

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

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Dear Colleague

**DTORS – Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study**

100 DATs have 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.

To address these questions we will follow 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 at each phase, with responsibility passed rapidly to researchers and 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 we would like to request your cooperation to become involved. If you agree to participate we will ask you to contact the tier 3/4 drug treatment agencies within your DAT to inform them that the study has your support, and to ask them to help us. We will then contact the agencies and make all necessary arrangements. All the research team will ask from you thereafter is for confirmation of your support and co-operation as needed throughout the duration of the project.

The recruitment of treatment seekers will take place over 7 weeks with a 2 week retrospective 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, agency staff are required to ask treatment seekers to speak to a NatCen interviewer. 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 study is designed to have minimum impact on agency workloads.**



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A separate qualitative study will also take place in a small number of agencies, to explore treatment from the view both of service providers and service users. This part of the research will be carried out in 4-8 DATs only. If selected for this part of the research, NatCen will be in touch to provide you with more information.

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, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me – details are given below.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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