



cc HB

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY  
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Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health

Mark Addison Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Prime Minister. (2)  
You were aware of DMS intention to  
publish this report. But I think it will prove  
rather difficult to  
use the information  
it contains to put up the authorities who are  
jelling short.  
17 JUN 85  
MEM 11/6

Dear Mark

SERVICES FOR DRUG MISUSERS

As you may know, John Patten proposes to publish shortly information provided by health authorities on the prevalence of drug misuse in their areas and their plans for tackling the problem.

Health authorities were asked in a circular issued in June of last year, to assess the prevalence of drug misuse in their areas, in consultation with other agencies, and to prepare a long-term strategy and fully developed plans to improve services for drug misusers. The enclosed report "Drug Misuse: Prevalance and Service Provision" is a summary of the information provided by health authorities in response to the circular.

As explained in Section II of the report, it is very difficult to obtain reliable information on the extent of drug misuse. Reliance has to be placed on various indicators, such as the number of misusers known to different agencies; and this sort of information has not always proved to be readily available. As a result the extent of information so far obtained has understandably been variable and there is no reason to expect that information will get much more accurate in the near future.

Specialist services for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug misusers have historically been concentrated in the South East of England. Although specialist treatment facilities and rehabilitation houses have in recent years been set up in other parts of the country - often as a result of central funding - there are still areas without any specialist services. Even where there are specialist facilities, these are often under great pressure. In areas without specialist facilities, services are dependent on the willingness of general practitioners, general psychiatrists and other staff to see drug misusers.

Most health authorities have taken action to set up multi-agency Drug Advisory Committees, as recommended by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, and my Minister intends that such a committee should be set up for every Region and District by the end of this year. Health authorities are at varying stages in the preparation and implementation of plans to expand services, but, in general, progress is being made in the development of plans for improvements to health education, advisory and counselling services and treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

E.R.

Mr Patten proposes to announce the publication of the report on Wednesday 19 June in an arranged Parliamentary Question and to issue a press notice and a circular to health authorities asking them to continue to take urgent and early action to develop services. Copies of these are also enclosed.

I am copying this letter and enclosures to the private secretaries of Mr Mellor at the Home Office and Mr Dunn at DES.

Yours ever  
Jane

JANE MCKESSACK

To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will publish the results of the review of services for drug misusers, and if he will make a statement.

The report, entitled "Drug Misuse: Prevalence and Service Provision" has been published today. It contains information provided by health authorities and other agencies on the prevalence of drug misuse and on plans for improving services for drug misusers. The work carried out by health authorities indicates that they share the Government's concern that urgent action should be taken in this field. The Government is grateful to health authorities and other agencies for the effort they have devoted to seeking information on the prevalence of drug misuse and formulating plans for improving services.

However, good services whether in the statutory or voluntary sector can never be the whole answer to the problem. The Government will continue to do all it can to restrict the quantities of illegal drugs coming into the country and their distribution here and to make provision for those in need of help. But it is ultimately up to the community as a whole to help with quelling this evil, helping those who are addicted or might be tempted to experiment.

For its part, the Government considers that the development of services for drug misusers must remain a high priority for the foreseeable future and I shall continue to monitor their development, through Regional Health Authorities. Ministers will be writing to Regional Health Authorities individually to comment on the progress they have made and to encourage appropriate further action. They intend that there should be multi-agency drug advisory committees for every Region and District by the end of 1985.

DRUG MISUSE REPORT PUBLISHED:  
MINISTERS URGE ACTION BY THE END OF THE YEAR

John Patten, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, today announced the publication of the results of a nationwide review of services for drug misuse.

In a written answer to a Parliamentary Question from Mr Alan Haselhurst MP for Saffron Walden Mr Patten said: "The report, entitled "Drug Misuse: Prevalence and Service Provision" has been published today. It contains information provided by health authorities and other agencies on the prevalence of drug misuse and on plans for improving services for drug misusers. The work carried out by health authorities indicates that they share the Government's concern that urgent action should be taken in this field. The Government is grateful to health authorities and other agencies for the effort they have devoted to seeking information on the prevalence of drug misuse and formulating plans for improving services.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

To: Regional Health Authorities )  
District Health Authorities )  
Special Health Authorities for the London ) for action  
Postgraduate Teaching Hospitals )

Family Practitioner Committees )  
Community Health Councils )  
Metropolitan County Councils )  
Non-Metropolitan County Councils )  
Metropolitan District Councils )  
London Borough Councils ) for information  
Greater London Council )  
Common Council of the City of London )  
Council of the Isles of Scilly )  
Directors of Social Services )

June 1985

HEALTH SERVICES DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES FOR DRUG MISUSERS

SUMMARY

This Notice encloses copies of a report on 'Drug Misuse: Prevalence and Service Provision' and asks authorities to continue to give high priority to services for drug misusers.

1. Circular HC(84)14/LAC(84)12 of June 1984 asked health authorities to take early action to improve services for drug misusers. In particular, health authorities were required to
  - a. assess the prevalence of drug misuse in consultation with local authorities, voluntary organisations with an interest, the police and the probation service;
  - b. send in interim report to the DHSS by 22 December 1984 on the scale of the problem and their plans for tackling it; and
  - c. include fully developed proposals in their short-term programmes for 1985-87 and in their strategic plans for 1985-94.

The enclosed report contains a summary of the information obtained by health authorities and their plans for improving services for drug misusers.

2. Ministers appreciate that health authorities share their concern that urgent action should be taken in this field, and they are most grateful for the effort which has been devoted to seeking information on the prevalence of drug misuse and to formulating plans to improve services. They understand that authorities are continuing to review the prevalence of drug misuse, to set up machinery for collaboration with other service providers, to implement plans for improvements in services and to formulate a long-term strategy for the development of services for drug misusers.
3. Ministers consider that, as stressed in the report (section II, paragraph 21), the development of services for drug misusers must remain a high priority for the foreseeable future.

ACTION

4. Health authorities are asked to continue to take urgent and early action to develop services for drug misusers.

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