

BRIEFING PAPER

FORTH VALLEY SUBSTANCE ACTION TEAM PROVISION OF NEW DRUG ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE

A groundbreaking new service in Forth Valley will give drug users easy direct access to advice, information and support. It is exactly what local people have asked for and the contract to run it has been awarded to a new combined organisation formed by three community groups with first-hand experience.

It will be available next spring in each of the three Local Authority areas of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling. It represents a new first tier in the wide range of services available in Forth Valley for people experiencing difficulties with drugs and for their friends and families.

Publicity Elements:

Scottish ‘first’:

As far as we know this is a first for Scotland in several ways:

- it is the first time such a service has been jointly commissioned by all the statutory and non-statutory partners who make up Forth Valley Substance Action Team (SAT)
- the funds will come from Scottish Executive allocations to the three Local Authorities
- the service will cover **all** age groups and **all** drugs (under 16s will be referred to the most appropriate service for their needs)
- no waiting lists are envisaged – the length of time between initial contact and commencement of service should be no longer than two weeks
- individuals will receive a brief assessment, time-limited counselling, relapse management and referral services aimed at helping people resolve drug problems and reduce drug related harm
- a Management Committee will supervise the service, and a manager will be responsible for ensuring the delivery and quality of service and supervision of staff

Flexible model:

The service will be the new first tier in a four-tier model that allows people to access the most appropriate service and allows services and staff to respond to needs within a clear structure represented by the SAT ‘s’ tiered approach to provision:

- the majority of individuals will access and need the services available at Tier One.

- fewer people will need the services and the interventions of increasingly specialised staff as they move up to Tiers Three and Four.
- the tiers are not separate entities but together form a seamless provision for the people of Forth Valley
- the new service will be available on weekdays, and there will be access times in the evening and at weekends

Public involvement:

The concept reflects the policies of the Scottish Executive, with trust and joint working between partners and public:

- the shape of the service has been identified in discussion with communities and members of the public
- local people made it clear at a seminar earlier this year that they did not want a whole range of new separate initiatives appearing, they wanted to add to services that already existed
- after a *thorough* process of tendering and assessment, it is local community groups who have been doing valuable work throughout the Forth Valley area who have combined to produce the winning concept, Signpost Forth Valley
- the groups, well known locally, will be partners in Signpost Forth Valley which will provide the £250,000 a year service
- most of the budget will be used for essential staff, operating largely from existing premises

Timescale:

The service will be introduced during the current financial year with all staff expected to be in post by the end of January 2002.

- it should be fully operational across all three areas by March 2002
- an official launch is planned after the service has bedded in, probably during May/June 2002

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