001 to children's charities all over London. 95.8 Capital FM listeners, companies and local groups raised the money over the Easter period. Help a London Child was launched in 1975 by Capital Radio, and since then has raised over £13 billion pounds for some of London's most deserving children.

For more information please contact Alcohol East, tel: 020 8257 3068, fax: 020 8257 3088

Rough Sleepers Unit research report

Research carried out by the government's Rough Sleepers Unit has shown that almost half of the homeless people who beg spend some of their money on alcohol and cigarettes and that about a third spend most of their money on drugs. A quarter of the people interviewed said begging was their only source of income.

Further information:
www.housing.dtlr.gov.uk/information/rough/begging

NHS Patients and the Public Consultation Events, March 2002

The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) is holding six free daytime consultation events in March 2002 with community and voluntary organizations to improve how they work with patients and the public.

The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) helps improve the quality of patient care by carrying out reviews of all NHS organizations in England and Wales. This series of consultation events aims to see how best to increase the involvement of NHS patients and the public in CHI's work. These events will be interactive and involve small group discussions.

For more details go to
www.chi.nhs.uk/patients or call 020 7436 9737 or email philipg@venuescope.com
**all events are free*

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

'One size fits all' – Exciting news from Broadreach House, Plymouth

Broadreach House has recently introduced some major changes in its residential treatment for people dependent on alcohol/drugs.

Drawing on the strengths of Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, a different kind of relationship with clients has evolved, developed within the traditional 12-step model – the 'one size fits all' solution to addiction.

A two week Newcomers

Programme aims to enable clients to explore their lifestyle, their attitude to change and to become more self aware, based on an eight session Motivational Enhancement programme. At the same time a series of workshops focuses on issues such as 'Managing Withdrawals', as well as assessing severity of addiction and individual treatment needs. The next 4-6 week period continues to support clients in recognizing and dealing with the impact that drugs and alcohol have had on their lives, utilizing group therapy, workshops and counselling.

The emphasis is on the impetus for change being drawn from the clients' own intrinsic motives and goals. The approach is client-centred and quietly directive. Aftercare and Resettlement services are also available.

To find out more, full details of the services at Broadreach are available at www.broadreach-house.org.uk or email busdev@broadreach-house.org.uk or tel Rick Weeks on: 01752 790000

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Primary Concern – Issue 2

The second edition of the PCAIS newsletter is now available containing a summary of the results of the PCAIS survey on the 'Alcohol Information Needs of Primary Care Professionals'. Issue 2 has a practical focus and contains articles on two innovative projects to tackle alcohol misuse in primary care.

Primary Concern – Issue 3

The third edition of the PCAIS newsletter is also now available and contains information about PCT commissioning of alcohol services, increases in alcohol related ill health and two articles on alcohol projects in primary care that were funded under Alcohol Concern's 'Alcohol services in primary care' grants programme.

Primary Care Network

The primary care network is now operational and has 30 members. The network provides an opportunity for alcohol services involved in primary care work to share ideas and receive advice from each other. To join the network, organisations simply have to complete a questionnaire about their primary care work. Members receive summary sheets and contact details for all the network members and can then contact organisations carrying out similar work.

The network also has a discussion board in the primary care section of the Alcohol Concern website to allow people to discuss primary care work. This discussion board is open to non-network members.

Brief interventions factsheet

This factsheet contains information about brief interventions and their application in health settings using information from research studies. It provides information about the content and effectiveness of brief interventions and is intended for health professionals and anyone interested in strategies to prevent alcohol misuse.

Indicators, symptoms and harmful effects of alcohol misuse

This factsheet was written in response to requests from primary care professionals for information on the physical, psychological, social and familial symptoms that can indicate alcohol misuse. It describes both the indicators of alcohol misuse and the potential harmful effects of excessive drinking. It does not provide a comprehensive list of all possible symptoms but instead contains information about the main indicators that can alert health care professionals to the possibility of alcohol misuse.

We don't have an alcohol problem in our practice? – Advice on how to engage primary care teams in alcohol projects.

This factsheet contains useful tips for encouraging primary care teams to take part in alcohol projects. It summarises the experiences of the 11 demonstration projects involved Alcohol Concern's 'Alcohol services in primary care grants programme', which have all successfully developed partnerships with primary care teams.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Screening tools for healthcare settings factsheet

This factsheet was written in response to requests for information on alcohol screening tools from primary care professionals. It compares alcohol-screening tools in terms of their reliability and effectiveness at detecting problem drinking, the type of problem drinking they detect, ease of use and suitability for health settings. It provides examples of screening tools alongside research evidence to support their efficacy and discusses the implementation of screening programmes in different health care settings.

To order PCAIS publications contact: Anna Wood, Primary Care Information Officer, Alcohol Concern, Tel: 020 7922 8668
Email:
awood@alcoholconcern.org.uk

Seminar - 'Preparing for pick-up 2002/03; influencing the Decision Makers'

This seminar was held in September for the projects involved in the 'Alcohol Services in Primary Care Grants Programme'. The projects only have six months of grant funding remaining and the seminar provided the opportunity for agencies to share their funding proposals and actions to dovetail the funded service into the PCG/T decision making process. The seminar aimed to explore how to maximise the opportunity for continued funding at a time when commissioners are starting to consider their funding intentions for 2002/03.

In the morning Peter Forrester, Chief Executive of Wyre Forest PCT gave a presentation on the current situation of PCG/Ts. He discussed the implications of the new NHS document 'Shifting the Balance of Power within the new NHS'. This document suggests that all PCGs will become PCTs by April 2002, two years earlier than initially planned. This means that from April 2002 PCTs will be responsible for commissioning a full gamut of services and that should, and could, include alcohol and drug services. In his presentation Peter Forrester also discussed strategies for encouraging PCTs to fund alcohol projects. A summary of his presentation will be available in the winter edition of Primary Concern.

In the afternoon two alcohol services presented examples of funding proposals to PCTs for continued funding or their alcohol projects in primary care. Feedback was given from Peter Forrester and Mandy Edwards (a Practice Nurse from a PCT board) on what should be included in funding proposals to PCTs. Both agreed that it was essential to demonstrate how alcohol work can help PCTs meet Government priority targets for waiting lists, CHD and stroke, mental health, and accidents.

The seminar was very successful and the feedback received was very positive. If you would like further information on the issues discussed in the seminar contact Anna Wood, Primary Care Information Officer or Jim Asbury, Grants Programmes Coordinator at Alcohol Concern.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Alcohol – one less problem for primary care?

A One-Day Conference - Thursday 28th February 2002, The Birmingham Grand

By April 2002 all PCTs will be responsible for commissioning alcohol services: one more problem for primary care. However, alcohol misuse impacts on CHD, accidents, mental health and waiting lists and times. Tackling alcohol misuse successfully will decrease the burden on primary care and help PCTs meet government targets.

The conference has a practical focus and will:

- *Demonstrate why primary care offers an ideal opportunity to tackle alcohol misuse*
- *Discuss evidence for the effectiveness of alcohol interventions in primary care*
- *Provide examples of alcohol initiatives in primary care*
- *Provide a choice of masterclasses on:*
 - Screening tools and brief intervention techniques
 - Setting up an alcohol project in primary care
 - Commissioning alcohol services for a PCT
 - Community detoxification

Who should attend?

The conference is designed to help primary care teams increase their skills in dealing with alcohol work, PCTs to take on commissioning of alcohol services and alcohol services to work in primary care.

Alcohol Concern members £120

Non members £140

For further details contact Alice Holtom, Alcohol Concern, Waterbridge House, 32 – 36 Loman Street, London, SE1 OEE. Tel: 202 7928 7377, fax: 020 7928 4644, Email aholtom@alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol Services in primary care – an update on the grants programme.

This update provides a brief overview of the progress the 11 demonstration grants projects made in their first 5 months of operation and provides short summaries of the projects. As part of the evaluation of the programme interviews were held with a PCG/T representative and GP or practice nurse involved in each of the projects. These interviews aimed to find out how these individuals felt the alcohol projects could benefit primary health care teams, commissioners of alcohol services and patients. A summary of their views is contained in the update and this information may be useful for alcohol services planning to begin work in primary care.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

New Alcohol and Mental Health Project

This is a new initiative aimed at enhancing services for people with both alcohol and serious mental health problems. Based around the implementation of the government's National Service Framework (NSF) for mental health services the project will aim to:

- Promote alcohol issues with the NSF Local Implementation Teams
- Work with alcohol specific agencies to enhance their links with mainstream mental health services.

The project is not specifically aimed at dual diagnosis clients in the sense that the phrase has come to be used; we are interested in everyone in contact with specialist psychiatric services who could benefit from support around alcohol issues. We also want to look at the needs of people who attend alcohol services but who may also be in need of support for other aspects of their mental health: What options do services have for onward referral? Can mainstream mental health services cope with people with problematic drinking? Is it still easy for people to fall between the two stools?

For further information contact
 Graeme Kerr Tel: 020 7922 8657,
 Email gkerr@alcoholconcern.org.uk
 or Alice Holtom Tel: 020 7922 8670,
 Email:
aholtom@alcoholconcern.org.uk

'Twice as many people are hooked on alcohol than all other drugs'

1 person in 13 is dependent on alcohol in Britain – twice as many as are hooked on all forms of drugs, including prescription drugs (1 in 26).

Yet just over £1 million is spent on alcohol prevention and treatment – compared with £91.45 million on drugs – while the drinks trade spends £227 million a year to advertise its products.

These are some of the startling new figures featured in a report published by Alcohol Concern - entitled 'The State of the Nation' – that formed the backdrop to this year's Annual Conference.

Commenting on the figures, Alcohol Concern Director Eric Appleby said:

"The sheer breadth and scale of the problems – in terms of their impact on people's health, relationships and pockets, not to mention on public services, especially the NHS - reinforces the need for urgent joined-up action at a national level.

What we need is a coordinated strategy that concentrates on prevention of harm, and tackles alcohol misuse on all fronts – education, public campaigns, community safety, counselling and treatment."

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Contracts win for new consultancy

Since the launch of consultancy@alcoholconcern we have won several new contracts.

The first of these is a review of the impact of alcohol misuse in Hackney for Hackney DAT and the Safer Communities Executive Committee. This involves an assessment of alcohol misuse and current initiatives in the borough to inform the development of a local alcohol strategy.

A Young people's substance misuse needs assessment is also being produced for Barking and Havering DAT. The overall aim of this study is to produce an integrated approach to substance misuse education, prevention and treatment services for children and young people, and to identify any needs for increased provision.

An Alcohol needs assessment and service review for Redbridge and Waltham Forest Drug Action Teams' Joint Commissioning Group will assess alcohol services in the two boroughs against identified needs and make recommendations for their future development.

A QuADS assessment for NORCAS involves an assessment against the Quality in Alcohol and Drug Services Organisational Standards.

Consultancy@alcoholconcern offers a consultancy service to a wide range of organisations on topics including local strategies combating

alcohol misuse, service commissioning and reviews, quality assessments under QuADS, primary care training and consultancy, and outcome monitoring and evaluation. For further details Email: consultancy@alcoholconcern.org.uk

National Network Update

Part of the remit of the new NDN project is to set up four national forums for people working with marginalized groups. For further information, or to become involved in one or more of these fora please contact the NDN team (contact details p3). The four national fora are:

***Children and Families
Black & Minority Ethnic Groups
Service Users
Residential Issues***

WATCH THIS SPACE.....

NDN proposes to develop training modules; these will be geared towards the new set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) due out in May 2002, the two proposed areas being Organisational Management and Practice. The format of this training will depend on consultation. NDN will hold conferences in Spring/early summer where the NOS will be dealt with in detail. The National Occupational Standards can be found in draft form on the website: www.healthwork.co.uk. Feedback from the field on the appropriateness of the standards is still being taken.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Care rules threat to people with drink and drugs problems

Hundreds of people recovering from serious drink and drug problems could be deprived of crucial treatment and counselling facilities – if proposed new Government standards for residential care homes are imposed.

That's the warning issued by Alcohol Concern and DrugScope, who are asking the Department of Health to think again.

Both point to their recent joint survey, which found that some of the new standards could potentially have a serious impact on residential drug and alcohol treatment availability. The standards are due to come into effect in April 2002.

The survey obtained the views of 78 of the 130 registered residential alcohol and drugs facilities in the UK. It finds:

- *40 per cent of residential care beds for people recovering from serious drink and drug problems could disappear as a direct result of the standards' introduction*
- *For some individual agencies the bed losses will mean they become economically unviable and are likely to close*
- *Vulnerable people would not get the help they need and the Government's drugs strategy target of a 66 per cent increase in participation in treatment would be very difficult to achieve*

The new standards, which will have the most impact on residential services are those that call for minimum bedroom sizes, larger communal areas, fewer people sharing toilets and bathrooms and an end to room-sharing.

"We are all for improving standards in residential homes," says Sue Baker of Alcohol Concern. "We applaud a great deal that is in the new standards; but certain key elements betray a misunderstanding of the needs of people recovering from alcohol and drug addictions, and would be a disaster for them."

Both Alcohol Concern and Drugscope have voiced their concerns in submissions to the Department of Health – urging the Government to think again about the suggested standards and refer the issue to the new National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse for further consideration. In addition, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Misuse and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Misuse have written to minister Jacqui Smith to request an urgent meeting to discuss their concerns on this issue.

Copies of the *Registered Alcohol and Drug Care Homes Survey Report* are available from the Alcohol Concern Information Line, Monday – Friday, 1pm – 5pm on Tel: 020 7922 8667.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Alcohol Concern's Website Update

The Alcohol Concern website is continuing to develop, with new information and sections being added on a regular basis. The site contains details of new publications, such as the young people factsheet, primary care publications and our annual report. The NDN section will soon be re-organised to reflect the work of the new team, and developments in the other projects that we run will also be reflected on the site.

The main work on the website for this year will be the development of a members only area of the site. This will be a password protected area, designed to give Alcohol Concern members access to extra information that is not provided in the main body of the website. Late last year we sent a questionnaire to members asking what they would like to see in the members only area in order to ensure that the section is as useful as possible. We had a very high response rate to the questionnaire and a number of useful suggestions were made as to what the content and aims of such a section should be. As a result of this consultation, the member's only area will contain information such as:

- Consultation documents and a feedback form to send AC their views
- Copies of AC responses to consultations
- Links to new publications and other new info on the main AC website

- Summaries of documents
- Nuggets from Findings
- Information on funding opportunities
- A news for members section
- Details of discounted events or publications
- Information on events in the alcohol field
- Information on the development of the NTA
- Developments re the Alcohol Strategy
- Information on best practice

This area of the site will take some time to develop, but we plan to have it set up by May.

The website is getting over 40,000 visitors per month, with many people returning to the site on more than one occasion. Most people look at Alcohol Strategy, Advice, Alcohol Services and the AERC sponsored Key Topics pages, and the NDN section gets about 300 visitors per month. Many visitors to the site spend up to 20 minutes on the site, looking at a number of different pages, downloading documents and purchasing publications via our online bookshop. We are hoping that the development of the member's only section will encourage more visitors to the site and allow us to add value to the existing membership package.

The Alcohol Concern website is www.alcoholconcern.org.uk. If you have any comments about the site or the content of the members only section, contact Zoë Freedman on 020 7922 8665 or email zfreedman@alcoholconcern.org.uk

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

News from the Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team at Alcohol Concern and DrugScope

The Education and Prevention Team are planning to hold three regional conferences on alcohol education and prevention with young people following the successful national conference 'Alcohol, Education and Young People' last October. The aim will be to support work at a local level to provide alcohol education in statutory and non-statutory settings. We hope to draw on local experiences and initiatives to provide workshops for stimulating ideas and promoting partnership working where possible.

We are particularly keen to involve alcohol services that work with young people either who are themselves problem drinkers or who are affected by the problem drinking of some one with whom they live, and with services that work with young people in schools or youth work settings

The conferences are currently planned to take place in May and June to cover London, the North (conference based in Leeds or Harrogate) and the South West (conference based in Bristol).

If you have information that might help us plan these conferences, or would like more information about them, please contact Nicola Sinclair on nsinclair@alcoholconcern.org.uk or call the Alcohol Concern switchboard 020 7928 7377

QuADS Competencies

The QuADS Competencies is the long awaited companion volume to QuADS Organisational Standards for Alcohol and Drug Services. The two sets of standards were developed to complement each other and the competencies provide standards against which individual worker performance in most aspects of substance misuse work can be measured, in much the same way as the Organisational standards describe effective agency practice.

Like the QuADS Organisational standards the competencies were drafted by an expert group, drawing from existing national standards wherever possible, and consulted upon with the field. The competencies can provide a framework for performance, which can inform Job descriptions and person specifications, measure performance of staff, identify training needs and assist in the design and evaluation of training.

QuADS Competencies is available from the Alcohol Concern Bookshop and DrugScope Publications Department price £15 (members) £20 (non-members).

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

Alcohol Concern Consultancy Service

Alcohol Concern has brought together a group of experienced consultants from within and outside alcohol field, with access to the support and technical back up it can provide as the national agency on alcohol misuse.

Alcohol Concern has a long history of developing standards for alcohol services. First ever minimum standards were developed in 1993, working jointly with DrugScope these were further developed resulting in QuADS, Quality in alcohol and Drug Services, the nationally accepted standards for alcohol and drug services.

Alcohol Concern Consultancy Services can provide:

- Agency review and Action planning against QuADS standards
- Support and Assistance in developing organisational practice to meet QuADS
- Independent assessment by the national organisation on alcohol certifying the status of the agency against the standards

For individual Alcohol Services the basic package will include:

Initial desktop review of the organisational policies, procedures and evidence of practice against QuADS

- A preliminary report showing where QuADS standards have been met and indicating areas requiring development, for discussion with the agency

Agencies may wish to commission help with policy development leading to

- In depth assessment against QuADS
- A full report
- Certification of assessment

Certification by Alcohol Concern takes two forms:

Preliminary Certification Status

will be awarded to agencies that we assess to have met at least 80% of the minimum standards and where a timetable has been approved for the achievement of remaining standards.

Full Certification Status will be awarded to agencies assessed as meeting all the standards.

consultancy@alcoholconcern will supply tailored packages for all or any parts of this process. Costs will depend on the level of support requested and the size of the agency. Local commissioners may wish to carry out assessment of all local services against the standards. Area reviews and assessment of services can also be undertaken.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

In addition to the assistance available to implement QuADS, Alcohol Concern's Consultancy Team is equipped to work with individual services looking to develop capacity, management and organisational practice, funding and fund raising, organisation reviews and restructuring issues.

Alcohol Concern can also advise on issues such as:

- Contracting requirements
- Equal Opportunities policies and user involvement,
- Implementation and evaluation of services, including development of Outcome Monitoring

If you want further information about the consultancy service or if you want to discuss issues facing your organisation and to explore what benefits an expert can bring, you can ring Enise Aymer, Business Development Manager on 020 7922 8659 or e-mail eaymer@alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol: Support and Guidance for Schools

To date guidance for schools has focused largely on illicit drugs. The new guide – *Alcohol: Support and Guidance for Schools* - aims to help schools:

- Deliver evidence-based alcohol education to pupils - which help them to understand the legal, cultural and social status of alcohol.

- Prepare for, and manage, incidents relating to pupils' drinking – as well as the potential adverse effects of other people's drinking, especially parents.
- Prepare for, and manage, issues relating to staff drinking where it affects their own welfare or capacity to do their job.

Explains Vivienne Evans, who heads Alcohol Concern and DrugScope's Education and Prevention Team:

"Rather than burdening schools with additional work, this document provides practical guidance and support to help them tackle alcohol education and alcohol related incidents and welfare issues - including staff welfare and where the quality of pupils' lives is affected by problem drinking.

Children and young people are entitled to education about alcohol. It is an important part of a curriculum that prepares them for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life. Alcohol plays a significant part in our culture, our society, our relationships and our economy."

The guide costs £10 and is available from the Alcohol Concern Bookshop. Tel: 020 7922 8667, Monday-Friday, 1pm – 5pm. Free copies of the guide have been sent to local education authorities, national healthy schools coordinators and drug action teams.

NEWS FROM ALCOHOL CONCERN

NEWS ON FUNDING

Funding sources for IT Equipment, Software and Services

Those of you who attended the most recent round of NDN Reference Group meetings will be aware that the internet, through the development of the NDN web pages and increased use of email, is to become an important part of the project. It is hoped that increased use of this technology will create more opportunities for effective networking between services and ensure thorough and widespread dissemination of information and good practice.

However, the NDN project is aware that access to information technology within services is limited as the costs of attaining and installing the appropriate equipment can be prohibitive.

In an attempt to help services overcome these problems, the following list of possible funding sources for IT equipment has been compiled. The list is by no means exhaustive and will be updated regularly – please contact the NDN team if you know of any IT schemes/funding sources in your area that may be of interest to others.

Please note that the appearance of schemes in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the NDN Team of services offered nor does it guarantee that requests for funding will be successful.

BT Community Connections

BT is offering community groups across the UK the chance to connect to the World Wide Web through a national awards scheme. Any group or individual who can show that the provision of a free Internet ready PC from BT will have a positive impact on their community can apply. The next round of bidding is due to start in February/March this year.

Further Information:

*BT Community Connections, PO Box 30775, London WC13 4QE
Fax: 020 77453301*

Carlton Television, West Country Region

Any charity or community group working in the in the South West Region can apply for a grant. In particular the organisation wish to encourage local and regional community initiatives that involve people in learning social, cultural or recreational skills.

Further Information:

*Carlton Broadcasting, West Country Region, Langage Science Park, Plymouth PL7 5BQ
Tel: 01752 333333*

Recycle – IT

This computer recycling company provides 'computers for communities'.

Further Information:

*Recycle – IT, c/o SKF (UK) Ltd, Sundon Park, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 3BL
Tel: 01582 492436*

NEWS ON FUNDING

In Kind Direct

This company distributes donated goods and office equipment to voluntary organisations across the UK. Donors include major manufacturers and suppliers.

Further Information:

*In Kind Direct, PO Box 140, 20 St Mary at Hill, London EC3R 8NA
Tel: 020 72045003*

Lapwing Computers

This computer services company, which sells and installs PCs, offers a negotiated discounted on some services for projects in the voluntary sector.

Further Information:

*Bruce Pickett, 33 Front Street, Westgate, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 1SD
Tel: 01388 517517
(Mention 'charitybuyer' when calling)*

The UIA Charitable Foundation

This foundation provides funding for charities that take action on social issues that might otherwise not be tackled. The preferred areas for funding include alcohol and drug addiction. *Further information: Christine Kraina, UIA Charitable Foundation, Kings Court, London Road, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2TP; tel: 01438 761615; fax: 01438761762; email: christine.kraina@uia.co.uk.*

ESF Global Grants

This is a small grants programme aiming to provide a simplified application process for grants of less than £10,000. The intention is to make ESF resources more easily available to small non-statutory organisations. The grants will be distributed by 'intermediary bodies' that provide the necessary match funding. *For information on Global Grants schemes in local areas contact your local Government Office listed under:
www.dtlr.gov.uk/index/htm.*

A guide to funding from government departments and agencies (second edition)

This publication describes the funding available for voluntary organisations and community groups in England from central government departments and agencies. The guide gives policy guidelines and criteria, total annual funding and details of grants given with their range and typical beneficiaries. *Authors Susan Forrester and Anthony Stenson; Price £18.50 plus postage. Available from: DSC Books, 24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP tel: 020 7209 5151; fax: 020 7209 5049.*

NEWS ON FUNDING

NEWS ON RESOURCES

Affordable support for Information Communications Technology (ICT)

ITSUVO is a not-for-profit company, sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Its remit is to provide affordable advice and practical help to voluntary groups on the efficient and effective use of ICT. ITSUVO is independent, with no links to other commercial interests. *Contact ITSUVO at Unit 16, Listerhills Science Park, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 1HR; tel: 01274 738388; fax: 01274 391937; email: info@fhit.org; web: www.fhit.org.*

Funders and Quality in the Voluntary Sector

This latest briefing from the Quality Standards Task Group summarises the findings of their research into funders' attitudes towards quality in the voluntary sector. It includes, in brief, recommended actions for funders, voluntary organisations and umbrella bodies. *The full report costs £15 plus £3 p&p and is available from: NCVO Hamilton House Mailings, Earlstree Court, Earlstree Road, Corby NN117 4AX; tel: 01536 399016; fax: 01536 399012.*

Telephone Helplines Directory

This fully revised edition is a comprehensive source of information about helplines operating in the UK, giving details of over 1,100 local and national helpline services. *Price £18. Published by: Telephone Helplines Association; 4 Deans Court, St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4V 5AA; tel: 020 7651 4321; email: info@helplines.org.uk; website: www.helplines.org.uk.*

To Mutual Advantage: getting the best out of Best Value

This guide shows how quality standards and local compacts can help voluntary organisations demonstrate best value. It promotes a better understanding between the public and voluntary sectors and shows how this can benefit local communities. *Produced by NCVO in partnership with the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IdeA); Price £10 (£8 NCVO members). Available from: NCVO, Hamilton House Mailings, Earlstree Court, Earlstree Road, Corby NN117 4AX; tel: 01536 399016; fax: 01536 399012.*

New guidance from Connexions

The first two parts of a set of four guidance documents is now available from the Connexions Service. These are Working Together Connexions and Social Services and Working Together Connexions and Teenage Pregnancies. The first outlines the respective remits of the Connexions Service and Social Services and sets out the principles that should underpin joint working. The second sets out the principles that should underpin joint working between the Connexions Service and those involved in teenage pregnancy strategies, looking at developing an integrated support service for young people. *Further information from www.connexions.gov.uk/pdf/workin together.pdf and www.connexions.gov.uk/pdf/teenage pregnancy.pdf.*

NEWS ON RESOURCES

Supporting People guidance

The DTLR has published two sets of guidance on the new funding régime for supported housing. The Interim Guidance deals with immediate or one-off tasks to be completed before April 2003 and the Steady State Guidance deals with the longer term administration of the system. All Supporting People providers need to have a contract with their local authority as a legal basis for payment and the contracts will be used to work out the size of the Supporting People pot. *The guidance can be found on the Supporting People website: www.spkweb.org.uk.*

New Opportunities Fund (NOF) new programme

The NOF has launched a new programme to widen access to information technology and the internet for socially-excluded groups in England. 192 projects will be funded and groups targeted will include minority ethnic groups, people living in isolated rural areas and the homeless. *Further details from the NOF on: 0845 275000*

QuADS Case Studies

This publication from the NDN team contains case studies from five organisations showing the different approaches they took towards implementing QuADS, why they did it, who was involved, where they got the funding, what good it did, what difficulties they encountered, how they overcame them and how they felt about the whole process. The case studies provide a useful insight into the pros and cons of QuADS implementation and examples of the different ways of approaching the QuADS question.

A copy of the case studies was sent out to all alcohol services in September and additional copies can be obtained from Alcohol Concern bookshop.

Transitional Housing Benefit

SITRA, the leading organization on Supporting People have forwarded to Alcohol Concern a standard model spreadsheet in relation to Transitional Housing Benefit. This will be of particular interest to smaller providers who are preparing charge splits under Transitional Housing Benefit regulations. The model includes an introduction to the spreadsheet, frequently asked questions, a copy of the spreadsheet and information on accessing advice.

The whole document is available on Alcohol Concern's website via the NDN page and also at www.sitra.org.uk

NEWS ON RESOURCES

FEEDBACK

Children, families and those affected by problem drinkers Drinksense/NDN Seminar 17th October 2001

Carole Sired reports on this seminar held jointly by NDN and Drinksense in Cambridgeshire.

Christine Greer, Chief Executive of Drinksense, introduced the day by explaining a little bit about the Alcohol Concern Networking Distant Neighbours (NDN) reference groups that meet quarterly around the country. The aim is for local agencies to get together to discuss issues of concern to the alcohol field (local, regional and national). These reference group meetings often take the form of a seminar on a specific topic, hence today's seminar on children and families.

Christine made the point that events of this kind are frequently organised with the aim of getting something from those attending in order to produce a strategy or some such. This was not the case here; with the aim being that people take something away from the afternoon to help/inform their practice.

Wendy Robinson, NSPCC Family Alcohol Service gave an overview of current practice, and research that applies to practice. Wendy explained that the Family Alcohol Service grew out of a smaller project that worked with the children of problem drinkers. However, working in that project, Wendy soon recognised that they were only seeing the severe end of the spectrum and that there were many more children in families who could benefit from help/ interventions, but were not being seen by services.

Wendy proposed the need for a family centre to address these issues and, following a feasibility study, funding has been obtained to set up a three year pilot service, with the hope that this model could then be disseminated across the country.

Wendy then presented some of the basic statistics about the effects on children of problem drinking families. She made the point that it is not the drinking per se that is the problem for children, but the violence, tension, neglect etc that may go with it. Family life and the way a family functions can be affected in many ways, but Wendy made the point that she is not talking about 'bad parents' solely because they are problematic drinkers.

There is a whole range of problems that can occur as a result of parental or family problem drinking, but we should make no assumptions about whether a child's welfare is (or isn't) compromised. However, alcohol can get in the way and make it difficult to recognise what is going on within a family.

The effects of parental problem drinking on children are usually all about communication. The child is trying to say things are not alright, and we fail them if we only focus on the symptom (i.e. the disruptive or withdrawn behaviour etc). The problems children develop result from some of their needs not being met all of the time, not necessarily total neglect.

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The challenge for us when working with these children is to be dependable in a world where children have no one to depend on and have learnt not to trust adults. In the

words of one 11 year old girl "When mum depends on alcohol and I depend on mum, I have no-one to depend on".

Questions

Points raised by questioners included how we define problem drinking and how important it is to include in this infrequent binges that recur over a period of time.

The point was also made that the problem for alcohol services is that alcohol use is seen as the norm for society unlike, for instance, domestic violence or drug use where there is no 'acceptable level'. This means that most people can distance themselves from violence or drug use and to see it as 'wrong', but much harder to do this with alcohol use.

Another problem is the 'grey area' of children who have not come to the attention of social services or the child protection register and how difficult it is to reach these children. Wendy made the point that people are often worried about working with these families and need to take more risks in terms of identifying or referring them. The difficulty is working with these families without scaring them off (i.e. with the threat of social services involvement).

Small Group Discussion Feedback

Six groups discussed the issues raised by Wendy's presentation. The main points of the feedback were:

- ? It was difficult keeping to the issue of children of problem drinkers and not to talk about parents and young people with problems themselves.
- ? There are very few services for children of problem drinkers, so when they are identified it is hard to know where to go from there. There are services for young carers, who can be carers of problem drinkers, although usually linked with mental or physical health problems.
- ? When these children are identified we need to be sure they need intervention – important to avoid stigmatising them and should not start something we cannot complete.
- ? Lack of outreach – how to reach these children before they are in desperate need. Problems are sometimes half identified, but then left (we need to take more risks).
- ? The lack of a national alcohol agenda makes this work more difficult.
- ? There needs to be co-ordination of cases with a designated case management worker.
- ? We should recognised that it is possible to work with just one family member and still effect changes in the family as a whole.
- ? Important to think about motivation – how to engage with a family without scaring them off – i.e. need to explode the myth that social services want to split up families, and emphasise that they can be a help and support.

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- ? We all need to take more responsibility for the welfare of children in these families and not hide behind our single roles.
- ? Need to acknowledge that there are different skills in different agencies.
- ? It can be difficult dealing with different agencies' agendas, for example alcohol agencies not wanting to risk losing the adult client.
- ? We all tend to work with the 'sharp end' clients because there is no funding to do anything, so the 'grey area' remains un-addressed.

Interventions

Wendy's second presentation looked at how to engender factors that help develop resilience in children of problem drinkers. She suggested that sometimes the best way to help these children is to help the parent. You don't necessarily need to see the child to effect change.

There are a number of protective factors and elements that can be developed in the family that will help the children. We can help to increase resilience by looking at the family and its problems as a whole, not just the alcohol issue. If a family is involved with social services the new Assessment Framework breaks down the issues around parenting capacity, enabling them to be flagged up and addressed.

There are a number of key therapeutic issues to address when working with the children and young people. These do not differ greatly from the issues that are key to working with adults, but are just as important to work on.

We should be campaigning for more designated services for children, funding for alcohol services to address parenting issues and more confidential services for children (such as ChildLine). Also alcohol services need to employ children and families workers and children's services need to have workers able to work with adult alcohol misuse.

Plenary

Issues raised in the plenary included who is going to do the longer-term work required in these families? The funding and initiatives from the Government do not nurture this approach. Everything is geared around short interventions. There needs to be pressure on the Department of Health to recognise the need for longer-term support.

There are huge monies available from the Government through the Children's Fund, aimed at ensure more services for 5-13 year olds. The money is targeted at identifying and supporting children who do not meet statutory service requirements, with the aim of preventing children reaching crisis point. The Community Foundation Network (CFN), which is managing the Children's Fund Local Network can be contacted on 020 7422 8611 or www.communityfoundations.org.uk

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The main messages from the afternoon were the need for sustained input at a low level for a period of time as well as acute services and the importance of coordinated care.

The NSPCC Family Alcohol Service has produced a handbook for practitioners on Alcohol Child Care and Parenting. This is available free (for the price of the postage) from the service: *NSPCC Family Alcohol Service, 88-91 Troutbeck, off Robert Street, London NW1 4EJ; tel: 020 7383 3817; fax: 020 7383 4989; email: wrobinson@nspcc.org.uk; website: www.nspcc.org.uk*

FEEDBACK

Alcohol East's 21st AGM

Carole Sired, Project Officer in the NDN team at Alcohol Concern, attended Alcohol East's 21st AGM in Stratford, London.

Poetry and domestic violence featured at this milestone AGM of an organisation that always prides itself on finding interesting speakers for its events, this one being no exception.

Benjamin Zephaniah, giving good value as always and backed by two local young musicians, provided the poetry.

Phillipa Chipping, Domestic Violence Coordinator in Tower Hamlets, London, examined issues around domestic violence and alcohol. Phillipa spoke about domestic violence as being a widespread but hidden problem that can involve not just physical violence but also sexual or psychological abuse and financial exploitation. Two women every week are killed in the UK by their partner, often whilst in the process of trying to separate from them.

It is difficult to establish the prevalence of domestic violence as many cases still go unreported. However there is more information gathered now than there was ten years ago when the monitoring was only carried out by victim organisations.

Some statistics gleaned from the available information are that 32% of the reported incidents in Tower Hamlets last year were repeat incidents; only 22% of perpetrators were charged; 21% of all cases of violence were domestic violence and 85% of alleged perpetrators were male.

Domestic violence takes place across the whole spectrum of ethnic groups, with the percentages of incidents in different ethnic groups reflecting the make-up of the Tower Hamlets population.

Phillipa made the point that although there are now initiatives to address this issue across many agencies (police, social services, homeless organisations, voluntary organisations) with £4m being spent, there are few results. Still neither victims nor perpetrators can access the support they need.

Phillipa spoke about the work being undertaken at Alcohol East. She made the point that women's organisations have always been wary of alcohol or drugs being given a causal relationship with domestic violence, not wanting to give the perpetrators an excuse for their behaviour. However, that is not to say that they are not closely related. We cannot treat domestic violence and alcohol or other problems in isolation.

Women with substance misuse problems themselves are at particular risk. They have to cope with a stigma that can mask other problems, including domestic violence and the alcohol misuse can itself be blamed, especially by the perpetrator, who may say 'who can blame me when she acts like this?' Women with substance misuse problems often have difficulty accessing refuges where

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staffs are unlikely to be able to manage a woman with an active alcohol or drug problem.

Phillipa spoke about how the perpetrators of domestic violence also suffer with loss of employment, relationship, home etc.

In Tower Hamlets a Domestic Violence Forum has been established with representative from a wide range of agencies and departments. This aims to enable exchange of information and to develop and implement a strategy. The forum aims to shift the onus away from the victim having to take action and to recognise this is a problem everyone can do something about.

The Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Unit has

- produced a handbook, help cards, posters and leaflets explaining what resources are available
- established an Asian women's refuge
- established a community project run by Women's Aid offering training and outreach
- developed the Stop the Violence project which aims to: enable discussion of specific incidents; develop a common referral/ assessment form which means victims do not have to continually answer the same 70-80 questions wherever they present for help; create a database to track referrals and record outcomes and establish a team of specialist women's advocates (including a specific Bangladeshi advocate) to help women plan and progress and put them in touch with other helping agencies.

Phillipa welcomed Alcohol East's new initiative on working with the perpetrators of domestic violence, whilst still being wary of presuming a causal relationship between alcohol and domestic violence (see above).

Contacts: Phillipa Chipping, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator Community Safety Unit, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG

Alcohol East, Capital House, 134-138 Romford Road, London E15 4LD

Tel: 020 8257 3068

Fax: 020 8257 3066

Email: alcoho.east@virgin.net

FEEDBACK

National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Younger Adults

Government publishes Care Standards for Registered Homes

Briefing paper by Sue Baker, Associate Director, Alcohol Concern (December 2001)

The government published the new Care Home Standards on 14th December 2001. These Regulations and Standards form the basis of the new regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 which replaced the Registered Homes Act 1984. The new Standards will be applied via the National Care Standards Commission (a non government public body) from 1st April 2002 across England and Wales, although some of the individual Standards come into force over a longer period.

The National Care Standards Commission will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of these Standards, any variations of conditions and the enforcement of compliance, which will include proceedings for cancellation of registration or prosecution.

As most people in the alcohol field will be aware, Alcohol Concern has worked hard over the last 2 years on the National Reference Group for the Care Standards to ensure issues important to the provision of residential programmes for people with alcohol problems are taken account of. As requested by Alcohol Concern's Residential Interest Group we have worked with EATA and DrugScope to provide evidence of the concerns expressed by the field and Alcohol Concern ensured, for the first time in this whole process, Department of Health consultation with both providers and service users in two seminars in June. Since the publication of the draft Standards earlier this year, we have campaigned for substantial changes to take account of stakeholders' views.

We are delighted to report that the final Standards released last week have largely taken account of the concerns raised.

A full copy of the final Standards can be obtained from the Department of Health (www.doh.gov.uk/ncsc/whatsnew.htm).

This briefing takes an initial look at the Standards, reports on the changes that have been achieved, notes issues that might continue to be of concern and sets out further action Alcohol Concern plans to take to help residential projects ensure compliance.

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Summary of issues raised (reported on in full in Straight Talk, briefings to the field and in Alcohol Concern's formal response to the draft Standards) and outcomes as set out in the National Minimum Standards now published

Note: A number of the issues of concern to our field are addressed in the introductory comments to different sections of the Standards and not in the Standards themselves.

Issue raised	Addressed in the Standards	Outline details
Resident's freedom	Yes	<p>Para 2.5 states that any potential restriction based on specialist's needs/risks and/or as required by a treatment programme are discussed and agreed during assessment.</p> <p>The introductory comments to section 2 acknowledge that restrictions on decision-making by residents may be necessary in the 'initial stages' of a treatment programme, although this term is not defined.</p> <p>Standard 6.4 states that Individual Service Users Plans are to set out any restrictions on choice and freedom as agreed with the service user (such as needed in a treatment programme for people with alcohol and drug problems).</p>
Rehabilitation and therapeutic needs are assessed by state registered health professionals	No	The problem depends on definition of rehabilitation and therapeutic needs. If these are considered in the medical sense this is unlikely to pose difficulties, although, if not, further clarification will need to be sought to avoid delays to assessment procedures.
Specialist services (e.g. services for people with substance misuse) are based on current good practice) (Standard 3.2)	No	The degree to which evidence is available from one central source is debatable for alcohol treatment and it is likely that evidence for drug misuse services will dominate. This is not considered an immediate problem and one Alcohol Concern will look into further.
Compulsory offer of introductory visits	Yes and no	Introductory notes to Standards 1 – 5 say that 'where feasible trial visits will be offered and conditions applied to visits (access to other users without the presence of staff for example) include 'if

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Issue raised	Addressed in the Standards	Outline details
		appropriate'. The actual Standards however state that a minimum half-day is required to be offered.
Risk taking and individual rights to make decisions	Yes	Limited by Standard 7.6 to being consistent with the purpose of the service and the home's legal duties and responsibilities. A risk assessment is required in Standard 9.2 with strategies to be agreed in the individual service user plan.
Service User involvement (on staff appointments and resident selection etc)	Yes	The form this needs to take in Standard 8.3 is less prescribed.
Unsupervised visits from friends	Yes	Standard 15.1 makes this now subject to any restrictions agreed and set out in the Service Users Individual Plan.
Daily routines	Yes	16.1 makes this subject to restrictions as above except that Standard 17 does not make an exception to the rights of residents to choose to eat alone or with others.
Control over medication	Yes	Subject to the home's policy and procedures for the receipt, recording, storage, handling, administration and disposal of medicines and other legal requirements (Standard 20).
Single rooms	Yes	An exception has been made on the requirement for an option of a single room in the case of homes for people with alcohol and drug problems. This is set out in para 4 of the introductory text to Standards 24-30 (on page 37) covering environment and may need to be pointed out to registration officers.
Multiple occupancy bedrooms	Yes	For short stay (up to 6 months) in homes for people with alcohol and drug problems, up to four people may share as long as privacy via screening/furniture arrangements is assured. New registrations will limit sharing to double rooms only.

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Issue raised	Addressed in the Standards	Outline details
Room sizes	For practical purposes – probably yes	Minimum requirements on room sizes are 10 sq m useable floor space from 2007 and 16 sq m per user for shared rooms. There must be a total of 14.1 sq m per service user (made up of bedroom and communal living space) but, in the introductory comments to these Standards, it is clear that adequate space for purpose and privacy are the key requirements (see Standards 24 – 30 for precise requirements). Standard 24.4 offers flexibility for short stay (up to 6 months) homes on room sizes.
Bathrooms and toilets	Yes	To be shared by no more than 3 people by 2004.
Clusters	Mainly yes	New homes to be for a maximum of 20 people, in clusters of 10 sharing a staff group etc and existing homes organised into clusters of 10 all by 2007. Homes intended for short-term rehabilitation (up to 6 months) may be more flexible as long as the accommodation remains domestic in scale and is appropriate for its purpose.
Staff Training	In part	Care staff are to hold NVQ 2 or 3 or are working to obtain this or the registered manager can demonstrate that staff meet the standard. Registered Managers must have NVQ level 4 by 2005 and meet TOPSS specifications.

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Issues of outstanding concern

1. Types of facilities covered

Current homes registered under the 1984 Act, and homes for less than 4 people, but the suggestion that the Standards could be applied to other facilities currently exempted under the 1984 Act remains. Alcohol Concern will be seeking further clarification.

2. How will registration be implemented?

This is not clear at present – for example involvement of lay inspectors and people who misuse substances and how local registration officers will work.

3. Who can assess?

The Standards state that the care management plans for individuals must be provided by local social services and NHS, where they are purchasing the service. This might pose problems for agencies contracted to undertake assessment and this will be looked into further.

4. Training

Registered managers will need to achieve TOPSS requirements and comply with any code of practice published by the General Social Care Council.

5. User holidays

Standard 14.3 requires that users in long-term placements have as part of the basic contract price, the option of a 7 day holiday outside the home. Given the lack of definition of 'long stay', providers in the alcohol and drug field may need to plan for this or seek exemption.

6. Emergency placements

Standard 24.7 requires that users in emergency placements occupy separate premises unless there is a benefit of doing otherwise (however it is thought that this will not be overly restrictive in the case of homes for alcohol and drug misusers).

Further action by agencies

Obviously providers will need to look at the Standards in detail, obtain clarification on how local registration will take place and prepare to meet new requirements.

Some of the things agencies will need to have/demonstrate, which may need developing, include:

- Up to date statement of purpose setting out the aims, objectives and philosophy of the home, its services and facilities, terms and conditions and that each resident has a services users' guide.
- Risk assessment (of individuals)

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- Copies of the home's policies, procedures, activities and services in suitable formats
- Individual Service User Plans
- Accredited training for care staff if they are handling medicines
- Training of staff on meeting Sector Skills Council work force targets
- Procedures for responding to suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (and whistle blowing) in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Department of Health guidance 'No secrets'.
- Staff training in accordance with Department of Health guidance on dealing with physical and verbal aggression

Further action by Alcohol Concern

Over the next few months Alcohol Concern will be working with the Residential Interest Group to look at how we can support residential service providers to meet the new Standards and clarify how they will be implemented locally. It is likely that this can be achieved in a planned way. Overall the outcome of this process is very good news for residential services for people with alcohol (and drug) problems.

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Workplace Service Update

Derek Mason, Workplace Development Officer at Alcohol Concern and DrugScope, reports on the developments so far in the Drug and Alcohol Workplace Service.

The Drug and Alcohol Workplace Service, the joint Alcohol Concern and DrugScope initiative offers training and consultancy to employers, to help them address the effect of alcohol and drugs on the workplace. As well as working with a number of employers individually, the service has undertaken a range of projects such as helping the TUC develop a guide to alcohol and drugs at work for their members and holding a nationwide survey of employers in partnership with Personnel Today.

The service also held a number of autumn events around the country to raise awareness amongst employers and help them to develop effective workplace alcohol and drug policies. These regional seminars were organised in conjunction with local substance misuse services and Chambers of Commerce, aiming to develop and support links between services and the business community. Recent events included those in:

- LONDON, with the City of London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- YORK, with the Retreat
- SHEFFIELD, with the Sheffield Alcohol Advisory Service
- CARLISLE, with CADAS and the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
- NORWICH, with NORCAS, the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- NORWICH, a workshop at the Norwich Health Forum's Alcohol Day

The seminars included contributions from local employers on their experiences of dealing with problems in the workplace, local specialist services and legal professionals who outlined the responsibilities of employers.

Many alcohol and drug services had expressed an interest in workplace issues and so a one-day workshop was organised, in partnership with Nottingham-based service APAS. The Working with Employers event aimed to help services develop their work with businesses and organisations. The workshop was over-subscribed so another will take place in London on 7th March 2002. It will look at:

- ways in which services can develop links and work with the business community
- the particular issues that concern employers
- possible barriers to working with businesses and organisations

The morning session will include speakers who have experience of developing workplace services: Simon Floyd (NORCAS), John Grace (KCA) and Nick Tegerdine (APAS). The workshop is free and lunch will be provided. There is likely to be a demand for the limited number of places on the workshop so please book early!

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For further details about the Drug and Alcohol Workplace Service or to book a place on the workshop, please contact Derek Mason, Workplace Development Officer on 020 7928 7377 or email workplace@alcoholconcern.org.uk

FEEDBACK

Manchester NDN Reference Group meeting

Monday 21st January 2002

Don Lavoie, Commissioning Manager, NTA spoke to the Manchester NDN reference group regarding alcohol and the new purchasing and commissioning structures. The slides accompanying his talk are available from the NDN team, tel: 020 7928 7377, fax: 020 7928 4644, email: ndn@alcoholconcern.org.uk

Some background to the NTA:

National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse

The Government's drug strategy, Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain, emphasises the importance of providing treatment to people with drug problems to help them overcome their personal difficulties, and reduce the level of crime, health problems and social exclusion that are associated with addiction. A growing body of research evidence that appropriately delivered treatment works supports this approach.

The drug treatment sector in this country has developed in an ad hoc manner over the last 30 years, although this has fostered innovation it has led to wide variations in coverage, methodologies and quality. There is also a significant gap between the number of people requiring treatment and the numbers of places available, so many areas of the country have long waiting lists.

Faced with this situation, the government took two significant actions in the most recent spending review. First was the decision to pump new money into the system – an extra £270 million in the 3 years from April 2001 to March 2004. Secondly, the decision was made to create an independent body to oversee the spending of that money, and to lead a drive to improve the coverage and quality of treatment services.

Consequently, the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse came into being as a Special Health Authority on 1st April 2001.

What is the NTA?

The NTA is designed to be a small body, working with government departments and local purchasers and providers of drug treatment services. It will cover England only – other arrangements are in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As a Special Health Authority it is managed independently, having its own Board of Directors, but reports to the government through the Secretary of State for Health. The Board is made up of the Chair, Senior Staff of the Agency, four non-Executive Directors, and departmental representatives from the Home Office.

The staff of the NTA are being appointed through the summer of 2001. The Chief Executive is Paul Hayes, who comes to the Agency from a background in the Probation Service. In addition to a small central team, based in London, there will be regional posts attached to each of the Government Offices for the Regions.

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Purchasing of drug treatment services will continue to be primarily implemented at a local level. Drug Action Teams (150 covering the country) have been asked to establish

Joint Commissioning Groups to ensure that local treatment services are of optimum coverage and quality. Each DAT will appoint a Joint Commissioning Manager, and the NTA will work closely with these individuals and other DAT members to improve standards.

What will the NTA do?

As the extra money for drug treatment is being invested now it is important that the agency becomes active quickly. Below is an explanation of some of the key areas of activity that will be pursued in its first year of operation.

Treatment planning

Each of the 150 Drug Action Teams in England has been asked to align the spending of all its members behind a jointly agreed treatment plan. The first versions of these were produced in February 2001, relating to plans for the financial year 2001/2002. In October 2001, the NTA will produce a template and guidance for the second year's treatment planning process which will include figures on the size and distribution of the pooled budget 2002/2003.

Performance management

The NTA will need to assure itself that DATs are using the pooled treatment budget effectively and that adequate services are being provided. To this end structures will be established to manage the performance of DATs and to track their expenditure on drug treatment. NTA Regional Managers will work closely with the Home Office's Drug Prevention Advisory Service to help DATs drive up standards locally but will also hold DATs to account for poor performance.

Human resources

There is a significant shortage of professionals available to work in this sector, and no clear framework for training and professional development. The NTA will address this key challenge by leading a national recruitment drive, to be linked with volunteering and apprenticeship schemes amongst employers in the field. The Human Resource Strategy will also include work on developing a clear set of competency standards for the main roles within the sector, and widely available training courses relevant to a range of skill types and levels. Commitment to staff development will be a key component of a strategy to retain staff, which will complement additional recruitment. The NTA will also work with other professional bodies to ensure that substance misuse issues are adequately covered in the training of related professional groups such as doctors, nurses, social workers and probation officers.

Quality assurance

Specialist drug treatment services in this country vary widely in quality. Some work on defining quality standards has begun (notably the QUADS project), which the NTA will use as a basis to develop a set of clear standards and benchmarks for all modalities of drug treatment. Commissioners will increasingly

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be expected to show that the services they purchase comply with these standards.

Assessment and care management

The process of assessing the problems of a drug misuser, and putting in place appropriate services is complex, involving many different agencies. In order to achieve the best possible outcomes, and the most efficient use of resources, each DAT will need to develop an integrated approach to assessment and case management. Guidance on the most effective models of care should be available for consultation in the autumn. The NTA will be piloting a range of approaches and systems with a small number of DATs to optimise the effective implementation of high quality intervention. As the learning from these pilots emerges guidance will be issued to DATs on how best to develop integrated systems, with all DATs expected to move towards such an approach during 2002.

Research

The evidence that substance misuse treatment is effective in moving users away from crime and improving their health and social functioning is significant and growing. However to provide a fuller understanding of what forms of treatment are most effective for the range of users at different stages of their drug using careers a long term programme of research and monitoring is required. The NTA will work with other research funders to plan and purchase a range of projects designed to answer the key questions facing the field.

User Consultation

As we go through the process of expanding and improving the drug treatment sector, we need to ensure that the services we are purchasing are relevant to the needs of the group that we are targeting. One important way to inform this process is to create structures by which service users can contribute their views and expertise to the treatment planning process. The NTA will be encouraging every DAT to establish lines of communication with user groups, and will ensure that they are included in policy consultations at national level.

Alcohol

The NTA was originally established to cover drug treatments only but strong arguments exist for combining this with a similar responsibility for the Alcohol treatment sector. Many of the treatment approaches and provider organisations cover both sectors, but the strategic approach and funding streams for alcohol treatments are less well defined. The NTA will make early recommendations to Ministers on the best way forward. The NTA exists to improve the quality and availability of treatment for drug misusers. To be effective the agency will need to engage the active collaboration of commissioners, drug service providers, generic services, drug misusers, and the wider community. The NTA is committed to being an open responsive organisation demonstrating transparent decision taking and a willingness to engage in dialogue and debate. We look forward to working with others to meet the challenge of making drug treatment in England a benchmark of quality.

FEEDBACK

How to contact the NTA:

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