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Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
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23 October 2018

Dear Home Secretary,

Introduction of Heroin Assisted Treatment in Middlesbrough

I would like to take the opportunity to draw your attention to the pioneering work that we are undertaking in Middlesbrough to address heroin addiction.

We believe our project will help to save lives, save money, and reduce crime.

I've been the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland since 2012; prior to that I was a councillor in Middlesbrough for 28 years with a particular interest in community safety; including serving as council cabinet member; as chair of the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership; and for a period was a member of the former Cleveland Police Authority.

Throughout this period I have always taken a fairly pragmatic policy stance on drugs; recognising the need for education, treatment and rehabilitation; as well as enforcement activity by police and other agencies to disrupt the supply of these substances.

Sadly, over this time I have also witnessed at first-hand the harm and devastating impact that chronic substance misuse, particularly heroin, has had on the lives of individuals, their families and communities.



The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation.

Set against a backdrop of high-levels of social deprivation, all four local authorities in the Cleveland area account for some of the highest numbers of opiate users, drug related deaths and adult re-offending rates in the country, with Middlesbrough local authority area topping the table for most of these.

As I refresh my Police & Crime Plan for Cleveland, I recognise that there is a greater need for us to adopt a different and innovative approach, to get 'Smart on drugs'. As such I am supporting the introduction of a Heroin Assisted Treatment scheme in Middlesbrough.

Working with Middlesbrough Public Health, drug recovery and treatment services (Foundations), and criminal justice partners, this pilot scheme will provide a supervised injecting facility where prescribed medicinal opiate treatment will be administered, and enhanced wrap-around community-based support available, seven days a week.

This pilot is not to be confused with Drug Consumption Rooms which are currently illegal in England and Wales.

As outlined in **Appendix A**, our approach will target those who have failed to benefit from traditional methods of treatment and continue to place increased demand on public services, and will seek to:

- Increase access to meaningful recovery
- Reduce drug related crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce drug related deaths
- Reduce drug related burden on society: drug litter, open drug use.
- Reduce demand and costs on public services

Using your Home Office Economic & Social Costs of Crime guidance, it has been estimated that a prolific cohort of 20 drug-dependent offenders, who would be targeted by this scheme, have cost the public purse almost £800,000 over the last two years - and that's only based on crimes that are detected. The cost of putting them through this pioneering programme would be £12,000 per individual per annum.

On the 3rd September this year we publicly announced our plans to introduce this scheme at the well-attended 'You Can't Recover if You're Dead' conference, where along with other national and international speakers, I spoke about the importance of enhancing harm reduction, reducing drug related deaths and improving community safety. As envisaged, our announcement attracted a lot of media interest, received cross party support, and stimulated healthy debate on social media platforms, where you can see in **Appendix B** support for this scheme is strong.

With well-established partnership support; the recent appointment of our Assistant Chief Constable as the National Police Chiefs Council lead on drugs; and Cleveland being selected to co-ordinate the Heroin and Crack Cocaine Area work for the North East region, I hope you agree that the conditions are right here in Cleveland to lead and test this new approach.

As we move forward, it will be helpful to the future success of such an initiative to have the broadest possible base of support and influence in the very best interests of the safety of our local communities and beyond.

I would very much welcome your support, and the involvement and assistance of your Alcohol and Drugs Unit in the development and implementation of this ground-breaking initiative. I also recognise that this work will be beneficial to your recently announced independent review into drug misuse.

We have a local working group which I chair which brings together Police; Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC); Public Health; Drug treatment & recovery services; and Lisa Dillon from your Drugs Policy Unit. We hope to have appropriate licences and premises ready by the end of the calendar year, to begin work with the first jointly-selected cohort of clients in the new year.

I hope you will join me in supporting this initiative, and if you would like to visit Middlesbrough at some point to view progress on the scheme, see our new Community Safety Hub which brings police and partners together, and discuss some of the ground-breaking work we are doing here, the Chief Constable and I would be happy to host a visit.

Reflecting the cross party and multi-agency support I have received for this scheme, I am also copying this letter to all our local MPs, who are interested in and supportive of the work we are doing in challenging circumstances.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry Coppinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barry Coppinger
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

cc. Simon Clarke MP
cc. Alex Cunningham MP
cc. Mike Hill MP
cc. Andy McDonald MP
cc. Anna Turley MP
cc. Dr Paul Williams MP
cc. Nick Hurd MP
cc. Lisa Dillon, Home Office Drugs Policy Unit
cc. Arooj Razvi, Home Office Force Insight