

Southend Partnerships

Agenda item

Report of the **Director of Commissioning & Director of Public Health**
to the

Health & Wellbeing Board

on

7th March 2022

Report prepared by: **Jamie Pennycott, Drug & Alcohol Commissioning Officer**

National Drug Strategy and implications for Southend

Report Status: for decision / note



1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the new National Drug Strategy, “From Harm To Hope” and its implications for drug & alcohol treatment and commissioning, namely:
- The expectations for local areas to develop a strong Strategic Partnership to provide proactive oversight of the implementation of the priorities in the drug strategy.
 - To build on strong evidence-base, in reducing the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on health and improving the wellbeing of users with more effective recovery support.
 - Introducing a new framework of national and local outcomes to inform progress and drive clear accountability.
 - To adhere to new drug and alcohol commissioning quality standards to support transparency and accountability requiring local areas to have strong strategic partnerships to drive effective local commissioning.
- 1.2 To inform the Board of additional three-year funding commitment being made available from the Office of Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID – led by the Chief Medical Officer) and Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to enhance drug and alcohol treatment services in addition to the Public Health grant that currently funds drug and alcohol treatment, not to replace it.
- 1.3 To inform the Board of the outcomes of the recent Drug & Alcohol Treatment System tender

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Consider implications of the new national drug strategy on local system and the expectations for implementing a more robust strategic and delivery partnership and outcomes framework

3. National Drug Strategy aims and requirements

3.1 On 6th December 2021, HM Government published a new 10-year national drug strategy, *From Harm to Hope*. The strategy has been written following an independent Review of Drugs initiated by the Home Secretary in February 2019 led by Professor Dame Carol Black.

The first phase of the independent review focused on the state of the national drugs market and its impacts on serious crime, violence and mortality, while the second phase focused on the state of the treatment, recovery and prevention sectors and the ability of services to meet the scale of demand.

3.2 The key findings of Dame Carol Black review were broadly:

- Drug-related deaths are at an all-time high
- The lucrative drug market has become much more violent
- There are increasing levels of exploitation among young people and vulnerable drug users driven by the county lines model of operation within the drug market
- Need for more proactive sharing and adoption of good practice and building on strong evidence-based interventions to ensure more sustainable health outcomes and good value for money
- A decade of austerity has resulted in a loss of skills, expertise and capacity across the treatment, recovery and prevention sector
- Substance misuse concerns can only be resolved through co-ordinated activity across multiple government departments, and this will need to be mirrored at local implementation levels by having strategic buy-in from a wide range of partner services

3.3 The new national drug strategy appears to have adopted the majority of the recommendations made in Dame Carol Black's review including:

- The development of a Joint Combating Drugs Unit which will hold the range of government departments accountable for their progress against the aims of the drug strategy
- Committing to significant investment to rebuild the skills and expectations of the treatment and recovery workforce
- Requiring commitment from local areas to develop strong Strategic Partnerships to provide proactive oversight of the implementation of the priorities in the drug strategy. Core members to include:
 - Elected members
 - Local authority officials (expertise in relevant areas to include substance misuse, housing, employment, education, social care and safeguarding)
 - Local NHS strategic leads (e.g. clinical commissioning groups, primary care networks and Integrated Care Partnerships)
 - NHS England and Improvement
 - The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities regional lead
 - Substance misuse treatment providers
 - Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector
 - People affected by drug-related harm
 - Primary care representatives
 - Mental health treatment providers

- Local schools and further education representatives
- Jobcentre Plus
- Police representatives
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Probation Service
- Youth offending service
- Prisons and young offender institutions.
- Improving the integration and joint commissioning approaches between a range of partners, including recognition of the importance of accommodation and employment as pillars of sustaining recovery
- Developing drug and alcohol commissioning quality standards to support transparency and accountability and requiring local areas to have strong strategic partnerships to drive effective local commissioning

4. Immediate and further funding

- 4.1 Although there will be several rounds of funding being made available across the next three years, the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) have stated that it is their expectation that the new funding streams should be used to enhance and build upon the Public Health grant that currently funds drug and alcohol treatment, not to replace it.
- 4.2 Across the last year, local drug and alcohol partnerships were allocated a single-year Universal Grant which was provided to improve the interface between drug and alcohol treatment services and the criminal justice system. OHID have now confirmed that this Universal Grant allocation will continue across the next three years (through to 31st March 2025).
- 4.3 Since January 2021, Southend has been one of 43 partnerships which have received the Rough Sleeping Drug & Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG) to enhance the treatment and recovery opportunities for rough sleepers and those accommodated through the Everyone In scheme. This funding is currently scheduled to continue until 31st March 2023.
- 4.4 The national drug strategy states a commitment to invest £780m into drug treatment nationally over the next three years, and that this will be allocated to the 149 local partnerships in three waves. The first wave, being issued from 1st April 2022, will be allocated to the 50 partnerships with the greatest levels of local need in relation to their current levels of funding. The next 50 most needy receiving funding from April 2023, and the final partnerships from April 2024.
- 4.5 No confirmation of the levels of funding or the partnerships involved in each wave has been issued yet, but discussion with Eastern region OHID colleagues suggests that it is not anticipated that any partnership in the East of England will be in wave 1. As Southend has some of the highest estimates of heroin and crack cocaine use in the Eastern region, alongside high rates of homelessness, Southend may be in wave 2, however this has not yet been determined.
- 4.6 On the 3rd of February an expert advisory group from the English Substance Use Commissioning Group (ECUSG) working with the Addiction and Inclusion Directorate at

OHID issued draft national Commissioning Quality Standards (CQS), which have been shared with local partnerships for consultation. Although some of what the CQS describes is already in place in, it goes further, setting out an ambition for future improvement using the resources attached to the new drug strategy. There is no expectation that local areas will have all of this in place as we make proposals for the first tranche of new funding.

5. Update on recent drug & alcohol treatment system tender

- 5.1 Following extensive consultation and engagement across spring and summer 2021, the Southend drug and alcohol treatment system (both the adults' and the young people's treatment services) was put out to tender in September 2021.
- 5.2 We received a good level of interest from the market and received bids from four lead organisations, eventually selecting The Forward Trust as our preferred provider for the new contract.
- 5.3 As this contract includes a requirement to provide a young people and young adult element, The Forward Trust have formed an alliance with Open Road to deliver this element of the service.
- 5.4 The Forward Trust are currently actively engaged with the providers of our adults' and young people's services (CGL Ltd. and Southend Borough Council respectively) to enable a smooth handover and mobilisation, including the transfer of current treatment staff into their new model
- 5.5 The contract held by The Forward Trust is funded solely from the Public Health grant allocation, with additional roles and support being funded through the RSDATG and Universal Grant. As and when these latter two grants cease, the expectation is that the core service would continue to be funded through Public Health grant allocation.

6. Next steps and actions for consideration

- 6.1 Commissioning to option appraise and make recommendations on establishing the local strategic partnership governance, and outline accountability and responsibilities to the Health & Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership Group. This will require stakeholder engagement sessions to be set up to agree recommendations to return to both Boards.
- 6.2 To ensure future drug and alcohol treatment and recovery system decisions are evidence-based and ratified through the new strategic partnership board as well as recommendations on future grant allocation on sustainability of the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery system.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: HM Government – From Harm To Hope