

# New therapy is big success on addicts

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A PIONEERING drugs treatment project is claiming a 75 per cent success rate in Dumfries and Galloway.

The electrical therapy, originally used in the 1960s to help rock stars beat their addictions, is being trialled by charity organisation the Lochbank Trust.

Using NeuroElectric Therapy (NET), the trust believe they can treat patients far more quickly and effectively than by other approaches, such as methadone.

Drug addicts and alcoholics who wish to quit are hooked up to the NET device with two headphone-like parts attaching to the patient's head, one behind each ear.

The device – which looks like a Walkman – then sends out a small electrical pulse, just strong enough for the patient to feel.

Supporters of NET claim it helps to restore electric pathways to the brain, which have been ravaged and distorted by substance abuse.

This lowers a patient's suffering as they withdraw from heroin or alcohol and greatly reduces the craving that follows.

The device is a key weapon used by the Borgue-based Lochbank Trust as part of their rehabilitation programme.

The treatment was famously used by rock stars Eric Clapton, Keith Richards and Pete Townsend to help them kick their habits.

But now addicts in Dumfries and Galloway can gain access to the treatment which is currently undergoing clinical trials at Glasgow University's Drugs Misuse Centre.

Lochbank Trust's Chief Executive Gordon Culbert said: "In ten days, NET treatment can detox alcohol, methadone and heroin at the same time.

"Whereas for someone going elsewhere in the region, it's going to take them many weeks or even years, to get them off the drug.

"So it is at a distinct advantage over methadone programmes.

"They are being detoxed, feeling well and having no cravings in about a week, rather than over many weeks."

"Hence we can shorten the whole rehabilitation process which is also much more cost effective.

"There haven't been full clinical tests completed yet, but there is certainly enough research evidence to support that it is worth considering."

Lochbank Trust began using the NET therapy 12 months ago, and have had 40 addicts complete the course – 30 of whom they claim are still drugs free.

NET was discovered by Scottish doctor Meg Patterson in the 1960s, but is only now undergoing clinical trials to determine its value.

The treatment is carried out as an early stage of a larger drug rehabilitation programme managed from Lochbank Trust's rehab centre in Borgue.

Team manager at the centre, Owen Fielding, said: "This is no silver bullet – a person needs to really want to get off drugs. But we believe it is giving people a much better chance of rehabilitation."