

# Developing standards of practice in the drugs & alcohol workforce

# DANGERS 2012



It's a  
vision thing...

A practical guide from the Federation  
of Drug & Alcohol Professionals

fdap

*Developing a competent substance misuse workforce... is crucial to ensuring a high standard of service delivery.*

**[Home Office Drug Strategy, March 2008]**

*...it is important that commissioners and services continue to work towards a workforce which is fully competent and able to demonstrate its competence.*

**[NTA Workforce Update, December 2007]**

“DANOS 2012” is published by FDAP in consultation with the Competence Group (a group of leading workforce consultants) and Skills for Health (which developed the DANOS standards).

It is supported by EATA, DrugScope and Alcohol Concern.



# THE VISION THING

## Competent practitioners...

Each job is made up of many parts.

To do your job properly you need to have the skills, knowledge and understanding, to carry out each part of your role.

But that's not all...

## delivering on the ground...

You could be a highly talented footballer - but to perform well on the pitch you need to make full use of your abilities when it matters.



*Off target - David Beckham misses a penalty in Euro 2004*

And what applies on the football field, applies to the drugs and alcohol field too.

## ...and working to high ethical standards.



*Maradona had a great left foot - but an even better left hand*

While it may have outraged a nation, 'unsporting' behaviour on the football field is not the end of the world.

But ethics really do matter when you're working with a potentially vulnerable client group like ours.

## DANOS AND ALL THAT

You've probably heard about National Occupational Standards (NOS). They sound complicated but actually they are quite simple and very useful (if a bit dull).

National Occupational Standards describe the different tasks and activities relevant to a particular area of work and the underpinning knowledge and understanding required to carry them out.

And each individual NOS standard, or 'unit' as they are often called, focuses on a specific task or activity.

### Substance misuse NOS

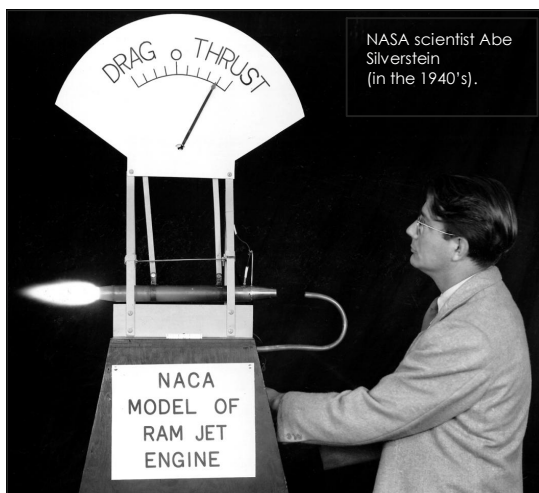
The Drug & Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS) cover most of the substance misuse related tasks and activities relevant to our field, such as:

Support individuals who are substance users [DANOS AB2]

Supply and exchange injecting equipment [DANOS AH3]

Employ techniques to help people to adopt sensible drinking... [DANOS AH10]

Counsel individuals about their substance use... [DANOS AI1]



*This is rocket science.*

*Opposite is an example DANOS unit.*

*Can you spot the difference?*

### Generic NOS

Most jobs also involve a range of more generic tasks and activities too. Most of these are covered in the Health & Social Care (HSC) and General Health (GEN) NOS. Examples include:

Promote effective communication for and about individuals [HSC 31]

Promote, monitor & maintain health, safety & security in the workplace [HSC 32]

Reflect on and develop your practice [HSC 33]

Promote choice, well-being and the protection of all individuals [HSC34]

## **DANOS AB2: Support individuals who are substance users**

*This unit is about supporting individuals who are substance users by enabling them to adopt safe practices, providing care and support following an episode of substance use and supporting individuals' efforts to reduce or cease substance use.*

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Each NOS unit is made up of one or more elements.

The elements making up DANOS AB2 are:

*AB2.1: Enable individuals to adopt safe practices associated with substance use*

*AB2.2: Support individuals when they have used substances*

*AB2.3: Support individuals in reducing substance use*

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Each element is then broken down in to individual competence components.

The components listed under AB2.1 include:

- *you offer people guidance, support & advice on ways in which substance use and activities affected by it can be practised more safely*
  - *you explain the risks to individuals from the substances taken and the methods used in a manner, and at a level & pace, appropriate to them*
  - *you support and encourage individuals to dispose of hazardous materials and equipment in a safe manner and place immediately after use*
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Each unit also includes a list of underpinning knowledge and understanding.

In AB2.1, things you need to know and understand include:

- *legislation relating to the supply and use of substances and how these affect your role and responsibilities*
- *the different forms of substance which individuals might use, how they are used and their likely effects*
- *the range of safer sex practices and how people can be encouraged to use them*

# THE GOALS

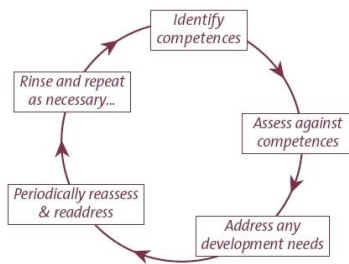
## Role profiles

The first step to a competent workforce is for each person to have a "role profile" which identifies:

- the range of 'competences' they require (ie the tasks and activities they need to be competent in) to do their job properly;
- the knowledge, understanding and skills (know-how) needed to perform each of these to the required standard.

## Continuing professional development (CPD)

Having identified the competences - and underpinning know-how - required in a person's job, we need to ensure that:



- they are regularly assessed against their role profile, to identify any shortfalls in their competence and underpinning know-how;
- any such shortfalls are addressed - through training, reading, supervision, and so on.

## Evidence of "basic competence"

To make sure everyone has a basic set of competences to work in the field all practitioners should either have, or be working towards, evidence of:

- their core generic competence to work with adults and/or children & young people (depending on their client group);
- their competence in at least some units from the DANOS standards.

## Code of practice

All practitioners should also be covered by a comprehensive code of practice and related complaints & disciplinary procedures - like FDAP's Code of Practice for Drug & Alcohol Professionals.

## Supervision

Finally, practitioners need regular supervision to ensure they are putting their abilities into practice and acting ethically.

[NB Line managers have an important role in this, but some agencies also use outside supervisors.]

## Getting there

These goals will not be reached overnight. However, here's a suggested timetable - with milestones along the way - which would see us achieve them in full by 2012.

2009

- All workers and their line managers should be subject to an appropriate code of practice and related complaints & disciplinary procedures.
- All drug and alcohol jobs - paid or unpaid - should have role profiles identifying the main competences (generic & substance misuse) required in the role.
- All front-line workers (including volunteers) should be subject to on-going CPD based on their role profiles, and be receiving regular supervision.
- 70% of all front-line workers should have, or be working towards, evidence of their basic competence (generic & substance misuse) to work in the field.
- 70% of line managers should be undertaking, or have completed, a training course in line management.

2010

- 85% of all front-line workers should have, or be working towards, evidence of their basic competence to work in the field.
- 85% of line managers should be undertaking, or have completed, a training course in line management.

2011

- 85% of workers' line managers/supervisors, should have, or be working towards, evidence of their own basic competence to work in the field.

2012

- All workers and their line managers/supervisors should have, or be working towards, evidence of their basic competence to work in the field.
- All line managers should be undertaking, or have completed, a training course in line management.

### What's the significance of 2012?

- A. it's the year of the London Olympics
- B. it's the Chinese year of the dragon
- C. it's 1390 in the Persian calendar
- D. it's a leap year
- E. it's 10 years since DANOS was first published



2012 is the year of the dragon - but that's not it

## RELEVANT NOS

This section lists a set of national occupational standards (NOS) which between them cover the main competences relevant to front-line workers in the drugs & alcohol field.

The units listed here are drawn from three sets of NOS standards:

- Health & Social Care (HSC)
- General Health (GEN)
- Drugs & Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS)

### Core generic units

The following NOS units are relevant to everyone working in the field:

- Relate to, and interact with, individuals [HSC 233]
- Promote effective communication for and about individuals [HSC 31]
- Promote, monitor & maintain health, safety & security in the workplace [HSC 32]
- Reflect on and develop your practice [HSC 33]
- Promote choice, well-being and the protection of all individuals [HSC 35] *and/or* Promote the well-being and protection of children and young people [HSC 34]
- Promote the equality, diversity, rights and responsibilities of individuals [HSC 3111]
- Make use of supervision [GEN 36]

### Core assessment units

Drug & alcohol workers would normally be expected also to be able to do the following:

- Assess and act upon immediate risk of danger to substance users [DANOS AB5]
- Carry out assessment to identify and prioritise needs [DANOS AF2]

### Specialist units

Depending on their particular role, all drug and alcohol workers would normally also need to be able to carry out at least one of the following:

#### Assessment & care planning

- Test for substance use [DANOS AE1]
- Carry out comprehensive substance misuse assessment [DANOS AF3]
- Develop, implement and review care plans for individuals [DANOS AG1]
- Contribute to care planning and review [DANOS AG2]
- Assist with the transfer of individuals between agencies and services [DANOS AG3]
- Retain individuals in contact with substance misuse services [DANOS AG4]

## Treatment

- Support individuals who are substance users [DANOS AB2]
- Prescribe controlled drugs for substance users [DANOS AH1]
- Prepare to & administer medication to individuals, & monitor effects [DANOS AH2]
- Supply and exchange injecting equipment for individuals [DANOS AH3]
- Support individuals through detoxification programmes [DANOS AH7]
- Supervise methadone consumption [DANOS AH9]
- Employ techniques to help individuals to adopt sensible drinking behaviour [DANOS AH10]
- Prepare prescriptions for controlled drugs [DANOS AH11]
- Counsel individuals about their substance use... [DANOS AI1]
- Counsel groups of individuals about their substance use... [DANOS AI3]

## Addressing wrap-around needs

- Help individuals address their offending behaviour [DANOS AJ1]
- Enable individuals to change their offending behaviour [DANOS AJ2]
- Enable individuals to access housing and accommodation [DANOS AK3]
- Support individuals to develop & maintain social networks & relationships [HSC 331]
- Help individuals to access employment [HSC 347]
- Help individuals to access learning, training & development opportunities [HSC 348]

## Education

- Raise awareness about substances, their use and effects [DANOS AD1]
- Develop & disseminate information & advice about substance use, health etc [DANOS AD4]

## Supporting & protecting others

- Contribute to prevention & management of abusive & aggressive behaviour [DANOS AB3]
- Provide services to those affected by someone else's substance use [DANOS AB7]

### **Other competence frameworks**

Competence frameworks like the Knowledge & Skills Framework (KSF) in the NHS typically include most of the generic competences relevant to drug and alcohol workers, but not the more specialist ones covered by DANOS.

So while they do not need to include the "core generic units", role profiles based on frameworks like KSF should be supplemented by the "core assessment units" and any "specialist units" relevant to the post.

## EVIDENCE OF COMPETENCE

Professionally qualified workers have already demonstrated the generic competence to work with people - but not the specialist knowledge required to put this in to practice in the drugs and alcohol field.

So they should at least be undertaking CPD in the area - and ought ideally to have a substance misuse related qualification too.

And anyone practising as a counsellor or psychotherapist, if not already *certified* by an appropriate body (like BACP, UKCP, UKRC or FDAP), should be working towards becoming so.

### Professionally qualified worker

...someone qualified to practise in the UK in a regulated health or social care profession (eg as a nurse, doctor, social worker), Chartered by the BPS as a psychologist, or Certified as a counsellor or psychotherapist by a recognised certifying body (eg BACP, UKCP, UKRC or FDAP).

[Academic qualifications (eg a degree in psychology) are **not** sufficient on their own, even if they are in a related area.]

All other workers - including volunteers - should have, or be working towards, a *practice-assessed* qualification, at "Level 3" or above, which demonstrates:

### Level 3 qualifications

Level 3 is broadly equivalent to A-level.

- their generic core competence to work with adults or children & young people (as appropriate), and
- their competence in at least 3 units from the DANOS national occupational standards.

## Relevant qualifications

### Evidence of generic core competence only

- NVQs (at Level 3+) in working with people in health, social care or criminal justice settings, without DANOS options

### Evidence of DANOS competence only

- National Award/Cert. in Working with Substance Misuse (Edexcel/City & Guilds)
- Open Univ./FDAP Prof. Development Awards eg "Assessment & Care Planning"

### Combined evidence: core + DANOS

- NVQs with DANOS options (Health & Social Care, Working with Offending Behaviour)
- Advanced Apprenticeship in Community Justice (substance misuse pathway)
- Open Univ./FDAP Professional Award for Drug & Alcohol Practitioners (10 units)
- FDAP Accreditation as a Drug & Alcohol Professional
- FDAP Accreditation as a Drug & Alcohol Counsellor

**Note:** Some other qualifications, though not providing evidence of competence in their own right, do include assessments of workplace practice and are recognised by FDAP towards Accreditation as a Drug & Alcohol Professional.

## MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Line management is a specialism in its own right yet few line managers in our field get any training for their role.



Together with the awarding body ASET, FDAP has developed a four day training programme for line managers, leading to a Level 3 qualification.

And in association with the Open University, FDAP offer a Professional Development Award in Line Management of Drug & Alcohol Practitioners, based on a practical assessment of workplace competence.

*Brian's management style  
needs a bit of fine tuning*

Supervision is also key to effective practice, and those providing it - whether as line managers or independent supervisors - should be qualified to deliver the services they are supervising, even if they do not have a caseload themselves.

## COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners have a key role to play in protecting services users and ensuring the quality of drug and alcohol services.

Commissioners should make sure that all services they fund and refer to are staffed by properly trained and qualified workers and managers, and covered by an appropriate code of practice.

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## MORE INFO

Additional guidance on national occupational standards and workforce development, and links to further information, can be found under "training & development" at:

[www.drinkanddrugs.net](http://www.drinkanddrugs.net)

For more information on FDAP training and qualifications for workers and managers, and our Code of Practice for Drug & Alcohol Professionals, visit:

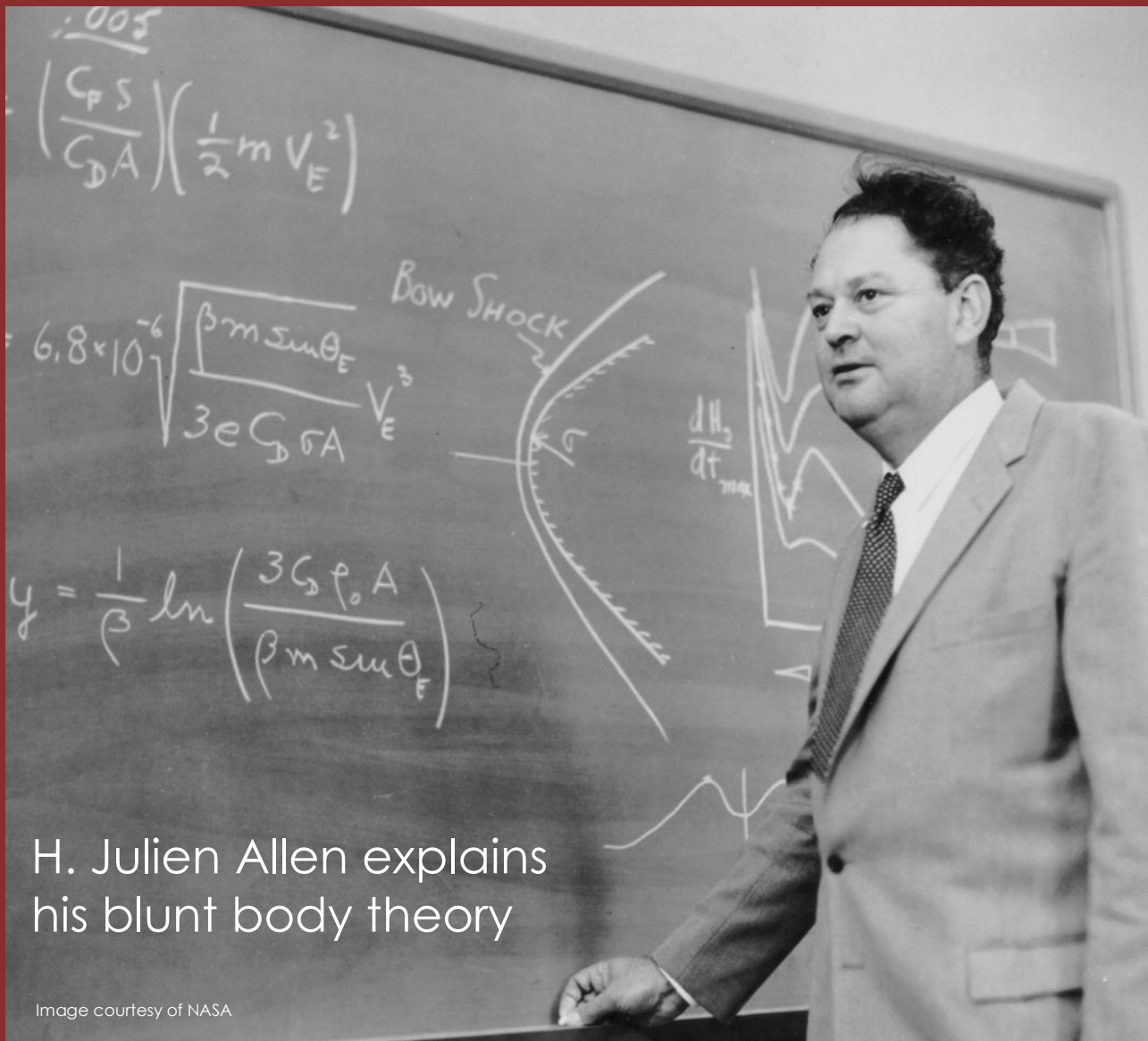
[www.fdap.org.uk](http://www.fdap.org.uk)

To find out more about the history of rocket science, and the latest developments in the field, try:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_technology)



More rocket science...



H. Julian Allen explains his blunt body theory

Image courtesy of NASA

...and some people think DANOS is complicated!