



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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News Release

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EXECUTIVE PUBLISHES 2002 ANNUAL REPORT ON TACKLING DRUG MISUSE IN SCOTLAND

“Solid progress is being made in delivering the Executive's Drugs Strategy”, Deputy Minister for Justice, Hugh Henry said today as he announced the publication of the Executive's 2002 Annual Report on Tackling Drug Misuse.

The Annual Report provides comprehensive information on progress across the key themes of the Drugs Strategy, namely supporting young people, helping communities, tackling the availability of drugs, and treating those who have developed drug problems.

Mr Henry said:

"Drugs are a global issue, and the many problems which drugs bring are an enormous burden on governments, communities, families and individuals across the world. It is evident that there is no single, simple or rapid solution, and Scotland is no different in these respects.

“The Executive is investing record sums in a wide range of activities - from educating children in schools about the risks from drugs, supporting



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community initiatives aimed at promoting drug-free lifestyles, providing new and improved treatment and rehabilitation services, and tackling those who bring fear and misery to communities through dealing in drugs.

“There are some encouraging signs mentioned in the Annual Report. Reported heroin misuse among the under 20s has declined and there has been a very significant decline in the numbers of young people reporting to services who are injecting drugs. A recent study revealed that reports of new HIV cases among injecting drug misusers are at their lowest levels since 1985. In addition, police forces and other enforcement bodies have seized record quantities of the drugs which cause the most harm.”

Mr Henry added:

"Balanced against these positive trends, the number of people who lose their lives due to drug misuse remains tragically high, and I am deeply concerned that waiting times for drug treatment in several areas of Scotland are unacceptably long. The Annual Report sets out what we are doing, in partnership with Scotland's Drug Action Teams and other agencies, to address these issues.

“A great deal is happening across Scotland to combat our drugs problems. As well as setting out progress in 2002, the Report outlines our priorities for the year ahead. Our drive to tackle Scotland's drugs problems should also be seen against our wider policy objectives of combating Scotland's historical problems of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion - these are the environments in which drug misuse thrives.”

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

1. The 10-year Drugs Strategy: Tackling Drugs in Scotland - Action in Partnership was published in 1999. The Executive's Drugs Action Plan



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was published in May 2000, set out the details of the Executive's plans to implement the Strategy. Delivery of the Strategy, its aims and targets, is supported by a 3-year package of £128million over the period 2001-02 to 2003-04.

2. These resources fund measures across a range of key strategic areas, including drug treatment and rehabilitation, training and employment initiatives, investments to protect children, young people and families, social inclusion partnerships, the "Know the Score" drugs communications strategy and funding for Scotland Against Drugs, who support a wide-range of community-based initiatives.

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