

**DTORS**

The Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study
on behalf of the Home Office

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Dear Service Manager

DTORS – Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study

Your DAT and all drug treatment agencies within it, has been selected to take part in the largest UK drug treatment outcome study to date and this letter formally asks for your help with this important national research.

The University of Manchester's National Drug Evidence Centre (NDEC), in collaboration with the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), has been commissioned by the Home Office to carry out this work - the Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study (DTORS).

This high-profile national study will focus on how drug treatment impacts on outcomes, specifically: levels of drug and alcohol use, offending behaviour, physical and mental health, and wider social outcomes. Furthermore, the study will examine how, if at all, being referred by the Criminal Justice System affects the outcomes of drug treatment.

We will be following up a large sample of drug treatment seekers over a 12 month period. The study will be split into three distinct phases comprising baseline interviews with drug users at the outset of treatment, and then 3 and 12 months thereafter. DATs and agencies will be asked to do only minimal work in each case, with responsibility passed rapidly thereafter to research interviewers.

We have randomly selected 100 DATs – and all agencies contained within the DAT area, to be involved in the research. Your DAT has been selected and agreed to take part, and we are therefore requesting your cooperation to become involved. If you agree, we will ask you to assist in the recruitment of treatment seekers at their first point of contact with your agency.

The recruitment of treatment seekers will take place over 7 weeks, with the addition of a 2 week retrospective sampling window, between March 2006 and December 2006. Each agency will be visited by a research interviewer to plan how to minimise burden and disruption to the agency and clients. During the recruitment window,



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agency staff will be asked to ask treatment seekers to speak to a NatCen interviewer – please find attached a list of our eligibility criteria for you to pass to your agency staff. Responsibility will then be passed immediately to the interviewer to explain the survey to the treatment seeker, and if possible to interview them, ideally at agency premises if this is convenient.

The interviews, carried out by trained interviewers from NatCen, will take approximately three quarters of an hour. All interviews will take place at a time and venue convenient to the research participant. Vouchers will be offered to those who participate to compensate them for their time.

Everything participants say will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. We will write reports based on the results of the interviews; no individuals, treatment agency or DAT will be identified within the report. DTORS has NHS multi-centre research ethical approval – Reference 05/Q1204/43.

We are very excited by this unique opportunity to research issues of treatment effectiveness. By taking part in DTORS you will have the opportunity directly to influence policy decisions at a national level to the benefit of all concerned with helping problem drug users to make significant changes in their lives and limit the harm done to themselves and those around them.

We very much hope that you will support us in this important work. In the meantime, we would be very grateful if you could inform your agency staff that you will be participating in the research. To help you to do this I have enclosed a staff information page, DTORS eligibility criteria, and a background leaflet giving an outline of the study. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me – my details are listed below. In the meantime a NatCen Group Leader will be in touch with you to arrange a convenient start date.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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Staff Information Page

DTORS is a nationwide survey of adult drug treatment seekers

- On behalf of the Home Office
- By the National Drug Evidence Centre at the University of Manchester, and the National Centre for Social Research.

What the interviewers will do

- Explain the survey to all eligible participants, and invite them to take part, either immediately, or at a time a place of their convenience. There is a £10 incentive voucher for taking part.
- Interview those who agree, as soon as possible after their first face to face contact.
- Keep records of all eligible respondents. This information is vital for the study.

Please note: The interviewers used in this study are trained but are not experts in the field of drugs.

What we would like agency staff to do

To make the survey work – we need your help!

- All staff should be aware of the survey.
- Please complete the log for all eligible clients making a face to face contact or making an appointment for a face to face contact (Group Leaders will supply this log)
- Please phone the interviewer to notify of all face to face contacts and cancellations made by eligible clients.
- After a face to face contact, please ask eligible participants either to speak to an interviewer, or to leave details so that they can be contacted later.

A NatCen Group Leader will be in touch with you to arrange a convenient start date

Your participation in DTORS has been fully supported by your Drug Action Team and Mental Health Trust.