Appendix 5

Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS)

During the past year:

(1) Did you think your use of [named drug] was out of control?

(2) Did the prospect of missing a fix (or dose) or not chasing make you anxious or worried?

(3) Did you worry about your use of [named drug]?

(4) Did you wish you could stop?

(5) How difficult did you find it to stop, or go without [named drug]?

For questions 1–4 each item is scored on a four-point scale: 0 = never/almost never
1 = sometimes
2 = often
3 = always/nearly always

Question 5 is also scored on a four-point scale, but here: 0 = not difficult
1 = quite difficult
2 = very difficult
3 = impossible

The SDS has been validated to measure severity of dependence of opiate and stimulant users. A total SDS score is calculated. Higher scores indicate higher levels of dependence. It is primarily a measure of compulsive use, which is a central component of dependence. It does not measure tolerance, withdrawal or reinstatement.