

News story: ACMD warns ministers of falling local funding for drug treatment services

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), which advises the government on drugs of misuse and their harmful effects, found that maintaining funding of drug treatment services is essential to preventing drug-related death and drug-driven crime in communities. However, money available for both youth and adult substance misuse services has fallen in recent years.

The ACMD heard evidence of examples of funding reductions in local areas in England, brought about through variations to existing contracts and re-procurement of local services. For example, one local authority re-procured its substance misuse services to achieve 32% 'cost-efficiencies' over a five-year contract.

The report says the ACMD is concerned that such a loss of funding would result in the dismantling of a drug misuse treatment system that has brought huge improvement to the lives of people with drug and alcohol problems. If resources are spread too thinly, the report says, the effectiveness of drug treatment will suffer, which could lead to increased levels of blood-borne viruses, drug-related deaths and drug-driven crime in communities.

Annette Dale-Perera, chair of the ACMD's Recovery Committee, said:

A lack of spending on drug treatment is short-sighted and a catalyst for disaster. England had built a world class drug treatment system, with fast access to free, good quality drug treatment.

This system is now being dismantled due to reductions in resources. Unless government protect funding, the new drug strategy aspiration of 'effectively funded and commissioned [drug treatment] services' will be compromised.

The ACMD received evidence that further reductions in resources were likely because of future savings to the overall public health grant, as outlined by Public Health England. The report also found that disruptive and frequent re-procurement of resources was draining vital resources and resulting in poorer recovery outcomes.

It adds that in the complex and changing context it is difficult to see how current levels of drug, and also alcohol, misuse treatment coverage and outcomes can be maintained without significant extra efforts to protect investment and quality.

In its conclusions the ACMD makes a number of recommendations including:

- drug and alcohol misuse services should be mandated within local authority budgets and/or the commissioning of drug and alcohol treatment placed within NHS commissioning structures
- transparency and clearer financial reporting on local drug misuse treatment services should be increased in order to challenge local disinvestment or falls in treatment penetration
- the drug misuse treatment workforce should be reviewed to strike a balance of qualified and unqualified staff and volunteers required for effective drug misuse treatment services
- links between local healthcare services and local drug treatment systems should be strengthened
- commissioning contracts should be five to ten years in length
- research infrastructure and capacity within the drugs misuse field should be addressed

Notes to editors:

[News story: UK sets clear objectives for continued science success](#)

The Government's paper on science and innovation will lay out a range of mechanisms and areas for future collaboration that the UK will seek to discuss with the EU as part of the negotiations on the future partnership.

It also considers areas where there are precedents for countries outside the EU to participate in pan-European programmes such as Galileo and Copernicus.

The programmes and mechanisms include space programmes including Space Surveillance and Tracking.

The UK space sector is worth over £11.8 billion to the UK economy, and employs at least 37,000 people around the country. Our work in the European Space Agency has put Tim Peake in space and is enabling us to explore Mars.

The paper will also lay out projects on nuclear research including:

- the Oxfordshire-based JET (Joint European Torus) which is funded by the EU's [Euratom Research](#) and Training programme and supports 1,300 jobs in the UK, 600 of which are highly skilled scientists and engineers; and
- ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor)

The UK will also continue to collaborate with European partners through international organisations that are not part of the EU for example the EUREKA network that helps SMEs collaborate on R&D across borders and the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), the European platform for particle physics and the fundamental laws of nature of which the UK was a founding member.

Other initiatives include the European Medicines Agency and Horizon 2020, which has over 7,300 UK participants so far and has seen many successes through collaboration, including through the Innovative Medicines Initiative:

- Through the SUMMIT project, UK researchers and companies have helped shorten clinical trials on diabetes, making new treatments available to patients sooner
- Through the HYFIVE project the UK together with other EU and international partners has taken hydrogen fuel cell vehicles to market, moving Europe towards a competitive low-carbon economy and providing cleaner air to all
- The UK has worked with other EU and international partners to train young researchers to exploit big data through the LONGPOP project
- Through the PAL project the UK has collaborated to build robots that interact with children to help manage their diabetes.

Secretary of State David Davis said:

As the Prime Minister set out in her Lancaster House speech, a global Britain must be a country that looks to the future. That means being one of the best places in the world for science and innovation.

This paper sends a clear message to the research and innovation community that we value their work and we feel it is crucial that we maintain collaboration with our European partners after we exit.

We want to attract the brightest minds to the UK to build on the already great work being done across the country to ensure that our future is bright and we grow this important sector.

Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

From space exploration and developing better and safer medicines, to nuclear fusion research, the UK and Europe has a long history of close collaboration to meet the world's great challenges. It's in our mutual benefit to maintain this successful partnership, and this paper clearly outlines our desire to have a full and open discussion with the EU to shape our joint future.

With science and innovation at the heart of our Industrial Strategy and our additional investment of £4.7 billion for research and development, we are ensuring we are best placed to continue being

at the forefront of new discoveries, and look forward to continuing that journey with the best minds across Europe.

The UK is a world leader in science and innovation and the paper also states that we want to continue to be a hub for international talent and sets out that it is vital we ensure research communities can continue to access the high level skills that support the science and innovation sector. It will say that the UK will seek to agree a system for continued recognition of professional qualifications, and will continue to welcome the brightest and best after we exit.

The paper makes clear that the Government is committed to maintaining the UK's status as a world leader in science and innovation and strengthening its science and research base, which already includes four of the world's top ten universities, a world class intellectual property regime and more Nobel Laureates than any country outside the United States.

Read [Collaboration on science and innovation: a future partnership paper](#)

Press release: Government Hub to be built in the heart of Leeds

HMRC, working with the Cabinet Office, will take approximately 378,000 sq ft at Wellington Place on a 25 year lease. This is the biggest ever commercial property letting in Leeds. The deal will see 6,000 civil servants working in a state-of-the-art new city centre premises in 2020.

Government Hubs will transform central government's offices by accommodating many different departments in shared buildings in London and in the regions. The programme will deliver taxpayer savings, act as a catalyst for regional growth and ensure the delivery of the best quality services to the public.

There will be 18-22 strategic hubs across the UK, located in major towns and cities and accessible by a range of excellent transport links. Hubs will be modern, sustainable buildings, supported by smart technology and shared services.

Wellington Place, close to Leeds Station, will deliver high quality offices for civil and public servants, including for HMRC, which will operate one of its 13 regional centres from Wellington Place.

NHS Digital will also relocate to Wellington Place, which will support the organisation's move to enable smarter and more flexible working, and collaboration.

Minister for Government Resilience and Efficiency, Caroline Nokes, said:

The Civil Service is a great place to work and enabling civil servants to have high quality and modern working environments will ensure that we work productively and deliver the best services to the public across the country.

The Leeds hubs will be a catalyst for growth in the surrounding cities and towns, helping rebalance the UK economy and underpin our strategy for a strong, well-connected Northern Powerhouse that can continue to provide good-quality jobs and economic growth across the region.

HMRC Chief Executive Jon Thompson said:

We are delighted to be part of the new UK Government Hub in Wellington Place, Leeds. This is another step in HMRC's transformation into a modern digitally advanced tax authority.

It's the beginning of a process that will see around 3,800 colleagues come together in state-of-the-art facilities, enabling closer working relationships and increasing our effectiveness in collecting taxes. It will also make HMRC an important contributor to the economy and to communities in and around Leeds.

Chief Executive of NHS Digital, Sarah Wilkinson, said:

We are delighted to co-announce our involvement with the new Leeds Government hub, this is a significant investment in the city and reinforces their long-term commitment to Leeds.

As one of Leeds major employers, it is an opportunity for greater consolidation of our Leeds estate when completed and will enable us at NHS Digital to build on our existing strong relationships with the wider NHS and government departments.

Over the past few years, Leeds has established itself as the major digital city in England with a thriving technology sector, which NHS Digital is proud to be a part of. The work NHS Digital does here in Leeds affects the lives of everyone in the country. Being part of the Government Hubs programme in Leeds is a great opportunity to work in partnership with both national and local organisations.

[News story: Crime news: attend a drop-in session about the Common Platform](#)

Drop-in sessions provide opportunity to find out more about the Common Platform and what it means for your work.

Common Platform drop-in sessions are now available to learn more about digital working plans for the criminal justice system (CJS) and how it affects your work.

The 'defence awareness days' drop-in sessions are being run from September to October 2017 and give you the chance to find out:

- what the Common Platform is
- what it means for you as a defence practitioner
- how it will evolve
- how the Common Platform is being built
- how to get involved and help shape the system

What is the Common Platform?

It is a new way of working for partners across CJS which allows practitioners to securely access case management information where and when they need to.

It means you can work at a variety of locations at times to suit your work pattern.

A new digital system will allow defendants, victims, witnesses and professional users to interact on-line. The idea is to deliver a unified way of working for HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and make everything available in one secure location.

This can then be accessed by defence practitioners as well as HMCTS, CPS, police and the judiciary.

How can I find out more?

Details of the locations, dates and times of events near you are available below:

[CJS Common Platform programme defence awareness days](#) – schedule of events

[HMCTS email updates](#) – sign up for regular HMCTS news alerts

News story: Hurricane Irma: government response and advice

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