Almost 150 addicts to every rehab bed in England, warns CSJ

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Effective addiction treatment remains preserve of the wealthy and lucky few, says Centre for Social Justice launching its manifesto for 2015

- Only a handful of residential treatment centres in many parts of the country
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There are 138 addicts for every residential rehabilitation bed in England, according to a think-tank which outlines bold plans to build a new generation of treatment services.

In some parts of the country the figure is as high as 605 opiate and crack addicts per bed.

In its manifesto, Transforming Lives to Strengthen Britain, launched today, the CSJ calls for a treatment tax of a penny on a unit of alcohol to pay for hundreds of new rehab centres.

The charge would raise a billion pounds over the next five years and create more than 200 new rehab centres. The North East of England has just two residential rehabilitation centres listed to serve 16,935 addicts, analysis from the CSJ shows.

In the East Midlands there are more than 359 heroin or crack cocaine addicts per available bed.

The shortage of available beds would be much higher if the number of dependent drinkers were taken into account. Residential rehabilitation is the most effective abstinence-based method of recovery with the best centres getting more than two-thirds of people to beat their addiction.

But Freedom of Information requests revealed that 55 per cent of local authorities had reduced funding for residential rehab in 2013.

The latest figures come after a Public Health England survey in December revealed that 60 per cent 'had felt the threat of closure in the past few years'.

As well as the shocking shortage of beds, the CSJ said that of the 193,198 addicts in treatment last year, just 2,956 addicts went through residential rehabilitation.

This means that many beds were likely to have lain empty, often because it is deemed too costly.

Meanwhile, nearly 150,000 people are given the heroin substitute methadone, with 47,519 'parked' on it for four years or more.

Christian Guy, Director of the CSJ, said: "Evidence shows residential rehabilitation is the most effective form of treatment but these figures tell us it is being dangerously underused.

"On many measures the UK is the addicted man of Europe so it is high time our treatment services mirrored the scale of the problem."

"The Coalition has made important political progress on addiction recovery, but we are still to see the opportunity for full recovery offered to the majority in local communities.

"The next government should commit to our treatment tax to ensure that abstinence-based treatment is not just limited to the lucky few."

The CSJ's manifesto also recommends introducing welfare cards for the most chaotic addicts with families who refuse to engage in treatment. This would ensure a portion of benefits are only available to spend on basic essentials.

It calls for an incoming Government to adopt a number of key poverty fighting recommendations, including:

- Abolishing youth unemployment with a 'youth offer' for school leavers
- Establishing a new child poverty measure to tackle root causes of poverty
- Replacing Sure Start with 'family hubs' to prevent spiralling rates of family breakdown
- Introducing 'jail for a day' scheme to give credibility to community sentences.

ENDS For media inquiries, please contact: - Centre for Social Justice – Media: 07780 707322 - Alistair Thompson, Media Intelligence Partners Ltd – Mob: 07970 162 225 - William Walter, Media Intelligence Partners Ltd – Mob: 07971 441 735
NOTES TO EDITORS Table showing number of addicts per residential rehabilitation bed in England: Region Total Centres Total Beds Total OCU Addicts OCU Addicts per Bed North East 2 28 16,935 604.82 East Midlands 3 67 24,085 359.48 West Midlands 5 113 34,329 303.80 Yorkshire & Humber 8 157 36,270 231.02 London 15 315 54,985 174.56 East of England 9 159 21,952 138.06 North West 21 399 46,337 116.13 South East 20 389 32,935 84.67 South West 20 508 26,051 51.28 ENGLAND 103 2135 293,879 137.65 *OCU- Opiate and Crack User
The CSJ compared data from two government sources. The official prevalence estimates of the opiate and/or crack addicts in England and Public Health England's directory of rehabs. Of the 119 residential rehab centres listed, the CSJ obtained bed numbers from 103. The others had either closed, did not answer, or no longer operated as a rehab.**Treatment tax** CSJ analysis suggests that to meaningfully tackle the UK's addiction problems, the following levels of tax on off-licence sales would be required:

- Half a pence on a unit between 2015 and 2017
- One pence on a unit between 2018 and 2020;
- One and a half pence on a unit between 2021 and 2023;
- Two pence on a unit from 2024 onwards.

The tax would initially raise around £155 million a year but this will rise to around £520 million a year from 2024 onwards. It could fund the creation and running of 350 new rehabilitation centres with an average of 40 beds over a nine-year period. The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think tank established in 2004 to put social justice at the heart of British politics. In June, the CSJ was awarded UK 4 Social Policy Think Tank of the Year 2013 at Prospect magazine's Think Tank Awards. In 2007 the CSJ published its landmark report, Breakthrough Britain. This publication, which set out 190 evidence-based policy recommendations to tackle poverty in Britain, transformed the social policy and political landscape and was awarded Publication of the Year by Prospect Magazine in 2008. Since Breakthrough Britain the CSJ has published over 40 reports which have shaped government policy and influenced opposition parties. These have included the seminal papers Dying to Belong and Dynamic Benefits, which has led the Coalition Government's welfare reforms. Further to this, the CSJ manages an Alliance of over 300 of the most effective grass roots, poverty-fighting organisations. The CSJ is able to draw upon the expertise and experience of Alliance charities for research work and media inquiries. Journalists wishing to conduct grass-roots research into social problems can be put in touch with front-line charity directors and staff.

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