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UK government to end illegal drug-related adverse effects

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New cross-government unit to tackle drug misuse following major independent review UK.gov



UK government announced on July 8, 2021, that a new drugs unit will be set up to help end illegal drug-related illness and deaths.

The Joint Combating Drugs Unit will bring together multiple government departments, including the Department of Health and Social Care, Home Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and Ministry of Justice – to help tackle drugs misuse across society.

The review recommends the government must work together to improve treatment, employment, housing support and the way people with addictions are treated in the criminal justice system. It recommends addiction be recognised as a chronic health condition, requiring long-term follow-up.

The report says there's an urgent need to reinforce the treatment workforce to raise standards and restore morale, while national leadership needs to be strengthened to reduce supply and help people get off and stay off drugs.

There are 32 recommendations made in the report, including that the government invests more in treatment and recovery support, and appoints a single, responsible minister on drug policy to hold the government to account.

The report highlights two welcome developments in the efforts to tackle drug-related issues, with the £80 million additional funding for drug treatment in 2021/22, as part of a broader package on crime, and the additional £126 million over three years invested into drug and alcohol treatment for people who sleep rough.

Government announced that the new Office for Health Promotion which will spearhead these efforts to level up society, while making the largest increase to drug treatment funding for fifteen years, with £80 million of new investment. A further £28 million is being invested into piloting Project ADDER – a new intensive approach to tackling drug misuse.

Throughout the last year providers have continued to support and treat public misusing drugs and alcohol and we are supporting local authorities, with over £3.3 billion in 2021-2022 .