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NATIONAL TACKLING DRUGS WEEK

Police and partner agencies throughout Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are giving their backing to National Tackling Drugs Week (19-23 May 2008).

Staffordshire Police, together with Stoke-on-Trent's Safer City Partnership and Staffordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team, will be promoting a host of initiatives and events in support of the national campaign - all designed to tackle drug dealing and use, reduce drug-related crime and address community issues.

Assistant Chief Constable Douglas Paxton said: "Staffordshire Police and our partner agencies are committed to working together to tackle and reduce drug-related crime. A vast array of work takes place throughout Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent - from targeting and arresting drug dealers, through to providing one-to-one support for those unfortunate enough to be dependent on drugs, and addressing drug issues that trouble our communities.

"Tackling Class A drugs is one of our operational policing priorities. Last year we arrested 166 people for supplying drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Through Operation Nemesis we are targeting major drug dealers and bringing them to justice. Three arrest days have led to 42 people being convicted, and jail terms totalling more than 130 years. More than 20 people await sentencing. There will be more arrests to come.

"Operation Nemesis wouldn't be the success that it is without the information about drugs and dealers that we get from the public - a great deal of that via the anonymous Crimestoppers number 0800 555 111. And our partner agencies make a massive contribution in helping to ensure that individuals who are addicted to drugs, and families torn apart because of them, get the treatment or help and support they need."

This week, local radio adverts funded by Staffordshire Crimestoppers are urging people to ring in with information about drug crime in their area.
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Staffordshire County Councillor Carol Dean, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities, said: "We are firmly committed to introducing more effective treatment strategies for those suffering from drug abuse. Our recent Drug and Alcohol Summit clearly demonstrated our intentions to work more closely with our partners to increase the support available and help get people's lives back on track. We hope that this awareness week will help raise the profile of the work already going on and enhance our efforts to tackle drug misuse."

Stoke-on-Trent's Elected Mayor Mark Meredith said: "Drugs are a major national problem. In Stoke-on-Trent we have an excellent Safer City Partnership that brings together initiatives by the city council, the police, the primary care trust, and the community and voluntary sector.

"We work together to address both the supply and demand for drugs, with one key aspect of the agenda being to increase the number of drug users accessing drug treatment in order to achieve healthy, crime-free lives. Last year, 1,550 people received drug treatment in Stoke-on-Trent - just over half of the estimated number of problem users in the city. We would like to increase this figure further.

"In addition, 61 per cent of schools were involved in the Healthy Schools Scheme, a component of which is drug and alcohol education, and 2,860 vulnerable young people received targeted drug and alcohol education and support."

Ends

Media note: More information about National Tackling Drugs Week initiatives being organised by Staffordshire Police are available from:

Chase division: Helen Jarvie or Liz McGinn, tel 01785 234108

North Staffs and Stoke-on-Trent divisions: David Bailey, tel 01785 233008

Trent Valley division: Peter Stevens, tel 01785 238228.

For information about drugs/alcohol, contact our partners:

Staffordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (coordinates drug services across Staffordshire), tel 01785 223176.

Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership (coordinates drug services in Stoke-on-Trent), tel 01782 235708.

Stoke-on-Trent Community Drug Service (for adult users, their families and friends), tel 01782 425100.

Alcohol and Drug Services in Staffordshire (ADSIS, a confidential service for alcohol users, their families and friends), tel 01782 271096.

The Lock (a confidential drug and alcohol service for under-19s), tel 01782 202077.

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