



**SUIT Interview with
Kate McConnell - Senior Probation
Officer & DRR Lead in W'ton**

What inspired you to become a probation officer, and has your chosen career lived up to your expectations?

Yes I would say it's lived up to my expectations because it's a really interesting job and I've been able to do lots of different things throughout the time I've been with the Probation Service. What inspired me is the opportunity to work with people in a positive way, the Probation Service believes everyone has the capacity for change and within this they also work hard to protect the public, it sounds a bit cliché but I wanted to work in a job where I made a change to peoples situations .

You have just recently taken up your current post, what changes if any are you hoping to implement?

I think what the team and I are hoping to implement is a more robust management of DRR orders and within that a real clear focus on making sure that the individuals we work with get something positive out of it. It's important that we take into account the views of the people we have on the Orders with regards to what they need to make the Order work for them, this is where Organisations such as SUIT can play a really important role. We want to build on closer partnership working with Horizon House and YMCA Bridge to make sure that all

agencies are working together to provide the best chance for people to succeed. The other thing we want to build on is that when people stop being on an Order, there is a clear support package so they've got things that they can engage with when they come out of the Criminal Justice System, I think SUIT is really important in providing part of that.

The number of successful completions of DRR's is the lowest in the region, why do you think this is?

I think there's a number of issues why this is. The team and I alongside SUIT, YMCA and Horizon House are working hard to tackle these issues and we have been making some really good progress. We have changed how we run groups looking at areas such as offending behaviour and drug misuse, we have strengthened our key working arrangements and we have actively involved other agencies in our process; for example SUIT have been offered time to deliver some parts of our group work programme. One of the key areas is ensuring that we have the right people on a DRR that people when they appear at court fully understand the demands of an Order like this, how difficult it can be at times, especially at the start of an order and to be fully committed to the requirements.

What do you do to relax after a stressful day at the office?

I cook a lot and then I eat! , I run and enjoy exercise- mainly because I enjoy my food so there needs to be a balance! .The other day I went and tried out a new rock climbing wall so I'll have a go at anything really. My other passion is my music, I like going out to see bands and I listen to a lot - different types which I like mixing up. I'm just getting to grips with some new music



Substance

Issue 16: March - April 2010

Wolverhampton Drug Service Users Lifestyle Magazine

Free

SUIT - 3 Years On

What's happened in this time

Update on Professor Nutt

Sacked advisor starts up rival group

MEEEEOOOOOOOWWWWWW

Get the low down on the new cat on the scene

Welcome to Substance

Substance Magazine Editorial Group



This magazine is put together by Wolverhampton Service User Involvement Team who hold weekly editorial group meetings to discuss its content, printing etc. If you would like to be part of the Team please call us on 01902 328983 or text your details to 88010 starting your message with the word SUIT.

Welcome to issue 16 of Substance magazine. And the third year for the service user team, I know I can't believe it either, 3 years and still going strong. So much has changed since the group first started but one thing that has remained the same is this magazine. Substance magazine is here to inform service users and without the input from you we wouldn't be here.

To show our appreciation for all the work service users have done for the magazine and the group, we are having a birthday celebration on **Wednesday 24th March** here at SUIT (more info inside), lunch will be provided. This gives everyone a chance to see what we are currently doing and our plans for the future. We hope to see you all there!

I hope you find this issue an interesting read, as usual we have real life stories and up to date info on what's happening in the world of drugs.

Please keep sending us all your articles and stories, this magazine wouldn't be here without them. Send them to our freepost address (on the page opposite). And to keep up to date with everything going on here text SIUT GO to 88010 (standard message rates apply).

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this work, no responsibility for loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any statement in it, can be accepted by the editor or by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Service User Involvement Team.

LOCAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust

Full Address: Wolverhampton PCT Tel No: **01902 444030**
Addiction Services
Horizon House
Pitt Street
Wolverhampton
WV3 0NF

Alcohol and Drug Drop In -
Monday to Thursday 9am - 12noon

Cocaine - Crack - Heroin - Ecstasy
Speed - Cannabis

Choose life... Choose the YMCA!

 WE CAN OFFER

- Counselling
- Groupwork
- Relaxation
- Acupuncture • Family support
- ... and much more!

Telephone: **01902 371582**
Email: bridge-reception@ymca-wolverhampton.co.uk
www.ymca-wolverhampton.co.uk/drugs-services/bridge
29-31 Temple Street Wolverhampton WV2 4AN



**Service User
Involvement Team
SUIT**

Full Address:
c/o WVSC
16 Temple Street
Wolverhampton
WV2 4AN
Tel No **01902**

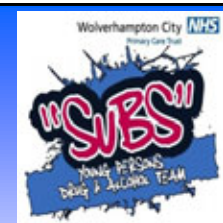
**Helping to
improve
drug
treatment
and lives**

**TURNING
POINT**
turning lives around

**Progress
2
Work**

Contact Dani Folan on
(07814 414560) or ask your key
worker or Jobcentre Advisor to
be referred.

Subs- see young people across the city at various community venues.
Telephone Number:
01902 572041
Opening Hours:
Monday to Thursday - 9am - 6pm
Friday - 9am - 5pm
Offers; Group Work, Key Work, Harm Reduction, Substitute Prescribing, Acupuncture, Family Therapy, General Drug Information.



LOCAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

LITTLE BROTHERS OF
THE GOOD
SHEPHERD



The Methodist Centre,
24 School Street,
Wolverhampton

Morning Service 10.30 – 11.30 a.m.

Monday & Thursday: Dry Food,
Gents Clothes, Male Showers
Friday: Gents Clothes, Male
Shower

Afternoon Service: 2 – 3.30 pm.



Service for stimulant users
Opening hours Mon to Fri
9.00am to 5.00pm

Out of hours appointments
available if necessary

07595 020887 Beccy

Or

07870 399060 Leanne



Or leave a message at
the office **01902 420041**

If you need any advice or guidance on Homelessness issues feel free to contact Wolverhampton City Council on the details below -:

Homeless Services
Unit
Social Services
Wolverhampton
City
Council
Civic Centre
St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RB

Wolverhampton
City Council



The Lords

Soup Kitchen

Full Meals
served be-
tween 7 &
9pm - Sun
and Wed.
For anyone in
need.



Tel :-
**(01902)
421904**

St. Georges

Opening Hrs
09:15 - 17:00

St Marks Rd
Chapel Ash
W'ton
WV3 09H

Hub

- Provide advice & guidance
- Activities like life skills, literacy etc
- Signposting
- Benefits & Tenancy advice
- Base for Big Issue **Plus much more...**

What's inside this edition.

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DON'T FORGET

Anyone can contribute an article, poem, story, question etc. Send your stuff FREE to:
SUIT, c/o WVSC, FREEPOST MID14051, Wolverhampton, WV2 4BR.

News - News - News - News -

SUIT Launch New Volunteer Programme at Addiction Services

SUIT have successfully launched a volunteer scheme together with Addiction Services in Wolverhampton. The programme had been developed in order for established SUIT volunteers to put themselves forward to volunteer within Horizon House.

This opportunity will give successful applicants an insight into the workings of a Tier 3 drug treatment provider, whilst also giving them an opportunity to build on their current skills and future job prospects.

The scheme is the first of its kind in Wolverhampton and has taken many months to establish, but hopefully will showcase the vast knowledge and commitment that recovering users can bring to any organisation.

For further information, or to find out what the criteria is to put someone forward for the scheme, please call SUIT on -: (01902) 328983

Sleeping Rough ?

In need of help and advice?

Contact and Access Team - Wolverhampton

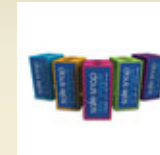
Ring the team on freephone :

0800 107 6753



A List of Pharmacies In Wolverhampton who Offer Needle Exchange

All equipment is provided for free



A Brickley Ltd, 88 Griffiths Drive, WV11 2JW
All Saints Pharmacy, 91-93 All Saints Road, WV2 1DR
Alpharm Ltd, 468 Stafford Road, WV10 6AP
Anderson Chemist, 311 Dudley Road, WV2 3JE
Boots Pharmacy, 40-41 Dudley Street, WV1 3ER
Boots Pharmacy, 100 Church Street, Bilston, WV14 0BJ
Brooklands Pharmacy, 48 Brooklands Parade, WV1 2NE
Brutons Pharmacy, 1 Mervyn price, Bilston, WV14 8DD
Co-op Pharmacy, Avion Centre, 6 Bargate Drive, WV6 0QW
Co-op Pharmacy, 425 Dudley Road, WV2 3AH
Co-op Pharmacy, 8 Showell Circus, WV10 9BA
Co-op, Pendeford Health Centre, Whitburn Close, WV9 5NJ
Essington Pharmacy, 129 Long Knowle Lane, WV11 1JG
HN Pharmacy, 124 Cannock Road, WV10 8PW
Lloyds Pharmacy, 323/325 Penn Road, WV4 5QF
Lloyds Pharmacy, 34/35 Thornley Street, WV1 1JP
Lloyds Pharmacy, 18-20 The Broadway, WV10 8EB
Lloyds Pharmacy, 45 Church Street, WV14 0AX
Lloyds Pharmacy, Lower Street, WV6 9NS
Lloyds Pharmacy, 181 Wednesfield Road, WV10 0EN
Lloyds Pharmacy, 18 High Street, Wednesfield, WV11 1SZ
Meerapharm, 331 Bushbury Lane, WV10 9UJ
Murrays Healthcare, 128 Childs Avenue, Coseley, WV14 9XB
Phoenix Pharmacy, Phoenix Health Centre, Parkfield Road, WV4 6ED
Staveley Chemist, 212 Staveley Road, WV1 4RH
Supercare Pharmacy, 135 Dudley Road, WV2 3HD
Superdrug Pharmacy, 65/67 Mander Square, WV1 3NN
Tettenhall Wood Pharmacy, 12 School Road, WV6 8EN

Look out for this sign on the shop front to find out if they provide the service





RECOVERY;
...a long road worth taking



List of NA meetings in our area

Wolverhampton

► Monday 7:30 pm Methodist Church, Darlington Street

► Friday 7:30 pm Methodist Church, Darlington Street

West Bromwich

► Wednesday 7:30 pm 'One desire-freedom', Chapter House
Phoenix St
(upstairs in lounge ring bell for access).

Walsall

► Thursday 7:30 pm 'The war is over', St Matthew centre,
St Matthew close, Churchill. (Ring bell for
access).

Stourbridge

► Tuesday 8:00 pm Gibbs House, Gibbs Rd, off Bald Lane, Lye.

► Wednesday 6:30 pm 'The truth in Lye', The Warehouse,
Atlantic House,
Dudley Rd. (Building behind the Bronx).
- Open on request.

News - News - News - News

Cocaine Found at Kennedy Space Centre

Space agency chiefs have launched an investigation after cocaine was found at the Kennedy Space Centre - weeks before a mission is due to blast into orbit.

A small bag of the drug was discovered in a restricted access Discovery space shuttle hangar at the agency's Florida spaceport.

The cocaine was found when a shuttle worker spotted it outside a bathroom and reported it to security, a [Nasa](#) spokesperson said.

Bob Cabana, a former astronaut and director of the Kennedy Space Centre, told [SPACE.com](#): "This is a rare and isolated incident, and I'm disappointed that it happened.

"But it should not detract from the outstanding work that is being done by a dedicated team on a daily basis.

(Up, Up and Away eh?, Just be careful of the comedown guys !)



Source - Sky News

SUIT DVD is now on - **You Tube**

The DVD produced by the Service User Involvement Team can now be found on You Tube, just type **User Friendly - Wolverhampton** into the search engine and it should come up. It is split into 4 parts. Have a watch and hope you enjoy.

Three years of SUIT by a SUIT Volunteer

The service user involvement team has come a long way since its humble beginnings. It started with 3 volunteers in a small office that you couldn't swing a cat in, a magazine of very limited circulation and an allotment project. In the 3 subsequent years SUIT has grown and diversified, from popular well attended football on a Monday afternoon to the forthcoming boxing project, all these activities build individuals self esteem, giving service users something else to do with their time. This however is not the only thing SUIT is about; it plays a full part in the strategic part of drug treatment, helping improve the quality of drug treatment for all. Any service users who would like to get involved in whatever aspect of what SUIT has to offer, ask your key worker for details or pop in and see us. (Address below)



LEGAL HIGHS

What you need to know

You can't know exactly what you're taking if you take a 'legal high', so the effects can be very unpredictable. Just because they are legal to possess doesn't mean they are safe.

Most of these substances are illegal to sell, supply, or advertise for human consumption, under medicines legislation, because of their effects on the body.

Legal highs can contain a range of potentially dangerous chemicals, and their chemical makeup changes all the time - so you can never be 100% certain what you have bought, and what the effects might be.

The chemicals in legal highs have, in most cases, never before been used as drugs, so have had no tests performed on them to show that they are safe. Nor do they have a long history of use, so that health problems would have become apparent.

Legal highs can carry serious health risks.

The risks

You increase the risk to yourself if you combine alcohol with any substance that causes a 'high', including the risk of death.

Other risks of legal highs include reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, excited or paranoid states, coma, seizures, and death.

Because legal highs are often new and, in many cases, their chemical make-up is constantly changing, the risks are unpredictable and are often still being assessed.

Mephedrone or Meow Meow??

Mephedrone is a stimulant drug with effects similar to MDMA producing euphoria, alertness, talkativeness and feelings of empathy. It can also cause anxiety and paranoid states and risk over stimulating the heart and nervous system to cause fits.

Severe nosebleeds have been reported after snorting. Mephedrone has been linked to the death of a young woman in Sweden in 2008.

A white or off-white powder usually sold on the internet as a legal high and described as a plant food or a research chemical not for human consumption. Sometimes mixed with other cathinones and caffeine.

Reports say that it can be compulsive to use and can create a state of psychological dependence.

Methylone Very similar to mephedrone.

MCAT A powerful psychoactive stimulant usually snorted but can be smoked and may be used by other routes.

The law

Currently it is illegal under medicines legislation to sell, supply or advertise these cathinone compounds for human consumption.

Cathinone and some of its derivatives are already controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (e.g. Cathinone itself; Methcathinone), but most substituted cathinones are not controlled. These include:

4-Methylmethcathinone (Mephedrone, 4-MMC);

4-Methoxymethcathinone (Methadrone) and Methylone (the cathinone analogue of MDMA).

Miss Heroin

So now little man you've grown tired of grass
All that damn acid, that cocaine and hash
And someone pretending that he is your friend
Said "I'll introduce you to Miss Heroin".

Well honey before you start fooling with me
Just let me tell you of how it will be
For I will seduce you and make you my slave
Believe me I've sent stronger men to their grave

You think you could never become a disgrace
And end up addicted to poppy-seed waste
You'll start by experimenting one afternoon
And end up asleep in my arms very soon

Then once I have entered deep in your veins
The craving will drive you nearly insane
You'll need lots of money as you have been told
For darling, I'm more expensive than gold

You'll swindle your mother just for a buck
And turn into someone who's vile and corrupt
You'll mug and you'll steel for the narcotic charms
Then feel so content when I'm in your arms

Then you'll realize the monster inside you has grown
And you'll solemnly swear to leave me alone
But if you think that it's easy and that you've got the knack
Then sweetie, just try getting me off your back

The vomit, the cramps, your gut in a knot
The jangling nerves screaming for just one more shot
The hot chills, the cold sweat, the withdrawal pains
Can only be saved by my little white grains

So now you returned (just as I foretold)
And I know that you'll give me your body and soul
You'll give me your morals, your conscience, your heart
And now you are mine till death us do part.

Author UNKNOWN

My Long Term Resolution

By Anonymous

A violent relationship, little money, risk of eviction, bad memories, so many painful memories. Life's so tough, even four beautiful children are hard to cope with.

That evening.....

Ahh... that's better, kids in bed, Eastenders starting and a glass of cider!!

Next morning.....

Ooh... I can't get up, feel so ill, just one glass to take the edge off! Kids are up, they need to go to school. They're getting themselves ready, how can i do this to them? This has got to stop!!

Later that evening....

Ahh... that's better, kids in bed, Coronation Street starting and a glass of cider in hand!!
(You get the idea!!)

Until....

That's it!! I can't cope anymore, I want to end my life completely!

Police, ambulance, sirens everywhere and SOCIAL SERVICES!!!

They've taken my kids- HELP ME PLEASE!!!

And that's when it hit, REALITY!!

Aquarius, Horizon House, every agency available.

Please this HAS got to stop !!

Weeks, months, years of agony to come, but I owe it to my children.

MY CHILDREN: who I love and cherish,

MY CHILDREN: who love their mom,

Your questions answered

**Q. What treatment is available for alcohol dependency in Wolverhampton?
(Service User)**

A. "Broadly speaking there are three options:

The drop-in at Horizon House from Monday to Thursday between 0900 and 1200hrs.

Contacting Aquarius on 01092 420041.

Attending your GP surgery for your GP to refer you as he/she considers appropriate.

A variety of measures may be necessary in the short term depending on the amount of alcohol consumed, evidence of harm or dependence, the presence of other significant physical health or psychosocial problems, the use of illicit drugs, being on prescribed medication etc

In the longer term a decision about undertaking a home detoxification or in-patient detoxification would be taken on a case by case basis depending on each individual's needs and circumstances and the availability of funding for in-patient detoxification.

In addition to these services individuals may need referral to New Cross for investigation and treatment of complications and to other agencies if there are issues relating to benefits, housing etc"

Dr George Ryan

**Q. How many people enter drug treatment services per year?. How many actually complete their treatment and are illicit and prescription drug free?
(Service User)**

A. "There are many different elements of Drug Treatment within Wolverhampton, overall as of August 2009 we had 1213 people across the city in Structured Treatment (This includes those who access Horizon House and YMCA) Currently the two biggest treatment options are Specialist Prescribing (treatment at Horizon House) which has a case load of 464 and Shared Care (seen by a GP in the community) which has a caseload of 335, out of these two treatment options year to date figures show that 88% of service users leaving Specialist Prescribing do so in a care planned way and 90% from Shared Care. In total 369 individuals have left treatment from Addiction Services 'Drug Free' since 1st April 2009. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask or if you have internet access you can view the figures for yourself on the website <http://www.ndtms.net>".

Andy Corfield

*Head of Business Management
Addiction Services*

Hope

When all about you is black with gloom,
And all you feel is pending doom.
When your bones are racked with grim despair .
When every breath is a gasp for air.
Keep on going, though you need to grope,
For around the bend is a ray of hope.

A ray of hope is perhaps all that's left,
As your will to live has been bereft.
You've lost it all, it's just no use!
You can end it all, you need no excuse.
But throw away that piece of rope,
And give yourself a chance of hope.

Just give yourself another day,
Brushing aside what your thoughts may say.
This is your life and you can make a new start,
By ignoring the brain - just follow the heart.
Taking baby steps in order to cope,
And minute by minute you'll build on your hope.

Build on your hope. One day at a time,
Though the road be steep and hard to climb.
The hurts of the past - they should be dead.
The fears of the future are all in your head.
Just live in the present and refuse to mope
Your life will sparkle for you're living in hope.

By Brian Quinn

MY CHILDREN: who have, through no fault of their own, had their childhood torn away from them,
MY CHILDREN: who deserve the best, the best being for me to be a good SOBER mom to them.
Three years later.... today!!

I'm sober

My children are living with family, but all love their mom and still want to be with me. They're doing really well at school, happy and confident, a true credit to me and a million times better little people than I could ever be.

But me?

I'm still fighting. I'm studying to go to uni next year. Legal battles for children still to go ahead, but I'm all worked up to win!!

Christmas day 2012.....

My children and I around the table, in our three bedroom house, about to carve the gigantic turkey, after opening tons of presents I brought with my salary as a qualified nurse.
Who'd have thought six years ago, that this day would come!!

Miracles are possible, as long as you seek help. Mine came from Horizon House and Aquarius, where too certain people (who I hope know who they are) I owe my life to.

My new year's resolution.....

To make sure that Christmas 2012 does really go as I dream it will!!!!



Anthrax case confirmed by HPA in Blackpool by SUIT

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) and NHS Blackpool can confirm they are investigating the death of a drug injecting heroin user in Blackpool. The investigation has confirmed that the cause of death was anthrax following positive test results.

This is the second case of anthrax seen in an injecting drug user in England, the first announced in London on 5 February. Similar cases have been seen in Scotland since December 2009 with nineteen cases having been confirmed and one in Germany. Similarities to the cases in Scotland suggest that the heroin, or a contaminated cutting agent mixed with the heroin, is the likely source of infection.

Heroin users are strongly advised to cease taking heroin by any route, if at all possible, and to seek help from their local drug treatment services. This is a very serious infection for drug users and prompt treatment is crucial.

Drug injecting is an extremely risky and dangerous practice and users are vulnerable to a wide range of infectious diseases, both from the action of piercing the skin, as well as contaminants in the drugs that they use.. **(Call Addiction Services on 01902 444030 for help).**

A response to the ordinary madness!!

Horizon House:

We would like to echo William's comments above and say thanks to the author of this article.

Our service has gone through massive changes over the last 18 months and it is good to hear feedback from service users, both the positive and negative comments.

Recently we have received feedback from SUIT regarding opening times, and have now changed these. Last year we received requests for music in our waiting area, so we installed the stereo. However we do not always get it right which is why we treat views of our service users very seriously.

Finally we would like to encourage all service users to come forward with ideas, attend the New Horizons group and have your say so that we can work together to make our treatment services the best they can be.

Carla Bickley
Head of Addiction Services
Horizon House

Wolverhampton City **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Addiction Services



Free Football
Run By
'Wolverhampton Service User
Involvement Team' - **SUIT**
*All we ask is that you access, or wish to access W'ton Drug
Treatment Services - (e.g. YMCA, Horizon House, Needle Exchange)*

Held at Wolverhampton
University, City Centre Campus
Every Monday : 4pm - 5pm
Ask staff member for more info,
or call SUIT on 01902 328983



**Drug or Alcohol
problem?**

Amphetamines, Alcohol, Cocaine, Crack, Cannabis, Heroin...
We offer a choice of services from reducing or stopping your substance
misuse to benefits advice, counselling, housing and family / carer support.

Drop-in sessions
Tuesday 1pm - 4pm @ Aquarius, Thornhurst,
1 Connaught Road, Wolverhampton
Monday - Thursday 9am - 12noon @ Horizon House, Pitt
Street, Wolverhampton
Wednesday 6pm - 8pm @ YMCA Bridge,
Temple Street, Wolverhampton

NEW TIMES
New Evening drop-in
sessions being held
every Wednesday from
6pm until 8pm at
YMCA Bridge, Tem-
ple Street, Wolver-
hampton. Starts 4th
November 2009.



A response to the ordinary madness!!

YMCA Bridge:

Firstly I would like to thank the author for their comments regarding The Bridge in what was an interesting article; I would also like to extend an offer of a meeting if a more in-depth discussion is required.

I feel I should elaborate a little on the possible acquisition of a bus by the YMCA. The bus will not just be used by Drugs Services and will be a real community resource. We intend to offer a wide range of services to the community including; education, training, youth groups, counselling, complementary therapy, parenting guidance, and advice on housing, debts and employment. The bus will also have a small crèche facility on board which will enable parents to talk to a member of staff in the knowledge that their children are in a safe environment. We are also looking in to the possibility that the bus could be used as a needle exchange service.

The Bridge has dramatically increased its outreach work and I am confident that my colleagues continue to offer an excellent service and I firmly believe that we do have the right staff here at The Bridge.

I agree that all clients should not only dream of a reduction plan but this should be made a reality. However whilst this is the case I also believe, and evidence suggests that an holistic approach is often the best way to tackle substance misuse and that will include dealing with issues such as debts; as well as housing, counselling, group work etc.

Finally I am glad you have found most Key Workers nice and caring people and in my brief time at The Bridge I can say the same of all the staff I have met within Wolverhampton Drugs Services.

If you would like to discuss issues raised in this article or anything else in relation to The Bridge please contact us on 01902 371582 or email us at bridge-reception@ymca-wolverhampton.co.uk

William James
Drugs Services Manager
YMCA Bridge
Wolverhampton



Drug free...

Ready to Move On?



A new exciting programme called

Moving On is starting at YMCA Bridge on Wednesday

14th January. It will run for two hour sessions over 12 weeks. It has been designed to meet the development needs of drug-free clients or clients stabilised on low levels of substitute medication.

Recovery is about the future - about change - which is not only challenging but often uncomfortable. This programme will help clients to understand the reasons why they act think and feel the way they do; how they can adapt behaviour to increase personal power and increase their ability to influence.



Give us a call on (01902 371582) for more information

DON'T FORGET

Anyone can contribute to this magazine. Send your stuff FREE to: SUIT, c/o WVSC, FREEPOST MID14051, Wolverhampton, WV2 4BR.

Prof Nutt's new drugs group 'to rival' official panel

Five members of the government's official drugs advisory panel are to join a new independent group set up by sacked drugs adviser, David Nutt.

Prof Nutt said the new group would be "very powerful" and would take over the role of the official Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD).

He said four of the five ex-ACMD members who resigned in protest at his sacking would also join the new body.

The Home Office said ACMD members were allowed to join another organisation.

BBC Home Affairs correspondent Danny Shaw said while it was theoretically possible for the drugs experts to be members of both groups, in practice it would make the framing of consistent drugs advice "rather tricky".

'Powerful grouping'

The new group - to be called the Independent Council on Drug Harms - is due to be launched at a meeting next week.

Prof Nutt said about 20 leading scientists and medical specialists had agreed to attend the meeting including a "significant bloc" of people from the ACMD.

He said: "We have a really very, very powerful grouping - more powerful than the ACMD in the past has ever managed to pull together."

Prof Nutt was sacked as ACMD chairman by the Home Secretary, Alan Johnson, last October for "lobbying" to change government policy on drugs.

Prof Nutt had publicly disagreed with the Government's decision to re-classify cannabis as a Class B drug and not to downgrade ecstasy. Five ACMD members then resigned in the row that followed Prof Nutt's departure.

It has now emerged that two other ACMD members - Peter Martin and Dr Anita Nolan - have also stepped down, though the Home Office said their departures were unrelated to the Nutt affair.

We haven't even got a proper needle exchange service! I want to be asked about my drug use, sit down and dream about a reduction plan off gear not meth I'll deal with that later, not get asked about have I got any more bills come in.....i don't pay em anyway! Stop smoking and the bills get paid you hardly need a A level in maths to work that out. Have an interest in the individual and their addiction not what it creates.

Why is it when you ask for a reduction your looked at like your mad! Mad when you started dancing with the devils daughter but not now! Then you finally get it a while later after pestering your key worker to death who nods their head in all the right places and umms and ahhs. Sound familiar?

Remember us, the bagheads, crackheads, speed freaks, pot heads and whatever else remember there's a person behind it all, and that person is there because they want to kick their habit and its fuckin hard on your own! Sort out my debts then when it will help me build a life instead of a habit. Talk about gettin touch with my family but most of all help me end the dance that could kill me!

On the upside most of the key workers I have come across are really nice caring people, though they shouldn't be scared to tell us what they think once in a while. Drop the rule book and have a human connection...**'what I do will ultimately fuck up my life'**, say when you notice that £10 bags have changed to a £25 special more days than not, say when the H-plan diet leaves me looking more hollow than Gillian McKeith. When the eyes are soulless, and the fight is gone **SAY SOMETHING!**
May your God go with you.

By an Ordinary Bloke

Read responses to this article on pages 18 & 19

A Tale of Ordinary Madness;

Well as I read in last weeks article Prof Nutt et al got their P45's, funny when you consider he was just doing his job, advising on what the Advisory council was set up to do....The fact that the statesmen didn't like it and didn't fit with their agenda???? Goodbye Prof Nutt! In what could be described as a Stalinesque departure...

But what does that mean to us 'the great unwashed'? Bearing in mind that this was a very high standing and well respected man of science and it was a very public execution? Call me cynical but most of the stuff we never get to know until about 20 years later and what the hell happens locally is anyone's guess??

Well, as we know the bridge is going to be getting a bus, why? So they can bring out the services to where we are, YIPPEE! Most people hate having to pick up their script and don't share where their going or why with people so why do you wanna get on a bus telling people on your doorstep what you do in your spare time? There used to be some damn good outreach workers in this town, sorry city, lol. What happened to them? I know people move on but some are still knocking around and been put out to grass? And no-one has taken it over. I've seen these people over the years when they were working and sometimes when they weren't, they've never pretended they don't know me, always asked how things were and what I was up too? how much you using? Still smoking? How's your script keeping you? at the very least, So save your bus money and get the right people.

[Read responses to this article on pages 18 & 19](#)

Work 'slowed down'

The professor said the new body he was setting up would provide independent scientific evidence about the effects of drugs, and that its "goal" was to supplant what the ACMD was doing.

"I think in a way we will take over that particular role of the ACMD," said Prof Nutt.



(Prof Nutt pictured above)

"We're going to focus on the science and the ACMD can continue if it likes to deal with issues about treatment provision, about social policy etc."

The Home Office said that a new ACMD chairman will be announced in the next few weeks, but that it could take two to three months to fill vacancies left by the other resignations.

Our correspondent said the ACMD was crucial to government policy on drugs, because of the panel's statutory role on drugs policy.

A spokesman admitted that work on the ACMD had "slowed down" after Prof Nutt's sacking, and that a number of meetings had been postponed.

BBC News understands that little progress has been made on a crucial area of the ACMD's work - research into the harms of a new range of synthetic substances, including Mephedrone.

The Home Office has said it is a "priority" to find out more about the dangers of the drug and that the ACMD would report back "early" in 2010.

But a working group, which was to have considered the evidence this month, has had to re-schedule its meeting, after the resignation of the chairman of the group, Dr Les King.

A Home Office spokesman said the ACMD's work was "still on course".

Source: BBC News

My Story

By Mark Griffiths.

I'd like to share with people my experience of being used as a political pawn by the British government, when I was extradited to Spain for a murder that happened back in 1996.

Although there was no evidence, I came close to losing my life as the prosecutor was asking for 35 years and there was no jury.

Although I've been to jail a few times in the past, this time totally changed my outlook on life, especially towards crime and drugs.

-: **Life's far too short.**

Before my arrest in 2007 I had a £500+ a day habit on crack and coke and my life was going down the pan. Scotland Yard raided my house and I was arrested for murder. I was taken to court in London and remanded to Belmarsh prison, CAT A, along with all the AL Qaeda prisoners, where I fought the extradition for 9 months. Since 2003 European countries no longer need to send evidence but you are guaranteed certain conditions.

The day came for me to go. I barricaded my cell and tried to hold off the riot squad with a table leg. Needless to say I got a beating for my troubles. Scotland Yard took me, with an armed escort, to a private airport where the Spanish police were waiting in a private plane. They cuffed me behind my back and bent me over all the way to Madrid.

When I finally arrived at the prison everything I was asked to sign was in Spanish, (lucky for me I could understand it), and I saw no sign of a lawyer until Sept 2009 1 month before the trial. So much for the conditions of the extradition. The British government's response to my many letters was; *"we're sorry about your situation but the extradition treaty is only a mutual trust agreement. There is nothing we can do"*. They know full well what Spain's justice system is like yet they still send British citizens there. Reason being Britain always wants criminals back from Spain so they return the favour without any regard for the person's welfare.

The only evidence was a few hearsay statements that the people had actually withdrawn. I also had witnesses who I was with on the night of the murder, 1 in England and 1 in Brazil. Whilst prosecution witnesses were allowed to give evidence by video link they would not allow mine to do the same nor were they ever questioned by the police. Luckily I was found not guilty, but I still lost two and a half years of my life. To tell the truth, knowing the way that Spanish justice works, I'd come to terms with I'd never be getting out. On the day of my release I phoned my partner of 10 years with my 2 kids only to be told that we were no longer together. I'd planned, if I got released, to dedicate every minute of my life to my partner and kids to make up for all the bad that the drugs had caused. Luckily I have my kids for the weekend every 2 weeks but it would have been better to be a real family and prove everybody wrong.



Deep down I'm a great person, the drugs and other drug users dragged me down to the gutter but it shouldn't have taken something like this for me to realise. It's like been diagnosed with cancer then given the all clear in a years time.

I'm now doing as many courses as I can and with the help of SUIT and the YMCA I hope to start helping others who are going through what I went through.

If I can do it anyone can.

The world is yours for the taking, and it only takes a fraction of the effort that you put into getting money for drugs and the rewards are far greater.