



Dear Sir/Madam

Please find enclosed/attached the submission from the Drugs and Health Alliance (DHA) to the Drug Strategy Consultation Paper 2007, *Drugs: Our Community, Your Say*.

The Drugs and Health Alliance (DHA) is a group of organisations and individuals who support an evidence-based, public health-led approach to dealing with illegal drugs. The consensus statement, to which all the member organisations have signed up to, is available on the DHA website: <http://www.drugshealthalliance.net/> (please refer to this website for further information and a regularly updated list of member organisations).

The DHA was established in 2006/07 in part to encourage constructive input into the drug strategy review process and related consultation. As stated in the DHA consensus statement, it is our view that problems with UK drug policy *'are perpetuated by the Government's failure to conduct an evidence based review of the progress of the UK drug strategy and its failure to consult with informed public opinion'*. The DHA represents one such body of opinion.

We sincerely believed that the review and consultation process would be a genuine opportunity for open dialogue with key stakeholders, that the successes and failures of the last 10 years would be objectively reviewed, and that actual change in both the focus of policy and decision making infrastructure was a real possibility. This belief was the spur for the formation of the DHA. We have been disappointed to see that the process so far has not met any of these expectations and we have outlined our specific concerns in introduction to our submission.

We make this submission despite these concerns in the hope that the relevant policy makers will give due consideration to its contents. We also hope our concerns about the flawed review and consultation process can be responded to accordingly, by delaying the new strategy publication and instigating a process in line with what everyone in the drugs field had hoped for and expected (regardless of their policy positions).

We aim to continue with the process of engagement and would welcome the opportunity for DHA representatives to meet with relevant officials and ministers to present our ideas for achieving a more just and effective 10 year strategy that puts public health and harm reduction at the heart of policy development and implementation.

Yours faithfully, on behalf of the Drugs and Health Alliance members