Cyrenians
Preventative Agenda – Substance misuse

1) To what extent do you believe the Scottish Government’s national drugs strategy, The Road to Recovery, and the approach by Integration Authorities & NHS Boards are preventative?

The Road to Recovery strategy, in practice, has influenced an effective approach to integrated work and strengthened partnership working between voluntary & statutory sector treatment providers to deliver positive outcomes to those service users looking to address their individual substance misuse issues, whilst accessing treatment services. It is by no means the finished article, prevention & education work does take place but there will always be opportunities to evaluate and further develop our approach. However in contrast to that statement, recent figures released highlighting the increase of drugs related deaths in Scotland, would suggest that despite the collective efforts of all parties involved, the strategy and the principles contained within, have been anything but preventative. Currently there appears to be a shift of focus again onto developing more Harm Reduction/Crisis Intervention provision in light of this report

2) Is the approach adequate or is more action needed?

Our experiences of working across several local authority areas has been that the approach has been inconsistent. An observation on this point would be to say, that in relation to the Essential Care aspect of the report, General Practice has a greater role to play than it currently does, by becoming more proactive in identifying those appropriate psycho-social interventions, community based support service and resources, beyond a substitute prescription, that meets the needs and aspirations of our specific client group.

3) What evaluation has been done of interventions?

Individual service providers will monitor service user progress against individual assessed goals and contractually agreed targets, as well seek feedback from their own service users which will complement or substantiate any outcomes based evidence that they have recorded. The Care Inspectorate has carried out a recent assessment of the local Alcohol & Drugs Partnership (ADP), where there was some evaluation or focus on interventions, however this was linked more, in the main to the performance of the ADP.

4) Are the service and national drugs strategy being measured and evaluated in terms of cost and benefit?

Again this is difficult to respond to, as a service provider, who has carried out cost & benefits analysis of certain aspects of service delivery. This exercise was more about considering cost effective service delivery, measured against contractually agreed service user outcomes, within the financial parameters at that time. This is more in relation to the individual service. Given current local
government financial constraints, there may be an argument to have as a priority a national evaluation in terms of cost & benefits within the provision of addiction treatment services in Scotland.