

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members
of the Operational Policing Panel
14th July 2009**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr Dave Pickard, Assistant Chief Constable
(Crime Operations)**

Status: For information

Drugs Update

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update in relation to drug treatment, enforcement, recovery and disruption efforts that continue across the Force area.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

3 Drug Treatment and Testing

- 3.1 The Force continues to support the government sponsored Criminal Justice Intervention Programme (CJIP) through the Drug Intervention Programmes (DIPs) that are in place within each of the four policing districts. This follows recognition of the importance of pro-actively tackling the local supply and demand problems whilst at the same time engaging users and guiding them into treatment support services.
- 3.2 The objective of the DIP is to engage and retain drug users in treatment with a view to reducing their propensity to commit crime.
- 3.3 Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Stockton districts have 'intensive' DIP status whilst Redcar and Cleveland has 'non-intensive' status.

- 3.4 The drug intervention programmes have evolved over the course of the last four and a half years aiming to involve a wider client base. Testing on arrest was introduced in April 2006 and seeks to test those over 18 years of age that have been arrested for a trigger offence whilst in police custody. The trigger offences are defined by legislation and have been identified as those offences that tend to be committed in order to finance a drug habit. This is a precursor to those testing positive being subject to a required assessment with a view to participating in mandatory treatment programmes.
- 3.5 The results of Mandatory Drug Testing across the four police districts are shown below:

Middlesbrough	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
No of tests attempted	288	265	292
Compliance rate (Target 95%)	98%	98%	95%
Positive test rate	29%	39%	31%

Hartlepool	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
No of tests attempted	151	163	161
Compliance rate (Target 95%)	95%	98%	98%
Positive test rate	28%	37%	37%

Stockton	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
No of tests attempted	199	152	211
Compliance rate (Target 95%)	98%	99%	99%
Positive test rate	32%	35%	32%

Redcar & Cleveland	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
No of tests attempted	39	31	40
Compliance rate (Target 95%)	95%	97%	93%
Positive test rate	31%	48%	43%

- 3.6 There have been no significant changes in performance over the three month period January – March 2009. The slight dip in Redcar & Cleveland's testing compliance rate is due to the small numbers of those subject to testing. Redcar & Cleveland do not form part of the compliance measures from the Home Office however, it is perhaps noteworthy that the positive test rate has dropped since November 2008.
- 3.7 Since testing on arrest began in 2006 the Force has maintained a consistent positive test rate averaging 45%. In November 2008 new Home Office provided equipment was introduced and almost overnight, test rate results fell to around 20%. Investigations took place as to why this had happened and it was established that the new testing processes proved more vulnerable to the 'human error' element. Interventions have been put in place to retrain Detention Officers and to identify potential problems. Early results show that

the positive test rate is beginning to rise again to levels that can be more expected.

- 3.8 Nationally, the numbers of people entering treatment via the criminal justice system hit a new high point in July 2008 when they topped 5,000 for the first time. However, there is an acceptance that while these commendably high numbers are being achieved, the focus of the programme is on re-offenders. In this regard, the new performance indicator NI38 that measures the reduction of Class A related offending has recently been introduced. The current baseline information indicates that Cleveland partnerships do not appear to be performing as well as expected in relation to this. Work is currently on going to establish the reasons why and what interventions might need to be made to remedy the issue.

4 Operational Update

- 4.1 The Force maintains its commitment to disrupt and dismantle drug supply networks at all levels.
- 4.2 Reducing supply means causing a shortage of drug availability. In this regard the Force continues to work closely with other law enforcement agencies (principally SOCA, the Regional Asset Recovery Team and HM Revenue & Customs) to disrupt higher level wholesale supplier networks whilst at the same time using neighbourhood policing teams, dedicated district drug enforcement units and specialist investigative resources from the Force organised crime unit in a comprehensive source to street enforcement response.
- 4.3 This response includes asset confiscation work at a higher level and an approach that seeks to maximise both local and national media to demonstrate to our communities that those involved in drug dealing and other associated criminal and anti-social behaviour will be held to account for their activities and will not profit from the crimes they commit.
- 4.4 This approach seeks to better empower and encourage members of the public to take a more pro-active role in tackling drug related criminality and provide information about those involved in drug dealing and associated criminality within their communities.

5 Hartlepool District Update

- 5.1 During the last three months, the following outcomes were achieved across the district:
- 128 drug seizures with a combined street value of £101,822 (of which £6,635 was Class A and £94,008 was Cannabis).

- Total number of arrests - 96
- A breakdown by commodity is shown for information below:

Drug Type	Amount seized	Street value
Cocaine	83.042 grams	£4152
Heroin	49.673 grams	£2,484
Methadone	90mls	£9.00
Cannabis Plants	308.75 plants	£92,625
Cannabis Resin	288.70 grams	£1,384
Amphetamine	9.57 grams	£48
Class C Controlled Drugs	1063 tablets	£1,063
Ecstasy	29 tablets	£58

(This information has been supplied by the Drug Seizure Register maintained at Police HQ. Drug costs have been taken from current price trends for controlled drugs in Hartlepool District as indicated through the district drugs unit).

6 Stockton District Update

6.1 During the last three months, the following outcomes were achieved across the district:

- Total number of arrests – 194 (of which 118 were for possession with intent to supply and/or supply of Class A drugs).
- 26 warrants were executed (financial year total = 177).
- In Quarter 4 there were 4 cash seizures totalling £11,565 bringing the number of seizures for the financial year to 16 and a total of £64,998.
- Crack House Closure Orders FYTD = 4 (against a target of 8)
- A breakdown by commodity is shown for information below:

Drug Type	Amount seized	Street value
Crack Cocaine	48.2g	£1,290
Cocaine	409g	£140,000
Heroin	414g	£655
Methadone	70ml	£775
Ecstasy Tablets	8 tablets	£30
Amphetamine	5.2 Kilos	£194
Subutex Tablets	97	£76
Cannabis Resin	328g	£745
Cannabis Bush	278g	£5,742
Cannabis Plants	250 plants	£280,000

6.2 The district continues to respond to community concerns in relation to crack houses and a further order was obtained during this last quarter in the Wrensfeld area of the district.

7 Middlesbrough District Update

- 7.1 Middlesbrough district continue to support the Dealer a Day strategy and with financial support from the Basic Command Unit fund, continue to target those responsible for the storage, supply and distribution of Class A and B drugs.
- 7.2 During the last three months, the following outcomes were achieved across the district:
- Searches carried out under warrant – 30
 - Street value of drugs recovered - £14,841
 - Total cash seized - £16,553
 - Total number of arrests – 67
- 7.3 The district regularly utilise neighbourhood policing teams to conduct searches and, where appropriate, implement crack house closures although it is right to say there have only been a small number of such closures over the course of the last 12 months.
- 7.4 In relation to the treatment of drug users, the District Crime Manager chairs the Reducing and Re-offending Group (formerly the DIP Steering Group) and is vice-chair of the Joint Commissioning Group (JCG). The JCG have a revenue budget that is used to provide services for drug users and their families and to support the Fulcrum Pharmacy in the dispensing of methadone. The district also works closely with the 'Boro Drugs Forum' (BDF) and Hope North East in the provision of facilities that users can attend to obtain support and where activities are provided.
- 7.5 During the last quarter, the district commissioned research designed to identify the top 100 offenders (excluding Prolific and other Priority Offenders) sitting at the second level of criminality. As a consequence, the Reducing and Re-offending Group secured some funding from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (NWF) to provide support interventions that the top 100 offenders have identified would direct them away from a life of criminality. This top 100 includes drug users and links have been established with the prison service, Citizens Advice Bureau, nursing care, housing, employment and many other partners. This is an innovative approach by the district which, if successful, could well result in further reductions in acquisitive crime linked to drug use and abuse.
- 7.6 Members will recall Operation Basar, a large scale investigation into organised criminality involving cannabis production centred on Middlesbrough District. The investigative phase of this operation began in April 2007 and focused on organised criminals who were producing cannabis on a commercial scale. Operation Basar involved enquiries in numerous police force areas both in this country and abroad and those involved were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment at the conclusion of their respective trials. There was significant and very positive media coverage of the investigation and subsequent prosecution. At the annual ACPO Drug Supply Awards ceremony held in Belfast in November 2008, the officer who led the investigation Inspector Mel Ashley

received a commendation award on behalf of the team in recognition of an excellent investigation and disruption operation.

- 7.7 This was the second year running that Middlesbrough District Drugs Unit has received a commendation for best practice in the field of drugs investigation. The awards form part of the Home Office Tackling Drugs, Changing Lives Programme and are awarded to those investigations which have identified good practice at a national level.
- 7.8 Further work continues pursuant to the convictions obtained through Operation Basar using the extensive powers provided by the Proceeds of Crime Act to confiscate associated criminal assets. Although the fruits of this investigative effort will take some time to progress through the courts, members can be assured that the outcome of this work will be reported in future quarterly updates.

8 Redcar & Cleveland District Update

- 8.1 The last quarter saw a continuing focus on enforcement efforts in support of the national drug strategy with the following outcomes achieved:
- Searches carried out under warrant – 36
 - Street value of drugs recovered - £507,201
 - Total cash seized - £6,640
 - Total number of arrests – 103
- 8.2 Two crack house closures were enforced in January (both in the Grangetown area) and the recovery of £500,000 worth of cannabis plants from units within the Skippers Lane Industrial estate led to the arrest and charge of two foreign nationals.
- 8.3 Six individuals were convicted during this reporting period and sentenced to a total of eighteen years imprisonment for their dealing activities involving Class A, B and C drugs. These cases received significant local publicity and appear to have had significant community reassurance impact.

9 Force Organised Crime Unit Update

- 9.1 The Force Organised Crime Unit continue to investigate higher level organised criminals and crime groups. Their focus of effort is predominantly in the counter narcotics arena and in support of Local Policing Priorities. A brief summary of a few of the operations carried out to date with associated results is provided below.
- 9.2 Operation Elland
A long running covert investigation set up to dismantle a Jamaican dominated crack cocaine supply network from the London area and seeking to establish a

foothold on supply into Cleveland. Over 20 people were arrested following a lengthy investigative phase. The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCAP) so called 'Supergrass' legislation was used with one of the defendants to assist in encouraging guilty pleas from others thus avoiding lengthy and costly contested trials. The enforcement and prosecution phases of Operation Elland generated significant positive publicity for the Force that has been warmly received by local communities but perhaps more importantly, a large and pernicious drug dealing network was dismantled which if allowed to continue unchecked would undoubtedly have led to an escalation in gangland violence and gun crime.

9.4 Operation Kiev

A lengthy investigation carried out in conjunction with Kent Police and focussing on the supply and distribution of amphetamine and cocaine into the Cleveland area. This operation recently resulted in a significant number of arrests (twenty one in Cleveland alone) as well as significant drug and cash seizures. Once again publicity was maximised to reassure our communities and prosecutions are now underway for offences of conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. This operation has resulted in the complete dismantling of a network which wreaked significant community harm over a lengthy period.

9.5 The Organised Crime Unit and surveillance operatives continue to provide bespoke specialist support to each of the four districts in both arrest operations and recoveries in addition to their own (many sensitive) ongoing covert investigations.

10 **Future Developments**

10.1 Entitled 'Drugs...Protecting families and communities', the Government ten year drug strategy document has been circulated widely with partner agencies and contains an 87 point three year action plan designed to cement Government intentions to intensify police and partner efforts on enforcement, treatment, education and harm reduction programmes.

10.2 In brief, the strategy (which has been the subject of wide ranging consultation and not without some controversy) aims to:

- Continue with enforcement/disruption efforts at neighbourhood, regional, national and international level.
- Increase capacity for testing on arrest.
- Provide for further support to Drug Intervention Programmes.
- Improve partnership working (particularly with health and education).
- Apply the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) to both criminal and civil cases and introduce wider confiscation powers to include asset seizure at time of arrest.

- 10.3 The action plan aims to focus the activities of all Government departments in support of local, national and international actions designed to address this large, widespread and extremely complex problem.
- 10.4 Although it will continue to be very much 'business as usual' for Cleveland Police, the Force and it's partners are committed to supporting the strategy on a wider basis and is well placed to continue to deliver performance improvements and results in this critical area of work.

11 Implications

11.1 Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities

There are no diversity or equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

11.3 Human Rights Act

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

11.4 Sustainability

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

11.5 Risk

There is a risk to Force reputation if disruption / enforcement efforts are reduced given the Governments continued focus in this area.

- 11.6 There are also operational and community risks if the situation is allowed to escalate and develop with the associated gun-crime now established and evident in many of our major cities across the UK.

12 Conclusions

- 12.1 This last period has seen some very positive results on a number of fronts in line with the national strategy intentions. There is no 'silver bullet' solution to this extremely complex subject area however the Force continues to tackle drug use and abuse in line with Government strategy and the expressed wishes of local people as articulated in our consultation processes.

Sean Price
Chief Constable