

Press release

30 January 2007

Hackney's CrackDown project has pioneered the fight against drugs in the borough and led to a reduction in crime and greater support for victims.

On the day when Hackney was nationally recognised and celebrated for the achievements made in reducing crime across the borough, the CrackDown project was singled out as a success in tackling drugs and related crime.

Attending the 1st Annual Hackney CrackDown project Conference was Louise Casey, Respect Tsar for the Government who commended the team for their bravery and tenacity and for helping the residents of Hackney feel safer in their environment.

Casey rubbed shoulders with Hackney MPs Diane Abbott, Meg Hillier, local police as well as an ex-drug user and residents to discuss how all agencies can continue to work together to tackle the problem of Class A drugs and their devastating consequences on the lives of families and residents in Hackney.

"Crackhouses are in business 24 hours a day and they can drag down an otherwise good area. The residents have to put up with drug paraphernalia, faeces, used condoms in their stairwells. Mothers, young people, elderly and children feel very intimidated".

Steve Tucker, Hackney Homes Chief Executive highlighted the work that the CrackDown Project is doing to intervene, to prevent and support those who are trapped in the cycle of drugs and crime.

"Their great work is helping to show London that Hackney is a great place to live and a great place to grow up".

A poignant moment of the Conference came from an ex-drug user who came face to face with residents to share his experience of drug use within estates in Hackney.

"Boredom drives you to drugs. That is why we need to engage and encourage people to take part in local activities from an early age. But remember, there is always hope for a drug user".

Ends

Press queries to Olaide Oyekanmi on 0208 356 3522, 0777 256 5514 or email olaide.oyekanmi@hackneyhomes.org.uk

Notes to Editors

CrackDown is a Home-Office part funded project aimed at achieving the sustainable closure of crackhouses in Hackney. In operation for two years, the project has assisted in the closure and securing of over 200 crackhouses.

The first of its kind in England, CrackDown brings together in one team a vulnerable persons' worker, a drug referral worker and a Police Sergeant all working to ensure that the needs of the victims and perpetrators are all adequately addressed.

How to spot a crackhouse:

- Large numbers of casual visitors
- Drugs paraphernalia left outside on balconies, stairwells, in gardens etc
- Large groups congregating on balconies or outside front doors
- Cars coming and going – particularly late at night and not stopping more than five or ten minutes.

To report a crack house in confidence, get in touch on:

Phone 0208 356 3333

Text: 07976 911165

E-mail: crackdown@hackney.gov.uk

Your name and address will not be asked for. All we need is information on crack houses and crack dealers.