



Home Office

HOME OFFICE DRUG STRATEGY 2010 REDUCING DEMAND, RESTRICTING SUPPLY, BUILDING RECOVERY: SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE A DRUG FREE LIFE

EQUALITY SCREENING



HOME OFFICE DRUG STRATEGY EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the findings of the initial screening of the new cross-Government Drug Strategy, which is being led by the Home Office. The Strategy is the start of a longer process, and while we are able to identify potential impacts at a high level through the initial screening, we will conduct more detailed assessments of the impact of the various new policy proposals in the Strategy, through individual Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) exercises.

OUR APPROACH

The Home Office will ensure the relevant equality impacts are taken into account in the context of expenditure under consideration in the Spending Review in compliance with the gender, race and disability duties set out in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“the Equality Duties”).

As a number of these policy options are in the early development stages, individual EIA exercises will be conducted by the relevant lead Department for each new policy option.

BACKGROUND

Our Coalition Programme sets out this Government’s ambition to bear down on the supply of illicit drugs, introduce a system of temporary bans on so called “legal highs” and to build a recovery led system to enable individuals to become free of drug or alcohol dependence and contribute to society. Therefore, the objective of introducing these policies is to deliver these commitments and build momentum to tackle drugs and drug-driven crime, whilst also enabling and supporting individuals, including those in contact with the criminal justice system, to become free of their dependence.

The Strategy sets out a range of policies that will deliver a fundamentally different approach to tackling drugs, including a new ambition for enabling those individuals dependent on drugs and alcohol to recover. It signals a shift in power and accountability to the local level, including through the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and the establishment of the Public Health Service. It also makes clear where some actions will necessarily be driven at the national level, including the work of the National Crime Agency (NCA) to tackle the availability and supply of drugs to the UK and the disruption of drug trafficking upstream.

KEY AREAS OF THE DRUG STRATEGY:

REDUCING DEMAND

Creating an environment where the vast majority of people who have never taken drugs continue to resist any pressures to do so, and making it easier for those that do to stop.

A separate initial EIA supports the policy options included in the Ministry of Justice's 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders' Green Paper. This includes new policy proposals around drugs and alcohol (and mental health), as well as highlighting existing policy commitments to create drug free environments in prison. During the consultation phase for the Green Paper, which runs from 7th December 2010 until 4th March 2011, the Ministry of Justice will gather further information from stakeholders to inform full EIAs for the proposals.

Proposals to prevent drug and alcohol misuse, and to intervene early where problems occur combine universal education and information, with targeted support for the most disadvantaged and those most at risk of developing problems with drugs or alcohol. The impact of proposals set out as part of the Spending Review for both a fairness premium and for the creation of an Early Intervention Grant considered the impact of policies and spending changes across a number of groups. A separate EIA has been published alongside the Schools White Paper.

RESTRICTING SUPPLY

We must make the UK an unattractive destination for drug traffickers by attacking their profits and driving up their risks

The provision in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill that will provide for the temporary control of drugs is an enabling power and, as such, has not been subject to an EIA. An individual EIA will be published each time the power is exercised, in the same way they are when a drug is brought under permanent control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (the 1971 Act).

An EIA conducted at the time of the publication of the Policing in the 21st Century consultation (which outlined proposals for the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)) concluded that the core policy themes would not result in any disproportionate impact. It also concluded that an individual EIA should be completed for each of the detailed proposals as they were developed, to ensure any emerging impacts were identified and assessed. All aspects of the introduction of PCCs will be examined and an EIA will be published alongside the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. The creation of a NCA is intended to improve the co-ordination of efforts against serious and organised crime and to improve efficiency, helping to rationalise and streamline the policing landscape to reduce duplication and multiple points of contact for police forces. The proposals are not expected to make any significant contribution to inequality or impact on particular groups. An EIA will be conducted as proposals are developed for the creation of the NCA to ensure all equality issues are considered.

RECOVERY

For those who are dependent on drugs and alcohol. We will build on the huge investment in treatment to ensure more people are tackling their dependency and recovering fully.

Department for Education is developing a national campaign to help turn around the lives of families with multiple problems which will support the measures in the Drug Strategy. An assessment of the equality impact of the national campaign will be considered as part of this process.

We will ensure that the benefit system supports engagement with recovery services. We will offer claimants who are dependent on drugs or who have a severe alcohol dependence a choice between rigorous enforcement of the normal conditions and sanctions for any non-compliance with benefit rules where they are not engaged in structured recovery activity, or appropriately tailored conditionality for those that are. This policy will be included in the equality impact assessment that will support the Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme.

The Department of Health's 'Healthy lives, healthy people' White Paper includes an EIA on the policy framework and a full EIA will be developed in light of the results from the 'Payment by Results' pilot schemes.

The table below outlines the key new policy changes:

New policy	Lead dept	EIA to be undertaken
We will make sure school staff have the information, advice and the power to: -Provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through drug education and targeted information via the FRANK service. -Tackle problem behaviour in schools, with wider powers of search and confiscation. We will make it easier for heads to take action against pupils who are found to be dealing drugs in school. -Work with local voluntary organisations, the police and others to prevent drug or alcohol misuse.	DFE	This policy is included in the equality impact assessment that supports the Department for Education Schools White Paper.
We will simplify funding to Local Authorities, including the creation of a single, Early Intervention Grant, worth £2 billion by 2014–15.	DFE	The impact of this policy will be considered as part of the DfE wider equality impact assessment of the Spending Review.
Subject to consultation in the Ministry of Justice's 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders' Green Paper new funding arrangements for youth justice services will incentivise Local Authorities to find innovative ways to reduce the number of young people who commit crime, including tackling drug or alcohol misuse where this is part of the reason for their offending.	MOJ	The impact of this policy is included in the equality impact assessment that supports the Ministry of Justice's 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders' Green Paper
The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)	HO	This policy will be included in the PCC equality impact assessment.
The formation of new National Crime Agency (NCA)	HO	This policy will be included in the NCA equality impact assessment.

Reduce the risk of harm from new psychoactive substances, so called “legal highs”: by introducing a system of temporary bans while the health issues are considered by independent experts	HO	An equality impact assessment will be completed on each occasion that the power is used, taking into account any evidence on prevalence of availability and use, in the same way when a drug is brought under permanent control under 1971 Act.
We will increase the focus within treatment on recovery, with the overarching aim of increasing numbers recovering from their dependence	DH/MOJ	The impact of this policy is included in the equality impact assessment that supports the Ministry of Justice's 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders' Green Paper
We will also support communities to build networks of 'Recovery Champions'	DWP	This policy will be included in the equality impact assessment that will support the Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme
Development of a benefit system that promotes engagement with recovery services	DWP	This policy will be included in the equality impact assessment that will support the Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme
We will explore building appropriate incentives into the universal credit system to encourage treatment take-up.	DWP	This policy will be included in the equality impact assessment that will support the Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme
Employment support will be funded on an outcomes basis, using benefit savings freed up when people engaged with recovery services move into employment or full-time education	DWP	This policy will be included in the equality impact assessment that will support the Department for Work and Pensions Work Programme

