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The Gazette

This publication has been funded from the Incidental Expenses Provision of John Penrose. Promoted by and on behalf of John Penrose MP at 24/26 Alexandra Parade, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1QX and printed by The Northcliffe Press Ltd, Tel:01332 595607

VICTORY FOR MP'S DRUGS CAMPAIGN

LOCAL MP John Penrose has achieved national success with his Cleaner Weston anti-drugs campaign. As a result of John's work, the Government has agreed to tighten up on agencies which refer addicts for treatment in Weston and around the country.

The commitments came during a Parliamentary debate led by John to highlight the problems caused by drugs in Weston-super-Mare.

During the debate, John called on the Government to bring in a national accreditation scheme to improve the quality of addiction treatment and care. He said that local authorities should be notified whenever an addict is sent into their area. At the moment, seven out of every eight addicts

arrive in Weston without the police, council, probation services and health authorities even knowing.

John also demanded that addicts aren't abandoned in towns like Weston-super-Mare when they leave rehab centres. A recent investigation by MP revealed that nearly four in ten addicts coming to Weston cannot be traced once their treatment is finished.

Responding to Mr Penrose, Health Minister Caroline Flint agreed to all three points. She said she would ask the National Treatment Agency to see if the work being done in Weston could be rolled out nationally.

She promised to send letters to all referring agencies,



informing them of their duty to tell local authorities when they send addicts to towns like Weston. She also agreed to write to local authorities to ensure they track the individuals they refer for treatment.

Ms Flint confirmed that the Government would consider using Weston's drug treatment centre accreditation scheme as a model for the rest of Britain.

John said: "I am absolutely delighted with the outcome. I asked the Speaker for a debate to bring the scale of this problem out into the open.

"I wanted three commitments from Caroline Flint and she

agreed to all of them. Effectively, this means that the Government has agreed to roll out the recommendations of the Cleaner Weston Campaign across the rest of the country.

"The Government's commit-

'Weston is leading the way in dealing with the problems of drug addiction.'

ment will give drug addicts everywhere a better chance to rebuild their lives. It shows that Weston is leading the way in dealing with the problems of drug addiction. But best of all, it puts the town back on the path to success."



HEALTH Minister Caroline Flint

John Penrose MP - Working for you all year round