

Report title: Combating Drugs and Alcohol Partnerships Annual Report

Date of meeting: 08 November 2023

Sponsor

(HWB member): Stuart Lines, Director of Public Health, Norfolk County Council

Reason for the Report

In November 2022, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) agreed to provide oversight of the new Norfolk Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (NDAP). This partnership includes the following members:

- Local Authority (including expertise in substance misuse, housing, employment, education, social care and safeguarding),
- NHS (including strategic mental and physical health leads, clinicians and provider reps),
- Jobcentre Plus,
- Substance misuse treatment providers,
- Norfolk Constabulary,
- Office of Police and Crime Commissioners Norfolk,
- The Probation Service,
- Service user voice – representing people with lived experience including families/carers,
- Secure estate,
- VCSE sector representatives and
- District Councils.

This annual report seeks to update the Board on priorities, progress and work underway by NDAP and to give a brief overview of the equivalent Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership (SCDP). It is requested that the Board provides its endorsement of the current work and agreement to continue work to reduce the risks presented by new synthetic opioids.

Report summary

Norfolk Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (NDAP): Since it was set up last year, NDAP has considered initial data, agreed four key priorities and progressed on a number of workstreams in a context of high ministerial interest in the progress of local combating drugs partnerships in delivering the national drugs strategy. Progress and work underway on workstreams is reported. The risk of new synthetic opioids is also highlighted, and recommendations are made to the Health and Wellbeing Board to help reduce the risk posed by their availability and impact.

Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership (SCDP): The SCDP is working to improve collaboration between agencies to ensure the delivery of the national drug strategy ambitions. The partnership is reshaping the local Delivery Plan and the action plan for drug and alcohol related deaths.

Recommendations

The HWB is asked to:

- a) Endorse the workplan of NDAP and acknowledge the work of the Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership in relation to the Waveney part of our ICS.
- b) Encourage partner organisations to ensure relevant staff take part in the NDAP joint training programme once this has been agreed. This will be staff that may be working with individuals or families that are experiencing substance misuse issues in the course of their day-to-day work.

- c) Ensure partner organisations participate in the Local Drug Information System (LDIS) by sharing intelligence relating to drugs in circulation with CGL and disseminating patient safety alerts relating to drugs within their organisations.
For those organisations not already signed up, take advantage of distribution and training on the administration of Naloxone by CGL. **Naloxone is a medicine which can reverse opiate overdose.*
- d) Support their organisations to identify drug and alcohol users in their care and support them to engage with drug and alcohol treatment to reduce risk.
- e) Endorse their organisations and contracted providers finding ways to collect and share appropriate pseudonymised data on non-fatal overdoses and administrations of Naloxone in order to track the impact of opioids, alert the system to emerging trends and target potential supply lines.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board agreed on 9 November 2022 to the formation of a new Norfolk Drugs and Alcohol Partnership to increase our ability to respond to drug and alcohol issues, including the aims of the national drugs strategy, *From Harm to Hope*, and in line with government guidance for local areas. The Board also had an update from the Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership, which is part of the Norfolk and Waveney ICS. The Board delegated the sign off of the Norfolk Terms of Reference to the Chair of the HWB, which he has since done. This included the addition of a joint Serious Violence Duty and NDAP Programme Group to enable closer joint working between the two workstreams.

2. Progress updates

2.1 Norfolk Drugs and Alcohol Partnership

- 2.1.1 Ministerial interest in progress against the national drugs strategy is understood to be high. Due to its size, Norfolk has the 6th largest adult treatment population of all the Upper Tier Local Authorities in England and has the 8th largest 18+ resident population. This makes it more visible in terms of national scrutiny and a programme of work, supported by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), is underway to increase numbers in treatment and improve prison continuity of care (one of NDAP's agreed priorities – see below).
- 2.1.2 After considering the data and results from several engagement exercises, **four key priorities** were agreed for the first year of the partnership. These have run alongside several other supporting workstreams. The NDAP Strategy Group acknowledged that there is other important work being carried out within the partnership but wanted to focus on a smaller number of key priorities in the first year. The four agreed priorities and progress on other workstreams are shown in **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that there are no additional financial implications from the agreed priorities and workplan.

2.2 Synthetic Opioids

- 2.2.1 HWB Board members may be aware that there is growing concern about synthetic opioids* being introduced to the UK drugs market, including more recently nitazenes, which can be significantly stronger than heroin and when taken at the same dosage have the potential to result in fatal overdose. Synthetic opioids are often found mixed with other drugs.

** Synthetic opioids are man-made drugs which mimic the effects of natural opioids such as heroin and morphine.*

- 2.2.2 Drug treatment is a key tool to support people to avoid harm and death, along with the provision of Naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses that occur. Naloxone can be carried by

people at risk of overdoses or those who are likely to witness an overdose e.g., police, family and friends. Naloxone can be obtained by organisations, community groups and individuals from any of the Change Grow Live (CGL) hubs in Norwich, Thetford, Great Yarmouth, and King's Lynn. Many Norfolk police officers carry naloxone and have deployed it to reverse overdoses.

2.2.3 A National Patient Safety Alert for potent synthetic opioids was issued in July 2023 by OHID. CGL and other national organisations have issued drugs alerts. Information has been shared at relevant forums across Norfolk. Agencies in Norfolk including the Police, drug and alcohol services, Norfolk County Council's Public Health team and local NHS partners are working together to identify trends and themes in drug usage and drug related incidents in order to reduce the risks to drug users. Sharing data and intelligence across the system is key to reducing harm – for example, data on non-fatal overdoses and the administration of Naloxone, whether in A&Es or on scene by ambulance.

2.2.4 Case study: Over a two-day period in August, four overdoses were reported in Norwich, fortunately non-fatal, thanks to the deployment of Naloxone by Police Officers from Norfolk Constabulary. The local response was informed by national reports on the rise in drug deaths due to potent synthetic opioids, including nitazenes. Following the fourth overdose, the Constabulary's County Lines team recovered remnants of the drug involved, and intelligence indicated this was supplied by a particular county line operating from London. A London drugs runner was found in Norwich with around 100 wraps of the drug which was later confirmed by a specialised lab as containing nitazenes. The London-based County line holder was found with a supply of drugs, arrested by the Metropolitan Police and brought to the Wymondham Police Investigation Centre where both the runner and line holder were charged and remanded, ending this particular supply of nitazenes. In the week leading up to the overdoses, CGL had sent out a warning message to their clients about a possible strong synthetic batch of drugs circulating in the area, and the police had also sent a message to users known to be in contact with this county line to help reduce the potential harm from these drugs. Intelligence proved critical in informing the local response, highlighting the need for sharing amongst partners locally and nationally.

* Synthetic opioids are man-made drugs which mimic the effects of natural opioids such as heroin and morphine.

2.2.5 Information on the Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership is shown in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Priorities, Stakeholder list and Progress

Priority: Dual Diagnosis (DD)

Overview: Develop pathways that support engagement, treatment and recovery for people experiencing both mental health and substance misuse issues.

Update:

- DD now included in ICBP Joint Forward Plan. Workplan has been agreed and 7 task and finish groups are now being established with representatives including the Integrated Care Board, Primary Care Networks, Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, Change Grow Live, the Voice of lived experience and other community providers. On target to deliver joint CGL/NSFT pathway in year one.

Priority: Continuity of Care (CoC): Prison to Community Treatment

Overview: Ensure that those moving between prison and community treatment do not fall through the gaps at a particularly vulnerable time.

Update:

- Multiagency group established
- Review and quality improvement activity - process, tools, and pathways.
- Data quality improvement plan underway.
- System Criminal Justice workforce capacity increased.
- CoC transfers are currently above national average at 48%.
- 2 x additional probation funded Dependency and recovery workers recruited to work across the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Priority: Workforce development

Overview: Identify if staff have access to appropriate training and if gaps are found, to develop appropriate packages of training.

Update:

- Initial focus Mental Health and Substance misuse workforce.
- Training audit has been launched and cascaded across the mental health workforce.
- Synthetic Opioids training being explored.

Priority: Project ADDER expansion

Implement best practice on enforcement, treatment and recovery from the Greater Norwich Adder pilot (which focused on heroin and crack users in contact with the criminal justice system) to the rest of the county and including alcohol and recreational drugs.

Update:

- County wide CJ team now in place.
- Training audit complete.
- Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in place
- Buvidal* now available for all Criminal Justice clients.
- Prison in-reach workers currently undergoing vetting.
- 2 ADDER Youth workers based in Wymondham Police Investigation Centre (PIC) seeing 90% of CYP detained.

* Buvidal is a long-acting medicine used to treat dependence on opioid drugs such as heroin or morphine. This means it can be used in a controlled way to help prevent withdrawal symptoms and reduce the urge to misuse other opioids.

NDAP Stakeholders:

- Norfolk County Council,
- Norfolk Public Health,
- Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service,
- Norfolk Constabulary,
- District and Borough Councils,
- National Probation Service,
- HM Prison Service,
- Department of Work and Pensions,
- Voluntary Norfolk,
- NHS England,
- Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board,
- Change, Grow, Live,
- The Matthew Project,
- Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust.

Current work and progress of key workstreams

Workstream: Drug and Alcohol Related Deaths

Overview: Reduce the number of drug and alcohol related deaths in Norfolk.

Update:

- Local Drug Information System (LDIS) managed by CGL is in place and is working well.
- First Drug and Alcohol Death Review Panel held September 2023.
- Roll out of QES (automated case management system) estimated November 2023.
- Work is underway with Norfolk's three acute Trusts and EEAST to agree information sharing pathways related to non-fatal overdoses (NFOs)
- Nitazenes/synthetic opioids - emerging national issue.
- Police trained and carrying Naloxone overdose reversal drug – used successfully on nine occasions to date.

Workstream: Joint NDAP and Serious Violence Duty (SVD) Programme Group

Overview: Combined Serious Violence Duty and NDAP Programme groups to better facilitate joint working across these areas.

Update:

- Regular meeting schedule in place.
- NDAP, serious violence duty, safeguarding partnership and safeguarding boards are joined by their membership of the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership.

Workstream: Service user voice

Overview: Ensuring User Voice is intrinsic to all aspects of the NDAP work.

Update:

- Capacity to engage with User Voice being commissioned by Public Health - provider expected to be in place Jan 2024.

Workstream: NDAP Joint Needs assessment

Overview: Conduct a joint assessment of evidence and data to understand better the local issues and patterns of drug and alcohol related harm.

Update:

- JNA is underway - will be used by the Strategy Group to develop a five-year vision, ambitions, key actions, and outcome metrics.
- Outcomes dashboard, aligned to the national drugs strategy outcomes framework is under development.

Workstream: County lines

Overview: Reduce the number of County Lines operating in Norfolk.

Update:

- County Lines Group has shifted its work into the joint SVD/NDAP Programme Group.
- Number of active county lines operating in Norfolk decreased by two-thirds from 2019 to 2022.
- 132 County Lines investigated, 94 closed and total sentencing of 400+ years.

Workstream: NDAP coordination

Overview: Coordination of the NDAP work to ensure successful delivery of the national strategy and outcomes.

Update: Recruitment to post underway.

Appendix 2: Suffolk Combating Drugs Partnership - for information only.

The Suffolk Combating Drug Partnership continues to deliver on the key priorities in line with the National Drug Strategy published in December 2022:

Breaking the drug supply chain by working with the criminal justice system to support victims into recovery services, safeguarding and reducing drug-related deaths. Mainly being delivered through

the countywide criminal exploitation work programme. Enforcement remains a key focus, but recent activity also centres around the importance of multi-agency intelligence to better understand demand and the ability to target resources to areas of greatest need.

Collaborate with the treatment and recovery services to strengthen local authority commissioned substance misuse services for both adults and young people, improving quality, capacity, and outcomes.

Suffolk is meeting targets for adults in structured treatment and access to rehabilitation services, but further work is required to meet continuity of care targets. Work is underway to increase the number of young people in treatment.

Monitoring drug-related deaths and working with relevant services to avoid reoccurrence of drug misuse and achieve a generational shift in the use of recreational drugs.

There is an increase in drug related deaths and overdose incidents involving synthetic substances being mixed with opioids that are appearing nationally. Suffolk drug and alcohol teams are collaborating closely with OHID and key partners locally to ensure harm reduction and interventions are being deployed. The Suffolk Drug Alert system is being well utilised to cascade information quickly and efficiently.

Workforce Development

The NHS Benchmarking Network (NHSBN) second annual census has been completed which analyses the workforce currently employed in alcohol and drug treatment and recovery services; lived experience recovery organisations (LEROs) and in local authority (LA) alcohol and drug commissioning teams in England. This will support NHS England Workforce Training and Education Directorate (WT&E) and Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to build a comprehensive national workforce profile to inform the next spending review and then monitor changes.

Co-Occurring Conditions (Dual Diagnosis)

Work is underway to develop a dedicated workstream that will bring together key stakeholders, identifying priorities informed by service user experience and partner organisations. Suffolk are attending equivalent dual diagnosis workstreams operating in Norfolk and Waveney.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

Name: Diane Steiner Tel: 01603 638417 Email: diane.steiner@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.