

DRUG ABUSE

You are meeting the Home Secretary, David Mellor and John Patten to discuss drug abuse on Tuesday at 1200. You will wish, however, to have the papers to consider over the weekend.

This briefing package contains the following:

- the Home Secretary's minute (Flag A);
- the Policy Unit advice on this (Flag B);
- Robert Maxwell's note (Flag C);
- the Home Office publication of Government strategy (Flag D);
- the DHSS guidelines on treatment of drug abuse (Flag E);
- further published DHSS material (Flag F) which is separately indexed.

IN FOLDER A BACK OF FILE

The most important documents are at Flags A and B. The Policy Unit recommendations are on page 6 of their note. You will see that three of the six would require extra resources, though one of the remaining three (forfeiture of assets) should, at least in the longer term, help generate them.

As you know, David Mellor's study group means to report to H Committee in July. The meeting on Tuesday offers you an opportunity to discuss generally the extent and nature of the problem, and the stage which discussions within the Government have reached. Mr. Mellor will be able to report on what he has learned in the US. In the discussion, you will be able to stress your personal interest in the drugs issue, and have a chance to offer a steer on the options being considered.

Max Addison

E.R.

PRIME MINISTER

CA
Do with MCA,
1984

Drug Abuse

The Home Secretary has written (Flag A), as promised, setting out his assessment of the problem and identifying the stage that David Mellor's Study Group has got to. Policy Unit comments are at Flag B, and Robert Maxwell's note, which you will recall seeing before Easter, is at Flag C.

The Policy Unit recommend that you should hold an early meeting with the Home Secretary, David Mellor and John Patten to discuss the current state of play, and to lend your support to a number of specific proposals the Study Group are considering (they aim to report to H Committee in July). Such a meeting would also provide an opportunity for Mr Mellor to report back while his US experiences are fresh in his mind.

We think a quick, small meeting is the right course. If you are content that we should set one up, you do not need to consider all the papers in detail now. You may prefer to consider them over the weekend, along with some other background material which Hartley Booth is drawing together.

Content for me to arrange an early meeting along these lines?

Mark Addison

Yes

Mark Addison

17 April 1985

MR BUTLER

Mark

I agree we should have a meeting on
the lines you suggest very soon.
and the Policy Unit

DRUGS

FERR

17.4

As you know, the Home Secretary was going to put a minute to the Prime Minister setting out current state of play, and this arrived immediately before Easter. The Policy Unit have now drawn up advice. These papers, together with other relevant earlier documents, are attached.

The Home Secretary's note summarises the problem and identifies the stage that David Mellor's group has got to. He notes that a full report from the group should be going before H in July. There is nothing new in the Home Secretary's note, though he does mention (something which seemed at one point to have been forgotten) that he is developing proposals for legislation to confiscate the proceeds of drug trafficking (a point Maxwell raised).

The Policy Unit note addresses a number of issues, including the second Maxwell proposal that a drugs supremo be appointed. It considers in particular what should be done about the sources of drugs, the transit of drugs, the way in which drugs get into Britain, the way they are sold and used, and ways of countering addiction. These of course are areas being looked at by the Mellor group.

The Policy Unit end up suggesting the PM should meet the Home Secretary, David Mellor and John Patten to lend her support to a number of specific proposals. These would cost money, which could be offset against assets confiscated from the convicted barons.

There is a tricky question of timing on this, and on how we might suggest to the PM that she takes forward her interest in the area. It would be odd if her intervention were entirely to pre-empt the Mellor group report, though sensible for her to give a steer before it is too late to exert an influence on the report. So a meeting now seems a sensible move, and could take the form of a report back from Mr. Mellor, following his US research visit.

As to who should attend, one of the difficulties in the drugs area is that just about everybody has an interest. But a small meeting with the key people seems right. The Policy Unit suggestion (Home Secretary, Mr Mellor, Mr Patten) excludes FCO and Treasury. They will be important, but on balance might best be left out at this stage.

Grateful for a word before we put it up to the PM.

MEB

16 April 1985



10 DOWNING STREET

Bernard.

In view of Rotins vote

I think we need to await
LB's minute, and then
we can react accordingly.

MVA 28/3

GOVERNMENT ACTION ON DRUG MISUSE

The Government's strategy

1. The Government's strategy involves attacking both the supply of, and the demand for, drugs. It consists of simultaneous action on five main fronts:

- (i) reducing supplies from abroad
- (ii) tightening controls on drugs produced and prescribed here
- (iii) making policing even more effective
- (iv) strengthening deterrence
- (v) improving prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

2. The Ministerial Group on the Misuse of Drugs is charged with reviewing, coordinating and developing this strategy. Departments represented on the Group - either at Ministerial or official level - are the Home Office, Department of Health and Social Security, Department of Education and Science, HM Customs and Excise, Scottish Office, Welsh Office, Department of Health and Social Security (Northern Ireland), Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Overseas Development Administration and Department of Environment.

Action taken

3. The following paragraphs contain a summary of the action which the Government has taken over the past year to combat drug misuse.

(i) Reducing supplies from abroad

4. The UK is an active member of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Since September 1984 the UK has also chaired the Council of Europe Pompidou Group. Both bodies promote international cooperation to reduce the availability of drugs. Through its contributions to the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control the Government gives financial assistance to producer and transit countries, eg for the elimination of opium-poppy cultivation and to improve law enforcement efforts. In April 1984 the Government pledged £1 million to the Fund to assist the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to eradicate opium poppy cultivation.

5. Greater priority has been given to mobile and flexible Customs controls and to improved intelligence gathering. The number of specialist Customs investigators has increased by 75% since 1979. A further 60 new Customs officers were recruited during 1984 to enhance prevention controls and 100 new Customs posts will be provided in 1985/86 specifically to combat drug smuggling.

6. A senior Customs officer has been posted to Karachi and a senior police officer has been posted to Amsterdam - to improve operational intelligence about drug smuggling to this country.

ii) Tighter domestic control

7. An order was made in April 1984 adding dipipanone to the list of drugs which doctors cannot prescribe without a special Home Office licence. An expert medical working group, appointed by the DHSS, is considering the feasibility of extending this restriction to all opioid drugs.

8. Barbiturates, and a number of other drugs, were brought under the control of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 from 1 January 1985.

9. Action has been stepped up against doctors suspected of irresponsible prescribing. Three directions against doctors were made in 1983 and four in 1984.

(iii) Policing

10. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales has written to chief constables to stress the priority which is expected to be given to the investigation of drugs offences. The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has pinpointed drugs offences as one of his six priority offences in his strategy for 1985. By 1 January 1985 all police forces in England and Wales had established specialised drugs squads. (In Scotland five out of the eight forces now have specialised drugs squads; a sixth force is setting up a squad and in the other two there are officers with specific responsibility for the collection and dissemination of drugs intelligence. Increasing emphasis has been placed on in-force training so that all officers are able to respond). Regional Crime Squads are devoting an increasing proportion of their time to drugs investigations. The Association of Chief Police Officers has established a working party to examine police structures and organisation.

(iv) Deterrent measures

11. Parole for drug traffickers sentenced to more than five years' imprisonment has been severely restricted.

12. The Government has announced that it intends to introduce legislation in this Parliament to deprive convicted traffickers of the proceeds of their crimes. (The Secretary of State for Scotland has introduced amendments to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill to make the imposition of a fine, in addition to a term of imprisonment, the norm in serious cases of drug trafficking. In addition he has referred the question of forfeiture etc of assets to the Scottish Law Commission for advice.)

13. The Government has also announced that it intends to increase from 14 years' to life imprisonment the maximum penalty for trafficking in Class A drugs. Mr Keith Raffan MP has introduced a Private Member's Bill, with Government support, to effect this change.

(v) Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

14. The Government has launched a major education and information campaign directed at parents and young people. In England and Wales parents' leaflets have been issued and an advertising agency is drawing up proposals for a media campaign beginning in late April. In Scotland a media campaign is already under way, including television and cinema commercials and the issue in April of a booklet as a magazine insert.

15. DHSS is providing £10 million over three years for pump-priming to local treatment and rehabilitation projects. £2 million has been made available in Scotland. Special Welsh Office funding totalling £200,000, will also be available for schemes beginning in 1985/86.

16. Doctors have been issued with guidelines, prepared by a medical working group set up by the DHSS, on good clinical practice in the treatment of drug misuse.

17. Health authorities in England and Wales were required to make interim reports to Ministers by the end of 1984 on the scale of the drug problem in their areas and their plans for tackling it. They were also required to prepare fully-developed plans and a long-term strategy as part of their general strategic plans, most of which are due by the end of March 1985.

March 1985

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON THE MISUSE OF DRUGS

Interim report to H Committee

Introduction

1 This is an interim report to H Committee by the Ministerial Group on the Misuse of Drugs. Its purpose is to:

- (i) assess the present position in regard to drug misuse and drug trafficking;
- (ii) review progress so far in tackling the problem;
- (iii) indicate the main issues which the Ministerial Group will consider in the coming months and on which it will make a substantive report to H Committee in the summer; and
- (iv) point up the resource implications of present, and of possible new, initiatives.

The problem

2 The problem of drug misuse continues to worsen. All the official indicators - seizures of drugs, notifications of addicts and number of criminal proceedings - point to an increasing incidence of drug misuse, especially of heroin. Customs' seizures of heroin rose from 212 kilos in 1983 to 299 kilos last year (compared with 40 kilos in 1979). There was a 40% increase in the number of addicts notified in 1983; the available information suggests that there was a further substantial increase last year (probably of the order of 20%-25%).

3 These official indicators are backed up by the experience of those in the field, eg the police and the staff of drug dependency clinics and "street agencies". All confirm a continuing upward trend in the amount of illicit drugs available throughout the country and in the number of people misusing them. And the fact that the average street price of heroin is low and its purity high confirms that supplies are plentiful.

4 It is not only the number of misusers which causes concern. An increasing proportion of misusers and addicts are in their 'teens (in 1983 one-fifth of new notified addicts were under 21). Very few fit the stereotype of the conventional "junkie". Today's misusers are often drawn from groups (such as children of school age living in council housing estates) who, a few years ago, barely figured in the drugs scene. Their need to obtain drugs is giving rise to a considerable amount of petty crime. There are signs that the widespread practice of smoking heroin ("chasing the dragon") may be only a stepping-stone for some to the more dangerous practice of injection. Finally, there is the threat - probably no more than that at present, but the situation could change rapidly - of an upsurge in the misuse of cocaine (such as the United States has experienced): there are vast supplies of cocaine in Latin America which will be seeking a market and Europe is a prime target. Underlying all these facts lies a good deal of human misery and despair among the misusers and addicts, coupled with concern on the part of their parents, families and the professional organisations who are trying to cope with the problem. The experience of other countries suggests that drug misuse can spread very rapidly through certain sections of society, creating a serious threat to law and order, and, ultimately, to social stability.

The Government's response

5 The Government's strategy, and the action which we have taken under each head of that strategy, are summarised in an annex to this paper.

6 In spite of the deteriorating position the Group believes that the Government's response has been creditable. Important initiatives have been taken in almost every field. Other initiatives - such as increasing the maximum penalty for trafficking in Class A drugs and legislating to deprive traffickers of the proceeds of their crimes - are still in train. The Group has devoted much of its energies to co-ordinating the development of the major education and information campaigns which were launched on 27 February.

Main outstanding issues

7 The Group is convinced that, if the Government's response is to match and to be seen to match) the scale of the problem and the degree of public and Parliamentary concern, further measures will be required. On any realistic view, the position is likely to deteriorate still further for the next year or so at least.

8 The following are the main topics which the Group expects to consider in the coming months and on which it intends to submit a substantial report to H Committee in the summer.

(i) Enforcement by HM Customs and Excise

9 The Ministerial Group is considering a paper by HM Customs and Excise which provides a general analysis of the areas where resources need to be deployed and of the allocation of the additional Customs posts announced last October.

10 The posting-in of experienced staff to fill these posts will not begin until April. It will not therefore be possible to make a firm assessment of their impact before the end of the year. But the substantive paper for H Committee will set out in broad terms the considerations governing the deployment of the additional staff, analyse the problem and present and future trends, indicate how Customs might have to change course to meet a developing situation, assess the constraints on effective action and the reasons for rejecting particular options and consider the future evaluation of present strategies in the light of results achieved.

(ii) Police structures and organisation

11 As paragraph 10 of the annex notes, the Association of Chief Police Officers has established a working party to examine police structures and organisation in relation to drugs investigations. Among the options which it is considering are some enhancement of the present capacity of Regional Crime Squads to take on drug-related work and the creation of separate regional drugs squads. The working party is not expected to produce its final report and recommendations until late 1985. An interim report will however be given to the annual ACPO Drugs Conference to be held in April, and the substantive report to H Committee will report progress. It is of course essential to avoid duplication of effort by Customs and the police and the working party will be taking this into account. In particular, both Customs and the police will be working together to agree guidelines which will clarify their respective roles.

(iii) Treatment and rehabilitation facilities

12 Health authorities in England have made interim reports to DHSS on the prevalence of drug misuse in their areas and their proposals for tackling the

problem. Fully-developed plans and a long-term strategy will be incorporated in their general strategic plans. Similar action has been taken in Wales. The substantive report to H Committee will assess, in the light of health authorities' plans, the scope for further Government action to secure improvements in the provision (by the statutory and voluntary sectors) of treatment and rehabilitation facilities for drug misusers.

(iv) Local inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation

13 Health authorities' replies will also provide a basis for considering the need for greater co-ordination and co-operation between the many different agencies at local level. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommended the setting up of liaison committees in each health district. The substantive report to H Committee will examine whether further encouragement is needed for the establishment of such machinery and whether particular models or structures should be recommended.

(v) Action by the education service

14 The education service has an important role in preventing drug misuse, both through formal teaching programmes and through counselling and support for young people. Some useful work has been carried out at national level and in a few local education authorities. The general awareness of the problem is not matched by appropriate and concerted input to health education in schools or by the training of teachers to give them sufficient confidence to provide guidance and counselling.

15 The substantive report to H Committee will consider proposals by the Department of Education and Science to stimulate an improved response,

focussing on (a) arrangements for better co-ordination within the education service and for liaison with other services, (b) appropriate training for teacher, youth workers and others, and (c) the provision of suitable teaching materials. Similar proposals, including the training of teachers and other professionals in identifying drug misuse and counselling young people and parents, will be formulated by the Scottish Office.

(vi) International assistance

16 The Group is reviewing the extent and value of our assistance to those countries which are the source of drugs smuggled into the UK (both producer and transit countries). It is considering, in particular, whether some expansion and rationalisation of the present programme is desirable, especially to enable a contribution to be made to UN programmes in the cocaine-producing regions and South America. The substantive paper for H Committee will report the results of this review.

Resource implications

17 The best estimate that can be made at present of the possible resource implications of the initiatives mentioned above is:

(i) Education and information campaigns - all the evidence suggests the campaigns of this kind are of limited effectiveness unless sustained over a period of years. The Department of Health and Social Security and the Welsh Office have found some £2 million to finance the campaign in the current financial year. Similar sums will be needed in succeeding years if the impetus is to be maintained. Similarly, some £350,000 or more a year would be needed to continue the Scottish campaign.

(ii) Customs resources - there are no plans at present to announce further increases in Customs staff, but, for illustrative purposes, the costs of employing another 100 officers would be approximately £2 million per year. More public investment will be required (£1.5m a year for three years) above the existing Customs and Excise PES provision for the development of new detention equipment.

(iii) Police enforcement - until the ACPO Working party has reached its conclusions the Home Office is unable to predict what proposals will be forthcoming or what the resource implications will be. Although the working party was given a remit by the 1984 ACPO Drugs Conference to develop recommendations on a 'nil net overall cost' basis, with any changes being effected by the redeployment of existing resources by chief officers, certain recommendations may nevertheless have resource implications.

(iv) Treatment and rehabilitation facilities - improvements to services would have implications for health authorities (and for other statutory and voluntary services). DHSS, in conjunction with other Departments, are considering various options for further stimulating service development, including in particular their expenditure implications.

(v) Local inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation - any central Government role might require additional funds.

(vi) Action by the education service - given the size of the education service, even a low-key (but comprehensive) approach on the lines proposed in paragraph 15 would cost some £5 million a year - a sum

which could not be found from within existing resources. The Scottish proposals would also require additional resources of up to £500,000 a year.

(vii) International assistance - any increase in the amount of UK drug-related assistance would need to be of the order of £1 million or more (spread over 3 or 4 years).

18 There are also outstanding recommendations by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on the security of controlled drugs in hospital pharmacies, chemists' shops and the premises of dispensing doctors. Implementation of the recommendations might cost perhaps £15 million in England, and Departments' view is that the actual seriousness of the problem does not at present warrant central government expenditure of that order.

Summary and conclusions

19 H Committee is invited to note:

(i) the assessment that the incidence of drug misuse (especially of heroin) has continued to increase and that this trend is likely to be maintained (paragraphs 2-4 and 7);

(ii) the progress made in developing the Government's strategy for tackling the problem (paragraphs 5-6 and the annex);

(iii) the issues which the Ministerial Groups intends to examine in

the next few months and on which it will make a substantive report to H Committee in the summer (paragraphs 7-16); and

(iv) the potential resource implications of current, and possible new, initiatives (paragraphs 17-18).

March 1985

F

DHSS INITIATIVES TO TACKLE DRUG MISUSE

DHSS interests in this field fall into two groups: preventing people from becoming involved with drugs in the first place; and helping those who have become involved and their families.

Prevention

1. 1984/5, market research was commissioned into the scope for a national advertising campaign against drug misuse and the nature of the message which any such campaign should convey. The summary report is at A(i)
2. One finding was that parents wanted information and advice. This resulted in the production of the 3 leaflets for parents at B(i).
3. COI produced two public information films, for showing on television, one for parents, advertising the leaflets and a low-key one designed to discourage young people from taking drugs. These were released at a press conference on 27 February. Press release at C(i).
4. £2m has been allocated in 1985/6 which will provide:
 - a. a national advertising campaign against heroin using TV, national press and youth press. The first stages were aimed at parents and professionals: advertisements at D(i). The second, aimed at young people, starts - in mid-May;
 - b. a video training pack for use in schools and youth clubs to convey more complex health education messages about drugs in general, to be available in the autumn;
 - c. A video and accompanying training pack for health and social service professionals, to be available in July.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

1. £10 million central funding initiative for health service and voluntary sector projects or local authority training schemes. Note E(i).
2. Chief Medical Officer issued Guidelines on good clinical practice in treatment of drug dependence to all doctors.
3. Circular issued to all Health Authorities on Note F(i). A summary of responses will be published in due course.