



drugs



be well

stay well



## Executive summary

The following report evaluates Swanswell's 12-session drug use and offending programme for people referred into treatment via the criminal justice system.

With the latest official figures showing that almost **one in ten offenders will reoffend**, criminal justice agencies are looking for innovative ways to reduce the risk of offenders returning to crime.

Swanswell undertook a pilot project in Birmingham involving a group of 360 people with drug problems, including around 80 prolific and priority offenders (PPOs) – i.e. those who commit the most significant level of crime. An innovative 12-session intervention programme was designed to reduce both drug use and related offending.

Commissioned by police and probation services, the outcomes from the pilot are impressive. They include a **71% reduction on spend on illegal drugs**, and a figure of **15.3%** of people completing the course **drug free**.

With estimated annual costs of drug-related crime in England and Wales totalling **£15.4 billion** (Gordon, L., et al. 2006)<sup>1</sup>, Swanswell's programme has the potential to reduce those costs by **£2.4 billion**<sup>2</sup>.

Our model offers a successful, practical and cost-effective programme which engages offenders in their own recovery and delivers reduction in drug-related crime in the UK. The programme would be ideally suited to a payment by results scheme, and would also lend itself to funding through new mechanisms such as Social Impact Bonds. Because of the structure behind the programme, it can be easily embedded into other services, creating opportunities to work in partnership and roll out the programme on a large scale.

Following on from the remarkable success of the pilot study, Swanswell is conducting a larger-scale study in Birmingham.



change and be happy

## Report

This report summarises the outcomes of a 12-session intervention, designed and developed by Swanswell, for use with people referred into drug treatment through the criminal justice system.

The key outcomes from the project show clear positive results:

- **illegal drug spend** across those who took part **dropped by 71%**
- **attendance rates of 73%** (up 23% on another non-Swanswell programme)
- a **67% completion rate** (up 41% on another non-Swanswell programme)
- those who took part rated **94%** of the sessions as **'good' or 'average'**
- **68%** of people offered a place **took up that offer** (almost double that for a non-Swanswell programme)

The Swanswell programme consists of 12 one-to-one sessions, following on from a brief introductory session. The sessions are delivered weekly for an hour per session and focus on how to reduce drug use and change offending behaviour.

Feedback from the people who attended the sessions shows that they found the structured programme particularly helpful. One person told us:

*'It's taught me how to be aware of when the urges come, and how to deal with those feelings and not to resort to getting drugs.'*

The police and probation services, who refer into our service, told us that the programme *'fits in with our need to promote the core aims of the service to protect the public and prevent reoffending.'*

## Background on reoffending

- Drug misuse **costs the economy £15.4 billion a year** in crime, health and social care – not to mention the huge toll in ruined lives, family breakdowns and other emotional damage (Gordon, L., et al. 2006)<sup>1</sup>
- Studies have shown that for every **£1 spent** on treatment of offenders, **£9.50 is saved** in health, police and court costs (BDAAT online, 2010)<sup>3</sup>
- Estimated annual costs of reoffending are in **excess of £11 billion** (Independent online, 2010)<sup>4</sup>
- The annual cost of convicting someone and keeping them in prison for one year is **£126,500** (Independent online, 2010)<sup>4</sup>
- Reoffending is highest among those sentenced to less than a year in prison (BBC online, 2010)<sup>5</sup>

The 'Make Communities Safer' Public Service Agreement (Home Office, 2008)<sup>6</sup> has provided a national target for the Ministry of Justice to reduce adult and juvenile reoffending rates by **10%** between 2005 and 2011. More recently Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke has pledged to cut the prison population of 85,000 by 3000 within four years, partly through a 'rehabilitation revolution' that would reduce reoffending.

National indicators show England and Wales have been making strides in reducing reoffending, with Birmingham among the better performing areas. Audit Commission figures for the year up to

31 March 2010 show the risk of reoffending for all offenders on probation in England and Wales was 9.71%; a decrease of 2.88% on the 2007/08 baseline. Birmingham was one of the better performing areas with a reoffending rate of **7.74%** for 2009/10 compared with a predicted figure of 8.83% (Ministry of Justice online, 2010)<sup>7</sup>.

### How the programme works – Swanswell’s method

Swanswell’s 12-session programme was developed in collaboration with the police and probation services. Swanswell workers were given full training in the programme before it was delivered. We know that Swanswell staff are skilled in delivering therapeutic interventions to people from all walks of life. However, our experience of delivering accredited programmes (e.g. the Offender Substance Abuse Programme which uses cognitive behavioural and educational approaches to motivate change) has taught us the importance of ensuring that a structured programme is delivered exactly as designed (Drink Impaired Drivers Programme, 2006)<sup>8</sup>.

The sessions (which included an element of homework) were structured to get people to link their substance misuse to their offending behaviour and to recognise and deal with risky situations in a different way. They were conducted on a one-to-one basis, and many people said that they felt less inhibited talking to a Swanswell drug worker than they would to probation or police officers. They also felt the benefit of having someone to talk to about their particular issues with drug use and their own offending behaviour. One said:

*‘I’ve done all crime - petty crime, serious crime. It’s cut my offending a lot, and at the time I didn’t really notice it. You know, I just thought I was getting a bit better, but I’ve turned things around completely. I was lucky; I had a good worker from Swanswell.’*

The sessions were structured as follows:

Week	Session themes	Time (minutes)
	Introduction and welcome pack	10
1	Initial assessments, including drug testing and risk assessments	60
2	Assessment of motivation; follow-up assessment of personal surrounding issues (e.g. housing, employment, education etc); looking at care plans; understanding the cycle of change (Prochaska, J.O., and DiClemente, C.C. 1984) <sup>9</sup>	60
3	Understanding the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, A.H. 1943) <sup>10</sup>	30
4	Review of ‘homework’/risky situations/strategies	30
5	Defining risky situations and developing strategies on how to avoid them	30
6	Understanding triggers and responses/seemingly irrelevant decisions	30
7	What are the gains and losses of offending?	30
8	Understanding sabotage – how you (or others) might disrupt treatment	30
9	Understanding how crack works	30
9	Understanding how heroin works	30
10	Examining harm reduction methods	30
11	Asking the ‘Miracle Question’ (de Shazer, S. 1988) <sup>11</sup>	30
12	Review and evaluation of outcomes	60

Frank's story highlights the effectiveness of this programme and the impact it had on his life.

### Giving Frank a second chance

Frank, a 43 year old man from Erdington in Birmingham, is rebuilding his life after two years of cocaine misuse and heavy drinking. He says Swanswell's programme made him realise how little he knew about the drugs he was taking and their devastating effects. He used to have it all – a well-paid managerial job, his own house, around £20,000 in savings, and was in the peak of fitness as a qualified gym instructor.

In 2007, he began to feel disillusioned with his job and life, and he began to use cocaine – just occasionally to start with. The weekend habit became more regular and within just eight months he was spending up to £400 a day on cocaine, while drinking heavily at the same time. Frank spent all £20,000 of his savings on his habit.

His employers realised something was wrong and gave him some time off to consider his position. He chose to resign and carried on using cocaine, selling his two cars to fund the habit – after all, he didn't need them because he had lost his licence due to drink driving. His mortgage and other bills went unpaid for months.

It was when Frank woke up in a police cell, after getting involved in a fight, that the full horror of the mess he was in struck him. He was remanded in custody, charged with two counts of causing actual bodily harm and one of threatening to kill someone. In September 2009, he was released on two years probation with a one-year suspended prison sentence. While on remand his house was repossessed and Frank was now £45,000 in debt.

His probation office referred him to Swanswell, via the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP), for our 12-session programme. Swanswell drug worker Steve Paisley assessed and worked with Frank to draw up a care plan that took account of his needs. Steve says:

*'We worked through the cycle of change that he would need to go through and how to deal with any relapse, looking at how cocaine works on the brain and the impact and dangers of alcohol misuse.'*

Frank says:

*'In the past if I tried to give up and lapsed I would just carry on using – but now I know that a one-off lapse doesn't have to be the end of it. Steve and I discussed the risky situations that might lead me to use cocaine or alcohol and I now try to avoid those triggers – seeing certain people and going to certain places. I am now totally off cocaine and I stopped drinking for three months, although have lapsed a couple of times. I now go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.'*

Frank is now doing some work as a personal trainer and intends to do some voluntary work, in the hope that he may eventually be able to train as a drug worker. He says:

*'The programme at Swanswell made me realise how little I knew about the drugs I was taking and their effect on my brain. Waking up in the police cell was my lowest point, but that did me a favour because it put me on the road to turning my life around. I hope, in time, that I can become a drug worker to help other people who have hit the depths of despair like me and that I can find my own place to live again.'*



Frank (right) talks to drug worker Steven Paisley

### Data gathered

Swanswell set up the pilot study, with mechanisms in place to gather quantitative and qualitative data to tell us whether the programme worked and what its impact was.

The quantitative data was gathered at three-week intervals throughout the programme, with baseline data gathered at the assessment stage before it started. The qualitative data was gathered through a series of interviews conducted by a researcher from Birmingham City University with our partner organisations - the police, the probation service and members of the Birmingham DIP teams. The researcher also spoke to people who had been referred onto our programme and asked them what they thought about the programme, and the difference it had made to their drug use, offending and day-to-day life.

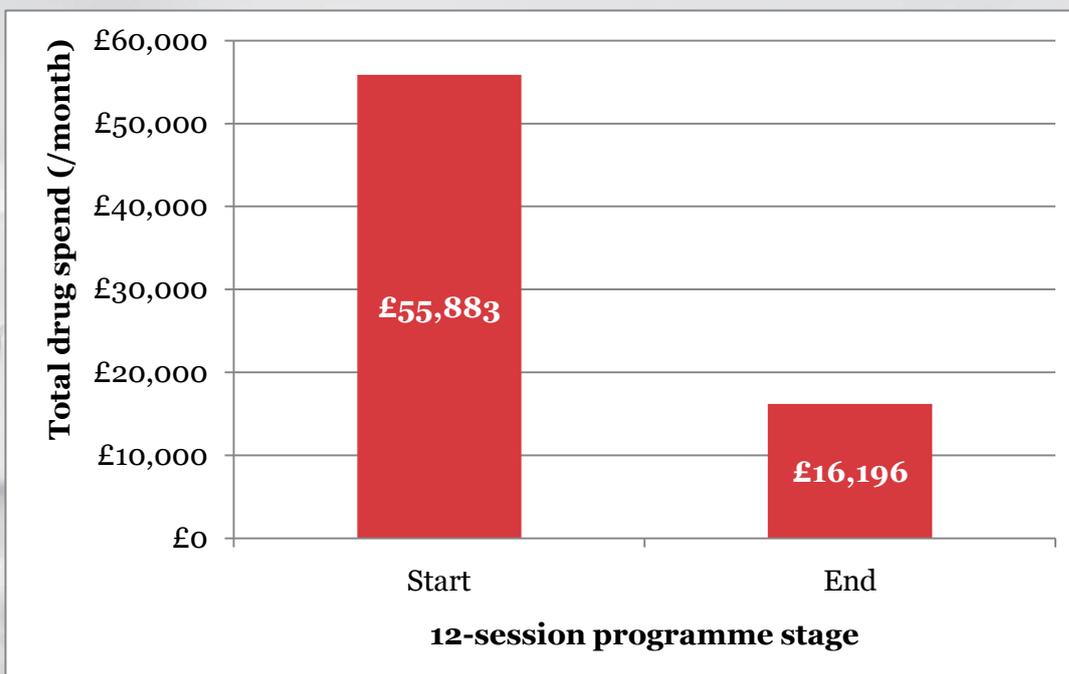
### Data analysis

The benefits of the programme are illustrated in figures 1-5.

After completing the programme, of those participants whose case has been closed (a total of 176 people) **15.3%** have done so in a completely drug-free state. A further **5.6%** completed with only occasional drug use. This is a very positive and beneficial outcome for these people, and provides a useful benchmark for future programmes.

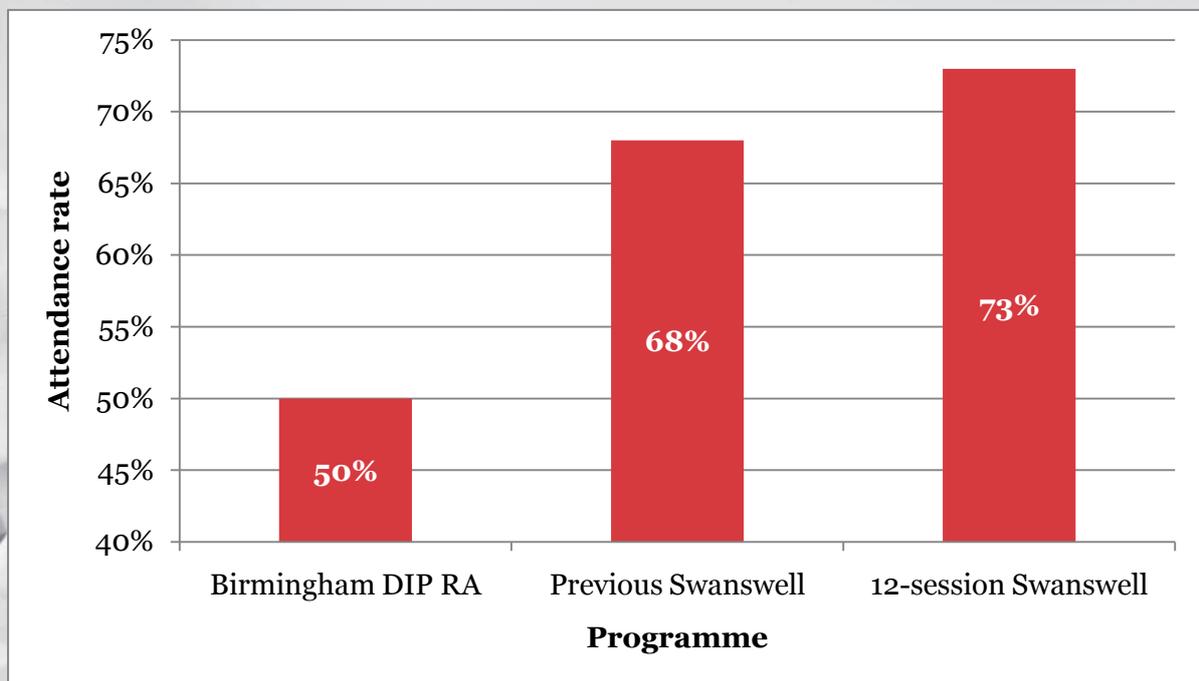
### Figure 1: Monthly drug spend before and after the 12-session programme

A **71% reduction** in total monthly spend on illegal drugs was achieved. If we link illegal drug spend with criminal activity to finance that spend, this is a useful way of monitoring the reoffending rate.



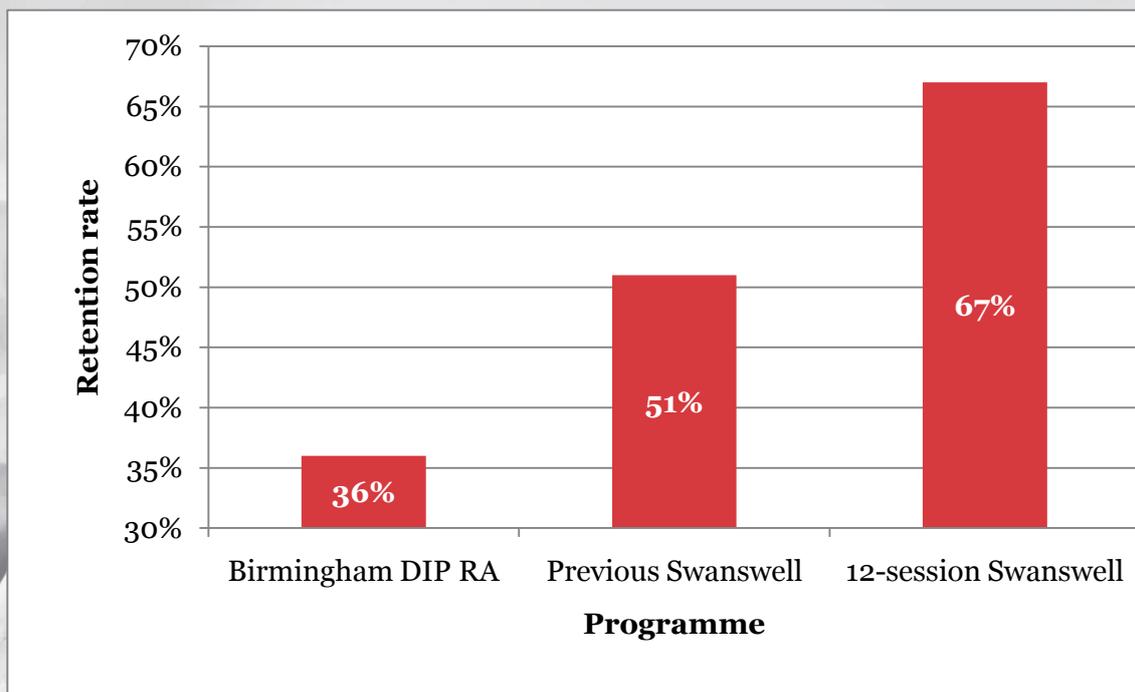
### Figure 2: Attendance rates

The programme achieved attendance rates of **73%** (up 5% on previous Swanswell programmes, and up 23% on a Birmingham DIP RA programme). Attendance rates (i.e. a measure of those who turned up for their appointments) are considered a key contributing factor to treatment success.



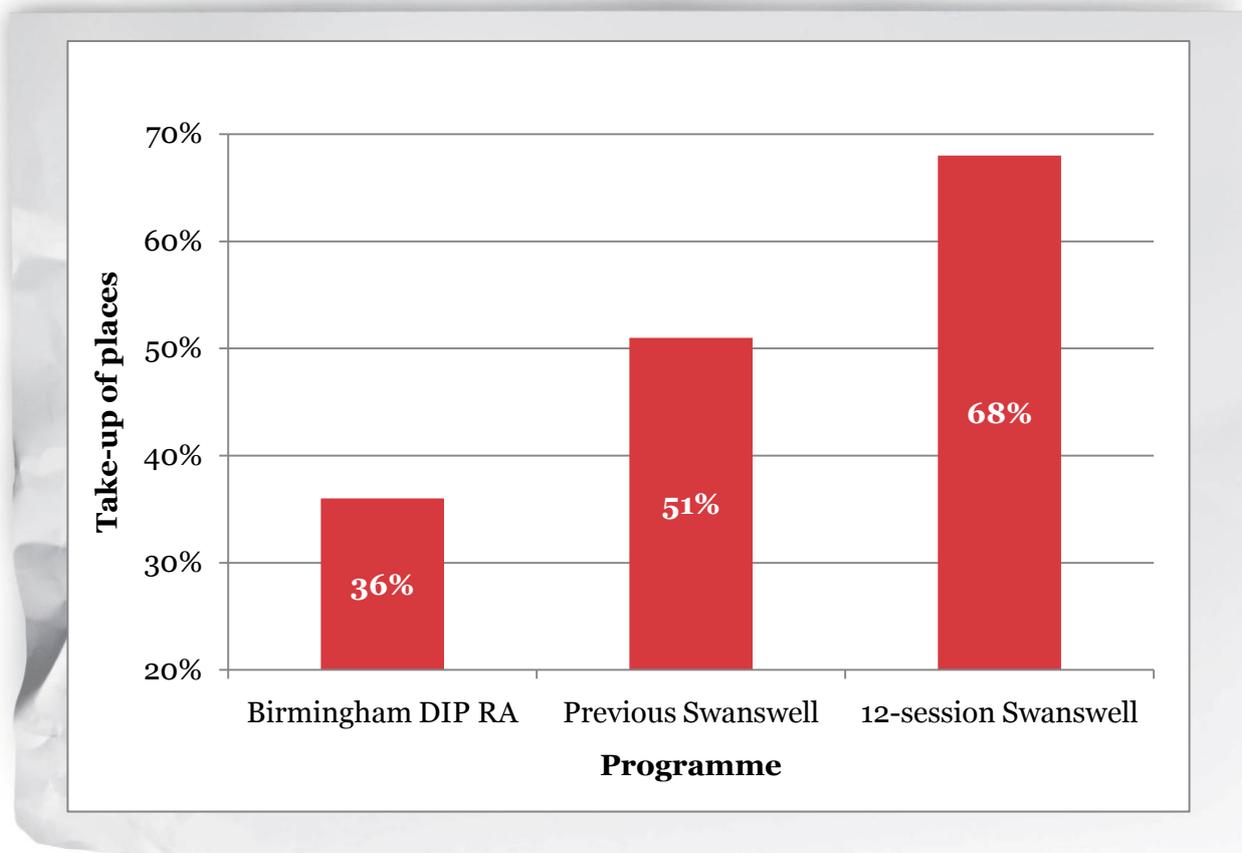
### Figure 3: Retention rates

**67%** of people who signed up for the programme fully completed it (this is up 16% on a previous Swanswell programme, and almost double that of a Birmingham DIP RA programme).



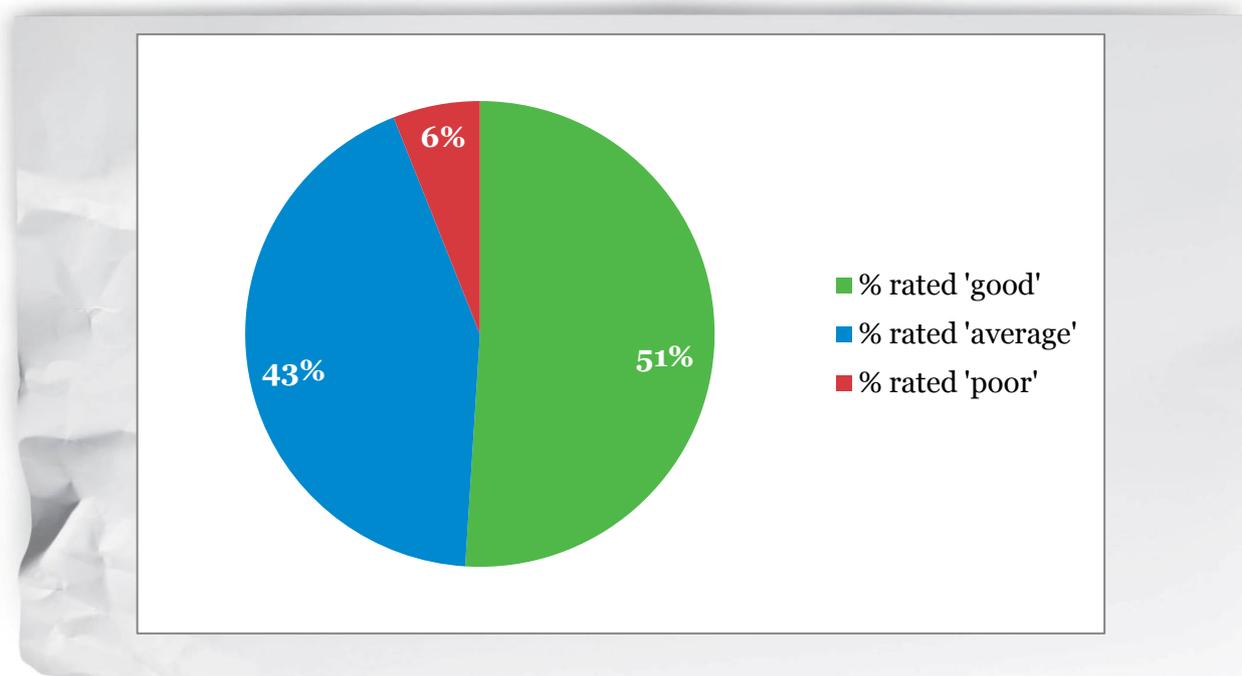
#### Figure 4: Programme take-up

68% of people invited to join the programme took up that offer (up 17% on a previous Swanswell programme, and almost double that of a Birmingham DIP RA programme).



#### Figure 5: Session feedback

94% of people on the programme rated the sessions as 'good' or 'average'. On average service users who returned feedback forms rated 7.2 of the 12 sessions they attended. In total, 172 sessions were rated as 'good', 145 sessions as 'average', and 19 as 'poor'.



### What people say about the programme

*'It's cut down my offending, and my drug use, yeah. Because before, just with probation, I wasn't really getting on with them, I just saw them as friends with the police.'*

*'It helps you realise what you're doing to yourself.'*

*'The drug worker tells me where it's going to lead to; in the long run, back in prison.'*

*'Because of the time in the Swanswell office, you actually get to look at yourself and look back at your behaviour. And you can actually see things you didn't notice at the time.'*

### What commissioners say about the programme

As well as helping to reduce drug use and related offences, the 12-session programme helped build stronger relationships between Swanswell, the police, the probation service and the other criminal justice agencies.

The feedback about the programme from these agencies was very positive, with police commenting that officers would benefit from a training day or workshop with Swanswell so that they fully understand the programme and how effective it is.

Paul Smith, a senior probation officer, says the programme offers an additional resource for the overall management of drug-related offences. He says:

*'It provides additional evidence of positive outcomes in work with substance misusing offenders which fits with the need to promote the core aims of the probation service to protect the public and prevent reoffending.'*

### Other things we have learned from the pilot study

From the feedback from our own drug workers and clients we will be reviewing the session plans and resources for this programme so that we:

- make the programme worksheets less wordy and more visual
- create an action plan for use at the end of each session so that people can plan and put into practice what they have learned during that session and feedback on how this has gone at the following session
- focus even more on improving partnership working during the delivery of the programme
- enhance the motivational content of the programme so that people can more easily address their own ambivalence, which is their greatest barrier to change

### Conclusions

Swanswell's programme delivered significant positive outcomes, reducing spending on illegal drugs by **71%** with an implied reduction in reoffending, a key objective of criminal justice agencies. The programme more than met the expectations of our commissioners and we believe it offers a very practical, cost-effective solution that delivers significant benefits in reducing drug use and reoffending.

With estimated annual costs of drug-related crime in England and Wales totalling **£15.4 billion**<sup>1</sup>, Swanswell's programme has the potential to reduce those costs by **£2.4 billion** (based on scaling up 15.3% of people completing the course drug free, and assuming that none of them will reoffend).

### Recommendations

The programme content and resources will be reviewed and amended, taking into account what we have learned from the pilot.

The evidence gained from this pilot shows that the programme would be ideally suited to a payment by results scheme. It would also lend itself to funding through new mechanisms such as

Social Impact Bonds. Because of the structure behind the programme, it can be easily embedded into other services, creating opportunities to work in partnership and roll out the programme on a large scale.

As shown previously, if offered nationally, this programme has the potential to reduce the costs of drug-related crime by around **£2.4 billion** each year. The Swanswell programme provides a clear model for other organisations to follow.

### References

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