

## **A tool kit for General Practitioners and Primary Care Organisations setting out criteria, standards and the evidence required for practitioners working with Drug Users**

Since the publication of the 1999 Clinical Guidelines in Drug Misuse (Orange Book), followed by the launch of the RCGP Certificate in the Management of Drug Misuse in Primary Care (now referred to as Certificate Part 2) in 2000, there have seen a number of key developments in primary care substance misuse. Modernisation and change is happening throughout primary care but the following developments are significantly impacting on substance misuse services: -

1. Service specification for GPs with a Special Interest in Drug Misuse (GPwSIs)
2. A national appraisal and revalidation system for General Practitioners
3. The new GMS contract including locally and nationally enhanced services in drugs and alcohol treatment
4. Models of Care

### **Why this toolkit is important?**

In order to deliver the best possible care to service users and carers whilst ensuring practitioners are equipped with the right skills and competencies for the level of expertise expected of them, services must be developed and managed in accordance with a set of consensus standards.

This toolkit is based on evidence of best practice in continuing professional development, training and supervision in the addiction field and is supported by the NEAG. The guidance describes the criteria, standards and evidence required at each tier of service. Section one describes the harm reduction, low threshold prescribing, public health interventions and signposting expected of a competent generalist involved in shared care and local or national enhanced services. Section two describes the competencies and skills expected of a GP with a special interest in drug misuse and section three offers draft guidance on the governance and appraisal arrangements for a drug misuse specialist. E.g. Clinical Directors of services, GP consultants, strategic clinical leads, educators and researchers.

### **The toolkit as part of a wider substance misuse educational strategy**

The RCGP National Drug Misuse Training team aims to drive up quality and promote consistent evidence based approaches to the care of drug users, through the development of local and national education and training initiatives. It has invested in a regional network of clinical leads and, in conjunction with SMMGP and the National Treatment Agency's regional management team, helped to forge links between clinical leads and local commissioners so that local terms and conditions, service specifications, levels of remuneration, clinical governance and drug and alcohol national occupational standards can be delivered consistently and appropriately throughout England and Wales.

As the Professional Development Lead of the National Drug Misuse Training team and on behalf of the NEAG, I commend this toolkit to you. Whilst it cannot contain all the answers, we hope that when combined with local training and appraisal guidance it will enable you to navigate through the ever-changing world of primary care substance misuse.

We also sincerely hope that it will encourage commissioners and local clinicians to work together to meet the challenging substance misuse health targets and reduce the pressures on the profession of the emphasis on providing evidence of improving quality and governance in local drug treatment services.

### **FEEDBACK REQUESTED**

We are keen to hear from practitioners regarding their local experiences of using the toolkit in practice. Please provide examples wherever possible of how the toolkit was used. Did it help you? Are there any errors or inconsistencies? How might it be improved? Please send your responses to me at the above address or by emailing them to me at: [drlinda@doctors.org.uk](mailto:drlinda@doctors.org.uk)

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