

Supporting Police, Protecting Communities: Proposals for legislation

Response to consultation

Question 36: Do you agree that mandatory drug testing will provide access to a key group of clients that might not otherwise engage successfully in treatment services.

Ayrshire and Arran Alcohol & Drug Action Team has considerable concerns about mandatory drug testing of individuals.

We would wish to review the evidence from England and Wales that drug testing in such circumstances is encouraging individuals to seek drug treatment. We are not convinced that coercion on its own would have a satisfactory outcome without relapse within a short space of time. Evidence on effectiveness of treatment programmes indicates that motivation of the service user is one of the strongest indicators of success.

In addition we are concerned that, without significant local investment to increase resources, local services would not currently have the capacity to deal with a large number of individuals who would fall into this treatment pathway. In such areas, the perverse incentive of engaging in criminal activity in order to gain access to treatment programmes without recourse to waiting lists or considered assessment needs to be borne in mind.