

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS UNIT

RESEARCH UPDATE 10

March 2005

Introduction

The Effective Interventions Unit is responsible for managing the Scottish Executive's Drug Misuse Research Programme. This is the tenth update and provides an overview of progress for the research commissioned under this programme up to March 2005.

Staff changes at EIU

Laura Turney, who has been Principal Research Officer in EIU since April 2004, is due to leave the Unit at the end of March to take up a post in the Equality Unit in the Scottish Executive. Laura's replacement should be in post by May 2005. **Dawn Griesbach**, who has been Senior Research Officer in EIU since April 2003, will leave the Unit in June 2005. Dawn has begun to set up her own consultancy business, but will continue to work part-time in EIU between April and June. **Sam Coope**, Senior Research Officer, will be holding the fort until the team is back up to full strength!

Current and forthcoming publications

- **Scoping options for the future: Research on psychosocial interventions** (February 2005). The report of this "scoping study" provides some initial groundwork for further research we plan to commission in 2005. The study looked at the nature of counselling interventions currently used in Scotland in drug treatment services; explored staff perceptions of the nature of effective counselling; and considered ways of measuring the effectiveness of counselling. The report is available at: <http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/eiu/CounsellingReport.pdf>.
- **Rural and remote areas** (February 2005). This report presents the results of qualitative research which aimed to identify and investigate the issues that influence the effective planning, design and delivery of integrated care for drug users in rural and remote areas. This involved interviews with service planners, service providers and service users. This research will inform an EIU guide for providers and commissioners of services in rural and remote areas. For further information, contact: Samantha Coope: sam.coope@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.
- **National Investigation into Drug-related Deaths** (expected June 2005). The National Investigation has involved collecting detailed information on the clinical and social circumstances surrounding all drug-related deaths in 2003. This research will result in recommendations and actions for both policy-makers and practitioners. For further information, contact Dawn Griesbach: dawn.griesbach@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.
- **An evaluation of the Lord Advocate's guidance on the distribution of sterile needles & syringes to injecting drug users** (expected April 2005). Following a change in the Lord Advocate's guidance on needle exchange schemes in December 2002, the EIU commissioned a study to evaluate the impact of the change. A report of the evaluation will be published shortly. The findings will have implications for harm reduction policy and practice. For further information, contact Dawn Griesbach: dawn.griesbach@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Research programme update: new and ongoing projects

Evaluation of Lloyds TSB Partnership Drugs Initiative funded projects

Progress continues on this evaluation of projects funded by the Lloyds TSB Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI) to work with young people. A report was published in May 2004 which describes the work of 17 projects funded in 2001. The final report in Autumn 2005 will present results from a process and outcome evaluation of four of these projects. For further information, contact Samantha Coope: sam.coope@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

If you would like further information about the EIU research programme, or any other aspect of EIU's work, please contact us on EIU@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. The current programme is available from: http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/eiu/pubs/eiu_073.htm.

Survey of needle exchange services

We are in the early stages of a collaborative project with the National Treatment Agency and the Welsh Assembly. This study aims to map the extent of needle exchange service provision in England, Scotland and Wales; to investigate in detail the nature of that service provision; to identify areas of innovative practice in this area; and to identify the barriers and difficulties in providing a needle exchange service. For further information, contact Dawn Griesbach: dawn.griesbach@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Co-morbidity

The Centre for Addiction Research and Education – Scotland (CARES), at the University of Dundee, are currently conducting a study to describe and examine the nature and scope of existing service provision in Scotland for people with co-existing mental health and substance use problems. This is due to report in April 2005. For further information, contact Samantha Coope: sam.coope@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Psychostimulants

The evaluation of 'Incite', a pilot service for psychostimulant users in Aberdeen, was commissioned in July 2004, and is being undertaken by Human Factors Analysts Ltd, a Glasgow based consultancy. The aims of the evaluation are to inform and improve the development of the pilot service, and to assess the effectiveness of the service particularly in its ability to attract, engage and retain service users. This will involve both process and outcome evaluation work. The evaluation team are currently conducting fieldwork. The final evaluation report is due to be completed in August 2005. For further information, contact Samantha Coope: sam.coope@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Tackling local drug markets

This work involves the examination of low-level drug markets and police interventions against them in three case study areas. Interviews with police officers, treatment providers, drug users and members of the wider community in the three areas have now been completed and the project is now at the analysis stage. This project is being undertaken by the Research and Service Development Centre (RSDC), a Leeds based drugs and alcohol research consultancy in partnership with EIU staff, and is due to report in July 2005. For further information, contact Samantha Coope: sam.coope@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Other work

- An evaluation of the **Scottish Prison Service Transitional Care arrangements** is still on-going. The next in a series of interim findings will be published in May 2005.
- An evaluation of a community based, structured health visitor assessment aimed at identifying babies born with **neonatal abstinence syndrome and visual impairment**. This is now due to report April 2005.
- An evaluation of the development of **community addiction teams (CATs)** in Glasgow This is now due to report April 2005.
- A study on the **safety, risks and outcomes from the use of injecting paraphernalia**. This is due to report February 2006.
- The Drug Misuse Research Programme is contributing to the funding of the **Drugs Outcomes Research in Scotland (DORIS)** study funded by the Robertson Trust.
- We are about to commission a scoping study examining **substance misusing parents and their families**. The purpose of this work is to identify key emerging themes and gaps in the evidence base and to identify the priorities for further research on 'what works'.