

# Department for Work and Pensions

## Work Programme Live Running Memo

**To:** Work Programme Providers

**Cc:** Account Managers  
Account Executives  
Senior Performance Managers  
Performance Managers

**From:** Work Programmes Division

**Memo Serial Number:** 164

**Date:**

**Subject:** Drug and Alcohol Abuse Awareness

**Action:** For information and action

**Timing:** Immediate

### Background

1. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, at the Work Programme Provider Forum, the DWP Social Justice team gave a presentation on Drug and Alcohol awareness and they advised that a note would be sent to you giving further information and support regarding Drug and Alcohol Abuse.
2. DWP recognises that disclosing substance dependency is a personal decision but that once disclosure has occurred individuals are more likely to accept and move into treatment. DWP also recognises that participating in treatment moves people closer to employment.

### Alcohol Dependency

3. In 2008 there were an estimated 630,000 dependent drinkers in England (volumes for Scotland and Wales n/k). Of these, approximately 160,000 were in receipt of one or more of DWP's four main benefits (JSA, IS, IB or DLA). This equates to around 1 in 25 claimants.
4. As of August 2013, around 54,000 claimants in receipt of an incapacity benefit (ESA, IB or SDA) had a dependency on alcohol recorded as their main disabling condition. This is around 3,000 (6 per cent) fewer claimants than in 2010.

5. A total of around 110,000 people in England who cited alcohol as their primary problematic substance received treatment for their dependency over the course of 2012/13.
6. Of the 153,000 people who first presented for treatment for alcohol dependency in England between 2009 and 2012, 65,000 (around 42 per cent) went on to successfully complete their treatment, and had not re-presented by 31 March 2012.

## **Drug Dependency**

7. Across Great Britain there are likely to be around 400,000 'problem drug users' (for example, people dependent on heroin or crack cocaine). This includes:
  - approximately 300,000 people living in England
  - approximately 60,000 living in Scotland and
  - a further 20,000 people living in Wales
8. An estimated 250,000 – 350,000 children living in the UK have parents who are 'problem drug users'.
9. Of those 'problem drug users' living in England, it is estimated that around 80 per cent are likely to be in receipt of one or more of the main DWP benefits. This means that around 1 in 15 claimants in receipt of one or more of the main DWP benefits, are likely to be 'problem drug users'.
10. As of August 2013, around 34,000 claimants in receipt of an incapacity benefit (ESA, IB or SDA) had a dependency on drugs recorded as their main disabling condition. This is around 13,000 (28 per cent) fewer claimants than in 2010.
11. At March 2013, there were around 130,000 individuals receiving recognised treatment for drug dependency in England. Over the course of 2012/13, a total of around 190,000 people received treatment in England.
12. Of the 86,000 people who first presented for treatment for drug dependency in England between 2009 and 2012, 33,000 (around 39%) went on to successfully complete their treatment, and had not re-presented by 31 March 2012.

## **Action**

13. The Work Programme supports participants with Drug and Alcohol dependency and DWP recognises and acknowledges the challenges faced by provider staff in identifying and supporting these participants.
14. To support your advisers identify claimants with substance dependency, and to participate in challenging conversations, we have supplied a desk aide,

which provides advice and hints and tips for supporting substance misusers. We encourage you to share this, and the key facts regarding Drug and Alcohol abuse as detailed in this memo amongst your staff.

### **Further information and contact details**

15. All enquiries on the subject of this memo should be raised with your Performance Manager in the first instance; they will endeavour to provide you with an answer as soon as possible.

Regards

**Work Programmes Division Enquiries Team**