

Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs - press statement from NHS APA

The second part of Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs has been published today (8th July 2021). The report, which was commissioned by the Home Office, focuses on drug treatment, prevention, and recovery and it outlines 32 individual policy recommendations to the government.

In response to the report Danny Hames, NHS APA Chair said: “As an alliance, we welcome the scope and ambition of Dame Carol Black’s Review and its recommendations which represents a landmark opportunity to reset and renew our treatment and recovery system which has been severely defunded for over a decade.

“Funding pressures have left some local treatment systems ‘on their knees’, so we applaud the recommended increases for funding which will be essential in order for services to deliver the recommendations effectively. Real impact requires real investment – Dame Carol is right to make a call for major, sustained and protected investment where funding is ring fenced specifically for treatment and recovery along with medically managed inpatient detox and broader tier 4 commissioning.

“We also welcome the call for strong, sustained local and national leadership at the centre of government with the creation of a new cross-departmental unit. However for this structure to be most effective we need clear structures, real accountability and an integrated approach across the agencies.

“Focusing on what is in the best interest of those who use our services will continue to be our mantra as an alliance of NHS Trusts providing addiction treatment services; this includes tackling the stigma around addictions that has enabled inequalities to grow. As an NHS alliance we want to ensure that drug and alcohol services sit across the Integrated Care System and are regarded with the parity of esteem that other health care services hold.

“Efforts to address ‘addiction’ without work with partners in criminal justice, health, homelessness and mental health fields are futile. We believe a ‘whole system’ approach based on accountability, collaboration and partnership is essential. The Review’s recommendation for a local government-led joint approach with health, housing and employment support, and criminal justice is welcome, as is the suggestion for closer working between the Ministry of Justice and NHS England over prison-based treatment. It is also a welcome move that care pathways will be underpinned by effective strong partnerships that will be accountable, funded, and organised on the principle of need and addressing disadvantage.”

Jon Shorrocks, Chair of the NHS Inpatient Network, a subgroup of NHS APA, stated: “Drug dependency is much more than an isolated health issue. It is a chronic relapsing health condition, often with comorbid factors and often requiring acute care, something which has been clearly acknowledged in the report.

“We welcome the recognition that inpatient detox needs to be invested in through regional and sub-regional commissioning models which have now been established across the country with a universal 12 months of funding. It also aligns directly with the NHS APA business case for securing NHS medically managed detox units under Tier 4 specialist commissioning models. There is however, a lot of work that needs to be done to train and educate the workforce and establish service effective pathways into treatment.

“The reports focus on co-existing mental health problems and drug dependence is also welcome and echoes the NHS APA’s position in this area. We also echo the call for additional investment from NHSE to high quality physical and mental health services. NHS inpatient detox units currently manage a high level of complexity that relieves burden from other areas of the healthcare system. We believe this provision should be seen at the heart of the developing integrated care systems as outlined in the report. Today’s report provides a critical opportunity to secure long-term funding of medically managed NHS and community detox services.”

Dr Emily Finch, Clinical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist with responsibility for addiction services across Lambeth, Bexley, Greenwich and Wandsworth, vice-chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Addictions and Vice Chair for the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance, commented: “The situation has become intolerable and significant change is urgently needed in the addictions treatment sector; the recommendations in the second part of Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs will create a fundamental step change in the right direction.

“We strongly advocate for the reformation of pathways to strengthen integrated partnership working and standards and ensure effective accountability is reinstated to reverse the steady decline of these standards that have become tolerated over recent years.

“The role of professionally qualified disciplines is essential, as per the recommendations, it is important that strong emphasis is placed on the development of the workforce in the addictions treatment sector. Dame Carol's suggestion that Health Education England take a leadership role in developing a strategy for the workforce is welcome and should include a broad focus on competence in order to successfully bolster our quality, appropriately qualified, skilled, and experienced workforce.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

About the NHS APA

The NHS Addictions Provider Alliance (NHS APA) is a collective of 15 NHS Trusts working together to be more effective in contributing to the addiction treatment sector. It works collaboratively with service users, carers and other organisations who are committed to making a positive difference to the ongoing development of the addictions field, including within drug, alcohol, gambling and gaming treatment and support.

The NHS APA membership:

- *provides drug and alcohol services in 35 local authority areas nationally*

- Provides drug and alcohol services in 43 prisons nationally
- Employs 1933 staff nationwide working in addiction services
- Provides 4 Inpatient Detox Units serving the most vulnerable and complex patients
- Gambling Services receive approximately 900 referrals working with most complex clients in the gambling treatment system
- Has over 200 volunteers supporting NHS APA member addiction services at any time

Danny Hames - Danny.Hames@mpft.nhs.uk

Danny Hames has 18 years' experience working in the public and voluntary sectors, within criminal justice, long term conditions and the drug and alcohol treatment sector. He has worked as a Practitioner, Operational manager and Head of Development. In September 2018 he became the Head of Inclusion which is part of the Midlands NHS Foundation Partnership Trust. Inclusion is the largest NHS provider of drug and alcohol services in England, working in both prisons and the community. Inclusion also provides Sexual Health and Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. Danny is an accredited PRINCE2 and MSP Practitioner and holds a PG Certificate in Drug and Alcohol Policy and an MA in Voluntary Sector Studies. Danny initiated, and is a founding member of, the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance which was founded in 2016. This is a collaboration of thirteen NHS trusts who provide drug and alcohol treatment services with the aim of supporting and developing best practice in the sector, this included, with Collective Voice producing "Improving Clinical Responses to Drug Related Deaths Best Practice Guidelines (April 2017)". The NHS APA also aims to provide an NHS treatment service voice to the benefit of the sector and as part of this runs annual conferences. The NHS APA currently works in over 50 prisons and 35 community services across England. NHS APA is currently establishing an initiative across 12 NHS trusts in England to eliminate Hepatitis C. Danny is the current chair of the NHS APA.

Dr Emily Finch - Emily.Finch@slam.nhs.uk

Dr Finch is the Addictions Clinical Academic Group (CAG) Clinical Director with responsibility for the Addiction services across Lambeth, Bexley, Greenwich and

Wandsworth. She is currently clinical lead for the Alcohol Assertive Outreach Team and is also responsible for quality for the adult psychiatry service in Southwark and a member of the Trust Quality Centre. She is currently on the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) and joint chair of the Recovery Committee. Emily is the vice-chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Addictions Executive. She is a co-chair of the London Joint Working Group on Hepatitis C. In 2012 Emily chaired a joint RCGP RCPsych working group to develop a document defining competencies for doctors working in Addictions and has recently chaired the NICE quality standard drug use disorders topic expert group. From 2004 to 2007 Emily was the Clinical Team Leader at the National Treatment Agency (NTA) where she took a lead in the clinical aspects of national drug policy and in liaising between the NTA and the professionals working in the field. Emily teaches and lectures on all aspects of addiction and supervises PhD students. She is an educational and clinical supervisor for psychiatric trainees. She is head of education and training for the Clinical Academic Group. Her research interests include the outcome of treatment for opiate users, hepatitis C and injectable prescribing. Emily is a Trustee of alcohol research UK and Gamcare.

Jon Shorrocks - jon.shorrocks@nhs.net

Jon started his working career as a secondary school teacher in inner city Liverpool in 1992. After undertaking voluntary outreach work for HIT, drug training and information centre, Jon became employed with HIT as the information manager developing harm reduction materials and managing a drug literature library. Jon co-designed and developed the Chill Out – The Second Coming and the mirrored Cocaine leaflet. Jon then left the country [of his own accord] for 3 years to work as a teacher in Jamaica, a Dive Master in Indonesia and door-to-door sales person in Australia. Working in these countries rather than just travelling through them provided Jon with real insights in to different cultures as well as understanding our own better. In the following 21 years Jon has worked as frontline drug worker undertook all aspects of drug work from NSP, OST management to prison in-reach and CCAs and developed a broad set of specialist skills. As a shared care worker, coordinator and service manager working including time in mental health, and the 3rd sector. Now with Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health

Partnership NHS Trust [AWP], Jon's role manages all of AWP's drug and alcohol contracts across the South West including the Acer inpatient detox unit in Bristol. Jon and AWP are founder members of the NHS Substance Misuse Alliance, he is the chair of the Inpatient Detox Network and amongst other things is an active member of the PHE OST Guidance work programme. Jon is passionate and committed to developing high quality services that make a real difference to service user's lives. In short, Jon has over 20 years' experience of working in drug and alcohol and despite its challenges loves the work, the service user group, developing partnerships and the expertise, quality, creativity and passion that commonly exist working in NHS drug and alcohol services.

For further commentary please email the above contact details or email admin@nhsapa.org