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## Media Release

### Frequent Flyers Project takes off

A new health service project aimed at helping alcoholics kick the booze, is starting this week. The service, called the Frequent Flyers project, works with Portsmouth patients who have the most hospital attendances linked to alcohol misuse. A dedicated health advisor will work with a small group of patients who have complex health and social problems in order to resolve the underlying issues that lead them to drink.

The service is funded by NHS Portsmouth and has been implemented for a further 12 months after a successful trial earlier in the year. The patients who took part in the trial had 37 hospital admissions each on average during 2009. It was expected that during the trial these patients would have accounted for 28 admissions between them but as a result of the project this was reduced to just 4 admissions. The estimated saving to the health service was £21,000!

The service has raised interest from across the South East region and a presentation on the trial's findings will be delivered to alcohol experts from across the region at a conference in Guildford on the 27<sup>th</sup> July.

Portsmouth has the highest rate of alcohol related hospital admissions in the South East, with approximately 4,000 people admitted to hospital each year. In addition to this up to 14,000 A&E attendances each year could be linked to alcohol.

Mark Poingdestre, Area Manager for Cranstoun Drug Services, who will be running the project said, "We are excited to be delivering this project. The service provides patients who are regularly hospitalised due to their alcohol misuse with intensive support around a whole range of issues, including health,

mental health, housing and debt. We will be able to link patients into our existing range of services which can help them to stay sober.”

Paul Edmondson-Jones, Director of Public Health and Primary Care for Portsmouth City said, “The Frequent Flyers project is an example of how we can use our money more effectively in these challenging times. The project will work closely with Queen Alexandra Hospital to identify those who are admitted on a very regular basis.

Rather than just accepting that they will keep going in and out of hospital, we will provide intensive support to address all the issues that cause their drinking. Once we have resolved these issues then patients will be in a much better place to stay off alcohol and live healthier happier lives.

This project is part of a much larger investment in alcohol services made by NHS Portsmouth. We are investing in a specialist alcohol school nurse, alcohol advice in pharmacies, a ‘Safe Space’ project in the city centre on Friday and Saturday nights and new treatment services in the hospital and the community.”  
For more information about the services that Cranstoun Drug Services provide for drug and alcohol users please call 023 9275 1617

Ends

**About Safer Portsmouth Partnership**

Safer Portsmouth Partnership is a group of statutory and voluntary community agencies that meet regularly and work together to reduce crime, substance misuse and the fear of crime. Their goal is to make Portsmouth a safe place to live, work and visit.

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