

# Appendix 6: UK government strategies for reducing illicit drug use

## England

In England, the 2010 Home Office drug strategy, *Reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug-free life*,<sup>a</sup> sets out two overarching aims: to reduce illicit and other harmful drug use, and increase the numbers recovering from their dependence. This includes action in the following three areas:

1. **reducing demand:** creating an environment to discourage people from starting to take drugs and making it easier for those that do to stop, through measures that will:
  - break intergenerational paths to dependency by supporting vulnerable families
  - provide good-quality education and advice so that young people and their parents are provided with credible information to actively resist substance use
  - use the creation of Public Health England (PHE) to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own health
  - intervene early with young people and young adults
  - consistently enforce effective criminal sanctions to deter drug use
  - support people to recover
2. **restricting supply:** making the UK an unattractive destination for drug traffickers, through a coordinated response across Government and law enforcement to make the country a more challenging environment for organised crime. This includes the cross-Government organised crime strategy, *Local to global: reducing the risk from organised crime*, published in July 2011<sup>b</sup>
3. **building recovery in communities:** the Government will work with people who want to take the necessary steps to tackle their dependency by creating a recovery system that focuses not only on getting people into treatment and meeting process-driven targets, but getting them into full recovery and off drugs for good.<sup>a</sup>

---

a Her Majesty's Government (2010) *Drug strategy 2010: reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug free life*. London: Her Majesty's Government.

b Her Majesty's Government (2011) *Local to global: reducing the risk from organised crime*. London: Her Majesty's Government.

## Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government's substance misuse strategy for 2008-2018, *Working together to reduce harm*,<sup>c</sup> sets out action in the following areas:

1. **preventing harm:** through the provision of information about the damage that substance use can cause to health, families and the wider community, and where to seek help and support. This includes raising awareness among parents and carers, and targeting young people
2. **support for substance users to improve their health and aid and maintain recovery:** the provision of support for substance users, through improved access to basic harm minimisation, outreach, treatment and social services
3. **supporting and protecting families:** engaging substance-using parents in effective treatment programmes, developing a multiagency approach to identifying and supporting vulnerable families, and supporting greater use of family intervention projects and the role of carers
4. **tackling availability and protecting individuals and communities via enforcement activity:** focusing on tackling the supply of drugs to children and young people, through improved local intelligence gathering in communities and stronger links between drug enforcement activities at a local and regional level.<sup>c</sup>

---

<sup>c</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *Working together to reduce harm. The substance misuse strategy for Wales 2008-2018*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

## Scotland

The 2008 Scottish Government strategy, *The road to recovery: a new approach to tackling Scotland's drug problem*,<sup>d</sup> set out the following priorities:

1. better prevention of drug problems, with improved life chances for children and young people, especially those at particular risk of developing a drug problem
2. to see more people recover from problem drug use so that they can live longer, healthier lives, realising their potential and making a positive contribution to society and the economy
3. having communities that are safer and stronger places to live and work because crime, disorder and danger related to drug use have been reduced
4. ensuring that children affected by a parental drug problem are safer and more able to achieve their potential
5. supporting families affected by drug use
6. improving the effectiveness of delivery at a national and local level.

---

<sup>d</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *The road to recovery: a new approach to tackling Scotland's drug problem*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

## Northern Ireland

In 2006, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety published the *New strategic direction for drugs and alcohol 2006-2011*,<sup>e</sup> which set out the following overarching long-term aims to:

1. provide accessible and effective treatment and support for people who are consuming alcohol and/or using drugs in a potentially hazardous, harmful or dependent way
2. reduce the level, breadth and depth of alcohol- and drug-related harm to users, their families and/or their carers and the wider community
3. increase awareness on all aspects of alcohol- and drug-related harm in all settings and for all age groups
4. integrate those policies that contribute to the reduction of alcohol- and drug-related harm into all Government department strategies
5. develop a competent skilled workforce across all sectors that can respond to the complexities of alcohol and drug use and misuse
6. promote opportunities for those under the age of 18 years to develop appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours to enable them to resist societal pressures to drink alcohol and/or use illicit drugs, with a particular emphasis on those identified as potentially vulnerable
7. reduce the availability of illicit drugs in Northern Ireland.

---

<sup>e</sup> Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2006) *New strategic direction for drugs and alcohol 2006-2011*. Belfast: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.