

DRUGS STRATEGY:

**Tackling Drugs in the Community
2009 - 2012**



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND





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This drug strategy aims to build safer and stronger communities through the principle of recovery. It will be supported by strong leadership and realistic objectives which place a reduction of supply, a reduction of harm and a reduction of demand at its heart. Its purpose is to provide guidance for police officers planning strategic as well as tactical activity. It is also hoped that the document will help inform our key partners and stakeholders about our commitment to working effectively in our communities.

ACPOS strategic deliverables

- ***To reduce the supply of drugs***
 - ***To reduce the harms caused by drugs***
 - ***To reduce the demand for drugs***
 - ***To use intervention and innovation***
- Developing effective and efficient strategies, tactics and interventions to improve the capacity and capability of Scotland's police forces, enhance drug detection rates and deter further crime
 - Disrupting and dismantling serious organised crime, including the identification of assets for restraint, seizure and redistribution to support communities
 - Developing strategies and tactics to reduce antisocial behaviour caused by drugs in our communities
 - Working with communities and partner bodies to reduce the impact of drugs and to promote recovery
 - Delivering and providing easier access to high quality services, both individually and collectively with partners
- Visibly working with communities, families and individuals to inform and influence the development and delivery of public policy to prevent and reduce the consequences of drug-related crime and to promote recovery
 - Supporting the education initiatives of partners to inform on the dangers of drugs and alcohol
 - Working with partners, especially voluntary bodies, to promote actions and activities that generate greater civic pride, awareness and personal responsibility.





Patrick J Shearer QPM MA LLB,

Chief Constable, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, incoming President of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland

While we recognise that the vast majority of people in our society are law-abiding citizens and do not take illicit drugs, the issue poses a significant risk to our society.

In Scotland, there are approximately 52,000 known problematic drug users and, in 2007, 455 people lost their lives as a direct result of illicit drug use. Cannabis remains the most misused drug and there has been a significant growth in the use of cocaine in recent years. All too often, one drug is mixed with other drugs and alcohol and the problems are exacerbated. In Scotland, it is estimated that 40,000 to 60,000 children may be affected by parental drug misuse, thus placing them at a greater risk of drug misuse in the future.

It is clear there is no instant answer to the drugs problem our society faces: drug misuse is a complex issue and there is no single solution or approach that will be effective on its own.

Our strategic deliverables have been set in line with the national targets and indicators, as outlined in the concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The police in Scotland can make a significant contribution through a renewed drugs strategy to the single outcome agreements created between the Scottish Government and each of the Scottish councils.

Reducing supply is a global issue – we cannot expect the problem will be solved solely by tackling the dealers in Scotland – and we rely on other law enforcement agencies at home and abroad to tackle supply at source and along the supply chain.

Each year, the police in Scotland work tirelessly to tackle drugs. At street level, we will continue to create a hostile environment for drug dealers through our enforcement activity; however, our effort is not limited to going head-to-head with the criminals. While we remain committed to our primary enforcement role to reduce the availability of drugs, if our strategy to tackle the issue is to be effective, it must be accompanied by a strong determination to reduce the harms associated with drugs and to reduce the demand for drugs. Throughout history, the police have had a mandate to prevent and reduce crime – the aim of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) is to tackle drugs in the broadest sense and to use all our resources to impact on the drug traffickers in a sustainable way. Only through action such as this will we enjoy the benefits and demonstrate that targeted enforcement is effective against those suppliers who bring misery to our communities.

Our efforts must join and complement all relevant public sector activity with the voluntary and private sectors. We will build on the strong partnerships that already exist and seek opportunities to optimise our daily activities so that collectively they are not only more cohesive, but create a more sustainable impact as well.

The police service in Scotland will continue to strengthen its approach to drug misuse and will continually seek the support of Scotland’s people to help reduce the availability, related harms and demand for drugs as well as promote recovery.

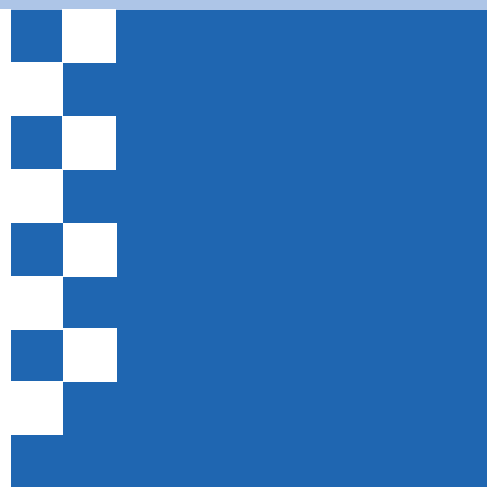


The Scottish Government's drug strategy *Road to Recovery: A New Approach to Tackling Scotland's Drug Problem*, published in May 2008, recognises that the dedicated efforts of many frontline workers have had some success, but acknowledges that very significant challenges remain.

The strategy acknowledges that preventing drug use is more effective than treating established problems. Reducing the supply is a primary role for police and is a crucial element of this strategy. The Scottish Government has tasked law enforcers to build and demonstrate a continuum of enforcement activity locally, nationally and internationally to reduce the impact on our communities. This means tackling the supply from source through to the dealers at street level.

The ACPOS Drugs Strategy lays out the approach police will take to reduce the supply of drugs, to reduce the harm caused by drugs and to reduce the demand for drugs. All Scottish forces and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) continue to target dealers, and all have dedicated drugs co-ordinators working at local, regional and national levels who are crucial to the promotion of harm reduction, prevention and education.

The availability of drugs and drug dealing on our streets can seriously affect the quality of life in our communities as it is often accompanied by violence and intimidation.



The social costs, including the costs to individuals and families, as well as the costs to our justice and health systems, are high. The effects and impact on communities have to be at the heart of our thinking. Communities are very aware of drug activity in their midst and this is often linked to their perceptions and fear of crime. For many reasons, they often remain silent until the activity reaches a level that is unbearable – often when drug dealers have an established foothold and are much more difficult to tackle directly. The police rely on community support and the public’s willingness to provide information. It is imperative that all information is acted upon and where, for legitimate reasons, that is not possible, the police need to make it clear why this is so and help the community to understand those reasons. For those that seek anonymity, Crimestoppers continues to offer a quality service which helps bring the police and public together.

We welcome the Scottish Government’s new drug strategy, *The Road to Recovery*, which gives all those involved in the field a clear mandate to work more closely together to promote recovery and to ensure joined-up and effective policies at strategic, tactical and operational levels.

The business model used by the police in Scotland, the National Intelligence Model (NIM), strengthens and reinforces all police activity at a local, regional and national level. This same model must be applied to link police activity with other activity by partners in the field. There is a need to create closer links to community planning partnerships that exist at a local level and to combine efforts through those partnerships engaged in tackling alcohol and drug misuse.

Every day in Scotland, enforcement activity results in the arrest and conviction of drug dealers and suppliers. While this is positive, this effort will not work alone. Our ability to intercept drugs has never been more co-ordinated nor more successful, but it is clear that no matter how good these efforts are, they need to be supported by equal effort to reduce the harms caused by drugs and, most importantly, to reduce the demand, particularly through early intervention and education among those most at risk.

- ***By means of enforcement, disruption and diversion, reduce the availability of drugs in the community and arrest those involved in trafficking and supplying***

Enforcement is a global activity and, on a global scale, it has been shown to work in a positive and sustainable way. There is clear evidence to show that enforcement activity at an international level has impacted on heroin and cocaine at source and through trafficking routes. There has been eradication of production areas and displacement of routes.



That said, the organised criminal groups that sit behind the trade are greedy and pernicious. They are not easily removed from the trade; therefore, enforcement efforts have to be innovative, flexible and sustained. This must apply equally at a local level where successes are many, but where positives are harder to interpret given the continued flow of drugs from upstream.

The availability of drugs is a key issue. While cannabis remains the most widely misused illicit drug and heroin remains a significant priority, there is a growing propensity among drug users for psychostimulants (such as cocaine) which are perceived to be 'clean and safe'. It is critical to have a clear overview of the situation at all times and for the police and partners to be aware of any emerging threat or changes in trend, including significant shifts or expansions of markets.

Scotland is increasingly becoming a point of direct importation and, in some cases, one of manufacture or production.

The National Intelligence Model has led to the introduction of the Scottish Strategic Assessment and the Scottish Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (STTCG) where partners from key agencies work together to reduce the opportunities for criminals. However,

there are undoubtedly gaps in our knowledge. We need to have a clearer picture of organised crime groups to understand market dynamics and why significant seizures at times have no impact. A newly instigated process of mapping will inform the STTCG, as well as the recently formed Serious Organised Crime Task Force set up by the Scottish Government, to consider the impact of serious organised crime in Scotland and help develop their response.

Supply can be considered at three levels: at an international level, at a regional level and at a local level. The Scottish police service works with partners to tackle, dismantle and disrupt traffickers, dealers and organised crime groups. The aim of the Scottish police service is to have a visible and sustained impact within Scotland's communities.

The police will:

- work with partners to share information and better understand the scale and extent of drug trafficking in Scotland
- work with national and international partners, including Europol, seeking opportunities to build law enforcement capacity to tackle those who trade their drugs at an international level or who are involved in the transportation networks

- work with national partners such as HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) to intercept drugs being brought across our borders
- work with local partners to target drug dealers who bring drugs into our communities and those who deal at a street level
- build on the success of the Proceeds of Crime Act and continue to identify and restrain the assets of drug traffickers, including targeting businesses which are operated by or connected to serious organised crime groups involved in drug trafficking.

Seizing assets is a key part of our ability to reduce the supply of drugs. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) is a powerful tool which allows law enforcement agencies to identify the assets belonging to people who have profited financially from crime.

The legislation allows the Crown to restrain these assets and, following conviction, apply to the court to confiscate them. The proceeds from these assets can then be invested to provide new opportunities and facilities for young people. > continued on page 12

Work is ongoing to:

- extend the time periods taken into account for confiscation and the recovery of assets
- reduce the minimum cash seizure threshold
- extend the range of offences indicative of a criminal lifestyle.

The police will also:

- develop innovative techniques and tactics which will assist law enforcement activity and make the marketplace unwelcome for the drug traffickers, including the development of forensic analysis to help tackle drugs crime.

Acknowledging the links with poverty and deprivation, the availability of drugs can be a barrier to regeneration and renewal within communities. Acquisitive crime and violence are often associated with drugs in our communities. The police will continue to build good relations with communities and, through local intelligence, will:

- take action to reduce the acquisitive crime associated with drugs

- maintain a high level of visible action against those supplying drugs at a local level, maximising powers of stop and search as well as the use of warrants
- target those dealers bringing drugs into our communities or those who seek to profit by producing cannabis or other drugs within the community
- ensure that all steps are taken to recover the criminals' funds and assets
- by means of intervention, ensure that all the communications and other services used by drug traffickers are unattractive to criminal activity.

The police will engage with partners at national and international levels to:

- identify and target those organised crime groups and individuals that seek to find routes to take illicit drugs into or out of Scotland
- ensure that the supply routes and the methods used to transport drugs are unattractive and unwelcoming to those who seek to use them for criminal purposes.

Over the years, it has been clear that criminals in Scotland will turn to the manufacture of drugs for illicit gain. The police will:

- work with partners to ensure that the chemicals required to produce illicit drugs are properly controlled or that steps are taken to reduce criminal access to those chemicals that are uncontrolled.

The police will continue to work closely with the Scottish Prison Service to ensure that those who organise shipments of illicit drugs into our jails are targeted and that drugs and related criminal activity are dealt with effectively.

The police will make representation as appropriate to:

- ensure that legislation is sufficiently robust to deal with changing tactics among criminals or emerging threats from previously uncontrolled drugs or chemicals.

Finally, intervention opportunities have been developed and this approach to prevention is only now emerging on a national level. Proactive preventative steps can be taken to reduce access to the services, communications and manufacturing equipment or material used by criminal groups. The Scottish police service will:

- work with partners to develop innovative ways to tackle drug producers and suppliers which will have a sustainable and long-lasting impact.



- ***By supporting police and partner activities aimed at reducing drug-related harm***

The ethos of crime reduction and the protection of life are at the centre of the work of the Scottish police service. The early identification of emerging threats is vital in safeguarding our communities and informing effective interventions.

Working with health and treatment partners, the Scottish police service will fully support measures designed to reduce the harm that drug misuse causes: to drug users themselves, their families and Scotland's communities.

To ensure the issues are understood and responses are appropriate and adequate, the police in Scotland commit to:



- an appropriate level of training for all police officers and support staff, to promote the benefits of referrals to partners
- ensuring that local police management adopt harm reduction measures, which will contribute to the aims of *Road to Recovery*
- working closely with local service providers to promote recovery and to ensure that drugs services are available for those who will no longer be able to purchase illegal drugs following enforcement activity.

Each drug-related death represents a tragic waste of life. Police will:

- continue to work with lead agencies such as the NHS and the Scottish Ambulance Service, monitoring drug-related deaths, identifying and exploiting opportunities for effective intervention to reduce the number of such deaths.

We acknowledge the positive opportunities in reducing drug-related harm, including those afforded by the introduction of mandatory drug testing and arrest referral schemes within police stations, and will:

- focus on opportunities to promote recovery and to reduce harm by acting as a gateway for prisoners at risk from blood-borne viruses to health authorities, treatment and harm-reduction services
- continue to work in partnership to develop and expand such opportunities.

In addition, we will continue to work with alcohol and drug partnerships and area child protection committees to ensure that the risks to children affected by parental drug misuse is reduced.

The Scottish police service recognises the need to consider further opportunities in this area where we can be effective partners, always letting the lead agency take its place.

Current estimates indicate that 40,000 to 60,000 children may be affected by parental drug misuse. These children are themselves considered to be at risk from drug misuse in the future and may require particular support or care to ensure they share the same opportunities in life as all of Scotland's children. *Getting It Right For Every Child*, the government's policy for addressing the needs of all children, demands that all agencies must work together to ensure the child's interest is placed first and provides the framework within which public agencies can work better together.

A lot of work has been done in Scotland to turn policy recommendations into improvements on the ground, but much more is required. The police are committed to:

- working with child protection committees and local partnerships engaged in tackling alcohol and drug misuse to help identify and protect children who are at risk
- strengthening the focus on prevention and early intervention to reduce the impact on children affected by parental substance misuse
- ensuring actions to address these issues are integrated with wider measures to promote the well-being of children and young people, particularly the *Getting It Right For Every Child* agenda, ensuring there is an appropriate response and balance in place with a focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families
- maintaining a common approach to gaining consent and to sharing information where appropriate, so that concerns are raised and appropriate actions and outcomes agreed.

- ***By supporting partnership activities from drug education and diversion to interventions which are aimed at reducing drug demand and dependency***

Cannabis remains the most commonly misused drug and is invariably the first illegal drug that a person will try. While the vast majority who try cannabis will never move to other drugs, it is considered by many to be a gateway drug which can lead to more harmful and powerful substances. Evidence exists to show cannabis is more powerful today than was previously the case. The strength is known to be a risk factor and can impact on the health of the user, particularly children and young people.

Early intervention and education are key to the success of any drug strategy. Demand reduction requires a well-constructed education policy – for children in the first instance – with good support, including appropriate tools for parents, carers and teachers.

There is also an identified need to give credible and reliable information to older users about health and social issues, and there is a growing need to identify and support peer educators and mentors.

Substance misuse education in schools is often the first line of prevention against drug misuse, providing opportunities to pass on accurate, up-to-date facts, explore attitudes and, crucially, foster the skills needed to make positive decisions. It is not just about classroom teaching, but encompasses all policies, practices, programmes, initiatives and events in the school connected with the prevention and reduction of drug-related harm.

It is recognised that culture, relationships and opportunities in schools contribute to young people's social and academic outcomes, and that these are relevant to a whole range of behaviours, including drug misuse. No one approach to prevention is effective and one-off interventions will have limited value.





While it is the responsibility of the teaching profession to deliver education to our children in school, over the years much support has been given by visitors who come from a range of backgrounds. This may include partners from the police and the NHS and in some areas it also includes visitors from the private and voluntary sectors.

While there is good practice in substance misuse education in schools, there is room for improvement. The Scottish Government has recently established a steering group to advise it on developing more effective substance misuse education in schools. Membership includes experts from education, drug agencies, NHS Health Scotland, officials from across the Scottish Government and the police. The group is due to publish an interim report early in 2009 and will produce advice, guidance and proposals aimed at helping schools and authorities to achieve the improvements sought through *Curriculum for Excellence* and legislation so that:

- appropriate teaching materials are available and are being used most effectively
- comprehensive, evidence-based approaches to substance misuse education are integrated into wider health education and promotion in the school
- education is planned in partnership with inputs from health, the police and the community
- delivery is by appropriately trained practitioners, effective teaching methods (e.g. with interaction to develop skills) and that there is student-centred, culturally appropriate and relevant education, targeted to needs and context
- training, networking, delivery and evaluation by practitioners is co-ordinated, and
- there is appropriate engagement with parents.

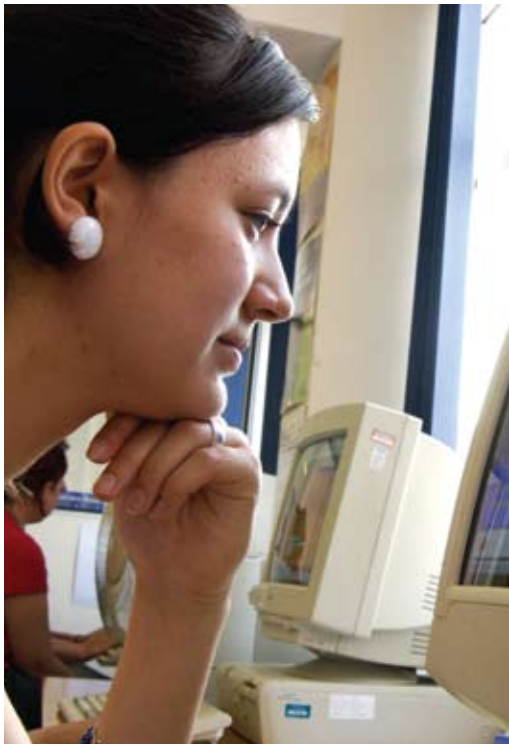
The new school curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence*, will provide opportunities for new approaches for substance misuse education to be developed across the school and best practices to be identified.

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There also needs to be a move towards identifying and giving assistance and support to vulnerable groups, including the children of drug addicts and users, looked-after children and truant.

Drugs education within schools is an essential element of a planned, progressive programme for personal and social development, aimed at ensuring young people are fully engaged in the important decision-making processes encountered during their formative years. The Scottish police service, working with its partners in health, education and other sectors, including youth organisations such as Young Scot, will:

- continue to support the development of nationally recognised quality educational resources, including *Choices for Life*, which assist education authorities deliver training with an emphasis on positive lifestyles and citizenship
- make appropriate contribution to the education of children and young people to ensure that they are provided with high quality information about the risks attached to drugs, which will equip them with the knowledge to make informed decisions about how they choose to live their lives
- support the teaching profession (those in role and those in training) to understand the issues and ensure that substance misuse education continues to be delivered to the high level it has in many schools over many years
- continue to raise awareness about illicit drugs among children and young people, especially those that are identified as being at increased risk
- develop and support joint initiatives and projects aimed at promoting community safety among young people and reduce offending
- continue to develop the professional understanding of police officers and police staff in respect of the positive contribution they can make to reduce the risks to children and young people from substance misuse.



To reduce the harm caused to Scottish communities by illicit drugs by:

- ***responding to emerging threats with innovative solutions***
- ***informing, influencing and engaging with all communities and partners to enable them to reduce such harm***

Interventions against organised criminal groups, including those who supply illicit drugs, seek to reduce harm by developing new and innovative strategies and tactical options to target those suppliers, the businesses that support them and the markets in which they operate.

Again, this demands close partnership working with other law enforcement agencies, voluntary and regulatory bodies, government, and the widest range of public and private sector organisations.

To maximise impact, through interventions techniques, the police will seek to inform and empower all of Scotland's communities to enable them to contribute to the fight against serious organised crime.

The Scottish police service will seek to work with partners, communities and families to:

- contribute to a reduction of fear of crime in communities by providing them with information and messages about key activities and by highlighting success through community meetings and the media, including the Internet
- use policing opportunities to make illicit drugs socially unacceptable by changing values, attitudes and beliefs within our communities, raising public awareness of the harms and promoting active citizenship
- provide parents and carers with advice and support to better understand the risks of illicit drugs and provide a positive influence on children and young people, recognising that the children of parents/carers who may themselves be drug users are more at risk
- encourage businesses to reduce the profitability of drug crime through lawful products, such as in the chemical industry, by engaging them to reduce the opportunities available to the criminals

- promote the full use of criminal justice interventions such as arrest referral, mandatory drug testing, drug treatment & testing orders, and drug courts to enable more people to recover from problem drug misuse and reduce drug related crime
- raise the fear of detection by making Scotland a more hostile environment for serious organised criminals, not only through successful prosecutions, but by using all legitimate means,
 - seeking to influence bail and licence conditions, and by
 - using new and innovative crime detection methods and technologies, including enhanced use of forensics and IT.



- **Maintain and develop intelligence** to inform understanding of organised crime, drug supply and misuse
- **Focus on penetrating, disrupting and dismantling supply networks through:**
 - **effective enforcement**
 - **effective use of legislation to identify and recover assets**
 - **effective intervention through innovation and use of technologies**
- **Engage communities** to help tackle drugs in the local area by gaining a true understanding of the problem, with a particular emphasis on **educating children and young people about the risks** and dangers attached to illicit drugs
- Use **high visibility** uniformed staff and targeted activities to provide reassurance throughout our communities, with a focus on areas where drugs-associated street crime is a particular problem
- Promote public support through **community meetings, public consultation** and Crimestoppers to enable local concerns and issues about drugs use to be identified and addressed
- **Use policing opportunities to provide links** for individuals affected by drug misuse to support networks and health partners
- **Engage and work in partnership** with all relevant agencies to form consistent strategies based on shared intelligence and outcomes (including single outcome agreements with local authorities)
- Work with **treatment agencies** to enable simultaneous support for drug misusers and targeting of drugs distribution networks
- Work with those partnerships engaged in tackling alcohol and drug misuse in the community and private sponsors to use the **local media for effective communication**, to promote single consistent messages
- Use intelligence-gathering and analysis to inform and assist local authorities in effective **removal of debris and other visible signs of drug misuse** in the community, such as needles and syringes
- Proactively use antisocial behaviour legislation to **manage areas** which are being used in connection with unlawful use, production or supply of controlled drugs where there is a serious nuisance/disorder.





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