

## **General stakeholder core script on DIP expansion**

Multi-agency work to get a grip on drug-related offending and the harm it causes in local neighbourhoods will step up a gear from 1 April.

The Home Office-led Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), which involves a range of partners, has grown in phases since it started in 2003. April sees a further significant expansion, introducing new areas of DIP “intensive” activity in Wales, Bedfordshire and Blackpool, with the aim of getting more people out of crime and into treatment and other support.

In the past six years, more than 172,000 drug-misusing offenders have been managed into treatment because of DIP and this expansion will help drive up the number even further as more are faced with tough choices about their drug misuse and tough consequences if they do not make changes. The impact has been significant: acquisitive crime – to which drug-related crime makes a substantial contribution – has fallen by 28 per cent.

Restriction on Bail (RoB) that has applied to drug-misusing offenders in all English local justice areas for three years is extended across Wales from 1 April. This means that any adult who appears in court anywhere in England or Wales can be eligible for the provision if they have previously tested positive in police custody, in relation to the offence, for heroin or crack/cocaine.

Restriction on Bail provides an incentive for defendants who have tested positive to address their drug misuse and engage in proposed treatment and support, or face a greater risk of being refused bail. It targets those whose offending is related to their Class A drug misuse – shown to be most closely linked to acquisitive crime – with the aim of reducing re-offending on bail.

The extension of RoB under the Drug Interventions Programme is just one of a set of new tools to strengthen offender management. April also sees measures to test and assess more people in police custody in Blackpool and Bedfordshire as a way to grip more drug misusers at an earlier stage in the criminal justice process. A move to Testing on Arrest rather than just on charge means that drug-misusing offenders can be identified earlier in the process and, in some cases, at an earlier stage of their offending behaviour. Already, more than 240,000 tests for Class A substances are conducted annually and this will risk further with the greater reach of Testing on Arrest in Wales, Bedfordshire and Blackpool.

Those people testing positive will have to undergo a Required Assessment by a drug worker, so even people who do not go on to be charged can access help and treatment before their offending behaviour spirals further out of control.

When the expansion happens in April, Testing on Arrest and Required Assessment will then be live in a total of 174 custody suites in 105 police basic command units across England and Wales.

For further information on the Programme, go to: [www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drug-interventions-programme/](http://www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drug-interventions-programme/)