

The Challenge to the Church

In terms of social action, local churches can often feel marginalised by other agencies. These agencies, in turn, can sometimes give the impression that they regard 'Christians' as well meaning amateurs who should leave this work to the 'professionals'. Unfortunately, over the years there have been services that have treated vulnerable people in unthinking and unhelpful ways, though usually with the best of motives. As a result, the Government believes, quite rightly, that it is necessary to set minimum care standards not just in the field of addictions but in every sector where vulnerable people are being helped.

The result is the Government's Drug Strategy (2008) which is being developed through the National Treatment Agency (NTA) and the Federation of Drug and Alcohol Professionals (FDAP). A summary of their expectations for all those working in this field, both paid and voluntary, is set out below.

The Government's new Drug Strategy recognises that "developing a competent substance misuse workforce... is crucial to ensuring a high standard of service delivery" - and the (NTA) notes "...it is important that commissioners and services continue to work towards a workforce which is fully competent and able to demonstrate its competence". They continue "But we need more than just people with the ability to do their job; we need a workforce which puts its potential into practice on the ground. And because of the **potential vulnerability of our client-group** we need practitioners to work to the highest ethical standards".

How will these guidelines impact the church and its work with addicts and their families? We believe that as they are being adopted by all local Drug Action Teams (DAT's) they will be applied to any voluntary charitable body in this field, possibly in the form of legislation, by 2011-12.

The target for the guidelines as at April 2009

By end 2010

- 85% of all front-line workers (including volunteer workers) should have, or be working towards, evidence of their basic competence to work in the field.
- 85% of line managers should be undertaking, or have completed, a training course in line management.

By end 2011

- 85% of workers' line managers/supervisors, should have, or be working towards, evidence of their own basic competence to work in the field.

By end 2012

- All workers and their line managers/supervisors should have, or be working towards, evidence of their basic competence to work in the field.
- All line managers should be undertaking, or have completed, a training course in line management.

LFTW's training is mapped to the relevant DANOS* competencies and is being developed so that every piece of training contributes towards meeting the above requirements. At the same time, LFTW addictions training sets out the 'Good News' for addicts and their families and how we can model the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. We believe that what we offer is of the highest quality in addictions training, truly holistic, professional and with a clear Christian spiritual dynamic.

*Drug and Alcohol National Occupational Standards

Life for the world

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