

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

18th September 2015

Drug Strategy 2014-17 Update



Report of Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board with an annual progress report on the delivery of actions of the Drug Strategy for County Durham.

Background

2. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board received a presentation as part of the consultation at its meeting in September 2014 to which the committee responded and requested an update on progress. The Drug Strategy 2014-17 was adopted by Durham County Council's Cabinet in December 2014.

3. The aim of the strategy is:

"To prevent harm, restrict supply and sustain a future for individuals to live a drug free and healthy life, whilst minimising the impact on communities and families."

4. The strategy has six strategic objectives under three themes:

Preventing Harm

- Increase awareness and understanding of drugs in order to reduce drug misuse across the population.
- Have fewer people taking up drug use and to break the inter-generational path to drug misuse and dependency.

Restricting Supply

- Reduce the supply of drugs and number of drug related incidents impacting upon communities and families.

Building Recovery in our Communities

- Ensure recovery is understood and visible in the community.
- Support people to successfully recover from their dependency, addressing both their health and social needs arising from their drug use.
- Involve and support families and carers living with drug related issues.

5. A multi-agency implementation group has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy and meets on a bi-monthly basis to monitor performance and the implementation of the action plan.

Changes to commissioned services

6. The drug and alcohol services across County Durham have been through a comprehensive review and recommissioning process. As a result, Lifeline was awarded the contract for the new integrated drug and alcohol service for both adults and young people in County Durham. Their contract began on 1st April 2015.

Current performance

7. There are two performance indicators reported corporately which directly relate to the Drug Strategy:
 - Percentage of successful completions of those in drug treatment – opiates; and
 - Percentage of successful completions of those in drug treatment – non-opiates.
8. The percentage of successful completions of those in drug treatment – opiates had a target of 7.9% with current reported performance of 7.1%. This shows an improvement when compared to the previous 12 months (6.1%).
9. The percentage of successful completions of those in drug treatment – non-opiates had a target of 40.4% with current reported performance of 40.1%. This shows an improvement when compared to the previous 12 months (34.2%).

Developments to date

10. Increasing the awareness and understanding of drugs is a strategic objective within the strategy. In order to do this a number of actions have already been implemented:
 - A social marketing plan has been developed which includes a training plan and is in the process of being implemented – this includes Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS)/Legal Highs;
 - In the first 6 months of 2015 1145 young people from 21 schools were given education sessions on drugs;

- Presentations around “legal highs” have been delivered to a number of partners to raise their awareness on the issues;
 - A good practice guide has been developed for schools and includes illegal drugs, caffeine and legal highs;
 - A report into the misuse of over the counter medicines has been completed following which guidance for approaching people suspected of misusing and highlighting referral pathways will be produced for Pharmacies.
11. To have fewer people taking up drug use and break the inter-generational path to drug misuse and dependency the following actions have been undertaken:
- A number of ambassadors have been trained and have taken up post in the new drug and alcohol integrated service;
 - Work is underway with the Stronger Families project to enhance pathways with the recovery service;
 - Family support services have been commissioned.
12. Under the objective of reducing the supply of drug related incidents impacting upon communities and families:
- The Police and Crime Commissioner held a symposium of future drug policy to debate the decriminalisation of drug users;
 - Lifeline is linked into the Checkpoint programme providing three navigators, this ensures that people who use drugs receive early referral for support and treatment where required;
 - Intelligence led operations continue to take place across the County.
13. To ensure recovery is understood and visible in the community:
- County Durham Recovery Forum has been established and constituted;
 - Ambassador courses are being run to train and recruit additional ambassadors;
 - Mutual aid groups have been established across the North East prison estates;
 - Durham City is hosting the national recovery walk in September 2015;
 - A Dual Needs Strategy has been complete;
 - Referral pathways between Lifeline and Housing Solution Services have been developed.
14. To support people to successfully recover from their dependency, addressing both their health and social needs arising from their drug misuse:
- A review of community based and prison based drug and alcohol specialist treatment services has been undertaken and services for sectors have been recommissioned. Lifeline was successful in gaining

the contracts for the prison services across the North East as well as the community services in County Durham.

- The Dual Needs Strategy has been finalised which ensures clear pathways for patients who have substance use disorders together with mental health conditions.
- Pathways are in place to move people on from the Recovery Academy into independent housing.

15. To involve and support families and carers living with drug related issues:

- Family support services have been commissioned as part of the wider recovery commission.

16. The action plan will continue to be implemented and further updates provided to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as requested.

Recommendation

12. Members of the Committee are asked to:

- (a) Note the contents of the report;
- (b) Consider a progress report in 12 months.

Background Papers

Drug Strategy 2014-17
Drug Strategy Action Plan 2014-17

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None