

# Identifying and Promoting Practice in Housing for Drug Users

## Introduction

This leaflet provides **general information** on the work being undertaken to identify and promote practice in housing for drug users, which can be used by local partnerships and providers.

As Housing has been identified as such a key issue for drug users, Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Home Office Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), The National Treatment Agency (NTA) the Ministry of Justice National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) from the Department of Health (DH) are working together to prevent homelessness amongst drug users.

Delivery of effective housing for drug users at different stages in their lives provides important challenges for national, regional and local partners. Identifying and promoting joined up solutions for drug users is one of the major drivers to help meet drug treatment targets, reduce crime and promote sustainable communities.

In order to improve a shared understanding of need, and to help further identify and promote practice (with a focus in England), the Home Office and CLG have seconded two housing and drug advisors, Martin Nugent and Greg Green. The two advisors were appointed from the housing and drug sectors respectively and are supported by a national working group.

## What has been happening?

The initial phase of the advisors' work was undertaken between November 2006 and March 2007. Making use of available national and regional information they focused on identifying the strategic linkages, data collection mechanisms and joint ways of working that were in place nationally and regionally to support positive housing outcomes for drug users. Emerging findings have been used to inform the second phase of their work and will be included in the final report which will be available in early Spring 2008.

## Next steps

The second phase of work will look at practice that demonstrates solutions that can be used to particularly help housing and drug partnerships and providers strategically plan, commission and deliver a planned system of housing for drug users. Drawing on information from partners and the 'field', a range of practice examples from strategic planning through to delivery and service user involvement have been identified. Innovative practice that addresses some of the challenges involved in planning, service delivery and monitoring outcomes will be a particular focus.

A range of national and regional stakeholders have helped to inform both the identification and selection of partnerships and providers who could contribute to this part of the fieldwork. Given the range of practice examples available, selection was particularly informed by the ability to evidence,

- local or organisational needs assessment in relation to drugs and housing.
- outcomes that have been planned and agreed in advance.

Given the time available to undertake this work we are not trying to collect details of all practice in England but merely a sample that will demonstrate a broad range of outcomes that can support commissioning, planning and delivery of housing for drug users.

### **How will practice be gathered?**

Practice will be gathered primarily through field work which is planned to take place from September to mid November (2007). Greg and Martin will aim to make best use of this time through clarifying in advance with contributing partnerships and provider organisations who may be best placed to meet with them. A framework of questions will be shared in advance with those who are participating. This has been drawn up in order to help structure each session, which will be undertaken as a semi-structured interview and take no longer than two hours.

In order that we best represent what is shared with us, and to ensure that we have all the information, those interviewed will be sent a write-up of the interview to agree and arrange sign off on behalf of their organisation or partnership. This is important as the information gathered will be shared widely such as on the Governments' drugs website [www.drugs.gov.uk](http://www.drugs.gov.uk)

### **What will we do with the information?**

Practice from the fieldwork, once cleared with contributing providers and partnerships, will be collated and findings will be shared in Summer 2008. The national working group supporting this overall project are seeking to identify how best to disseminate this practice as well as the findings from the initial work which will also be updated as appropriate and be available as part of this same report.

**For further information about this work please contact:**

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