

# Harm Reduction

Superintendent  
Stephen McGrath  
Strathclyde Police

Yes the Police!!!

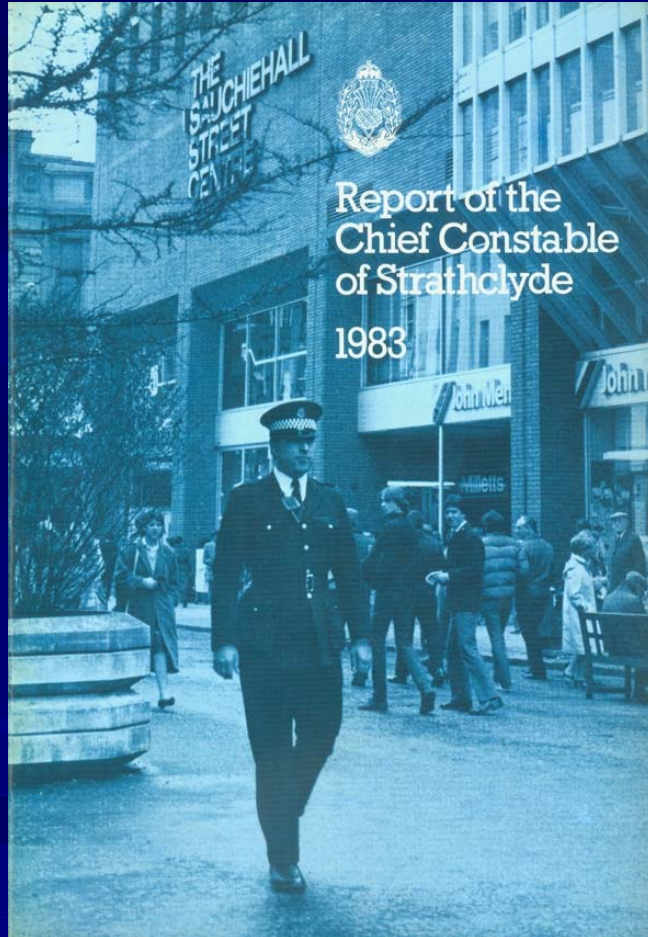
# The next 20 mins or so...

- Where we have come from
- Principles
- ACPOS Strategy
- Enforcement and Education isn't enough
- Types of Harm
- Tenner Bag  
(10 questions to consider)

# 1983

- .....The emphasis will be to strike at dealers to proscribe scope for the permeation of this world wide affliction in Strathclyde....
- .....I wish to affirm my declaration that this type of crime will be pursued relentlessly in Strathclyde to bring to justice those who see easy profits to this sad exploitation which destroys so many young lives.
- Sir Patrick Hamill  
Chief Constable Strathclyde Police

# 1983



- Possession W.I. to Supply - 343  
(Up 217 from the previous year)
- Possession 2202  
(Up 577 from previous year)
- 206 lectures regarding Drugs

# 2007



- Possession W.I. to Supply  
- 4357
- Possession - 17356
  
- Presentations
- Primary 1072
- Secondary 1071
- Youth 144
- Adults 255
- Total 2542
- 45,000 People

# Starting point

## *Police (Scotland) Act 1967*

- Police officers guard, watch and patrol in order to:
  - Protect life and property
  - Preserve order
  - Prevent crime and detect offenders
  - Prepare reports, serve legal documents and attend court to give evidence



# What are harm reduction measures

- Needle Exchange
- Methadone
- Naloxone
- Arrest Referral
- Mandatory Drug Tests
- Drug Court
- Persistent Offender Project
- Alcohol
  
- *Never mind the Service Users, are the Police responding to the commitment required of these treatments*

# Principles

“...will give special attention to and take all practical measures for the prevention of abuse of drugs and for the early identification, treatment, education, after-care rehabilitation and social reintegration of the person involve.”

United Nations Convention 1961

# Principles

“...Shall adopt appropriate measures aimed at eliminating or reducing illicit demand for drugs...with a view to reducing human suffering...which includes interventions to counteract the social and health consequences”

UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in  
Narcotics Drugs 1988

# Principles

**“Harm reduction has a role to play in a tertiary prevention strategy for demand reduction purposes.....**

**Harm reduction should not be carried out at the expense of ,- or considered a substitute for - other activities to reduce the demand... i.e. Drug Prevention”**

**International Narcotics Control Board 1993**

# Principles

***“Demand reduction programmes should cover all areas of prevention from discouraging initial use to reducing negative health and social consequences of drug abuse for the individual and society as a whole”***

**UN General Assembly - Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction 1998**

# International Narcotics Control Board... 2003

“...adopt measures that may decrease the sharing of hypodermic needles...to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS

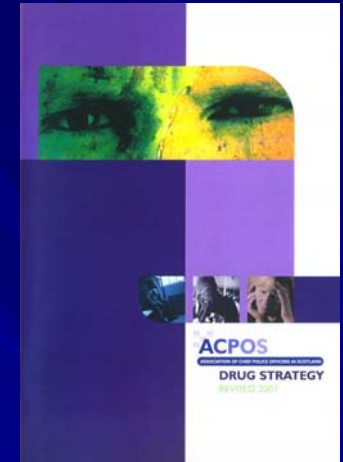
Such measures should not promote or facilitate drug abuse

Drug substitution and maintenance treatment may be used in line with sound medical practise”

# ACPOS DRUG STRATEGY

## Positively support harm reduction measures

- Promote Public health  
The benefits of treatment for drug users  
And protect human rights
- Maintain an equitable, needs led and person centered approach to service delivery
- Create the appropriate environment for harm reduction measures to succeed
- Not stigmatize or exclude drug users, carers and workers



# For the Scottish Police Service – “Enforcement & Education isn’t enough”

## The Police have had to learn about Harm Reduction (not always been in our psyche)

- A Public Health philosophy that seeks to lessen the dangers that drug abuse causes to society.
- A comprehensive approach to drug abuse and drug policy.
- There has never been, is not now, and never will be a drug-free society.
- Pragmatic solutions to the harms that drugs cause.
- More than a Crime
- Harm reduction's complexity can lend it's self to a misperception as a drug legalisation tool !!!
- 2000+ years or so have proved that!
- Not just our toolkit of Legislation, Warrants, Phone Records and Size 10 Boots

# For the Scottish Police Service – “Enforcement & Education isn’t enough”

## The Police have had to learn about Harm Reduction (not always been in our psyche)

- Fits with “Reducing Demand” by advocating lessening the harms of drugs through the education, prevention, and treatment.
- Arrest, conviction and detention in prison does little, if anything, to reduce the harm
- A harm reduction strategy demands new outcome measurements.
- There is no ultimate solution to the problem of drugs in a free society.
- The same education which sets out to divert young people from even starting on drugs.
- A harm reduction approach favours treatment of drug addiction by Health Care Professionals over the Criminal Justice System.
- Stop counting Crimes, Offences and Weights
- Many different interventions may work.  
**No one solution**

# Types of Harm

| <u>HARM</u>     | <u>Individual</u>                        | <u>Family</u>                    | <u>Community</u>               | <u>Society</u>                            |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>HEALTH</b>   |  |                                  |                                |   |
| <b>SOCIAL</b>   |  |                                  |                                |   |
| <b>ECONOMIC</b> |  |                                  |                                |   |
| <b>LEGAL</b>    | Imprisonment<br>Fines<br>Criminal record | Theft from Family<br>Way of life | Becomes normalised<br>No trust | Drain on Police and Crim. Just. Resources |

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|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>HEALTH</b>   |  |                                     | Drug Dealing                       |  |
| <b>SOCIAL</b>   |  |                                     | Violence<br>Crime<br>Social fabric |  |
| <b>ECONOMIC</b> |  | Crime<br>Begging                    |                                    |  |
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| <b>HEALTH</b>   | HIV/Aids<br>Poor/No Health<br>Employability | Nature or<br>Nurtured               | Health Risks<br>Drug Dealing       | Pressure on<br>Health<br>Services                  |
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| <b>SOCIAL</b>   | Chaotic Life<br>Breakdown of relationships | Marital<br>Neglect                  | Violence<br>Crime<br>Social fabric | Helpless<br>Dealers                                |
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# 10 questions for the Police Role in Harm Reduction – Part 1

- Are we getting to the boundary of Police assistance ?
- Can either harm reduction or enforcement ever take precedence over each other?
- Are we meeting the challenge of attitudinal shift?
- Is the provision of basic facilities, conditions and Referral in police detention adequate?
- Is the Police response consistent?



# 10 questions for the Police Role in Harm Reduction – Part 2

- Do we need further legislative changes ?
- Can the police take a different tack with the media ?
- Does the criminal justice system raise some important concerns about coercion and enforcement of treatment ?
- Are there problems of coordination of partners?
- What further joint training would be advantageous?



