

Government launches second phase of independent review into drug misuse

- Professor Dame Carol Black to lead next stage of the independent review into the misuse of drugs
- Second phase to consider the provision of treatment and recovery services for drug users, as well as a focus on how to prevent the misuse of drugs among adults and young people
- Review findings will feed into wider government work to tackle the serious harms caused by substance misuse

Building on an initial phase commissioned by the Home Office, the next stage of the review will focus on treatment, recovery and prevention. The overarching aim will be to ensure that vulnerable people with substance misuse problems get the support they need to recover and turn their lives around in the community and in prison.

The review will consider how treatment services can enable people with a drug dependency to achieve and sustain their recovery – spanning a wide range of services they may interact with across mental health, housing, employment and the criminal justice system.

Professor Dame Carol Black has been appointed to lead the review following her [initial report commissioned by the Home Office](#), which looked at the challenges around drug supply and demand. Her initial report found that:

- drug deaths are at an all-time high
- the market has become much more violent
- drugs are costing society billions of pounds every year

Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

Drug misuse can have a tragic impact on people's health, families and livelihoods, causing suffering to all those involved.

With drug deaths at an all-time high, we must tackle the root causes of substance misuse to improve health outcomes and prevent lives being lost needlessly.

The findings of Dame Carol's first review set out the scale of the challenge. Now our focus must shift to ensuring the appropriate services are in place to support the treatment and recovery of drug users, as well as preventing drug use in our communities in the first place.

I look forward to receiving Dame Carol's recommendations and working with others on the solutions.

The review will make policy recommendations to government, including around funding, as well how services are commissioned and local bodies are held accountable to ensure they are effective in preventing, treating and supporting recovery from drug problems.

Part one of the independent review found children and young people are now more likely to experiment with drugs after years of decline, and so the second phase will include a specific focus to make recommendations on prevention and treatment services for this age group.

Professor Dame Carol Black said:

I am delighted to be starting part 2 of the Independent Review of Drugs. In my foreword to part one I said that behind the thorough analysis of the market for illicit drugs that we had just completed lay a very tragic human story: about the effect on individuals, their families, youngsters caught up in the trade, and the economy.

We showed a decade-long erosion, under previous governments, in almost every aspect of drug addiction, prevention, treatment and recovery.

We now have the opportunity to correct this and build a better world. To do this many stakeholders and government departments must work together as never before.

As part of the next phase of the review, Dame Carol has launched a call for evidence and will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including hearing from service users and people with lived experience of drug addiction to build a detailed picture of treatment, recovery and prevention.

Dame Carol will be provided with expert support from:

- Dr Ed Day, an NHS substance misuse consultant and government drug recovery champion
- Dr Keith Humphreys, a US academic and former drug policy advisor to President Obama with substantial expertise in this field and an international perspective

Dr Ed Day, NHS Consultant in Addiction Psychiatry and government drug recovery champion, said:

I look forward to working with Dame Carol Black and her team to help deliver a fully functioning recovery-orientated system of care in every community in England. This will require professionals and people with lived experience of addiction to work together to reduce the harms that drugs cause and maximise the potential of people of all ages.

Dr Keith Humphreys, Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford University and former drug policy advisor to President Barack Obama, said:

The first part of Dame Carol Black's review showed a deteriorating situation regarding drugs throughout the UK. This second part presents the opportunity to reverse those trends. Doing so will require a review of how health and social care for people with drug problems are organised, delivered and financed.

Dame Carol is expected to submit initial recommendations in September and her final report in December this year.

The [terms of reference for the review](#) and [call for evidence](#) have also been published. The call for evidence will close on Thursday 6 August.

The government is already responding to Dame Carol's findings with further investment to significantly increase the law enforcement response to county lines and the recruitment of 20,000 extra police officers over the next 3 years.

The government has pledged to address the complex challenges caused by drug misuse, with a cross-government addiction strategy due to be published in early 2021.