

## **Drug and alcohol services in Scotland**

### **Summary impact report (3 months)**

#### **The report findings and recommendations**

1. Audit Scotland published *Drug and alcohol services in Scotland* on 26 March 2009. This was a joint report for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission.
2. The report identifies, for the first time, how much the public sector spends on drug and alcohol services in Scotland. It assesses whether evidence of need or what works determines how this money is spent and what impact the money has had.
3. The report found that:
  - Scotland has high levels of drug and alcohol misuse compared to the rest of the UK and Europe,
  - in 2007/08 the public sector in Scotland spent £173 million on drug and alcohol services but the wider costs to society are estimated at £5 billion a year,
  - spending decisions are not always based on evidence of what works or what is needed,
  - there are no national minimum standards in terms of range, choice or accessibility for drug and alcohol services,
  - the Scottish Government need to set out the direction and the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies and how performance will be assessed.
4. The report made 14 recommendations for the Scottish Government and public sector bodies. The recommendations cover three categories and aim to improve:
  - the way funds for drug and alcohol services are managed,
  - the effectiveness of drug and alcohol services,
  - drug and alcohol partnerships.

### Media interest in the report

5. The report received good media coverage. In the three months since publication there have been 128 media items; this compares to an average of 58 media items for other similar Audit Scotland reports.

Coverage (3 months post publication)	Number of references
Local press	18
National press	42
Local radio	17
National radio	12
Specialist press	5
TV	13
Web	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

6. The number of web downloads on the Audit Scotland website in the three months following publication was:

	<b>Downloads</b> <b>26 March - June 2009</b>
Main report	2,516
Key messages	129
Podcast	81

### Parliamentary scrutiny

7. The Auditor General for Scotland gave a briefing to the Scottish Parliament Public Audit Committee on 22 April. The Committee sought written evidence from the Scottish Government's Accountable Officers on a number of areas including the complex funding arrangements for services, the variation in service provision across the country and the lack of national performance management information such as service activity and costs.
8. The Committee has written again to the Accountable Officers' for further details. The Scottish Government's second response is due to be discussed by the Public Audit Committee on 23 September.

## **Significant developments**

9. On the day of publication the report was welcomed by all major political parties and was debated at First Minister's Question Time where Annabel Goldie MSP called for a 'national summit' to discuss the issues raised in the report. The Minister for Community Safety then made a statement to Parliament in response to the report announcing a national event on 20 April. The Auditor General presented the reports key findings at this event and the Scottish Government outlined a new framework for the delivery of drug and alcohol services which included several of the reports recommendations.

## **Reviewing the longer-term impact**

10. We will assess the longer-term impact of the report by reviewing the Scottish Government reforms and other national developments.
11. **Appendix 1** lists all the recommendations in the report against Audit Scotland's impact framework and highlights those we will be able to follow-up one year after publication.

## Appendix 1 – Summary of anticipated report impact by Audit Scotland’s framework for measuring impact

HOLDING TO ACCOUNT AND HELPING TO IMPROVE					
Recommendations	Assessing impact/plans for follow-up work	Assurance and accountability	Planning and management	Economy and efficiency	Quality and effectiveness
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should regularly review funding arrangements for drug and alcohol services to ensure that they maximise value for money and reflect levels of local need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should work with provider organisations to reduce the impact of complex and short-term funding on projects.	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether work to address short-term funding and complex funding streams has been carried out</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●
<b>The Scottish Government and public sector bodies</b> should work closely to develop a performance framework incorporating, but not limited to, existing targets. Further work is required to identify information on spend,	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether a performance framework has been developed</li> <li>Whether information on spend, activity and</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●

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activity and outcomes.	outcomes has been collected				
<b>The Scottish Government and public sector bodies</b> should ensure that there is a comprehensive range of services available in each local area.	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether it is clear what services should be available in a local area and how this will be monitored</li> </ul>		●		●
<b>The Scottish Government and public sector bodies</b> should develop unit cost information for different drug and alcohol services to help public bodies measure and compare the cost-effectiveness of various services.	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether unit cost information has been developed and disseminated to public bodies</li> </ul>		●	●	●
<b>The Scottish Government</b> should set clear national minimum standards for drug and alcohol services including their range, quality and accessibility; receive assurance that these standards are implemented in line with set timescales; and ensure performance is regularly monitored and publically reported.	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether minimum standards have been developed and a process for reviewing implementation in line with a set timescale has been planned</li> <li>Whether a process to monitor local performance has been</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●

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	developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether there are plans to publically report performance</li> </ul>				
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should ensure that all drug and alcohol services are based on an assessment of local need and that they are regularly evaluated to ensure value for money. This information should then be used to inform decision-making in the local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>		●	●	●
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should ensure that service specifications are in place for all drug and alcohol services and set out requirements relating to service activity and quality. Where services are contracted this specification should be part of a formal contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should set clear criteria of effectiveness and expected outcomes for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●

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the different services that they provide, and undertake regular audits to ensure services adhere to expected standards.					
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should use the Audit Scotland checklist to help improve the delivery and impact of drug and alcohol services through a joined-up, consistent approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●
<b>The Scottish Government</b> should clarify accountability and governance arrangements for the delivery of drug and alcohol services in Scotland and set out clearly the responsibilities of all organisations and partnerships involved in planning or delivering these services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update from the SG</li> </ul>	●	●		
<b>The Scottish Government</b> should systematically identify and disseminate good	Update from the SG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether good practice is routinely identified and disseminated</li> </ul>			●	●

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practice – including the details of local drug and alcohol-related interventions and treatments.					
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should ensure that drug and alcohol partners are clear about their role in delivering effective and joined-up drug and alcohol services in Scotland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●	●	●	●
<b>Public sector bodies</b> should put systems in place to routinely engage with service users and their families to ensure that their views inform the development of drug and alcohol services to address local needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local work required to assess improvement</li> </ul>	●		●	●