
DRUG DEATH MATTERS

Issue 9

July 2010

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue 9 of Drug Death Matters. This issue features: the regular update from the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths; details of the recently established Scottish Drugs Recovery launch and their new partnership with the UK Drug Policy Commission on stigma research; a Harm Reduction Support Worker's tells us about her experience of administering Naloxone and finally an introduction to the newly established Scottish Naloxone Network (ScoNN).

UPDATE FROM THE NATIONAL FORUM ON DRUG RELATED DEATHS

The National Forum has met twice since the last issue of this newsletter was published. The Forum has noted with alarm the spread of anthrax bacteria in contaminated heroin. As at 16 July, there have been 47 confirmed cases in Scotland, tragically resulting in 13 deaths. The Chair of the National Forum was invited to join the Outbreak Control Team (OCT) established by Health Protection Scotland to co-ordinate the response to this outbreak. In addition, the Volunteers Forum provided invaluable advice to the OCT on how best to get information and advice to those at greatest risk. While the spread of anthrax infection has appeared to slow in recent

months, the Forum will continue to monitor this situation closely.

The Forum has also been carefully considering how to support the roll out of the national naloxone programme. This has included developing national protocol and guidance to support local areas in taking this forward. More detail on this programme is provided below.

The Forum recognises the importance of gathering as much information as possible about each drug related death, with a view to better understanding and helping to prevent drug related deaths. The National Drug Related Death Database, which will publish its first report by the end of this year, will be an invaluable resource, providing detailed information on each drug related death in Scotland. This will help to identify risks and trends in order that interventions can be targeted.

The Forum has continued to benefit from presentations from a range of experts which have helped to shape the thinking of this group.

The National Forum will shortly be publishing their annual report for 2009/10. This report will be available online on the publications page of the Scottish Government's website. Please contact Jennifer Stoddart in the Drugs Policy Unit for more

information at:
jennifer.stoddart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

SCOTTISH DRUGS RECOVERY CONSORTIUM (SDRC) HOSTS SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH AND AGM

The following two articles were written by Luiza Burns, Communications Manager at the SDRC.

The Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium (SDRC) was officially launched by the Minister for Community Safety, Mr Fergus Ewing, in Glasgow on Tuesday 1 June. The launch event was well attended with over 100 representatives from across the public and voluntary sector showing their support for the SDRC and the promotion of recovery across Scotland.

Highlights from the evening included an opening speech from Mr Ewing who welcomed the launch of the SDRC and reinforced the importance of promoting recovery from drug problems and addictions and a preview of current research being undertaken by SDRC Chair, Dr David Best.

Dougie Paterson, SDRC Director said:

"I would like to thank everyone who showed their support for the Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium by attending our launch event on Tuesday 1 June. We received incredibly positive feedback about the event and look forward to working with partners across Scotland to increase our membership and raise awareness of recovery from drug problems and addictions."

The SDRC also held its first AGM at the event and confirmed the

members of the new Board as follows:

Chair: Dr David Best, University West of Scotland;

Vice Chair: Elaine Wilson, Partnership Drugs Initiative, Lloyds TSB Foundation;

Keith Fowler, Perry Fowler Trust;

Gerard Brady, Lanarkshire Addiction Recovery Consortium;

Simon Bradstreet, Scottish Recovery Network;

Martin Cawley, Turning Point Scotland;

Dr Michael Blackmore, MRCGP;

John Arthur, Crew;

Reg Hall, Routes Out of Prison;

John Campbell, Moray Alcohol & Drug Partnership;

Valerie Tallon, Lanarkshire Alcohol & Drugs Partnership.

For more information on the SDRC visit: www.sdrconsortium.org

SCOTTISH DRUGS RECOVERY CONSORTIUM ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH UK DRUG POLICY COMMISSION ON STIGMA RESEARCH

The Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium is delighted to announce a new partnership with the UK Drug Policy Commission. The SDRC will sponsor the Scottish component of the UK DPC's research into the stigma experienced by drug users in recovery.

The project aims to identify stigma and prejudice towards drug users and the impact this has in relation to recovery from drug problems in terms of media coverage, public attitudes and service provision.

A steering group with representatives from the UK DPC, Scottish Government, Scottish Families Affected by Drugs, Routes

Out of Prison, Family Addiction Support Services and Lanarkshire Addiction Recovery Consortium has been created to drive forward the Scottish component of this research.

Dougie Paterson, SDRC Director said:

“The SDRC welcomes the opportunity to work with UKDPC on this vital research project. We believe that stigma, whether real or perceived, can have a massive impact on individuals in recovery, their families and communities at large. Working with partners to dispel the myths that contribute to the existence of stigma will increase the potential for people across Scotland to recover from drug problems and addictions.

We are excited to be part of this important project and look forward to receiving the results later this year.”

Nicola Singleton, UKDPC Director of Policy and Research said:

“We are delighted to be working so closely with the Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium and other leading agencies in Scotland to further our understanding of stigma and improve the evidence base. We hope our research will be the important first step in getting the evidence in place, to empower others later on to challenge stigma and prejudice towards recovering drug users. In mental health, disability and other fields, solid evidence of stigma has provided the bedrock for subsequent campaigns for equality and inclusion.”

NATIONAL NALOXONE PROGRAMME

As highlighted in the last issue of this bulletin, the Minister for Community Safety asked the National Forum to develop a national naloxone protocol and guidelines around take home naloxone. This work is now complete and the protocol and guidance, along with a Patient Group Direction for naloxone which will enable nurses and pharmacists to supply this medication, was finalised in May.

The Scottish Government are supporting the roll out of take home naloxone across Scotland and will be providing their local partners with central resources to enable this.

The Minister for Community Safety will shortly be writing to ADPs, Health Boards and local authorities, providing more detail on the national roll out, including information on the support which will be available to them in developing local take home naloxone programmes.

OVERDOSE MATERIALS

The Volunteers Forum, which is a sub-group of the National Forum on Drug Related Deaths, has designed and developed a range of overdose prevention resources. The aim of these materials is to help prevent overdoses by raising awareness of when people are most at risk of overdose, the signs and symptoms of overdose and what to do if you find someone in overdose. The materials consist of an information leaflet, an information booklet and storyboard poster and a wallet card which provides an overview of what to do if you find someone in overdose and useful contact details.

The booklets, posters and wallet cards will be disseminated to ADPs and drugs services (voluntary and statutory). The information leaflet will be issued to a wider range of agencies, including the police, health services, GPs and community pharmacists. These materials will be issued next month.

For more information about these materials, please contact Jennifer Stoddart, Drugs Policy Unit at:

jennifer.stoddart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

MORE NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY read on.....

THE IMPORTANCE OF NALOXONE TRAINING

This article was written by Fiona MacKenzie, a Harm Reduction Support Worker at NHS Highland Harm Reduction Service, Inverness.

I did not fully appreciate how much we expect from our clients when we train them to respond appropriately to an overdose until I found myself in the same situation. I was working at the Needle Exchange in Waterloo Place, Inverness when a client came in, looking for a Naloxone pack. He said his friend had just overdosed and asked me to go with him to help.

I'd completed my Naloxone training, so I took one of the packs from the clinic and followed him, phoning 999 as we ran. He had not phoned for an ambulance because he was worried about police attendance at the scene. I was still on the phone to the paramedic when we reached the house. A young man was lying on the floor, cyanosed. He was

barely breathing, taking one breath every ten seconds or so. Without waiting, I gave him a single dose of Naloxone (0.4ml). At this point he stopped breathing completely, so I immediately began CPR.

After the first cycle of CPR I administered a further 0.4ml of Naloxone then continued a second cycle. This was the first time I'd performed CPR, and it is remarkably tiring. Just as I was starting a third cycle I was relieved to see the police arrive and asked a male officer if he could help. He pointed to the casualty and said, *"Just carry on with what you're doing"*. So I continued with the chest compressions myself until the paramedics arrived, while he stood in the doorway questioning witnesses.

When the paramedics had the casualty stabilised, I went back to work. The entire incident had taken less than an hour. I found out later on that the casualty was successfully resuscitated. It struck me that our clients who have often used Naloxone seem almost nonchalant about it afterwards. I don't know if this is them putting on a brave face or if they really are just so used to the stresses of overdose that it no longer phases them, but it did make me wonder if we value highly enough what we are asking clients to do when we train them to administer Naloxone?

RECENTLY ESTABLISHED SCOTTISH NALOXONE NETWORK (ScoNN)

This article was provided by Andrew McAuley from NHS Health Scotland.

A new network for those interested in Take-Home Naloxone (THN) has been established. The Scottish Naloxone Network (ScoNN) met for the first time in November 2009 and again in March of this year. The purpose of this new network is to bring consistency to the range of THN programmes emerging across the country and increase opportunities for networking and sharing of best practice between them.

The role of the network members is to update on progress in their local / specialist areas and to advise, drive and direct THN work across the country ensuring that delivery and process fits with local, national and international strategies, evidence and protocols. Current membership of the network is made up of those working on current or emerging THN programmes across the NHS, ADPs and the Scottish Prison Service although anyone with an interest in THN is welcome to attend.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Glasgow on August 26th. If you are interested in attending or would like more information on ScoNN please contact Andrew McAuley on 0141 354 2935 or via email andrew.mcauley@nhs.net.

CORRECTION TO ISSUE 8

The following paragraph included in Issue 8 of this newsletter has been amended:

'A recent survey of deaths in Glasgow has shown that 70% of these deaths were amongst people who were not in touch with a treatment service. It should have

read 'A recent survey of deaths in Glasgow has shown that 70% of these deaths were amongst people who were not in touch with a prescribed treatment service.'

We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

CONTACT

We welcome contributions to the newsletter from all areas and disciplines. These can be e-mailed to Fiona.scott@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Look out for **Issue 10** in December 2010.