

Dear Colleague

## MANAGING THE NEEDS OF DRUNK AND INCAPABLE PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This letter confirms the publication of “Managing the Needs of Drunk and Incapable People in Scotland: A Literature Review and Needs Assessment”; gives notice of the related stakeholder dissemination event to be held on 23 November 2009; and outlines actions which Alcohol and Drug Partnerships are asked to take in following up this report. Copies of the report are available at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/29154403/0>

A review of the literature is available at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/29154320/0>

A summary of findings and recommendations is available at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/29154234/0>

### Background

1. There has been considerable debate over the proper handling of drunk and incapable people who come into contact with the emergency services. Limited data has been available on the scale of the problem and Police Forces, Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) and accident and emergency departments (A&E) can be severely stretched by having to provide care and support to individuals who are intoxicated and a danger to themselves or others.

2. This can mean that services’ ability to address the needs of other service users is reduced, and their responses to the problem may not represent the best model of service provision to meet the needs of intoxicated individuals themselves. This is an issue which impacts directly on a number of service providers - not only are there implications for health services but it is also recognised that the link between alcohol misuse and crime, particularly violent crime and anti-social behaviour, is strong.

3. To assess the scale of the problem Scottish Government social researchers commissioned research to estimate the size and nature of the issue and look in detail at how the needs of this population are currently being addressed.

4. “Changing Scotland’s Relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action”, launched in March 2009, outlined a commitment to publish and disseminate this research report, which sets out a range of possible approaches to supporting drunk and incapable adults

CEL 44 (2009)

17 November 2009

### Addresses

#### For action

Chief Executives, NHS  
Territorial Boards  
Chief Executive, Scottish  
Ambulance Service  
Scottish Police Forces  
Alcohol And Drug  
Partnerships  
Chief Executives, Local  
Authorities  
Community Safety  
Partnership Chairs  
Directors of Public Health,  
NHS Boards

#### For information

CoSLA  
ACPOS  
Local Authority Chief Social  
Work Officers

### Enquiries to:

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and addressing their impact on communities. This report can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/04144703/0>

5. A stakeholder dissemination event for this report will be held on 23 November 2009. This will be opened by the Minister for Public Health and Sport, Shona Robison MSP and will take place at the Barceló Edinburgh Carlton Hotel, North Bridge, Edinburgh. As this issue straddles public health, A & E services, policing and measures to address anti-social behaviour it will be of interest to strategic policy makers in all these areas, as well as Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and the Scottish Ambulance Service. Invitations to the event were issued to relevant stakeholders on 27 October 2009.

6. Ministers have previously made it clear it is for local strategic partners to work with service providers, using needs assessment data to determine and resource the appropriate services to meet local need. The research findings support this and recommend that there should be a strategic and partnership approach at local level to planning and funding services to meet the care needs of drunk and incapable people. This approach is further underpinned by the national framework for local alcohol and drug partnerships launched in April 2009. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/23084201/0>

7. In taking forward work in this area support and strategic input is available to local partnerships through the new Alcohol and Drug National Support Coordinators and the ACPOS Medical Services Reference Group. The Alcohol and Drug National Support Coordinators can be contacted at [Emma.Christie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.Christie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) and [Steven.Dalton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Steven.Dalton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) ACPOS can be contacted at [Malcolm.McMillan@grampian.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Malcolm.McMillan@grampian.pnn.police.uk)

## Research Findings

8. The research report makes clear that there is no single best practice model for services for drunk and incapable people. It is important that services are developed directly in response to local needs and that they remain flexible when needs change.

9. The research also concludes that there are potential cost savings to be made in shifting the balance of care from high-resource-intensive emergency services to services that are specifically targeted at this population. Furthermore, the strategy for addressing the care needs of people who become drunk and incapable should be part of a wider local alcohol strategy, which Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) are best placed to lead.

## Action

10. All ADP partners are asked to ensure the research report is made available to all staff with responsibility for developing local strategies and those who are involved in managing the needs of people who become drunk and incapable. This should include relevant Third Sector partners.

11. Attendance at the event on 23 November is recommended for strategic policy makers in all relevant areas.

12. ADPs are asked to ensure the needs of people who are drunk and incapable are included in local needs assessments when reviewing their service provision, and to ensure there are clear and effective partnership-based strategies in place to manage the needs of this vulnerable population and mitigate the impact they have on their communities.

**Further Information**

13. Further information on the event being held on 23 November is available from Amanda Adams at [Amanda.Adams@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.Adams@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) telephone 0131 244 2278.

Yours sincerely



Kevin Woods



Deputy Chief Constable George Graham  
ACPOS