

DOREY SCRUTINY PANEL: REVIEW OF DRUG SERVICES IN JERSEY

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES

(2) (Mrs E)

22nd July 2004

Mrs E lost her son recently through his suicide. She hopes that through the scrutiny process services will improve so that others can avoid facing such a loss in the future.

- Once her son started using heroin he was badly hooked. He had an addictive personality.
- He was on a methadone programme - this was so degrading, having to take it in full public view.
- Methadone is simply replacing heroin with a different addictive substance. It's a waste of time and money.
- In Brighton there was an experiment to give addicts heroin on prescription instead of methadone as part of a harm reduction programme. It seems to make sense to have controlled, monitored use rather than brush it away as illegal.
- An addict has got to be motivated to choose total abstinence as it is hard work to get clean. NA and AA provide on-going support - but recovering addicts still get tremendous cravings.
- She fought for a long time for a residential rehabilitation facility on the Island. She was introduced to the Jersey Addiction Group (JAG) when it was in its infancy and was subsequently delighted to see the establishment of Silkworth Lodge.
- She is disappointed, however, that JAG and ADS are not working towards a common aim. There's nothing in between them.
- An addict ready to change needs to have a full detox before going into a residential rehabilitation like Silkworth.
- Her son went through several detoxes, including a session at the hospital and at home, but this is a waste of time without an opportunity to follow up - to reflect and get their life back together.
- Some aren't ready to give up their habit and of them some form of maintenance programme can be a temporary solution.
- Her son told her you'll never meet an addict who enjoys being an addict.
- There needs to be some form of halfway house where addicts can go and be treated as a human being, not as scum on the street - they are kids with an illness. They are Jersey's future. They could be making a positive contribution.
- Maybe they shouldn't have been tempted in the first place - but it's a sign of the times - and it's happening more and more. They are someone's sons and daughters.
- It's a miserable, chaotic, dreadful existence. Many families can't cope with them.
- At some stage a heroin addict will commit an offence through sheer desperation to feed their habit. They use tricks and lies, but they are not naturally criminal.
- She feels that addicts shouldn't be put in prison for minor offences as they will get heroin inside.
- Clean needles should be available to prisoners - addicts start to get fixated on needles.
- Mrs E was amazed at a reported comment by the Director of ADS that addicts in Jersey used smaller amounts of heroin because of the high cost. Addicts can't cut back - they need more and more in order just to feel the same from a fix.
- Mrs E criticised ADS for delays in getting appointments. She tried on several occasions to speak to the Director but was unable ever to get an appointment to see him.
- Counselling at ADS was abysmal. She sat in on some sessions with her son. There

was no real psychological help or an attempt to find out where they were coming from.

- The impression was given that clients were being punished for being addicts.
- Her son begged to be allowed to stay in hospital but was told that he was just trying to have an easy time.
- Relapses are part and parcel of addiction - everyone deserves to have a second chance.
- There should be somewhere where Narcan is available 24 hours a day to save people from overdoses. Some people won't go to the hospital because of fears of being identified.
- She found the attitude of people at JAG very different - possibly because some of the staff were in recovery themselves and therefore have a greater empathy with their clients. They provide the aftercare and support.
- Her son went through a successful rehabilitation programme at Silkworth and was starting to put his life back together. He made the mistake however of getting involved too soon in a relationship - against advice in the 12 steps. When this broke up he hit rock bottom again.
- He had too much pride to go back through the rehabilitation although they would have accepted him. She felt that he wouldn't have had any such understanding from ADS.

We fight for the sons and daughters we know exist underneath the addiction. I fought for my son who emerged after treatment at Silkworth, because I knew what he was like before. And I knew that he wasn't what people saw.

People used to say, 'What a shame. He's so intelligent. What a waste' Which it was.

It could be your son, your children. It could happen to anybody.

My son wanted to go into schools and tell them 'You don't want to end up like me!'