

This briefing is a fortnightly update on important policy developments relevant to family support and the drug and alcohol sector. It includes comment, data, reports, parliamentary news, policy directions and debate.

POLICY BRIEFING

16 – 27 April 2012

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Editorial

On Monday Adfam and DrugScope will release a joint briefing on the troubled families agenda and what it means for the third sector and those affected by drugs and alcohol. The troubled families work has received significant public and political attention recently but its practical implications may still be misunderstood at a local level.

The figure of 120,000 families has been much talked about in the media and the significant cost alleged to be involved in 'dealing' with these families estimated to be extremely high - £9billion a year. In March 2012 the DCLG's *The Troubled Families programme: Financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities* defined troubled families as those households which: are involved with crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), have children not in school, have an adult on out of work benefits and cause high costs to the public purse. Although families affected by drugs and alcohol are not included specifically, the programme allows local authorities the flexibility to bring this issue in to their selection processes under the 'high cost to the public purse' indicator.

Obviously this focus on families experiencing multiple disadvantages is welcome. The extra support and skills offered to make these changes could improve outcomes for the whole family. However, at Adfam and DrugScope's roundtable notes of caution were raised by some professionals, specifically about the potential for 'short-term fixes' to longer term problems given the explicit intention for the programme to end in 2015. Much of the evidence suggests that families need quite a lot of time and consistent support to make positive changes to the most enduring problems they face. The outcomes for the troubled families agenda will provide the basis for the payment by results model, which some critics may argue incentivises 'cherry-picking' - working with 'easier' families who may provide quicker results.

Participants at the roundtable also raised concerns that the specific focus on 'turning around the lives' of 120,000 families could distract local authorities from the more systemic necessary changes identified in the Munro review and other reports. It is commonly stated that some troubled families experience up to 20 specialist professionals simultaneously trying to support them. Sometimes a family can fall through the gaps, with each service thinking that another one is providing the essential support. By taking a more systemic approach and focusing on improving training and awareness, multi-agency working practices and decreasing bureaucracy more families should benefit and their risk of multiple needs worsening be decreased.

Please do read our briefing which is out on Monday and email us at policy@adfam.org.uk to let us know what you think of the troubled families agenda and its local implications.



Joss Smith

Head of Policy and Regional Development

Parliamentary roundup

Gross social care expenditure by group, 2008-11:

Group	Gross expenditure (£billions)		
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Older people	9.08	9.39	9.44
Adults (18-64) with a physical disability	1.56	1.65	1.66
Adults (18-64) with a learning disability	3.81	4.01	4.19
Adults (18-64) with mental health needs	1.16	1.22	1.22

NB: these figures do not add up to total social care expenditure.

Prisoners enrolled in a variety of interventions for offenders with drug addictions:

Programme	Starts in 2010-11
Building skills for recovery	161
P-ASRO (Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending)	2,764
P-ASRO for women	82
Short Duration Programme	4,639
FOCUS programme	97
Prison Partnership 12-step	133
Prisons Partnership therapeutic community	235
RAPt 12-Step	598
Bridge programme	59
Total	8,768

People in England prosecuted and convicted for domestic violence offences, 2007-12:

Year	Number prosecuted	Conviction rate (%)
2007-08	59,898	68.8
2008-09	62,824	72.2
2009-10	69,491	71.9
2010-11	77,007	71.9
2011-12	73,831	73.2

Debates and questions have also revealed:

- The Department of Health will provide Primary Care Trusts with £466.7m in funding for drug treatment in 2012-13.
- There were 7,941 Health Visitors (or full-time equivalents) in 2011, down from 8,017 in 2010 and 8,307 in 2009. This number is expected to rise again as the new cohort of trainees enters the workforce in 2012.
- The Government estimates that 90% of prisoners have a psychiatric problem and 10% of males on remand (as well as 14% of female offenders) have functional psychosis.
- 6% of total recorded crimes are drug offences (though crucially this is not the same as drug-related); and in 20% of violent incidents, victims perceived the offender to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs .
- Askham Grange, Bristol, Featherstone, Pentonville, Swaleside and Swansea prisons are the six prisons taking part in the pilot for Drug Free Wings.

Consultations

[Sexual Violence, Survivors' Substance Use and Capacity to Consent: A Survey for Professionals](#)

This survey from Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) is aimed at any professional who has worked with survivors of drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA). As well as covering experiences of working with this group of people the survey also covers how this type of assault relates to domestic violence and practitioners' own understanding of how drugs and/or alcohol affect a person's capacity to consent.

The survey is running until the beginning of **July 2012**.

[Sexual Violence, Survivors' Substance Use and Capacity to Consent: A Survey for Survivors](#)

This AVA survey is for survivors of sexual violence. The findings, as well as a literature review and a survey with practitioners, will be used to produce a report looking at how the law and the criminal justice system in England and Wales interpret the effects of alcohol and/or drugs on an individual's ability to agree to sexual activity by choice ('capacity to consent'). All responses will be treated with total anonymity.

The survey is running until the beginning of **July 2012**.

[Multiple needs and exclusions and the work of Making Every Adult Matter \(MEAM\)](#)

MEAM has been running since 2008 and is a partnership of CLINKS, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind. The aim of the coalition is to change policy and practice to benefit people facing multiple needs and exclusions. This short (five minute) survey is for anyone who has had any involvement with MEAM and will form part of the evaluation of the project's success and future direction.

[Social and emotional wellbeing – early years: consultation on the draft guidance](#) – NICE

This draft guidance is aimed at anyone responsible for the social and emotional wellbeing of children under five, including those planning, commissioning and delivering services for these children. It covers areas including the identification of vulnerable children – for example those whose parents have substance use or mental health problems, or who live in households affected by domestic violence – early education and pre- and post-natal home visiting. The draft guidance consists of a set of recommendations regarding the importance of identifying the strengths within a family as well as weaknesses; discussing substance use, mental health and support network issues in pre-natal settings; and establishing agreed pathways and referral routes which define how different services will work together.

The guidance is open for comments until **18 June 2012**. (*Note that only [registered stakeholders](#) can respond to this consultation.*)

[Family Support and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments](#) – Adfam

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) will be one of the main guiding documents used by new Health and Wellbeing Boards to decide on local public health priorities and make commissioning decisions. Adfam would like to understand more about how family support services will be affected by JSNAs to ensure the needs of drug and alcohol users and their families are fully recognised. This questionnaire can be filled in even if you do not have any direct experiences of JSNAs - we appreciate anyone completing it to give us as comprehensive a picture as possible.

[Annual survey 2011/2012](#) – Compact Voice

This is Compact Voices' annual survey which is used to establish the relative health of local Compacts around England. Compacts are the agreements made locally between third sector organisations and local authorities. The information from the survey will be used to map local Compact activity across England and help us provide effective support for the implementation of local Compacts. All responses will be confidential.

The survey is running until **May 11 2012**.

Reports and announcements

Click on the report titles to access the documents.

Drugs, alcohol and families

[Police and Crime Commissioners – A briefing for the drug and alcohol sector](#) (pdf) – DrugScope

This DrugScope briefing aims to provide a short and accessible overview of these reforms and their implications for the drug and alcohol sector. It uses an FAQ structure to pose and answer key questions exploring what powers the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will have, how they will work and what they will be responsible for. It also provides a reading list of further resources for those interested in exploring the issue further.

[A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People](#) (pdf) – National Youth Agency

This document is designed to help local authorities explore how young people can be involved in commissioning young people's services. It is in two parts. The first part provides an overview of the policy and legislative context and details some of the benefits of involving young people. There are also case studies that show how a range of authorities have come up with creative ideas to ensure the voice of young people is heard and acted upon in the commissioning of services that affect them. The second part offers a self-assessment tool to identify organisational strengths and weaknesses in involving young people in the commissioning process.

[Working for stereotyped and stigmatised groups](#) – Guardian Voluntary Sector Network

This online resource from the Guardian newspaper brings together the opinions of various practitioners and managers who work with stigmatised groups. The contributors work in services supporting single parents, drug users, young people and homeless people. The advice they give covers useful areas of practice such as workforce and training needs, service user involvement and empowerment, building and evidence base and combatting stigma.

[What the 2012 Budget means for carers](#) – Carers UK

This short briefing looks at some key announcements from the Government's 2012 budget and what they might mean for people with caring responsibilities. The paper sets out changes to taxes (and tax credits), pensions, welfare spending, social care and advice services, and looks at what each pronouncement means for carers: for example, new funding pledged for information services will not cover losses from other sources, especially with increasing demand for advice and changes to Legal Aid provision; households containing someone on Carer's Allowance will be exempt from a change in the number of hours a couple needs to work to claim Working Tax Credit; and carers who are working a small amount may get to keep more of their earnings as the amount they can earn before they start paying tax at all is raised.

[Leading for outcomes: children and young people](#) – Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services

This guide is part of a series which provides support and training materials for the social services workforce. The outcomes mentioned in the title are the beneficial improvements in a service-user's life that all services aim for. The report has sections covering the background policy; the realities of working with an outcome-focused approach, how to identify and record outcomes for young people and working with parents. The guide uses exercises to engage readers and is described as a 'framework rather than a prescriptive training course. Users of the guide are encouraged to dip in and out of it'.

[Evaluation of independent social work reports in care proceedings](#) (pdf) – Owen *et al*, University of Oxford

This report aims to examine the effectiveness of Independent Social Workers' contributions to care proceedings, stating that many people have strong opinions about them but that evidence is lacking; in particular, the report is set in the context of the Government's Family Justice Review, which had a stated aim of a six month time limit on care cases and expressed concerns that ISWs duplicate existing knowledge and therefore contribute to delays in the system. The report looked at 65 cases concerning 121 children, with many of the parents having histories of ill treatment in their own childhood and substance use, domestic violence and mental health problems. The report's overall conclusion is that ISWs are a valuable source of expertise and knowledge and do not duplicate existing assessments as much as many apparently believe.

[**“Striking the Balance”: Practical Guidance on the application of Caldicott Guardian Principles to Domestic Violence and MARACS**](#) (pdf) – UK Council of Caldicott Guardians/Department of Health

This guidance is intended to assist decision making for those involved in information sharing between agencies working with domestic violence victims. It identifies the underlying ethical considerations so that tensions between confidentiality and information sharing can be addressed and explores the six Caldicott Guardian Principles and how they should be worked with. The guidance also provides direction for staff in circumstance when they are unsure on the appropriateness of sharing sensitive information.

[**Keeping children safe: the case for reforming the law on child neglect**](#) (pdf) – Action for Children

This report argues that the law on child neglect – originally drafted in 1933 – is outdated, too focused on ‘antiquated’ conceptions of harm to children and in need of revision to reflect changing ideas on what constitutes neglect. Whilst recognising that changing laws takes time, Action for Children argue that the current system is too focused on physical injury, basic needs and punishing parents, and should move to recognise wider ideas of neglect – including those that may be caused by parental substance use – and account for how to support parents to provide a positive environment for their children.

[**Screening, searching and confiscation: advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies**](#) (pdf) – Department for Education

This advice is intended to explain schools’ powers of screening and searching pupils so that school staff have the confidence to use them. In particular it explains the use of the power to search pupils without consent. It also explains the powers schools have to seize and then confiscate items found during a search. It includes statutory guidance which schools must have regard to. It states that a pupil may be searched for any item if they agree to being searched. Pupils can be searched without consent, but only for certain specified items such as weapons, drugs, pornography and fireworks. These items can then be confiscated.

[**Corston Report 5 Years On - How far have the government got on the road to reform of the criminal justice system for women?**](#) (pdf) – Women in Prison

This report is a five-year follow up on the Corston Report which made a number of recommendations on women’s prisons. It individually addresses the 43 recommendations made and gives the government a red, amber or green light rating on its progress. The ratings are fairly evenly split amongst these three ratings, although certain areas are flagged as areas of potential concern, and others are marked ‘U-Turn’ where progress has been made but later lost.

[Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in Wiltshire](#) (pdf) – CQC/Ofsted

Though this only concentrates on one county area, the fact that safeguarding services were judged ‘inadequate’ gives useful insight into safeguarding practices, how they are inspected and on what terms. In particular, the inspection found that procedures did not follow statutory guidance; there were failings in child protection work with children who had already been identified as at risk or were on child protection plans; there was insufficient managerial oversight of decision-making, leading to incorrect assessments of risk; and a lack of safeguarding training for a wide range of professionals who have direct contact with children, young people and families. More positive points in the report include good multi-agency work delivered through children’s centres, cross-party political commitment to safeguarding and high levels of commitment in the front line workforce.

[Charting New Waters: Delivering drug policy at a time of radical reform and financial austerity](#) (pdf)

– UK Drug Policy Commission

This wide reaching report from the UKDPC assesses the background context of reform and change in the drug and alcohol sector and concludes with a ‘broad picture of upheaval and uncertainty’. It is aimed at national policy makers, commissioners, providers of drug treatment and others. The report identifies reasons for the change – increased localism, decreased funding, health and social care reform, the new Police and Crime Commissioners – and then how organisations are responding to these challenges.

Key findings in organisational behaviour include: unprecedented degree of change and upheaval, often underpinned by insufficient evidence; changes in the structures of accountability and reporting; and a risk of fragmentation between the health and criminal justice agencies that deliver successful drug interventions.

Your organisation

[Managing charities in the new normal – A perfect storm?](#) (pdf) – PwC/Charity Finance

Group/Institute of Fundraising

This report builds on a project from 2008 which aimed to investigate how the ‘credit crunch’ was affecting charities, and what the outlook was for the future. This paper presents survey results from several hundred charities, concluding that the ‘new normal’ is a much tougher environment which features falling income and a tough fundraising environment mixed with rising demand for services; the recommendations for charities therefore centre on sound financial management, maintaining confidence and managing the process of change. The report also contains a variety of tips on navigating this ‘new normal’, including a clear strategy for using reserves, investment in fundraising skills and carefully planned collaborations to help reduce costs.

[Theory of change: the beginning of making a difference](#) – New Philanthropy Capital

Put simply, a ‘theory of change’ aims to demonstrate a causal relationship between what a charity does and its stated aims and objectives: how and why its activities lead to outcomes and impact. The basis of this report is that a sound theory of change can help charities refocus their work where it is most effective and illustrate the changes they make to service users and funders. After a brief rundown of how to create a theory of change (including identifying realistic goals, working out which activities lead to which outcomes, and finding what outside factors are needed for interventions to work), the guide examines how a theory of change can be used in strategy, for evaluation, and to support collaboration between different organisations working in the same area.

[Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities](#)

– Charity Commission

This strategy document describes and explores the role the Charity Commission (CC) has in regards to safeguarding and third sector organisations. It explains how the CC works with charities to prevent concerns over safeguarding arising in the first place, how concerns are dealt with when they arise (for instance if some form of child or vulnerable adult abuse is alleged to occur within a charity) and how concerns with an individual who works for a charity are dealt with. There is also a section on how the CC deal with sensitive or confidential information.

[Promoting positive mental health at work](#) (pdf) – ACAS

This guide aims to help employers deal better with the issues presented by mental health problems in the workplace. As well as setting out simple information what does and doesn’t constitute ‘mental health problems, how prevalent they are and how they can affect the workplace, the guide aims to help employers recognise mental health issues, know what they can and can’t influence and promote positive mental health at work. The paper also contains a number of case studies and representative scenarios for employers to work through.

Featured issue

[Building for recovery](#) – DrugScope

This report has been produced by DrugScope as part of their Drug Sector partnership work and provides a discussion of what recovery means in reality for the sector and how it can be achieved. It has been produced after consultation with DrugScope members, and takes as a starting point the Government's assertion in the 2010 Drug Strategy that recovery is 'an individual, person-centred journey, as opposed to an end state, and will mean different things to different people'.

The report acknowledges the positive steps that have been made in the treatment of those with substance use problems – notably a commitment from government, a growing base of knowledge and evidence on what really works, and a high level of partnership and consensus in the sector as signified by the Consensus Statement of 2010 signed by over 70 people and over 30 chief executives of drug treatment agencies.

As well as these positive steps it's clear, the report states, that there are on-going processes of political reform or policy-making which will influence the drive towards recovery for the sector, communities, families and individuals. The main three pieces of reform identified as significant are the following –

- **Public spending constraints** – local authorities face a cash reduction of 14% by 2014/15 according to the 2010 spending review
- **Localism** – local authorities will have greater autonomy in allocating funds with the removal of ring-fenced budgets and the appointment of Police and crime Commissioners (PCCs).
- **Public policy reform** – the abolition of the National Treatment Agency (NTA) is bound to have an impact, as it the promotion of Payment by Results (PbR) and welfare reform.

The report then identifies key challenges that exist derived from these processes and others that might hinder the sector's drive towards recovery. These include: the potential risk of disinvestment in treatment services; lack of access to recovery capital (such as appropriate housing) given the risk of disinvestment in other sectors; and the importance of working with the new Health and Wellbeing Boards to unite services and join up health strategies.

The report finishes with a set of 'foundations' – the necessary steps DrugScope believe should be taken to facilitate recovery for all. Many of these are the opposite of the challenges previously identified – the need for investment; access to social/recovery capital; building a vision of recovery which includes all members of the family; and increased involvement for the VCS, including representation on Health and Wellbeing boards are all stressed.

A commitment is also made by DrugScope on behalf of its members to work with Government and 'local partners and colleagues to build recovery-based services that respond to local needs and priorities, while providing high quality and evidence based services to manage the harms associated with problem drug use, to individuals, families and communities'.