

## DOREY SCRUTINY PANEL: REVIEW OF DRUG SERVICES IN JERSEY

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES

(1) (Mrs G)

22nd July 2004

Mrs G, speaking as a recovering alcoholic herself, criticised Alcohol and Drug Service (ADS) for lack of understanding of addiction.

- ADS gave a message that it is possible to control and cut down on use of alcohol and drugs - that's just what addicts want to hear because they don't really want to give up using.
- ADS promote methadone which is simply another addictive substance - she feels the only real solution is total abstinence.
- She has tried to get in touch with ADS on a number of occasions but they don't return her calls. She was turned away from Gloucester Lodge because every one was in a meeting.
- There is no service at weekends. The Animal Shelter in contrast has a 24 hour service.
- Her son has told her that addicts were currently using subutex with heroin to get a better fix.
- He spent 18 months in prison and came out with Hepatitis C through sharing needles.
- Mrs G has had to pay dealers for the heroin he used while inside.
- There was no aftercare support when he was released to help him find a job or a place to live, apart from the Shelter. Her son received only £10 but had nothing worthwhile to do to occupy himself.
- She wasn't even informed when her son was released on the tagging system, although he was supposed to be in her care.
- Individual prison officers have provided marvellous support on their own initiative.
- A drop-in centre would provide some form of social support; to help people adjust to reality of living without the 'protection' of prison and also help them to avoid contact with former friends still using.
- Her son has an addictive personality like his mother. Once he started using there was a steady progression into injecting heroin.
- The high cost of heroin has no deterrent effect - addicts will steal anything to feed their habit.
- Her son was admitted to Silkworth Lodge (SL) recently after assessment by ADS.
- He was on a methadone programme at ADS insistence, which was at odds with SL regime. As a result he was asked to leave within a short time.
- He was told by ADS that he would have to wait until September for his next appointment. In the meantime he should take anti-depressants
- He is currently trying to go 'cold turkey' as he is against using methadone. [The Panel was subsequently informed that he has gone back to injecting heroin.]
- Mrs G's youngest son has also recently been released from prison. He refused to go to ADS for help but went to Narcotics Anonymous. He has remained clean.
- Mrs G said that, reportedly, the Director of ADS warned people against going to NA supposedly because of the availability of drugs at the meetings. Nobody at ADS ever told her to try AA when she was drinking.
- How many more kids have to die over here? They are not bad kids. They are just hooked and don't know where to turn. It's a horrible lonely illness.
- ADS should work with people who have been there - gone through the experience of addiction and found a way to recover. But they want to do things their way. They don't like AA or NA because of its total abstinence approach.

*'If I hadn't gone to AA I wouldn't be here now.'*