



Health and Wellbeing Board

Update on the Lewisham Combating Drugs Partnership and Tobacco, Drug & Alcohol Strategy

Date: 17th October 2023

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Borough

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Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the progress of Lewisham's combating drugs partnership and development of the associated Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol borough strategy.

Summary

In December 2021 the Government released a new 10 year drugs strategy titled "From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives".

The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) offered Lewisham a supplementary substance misuse and treatment recovery grant (SSMTRG) from 2022/23 to support improvements in the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment, as part of a combating drugs partnership.

In December 2022 it was agreed that overall oversight would be incorporated within the work of the Safer Lewisham Partnership.

Whilst the national strategy has a broad partnership and whole system focus, the current

delivery plans required by OHID have a narrower focus on the treatment system.

Given the wider ambitions in Lewisham for the strategy, officers have begun the process of bringing partners together to develop a broader Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol strategy and Action plan for the borough. This will be brought to the Board for sign off by Spring 2024.

Despite the challenges to date with implementing the aims of the partnership, outcomes and successful completions from treatment have also shown significant improvements since the start of the strategy.

Officers plan work with providers, partners and experts by experience to have firm year 3 proposals by end November 2023.

Recommendations

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to note the contents of the report.

Policy Context

This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):

- Children and Young People
- Safer Communities
- Health and Wellbeing

In particular, this report is closely aligned to the following priorities:

- We will ensure the most vulnerable children are protected from harm, driving improvement in children's social care and aiming to reduce the number of children coming into care through earlier targeted support for families in crisis.
- We will reduce the number of young people who enter the criminal justice system, focusing on prevention and expanding our trauma-informed approach, championed by our Youth Offending Service.
- We will continue to focus and develop our successful public health approach to youth violence, aiming to tackle knife crime and reduce sexual exploitation across the borough.
- We will collaborate with other organisations to deliver the places, activities and programmes our residents need to feel empowered to live a physically active lifestyle.

Since the work of the partnership and strategy development is cross cutting – a health in all policies approach is being adopted by working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in national policy.

Background

In December 2021 the Government released a new 10 year drugs strategy titled “From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives”. The strategy is built on the findings and recommendations of the recent review undertaken by Dame Carol Black. This strategy has 3 overarching aims:

- Break drug supply chains – by increasing the response to the supply of the most harmful drugs, attacking all stages of the supply chain, reducing the associated violence and exploitation, and protecting prisons from being academies of crime
- Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system – by rebuilding drug treatment and recovery services, including for young people and offenders, with new commissioning standards to drive transparency and consistency
- Reduce the demand for recreational drugs – by strengthening the evidence for how best to deter the use of recreational drugs, ensuring adults change their behaviour or face consequence, and with universal and targeted activity to prevent young people starting to take drugs

The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) offered Lewisham a supplementary substance misuse and treatment recovery grant (SSMTRG) from 2022/23 to support improvements in the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment, as part of a combating drugs partnership. This supplemental funding is confirmed until 2024/25.

There was a requirement from OHID (as part of a multiple government department initiative) for a strong multi-agency Combating Drugs Partnership for oversight of the strategy, with proactive oversight of the implementation of all three strategic priorities of the Drug Strategy. In December 2022 it was agreed that overall oversight would be incorporated within the work of the Safer Lewisham Partnership.

Lewisham’s officers developed a needs assessment, adding data from a range of sources. In February 2023 a delivery framework and action plan were submitted to OHID, including plans for investment

Strategy Development, consultation and coproduction

Whilst the national strategy has a broad partnership and whole system focus, the current delivery plans required by OHID have a narrower focus on the treatment system. Given the wider ambitions in Lewisham for the strategy, officers have begun the process of bringing partners together to develop a broader Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol strategy and Action plan for the borough.

On 6th September, a workshop was held to bring together partners across the tobacco, alcohol & drugs system – those from prevention through to treatment and recovery. The day

was a great success and had representatives from Parks and Green Spaces, Police, University Hospital Lewisham, Experts by Experience, Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), Licensing and Enforcement, and the Youth Justice team, as well as providers and primary care representation.

During the workshop, participants were asked to consider what should be part of the wider strategy to tackle addiction to alcohol, drugs and tobacco, and where they could make some significant contributions. These will be written up and shared with participants and built upon at the next workshop to be arranged toward the end of October/middle of November.

The current proposed structure strategy focuses on tackling addictions under 6 key themes (which may change as co-design progresses). These are:

- Challenging stigma and norms
- Prevention and early intervention (including education and schools, and Youth Justice Board)
- Minimising harm, protecting health and environment (including parks and green spaces)
- Treatment and recovery
- Community safety (including legislation and enforcement)
- Emerging challenges

This is underpinned by cross-cutting enabling themes of data and research, workforce training, capacity and capability building. Further work with partners who couldn't attend the workshop and an additional workshop will contribute the further development of the strategy.

September is Recovery month and saw a huge amount of activity across the borough in partnership with experts by experience and our providers. This included a Council organized recovery day hosted at the Civic Suite, with talks from experts by experience, partnership stalls and networking, and a talk from a leading academic on the role of shame on treatment and recovery from addiction.

Officers also commissioned a community consultation, including interviews with stakeholders, direct days interviewing the public and a full day citizens' panel. This is attached as appendix 1. The report made a number of recommendations, and officers are working with partners to develop an action plan to respond to these.

Challenges and performance

The strategy and associated investment and ambition has created significant challenges nationally in workforce and recruitment, both in roles funded both from additional grant and core Public Health and MOPAC services. Currently in Lewisham there are 18 vacancies across the local system.

Increasing overall numbers in treatment, whilst reducing caseloads in line with the strategy

ambitions therefore remains challenging in Lewisham as elsewhere. A range of initiatives and a partnership focus on this has seen significant improvement in more recent local data in line with the required trajectory.

Continuity of Care (continued treatment and recovery from addiction for those leaving prison) targets are nationally set at 75%. In Lewisham, as the rest of London this is a challenging target, and officers are working with colleagues across South East London to understand and rectify some of the issues that may be hindering progress towards meeting it, particularly the role of our largest prison (Thameside)

Despite the challenges, outcomes and successful completions from treatment have also shown significant improvements since the start of the strategy.

	Baseline period		D.O.T		Latest period		Top Quartile range for Comparator LAs	Range to achieve Top Quartile
	(%)	(n)	B	LQ	(%)	(n)		
Opiate	4.4%	35 / 792	▲	▲	5.4%	39 / 716	6.11% - 11.38%	44 to 81
Non-opiate	33.7%	61 / 181	▲	▲	39.1%	54 / 138	38.21% - 47.30%	53 to 65
Alcohol	36.4%	116 / 319	▲	▲	40.5%	126 / 311	40.51% - 55.89%	126 to 173
Alcohol and non-opiate	24.2%	67 / 277	▲	▲	36.9%	83 / 225	33.91% - 50.00%	77 to 112

Next steps and future funding

Year 3 supplementary grant funding (204/25) proposed plans include a continued focus on ensuring we are engaging communities who aren't well represented in our services, continuing with prevention and education activity to ensure people don't start taking substances, and an increased effort around our treatment and recovery pathways to better support those who are ready to enter treatment (peer support helpline) and ensuring they have the best recovery journey (supportive housing options).

Plans for the spend of the Year 3 supplementary grant will be alongside the core offer for substance use treatment, the rough sleeper's drug and alcohol grant, the stop smoking service, all under the vision developed and set out in the overarching strategy.

Whilst OHID timelines remain unclear, officers plan work with providers, partners and experts by experience to have firm year 3 proposals by end November 2023.

Financial implications

This service is funded from a mixture of Grant, Reserves, and Health. The funding breakdown is as follows;

SSMTRG:

2022/23 - £590,000

2023/24 - £970,000

2024/25 - £1,890,000 (indicative)

Public Health:

- Public Health Core funding £3,412,000
- Public Health £453,000 (PCT Reserve Funding)

Other Grant:

- Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (Grant allocation for 23-24 £626,495 - 24-25 allocation to be confirmed)

There are no further financial implications to consider.

Legal implications

There are no significant legal implications of this report.

Equalities implications

A future Lewisham drugs, alcohol and tobacco strategy would aim to address any existing health inequalities relating to the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in Lewisham.

Climate change and environmental implications

There are no significant climate changes and environmental implications of this report.

Crime and disorder implications

There are no significant crime and disorder implications of this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

The contents of this report relates to the health and wellbeing of Lewisham residents impacted by the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

Background papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

Glossary

Term	Definition
SSMTRG	Supplementary substance misuse and treatment recovery grant
OHID	Office of Health Improvement and Disparities
MOPAC	Mayor's office for Policing and Crime

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