

Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment 2022

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12/01/22



Background

- The Council's current Adult Substance Misuse Service is contracted until March 31st 2024
- In line with the expiry of this service contract, an updated service will commence from April 1st 2024
- To inform the re-commissioning process the Council's Public Health team have recently completed an Adults Substance Misuse Needs Assessment
- This needs assessment is intended to represent the robust evidence base from which a revised service specification will be created and, ultimately, a new Adult Substance Misuse service will be commissioned
- To date, the needs assessment has been considered, commented on and approved by the Public Health Leadership Team and the Adults, Housing and Health Directorate Management Team

Aims of the Needs Assessment

- At the formal scoping stage the needs assessment had 5 specific aims:
 1. To present data concerning service needs and provision, to inform the recommissioning of local drug and alcohol misuse services
 2. To identify gaps in the local service provision, including consideration of those who do not engage with services
 3. To describe examples locally or from other areas concerning harm minimisation approaches, in particular for alcohol misuse
 4. To estimate the number of Thurrock residents with co-occurring conditions of substance/alcohol misuse and mental illness, and those with complex needs involving other difficulties such as housing and employment
 5. To seek to identify any areas of quality improvement that might lend themselves to a Human Learning Systems (HLS) co-design approach

Approach of the Needs Assessment

- A comprehensive data and intelligence approach was undertaken consisting of 5 distinct sources of information:
 1. Quantitative data from national datasets alongside data from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring Service and local providers
 2. Qualitative information about barriers, enablers, and gaps in service provision from 16 interviews with professionals
 3. Questionnaires from 47 drug and alcohol misuse service users to gather their experiences
 4. A document review of national and local policy and strategic approaches to drugs and alcohol misuse prevention and treatment
 5. A literature search of evidence about effective approaches to prevention of drug and alcohol misuse

Key Findings 1/2

- The most recent estimates suggest that there are lower rates of opiate use in Thurrock compared to England, and similar rates of crack cocaine use in Thurrock compared to England
- Local figures suggest there are however still around 493 people using opiates and 450 people using crack cocaine in Thurrock
- There were an estimated 1,600 adults with an alcohol dependency in Thurrock in 2018/19.
- The proportion of people abstaining from drinking and those drinking over 14 units of alcohol per week were both significantly lower for Thurrock than England
- People were most commonly in specialist treatment in Thurrock for opiate misuse. The second most common reason for treatment in specialist services was alcohol misuse
- People with co-occurring conditions and complex needs represent a significant proportion of those seen by the drug and alcohol service

Key Findings 2/2

- Since 2015/16 the number of people in treatment has decreased from 715 to 330, and new referrals have decreased from 430 in 2015/16 to 170 in 2020/21. It is unclear why this is the case
- The target of successful treatment completions for opiate treatment was met for the three-year period from April 2019 to March 2022. There is much more variability for successful completion rates for the other substance types
- Limitations of the existing service level agreement restricts the remit of the adult drugs and alcohol service. For example, where people are reluctant to engage with the service there is little the provider can do to support them as assertive outreach is not currently within scope
- The difference in approach between the young peoples and adults' services mean that when young people move to an adult service and the statutory support changes, it can be a difficult transition. Older teenage and young adult group have particular needs & vulnerabilities

Recommendations

- Recommendations from the needs assessment were grouped into 5 distinct categories: Strategy; Partnership Working; Service Development; Service Users; Information & Evaluation. These include:
- Ensure action plan is put in place to meet national timeline for set up of a Combatting Drugs Partnership, completion of HNA, development of strategy and process to collect relevant metrics
- When the current contract ends, re-commission a systems level drugs and alcohol service in line with Thurrock Councils' ambition to use a human learning system (HLS) approach to service delivery
- The Thurrock Mental Health Transformation Board should foster a culture of collaboration and cross-working between Adult Mental Health Services, Housing, Homeless services and substance misuse services in line with a HLS approach
- Suicide awareness training should be carried out with all agencies working with individuals considered to be at higher risk of suicide

Next Steps

- Following final approval of the needs assessment the document will be made publicly available
- Ownership of recommendations contained within will be discussed with, and assigned to, relevant individuals
- Recommendations assigned to the Commissioner will be actioned
- The recommissioning process for the 2024/25 service contract will commence