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| Committee: | Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Date: | 25 April 2024 |
| Title: | From Harm to Hope - Drug and Alcohol Strategy Update |
| Report From: | Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health |

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the delivery of the National Drugs Strategy on the Isle of Wight and provide an update of key achievements and key areas for focus during 2024.

Introduction

2. The multi-agency Island Strategic Drug and Alcohol Partnership (ISDAP) is chaired by the Director of Public Health as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and delivers the ambitions of the National Drugs Strategy on the Island. This partnership has collectively developed the Island Drug and Alcohol delivery plan, which aims to:
 - ensure continued focus on prevention across work on drugs and alcohol.
 - target resources to make it more difficult for county lines operations to supply illegal drugs on the IOW.
 - improve drug and alcohol treatment services through increased capacity and quality of the workforce and better pathways of care alongside other organisations (including across the criminal justice system, mental health, housing, employment, and health care)
 - reduce unmet need, with a specific focus on improving access to treatment for those misusing alcohol.

Contextual Information- From Harm to Hope - National Drug Strategy

3. In December 2021, the government launched its 10-year drug strategy, From Harm to Hope with a clear vision to:
 - break drug supply chains;
 - deliver a world class substance misuse treatment and recovery system;
 - reduce demand for recreational drugs.
4. In line with national guidance, local Combatting Drugs Partnerships were formalised in line with Upper Tier Local Authority (UTLA) boundaries. This partnership has formed the accountable local governance, ensuring joint ownership and approach to the local implementation of the national strategy. The

Director of Public Health (DPH) for the Isle of Wight is the nominated Senior Responsible Officer (SRO).

Context

5. Alcohol and drug use can negatively impact health, the economy, productivity, and social aspects of communities. It is estimated every year that the social and economic costs of alcohol related harm amount to £21.5bn, while harm from illicit drug use costs £19.3bn. These include costs associated with health and social care, crime, lost productivity and premature death.
6. Alcohol and drugs cause some of the leading risk factors for the overall burden of disease in the UK and are associated with cardiovascular disease, some cancers and liver disease. There are also associations with acquisitive and violent crime and domestic abuse. Drug and alcohol use are also associated with poor access to housing, education and meaningful employment.

Local prevalence and unmet need

7. The Office of Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID) publish estimates on the prevalence of illicit drug use and the number of people with an alcohol dependency and use this to determine local levels of unmet need.
8. On the Isle of Wight, there are an estimated 740 people using illicit opiates and/or crack cocaine which is a rate of 9.1 per 1,000 population (statistically similar to the England rate of 9.5 per 1,000)¹. Prevalence varies by age, gender, and drug type. Patterns of drug use are also changing and overall use is declining.
9. The Island has a slightly lower proportion of opiate and/ or crack users not in treatment (54.5%) compared to England (57.6%). Reducing barriers and improving access to treatment continues to be a priority moving forward.
10. Prevalence of alcohol dependency on the Island (13.5 per 1000) is similar to England (13.7 per 1000). In terms of numbers, this means that there were approximately 1,580 adults on the Island drinking dependently (2019-20; more recent data is not yet available) with numbers remaining relatively stable over the previous 5 years². There are more informal options for those seeking support for alcohol use alongside community treatment providers, such as mutual aid organisations and primary care, therefore obtaining a complete picture of those seeking treatment is complex.
11. Whilst the impact of drug and alcohol use can affect anyone, some communities and groups are at greater risk of harm. Drug and alcohol use can also have a disproportionate impact on physical and mental health outcomes.
12. Approximately 80% of people accessing drug and alcohol treatment nationally have co-occurring mental ill-health.

¹ [Opiate and crack cocaine use: prevalence estimates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

² [Alcohol dependence prevalence in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

13. Approximately 70% of people accessing drug and alcohol treatment services smoke tobacco. This is significantly higher than the population of the Island (9.5%).
14. Blood borne viruses (such as Hepatitis C) largely affect people who inject drugs in the UK.

Isle of Wight Strategy and Local Delivery Plan

15. In line with national expectations, a local delivery plan provides clear strategic priorities to reduce both drug and alcohol related harm and improve outcomes for Island residents. The Island Drug and Alcohol delivery plan was informed by a needs assessment alongside workshops held with partners across agencies. Key achievements and performance are presented later in this report.
16. The delivery plan is supported by 3 years additional funding to support local delivery. It is not known whether any further additional funding will be forthcoming post March 2025.

Local Treatment Services

17. Drug and alcohol treatment and support for all ages is led and commissioned by Public Health and provided by Inclusion Recovery IOW. Inclusion is part of the Midlands Partnership NHS Trust.
18. The service is for all ages and has a hub in Newport. Interventions and treatment are tailored to individual needs; providing structured treatment, group activities, peer support, opiate substitution therapy, harm reduction, brief interventions, and advice as well as access to detoxification and residential rehab.
19. Inclusion provide specialist training and advice to the wider treatment system, work in partnership with other organisations to build and improve pathways and support the work of the Island Strategic Drug and Alcohol Partnership. Inclusion also offers a tailored package of support to young people under 25 years old to identify and address behaviours in connection with drug and alcohol use.
20. The service offers a community engagement model, supporting children and young people where they feel most comfortable and working at their pace including in-reach into local schools and colleges. Young people are offered a tailored, holistic package of support including one to one and group work, supporting them to understand and address the factors driving behaviour and building their personal resilience. Through early intervention, education and delivery of specialist treatment, young people are supported to make informed choices and reduce the impact of substance use on themselves, their family, and the wider community. The service also works alongside education settings to provide substance awareness and harm reduction workshops, including drugs, alcohol and smoking.
21. Support for people impacted by someone else's drug and/or alcohol use is also provided by Inclusion. This includes emotional support and information on

addiction, advice on available services and how they can support their family member more effectively to aid recovery.

22. The Dame Carol Black Detoxification Centre opened in 2022 to provide a local service in Fareham, Hampshire (previous centres in Kent and Somerset) and offers medically managed detoxification to approximately 200 people per year. It is funded through a three-year grant from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities utilising a pooled budget from 20 local authorities.

Key achievements

23. The ISDAP has worked in partnership to prevent and reduce drug and alcohol harm on the Island, including the following achievements:

Health:

24. Improved pathways are in place for people with co-occurring conditions (drug, alcohol and mental health), including:
- a mental health drop in established at the Inclusion Hub in Newport to overcome barriers to accessing mental health support.
 - trained mental wellbeing practitioners within the drug and alcohol service so service users can easily access support for all their needs in one place. It should be noted that people with more complex mental health needs will still receive support from other partners e.g. community mental health services.
25. A specialist alcohol and drug liaison nurse works in the acute setting to support vulnerable people and improve access to structured treatment if required.
26. The Island has achieved Micro-elimination of Hepatitis C.
27. Refreshed support for whole families through the alcohol and drug Family Support Service. This has supported outcomes in terms of harm reduction to the family as well as improved support at home.
28. A brief structured intervention programme for alcohol has been developed and delivered, supporting people to reduce their drinking over a number of structured sessions, bridging to further support if required.
29. Training has been delivered to wide range of professionals including health care assistants, youth support workers, teachers and social workers on harm reduction, emerging trends and support available for people who need it.
30. Workshops have also been delivered in schools, responding to local needs and delivered in friendly and engaging way with positive feedback.
31. Coordinated campaigns have helped to improve awareness of available services on the Island, including promotion of the Rethink your Drink quiz and campaign, radio adverts for support through festive period and into new year, and a drink and drug driving awareness campaign led by IWC Road Safety Team.

32. A new smoking cessation service for those with co-occurring substance misuse and tobacco dependency.

Criminal Justice:

33. Pathways within the criminal justice system have been improved through:

- Specialist workers within the drug and alcohol team who work closely with Police and Probation to provide support to those in the criminal justice system.
- Closer working with Isle of Wight prison on the continuity of care pathway to ensure support for those released from prison remand so that they enter the community alcohol and drugs service without a break in medication and support.
- Collaborative work with the OPCC and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary to pilot Drug Testing on Arrest (DToA) (Class A drugs)
- Establishing a formal working agreement with Youth Justice Team to better support young people in the criminal justice system.

Housing and employment:

34. Targeted outreach from homelessness navigators who support vulnerable people to access coordinated support for their substance use, housing, and mental health. This includes hostel drop-in sessions, which improves access to support as the person is seen where they are currently living (rather than having to travel into Newport).

35. Inclusion have worked alongside the Department of Work and Pensions to provide additional support into employment for those accessing the drug and alcohol treatment service.

Responding to emerging threats:

36. The changing illicit drug market presents challenges, including an increased threat of drug related harm from synthetic opioids and other adulterants. To address this, we are:

- Working across the Isle of Wight to improve intelligence from partners and review the current Local Drug Information System, which issues drug alerts to professionals when adulterated / synthetic drugs are identified.
- Exploring opportunities to pilot rapid drug testing to understand types of drugs availability and be able to respond and issue timely harm reduction messaging.
- Continuing to ensure availability of naloxone in a variety of settings (e.g. Chantry House, Pharmacies) and deliver peer to peer naloxone training.

Co-Production:

37. On the Island, work is underway to improve understanding of the stigma and discrimination experienced by all people harmed by drug and alcohol use.

38. Work with professionals will also raise awareness of language we use when talking about addiction through the development of a language guide. This guide will challenge existing preconceptions and provide guidelines for professionals on how to use language to empower individuals and reinforce a person-first approach.
39. Inclusion has extensive Service User Involvement strategies to ensure people who use their services can contribute to service improvement and development. Involvement in services through peer mentoring, service user forums and co-delivery also promotes individual self-confidence and skills development and supports longer term recovery.

Conclusions

40. The Island Strategic Drug and Alcohol Partnership (ISDAP) is well established and has been a successful vehicle for implementing the national drugs strategy at a local level. The local plan to prevent and reduce drug and alcohol related harm has made substantial progress against national ambitions. Key areas of focus have been identified for 2024 and implementation will be reviewed through the ISDAP.

Supporting documents and information

41. [From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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