



London Drug and Alcohol Network

c/o DrugScope
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Dear London Councils Grants Committee,

Re: The Future Role and Scope of the London Councils Grants Scheme - Interim response

The London Drug and Alcohol Network (LDAN) is a pan-London second tier organisation with a wide membership base covering over 200 drug and alcohol and related services, including a number of London Councils funded agencies. LDAN supports its members through information sharing, capacity building and representation to develop high-quality drug and alcohol services for Londoners. In March 2009, LDAN merged with the national membership charity for the drug sector, DrugScope.

LDAN/DrugScope is funded by London Councils to provide substance misuse expertise and support to two pan-London projects: Second Tier Services to Homelessness (no.103) and to Domestic Violence Services (no.70). The projects have helped organisations across London to better support individuals with the combined problems of substance misuse and homelessness or domestic violence. These projects have a pan-London focus and could not be commissioned at borough level.

We will be responding in full to the grants scheme consultation using the online form prior to 10 November, but have been advised to submit an interim response to inform the Grants Committee meeting on 19 October. It is unclear whether decisions about the future of the grants scheme will be made at this meeting. It is our view that decisions should not be made (if this is indeed the intention), before the official consultation period closes in November, to allow funded groups sufficient time to feed into decisions that will affect the future of their services, and to comply with the time frame that London Councils set out for this consultation.

To anticipate the key points LDAN will be making in its full response to the consultation, we believe that substance misuse, homelessness and domestic violence issues are pan-London by their nature and cannot effectively be commissioned or supported by one borough alone. For people with substance misuse problems, including those experiencing homelessness and domestic violence, the need to move away from past associates and areas can be vital for successful recovery.

Homeless people do not live within specific borough boundaries, and often have very chaotic lives which include drug and alcohol use. One refusal from a service due to 'local connection criteria' can lead to an individual disengaging from services

altogether. The Mayor of London is committed to ending rough sleeping in London by 2012, and this is a core objective for the GLA's London Housing Strategy 2010. Without the vital work of the London Councils funded homelessness agencies who work with people from across London, this will be much more difficult to achieve.

Equally, London Councils' funded services for domestic violence victims and perpetrators are vital to deliver the Mayor's 'Violence against Women Strategy'. Victims of domestic violence often need to move to a different borough at very short notice, and this can only be coordinated safely if services are accessible to all Londoners.

There are economies of scale in developing and administering services at a pan-borough level, and this helps to facilitate effective cross-borough communication and cooperation. It is particularly important that there is a strong commitment to continue to provide services for vulnerable people and communities at a time of public spending cuts. The negative consequences of disinvestment in provision for these groups would be substantial.

We believe that second tier agencies like LDAN have a critical role to play in supporting frontline services across London, which is a necessarily pan-London function, and has a direct impact on outcomes for service users, families and communities. A critical dimension of our work is to develop resources and networks to enable service providers and others to share information, provide support and disseminate good practice with colleagues across boroughs. Our projects help inform strategy, policy and practice development at the pan-London level and facilitate the bringing together of third sector and statutory agencies.

Our domestic violence project brings together domestic violence and substance misuse agencies from every London borough to share experience and knowledge. After six months, all attendees at our homelessness and drug and alcohol network events said they had increased their knowledge of drug and alcohol services and interventions for homeless service users, at all these events this involved hearing about good practice in other boroughs. Ninety five per cent of attendees at these forums say that our networks are helping the development of joint and partnership working.

If you have further questions at this stage please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Barnes
Chief Executive
DrugScope / LDAN