

W.LANCS COMMUNITY DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICE
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13th January 2003

Dear Mr.Greening,

Regarding the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Consultation Document, we at the W.Lancs Alcohol Service would like to make the following comments.

Firstly we were quite taken aback at the scale of the questioning. We appreciate that each question is very relevant (in fact each is a thesis in itself!), and the whole issue is massive, but No.14 for example –“How do you define harmful drinking?” –the answer to this is clearly explained by the World Health Organisation’s Diagnostic Criteria –(ICD10.1992).

As a community nurse treatment agency we utilise some common knowledge bases when delivering up-to-date, evidence-based care. For example:-

- The National Treatment Agency’s “Models of Care” document (DoH Feb.2002)
- The National Addiction Centre’s “Dangerousness of Drugs” document (DoH Sept.2001)
- The Medical Council on Alcoholism
- Alcohol Concern
- The National Service Framework for Mental Health
- SCODA (Standing Conference on Drug Abuse)
- Prevention & Reduction of Alcohol Misuse Evidence Briefing (Health Development Agency June 2002)

In fact a lot of answers to your questions can be found by referencing these sources.

We appreciate that your task is immense but please do not make the assumption that the growing harm posed by the drug ‘alcohol’ is in any way related to a failing of alcohol treatment agencies. To highlight this point, in W.Lancashire, which has a population of approximately 100,000, there have been only two community nurses employed to deal with an average of 220 referrals per year. These referrals being people with severe alcohol problems causing depression, suicidality, liver disease, etc. etc. There is no medical or social work professionals in the Team and we have access to only six in-patient detoxification beds per year. This is not untypical in other community alcohol teams.

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In our experience alcohol treatment agencies deliver highly effective results for problems drinkers. You can access our local outcome measurement by contacting our Trust's Clinical Governance Dept.

May we take this opportunity to wish you luck in your endeavour as we appreciate that feedback from community alcohol teams will play only a small part of your overall task.

Yours sincerely,

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