

From: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Dr Anjan Ghosh; Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee, 16 March 2022

Subject: Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028

Decision Number: 23/00021

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: This is the first committee to consider this report.

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: During 2021/22, a new partnership-wide Drug and Alcohol Strategy was developed as a response to the government strategy – “From Harm to Hope” in December 2021. In 2022, the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028 was adopted and shared with Kent Substance Misuse Alliance members, and for completeness, it went out for public consultation in 2022. The consultation was completed in late 2022. The public consultation was broadly in line with the current Strategy. As a result of the public consultation, the Strategy’s action plan will be refined, particularly for children and young people prevention. The action plan will be completed in April 2023.

Recommendation: The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:

- a) Adopt the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028 and
- b) delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to refresh and/or make revisions as appropriate during the lifetime of the Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent has always had a robust Drug and Alcohol Strategy. The previous Strategy ran from 2017-2022 and focused on the following five areas:
- Resilience: we supported the sustainability of the Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (KCAP) to enable communities to tackle alcohol and drug harms. Currently there are nine partnerships across Kent.

- Identification and brief advice: we supported the '[Know your score](#)' campaign and other awareness raising and advice giving interventions for alcohol harms.
- Early help: our early help offer for drug and alcohol needed strengthening – we identified gaps via a co-occurring conditions (drug or alcohol dependent co-existing with severe mental health issues) project and understanding pressures for treatment services. We worked with '[One You Kent](#)' and local districts to get a pathway for prevention. We also strengthened links to prisons and criminal justice.
- Recovery services: our treatment recovery services were under pressure but still performed better than the national average.
- Supply: the alliance between Trading Standards, Kent Police (via County Lines) and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office enabled continued disruption of drug supply.

- 1.2 The Government's new Drugs Strategy: "From Harm to Hope" was published in December 2021. Its objective is to cut off the supply of drugs by criminal gangs and give people with a drug addiction a route to a productive and drug-free life. It is underpinned by investment of over £3 billion over the next three years. The three strategic priorities of the Strategy are:
- a. Break drug supply chains.
 - b. Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system.
 - c. Achieve a generational shift in demand for drugs.

2. Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028

- 2.1 The new Strategy takes a whole system approach. There are 13 strategic priorities, grouped under three areas: Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, and Community Safety. Some of the strategic priorities already have outcomes and some are to be identified. For each priority details are provided on the problem, what we will do, and actions – see the full Strategy (Appendix 1) for more information.

1. Prevention

- 1.1 Prevention, early intervention and behaviour change.
- 1.2 Early Help: prevention to treatment intervention.
- 1.3 Improving hospital and acute intervention to treatment.
- 1.4 Preventing inter-generational alcohol misuse / children and young people living with alcohol misusing parents.
- 1.5 Tackling high rates of suicide and self-harm associated with substance misuse.

2. Improve Treatment and Recovery

- 2.1 Continue improvement to treatment and recovery services.
- 2.2 Improve criminal justice routes to substance misuse treatment.
- 2.3 Improve treatment and recovery for targeted groups / vulnerable people.
- 2.4 Improve pathways to treatment and recovery to rough sleepers.
- 2.5 Improving treatment and recovery for people with co-occurring conditions.

3. Community Safety

- 3.1 Working in partnership to share data and intelligence in order to identify those at risk of drug / alcohol related harm and exploitation and to provide safeguarding and intensive support.
 - 3.2 Disrupting supply of illegal drugs.
 - 3.3 Tackling local alcohol supply.
- 2.2 The Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy for 2023 to 2028 is overseen by the Kent Substance Misuse Alliance (a Strategic partnership meeting) and is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health. The alliance is a partnership of key stakeholders including Kent Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner, KCC Commissioners, NHS commissioners, Mental Health Trust, KCC Safeguarding, Social Care, Trading Standards, and others who work together to tackle alcohol and drug related harms. All the priorities in the Kent Strategy are taken from local needs and stakeholder's views and are also aligned to the National Drug Strategy: "From Harm to Hope". The Alliance governance is reporting to both the Kent and Medway Health and Well Being Board and the Kent Community Safety Partnership. This is important for the wide-reaching nature of substance misuse and importance of tackling supply, crime and disorder.
- 2.3 The heart of this Strategy is to empower, encourage and support individuals and communities to take a more active role in preventing and reducing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol in Kent.

3. Consultation

3.1 Pre-engagement for the Strategy

3.1.1 During the months April to October 2020, Kent undertook a peer-review assessment where one local authority peer reviews another with help from Public Health England (PHE). They organised a series of online workshops and discussions which was attended from all aspects of the partnership in Kent & Medway system.

3.1.2 Ahead of public consultation we have engaged with:

- Joint Kent Chiefs
- Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Board
- District Housing Groups
- Kent and Medway ICS Prevention Board

3.2 Public consultation of the Strategy

3.2.1 The draft strategy was published in the consultation platform [Let's talk Kent](#) (including the creation of an online version of the questionnaire (see appendix 2 for full report)). The consultation was run for eight weeks from 6 September to 31 October 2022. The following activities were undertaken to help make the consultation accessible:

- Short plain English summary of the Strategy
- Details of how people can request hard copies and alternative formats in the draft Strategy and on all consultation material.
- Word version of questionnaire for those who cannot take part online.
- Large Print version of the draft Strategy and questionnaire.

- Commissioners to work with partners to ensure they are fully onboard with promoting the consultation to their clients and to support them, where required to participate.

4. Corporate responsibilities

- 4.1 The 10-year Drug and Alcohol Strategy is required to establish a combating drugs partnership that will bring together local partners in order to understand their populations, identify challenges and solutions. These Partnerships will be accountable for delivering the outcomes in the National Outcomes Framework with a named Senior Responsible Officer reporting to central government.
- 4.2 The Partnership should have a named Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) who will report to central government and hold delivery partners to account. The SRO will be responsible for ensuring the right local partners come together, building strong collective engagement, and designing a shared local plan to deliver against the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework. It is proposed that the Kent Director of Public Health (DPH) will serve as SRO and Chair of the Combating Drugs Partnership Senior Executive Group.
- 4.3 The aim is to achieve reductions in the prevalence of drug & alcohol harm across the county, thus:
- Reducing the harmful effects of drug & alcohol on the Kent population.
 - Reducing health inequalities caused by drug & alcohol misuse.
 - Reducing crime and the economic burdens from drug & alcohol misuse
- 4.4 Key membership of the new senior executive group includes local authority officials, NHS, police, PCC, and National Probation Service.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 None

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 Following the EQIA assessment (appendix 3), positive impacts were found for the following protected groups as a result of this strategy:
- Better access to treatment and recovery services in women, BAME, disabilities
 - Reduced premature mortality and drug deaths.
 - Better family systems that will protect young people from adverse childhood experiences.
 - Better access to care plans and access to recovery and signposting to aligned services, e.g. mental health
 - Better prevention for rough sleeping and housing failures
 - Better access to physical and social care
 - Better inclusion of service users and carers

7.2 No negative impacts for age, disability, sex, gender identity / transgender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, carer’s responsibility. It is fully inclusive.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The new 5-year Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy has been developed in line with the national Strategy, informed by needs assessments and localised via stakeholder and public consultation. It is a strategy that spans various partnerships to prevent drug and alcohol harms and enable many more vulnerable people to access the care, treatment and recovery available. In summary, the new Strategy will highlight where partners can come together to make best use of local resources, the existing Kent Substance Misuse Alliance will continue to provide an excellent resource for sharing learning and opportunities to work together, there will be a renewed focus on tackling deaths as a result of drug and alcohol harm and the newly formed executive group for the Strategy will ensure focused delivery and robust evaluation.

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:
a) Adopt the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028 and
b) delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to refresh and/or make revisions as appropriate during the lifetime of the strategy.

10. Additional Documents

- Appendix 1 – Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy Consultation report
- Appendix 3 – EQIA

11. Contact details

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