

DAT ASSOCIATION REMOTE & RURAL COMMUNITIES SUB-GROUP

Tuesday 20th September 2005 @ 1400

held at the DAT Association, c/o ASH Scotland, 8 Frederick Street, Edinburgh

Present:

Anni Stonebridge, Aberdeenshire ADAT [Chair]
Linda Bates, DAT Association Administrator [minutes]
Susan Black, Borders DAAT
Jackie Davies, Dumfries & Galloway DAAT
Angus MacKay, Western Isles ADSAT
Mike McCarron, National Officer, DAT Association
Liam McLaughlin, Perth & Kinross DAAT
Julie Murray, Borders DAAT
Catriona Oxley, Shetland DAAT
Carole Ross, Head of Treatment & Rehabilitation team, Safer Communities Division of
Criminal Justice, Scottish Executive
Fraser Ross, Moray DAAT
Ian Smillie, Perth & Kinross DAAT

Apologies:

Grace Ball; Suzy Calder; Liz Coates; Eric Corstorphine; Grahame Cronkshaw; Sharon Flynn, Pat Greenhough; Maggie Jamieson; Gaynor Jones, Rita Keyte; Jenna Leask; Marion Logan; Stevie Lydon; Hannah Muldoon; Liz Sneddon; Karyn Tait; Valerie Tallon; Iain Turnbull; Liam Wells

1. Welcome

Anni Stonebridge welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Carole Ross of the Scottish Executive.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from those listed above.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting [23rd February 2005]

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as accurate.

4. Matters Arising

Liam Wells, Chair of the sub-group, had advised Anni and Linda that he will be leaving Forth Valley SAT at the end of September, to take up a new post within social work at East Ayrshire council. Liam had **proposed** (via email) that Anni replace him as Chair of the sub-group; this was **seconded** by Ian Smillie. Anni Stonebridge was thus appointed Chair of the Remote & Rural Communities sub-group of the DAT Association.

Regarding the proposed web forum (matters arising, page 1), Anni reported that she had initially been in contact with Graham Lockhart of ISD to further this issue, but had not heard from him recently. Anni shall email Graham again to re-establish discussions. **action: AS**

With reference to needle syringe exchange programs (item 7), several members reported that local funding for such initiatives had recently been quite severely cut back, and so they were unable to continue providing support. Frustration was felt by many that local DATs will be asked to implement the Hepatitis C Action Plan, but were unable to determine how they would be able to fund it. Carole Ross stated that funding had not been cut by the Scottish Executive, and suggested that it may have been cut instead by local Health Boards.

A general discussion was held regarding the recent allocation of additional drug monies to local DAATS; many members felt frustration that the 'indicative amounts' given by the Scottish Executive initially bore no resemblance to the final amounts awarded, and had subsequently caused significant difficulties in relationships with partner agencies. Carole Ross stated that the Scottish Executive have acknowledged that it was a mistake to give misleading indicative amounts, but reiterated that the funds were always additional to existing monies, and that the 'bidding' process is how funds will be allocated in the future. Mike McCarron stated that it will be useful to draw these issues together to raise with the Scottish Executive for future funding allocations.

With reference to the letter (12th September) sent out by Patricia Scotland to all local DATs regarding the internal 'stock-taking'/scoping exercise to be carried out by Peter Bates (Chair of NHS Tayside) on behalf of the Scottish Executive, Carole Ross explained that this is being done to help identify all funding streams that may or may not have accountability mechanisms attached to them. Members agreed that this would be a helpful exercise, particularly if it includes looking at funding for enforcement, and would hopefully inform the proposed National Review of local DATs (which has been delayed to allow the scoping exercise to take place first).

5. Internet Approaches to Treatment - update

Anni Stonebridge stated that this has been an ongoing proposal for approximately 18 months; a proposal was sent to Colin Cook at the Scottish Executive at the end of 2004, which looked for funding of a national project to introduce internet approaches to treatment, but to date no official feedback has been received. In Aberdeenshire, an internet service has also been progressed at a local level through partnership working with Barnado's, which should be 'live' by Christmas; Carole Ross stated that the Scottish Executive would be very keen to see how successful that is, but the proposal submitted to them for a national service would not get funded at the moment as it was not detailed enough with respect to evidence base and outcomes for that specific type of service. Anni stated that Colin Cook had appeared very keen in previous discussions, and that the proposal was not for a service *per se* but is about effective communication with a client group; disappointment was expressed that there had been no feedback from the Executive until today. Mike McCarron suggested that DATs continued to work with each other to provide information and support for the proposed pilot, to look at alternative funding streams, the amount of interest in such a pilot, and different options for the type of service available via the internet. Anni stated that it would be helpful to meet within the next couple of months to move forward with the issues concerned, and shall contact interested parties shortly to arrange a meeting. **action: AS**

6. EIU Report on Integrated Care in Rural and Remote Areas: local DAT responses

The EIU's report was published by the Scottish Executive on 29th June 2005; local DATs had contributed to its content via meetings with Davie McCue over the course of the previous year. The general consensus was that this was a helpful document which highlighted many (although not all) of the challenges and issues that remote and rural DATs face, and should help provide a better understanding of those issues to a wider audience. Several areas of concern remained, however, including:

- the authority of DATs with respect to finance – no local DAT currently holds their own funds, and there are ongoing concerns about such funds not being protected
- where DATs sit strategically with respect to Community Healthcare Partnerships, Criminal Justice Authorities, planning boards etc
- the lack of rural 'weighting' for some aspects to a service (e.g. time/cost for travelling; single working safety issues)
- hidden deprivation due to lack of services in some areas

It was suggested that it may be useful to formulate an official response to the document, although some members argued that local DATs have been contributing for several years to policy or position documents but with little apparent success or change to strategy. It was agreed that it is vital that Chairs of local DATs have a full understanding of all the key policy and strategic issues (including those concerning an urban/rural split), and that the DAT Association collectively can take related concerns to the Scottish Executive with a unified voice.

7. SMART Recovery – Grampian

Fraser Ross of Moray DAAT led a discussion about an initiative called SMART Recovery (Self-Management And Recovery Training); this is an online internet community which offers 24hr support and 'virtual' meetings for people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse (as well as other forms of addiction), and is particularly helpful for those in remote and rural locations as it offers peer support for clients. A group has recently been set up in the Inverness area, which Fraser is involved with; the program is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy practice, which aims to empower the individual to manage their own recovery. There are four points to the program:

- Enhancing and maintaining the motivation to abstain
- Coping with urges
- Problem-solving (managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours)
- Lifestyle balance (balancing momentary and enduring satisfactions)

Fraser reported that clients who use traditional services might do well with respect to motivation to quit and coping with urges, but don't fare so well with problem-solving and lifestyle balance; the SMART group can help clients work through these issues, and give a higher chance of success. Fraser and Anni have been asked to evaluate the online service (in their own time), and shall report back to the Remote & Rural sub-group with their findings.

action: FR/AS

Fraser is also involved in a web-based intervention (via SMART Recovery), which does not involve contact with a counsellor but instead directs people to self-help materials. Existing research suggests that this form of internet-based intervention is particularly effective for younger (computer-literate) adults, as they find it empowering and easy to use; further research will be done by Fraser to evaluate the project he is involved with. This work ties in with the research that Linda Sobell carried out in Canada, targeting people who didn't use traditional services; they were given self-help intervention materials, and the results were very encouraging. Linda Sobell will be giving a masterclass in Aberdeen on 3rd November, providing information about motivational interviewing techniques; the following day there shall be a conference (with presentations and workshops) in Aberdeen which focuses on natural recovery (at which Linda Sobell shall also be speaking). Further details about the SMART Recovery program can be found at www.smartrecovery.org.

Members felt that this online community gave people options to have continuing (and confidential) support, which is particularly important for aftercare once a client has used a service. Additionally, it helped community members to 'give something back' once they had managed to overcome their addictions, which is helpful for building self-confidence. SMART Recovery groups are known to have been set up/are being set up in Ayrshire & Arran and Inverness, and it is anticipated that several other areas may choose to set up the program as part of a range of services (although it should ultimately be self-running rather than managed by DATs).

8. Rise in Rural Prevalence Rates

It was felt that this issue had been covered under the general discussions at points 5 and 6, and was taken off the Agenda.

9. Any Other Business

No other business was tabled.

10. Date of next meeting

Linda advised that the next known date for a DAT Association meeting (whether for Chairs only or full Association) is Thursday 8th December 2005; the next Remote & Rural meeting might therefore be timed to coincide with that. Linda shall email members to confirm.

action: LB