
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

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West Sussex Combating Drugs Partnership

Report by Dan Barritt, Public Health Lead for Substance Misuse, West Sussex County Council

Summary

This report provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the newly mandated West Sussex Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP). The Partnership has been established as part of the Government's requirements following publication of the 10-year drug strategy in 2021¹ and is accountable to the national Joint Combating Drugs Unit.

Recommendation(s) to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- 1) Note that the West Sussex Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP), chaired by the Director of Public Health, as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the partnership, is the local delivery structure for the implementation of the national 10-year drugs strategy and mechanism that central Government will draw upon to track and support delivery of the Strategy.
- 2) Recognise the significant impact that this new partnership can have on improving the quality of life for residents and communities and reducing future demand and costs for services across the wider health and care system in West Sussex.
- 3) To consider how the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, as key systems leaders, can support the West Sussex CDP to gain representation and full involvement of local people with lived experience, to maximise our collaboration and impact for this important agenda (e.g., people who are using/have used drugs, family members/carers who have been impacted by substance misuse harms, professionals/services affected by drug related harm).

Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Drug and alcohol misuse causes far-reaching and devastating harm across all stages of the life course. Substance misuse damages people's health, puts children, and families at risk, reduces productivity, and illicit drugs drive criminal behaviour. The most deprived areas face the greatest burden. In alignment with the priorities of the

¹ HM Government. From harm to hope - A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives. 2021.

West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the West Sussex CDP aims to improve the overall health outcomes of West Sussex residents and reduce inequalities, supporting our local population.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Nationally, the past decade has seen a rise in overall drug use and drug and alcohol related deaths (increase of 61% between 2010-2019), increased harms from substance misuse (e.g., polydrug use, homelessness, imprisonment, changing patterns of socioeconomic deprivation), and reduced funding for treatment and recovery services².
- 1.2 Dame Carol Black's two-part review of drugs policy for the UK Government outlined the scale of the challenge: *"Funding cuts have left treatment and recovery services on their knees. Commissioning has been fragmented, and partnerships between local authorities, health, housing, employment support and criminal justice agencies have deteriorated. The workforce is depleted, especially of professionally qualified people, and demoralised. Vital services have been cut back"*³.
- 1.3 In response, in 2021 the Government published its 10-year drug strategy, From Harm to Hope, and mandated Local Authority areas to establish a local Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP).

2 The role of a dedicated Combating Drugs Partnership

- 2.1 Addressing substance misuse-related harms is a complex, broad challenge, that requires action from a range of local partners and from a range of perspectives.
- 2.2 Chaired by the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), the Director of Public Health, West Sussex County Council, the West Sussex CDP is a multi-agency forum that includes representation from elected Members, local authority officials, the NHS, Jobcentre Plus, substance misuse treatment providers, the Police and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the National Probation Service, and the secure estate (e.g., prisons, young offender institutions). As the CDP develops, the following organisations will also be engaged and worked with: education providers (including higher and further), housing associations and providers of supported housing and homelessness services, youth offending teams, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, the coroner's office, and people with lived experience.
- 2.3 The CDP provides a single setting for understanding and addressing the shared challenges related to local drug (and alcohol)-related harms. It is a central place to bring together action and oversight across the three strategic priorities and commitments of the Government's drug strategy, with accountability against the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework.
- 2.4 The strategic priorities of the national strategy include: (1) Delivering a world class treatment and recovery system; (2) Breaking drug supply chains (3)

² Office for National Statistics. Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2020 registrations. 2021.

³ Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care. Independent review of drugs by Professor Dame Carol Black. 2021.

Achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs (see Appendix 1 for commitments against each strategic priority).

3 The responsibilities of the West Sussex Combating Drugs Partnership

- 3.1 Undertaking an ongoing **joint local needs assessment**, which involves reviewing all relevant local data and intelligence, identifying gaps, and a formal review at least every 3 years.
- 3.2 Producing and agreeing an ongoing **local drugs (and alcohol) strategy delivery plan** that reflects the national strategic priorities and commitments, development of data recording and sharing at a local level, and establishment/development of focused, multi-agency sub-working groups.
- 3.3 Regularly reviewing our progress, reflecting on local delivery of the strategies objectives, and identifying local issues and priorities ongoing. The County Council's Senior Responsible Owner, Director of Public Health, will report our CDP's activity and progress to central Government via the newly established national Joint Combating Drugs Unit⁴
- 3.4 There are already strong multi-agency partnerships in place both nationally and locally that may already contribute to addressing substance misuse harms and promoting recovery. To understand potential interactions, synergies, and dependencies, it is vital that the West Sussex CDP focus on collectively defining its relationship with other strategic and operational bodies.

4 Proposal details

- 4.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the newly mandated West Sussex CDP.
- 4.2 Views are sought from the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board on how the West Sussex CDP can work in partnership and gain representation and full involvement of local people with lived experience to maximise our collaboration for this agenda.

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⁴ HM Government. Guidance for local delivery partners. From harm to hope – A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives. 2022.

Appendix 1 - Strategic priorities and objectives from the national drug strategy⁵ to be included in local strategic delivery plans

Deliver a world class treatment and recovery system

1. Strengthening local authority commissioned substance misuse services to improve quality, capacity, and outcomes.
2. Develop / deliver comprehensive substance misuse workforce strategy.
3. Address physical and mental health to reduce harm / support recovery (including joined up activity to maximise impact across criminal justice, treatment, broader health and social care, recovery).
4. Access to quality treatment for everyone sleeping rough, and better support for accessing and maintaining secure and safe housing.
5. Linking employment and peer support to Jobcentre Plus services.
6. Improved outreach and support treatment requirements as part of community sentences so offenders engage in drug treatment.
7. Improving continuity of care in the community.

Break drug supply chains

1. Targeting 'middle markets' – breaking the ability of gangs to supply drugs wholesale.
2. Targeting money – disrupting drug gang operations and seizing cash.
3. County lines – bringing perpetrators to justice, safeguarding, and supporting victims, and reducing violence and homicide.
4. Improving targeting of local drug gangs and street dealing.
5. Restricting supply of drugs into prisons – applying technology and skills to improve security and detection.

Achieve a generational shift in the demand for drugs

1. Local pathways to identify and change behaviour of people involved in activities that cause drug-related harm.
2. All pupils receive a co-ordinated / coherent programme of evidence-based interventions to reduce the chances of using drugs.
3. Supporting children, young people, and families most at risk of substance misuse or criminal exploitation – early, targeted support to reduce harm within families that is sensitive to all the needs of the person or family and seeks to address the root causes of risk.

Background papers None

⁵ HM Government. From harm to hope - A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives. 2021.