Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times
New System Development

Why is a new system being developed?
The Scottish Government has introduced a HEAT target for Drug Waiting Times from April 2010 and this will be expanded to include Alcohol Waiting Times from April 2011. The new HEAT target will measure the waiting times from the time a referral is received by a service until the client starts treatment.

As a result of developing a drug and alcohol 'Referral to Treatment' target, the existing Access database used to collect Drug Treatment Waiting Times data is no longer fit for purpose. The database was originally for drug treatment services only and was designed to be run on a PC’s local drive (C: drive). This is generally now incompatible with NHS Boards and local authorities IT security policies. Some areas have installed the database on network drives, however this has caused operational problems and has adversely affected data provision.

Rather than attempt to expand the Access database further and to include alcohol treatment services in this database, a decision was taken to invest in creation of a new system for collection of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times data.

What is the new system?
The new system is much more sophisticated and has been built as an addition to the existing Scottish Drug Misuse Database web system. This system allows submission of data securely to ISD over the web, and will be fully rolled out by 1st April 2011. For those services that wish to continue submitting data through their own systems, the new database will have the facility for services to upload data extracted from local systems. NHS Boards have notified us of those services in their area who will be submitting data via file upload. If you are unsure about how you will be submitting data then you should contact your local ADP in the first instance.

Benefits of the new system

- Web-based submission means that ADPs will not need to maintain and update an access database
- Web-based submission will allow all services to submit directly to ISD and not through ADPs. ADPs and NHS Boards will still have access to anonymised data in their geographical areas to monitor progress of their local services waiting times
- Enables addition of new data items to measure the full wait from referral to treatment for both drug and alcohol services
- The new system collects information on where clients could not or did not attend offered appointments and calculates the time clients wait for treatment
- File upload facility enables submission of data from local systems
- Improved validation of data entry will reduce errors and time spent quality checking data at ADP level
- More timely reporting of data as services will be updating directly to the database
- Reporting facility will enable services, ADPs and NHS Boards to produce reports from the system to monitor waiting times

Further information
If you require further information in relation to the new Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times system please contact Laura Wood (laurawood1@nhs.net).