MEDIA RELEASE:

FEWER YOUNG ADULTS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS SEEK HELP FOR CRACK COCAINE USE

New figures from the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA) show a sharp drop for the first time in the numbers of drug users in the West Midlands seeking treatment for addiction to crack cocaine (down 20%).

The fall affects all age groups but is particularly marked among young adults aged 18-24, and reverses the recent trend of steadily increasing treatment demand from users of these Class A drugs.

According to an NTA report, Drug Treatment in 2009-2010 which is published today, the reduction disclosed by annual treatment statistics reflects recent evidence of a decline in popularity of cocaine as scarce street supplies are cut and adulterated by dealers.

NTA Regional Manager David Skidmore, said:

“Treatment services in the West Midlands are continuing to contribute to safer and better communities by getting people into treatment so they can start to recover from addiction.

“These statistics give us more than just an annual snapshot for one year, 2009-10. We now have five years’ worth of robust data from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, so we can show some reliable trends.

“What this tells us is that the problems facing drug treatment services in the West Midlands are changing. We need to be flexible to adapt to these new challenges, and maximise the opportunities for drug addicts to recover. Our priority now is strengthen the focus of drug treatment systems in the West Midlands on delivering sustained recovery from addiction so that users can get off drugs altogether, start re-living their lives and contribute to their families, communities and society.”

A year ago the NTA discovered that, nationally, there was a dramatic drop in demand for heroin treatment among young adults aged 18-24. That fall has continued this year, and now affects the 25-29 age-group as well.
NTA Chief Executive, Paul Hayes said:

“This year’s figures confirm the NTA’s claim that the ‘trainspotting generation’ that got hooked in the 1980s is growing older, fewer young people are risking getting addicted to heroin, and treatment is beginning to show an impact on drug use.”

However just as young adults are shunning heroin, there is a small rise in treatment demand among the over-40s. In line with national trends, the West Midlands has seen a 5% increase in the number of people in their 40s accessing treatment for opiate problems since 2008-09 (36% since 2005/06).

As the heroin-using population gets older, some entrenched users are beginning to come into treatment for the first time.

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**


The most frequently reported main drugs of misuse by adult clients in the region:

- Heroin: 49 per cent (11,353)
- Crack: 2 per cent (414)
- Crack and heroin: 36 per cent (8,246)
- Cocaine: 4.0 per cent (908)
- Cannabis: 6.7 per cent (1,540)

The National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA) is a National Health Service (NHS) special health authority which aims to improve the availability, capacity and effectiveness of drug treatment in England. We help people to overcome addiction and regain their lives.

**Drug Treatment in 2009-10** draws on information from:

- [A Long Term Study of the Outcomes of Drug Users Leaving Treatment September 2010](#)
- [National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) Statistical report for 2009/10](#)
- [Prevalence estimates for England 2008/09 (Glasgow University)](#)
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