

CROYDON DAAT NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME

Welcome to Croydon Drug & Alcohol Action Team's newsletter. The purpose of this is to let people know what is happening in the drugs and alcohol world in Croydon and beyond. We hope you find the articles interesting and informative and would love to hear reports and stories from individuals and agencies about the latest news on substance misuse in Croydon. Please send articles to Karen.handy@croydon.gov.uk or fax to: 020 8633 9613 or by post to DAAT Unit, 6th floor, Carolyn House, 22-26 Dingwall Road, Croydon CRO 9XF.

CROYDON DAAT CO-ORDINATION UNIT

Andy Opie Co-ordinator	Janet Austin Joint Commissioning Manager	Jackie Cave YP Co-ordinator	Karen Handy Office Manager
Ray Rajagopalan Data Manager	Jennifer Francis DIP Project Manager	Taiwo Dayo-Payne DAAT Projects Manager	Petrina Parnell Data/Admin Assistant
Ryan Williams Data Analyst	Melanie Bowman DAAT ROB Co-ordinator	Stephen Christian DIP Data Co-ordinator	Selena O'Neill DIP Core Team Mgr

DAAT CO-ORDINATORS UPDATE

Outreach Strategy

The DAAT Unit has recently finalised a substance misuse Outreach Strategy for the Borough. The key recommendations from the strategy are to deliver more targeted work with certain populations including women and BME groups, to gain a better understanding of prevalence of substance misuse amongst particular groups, expand the level of satellite provision in the North and North West of the Borough, make better use of non-substance misuse outreach services in

signposting drug users, enhancing assertive outreach through DIP and enhancing capacity and co-ordination of outreach across the board.

The DAAT Unit held a consultation workshop in November 2006 to discuss the recommendations and to start developing an action plan, which is now completed. One of the key actions in improving outreach will be the re-tendering of existing services. This includes outreach services for women, generic substance misuse outreach and housing support. The DAAT Unit is also working with the Supporting People team in improving housing support available locally.

Diversity Strategy

This was presented at a previous DAAT meeting. We have been unable to identify a local champion so far and the workshop proposed to start delivering the work is yet to be organised. However, recommendations are being taken forward as part of the Outreach Strategy and are reflected in the treatment plan. Further actions will be highlighted in the DAAT Team Plan.

Workforce Strategy

The DAAT Unit commissioned a consultant in November 2006 to deliver certain pieces of work identified in the Workforce Development Strategy. In particular, this work related to:

- Investigation into establishing an entry level training programme for the drugs sector
- Investigating and mapping locally available training programmes for drug workers
- Supporting the development of a system of accrediting or assuring the competence of staff in drug services
- Developing a training package to support implementation of the Models of Care single assessment process

A number of recommendations for future action have been highlighted for further action including:

- The restructuring of the current DAAT Training Group and the systems used to appraise trainers and evaluate courses
- Establish a stronger working relationship with the Learning & Skills Council and other learning and development organisations or partnerships
- Purchase places on an entry level training programme that already exists (SMART scheme) and investigate opportunities for ex-service users to graduate into NVQ Level 2 training from the Red Kite Learning ETE scheme that currently exists in Croydon
- Publicise more widely the training opportunities for local staff
- Investigate using Croydon College to provide Health & Social Care NVQ Level 3 to employed staff who do not have professional qualifications

Drug Related Paraphernalia

The DAAT Unit is undertaking some mapping of discarded drug related paraphernalia across the Borough. A short questionnaire has been distributed to a wide range of organisations for completion. Once the questionnaires have been returned the DAAT Unit will map 'hotspots' around the Borough and develop an action plan to tackle the issue more effectively in the future. This may include targeted outreach to hotspot locations or the provision of more disposal equipment/ services in particular areas. A draft report will be ready by the end of February 2007 and will be taken to the Harm Reduction Steering Group for discussion and to shape the action plan.

Service User Update

As a follow up on the Strategic Review of Drug and Alcohol services, a mini-questionnaire/survey regarding accessibility/opening times of services in Croydon has been designed with an accompanying covering letter. The letter has been addressed to service users summarising the results of the review, describing subsequent service improvement and thanking service users for their participation. The questionnaires will be tailored to focus on the gaps in information required for each individual service. Services are to feedback collated information required accordingly to avoid unnecessary information. SUReps will be involved in shaping the format of the questionnaire and in supporting Service Users in answering the questionnaires.

The SUReps have also been involved in a Christmas Mystery shopping exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to ascertain the quality of advice and the quality service being received on a point of contact basis. Service user representatives (SUReps) were asked to test the market across many providers i.e. housing services, advice and information services, and drug and alcohol services.

Each SURep was allocated approximately 11 services and were asked to call providers anonymously using an agreed script designed by the SUReps and enquire on Christmas opening times. Initial feedback from this exercise has been positive although a more formal report is still to be developed.

DRUG INTERVENTIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE (DIP)

- On 31 December 2006, CRI's contract with Croydon came to an end. The service has transferred to the DAAT Unit for a period of 6 months whilst a new provider is tendered. The team is still based at Cygnet House and have the same telephone number (0845 0560 099). Selena O'Neill has been appointed as the Operations Manager and should be the first point of contact for queries. A number of other new staff have been recruited and a three day training course was delivered just before Christmas.
- Melanie Bowman, the Restrictions on Bail Co-ordinator, has transferred permanently to the DAAT Unit but will still be based at the Magistrates Court (020 8686 5560).
- The DAAT Unit has recruited a dedicated DIP Data Co-ordinator who is responsible for pulling together all of the DIP information. This will help with problem solving, data cleansing and analysis. Data issues have been a major issue for Croydon since DIP's inception so it is anticipated that the extra capacity will ensure that this is managed more effectively in the future.
- There will be a requirement for DIP clients to attend a Follow Up treatment assessment as of April 2007. This is in addition to the Required Assessment currently enforced for people who have tested positive. It will become a separate criminal offence for people to miss Follow Up assessments in the same way that it is for required assessments at the moment. It is therefore important that the DIP team are equipped to be able to manage these changes effectively so we are currently reviewing the pathways into treatment. Changes have also been announced to the DIP recording tools (Drugs Intervention Record). These will be rolled out from April 2006. Training is being delivered for key personnel over the next month or so to help the implementation of these changes.

- Changes have also been agreed to the trigger offences for which people will be tested. These are as a result of the Fraud Act 2006 and include possession, making and supplying of articles for use in fraud.
 - A decision has been made to wind down the drug testing on charge pilots for under 18s with effect from the beginning of the financial year 2007/08. Ministers have also decided to wind down central funding for the 10 arrest referral pilots for young people from September 2007. An independent evaluation report into the pilots is available as an online document, and this can be accessed via the www.drugs.gov.uk website, under the Young People's section.
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CROYDON CDA

Croydon CDA is currently searching for any budding David Beckham's out there, who would be interested in joining a C.D.A. football team. Either 5 or 11 aside, play against other service users in the Croydon area . If you are interested please contact Bryan, who is trying to organise a training afternoon, so that he can gauge interest.

Croydon CDA has an Outreach Worker, Kerryn Wotton, based at the Family Justice Centre Monday to Friday between 10am and 12noon. The Family Justice Centre offers a one-stop shop style of support for those who experience family or domestic abuse / violence. If any service is supporting a substance misuser where domestic violence / abuse is a current or historic issue; why not refer them to Kerryn Wotton at Croydon CDA.

As well as providing therapeutic interventions to service users, Croydon CDA offers a range of training programmes for professionals who may not work directly in the substance misuse field. If your service, or a service you know of, would benefit from an individually tailored training programme (these range from half day through to 12 weekly sessions; depending on need), please contact Dean Parsons or Natalie Howarth at Croydon CDA to discuss your requirements

Over the past 4 months, 1 Outreach Worker, the Team Leader, 4 Project Workers and the Health Advisor all recently undertook a course in 'Deaf Awareness and Basic Sign Language', through an organisation called 'Hear This'. 100% of those who undertook training successfully completed and passed the course exam. Not only would we like to recommend 'Hear This' for the quality of the training provided, but we would now like to extend our support to any partner service that may be supporting a hearing impaired service user and may from time to time benefit from the 'basic skills' our team can offer.

With one member of staff already having trained previously, we have already successfully key-worked a deaf service user, using a mixture of our signing skills and their lip reading skills; along with computer based tools. So, please do not allow the costs of a translator to be prohibitive in providing access to treatment for a deaf service user; we have found a way to provide support in the form of Key-work and will be pleased to assist.

For further details on any of the above, or to make a referral, please contact Croydon CDA on 020 8686 7500.



Crystal meth to be class A drug

Crystal meth is to be reclassified as one of the UK's most dangerous drugs alongside cocaine and heroin, the government has announced.

Drugs Minister Vernon Coaker said the drug, also known as methamphetamine, is to move from class B to class A. Crystal meth is a highly-addictive stimulant which is thought to be most commonly used by gay clubbers.

Police wanted the drug reclassified. Mr Coaker said it could be very damaging to people, families and communities.

Jail threat

The decision to reclassify came after the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommended moving crystal meth to class A.

Mr Coaker told MPs on the Commons science and technology committee that police had raised concerns about a "low number of illicit laboratories synthesising the substance".

Ranking the drug as among the most dangerous in the UK means higher penalties for people found in possession or trying to supply crystal meth.

Possession of class A drugs can carry sentences of up to seven years in prison or an unlimited fine.

Judges can sentence class A dealers to life in prison or give them an unlimited fine.

Mr Coaker said: "Methylamphetamine is a very substantial problem in many countries outside the European Union but not within it.

"Reports that the UK is on the verge of a crystal meth explosion have been repeated for some years but to date there has been no reliable evidence to support this.

"However, international experience shows it has the potential to be extremely damaging."

The government move was immediately welcomed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo).

BBC news

London: The highs and the lows

A report from the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA) - January 2007.

The second edition of 'London: The highs and the lows' presents information on alcohol as well as drug use in London. The report contains detailed information on the way that drug and alcohol use in London differs from the UK as a whole, and also on the variations across London. It reveals the complexity of the challenges London faces and re-emphasises the necessity for partnership working to reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol use. Working with GLADA, the Mayor is committed to publishing one 'Highs and Lows' report in each Mayoral term and to continuing to support their wider programme of work.

For more information visit: <http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/health.jsp#hilo2>
www.london.gov.uk

ALERT!

Contamination of herbal or 'skunk-type' cannabis with glass beads

The Department of Health has recently received information suggesting that batches of herbal and 'skunk-type' cannabis have been contaminated with microscopic glass-like beads (or possibly ground glass). Laboratory testing has since confirmed a number of cases from a number of different parts of the country, in which cannabis appears to contain microscopic particles of glass. We have no information on other types of cannabis such as resin.

Reports, unconfirmed, suggest that smoking this contaminated cannabis, has been linked with complaints by users of sore mouth, mouth ulcers, chesty persistent coughs, and a tight chest lasting a few days after use.

Government advice already makes clear that cannabis is a substance harmful to health. The risk of glass contamination adds an additional layer of risk of harm. Whilst the exact potential health harm from this contamination is not yet fully determined, inhaling hot glass into the mouth, throat, or into the lungs should clearly be avoided.

In the current circumstances, the Department of Health advises that smokers of herbal and 'skunk-type' cannabis, in particular, should exercise caution.

For any patients presenting with concerns about their health after having smoked cannabis which may have been contaminated, or who may benefit from opportunistic health advice due to an identified high risk of cannabis use, the following advice may be useful:

- a) Whilst there are no reported serious health effects to date from this contamination, we are not yet able to determine fully what are the possible or likely risks to the health of cannabis smokers.
- b) There are anecdotal reports of some cases of the development of sore mouth, mouth ulcers, chesty persistent coughs and a tight chest lasting a few days, after smoking cannabis.

c) To avoid the risk of contaminated cannabis completely, patients should be advised to stop smoking cannabis.

d) If patients feel unable to stop, they should limit use as much as possible.

e) If patients continue to use, they should be warned, if any particular supply of cannabis that they have access to appears to have caused irritation to their mouth or airways, or if they suspect it is contaminated (e.g. due to grittiness when rubbed between moistened fingers), they should stop using that supply, or trading it, immediately; and they should not use any more cannabis from the same source.

f) Patients can be advised that self-help assistance with quitting cannabis can be located at the following websites: www.talktofrank.com or www.knowcannabis.com

The Department of Health will be making similar information directly available to the public, and to drug user networks, through a range of communication channels shortly after this alert has been sent to the NHS.

In addition, as part of the advice made directly available to the public, cannabis smokers will be advised that if they have particular symptoms and concerns about their health after smoking potentially contaminated cannabis, they may wish to discuss symptoms with their general practitioner. If exceptionally they believe they have an urgent problem and cannot access their general practitioner, they may consider they require assessment at an accident & emergency department.

As any further relevant information becomes available, the Department of Health will update this advice to practitioners.

EVENTS/ CAMPAIGNS

This year National Drugs Day will be on 23 May 2007. Further information about this day will be published on <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/communications-and-campaigns/> by the end of March 2007.

If you are thinking of hold an event please let the DAAT know.

VIRTUAL TEAM UPDATE

The Young People's Virtual Substance Misuse Team launched in October 2006. The aim of the team is to provide integrated services for young people within the Borough regarding substance misuse.

The four services within the team are:

CAMHS

DNA @ Off the Record

Social Services
YOT

The team meet once every two weeks to discuss how the team will be developed and in the future these meetings will include a clinical discussion, where members of the team will be able to present cases and seek ideas/support from their peers.

For Further details please contact Paulin Sullivan, Virtual Team Coordinator, Tel number: 020 8296 9655, email: paulinsullivan@offtherecordcroydon.org or virtualteam@offtherecordcroydon.org

FRANK Street Marketing Campaign

The aim of the FRANK campaign was for young people to be part of a 'street marketing' team, engaging with their Peer Group to promote FRANK and raise young people's awareness regarding substances and giving out prizes once young people had answered a question.

February was the 'Hero' event for the FRANK Campaign. The theme was Valentines and the resources, which were provided to be given to young people, as prizes were love heart tattoos, mint dispensers and teenage pregnancy also contributed 'make love special cards'. Resources from the autumn campaign were also used as prizes. The young people were briefed that their role was to ask their peers the question on the FRANK scratch card and if the young person got the question right they were given a prize.

The question was:

'What percentage of people recently said they would dump their boyfriend or girlfriend if they found out they were using drugs?

a. 10% b. 25% c. 52% d. 73%

The answer was 73%, which surprised some of the young people who answered the question and gave the street marketing team a chance to engage their peer group and discuss any issues that arose.

Two events took place; the first event was in partnership with Croydon College. Six young people were 'street marketers' and engaged with other students in the college asking the questions, giving out prizes and engaging in general conversation. If the young people required more in depth information then they were referred back to workers who could offer support and signpost to relevant organisations if required. Approximately 100 young people were seen during the two hours the event took place within Croydon College.

The second event was in partnership with Drop In and was based on a Thursday afternoon with the Talk Bus in Croydon town centre. Eight young people were 'street marketers' and they were from various agencies, including YOT, CYDT, service user from Talk Bus and Croydon College. The young people were based all along Croydon High Street and it was interesting to see young people walking past with FRANK resources which they had been given further along the high street and listen to

the discussions they were having as some could not believe the answer to the question was 73% and were discussing whether they would leave their partner if they were using drugs and/or alcohol. The young people and workers worked well engaging young people in the town centre giving out resources, and having general discussions with young people, again if a young person needed further information they were directed to Talkbus who could offer support and signpost to other services.

The two events went really well and I would like to say thanks to Croydon College and Drop In's Talkbus for allowing us to locate the event with them. Also thanks to CYDT, DNA, Talkbus, YOT and Connexions workers for attending the events and participating in the events. Finally a special thank you to the young people who were 'street marketers' who worked really hard at the two events.
