



Turning Point Scotland

**Information Paper**

**Drugs Services**



Turning Point Scotland

Information Paper

**Drugs Services**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Turning Point Scotland has been managing drug services in Scotland since 1994. We opened the Glasgow Drug Crisis Centre in November of that year and have gone on to develop drug services from Peterhead in Aberdeenshire to Stranraer in Dumfries and Galloway.

Turning Point Scotland offers a range of different service including crisis units, needle exchanges, methadone treatment programmes, supportive accommodation projects and community rehabilitation services. Each service collects data to help target and improve our work. We have used the paper "Statistics from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database, 2002/03" and "Estimating the National and Local Prevalence of Problem Drug Misuse in Scotland" (2005) from the Centre for Drug Misuse Research, University of Glasgow, to benchmark our work.

In this paper, the first of a series, we give an overview of the type of services we provide and look at the number, age and gender of our service users to give a Turning Point Scotland picture of the people we work with across the country and how we work with them.

Subsequent papers will look at more specific areas of our work, including working with children and families and providing services in rural areas, within the context of the policy and practice in which we operate.



## 2. THE NATIONAL PICTURE

In 2003 – 2004 Turning Point Scotland drug services helped around 8,342 individuals, (Table One) both new and returning. The most current national figures from the Information and Statistics Division of the Scottish Executive are for 2002 - 2003. Their totals show 11,472 “new” individuals reported to the Scottish Drug Misuse Database. The minimum number of individuals already known to drug treatment, police and other agencies in the year 2003 was estimated to be 24,894, (Estimating the National and Local Prevalence of Problem Drug Misuse in Scotland, Executive Report, January 2005, Centre for Drug Misuse Research, University of Glasgow). From these figures, we can roughly estimate that the number of drug users in Scotland in 2002 - 2003 was around 36,000. Comparing these national figures with our own internal data for 2003 - 2004 indicates that Turning Point Scotland is seeing the equivalent of just under 24% of total drug users. We are also in contact with many more people looking for help and advice.

Table One also gives information on some of the characteristics of our service users. We can see that the users of our drug services tend to be young, their average age being in their 20s and 30s, and mainly male. This is consistent with the national picture.

Table Two shows comparative figures with European countries of a similar population to Scotland. We have looked at a number of European countries to compare with both Scotland as a whole and Turning Point Scotland in particular. The figures suggest that Scotland faces a more serious issue with drug use than comparable European countries.

**Table 1: Turning Point Scotland Figures**

| Service             | Year                              | Service User Numbers  | Mean Age  | Gender Ratio Male/Female% |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Big River           | 2003/2004                         | 234                   | 31        | 73/27                     |
| Midpoint            | 2003/2004                         | 18                    | 28        | 89/11                     |
| GDCC*               | 2003/2004                         | 7,000 (40,281 visits) | 32        | 75/25                     |
| Leith               | 2003/2004                         | 132                   | 32        | 64/36                     |
| CACTUS              | 2003/2004                         | 171                   | 28        | 71/29                     |
| SEA                 | 2003/2004                         | 110                   | 31        | 65/35                     |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 2003/2004                         | 170                   | 28        | 53/47                     |
| Timeout 218         | 2003/2004 (Opened December 2003)  | 52                    | 30        | All female service        |
| Links               | 2003/2004                         | 183                   | 30        | 71/29                     |
| Chrysalis           | 2003/2004                         | 60                    | 28        | 79/21                     |
| Northern Horizons   | 2003/2004                         | 160                   | 27        | 64/36                     |
| Integrate           | 2003/2004 (Opened September 2003) | 52                    | 27        | 67/33                     |
| <b>Overall</b>      |                                   | <b>8,342</b>          | <b>29</b> | <b>70/30</b>              |

\*Glasgow Drug Crisis Centre



**Table 2: Comparative European Figures – 2001 unless stated otherwise**

| Country                | Number of New Individuals Treated for Drug Problems | % Drug Use |
|------------------------|---|------------|
| Scotland               | 11,472*   | 0.22       |
| Turning Point Scotland | 8,838   |            |
| Ireland                | 4,778**   | 0.13       |
| Denmark                | 4,079**   | 0.07       |
| Sweden (1)             | 1,336**   | 0.01       |
| Finland                | 3,158**   | 0.06       |

Figures come from \*Scottish Drug Misuse Database 2002/03, \*\*EMCDDA Annual Report 2003

(1) In Sweden data only refers to outpatient treatment centres



### 3. OUR SERVICES

This section gives a brief overview of the services Turning Point Scotland offers across Scotland.

**South East Alternatives (SEA)** offers day support services for people who are stable on methadone or newly drug free in the south east area of Glasgow. In addition, the project works with people who have parenting responsibilities to assist them and their children. The project has a number of key partners including the Social Work Department, Barnardo's and the Glasgow Nautical College. The programme includes one-to-one work, group work, and a variety of educational/structured recreational activities.

The **Big River Project** is a direct access service for people with drug misuse problems across the Scottish Borders. With a project base in Galashiels, the service works out of community and rented sites in Kelso, Hawick and Eyemouth. It operates a drop-in service and one-to-one counselling work as well as a needle exchange. Given some of the distances that people would have to travel to access services, the project does some home visiting work.

**CACTUS (Creating Alternatives to Custody Through Understanding and Support)** provides arrest referral, diversion and support to individuals with drug problems involved with the Criminal Justice System. It offers a tailored 12-week plan of action to support individuals who wish to break away from their current lifestyle and address their drug taking and offending behaviour. The service currently helps service users from Renfrew, Johnstone, Linwood and Paisley and has taken the service into the community so that the help is available where it is most needed. The CACTUS team also offers an arrest referral service in East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.

The **Chrysalis Project** is a three-month day programme for stabilised drug users or those newly drug free in the Edinburgh area. The programme aims to tackle both people's offending behaviour and their drug use. The Chrysalis Project uses a variety of interventions with service users including one-to-one, group work, educational classes and access to colleges and employers.

**Dumfries and Galloway Drug Services** is a centre-based drop-in, counselling and needle exchange service for people with drug problems. The project, based in Stranraer, provides information, advice, practical and personal support to drug users, their friends and families. Services offered include one-to-one counselling, needle exchange, drop-in facility for drug users and their carers, an advocacy and befriending service, a crisis intervention service and a parent/carer support group. The service has also developed its work into Annan and Kirkcudbright.



**Northern Horizons** offers a variety of interventions to people who have or have had a drug problem. Interventions include arrest referral, diversion from custody, referral from Community Substance Misuse Teams and other agencies and self-referrals. Northern Horizons has close links with a variety of agencies such as social work teams, GPs, drug workers and community education teams. The project currently covers the north east Aberdeenshire area from Peterhead to Banff and Macduff.

**Turning Point Leith** offers a free and confidential service to people affected by drug use who may find it difficult to access other services. We respect our service users as individuals and aim to empower them to explore their lifestyles and choices, reduce harm to themselves and others and engage with other services and treatment options in the community.

**Midpoint** is a supported housing project for people with drug misuse problems who are homeless. Midpoint supports service users in 12 furnished tenancies. As part of the Edinburgh Rough Sleepers Initiative it has proved to be very successful in supporting people from the street to permanent housing.

**Glasgow Drug Crisis Centre (GDCC)** is a 24-hour walk-in assessment, needle exchange and support service for people with drug misuse problems. In addition, there is a short stay residential unit for those people no longer coping in the community. The Drug Crisis Centre has been open since 1994 and is the busiest walk-in service in Scotland with around 130 visits every day. The Drug Crisis Centre is in contact with over 7,000 individual users from the Greater Glasgow area and surrounds. The Centre is contracted to the City Council and Greater Glasgow Health Board.

**The Links Project** in Edinburgh is a short-stay, 12-bed crisis unit in Edinburgh. Working with those in priority need, the project assists people towards building realistic plans for discharge by involving all appropriate services.

**Integrate** is an Edinburgh city wide service which works positively and flexibly to support people in accessing and sustaining community rehabilitation and open doors towards education, training and employment. The service offers one-to-one support, signposting to other services, outreach work, case co-ordination, practical and emotional support and move-on options of education, training and employment.



**Timeout 218** is a women only service, working with women who live in the Glasgow area where offending has resulted in current or previous involvement with the Criminal Justice System. These women may also have a substance misuse problem and more complex needs. Their involvement in the Criminal Justice System ranges from arrest referral through to risk of custody, on remand, or on release from custody. They may be subject to statutory supervision such as probation, parole, drug treatment and testing orders, deferred sentences, or on bail awaiting sentence or trial. 218 offers programmes of care, support and development designed to stop women offending by tackling the substance misuse, trauma and poverty that drive it.

218 has built on the lessons and successes of its Turnaround service, which it now incorporates.

## **4. OUR VALUES AND WHAT WORKS**

All our services share core values, which we know work best with our service users. We believe the best services are:

### **Available All Day and Every Day**

In our Northern Horizons service in Peterhead when someone is taken into custody they are given one of our cards. They can then request that the officer on duty contact us and request a visit in the cells to access support in addressing their drug problem. We have a 24-hour call out system and can attend the cells within one hour. This enables us to meet the needs of the person at crisis point when intervention is likely to lead to uptake of our service.

### **Responsive**

At our Paisley service CACTUS, we aim to see people as soon as we can within 24 hours of receiving a referral. At Links in Edinburgh we can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At the Drugs Crisis Centre in Glasgow anyone can walk in and be seen 365 days of the year.



## Flexible and Diverse

We offer a person-centred approach to support that may include one-to-one work, group work, harm minimisation and alternative therapies.

At our South East Alternatives service, which provides individual support for stable drug users, former drug users and their families we are open 6 days a week and some evenings. The service we provide there includes:

- An individual support package to suit individual needs
- One-to-one and group work support
- On-site educational classes
- Opportunities to increase social activities
- Access to other services and organisations
- Family Support

## In Partnership

Our services understand that they cannot succeed on their own and need partnerships. Our most important partnership is with service users so we aim for a standard of dignity and mutual respect at all times. We do not exclude people, but pride ourselves on our ability to deal with chaotic lifestyles and challenging behaviour. Other important partnerships are with Social Work, Housing, Health Boards and with our colleagues in voluntary sector housing and drug services.

At Leith we work in the areas of health, prescribing, legal issues, housing, finance and family relationships. If we cannot help we will refer on to someone who can.

## On the Move

Our Big River project works throughout the Borders. We help our service users to access our service by going to where they are. We will discuss this with service users to come to an arrangement that suits them best. We prefer to meet service users somewhere they find comfortable and convenient, so we work in a variety of community settings. Big River provides different kinds of support for different people in different circumstances. Service users can choose to come to a drop-in in Galashiels, Kelso or Eyemouth. Alternatively they can arrange an appointment in any Borders town.



## Innovative

Turnaround, which has now been incorporated into our Timeout 218 project, piloted Scotland's first diversion programme for women drug users in Glasgow. Providing an alternative to prosecution, the programme involves regular participation in one-to-one and group sessions over a 12-week period. The twin aims of the programme are to reduce illegal drug use and to reduce offending behaviour.

## Accessible

The Drug Crisis Centre in Glasgow has easy access as one of its core values. The service is based near the city centre and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. The Centre sees about 130 people each day. No referral is necessary, there is no waiting list: service users just walk in and are seen.

There are an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 drug injectors in Glasgow and the Centre deals mainly with the 4,000 - 5,000 people who are at the more vulnerable and chaotic end of the spectrum. The Centre provides an extremely prompt service with an average waiting time of 5 minutes. The speed with which we can see service users is crucial. When people turn up they want to be seen.

As evidence of why services need to be provided outside standard office hours of 9 am – 5 pm on Monday to Friday, the Drug Crisis Centre's busiest day last year was Sunday 23rd June when staff saw 164 people.

Accessible services means access to sterile injecting equipment. All our needle exchange services monitor needles out and in and can report on the percentage return rate. Each individual's needs are recorded so we can monitor the change in pattern of someone's injecting, for example by changing the size or type of needle. We regularly record a higher than 100% needle return rate.

Most of our services offer a drop-in facility so people can come in at a time that suits them and without an appointment. At Stranraer people can drop in any afternoon during the week and do not need to be referred, or they can make an appointment. Most people do make an appointment with 91% of appointments made being kept, an indication of the quality of service there.

Because of the accessibility of our services we continue to have over 45,000 visits a year to our services. We know our service users and what kind of service they want. They want it there and then and that is what we provide.

Turning Point Scotland, 54 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 1JL

Tel: (0141) 427 8200 Fax: (0141) 427 8201

Email: [info@turningpointscotland.com](mailto:info@turningpointscotland.com) Website: [www.turningpointscotland.com](http://www.turningpointscotland.com)

Turning Point Scotland is a company limited by guarantee No. 194639 (Scotland)  
Registered Office: 7 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1BA Charity No. SC028827