

UK drug policy in crisis?



one-day conference

Thursday 4 October 2001

At the Kings Hill Conference & Training Centre, West Malling, Kent

KIMHS

KENT INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
& HEALTH SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF KENT
AT CANTERBURY ■■■■

KCJC

Kent Criminal Justice Centre

UNIVERSITY OF KENT
AT CANTERBURY ■■■■

About the conference

There have been **dramatic changes in the substance use field** in recent years:

- substantial investment and growth in spending on treatment
- a drive towards improved standards of care
- the development of new services for young people and across the criminal justice sector
- progress towards joining up the various 'players' through a national network of Drug Action Teams to produce a more co-ordinated approach.

Despite this, **a range of critical voices** has been growing including from people:

- worried by a perceived shift away from public health towards crime reduction within our drug strategy (UK Harm Reduction Alliance)
- disturbed by the lack of commitment to tackling an epidemic of hepatitis C among people who have injected drugs (hepatitis C Action Group)
- concerned about the human rights of drug users (National Drug User Development Agency and Transform)
- troubled by a refusal to contemplate reform of the 30 year old Misuse of Drugs Act (The Joseph Rowntree Foundation; The Police Foundation and Royal College of Psychiatrists).

There are also signs of tension between a government-led, centralised, top-down approach to drug policy and the need for local solutions to local problems.

This conference will provide an opportunity to listen to these arguments, assess them and consider their relevance.

There will also be a special session to explore how good practice in user-involvement across Kent and Medway can be further developed.

Who is the conference for?

- people who shape, implement or are simply interested in drug policy
- drug workers
- other practitioners in health, social services and criminal justice settings whose work touches the lives of drug users in some way
- most importantly, the people on the receiving end of drugs work and drug policy — drug users, their families and friends and other members of their communities



0900 Registration and coffee

Chairman for the morning: **Mark Outhwaite**
(East Kent Health Authority)

0930 Mark Outhwaite: Introduction

0945 Professor John Strang

(National Addiction Centre, Institute of Psychiatry)
The science-policy relationship: the neglected interaction

1015 Marjorie Blackadder (Parent of a drug user)

*A parent's perspective on drug problems —
problems with treatment services, problems with the law and
problems with the quality of the public debate*

1045 Alex Stevens (European Institute for Social Services,

University of Kent)
Drugs, coercion and the therapeutic state in Europe

1115 Coffee

1145 Annette Dale-Perera

(Director of Policy and Practice, DrugScope)
You want it done by when!!!

1215 Bill Reading

(Manager — Mount Zeehan Alcohol Service)
Autonomous therapy and alcohol policy

1245 Discussion session

1315 Lunch

Chairman for the afternoon: **Peter Gilroy**
(Kent Drug Action Team)

1415 Neil Hunt

(Lecturer in Addictive Behaviour, University of Kent)
*Democracy, drug law reform and the drug war:
some current issues*

1445 Lorraine Hewitt (Manager of the Stockwell Project and ACMD member)

*Losing sight of public health? The case for a 'fifth amendment'
to our national drugs strategy*

1515 Grant McNally (National Development Worker,

The National Drug Users' Development Agency)
User involvement — from aspiration to reality

1545 Discussion session

1610 Peter Gilroy: Concluding comments

1615 Main conference closes

Changes to this programme may become necessary
due to circumstances beyond the organisers' control.
For a full update go to www.ukc.ac.uk/kcjc

S P E C I A L S E S S I O N S

Promoting good practice in drug user involvement across Kent and Medway

1630 Part 1. Session leaders: Ann Windiate and Peter Gilroy (DAT Chairs for Medway and KCC)

This session is open to drug users and practitioners from Kent and Medway along with any others who are concerned to see the development of effective user involvement and user empowerment across Medway and Kent. The session leaders will explain the importance attached to effective user-involvement and empowerment locally as part of a unique opportunity to enhance the dialogue between drug users, policy makers and service providers.

1730-1900 Part 2. Session leader:

Grant McNally (Co-ordinator, National Drug User
Development Agency), supported by Neil

Hunt (University of Kent at
Canterbury). This session is a **closed
session for drug users only**. Its

purpose is to consider ways in which
drug users would wish drug user
involvement and empowerment to evolve
within the Medway and Kent area. We hope
that this will be a landmark event for drug
user organisation in Kent and Medway. If you
are a drug user, you should expect this to be
unlike anything you have attended before. Please
try to come. Your participation can make a
difference. If you have any questions or special
needs please contact Neil Hunt on mobile: 07780
665830 or email: N.Hunt@ukc.ac.uk.

EVENING EVENT

There is a benefit event at the University of Kent's Student Union Club, the Venue, a state of the art clubbing environment on the university campus in Canterbury that is open until 2am. This will be used to promote awareness of health and welfare issues relating to alcohol and other drugs in the clubbing and 'free party' scene.

The event is supported by the UK Harm Reduction Alliance and the Dance Drugs Alliance.

All conference delegates are warmly encouraged to attend and take advantage of this additional opportunity for more leisurely (or energetic) forms of networking... or just have fun after a hard day's work.

Entry costs £3.50 and evidence of conference attendance (or membership of the Student Union) will be required. Canterbury is about 25 miles from West Malling. People who would like to attend but require assistance with transport should notify the conference organisers on your application form or directly by emailing N.Hunt@ukc.ac.uk. We will try to co-ordinate car-sharing for those who need it.

Please note that, like all commercial clubs, the Venue enforces a drug-free policy in line with its legal responsibilities.



John Strang

The science-policy relationship: the neglected interaction

We incur great damage to all parties by our neglect of the science-policy relationship. If researchers fail to pay attention to the relationship, then they are in danger of producing work which may be scientifically elegant but fails to speak to the real issues facing us today. If policy makers ignore the science-policy relationship, then there is a danger that crucial policy formation will be determined on the basis of the dogma or prejudice of leading decision-makers of the day. Furthermore, given the politically charged nature of the drugs debate, this danger is even greater, as evidenced by the prominent media attention given to impassioned declarations from the extremes, and the disregard of alternative less sensational evidence-based considerations. At present, there are no secure independent addiction research groups in the UK. Unless such centres are established (with career development opportunities for staff within these centres) there is little prospect for serious improvement in the science-policy relationship.

John Strang is Director of the National Addiction Centre (Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London) and is also Clinical Director of the Drug and Alcohol Services, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. In his capacity as Consultant Adviser to the Department of Health he chaired the working group which prepared the 'Orange Book' guidelines recently published by the Department of Health.

Marjorie Blackadder

A parent's perspective on drug problems — problems with treatment services, problems with the law and problems with the quality of the public debate

This personal account draws on the experience of supporting my son through his heroin addiction. As a parent I have been appalled at the limitations of the treatment services for drug users, which can be bureaucratic, high-handed and unresponsive to the needs of drugs users and their families — assuming you can get access to them at all. As a Christian I have been morally compelled to prevent my son from stealing from other members of the community and — in the absence of adequate treatment — obtained heroin for my son as the only ethical option available to me. As a mother, I have striven to keep my son out of prison, which I regard as one of the most degrading and destructive environments in which it is possible to put a drug user. I will draw on our personal experiences to illuminate wider problems at the national level.

Marjorie Blackadder is the mother of a son who has used heroin extensively. She is a committed Christian, member of the Mothers' Union and Women's Institute, a retired operating theatre nurse and a founder member of the local 'drugs anonymous' group which supports parents and carers of drug users. She has spent much of her retirement supporting her son through his drug problems.

Alex Stevens

Drugs Drugs, coercion and the therapeutic state in Europe

In the Netherlands an 'Order under the criminal law for the care of addicts' has been created for persistent, drug-dependent offenders. This order lasts up to two years; longer than the maximum sentence for many of the crimes that these offenders have committed. This has been justified as 'therapy instead of punishment', as has the move to coercive treatment in other countries. This presentation will take this Dutch example, compare it to developments across the European Union, and apply the theory of the Therapeutic State (developed by James Nolan) to these European developments. This theory suggests that governments are increasingly using the discourse of therapy to overcome problems of legitimacy and to justify increasing state control. It will be suggested that in moving from punishment to therapy as a response to drug-related crime, governments are using therapeutic justifications for the increase in social control that is made necessary by increasing inequality.

Alex Stevens works at the European Institute of Social Services, University of Kent. He was formerly the Manager of the European Network of Drug and HIV/AIDS Services in Prison and has maintained an interest in the link between drug treatment and the criminal justice system in Europe.

Annette Dale-Perera

You want it done by when!!!

Drugs is a cross cutting issue which has received a great deal of political attention and the centrally driven national drug strategy. It increasingly requires those commissioning and delivering interventions to work with a multiplicity of mainstream planning and delivery systems and other 'initiatives'. This presentation will look at the reality of trying to undertake this task from national and local perspectives. It will look at some of the initiatives we need to take into account from a drugs perspective and at others that effect drugs from the mainstream and left field. It offers empathy, humour, tea, biscuits and Prozac for those attempting these daunting tasks.

Annette Dale-Perera is Director of Policy and Practice at DrugScope and formally SCODA. She has a background in psychology, and has worked in the drugs field since 1984. She has published extensively in substance misuse, has spoken at numerous national and international conferences and acts as an advisor to a variety of government departments and other national professional groups.



Bill Reading

Autonomous therapy and alcohol policy

As a society, we have employed medical and quasi-medical metaphors in order both to facilitate humane responses to those experiencing alcohol-related harm, and to address the anomaly whereby our cultural, commercial and financial reliance upon alcohol can be reconciled with the increases in alcohol-related harms which will inevitably accompany increased consumption. With regard to drugs other than alcohol, it is now commonplace for previously criminal activities to be re-defined as being secondary to (medicalised) problematic drug use and thus, worthy of some form of 'treatment'. Lawbreakers are increasingly required to submit themselves to such 'treatment' if they wish to avoid more traditional modes of punishment. For some this may be seen as 'expanding our concept of care'. The speaker will argue that such paradigm shifts represent a serious assault upon personal and civil liberties and that they are ethically suspect. As we continue to await the arrival of the National Alcohol Strategy, we may have the opportunity to question the potential trend towards compulsory 'treatment' and in particular the demarcation between obligatory participation as compared to autonomous collaboration in therapeutic contexts.

Bill Reading manages the East Kent Community Alcohol Service and has worked in the field for more than 20 years. He holds an Honorary Lectureship at the University of Kent at Canterbury where he has been involved in the training of addictions counsellors and psychoanalytic psychotherapists. He has a particular interest in the links between Attachment Theory and problems of addiction. He is a UKCP registered psychoanalytic psychotherapist.

Neil Hunt

Democracy, drug law reform and drug policy: some current issues

At the time of writing (Summer 2001) public policy regarding drugs is in ferment. Hellowell has gone (virtually); the Home Office ownership of drug policy is being consolidated and the role of the Dept of Health seems to be increasingly peripheral; Blunkett is signalling readiness to debate drug laws; cannabis use in Lambeth is — in effect — legal; the Criminal Justice and Court Services Bill has just been enacted, permitting surveillance of the population's drug use to an extraordinary, and some would say totalitarian, extent; the operation of the foreshadowed National Treatment Agency is a mystery (to me anyway); former Home Secretaries and Foreign Office staff clamour for legalisation; central government talks the talk of 'user involvement' but doesn't walk the walk of investing in the National Drug Users Development Agency. The only reliable feature on the landscape is Ann Widdecombe's unwavering moral authoritarian opposition to cannabis. This paper will draw together aspects of where we are now, where we are going, 'what's good about it?' and almost certainly 'what's wrong with it?'

Neil Hunt is a lecturer at the Kent Institute of Medicine and Health Sciences, UKC and a founder member of the UK Harm Reduction Alliance. His research interests include young people and drug use, clubbers, injecting, global aspects of drug use and drug user activism. The Department of Health has recently sponsored the national dissemination of an intervention he developed to reduce transitions to injecting.

Lorraine Hewitt

Losing sight of public health? The case for a 'fifth amendment' to our national drugs strategy

In Spring 2000 a group of conference delegates from the UK attending the International Harm Reduction conference met to discuss their growing concern about the erosion of humane, health-focused drug policy and its replacement with an agenda, driven by the Home Office, that prioritises crime reduction. The outcome was the formation of the UK Harm Reduction Alliance — a group campaigning for healthy drug policy. I will use my time to elaborate some of the problems that concern us and to describe one of our key campaigns — the 'fifth amendment'. The government's drug strategy has four strands: young people, communities, treatment and stifling availability. We wish to introduce a fifth strand that will set targets for action relating to key public health issues including: overdose, hepatitis B and C, and HIV. The campaign will be explained and I will talk about ways people can act locally to ensure that health concerns get proper consideration within a drug strategy designed to 'build a better Britain'.

Lorraine Hewitt has been in the drugs field for 20 years, though it has never seemed as eccentric as the books trade, where she first worked. She works in the Stockwell Project, an inner-city NHS service for drug users with complex needs, now part of the Maudsley Addictions Division. Lorraine sits on the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. Her interests are treatment and human rights. She lives in Kent, a forgotten area of radical labour history.

Grant McNally

User involvement — from aspiration to reality

This presentation will examine some of the issues regarding drug user involvement and drug user self-organisation. Looking briefly at the drug user movement from the HIV era to the present whereby current drug policies and legislation are having a significant impact on the health of drug users. We are now in a situation where a large percentage of the drugs field see the value and benefits of user involvement using the model promoted by the development agency, but are hamstrung by a lack of commitment at the top end which further causes dissonance between services and users. Involving drug users is challenging and has a number of cost benefit potentials but the effectiveness of involving users can be easily undermined if the issues of human rights, self determination and empowerment are neglected.

Grant McNally is the National Development Worker for The National Drug Users Development Agency. A qualified Social Worker who holds a research degree, he has a previous background in welfare rights/paralegal work and has worked in the drugs field since 1987. As Manager of the Day and Outreach services at Mainliners he was responsible for a number of initiatives around HCV, in particular as a founder member of the HCV support group and has been an active promoter of user involvement. He is a member of Action on Hepatitis C and chairs the UK Assembly on Hepatitis C.



The Kent Institute of Medicine and Health Sciences, established in 1994 and led by Dr Mark Rake, Clinical Dean, encourages education of healthcare professionals and research at the interface between the University and the NHS.

KIMHS comprises three academic divisions whose staff are involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and in research. Many of the staff in the divisions also have a clinical commitment to the NHS. Likewise, our honorary staff have a commitment to NHS posts but additionally provide a valuable contribution to the Institute's teaching and research programmes.

The Addictive Behaviours group offer several courses, including the Certificate in Addictive Behaviour, Diplomas in Addiction Counselling and Addiction Management and a new BSc in Addiction Studies, with effect from 2002.

We offer a wide range of programmes by teaching or research pathways and encourage medical and non-medical students to enrol on a full or part-time basis.

The Institute Administrator, Hilary Edridge, can provide further details — telephone 01227 824041, email H.A.Edridge@ukc.ac.uk. The KIMHS website is at www.ukc.ac.uk/KIMHS/.



The Kent Criminal Justice Centre was established in 1996 to provide a focus for research in Criminology, Criminal Justice Policy and Criminal Law at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Although the centre is formally part of Kent Law School, its first Director was Chris Hale, Professor of Criminology (one of the few criminologists in the UK with advanced quantitative skills), then a member of Canterbury Business School and now in the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR). The current director is Steve Uglow, Reader in Criminal Justice at KLS. The Centre has expanded its range of research work and has been strengthened by the involvement of Dr Ann Netten, Director of the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at UKC and a leading expert on economic cost-benefit analysis. The appointment of Dr Emma Wincup has added to the unique multidisciplinary background of its core members which span a range of disciplines including sociology, economics, law and statistics and a methodological expertise covering sophisticated quantitative techniques, economic modelling and qualitative methods.

The group has successfully bid for contracts to evaluate projects within the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme and for the Youth Justice Board. There are currently seven full or part-time researchers working on projects on problematic substance misuse and the young homeless, restorative justice, youth justice, parenting and targeted policing.

KCJC presents a popular series of seminars and conferences. To receive details of these as they are announced, please contact Judy Lee on 01227 827672 or email J.C.Lee@ukc.ac.uk.

Centre staff supervise part-time and full-time students on research degrees within its areas of interest. They are also active in developing teaching programmes in the area: an LLM in Criminal Justice (KLS), a Certificate in Criminology (SSPSSR — taught at Bridge Wardens' College, Chatham) and courses in criminology and sociology. More details about the centre and courses are on the website www.ukc.ac.uk/kcjc/.



East Kent
Health Authority



We are grateful to East Kent Health Authority
and the UK Harm Reduction Alliance
for financial assistance towards the conference



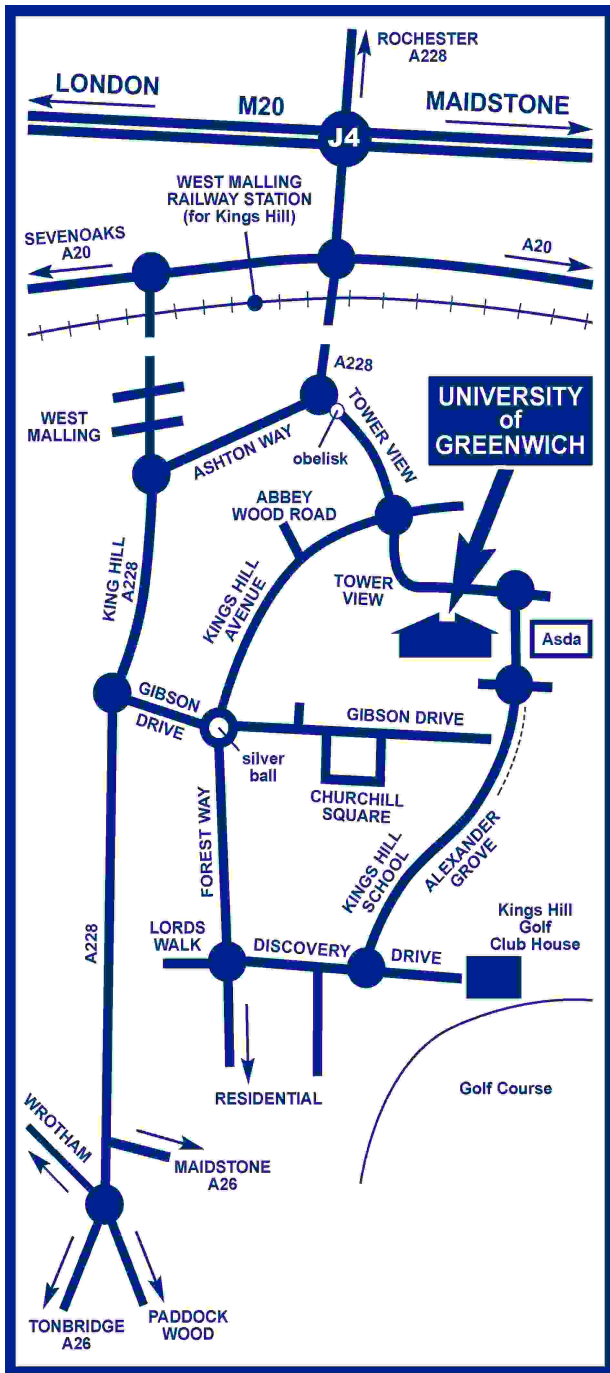
The conference venue is Greenwich University's Kings Hill Conference & Training Centre at West Malling, Kent. Road and rail access is good — see the details below. There is full access for people with disabilities and plenty of free parking. We will try to arrange car shares for those who are interested.

Lunch and refreshments

The conference fee of £48 per person includes lunch and morning refreshments.

Accommodation

Limited discounted accommodation is available at the nearby Posthouse Maidstone/Sevenoaks. To take advantage of these reduced rates, please book using the form overleaf. There are a number of other nearby hotels.



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Road directions

Leave the M20 at junction 4. Follow the signs for TONBRIDGE (A228). Continue across the traffic lights at A20 (following signs for Tonbridge) onto the West Malling by-pass. The main entrance to Kings Hill Business Park is after approximately two miles.

Rail directions

West Malling Station is approximately 50 minutes from London Victoria on the line to Maidstone East and Ashford (Kent). Kings Hill Business Park is 5 minutes by taxi from the station (let us know if you would like us to book a taxi).
National Rail Enquiries: 0345 484950.

Local connections

Bus 123 connects West Malling Rail Station to the Business Park. Other bus routes provide direct connection with Maidstone, Tonbridge and Chatham.

