



HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
31 AUGUST 2022

ALCOHOL MISUSE INCLUDING THE WORK OF TRADING
STANDARDS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Public Health response to alcohol misuse, including the remit of the Trading Standards Department.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council's Substance Misuse Strategy 2020 – 2023 approved at Cabinet in November 2019 attached at Appendix A, outlines the following key priorities:
 - a. Raise awareness and prevent the harms of drug and alcohol misuse particularly for those at greatest risk;
 - b. Develop a coordinated approach to early identification of individuals exposed to the harmful effects of drug and/or alcohol misuse;
 - c. Develop an approach to the provision of treatment and recovery services that is responsive to the changing trends in drug and alcohol addiction among residents of Leicestershire;
 - d. Reduce ill health and deaths as a result of alcohol and drug misuse;
 - e. Ensure a joined up and timely response to changing patterns of substance misuse and emerging issues relating to substance misuse.
3. The above priorities align with the 'Safe and Well' strategic outcome of the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 approved by the County Council on 18th May 2022, the 'Staying Healthy, Safe and Well' strategic priority of the Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032 approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 24th February 2022, and the 'Protect' priority in the Public Health Strategy 2022 – 2027 approved by Cabinet on 24th June 2022.

4. In December 2019, Cabinet agreed a model for the delivery of substance misuse treatment and recovery services. This was presented to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021. The new service commenced on 1st April 2022 across Leicestershire and Rutland.

Background

5. Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health, and disability among 15-49 year olds in the UK, yet evidence suggests that only 20% of dependent drinkers are currently accessing treatment.
6. Research suggests that those most susceptible to developing problematic substance misuse problems are from vulnerable groups such as children in care, persistent absentees from school, young offenders, the homeless, and children affected by parental substance misuse.
7. Drinking patterns in England changed during the COVID-19 pandemic with an increase in the number of higher risk drinkers, and the heaviest drinkers having increased their consumption the most, which brings a risk of more alcohol-related health problems. These changes in alcohol consumption have continued beyond the national lockdowns of 2020 and 2021. In addition, there was a 20% increase in alcohol-specific deaths in England in 2020 compared with 2019, and this trend persisted through 2021.
8. The economic burden of alcohol is estimated between 1.3% and 2.7% of annual UK GDP. Nationally, estimates suggest that the social and economic impact of alcohol-related harm amounts to £21.5 billion. These include costs associated with lost productivity, crime, health and social care and deaths.
9. Evidence indicates that when engaged in treatment, people consume less alcohol, commit less crime, improve their health, and manage their lives better. This correlates with the economic argument that for every £1 spent on alcohol treatment, there is a social return of £3.
10. Data for Leicestershire for 2020 shows the following:
 - a. Deaths specifically caused by alcohol use are similar to regional and national averages (Leicestershire - 10.9/100,000, East Midlands - 12.9/100,000, England - 13.0/100,000);
 - b. Hospital admissions for alcohol specific conditions are significantly lower than regional and national averages (Leicestershire - 399/100,000, East Midlands - 510/100,000, England - 587/100,000);
 - c. Proportion of individuals successfully completing alcohol treatment is significantly better than regional and national

averages (Leicestershire (including Rutland) – 42.1%, East Midlands – 34.0%, England – 35.3%);

11. Additional data for Leicestershire shows:
 - a. 30% of individuals in treatment report smoking tobacco and 68% report a mental health need;
 - b. Only 44% of individuals in treatment report being in regular employment;
 - c. 5% of domestic abuse victims report substance misuse issues.

Current provision

12. Local Authorities are required to provide an accessible drug and alcohol treatment and recovery system while having regard to reducing health inequalities. This is a condition of the Public Health grant.
13. Recommissioning of the Integrated Substance Misuse Community Treatment Service took place last year with the new service commencing on 1st April 2022 across Leicestershire and Rutland. The new service is provided by Turning Point. The service works in partnership with Dear Albert, Falcon Homeless and Community Support and Age UK to provide the following offer:
 - a. **My Turning Point** - a digital treatment tool that provides 24/7 access to a range of guided and self-help sessions that can help with drug and alcohol use, as well as emotional health and other wellbeing issues.
 - b. **Alcohol and wellbeing programmes** – designed to help individuals cut down or stop drinking.
 - c. **Young People’s Service** – A dedicated Young People’s team that works with all under 18s (and those aged up to 25 where required) at a location suited to the young person. The team supports young people to make changes to their drug and alcohol use. The team also supports young people affected by someone else’s substance use.
 - d. **Family and Friends Support** - Offers support to family and friends even if the individual with a drug or alcohol problem isn’t accessing treatment services.
 - e. **Last Orders Project** – This project helps those over 50 to learn more about their drinking and how it affects their life and provides support to make positive changes.
 - f. **Community detoxification service**
 - g. **Access to inpatient detoxification services**
 - h. **Access to residential rehabilitation services**
 - i. **Harm reduction support** via district wide drop-in sessions in partnership with Falcon Support Services.
 - j. **Access to recovery support**
14. Activity from the service shows:

- a. In Quarter 1, there were 186 new presentations involving alcohol misuse. This represents 70% of all new presentations to the service.
 - b. Over a rolling 12 month period, there were 1,347 individuals in treatment for alcohol misuse. This represents 51% of all individuals in treatment.
 - c. Over a rolling 12 month period, 37% (505 individuals) of individuals successful completed treatment for alcohol misuse.
15. Turning Point also deliver a dual diagnosis service through additional funding from the Clinical Commissioning Groups. This service provides specialist and intensive support to individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. In Quarter 1 22/23, the service supported 117 individuals, of which 68 (58%) were County residents. This is a pilot service that will run until 31st March 2023. Following changes to NHS structures, it is unclear whether funding for this service will continue beyond March 2023.
16. The Public Health department funds Alcohol Brief Intervention training for any staff that are linked to Leicestershire County Council. There are two training sessions on offer. The first training session focuses on general alcohol awareness including understanding the short-term and long-term effects of alcohol misuse. To date 186 members of staff have received this training. The second training session focuses on providing low level/initial support to individuals who are consuming alcohol at levels likely to cause harm. To date 26 members of staff have received this training.
17. Turning Point are currently piloting a service (commenced July 2022) aimed at reducing the number of individuals at risk of long-term effects from alcohol misuse. The offer involves a non-invasive procedure to assess liver health and spot early signs of liver damage. One of the many strengths of this offer is an outreach provision within primary care services to support dependant drinkers who not yet managed to reduce their alcohol consumption.
18. The Public Health department funds and provides a Healthy Schools Programme which supports all schools in Leicestershire (and Rutland) to create a positive environment that improves the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff, and the wider school community. A component of the offer is the provision of free resources to support schools in offering drug and alcohol education.
19. Leicestershire Police have a Substance Misuse Team that is dedicated to reducing the demand for substances, supporting recovery, and working to reduce related harms. Their offer includes:
 - a. Working alongside Turning Point when a young person's offending behaviour is linked to substance use including alcohol.

Since February 2022 100% of those individuals have engaged with Turning Point.

- b. Carrying out checks on those coming through Police custody to identify any substance misuse issues particularly those previously 'hidden'. Since January 2022, 37% of the 731 individuals identified have had alcohol as their main substance of concern with only 15% of this cohort actively engaged in support.
- c. Delivering the Police Substance Misuse Educational Offer in education settings, facilitating tailored workshops utilising local information and case studies. Working alongside Turning Point and the Violence Reduction Network, the offer is delivered to over 16,000 young people each year.
- d. Co-management (alongside Turning Point) of a new Drug Alert Protocol (including alcohol), ensuring that more information regarding local trends and emerging substance misuse issues is shared with a wider range of partners more effectively.

20. Turning Point and Leicestershire Police jointly chair the LLR Substance Misuse Community Safety Partnership Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to coordinate partnership activity relating to substance misuse across LLR, increasing collaboration, intelligence sharing, dissemination of key information, and targeted partnership activities.

The role of Trading Standards

21. The Licensing Act 2003 introduced a scheme, administered by local authorities which covers the retail sale of alcohol, the supply of alcohol, the provision of various forms of entertainment and the provision of late-night refreshment.
22. The objectives of the Act include: the prevention of crime and disorder; public safety; the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.
23. Under the Act, a range of public bodies (responsible authorities) must be notified of applications and are entitled to make representations on those applications to the licensing authority. Since 2013, directors of public health in England have been included in the Act as responsible authorities.
24. The Trading Standards Department receive a small number of complaints regarding alcohol and underage sales. While this is not an area of concern currently, there is an increase in complaints regarding children using vapes.
25. On receiving complaints from either Public Health, schools or specific shops regarding underage sales, the Trading Standards Department make use of the following options:

- a. Visiting shops to provide advice about how to avoid selling alcohol to children.
 - b. Test purchasing businesses who, following a visit, it is believed are selling to those underage
 - c. A licence review could be considered if the business does not follow advice and, if successful, would prevent the business from being able to sell alcohol.
 - d. There are other remedies available such as prosecution, caution and/or warning letter.
26. Trading Standards respond to complaints, or intelligence received, when it concerns counterfeit alcohol due to the potential danger to life or health, along with statutory duties under the Trade Marks Act 1994 and Food Safety Act 1990. Counterfeit alcohol remains a concern to the Trading Standards Department. It is not always the case that non genuine brands are cheaper and more accessible, and a recent Court case focussed on counterfeit wine labelled with a well-known brand, found not to have an obvious price reduction.

Future Developments

27. As part of the NHS Long Term Plan 2019, national funding has been made available to set up hospital Alcohol Care Teams in areas with highest need. Locally, Leicester City Council are leading on behalf of University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) and on behalf of LLR. The aim of the provision is to reduce demand on NHS services as a consequence of alcohol. The offer involves the provision of specialist interventions to alcohol dependent patients admitted to hospital, and to liaise with community substance misuse treatment services to facilitate ongoing management following discharge from hospital. Once the service has commenced, it will run for 3 years.
28. The Public Health department is leading on the implementation of an LLR Drug and Alcohol Related Deaths Review Panel. The panel is a multi-agency panel whose primary aim is to prevent and/or reduce future drug and alcohol related deaths by:
- a. Reviewing drug and alcohol related deaths as well as near misses;
 - b. Determining any modifiable risk factors which may have contributed to the death;
 - c. Identifying patterns or trends;
 - d. Identifying and sharing learning across agencies;
 - e. Identifying, advocating, and actioning changes.
- It is anticipated that the panel will go live in Autumn 2022.
29. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) have provided supplemental funding to all local authorities across the country to enhance substance misuse service provision over the next 3 years. For

Leicestershire, the maximum allocation is just under £2m. The proposal for Year 1 (2022/23) has been approved by OHID and comprises of:

- a. Enhanced work with underserved communities – understanding unmet need and putting in place recommendations for action;
 - b. Enhanced capacity to support police and court custody assessments to improve pathways into treatment;
 - c. Complex case/vulnerability team within the treatment service to support individuals with complex needs;
 - d. Enhancing the volunteer and peer mentor scheme;
 - e. Additional substance misuse recovery workers.
30. The Public Health department is currently reviewing its role in the review and input into alcohol licensing applications to ensure the objectives of the Licensing Act continue to be met.
 31. The Public Health department is working jointly with the Children & Family Services department to implement the adolescent (11-19 years) public health service which is due to commence in September 2022. An element of the offer is to support children and young people to make healthier choices with a particular focus on reducing substance misuse and reducing the impact of substance misuse.
 32. Dame Carol Black was commissioned by the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care to undertake an independent review of drugs to inform the government's thinking on what more can be done to tackle the harm that drugs cause. This led to the development of a 10-year national drug strategy – 'From Harm to Hope' and a requirement for local systems to set up a 'Combating Drugs Partnership'. The focus of the national work is geared towards illicit drugs with very little mention of alcohol even though these quite often go hand in hand. As such, the local direction of travel is to continue to focus on substance misuse as a whole and to utilise existing partnerships to strengthen our work rather than creating new standalone ones.

Background papers

Report to Cabinet 22nd November 2019: Leicestershire Substance Misuse Strategy 2020 – 2023:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s149616/Leicestershire%20Substance%20Misuse%20Strategy%202020-23%20FINAL.pdf>

Report to Cabinet 17th December 2019: Recommissioning of Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Services:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s150182/Substance%20Misuse%20Recommissioning%20report%20final.pdf>

Report to County Council 18th May 2022: Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s168908/Strategic%20Plan%202022-26.pdf>

Report to the Health and Wellbeing Board 24th February 2022: Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2032:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s166706/HWB%2024th%20February%20JHWS.pdf>

Report to Cabinet 24th June 2022: Public Health Strategy 2022 – 2027 Delivering Good Health and Prevention Services:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s169676/Public%20Health%20Strategy%202022%20-%202027.pdf>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

33. None

Crime and Disorder Implications

34. Substance misuse has far reaching impacts on individual health, families, and communities. There are clear links between substance misuse, crime, and community safety. Meeting the needs of people with alcohol problems can help to achieve reductions in crime, reduce reoffending, and improve an individual's health.

Appendices

Leicestershire Substance Misuse Strategy 2020 – 2023

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2019/7/8/substance-misuse-strategy%20.pdf>

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