

SACDM: PROPOSED SHORT-LIFE PROJECT GROUPS

Background

1. SACDM is responsible for identifying, taking part in and/or overseeing any short-life project groups tasked with taking forward specific work streams as approved by Scottish Ministers. This paper sets out proposed project groups and membership, in line with Ministerial priorities.
2. There already exist several working groups including key stakeholders set up by the Executive to tackle different aspects of drug misuse. Given this, it is important to ensure that the topics of the working groups do not replicate or cut across work being taken forward elsewhere and it is proposed that existing groups are used where appropriate. SACDM's views can be fed into these other working groups.
3. To achieve the right mix of skills, expertise and knowledge for the project groups it may be helpful to draw members from within and outwith SACDM. As a starting point, suggestions of broad membership categories for each working group have been made. SACDM are invited to nominate possible members for the groups. The secretariat will be provided by the Safer Communities Division.
4. Following SACDM's discussion, topics and membership of groups will be submitted to the Deputy Minister for Justice for approval.

Proposed short-life project groups

5. The proposed project groups and membership are set out below.

Cocaine and crack cocaine

6. Recent evidence from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database and from the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) suggests that use of cocaine and crack cocaine is increasing, however, there appear to be few services specifically geared towards the needs of users of these substances.
7. It is proposed that a project group be set up to scope out the extent of the problem and changing patterns of use; the services available; and to consider further how to improve access to prevention and treatment services for cocaine and crack cocaine users and optimise the range of treatment options available. The exercise will build on work already undertaken, including the "Psychostimulant Working Group Report" produced by SACDM in 2002.
8. Membership will comprise representatives from service commissioners, service providers, police/enforcement bodies, Drug Action Teams (DATs), GPs, service users and criminal justice.

Review of methadone in drug treatment

9. The First Minister announced in May this year a review of the place of methadone in drug treatment. As part of the review the Executive is seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders on how methadone is used, its effectiveness and how we can improve the outcomes achieved from drug treatment, which includes prescription for methadone. The Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) is consulting service users and the wider community. It is proposed that a SACDM project group is used as the vehicle to seek views from professionals on the above and the implementation of any subsequent changes.

10. It is proposed that membership will comprise representatives from service commissioners, service providers, GPs, representatives from criminal justice (including prisons) and employment organisations. Group members will be expected to take soundings from their professional or sectoral networks.

Integrated treatment

11. Despite general acceptance that partnership between services trying to support substance misusers improves treatment outcomes and that single shared assessment is a useful tool which enhances integrated care, development in practice has been very patchy across Scotland. Moreover, it is unlikely that those systems which exist are compatible with each other as they have been developed individually to meet local need. It is proposed that a project group be set up to look at the barriers to establishment of integrated care, to make recommendations on how those barriers can be surmounted (within existing budgets) and to consider whether a streamlined system for use across the whole country is appropriate.

12. Membership will comprise representatives from service commissioners, service providers, GPs, representatives from criminal justice (including prisons), employment organisations and IT experts.

Mandatory drug testing

13. The Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 provides powers for the police to arrange drug-testing for anyone aged 16 or over who is suspected of a drug or drug-related offence. To implement these provisions Ministers need to decide on the qualifications of those people employed as assessors, which will be prescribed in secondary legislation.

14. It is proposed that a short-lived working group is set up to provide the necessary expertise to the Executive. SACDM's views on membership are invited.

Other topics

15. SACDM's views are invited on other topics for short-lived project groups.

Conclusion

16. SACDM's views are invited on the topics and membership of the proposed project groups (detailed in paragraphs 6-14), and if there are any other topics which could usefully be considered by a SACDM project group.

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