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ADDICTS SELLING HEROIN TO FEED HABIT WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED - POLICE CHIEF



Drug addicts who sell heroin to other users will not face prosecution under a new scheme, a police chief has said.

Durham Police Chief Constable Mike Barton said those found in possession of drugs, including class A narcotics cocaine and heroin, would not go before a court if they agreed to go on a four-month programme.

Called Checkpoint, the scheme follows a two-year pilot and aims to tackle underlying lifestyle issues with access to mental health treatment.

Mr Barton said it would allow police to tackle criminal gangs who profit from users' addictions to fund their enterprise.

He told the Mail on Sunday: "From next

month, anyone caught in possession of any drugs will go on Checkpoint. If they agree, they will not face prosecution or go to court.

"If they are selling heroin to feed their habit, we do not want to send them to prison.

"They are technically dealers but if they are sad people rather than bad, we want to stop their addiction. Then we can focus on the really bad people.

"What's the point in an addict going to court and getting a £50 fine? If they pay it at all, they will only steal or sell five bags of heroin to fund it. How does that help us?"

But the plan met with criticism from a charity that provides support for families of those with drug and alcohol addiction.

Elizabeth Burton-Phillips, who set up DrugFAM after losing her son Nick to heroin addiction in 2004, told the paper: "This is absolutely wrong. If you are an active drug dealer, you are dealing in death."

The programme's extension follows Mr Barton's previous calls to decriminalise class A drugs and reform how addiction is treated.

In 2014 he visited Copenhagen to study how the Danes deal with heroin addicts as part of a BBC documentary.

In it he said: "What I'm saying is, let's take the money out of the business."

A Home Office spokesman said: "This Government has no intention of decriminalising drugs.

"It is vital that the police and criminal justice system have a range of measures available to them to prevent drug use.

"However, they also have the tools to deal robustly with serious and repeat offenders who cause the most harm in our communities."



A Massachusetts man authorities dubbed the "spelling bee bandit" - because the notes he passed to bank staff during a series of robberies contained the same spelling error - has pleaded guilty.

Jason Englen, 34, admitted four counts of bank robbery in the Boston area. Authorities said he entered an Arlington bank on October 31 last year, approached a clerk and handed over a note written on a deposit slip indicating a robbery was in progress, except robbery was spelled with just one B.

Over the next few weeks, he also robbed banks in Reading, Burlington and Peabody using notes with the same misspelling. He was arrested last December, and now faces up to 20 years in prison.

Jail Inmate Charged With Attempted Murder Of Two Prison Officers

An inmate in a jail has appeared in court charged with the attempted murder of two male prison officers.

Cairo Adams, 21, is accused of attacking the officers at Norwich Prison on June 11 2017.

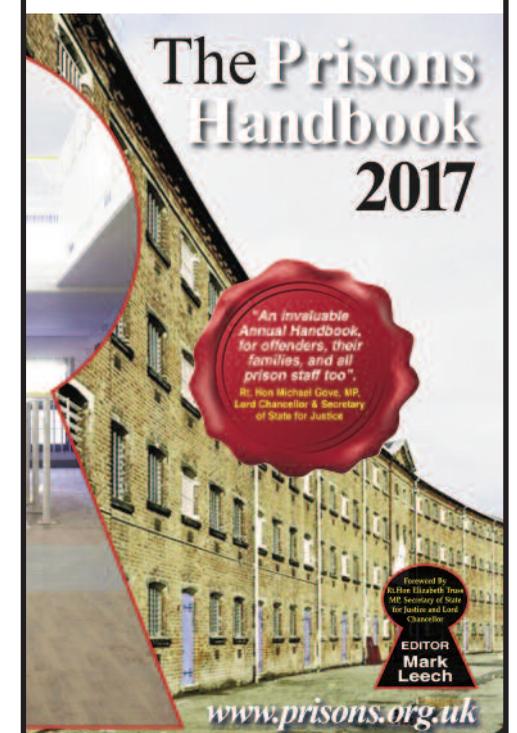
He appeared before Norwich Magistrates' Court by videolink from Whitmoor Prison near March, Cambridgeshire.

No pleas were taken and he was remanded in custody to appear at Norwich Crown Court on December 14.



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