



**Ministerial Meeting of the Sectoral Group on the Misuse of Drugs  
24th February 2010**

**Communiqué**

Mr Adrian Earnshaw, MHK, the Isle of Man's Minister for Home Affairs, today hosted the seventh Ministerial meeting of the British-Irish Council on the Misuse of Drugs at the Tynwald Buildings, the Isle of Man's Government Buildings in Douglas. The meeting was chaired by Mr. John Curran T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy in Ireland. The meeting focused in particular on how to effectively manage the challenges associated with substance misuse in the Prison Setting.

The meeting provided a good opportunity to focus in detail on two key challenges related to this issue:

- (i) the need to counteract the availability and use of drugs in prisons; and
- (ii) the need to provide a range of treatment services in prisons, comparable to those available in communities generally, thus enabling prisoners to address their problem drug use.

In detailed discussions the Ministers exchanged information on their experiences, and on best practices utilised across their jurisdictions. Much of the exchanges focusing on improvements to security procedures aimed at preventing drugs getting into prisons. At the same time, it was emphasised that such action could only really be effective when combined with the provision of drug treatment to prisoners. The importance of continuity of treatment for people following their release from prison was also emphasised. The Ministers envisage that the successful addressing of these key issues will facilitate their respective Governments to impact positively on the lives of prisoners, to reduce the levels of re-offending and to contribute to reducing problem drug use in society.

The Ministers also took the opportunity of utilising the BIC forum to exchange information on the issue of the sale and use of psychoactive substances ("legal highs"). The Ministers discussed the various measures planned and implemented across jurisdictions, and the outcomes of these interventions. Given the ongoing concerns around psychoactive substances, not only among the Administrations of the British-Irish Council but also across the EU and beyond, the Ministers directed that the BIC Sectoral Group on the Misuse of Drugs should retain the issue of psychoactive substance use as a standing item on their agendas for the foreseeable future.

The British-Irish Council was established under the Strand Three Provisions of the Good Friday Agreement as a forum for its Members to exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of relevant Member Administrations. Ireland is the lead administration within the Council on the issue of Misuse of Drugs.

The Irish Government was represented by the Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy, Mr. John Curran T.D., who chaired the meeting. The Isle of Man Government was represented by the Minister for Home Affairs Mr Adrian Earnshaw MHK, who hosted the meeting and was accompanied by Mr William Malarkey MHK Member of the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Health and Social Security. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Junior Minister Robin Newton MLA and Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MP MLA. The States of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Hunter Adam, Minister, Health and Social Services Department, and The States of Jersey by Deputy Anne Pryke, Minister for Health and Social Services. The British Government was represented by Mr. Matthew Bullard, Head of Drug Supply Reduction and Mandatory Drug Testing Strategy, National Offender Management Service and Mr. Dominic Flint, Senior Policy Advisor, Drug Strategy Unit, Home Office. The Scottish Government was represented by Mr Alan Johnston, Deputy Director of Drugs and Community Safety, Scottish Government. A full list of delegation members is attached.

The Ministers reviewed the successful work carried out by the Council during 2009 and focused on these important areas:

- .. ■ Guernsey Meeting: Main subject - Youth Justice Initiatives. In addition, Guernsey's response to psychoactive substance use was presented and discussed.
  - Ireland Meeting: Main subject - Drugs-Related Deaths Indices. A major part of the meeting focused on developing effective policy responses to drug deaths.
  - Scotland Meeting: Main Subject - Drug Prevention. The presentation and discussion centred on innovative approaches in Scotland around drugs information and advice initiatives and their Drugs Awareness Campaign on cocaine.

The Ministers agreed that these meetings had provided a very useful forum for sharing, in a focused and practical manner, the detailed expertise and knowledge of those involved in the drugs area across the British-Irish Council region. It was also noted that, in addition to exploring specific themes in depth, each meeting had facilitated the exchange of information on general developments and initiatives in relation to the misuse of drugs.

The Ministers noted and agreed that work in 2010 will focus on the following areas:

- Ireland: the policies of Administrations in the tackling Alcohol Misuse;
- UK: new directions for drug and alcohol policy - meeting new challenges; and
- Jersey: Community Action in dealing with drugs, alcohol and anti-social disorder.

These meetings will also facilitate the strengthening and consolidation of the ongoing co-operation and the exchange of information, experience and best practice between Members.

It was agreed that Ministers would meet again in the Spring of 2011.

**British-Irish Council (Misuse of Drugs Sectoral Group)**

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

**List of Delegates**

<b>Irish Government</b>	
Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy	Mr. John Curran T.D
Principal Officer, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Mr. Michael Conroy
Higher Executive Officer, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Ms. Linda O'Rourke
Private Secretary to Minister of State Mr John Curran T.D	Mr. Alan Kelly
<b>Government of the Isle of Man</b>	
Minister for Home Affairs	Mr. Adrian Earnshaw MHK
Member of the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Health and Social Security	Mr. William Malarkey MHK
Director of Drug and Alcohol Policy	Ms. Margaret O'Reilly
Chief Probation Officer Department of Home Affairs	Mr. David Sellick
Prison Governor Department of Home Affairs	Ms. Alison Gomme
<b>UK Government</b>	
Senior Policy Advisor, Drug Strategy Unit, Home Office	Mr. Dominic Flint
Head of Drug Supply Reduction and Mandatory Drug Testing Strategy, National Offender Management Service	Mr. Matthew Bullard
<b>Northern Ireland Executive</b>	
Junior Minister	Robin Newton MLA
Minister for Regional Development	Conor Murphy MP MLA
Special Adviser to Junior Minister Newton	Peter King
Private Secretary to Junior Minister Newton	Alma McManus
Special Adviser to Minister Murphy	Stephen McGlade
<b>States of Guernsey</b>	

Minister, Health and Social Services Department, States of Guernsey	Mr. Hunter Adam
Chief Officer, Home Department, States of Guernsey	Mr. Paul Whitfield
Drug and Alcohol Strategy Co-ordinator, States of Guernsey	Ms. Andrea Nightingale
States of Jersey	
Minister of Health and Social Services of the States of Jersey	Deputy Anne Pryke
Director of Alcohol and Drugs, Department of Health and Social Services	Mr. Michael Gafoor
Scottish Government	
Deputy Director of Drugs and Community Safety	Mr. Alan Johnston
BIC Secretariat	Ms Aoife McGarry
BIC Secretariat	Ms Kam Samplay
BIC Secretariat	Ms Elizabeth Reynolds