

Police Service of Northern Ireland

HQ Ref: OCS/DS/1

PD 03/07

POLICY DIRECTIVE

DRUGS POLICY

1. POLICY IDENTIFICATION

POLICY TITLE: Drugs Policy

POLICY OWNERSHIP:

DEPARTMENT	Crime Operations
BRANCH	Drugs Squad
AUTHOR	D/Superintendent

POLICY APPROVED BY:

CCF REF/OTHER	ACC Sheridan
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2. POLICY STATEMENTS

- (1) Drugs crime and drugs misuse are very significant areas of public and policing concern and to which the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is committed to providing a robust and measured response.
- (2) PSNI will strive to reduce the availability of controlled drugs and to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce the harm caused by drug misuse.

3. INTRODUCTION

(1) Executive Summary

This Policy communicates the commitment of the Chief Constable and the Service to the investigation of drugs crime and drugs related issues.

(2) Application

This Policy will apply to all police officers serving with the PSNI and as such the PSNI will ensure that appropriate processes are in place to enable compliance with relevant legislation, principally the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; arrangements for partnership working as outlined in the Governments New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (2006 – 2011) and that all police staff are aware of their responsibilities.

(3) Background

Northern Ireland has experienced a growing drugs culture since the late 1960s and early 1970s. The appearance of recreational stimulant drugs associated particularly with the dance or rave environment caused a significant rise in demand and consumption of these and other controlled drugs.

The PSNI recognises that the problems associated with drug misuse cannot be solved by law enforcement alone and is therefore committed to working in partnership with other agencies under the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2006 –2011.

The PSNI approach to tackling drugs misuse will therefore be:

- (a) To reduce availability through enforcement, thereby disrupting the supply of illegal drugs destined for our communities;
- (b) To work in partnership with Education Authorities and provide appropriate education to children and young adults;
- (c) To provide educational information and advice through presentations to interested groups;
- (d) To help reduce demand by working in partnership with treatment services through arrest referral schemes operating from the custody suites in Foyle, Ballymena and South Belfast District Commands and enabling users who have been arrested to access those treatment services.

The Northern Ireland drug market has links to the global drugs network, and PSNI will continue to work in close co-operation with police forces and other law enforcement agencies at national and international levels, to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs into Northern Ireland.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- (1) This Policy makes explicit PSNI's commitment to the 'Long Term' aims of NI Alcohol and Drug Strategy and seeks to develop a strong and robust corporate framework capable of uniting the Service's delivery of the following key objectives.

- (2) Our overall aim is to reduce supply through enforcement and demand through education, prevention and treatment.
- (3) Reduction of supply will be achieved through intelligence led enforcement activity that targets those involved in drug trafficking and supply.
- (4) We aim to reduce demand for illegal drugs by working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies in the areas of:
 - (a) Treatment and Support;
 - (b) Prevention and Early Intervention; and
 - (c) Harm Reduction.
- (5) The Policing Board who will set performance indicators and targets in the Policing Plan, monitors progress in respect of these objectives.

5. LEGAL BASIS

- (1) Although there is no specific legislative requirement for this Policy, its introduction will ensure that appropriate police action and responses take into account:
 - (a) The Human Rights Act 1998;
 - (b) Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 2000;
 - (c) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;
 - (d) Misuse of Drugs Act 1971;
 - (e) Proceeds of Crime Act 2002;
 - (f) Section 32 of the Police (NI) Act 2000;
 - (g) Drugs Act 2005;
 - (h) Code of Ethics for the PSNI.
- (2) Controlled drugs means any substance or product for the time being specified in Part I, II or III of Schedule 2, Misuse of Drugs Act; and the expressions "Class A Drug", "Class B Drug", and "Class C Drug" means any of the substances and products for the time being specified respectively in Part I, Part II and Part III of that Schedule.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

(1) Human Resources/Training

- (a) The Police College of Northern Ireland (PCNI) will be responsible for delivering appropriate training on drugs crime investigation to all police officers. Further specialist training will be required to develop the skill of police officers attached to C1 Drugs Squad officers. This specialist training could potentially impact upon departmental budgets.
- (b) Frontline PSNI officers will also have the opportunity to apply for a three-month secondment to C1 Drugs Squad. This secondment opportunity is designed to enhance the police officer's experience in the investigation of drug supply and related offences, providing them with new skills to bring back to District Policing.

(2) Partnerships

- (a) PSNI Drugs Squad has formed strong links with both national and international police services and other law enforcement bodies, which on occasions require explicit protocols to enable operational police partnerships.
- (b) Representatives from Districts have a consultative role on each of the four Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordinating Groups and attend meetings on a quarterly basis.
- (c) PSNI have also forged strong links with agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors and assist where and when requested, this is particularly relevant in relation to the field of education and emerging new drugs trends.
- (d) PSNI will also be represented on the following working groups set up under the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (2006 – 2011):
 - (i) Children, Young People and Families Advisory Group;
 - (ii) Binge Drinking Advisory Group;
 - (ii) Law and Criminal Justice Advisory Group.
- (e) PSNI's Community Safety Branch will take the lead in all service Education Initiatives and in doing so will work closely with Education Authorities and the Health Promotion Agency.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/CODE OF ETHICS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- (1) "This Policy is deemed to be in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998."
- (2) It has been screened for Section 75 considerations and complies with the PSNI Code of Ethics.
- (3) The Policy and Guidance are suitable for disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, with the exception of Section 7.

8. REVIEW

- (1) The Head of Drugs Squad will review this Policy within 12 months.
- (2) Feedback should be addressed to D/Chief Inspector, Drugs Squad, PSNI Station Antrim Road, 280 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 5AA.