

**UTTLESFORD DRUGS REFERENCE GROUP held at 12.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 20 JANUARY 2000**

Present:- Mike Hillyard - Chairman.
Canon Chris Bishop - Rural Dean/Stansted Airport
Florence Cantle - North Essex Health Authority
Peter Caulfield - Essex Police
Sarah Dukes - North Essex Health Authority
Laurel Anne Juniper - Essex Probation Service
Francis Kelly - Essex Probation Service
Sarah May - Magistrate
Elaine McGuinness - School Nurse
Sarah McLagan - Uttlesford District Council
DI Peter Orpe - Essex Police
Catharine Roberts - Uttlesford District Council
Sandi Satchel - West Essex CDAT
Ralph Smallwood - Essex Youth Service
Andrew Thomson - ADAS
Brenda Towle - ECVYS
Michelle Vogels - Uttlesford District Council
Christopher White - Essex Social Services
John Whittaker - Commerce
Anne Wiseall - Essex Drug Action Team

The Chairman welcomed those then present with particular reference to Laurel Anne Juniper, Francis Kelly, Sara May and Peter Caulfield.

I. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Jenny Burgess, Keith Ivory, Trevor James, Hanneke Jones and Graham Seal.

I. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 1999 were agreed as a correct record and signed.

I. MATTERS ARISING

Michelle Vogels reported that 95 people had taken information from the Officers manning the table outside Boots during the Drug and Alcohol Awareness Campaign in November. She thought it was questionable whether the exercise was worthwhile since it occupied two staff for five days as well. It was suggested that the event might be more productive in summer time.

The Chairman thanked Detective Inspector Orpe for supplying the figures for seizure of drugs in recent operations. Detective Inspector Orpe added that it was not yet possible to break down the Braintree figures to show those relevant just to Uttlesford although those with respect to crime in general would be able to be broken down to police beats.

Michelle Vogels gave statistics (1997 to December 1998) of the number of people using the needle exchange scheme operated by the North Essex Health Authority. The significance of the statistics was not yet clear. Anne Wiseall reported that the Chairman of the DAT was approaching each Council to ascertain its policy on the disposal of drug debris and that once the information was collated the DAT office would be coming out with suggested protocols.

Michelle Vogels reported on her attendance at the North Essex Substance Misuse Strategy Group meeting. She felt that the activities of this organisation of commissioners and providers of treatment in North West Essex need not directly involve the Drugs Reference Group, but representation would continue, to make sure Uttlesford, being a rural area, was not forgotten.

Michelle Vogels reported that the Saffron Walden Youth Theatre had written to say the Drug Awareness Tour could not be produced because the young people concerned felt that they could not take on such a large project. Deposit money would be returned. Members of the Group expressed disappointment at this outcome and it was agreed that Brenda Towle liaise with Michelle Vogels to see whether the initiative could be revived in some way.

The Chairman reminded members that the DAT conference was taking place on Wednesday 9 February 2000 and encouraged attendance as he felt that it provided an opportunity for the Drugs Reference Group to influence decisions before they were taken.

A progress report on the DRG action plan was circulated in the folder to members for comment prior to submission to the DAT.

I. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman updated the meeting on a letter received from UKADCU regarding the establishment of the Confiscated Assets Fund. A central fund was to be set up from which Drug Reference Groups could indent via the DAT for local initiatives. £100,000 was to be allocated for drug treatment and £100,000 for rehabilitation.

I. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the financial statement circulated with the last set of Minutes and identified for them the sources of income. Members agreed on the format of the statement. He added that Ralph Smallwood would speak about the Mobile Cafe, for which the funding for this budget year needed to be used by 31 March 2000. Monthly invoices needed to be made by Essex Youth Service for staffing costs.

I. **PRESENTATION ABOUT DRUG TREATMENT AND TESTING ORDERS IN ESSEX**

The Group received a presentation by Laurel Juniper of Essex Probation Service about drug treatment and testing orders which were to form a very important part of the Government Strategy for prevention of crime and disorder. The object of the orders was to reduce offending caused by drug use. The Home Office comment was that the orders were most appropriate in the case of opiates, cocaine and amphetamines. The cost of each order was approximately £6000 (including detox and rehabilitation) however, so that all offenders could not be treated. Home Office guidance was that the volume of offending and the acquisitive nature of the crimes were important criteria for the relevance of a DTTO, and that social vocational and employment factors should be taken into consideration. The DTTO itself featured intensive supervision, counselling and frequent and random drug tests by urine analysis. Each order would be tailored to the particular offender by probation working in partnership with magistrates, drug agencies and other relevant bodies. Court review hearings would take place at intervals of between one month and six weeks with ongoing reports of progress. Pilot DTTO schemes were being operated in South Merseyside, Croydon and Gloucester currently.

In parallel, but within the prison system, CARAT schemes were being introduced whereby offenders were offered counselling, detoxification and rehabilitation, within the prison, and tracking for six to eight weeks on release, the probation officers making the link with the drugs teams for the rehabilitate.

The various projects around the country had shown a reduction in offending behaviour. The regime was intended to be structured to keep people within the community who were at risk of going into prison. In answer to questions from John Whittaker Ms Juniper explained that a DTTO would not be ordered by the court if it were unlikely that the offender would comply with it. It was a sentence which fell in severity between prison and the community service order. It was designed to deal with the most chaotic offenders in the community, the ones who had not to date shown much commitment. She added that it was possible to link into the confiscation of assets fund to support DTTO's. 133 Orders had been made so far of which 29 had been revoked. The amounts spent by offenders on drugs reduced dramatically in the run up to an order and there were substantial reductions in the amounts and types of drugs used.

In answer to a question from the Chairman Mrs S May said that she thought the programme was an excellent one and felt that magistrates should have an update and training about it. Anne Wiseall informed the meeting

that information on DTTOs would be provided at the DAT conference. The Probation Service would manage DTTOs but would welcome views on possible input to the scheme.

I. **PRESENTATION ABOUT ARREST REFERRAL**

DI Peter Orpe, in the absence of Inspector Graham Seal, made a presentation about arrest referral in Essex. DI Orpe explained that this system differed from eg support cautioning because it applied to all rather than limited classes of offenders. The arrest referral scheme was intended by the Home Office to be implemented by April 2002 but the Essex Police hoped to implement it by April 2000. The purpose was to increase the number of people entering treatment, reducing the costs of psychosis to the health service. Currently drugs workers sought out drug users within police custody suites and there were facilities for a drugs worker in the courts. The proposal was now for a full time court drugs worker and it was estimated that 12% of offenders could enter treatment this way. The qualities of drugs workers were very important and the Home Office had provided a lucrative package for drugs workers in custody suites. Adequate resources would be necessary to treat offenders after referral and the Home Office would match local funding for quick and effective treatment. Some alignment might be necessary in the procedures used by different custody sergeants.

Research showed that the first offence of drug users occurred between the ages of 13 and 16. Between 16 and 21 addiction occurred and after 21 an addicted user could become a problem user. Currently however it was not until the user was in his or her 30s that they were treated and on average there were in the meantime 19 arrests for offences. About 7 out of every 37 arrests would be for relevant offences. Referrals would be back for treatment to the place where the offender lived not where the offence happened.

Funding from the Home Office matched equally by the Essex Police would provide up to 7 drugs workers in custody suites and it was proposed that the Probation Services would fund one more. Details would be settled at the conference in February. DI Orpe emphasised that the new workers could not be employed by the Police because they would be unable to confer with those who were in custody and the latter would not be prepared to talk to them. One worker was proposed for the Courts and six for individual custody suites. The eighth was to cover leave and sickness. They would see all detainees for relevant offences and anyone with a PNC marker including caution for drugs, and anyone requiring medication indicating drugs use. The assessment form used in the referral would be used in the evaluation and sent to all relevant agencies. £78,000 had been paid direct to the Health Authority for treatment.

I. **UPDATE ON MOBILE INFORMATION CAFE**

Ralph Smallwood of the Essex Youth Service reported on the progress with converting the bus for use as a mobile information cafe. It was noted that the lowest quote had been obtained from Osborne's. It might be possible to save some money if the secondary heating system could be salvaged. £5,000 to £6,000 would have to be spent to provide disabled access and £2,500 to £3,000 for extras not in the original quote.

Members asked whether the exceptions under the Disability Discrimination Act had been explored and Ralph Smallwood agreed to make further enquiries. Mr Smallwood undertook to prepare a contract for completion in March. He said that no response had been received from schools to the request for a name and design of logo. He was compiling a new list of desired equipment and was liaising with Parish Councils and local broadcasting companies to fundraise. He suggested that it would be advisable to join the Play Bus Association to use their expertise and added that he hoped to have an information pack compiled for the next meeting.

The Chairman stated that it was necessary for monthly indents on spending to be provided. A launch date must be established for the benefit of sponsors and dignitaries. Staff training and manning must be organised and the provision of licences and insurance. He thought that it was important for charitable status to be established for this particular project and asked Michelle Vogels to set the wheels in motion for this with a view to the floating of the whole project onto the Youth Service in due course. It was agreed that the launch would take place in April.

I. **STATISTICS FROM POLICE AND DRUGS AGENCIES**

PC Peter Caulfield presented the statistics for the previous 2 months (annexed to these Minutes). He informed the meeting about current operations and successes. DI Orpe added that an arrest had happened in

Takeley involving £30,000 worth of drugs. There was no confiscable asset however. Ms S Satchell reported that about 6 to 8 people a month contacted her Agency for assessment. Andrew Thomson updated the meeting on the acceptance and funding by the DAT of Dr Ronni Ooi's proposals regarding joint accessibility of information retained on computers. It was noted that the Lifespan information was not contained in these figures. Sandy Satchell added that the figures supplied by her organisation included alcohol and it was noteworthy that 67% of referrals for Uttlesford were referred for alcohol offences.

I. **ESSEX SCHOOLS DRUG EDUCATION PROJECT - LAUNCH**

Michelle Vogels informed the meeting about the launch of this project on 16 February at 4.00pm, in the District Council Offices. Invitations for the launch had been distributed with the agenda. It was hoped that one dedicated staff member would be trained for each school. A programme and display for the launch was needed and Members considered that this would best be provided by the Peer Education Project. Michelle Vogels added that a timetable of events would be provided to schools by Nick Boddington and that District Council Members were invited to the launch. Press would be invited and a press release issued a week prior to the launch.

I. **FAMILY FACTFILE DISTRIBUTION**

Brenda Towle reported that she was having difficulties in distributing family factfiles to schools. John Whittaker offered to assist by speaking to the Chairman of Governors of a relevant school.

I. **PROOF OF AGE SCHEME**

Peter Caulfield reported that all cards had now been issued and there had been no reported sales of alcohol to the underaged. Test purchases had produced good results. Shopkeepers were now asking for the cards. John Whittaker reported that the cards were not being used much in pubs which used their own age identification systems. Peter Caulfield added that among the older teenagers photo/driving licences were not being accepted as proof of age.

I. **SURVEY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

Michelle Vogels referred to the proposed survey among young people and asked for Members views on how to progress this matter. After discussion it was agreed that the timing was wrong for this project which would coincide with the drug education project. Members considered that the survey among young people should be put back for a future meeting and that John Balding would be asked to be involved in reviewing the questionnaire.

I. **PEER EDUCATION PROJECT**

Michelle Vogels reported that 12 young people at Newport were involved in the Peer Education Project and 6 at Saffron Walden County High school. They will be producing an educational tool at the end of the 12 week programme, which can be used for drugs education in their individual schools.

I. **PRIMARY CARE INVOLVEMENT**

Florence Cantle reported that the Pharmacy Supervision Scheme was being evaluated and results would be presented to the Drugs Reference Group in June. A conference entitled "Bring Your Partners" was scheduled for a date in February at Felsted and was aimed at voluntary groups involved in community safety.

Michelle Vogels informed the meeting that she had made a presentation to the Primary Care Group and that she would shortly be making another to the Association of Local Practice Managers.

I. **FOOTBALL IN COMMUNITY PROJECT**

PC Peter Caulfield wished to make a presentation on a project for supporting football in the community to divert young people from anti-social and self destructive behaviour. Ralph Smallwood affirmed that this scheme worked well in Braintree. As time for discussion was short, it was agreed to invite Ben Bartlett, who runs the scheme in Braintree, to the next meeting to do a presentation.

I. **ACTION PLAN**

It was agreed that a Working Group be formed composed of Michelle Vogels, Graham Seal, Andrew Thomson, Ann Wiseall and representatives from Social Services, the Health Service and the Youth Service to review the Action Plan for the coming year.

I. **RETIREMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

The Group's Chairman wished the Group well in the future. Michelle Vogels on behalf of the Group expressed thanks for all the efforts made by the Chairman on the Group's behalf during his period of chairmanship. She presented a farewell gift and bouquet.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm.