

This is the second of two factsheets on definitions of commonly-used words in the drug field. The first sheet outlines the more general words and this sheet picks up on the more specialist ones. Both sheets can be used when training new staff, explaining things to the media or as a quick reference point when you're unsure on the specifics of certain terms.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) was set up under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to advise the government on drug misuse policy and on amending the Act and its regulations.

Community Drug Team (CDT) is a statutory drug agency, working at a local level both to help drug users and to educate the community. Offer a range of services similar to street agencies, but not always a drop-in service.

Community safety is a combination of crime prevention, victim support and tackling the fear of crime. Community safety is developed by local authorities working in partnership with the police, probation services, the voluntary sector and community groups.

Decriminalisation/legalisation; *decriminalisation* is effectively the more 'neutral' of the two terms. It refers to removing references to drugs (usually those referring to possession) from criminal law. *Legalisation* means allowing drugs to become commercial products, and may involve setting up a licensing system (ie, putting drugs on a par with alcohol).

Demand reduction occupies the middle ground between *harm reduction* and *supply reduction*, this term describes policies and programmes aimed at reducing consumer demand for drugs. It can take in educational, treatment and rehabilitation strategies.

Drug Action Team (DAT) is a recent government proposal for ensuring effective delivery of the national drug strategy on the local level. DATs will be made up of senior representatives from health and local authorities and the criminal justice agencies.

Drug Dependency Unit (DDU) is a statutory service usually hospital based offering a range of services including out-patient methadone prescribing, in-patient detoxification, counselling etc.

Drug Misuse Database (DMD)/ regional database; piloted by the North Western Regional Health Authority in 1987, the *DMDs/regional databases* stand alongside the Home Office's *register of addicts*. Their advantages over the 'register' are that they cover both a wider range of services and a wider range of drugs. As they are regionally-centred, the

DMDs also provide a much more nationally comprehensive picture than any other comparable set of data.

Harm reduction/minimisation are policies and programmes aimed at reducing the risks of drugs and drug using to individuals and society. This can range from advice on safer drug use to community action programmes. [See *Demand reduction and Supply reduction*]

Illegal/illicit are two words are often used interchangeably to describe drugs and drug-taking behaviour. There is a slight difference however: *illegal* means prohibited by law, while *illicit* is a wider term, taking in actions which offend against common codes of accepted behaviour.

Legalisation [see *Decriminalisation*]

Maintenance therapy is the treatment of drug dependence by prescribing a substitute drug for which 'cross-tolerance' exists. The goal is to reduce the use of a particular drug or to reduce the harm caused by a particular method of administration. The most well-known form of *maintenance* therapy is the prescribing of methadone to wean people off opioids.

Minnesota Model [See *Twelve-step programme/group/method*]

Needle Exchange Schemes are services either offered by a drugs agency or a pharmacy whereby users can obtain free syringes and needles in exchange for used injecting equipment.

Notifiable drugs, users of these should be notified by their doctor to the Home Office. There are 14 notifiable drugs including cocaine and various opioids. [See *Register of addicts*]

Notified addict is a user of *notifiable drugs* who is officially recorded on the *register of addicts*.

Outreach work carried out by a drug agency, off agency premises, in the community. Some outreach work is 'detached' in that the worker is taking the service to the users, rather than necessarily encouraging them to come to the agency.

Peer education refers to advice-giving by (ex-)drug users to other drug users with a *harm reduction* and prevention emphasis. [See *Self-help groups*]

Register of addicts; the annually updated record of addicts who are notified to the Home Office by doctors including those based in hospital and prisons as well as GPs. As it only records cocaine and opioid users, the register should only be used as a guide to trends in the use of those specific drugs rather than an accurate picture of the number of drug users in Britain. Used both for statistical purposes and to enable a doctor to check whether a patient is receiving treatment for dependence problems elsewhere. Confidential; information not available to police or other agencies.

Relapse prevention is a form of therapeutic rehabilitation which aims to help people avoid returning to uncontrolled drug use. Patients are rehearsed in how to cope with 'tempting' situations and how to minimise drug use if they do 'lapse' occasionally.

Self-help group is a group in which participants support each other through recovery from drug use. The most well-known self-help group in the drugs field is Narcotics Anonymous. [See *Twelve-step programme/group/method, Minnesota Model*]

Supply reduction describes law enforcement strategies targeted at curtailing drug production and distribution. [See *Demand reduction and Harm reduction*]

Therapeutic communities (often known as 'rehab') are places where people with drug-related problems try to work through these prior to returning to the community. They tend to be highly structured, run by ex-drug users and geographically isolated.

Twelve-step programme/group/method is a *self-help group* based around the Minnesota Model (so called because it originated in Minnesota) devised by Alcoholics Anonymous. The twelve steps involve the user admitting powerlessness over their life and drug use, surrendering to a 'higher power', making up for past wrongs and offering to help other 'addicts'.