



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Annual Substance Misuse Progress Report 2012**

DATE **31 October 2012**

BY **Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Health and Social Services**

The Welsh Government published its ten year strategy "*Working Together to Reduce Harm*" to tackle substance misuse in Wales in October 2008. The Strategy sets out our clear national agenda for tackling and reducing the harms associated with substance misuse in Wales. Our Programme for Government commitments further evidence the importance the Welsh Government places on this challenging agenda.

Following a change in Ministerial portfolios in April 2012, the lead responsibility for the substance misuse agenda now rests with me as Minister for Health and Social Services. The move back to my portfolio has provided a valuable opportunity to review and strengthen the links with the wider health agenda.

It is evident the strategy's vision will not be realised by the Welsh Government working alone and we must continue to work in partnership to ensure progress is made. Last year, this partnership working enabled Wales to become the first country in the UK to roll out Naloxone to all of its community treatment sites and prisons. The drug, which temporarily reverses the effects of an opiate overdose, is a crucial weapon in our Programme for Government commitment to reduce drug related deaths. It is also being trialled in A&E departments and with paramedics responding to overdoses.

Progress is also being made on our Programme for Government safeguarding commitments. We are strengthening arrangements to safeguard children and adults at risk with care and support needs, through the Social Services (Wales) Bill legislation. We have also continued the roll out of Integrated Family Support Services across Wales with regional consortiums across Dyfed Powys and Cardiff and the Vale becoming operational last year.

We are also determined to tackle our binge drinking culture and have broadened the scope of our Change4Life programme to cover alcohol misuse prevention. The programme campaigns to raise self awareness about drinking levels and communicates the long term health harms of drinking too much.

To ensure we are continuing to deliver against this agenda, a comprehensive review of the existing strategy was initiated last year. As part of this, the Welsh Government has evaluated the impact of the strategy since its publication in 2008. We are expecting the final report to be published shortly and the emerging findings will inform our next implementation plan.

We continue to work with partners to tackle the harms associated with substance misuse. There are many significant challenges in the coming year. The misuse of alcohol continues to be a concern. We continue to press the UK Government to strengthen legislation in respect to pricing and availability of alcohol, whilst also working with stakeholders in Wales to ensure there are appropriate support services in place for those who need them. We are also seeing the increasing use of mephedrone and other new psychoactive substances and the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse are informing our current work to ensure we provide consistent education, prevention and harm reduction messages.

The attached report provides a summary of progress made to implement the new strategy and how the Welsh Government and its partners have delivered on the key actions contained within its supporting implementation plan.