

# **MEETING of the ASSOCIATION of DRUG ACTION TEAMS**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005**

**Abbey Business Centre, 83 Princes Street, Edinburgh**

## **Present:**

Sandy Cameron [Chair]; Linda Bates [minutes]; George Brechin; Liz Coates; Steven Dalton; Tom Dougan; Sharon Flynn; Marie Hayes; Stephen Heath; Vered Hopkins; Gaynor Jones; Marion Logan; Stevie Lydon; Angus MacKay; Joni McArthur; Mike McCarron; David McGrouther; Liam McLaughlin; Hazell Morrell; Julie Murray; Catriona Oxley; Robert Peat; Sandy Riddell; Eleanor Robertson; Fraser Ross; Ian Smillie; Anni Stonebridge; David Strang; Iain Turnbull

## **In attendance:**

Dr. Jane Jay, Community Drug Problem Service (speaking to item 8(i))  
Barbara O'Donnell, National Alcohol Liaison Officer, SAAAT

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Alan Baird; Grace Ball; David Burke; Suzy Calder; Ian Clark; Eric Corstorphine; Gordon Coster; Grahame Cronkshaw; Jackie Davies; Chris Denmark; Tom Divers; Brian Doughty; Elaine Fetherston; Caird Forsyth; Brian Gardner; Harry Garland; Maggie Jamieson; Rita Keyte; Jenna Leask; Val MacIver; Fiona MacKenzie; Malcolm McEwan; Elaine McNeil; Hannah Muldoon; Maggie Murray; Leona Paget; Jim Parker; Donna Reid; Andrew Riley; Bruce Robertson; Hilary Smith; Jack Stuart; David Sullivan; Karyn Tait; Valerie Tallon; Sarah Taylor; Liam Wells; Tom Wood [Vice Chair].

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

Sean McCollum, Integration Manager at Fife DAAT had advised Linda that he should not have been listed as an apology for the previous meeting; with this correction, the minutes of the previous meeting (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005) were accepted as accurate.

### **3. Note from Chairs' Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

The note from the Chairs' meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> July was accepted as accurate.

### **4. National Review of Drug and Alcohol Action Teams**

A letter had recently (12<sup>th</sup> September) been sent from Patricia Scotland of the Justice Department at the Scottish Executive, to all DAT Chairs and Action Teams, explaining that Justice Ministers have decided to undertake an internal 'stock-taking'/scoping exercise for drugs before embarking on any National

Review of Action Teams. This follows the recent announcement that operational responsibility for drugs policy has been transferred from Health to the Justice Department (alcohol remains within Health). Peter Bates, the current Chair of NHS Tayside, has been appointed to undertake this exercise (estimated to take 2-3 months). It is believed that this exercise is unlikely to commence before the New Year; no contact has yet been made by Peter Bates with officers of the DAT Association.

It was felt by many members that there was still a lack of clarity about what the Executive's thinking is on the review of Drug and Alcohol Action Teams, which is causing uncertainty amongst Teams; Sandy Cameron is due to have a meeting with Patricia Scotland this Friday (23<sup>rd</sup> September) to further discuss these concerns, and shall circulate a note of that meeting shortly thereafter.

**action: SC**

Mike McCarron stated that he is drawing up a paper, based on the issues raised at the Alcohol and Drug Officers' meeting held last August (at which two working groups discussed the proposed National Review); he shall forward this to the Scottish Executive to assist in their Review, as/when it happens. **action: MMcC**

## **5. Proposed DAT Association / SAAAT Merger**

Sandy stated that he, Tom Wood and Mike McCarron, have had ongoing discussions with officers at SAAAT (the Scottish Association of Alcohol Action Teams), which has produced a broad agreement that merging the two Associations into one makes sense. A proposed draft Constitution and Standing Orders (attached at **Appendix 1**) had been circulated to all members of the DAT Association in advance of today's meeting.

Some members questioned whether it was prudent to merge Associations just at the point when the Scottish Executive are demerging responsibility for alcohol and drugs to different departments; Sandy agreed that although the outcome of this demerging (and any National Review) is uncertain, it is hoped that a joint Association would have greater strength and influence in the general debate if speaking with a unified voice. It is intended that this joint Association will be reflective of individual Action Teams' (as opposed to individual Officers') views on specific issues, and that the joint Association have 23 members (one member per Action Team - the Chair or their nominated representative) who will attend meetings.

It was acknowledged that some people and agencies have concerns that alcohol-related (or specific) issues be 'lost' in any merged Association; Sandy reiterated his support for an Association that retains alcohol issues as a priority, reflecting the more prevalent problems of alcohol use and abuse within Scottish society.

Sandy stated that Kevin Hanlon at the Scottish Executive has confirmed that funding for the separate Associations shall continue until at least September 2006.

Barbara O'Donnell stated that at last week's SAAAT meeting (which few Chairs attended), no clear mandate had been given by Alcohol Officers to the merging of the two Associations, but it was agreed that there is logic to such a merger. They proposed that the office holders of the two Associations meet in advance of any inaugural meeting to tease out remaining concerns and issues; this was **agreed**.

It was **agreed** by the members of the DAT Association that:

- the two Associations should merge;
- an inaugural meeting of this new merged Association be convened, if possible, before the end of December 2005, to agree the Constitution and Standing Orders; and
- any member could send suggested amendments to the Draft Constitution and Standing Orders to Mike McCarron ([mike@datassociation.org.uk](mailto:mike@datassociation.org.uk)), which would then be circulated to all members in advance of the inaugural meeting.

## **6. Allocation of and Accountability for new Drug Monies**

Mike McCarron stated that he is currently drawing up a paper aiming to put into context recent allocations of drug monies for treatment and rehab, which appears to have been done in a rather 'ad hoc' way by the Scottish Executive. The paper shall include information regarding cumulative totals by each DAT area; proportions of the total per area; and relevance to existing prevalence data. Mike shall circulate this paper to all members. **action: MMcC**

A wide-ranging discussion was held regarding the recent allocation of drug monies; concerns raised included:

- the seemingly arbitrary nature of how allocations were arrived at by the Scottish Executive;
- lack of clear criteria for applications for funding;
- Scottish Executive responses to individual Action Teams' written requests for clarification on their allocation;
- the misleading 'indicative amounts' communiqué from the Scottish Executive to each Action Team, which in several cases bore no resemblance to the final allocation;
- the damage done to local partnerships and DAT credibility as a result of the failure to secure funding, after significant work had been done in creating bids which were ultimately unsuccessful.

Members also wished to have clarification on when the £2m that had been held back from the initial £6m of additional funds would be distributed; indications were that this money had been retained by Criminal Justice for offender-related issues. It was suggested that when the money is made available, local DATs (as part of strategic partnerships in their area) sign it off for use. Concerns were raised by members that there might now be a move away from an emphasis on prevention and treatment (via Health streams) and into criminality (via Criminal Justice). Sandy stated that he had recently spoken with Elizabeth Carmichael and Brian Cole of the Criminal Justice social work department; they are holding the funds but there have not yet been any decisions made on how the money is to be used or distributed, or when (not necessarily this financial year). The decision is currently resting with Justice Ministers.

Sandy shall take forward these issues in his discussions with Patricia Scotland on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, although she has indicated that Colin Cook has responsibility for concluding the process that he initiated (despite his recent move away from drugs-specific issues).

## **7. DAT Association Budget 2005-06**

Mike reported that the DAT Association's budget is £100,000 per financial year; with the recent changeover of National Officer (causing a temporary slowing down of activities led by the DAT Association), there is currently an underspend of around £50,000 for the current financial year. ASH Scotland currently have an agreement with the Scottish Executive to provide office space and part-time administrative support (currently Linda Bates) to the DAT Association until the end of December 2005; thereafter the DAT Association (or any merged Association with alcohol) shall need to make provision for these facilities. Mike stated that there was the possibility of the underspend being used for research and/or development and/or practice seminars, and encouraged members to email him with suggested topics.

## **8. DAT Association Working Groups**

### **(i) Drug-Related Deaths sub-group: Final Report**

Dr. Jane Jay, Chair of the DAT Association's Drug Related Deaths sub-group, presented its Final Report (published and distributed in January 2005). The Introduction and Recommendations from this Report are attached at [Appendix 2](#).

Dr. Jay reported that subsequent to the Report being published, Naloxone has now been approved by the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority) for inclusion on the 'approved' list of prescription medicines available for administration by anybody in an emergency (overdose) situation. Additionally, the recommended National Conference on Drug Related Deaths (facilitated by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Drugs Forum) took place in August in Glasgow.

Dr. Jay stated that there had been several related areas, discussed over the short life of the working group, which remain controversial (such as safer injecting rooms; heroin prescribing; the provision of outreach to older and more vulnerable drug users) but should continue to be considered as part of the ongoing dialogue surrounding Drug Related Deaths.

Stephen Heath reported that Ayrshire & Arran ADAT use a standard dataset (approved by the Procurator Fiscal, who owns the related information, based on the previous 3 years' worth of information), and that they would be glad to share that dataset with other members. Stephen shall send the details to Linda for wider distribution. **action: SH/LB**

Mike McCarron reported that with reference to the automatic involvement of police at scenes of suspected drug overdose, Scottish Drugs Forum are proposing research on the topic, taking into consideration the views of the police and ambulance service, as well as users. A request might be made by SDF for local DAT participation in this research, and/or for funding via the DAT Association.

It was suggested that an ongoing working group on Drug Related Deaths be convened by the DAT Association, to share information and best practice; this was **agreed** to by members.

**(ii) update on Remote & Rural sub-group**

Anni Stonebridge reported that the Remote & Rural sub-group currently feels quite frustrated with a lack of progress on certain issues (e.g. internet treatment proposal), as there seems to be a lack of understanding at the Scottish Executive. The sub-group shall explore other funding avenues for moving forward with the proposed pilot scheme.

It was reiterated by several members that delivery costs of services in Remote and Rural areas are an ongoing issue, with specific reference to recent allocation of drug monies.

It was felt that the recent Effective Interventions Unit document (Rural and Remote Areas: Effective approaches to delivering integrated care for drug users) had helped crystallise issues, and it was regrettable that the EIU had subsequently been disbanded.

**(iii) Training and Employment sub-group**

Mike McCarron stated that the Training and Employability sub-group has not met recently, but that relevant issues remain 'live'. The Scottish Executive have been leading multi-agency working groups to develop an

Employability Framework; four papers have been produced as a result of this work, available online via

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Search/Q/SearchFor/employability+framework>

The papers discuss the approximately 600,00 Scots of working age who are currently unemployed and/or on sickness benefits, amongst whom rests a large percentage of the substance misusing population; Mike believes that the Employability Framework creates an opportunity to proceed positively with many associated issues (homelessness, alcohol, drugs, mental health etc).

It was suggested that Sandy Cameron request a meeting with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, to discuss suitable opportunities for people with a substance misuse background who may be looking to re-enter education and training. Sandy shall write to the SQA to progress this. **action: SC**

#### **9. Scottish Network of Families Affected by Drugs**

Stevie Lydon attends SNFAD meetings, and reported that a major part of his remit is to work on communications; in the past year, there has been television coverage (in the form of three slots on the STV 'Talking Scotland' strand), and they are currently working on producing three publications (based on ADFAM's 'Journeys', produced in England) for a Scottish readership. The funding for this is coming mainly from Know The Score at the Scottish Executive (contact is Kevin Hanlon), but Stevie requested that the DAT Association help with the distribution of the publications. This was **agreed** to by members present; Stevie shall contact individual DATs when they are ready for release. **action: SL**

#### **10. Service User Conference Proposal**

Mike McCarron stated that SDF are supporting a service users' steering group to prepare for a conference of approximately 100 service users (supported by Drug Officers), to take place at some point next year (possibly spring). Structure, content and an invitees' list are currently being drawn up; it is anticipated that the DAT Association may be approached to help provide funding for the conference. It was felt by members that any such conference may provide helpful feedback for future service provision, and should be supported.

#### **11. Policy Development and Practice Exchange Seminars**

Mike McCarron spoke to the proposal of a series of policy development and practice exchange seminars take place, hosted and supported by the DAT Association, over the coming year; this had been extensively discussed at this morning's Officers' meeting. It is intended that such a programme looks at higher strategy policy events, and is able to have a collective range of views on given topics; these views can then be represented at meetings with the

Scottish Executive and wider stakeholders. Members **agreed** that this was a positive step; Mike requested that members forward him suggested topics for such a programme of events. **action: ALL**

Mike also stated that he has been in discussion with the journal Drug and Alcohol Findings, and reported that they are willing to have an affiliation with the DAT Association to inform future events; it is also anticipated that experts from specific fields will be invited to participate.

## **12. DAT Association visits to England and Wales**

Mike McCarron suggested that it may be beneficial for visits to be made to local English and Welsh DAT teams, to explore any differences that they have in approach to and provision of services (e.g. working with Criminal Justice agencies; contact with the National Treatment Agency - several members stated that the NTA website is a useful reference tool, accessed via [www.nta.nhs.uk](http://www.nta.nhs.uk)); it was felt that the visit by some DAT Association members to Holland in 2003 was informative and thought-provoking, and there may be merit in repeating this exercise. Mike asked members to email him with suggestions for suitable visits. **action: ALL**

## **13. Scottish Executive Working Groups**

Mike McCarron reported that he has recently attended several Scottish Executive working group meetings, as the representative of the DAT Association. They may have significant implications for local DAT teams and services:

### **(i) Homelessness and Addictions Working Group**

following on from the national conference earlier this year, connections between substance abuse (both drugs and alcohol) and homelessness are now well established, and strategies are needing to be developed.

### **(ii) Quality Standards Working Group**

Quality Standards to govern community drug and alcohol services are being drawn up by the Scottish Executive, supported by Phil Hogben, and should produce outcomes with standards next year. The DAT Association needs to find ways in which existing services can contribute to the formulation of these standards, to ensure that they 'fit' with aspirations at a local level; discussions also need to continue amongst members about how these standards are going to be incorporated into existing services.

### **(iii) Hidden Harm Action Plan Working Group**

Marie Hayes is leading on this work for the DAT Association; the Scottish Executive working group has produced a remit, outline proposals, and its first meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Marie has sent these on to the DAT Association for distribution; Linda shall email them to all attendees. **action: LB**

Several members reported 'tension' between local DATs and Child Protection Committees, over who is meant to be leading and who has responsibility for specific remits. Some representatives reported that they had held (or were about to hold) joint seminars with the partner agencies involved to further discuss these issues; Joni McArthur stated that West Lothian DAAT have created an Action Plan which looks at both Hidden Harm and Getting Our Priorities Right, defining what purpose has to be achieved by each set of guidelines, and would be happy to forward this to other DAT Association members. **action: JMCA**

Sandy Cameron stated that 'Hidden Harm' was commissioned by the Advisory Committee on Drugs Misuse as a UK-wide view of issues, but he feels that there are serious and growing issues which need to be addressed (requiring major policy decisions, with significant resource implications). Sandy believes that the Action Plan Working Group to which Marie Hayes belongs is an important step along the way to looking at these issues, including linkages with Criminal Justice Authorities.

#### **(iv) Know The Score**

##### **- Communications Partners Group**

Mike McCarron and Barbara O'Donnell are involved with this group (along with Kevin Hanlon), which was convened after problems around the national campaign for women and the use of alcohol. It was proposed that this group 'tap into' a range of experts who can contribute their specific perspectives to any campaign; the first meeting of the group will be on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October. Mike requested that DAT Association members email him with specific issues and/or concerns regarding communication, which he shall take forward to the meeting. **action: ALL**

Sandy Cameron acknowledged that there have been some recurring concerns over poor communication from the Scottish Executive with regards to campaigns and information.

##### **- Young People Survey – co-ordination and local DAT support**

The Scottish Executive have contracted Citigate SMARTS to undertake a lifestyle survey of 10-25 year-olds across Scotland. This would involve group work in age bands (eg 10-13, 13-15 etc), and also require the distribution of a survey to 500 young people. Citigate SMARTS have requested that local DATs assist in the distribution of this survey; Mike is awaiting further information and shall contact DATs accordingly. **action: MMcC**

#### **14. EMCDDA Social Reintegration Questionnaire**

Mike McCarron reported that he has largely completed an initial response to the EMCDDA questionnaire (on social reintegration issues such as housing, employment, education, vocational training) on behalf of Scotland, but that a lot more information is required to 'fill the gaps'. Mike shall redistribute the questionnaire to local DATs with a range of queries, and has requested the assistance of members in completing it. **action: MMcC/ALL**

#### **15. Royal Society of Arts Commission on Illegal Drugs, Communities and Public Policy**

Susan Deacon MSP is one of two Scottish representatives on this Commission, and is keen to bring some of the other Commissioners for a visit to help inform them about the Scottish context of the issues involved. Sandy Cameron stated that he believes the Commission is well placed to look apolitically at the complex issues surrounding problem drug misuse, and provide suggestions for policy development. Members present were happy for Mike to liaise with Susan Deacon in offering her DAT Association support for setting up an event for RSA Commissioners in Scotland.

#### **16. Any Other Business**

Sandy Cameron stated that he is Vice Chair of Scotland Against Drugs (SAD), and attended a steering group meeting in July. Colin Cook was also present at the meeting, and informed those present that as of next year the new Centre for Healthy Working Lives would be taking over responsibility for relationships with the business world. Ministers were interested in SAD's experience with the Challenge Fund, and would welcome their advice, but the view was that funds shall be pooled and SAD would cease to be a conduit for continuing funding initiatives.

#### **17. Date of Next Meetings**

Linda shall advise members of the date of the inaugural meeting of the joint DAT and SAAAT Associations, which shall if possible take place before the end of the year (possibly Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December – to be confirmed).

**action: LB**