

## Welsh Assembly Government launches consultation on new 10-year substance misuse strategy

12 February 2008

Today the Welsh Assembly Government launched a consultation on a new 10-year substance misuse strategy. Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, Dr Brian Gibbons, launched the document that puts alcohol-related harm at its heart.

*Working Together to Reduce Harm* proposes a joint approach to drugs, alcohol and other misused substances. It sets out how the Welsh Assembly Government and partner organisations will work to reduce the damage caused to individuals, their families and society from all substance misuse.

Funding for the strategy will come from the investment of an extra 9.6 million into the Substance Misuse Action Fund over the next three years, taking the total funding to over 27 million per annum by 2010-11.

There will also be an additional 3 million over the next 3 years from the Health Inequalities Fund to assist with the delivery of an alcohol action plan and nearly 11 million a year ring-fenced funding provided to local health boards for tackling substance misuse.

Speaking at the launch of the consultation at the Cardiff Drugs and Alcohol Team, the Minister said:

Substance misuse can have a devastating effect not only on the substance misuser, but their family, their friends and the neighbourhood they live in. The proposals set out in the draft strategy will build on the good work that resulted from the previous strategy and from the lessons learnt. It is a 10-year route map for all agencies in Wales to make a real difference to reduce harm and to improve lives.

Although it addresses all misused substances, the draft strategy will place a greater focus on the distinctive issues caused by the inappropriate or risky use of alcohol and will be underpinned by the alcohol action plan.

The harmful use of alcohol in Wales is far more widespread than that of illicit drugs or other substances. In particular, a significant minority of people who drink to excess do not consider that they have a problem.

The proposals in the strategy address four key areas: prevention, supporting substance misusers, supporting families, and, tackling availability and protecting individuals and communities.

Education and information based on sound and credible evidence will be the key to prevention with resources targeted at those individuals and communities most at risk of harm.

*Working Together to Reduce Harm* will be subject to a three-month consultation ending on 13 May 2008.

For more information please contact Ruth Goldsmith in the DrugScope Press Office on 020 7940 7517 (07736 895563 out of hours) or at [press@drugscope.org.uk](mailto:press@drugscope.org.uk)

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