

12 January 2023		ITEM: 9
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Philip Gregory, Senior Public Health Programme Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Andrea Clement, Assistant Director of Public Health		
Accountable Director: Dr Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The Council's Public Health team have recently completed an Adults Alcohol and Substance Misuse Needs Assessment.

This needs assessment is intended to represent the evidence base from which the Adult Substance Misuse service will be re-commissioned. In line with the expiry of the existing Adult Substance Misuse service contract, this revised service will commence from April 1st 2024.

Based upon a combination of national and local data and intelligence, the voices of people who use the existing service, the expert input of key professionals from across the local health and care system, and a review of the latest evidence base for harm minimisation and effective practice, the needs assessment is considered to be the robust evidence base needed to inform a revised service specification.

The document has identified the scale of local need, highlighted limitations of the current service scope and shone a light on under-representation of certain local populations. Subsequently it has made 20 recommendations for working with substance misuse in the future covering: strategic approaches; partnership working; service development, information and evaluation; and. the role of individuals who access services.

The needs assessment has been considered by the Public Health Leadership Team and the Adults, Housing and Health Directorate Management Team. Following feedback and requests for some amendments to the document's content and recommendations, both teams subsequently provided their approval in October 2022.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee review the needs assessment and the recommendations contained within and provide comment.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Substance misuse causes increased harm to individuals, those closest to them and to wider society
- 2.2 The most recent national government drug plan was launched in 2021. '*From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives*' recommends a national effort to reduce the availability and demand for drugs, as well as enhancing treatment and recovery services
- 2.3 Guidance is clear that while the 10-year strategy focusses on the use and supply of illegal drugs, local partnerships should also ensure plans sufficiently address alcohol dependence and wider alcohol related harms including capturing relevant activity and performance monitoring
- 2.4 Thurrock Council currently commissions Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, operating under the brand name Inclusion Visions, for the delivery of an Adult Substance Misuse Service. The existing contract expires on March 31st 2024.
- 2.5 At the point this contract expires the Council should have completed a comprehensive re-commissioning exercise which will allow a revised service provision to be in place from April 1st 2024 onwards. This revised provision will be based upon a robust evidence base which has identified what is the most effective and efficient delivery model for meeting the needs of the people of Thurrock
- 2.6 The robust evidence base for this revised provision is the recently completed Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment. This health needs assessment explores the needs of adults living in Thurrock who have accessed or would benefit from accessing drug and alcohol misuse treatment services
- 2.7 The needs assessment has five key objectives:
 - to present qualitative and quantitative data to inform the re-commissioning of local drug and alcohol misuse services
 - to identify gaps in the local service provision
 - to describe examples of harm minimisation approaches
 - to estimate the number of Thurrock residents with co-occurring conditions of substance/alcohol misuse and mental illness
 - to seek to identify any areas of quality improvement that might lend themselves to a Human Learning Systems co-design approach

- 2.8 Data and information for the needs assessment was gathered in the form of:
- quantitative data from national datasets
 - qualitative information from semi-structured interviews with relevant professionals
 - questionnaires completed by individuals who use the current service
 - A review of national and local policy and strategic approaches
 - A literature search of evidence on effective approaches
- 2.9 The needs assessment established from the most recent estimates 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. However, local figures do still suggest there are approximately 493 people using opiates and 450 people using crack cocaine in Thurrock.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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 but referrals are likely to have been affected by the pandemic. People with co-occurring conditions and complex needs represent a significant proportion of those seen by the drug and alcohol service.
- 2.13 Overall, the target of successful completions of 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. Rates of unplanned exits from treatment are higher in Thurrock than for England for all four substance types.
- 2.14 When service users were asked about their views, they were very positive about the service and their experience.
- 2.15 Limitations of the existing service level agreement has restricted 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 has been able to do to support them as assertive outreach has not been part of the contracted service. This will be addressed as part of service re-commissioning.
- 2.16 The difference in approach between the young people's 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 and vulnerabilities.

- 2.17 The collection of access to and sharing of data and intelligence between services was highlighted as an important gap in the current system, and a limited understanding by teams about how other teams work.
- 2.18 A total of 20 specific recommendations have been made by the needs assessment covering: strategic approaches; partnership working; service development, information and evaluation; and. the role of individuals who access services. These will be addressed through quality improvement of the existing service and service re-commissioning as appropriate.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The final version of the needs assessment was completed in August 2022 and was subsequently approved by the Public Health Leadership Team and the Adults, Housing and Health Directorate Management Team.
- 3.2 As this is a needs assessment there is no requirement of the Committee in relation to options, beyond reviewing the content and offering comment.

4. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 4.1 The needs assessment itself contains significant engagement with relevant professionals and individuals who use services. As such every effort to capture the voices of local people has been made.
- 4.2 The needs assessment was reviewed by the Public Health Leadership Team in August where conditional signoff was granted. Subsequently the document was reviewed by the Adults, Housing and Health Directorate Management Team who requested some amendments to the content and recommendations. Following completion of these amendments the document was approved by the Adults, Housing and Health Directorate Management Team in October 2022. The Public Health Leadership Team subsequently reviewed the amended document in October 2022 and provided their unconditional signoff.

5. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 5.1 The Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26 contains a goal to reduce substance misuse in all communities in Thurrock. It commits to doing so by addressing unmet need in relation to drug and alcohol misuse.
- 5.2 The Adult Substance Misuse service is not a mandated service but it is a condition of the Public Health Grant that monies be spent on ensuring there are public health services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol use.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Bradley Herbert**
Senior Management accountant

There are no direct financial implications of reviewing the content of the Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment and providing related comments.

The publication of the needs assessment however does ensure that the Council can conduct the re-commissioning process for the Adults Substance Misuse Service and can be confident that it is doing so from a robust evidence base. The Council is ensuring that it commissions a future service that meets the needs of local people to the best of its ability, and as such represents a best value approach.

Finance will need to be included when the commissioning proceeds in the near future to ensure that the contract price stays within the budgetary allocation.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Principal Solicitor

There are no legal implications of reviewing the content of the Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment and providing related comments. The document contains no confidential information and has been produced through a combination of publicly available information and research conducted in line with standard ethical guidelines.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

There are no Diversity and Equality implications of reviewing the content of the Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment and providing related comments.

The Adult Substance Misuse service is in itself a universal service. The content of the needs assessment however has identified some groups of individuals who are under-represented in terms of service engagement. In publishing this assessment, the Council will be better placed to commission a future service that seeks to address inequality and inequity where it has been

identified. It will also be able to better tailor a service which meets the needs of some of societies most vulnerable and at-risk individuals.

6.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None

7. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

8. **Appendices to the report**

- Adult Alcohol and Substance Misuse Needs Assessment

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