

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

Report of the Executive Director
Core Services

SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) REPORT ON SUBSTANCE MISUSE

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) from the investigation undertaken on its behalf by the Substance Misuse Task and Finish Group (TFG). This included undertaking a review of substance misuse in Barnsley with consideration for both adults and young people in relation to support services, prevention work, as well as community safety and enforcement. The TFG considered current work, future plans and highlight a number of recommendations in support of further improvement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Cabinet considers the conclusions and recommendations set out in section 6 as a result of the TFG's review of Substance Misuse.**

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 As part of its work programme the OSC agreed to undertake a TFG investigation into substance misuse in Barnsley. Given the heightened profile of substance misuse both locally and nationally, the OSC felt it was an opportune time to undertake work in this area. The investigation sought to better understand the extent of substance misuse in Barnsley, the challenges being faced by services in tackling this, including both enforcement as well as provision of support services for young people and adults.
- 3.2 The members of the TFG who undertook this investigation included the following: Councillor Gill Carr (TFG Lead Member), Councillor Jeff Ennis, Councillor Annette Gollick, Councillor Wayne Johnson, Councillor Kath Mitchell, Councillor Pauline Phillips, Councillor Margaret Sheard, Councillor Sarah Tattersall and Co-opted Member Pauline Gould.

4. What the Task & Finish Group (TFG) looked at

- 4.1 Initially, the TFG met to consider the scope of the investigation. This included discussing their key concerns and substance misuse issues both in their local communities as well as in the Town Centre. Given the points raised, the group focused on community safety and enforcement activity being undertaken and how Barnsley compared with neighbouring areas as well as the national picture. The use of the drug 'Spice' had become visibly prevalent in the town centre and there continue to be challenges in communities with abuse of alcohol as well as illegal substances.

- 4.2 The group were also keen to find out more about what support services are provided to both adults and young people in relation to substance misuse. This included how people are referred into services, what treatments they can access as well as how successful the interventions are. The TFG wanted to understand how well services are connected in the local area, and utilising their community knowledge, assist in where improvements could be made.
- 4.3 The TFG undertook a number of 'check and challenge' sessions with officers regarding the work being carried out and future plans. This involved asking questions of them regarding their work, their involvement and partnership working with other agencies including the impact of this on Barnsley residents. This included:
- Meeting with Council representatives working in Community Safety Services;
 - Meeting with Council officers responsible for the commissioning of Adult Substance Misuse Services;
 - Undertaking site visits to meet with officers who manage the service, Drug and Alcohol Practitioners who work with clients on a daily basis, as well as a service user, at the Adult Substance Misuse Service Hubs at Burleigh Court in the Town Centre and at The Factory in the Dearne;
 - Meeting with officers from South Yorkshire Police (SYP) who could provide insight into the impact of dealing with substance misuse on their service;
 - Meeting with the Cabinet Member and Executive Director of the Communities Directorate;
 - Finally, meeting with Council officers responsible for the commissioning, management and provision of the Children's Substance Misuse Service which is shortly due to move to Regent Street in the Town Centre to be co-located in a hub of services for young people.

5. What the Task & Finish Group found

- 5.1 Initially, the TFG focused on community safety and gained a better understanding of the challenging circumstances in which services operate, including having reduced resources and dealing with increasingly complex issues. The group were informed of changes in the drug market, specifically in relation to the synthetic cannabinoid 'Spice'. The drug is made up of a range of laboratory-made chemicals that mimic the effects of the main psychoactive component of cannabis. As the drug is synthetic, it can be up to 85 times more potent than cannabis and as a result of how it is made the amount and strength of the drug in each batch can vary. It is difficult to detect and is frequently used by very vulnerable people with multiple needs, including rough sleeping and mental health problems. Spice is very cheap and individuals may use it as a coping mechanism to escape from their daily life.
- 5.2 The group recognised the work being done both locally and nationally to tackle the issue of Spice, including taking enforcement action on those supplying the drug as well as researching possible treatment options. However, the TFG acknowledge that those using Spice have more complex needs, which require addressing alongside their substance use. Locally, a lot of work is being done amongst partners to tackle these issues, for example through the Safer Neighbourhood Service (SNS). The return of neighbourhood policing is assisting in gathering intelligence from communities and is being utilised to prevent issues escalating as well as gather evidence regarding criminal activity.
- 5.3 In relation to providing support to vulnerable people who are involved in substance misuse; housing and mental health were frequently mentioned as the biggest areas of challenge. There are challenges in ensuring we have enough provision of supported

housing for our most vulnerable residents and support for them to maintain tenancies. Work is currently being undertaken between the Council and Berneslai Homes to avoid evictions and formalise a procedure regarding what this should look like. It was highlighted that it is better for those with the most complex needs to be housed in Council properties. In Council tenancies they can be supported and managed rather than ending up in the unregulated private sector where it is much more difficult to intervene when there are issues; especially when this is coupled with absent landlords.

- 5.4 With regards to support services, Humankind has been commissioned by the Council to provide a comprehensive adult substance misuse service. The TFG welcomed the knowledge that this service was recently brought together under one contract which enables a more seamless service for clients as well as clearer performance management arrangements. The service offers advice and brief interventions as well as comprehensive structured treatment packages that include prescribing for substance misuse. The service aims to engage with people who may not have considered addressing their substance use. Access to the service is made through a Single Point of Contact number which accepts self-referrals and professional referrals (with consent). It was highlighted that individuals cannot be forced to engage in treatment and it is most effective when there is motivation to undertake behaviour change. The service provides drug and alcohol treatment interventions for those subject to Criminal Justice Custody or Court requirements.
- 5.5 The TFG questioned the extent to which Humankind services are closely linked with other partners and were reassured that they do visits in communities, attend Family Centres, host a Hepatitis Treatment Clinic delivered by a nurse from Barnsley Hospital and do a lot of work to promote their service and liaise with others such as GPs, Social Care Services, Job Centre Plus, SYP and the Probation Service, amongst others. The group were also positive with regards to the arrangements for officers from SYP to shadow Substance Misuse Key Support Workers and undertake placements in the service. This helps to aid officers' understanding of the challenges associated with substance misuse and also be aware of the variety of support services available.
- 5.6 On visiting the services provided by Humankind, the TFG were given a detailed presentation on all the services on offer and were reassured by the comprehensive assessments undertaken for clients which are sensitive to their wider needs and not just presenting substance misuse. Recovery Navigators manage care plans and provide key working alongside psychosocial interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapies to challenge behaviours and thought patterns. Clients are also encouraged to engage in other activities such as exercising, volunteering and attending peer support groups to aid in improving health and wellbeing. It was acknowledged however that mental ill-health amongst communities is considerable, especially those who engage in substance misuse. Often, individuals use substances to self-medicate and this can mask underlying needs such as learning disabilities and mental health problems.
- 5.7 The service highlighted that a cohort of the treatment population function well day to day and maintain positive relationships and employment. However stigma associated to substance misuse is a barrier to many people accessing help. It is important that we all take responsibility for reducing the stigma as this acts to isolate individuals even more. It is also important that employers take responsibility in supporting their employees in relation to substance use. As part of the recovery service offer, the Factory in the Dearne has facilities to help people with developing life skills; this includes access to a training kitchen, as well as an IT suite which offers jobs clubs. The TFG were impressed with the facilities available and work being undertaken and were supportive of a similar offer being developed within the Town Centre to assist more people being able to access such opportunities.

- 5.8 In meeting with a service user who had accessed adult support services and turned their life around; the importance of substance misuse support services was brought to life. It evidenced how this work had now prevented accident and emergency (A&E) attendances and this person was now able to contribute positively in their community. This individual had improved their self-confidence and re-gained interest in their old hobbies which now gave them a purpose and new lease of life. The individual highlighted the importance of utilising the techniques they had learnt to recognise their 'triggers' and prevent them relapsing. Also the availability of the Building Recovery in the Community (BRIC) Service which provides ongoing support and enables people in recovery from substance misuse to enjoy lasting change and integrate back into society in a meaningful and valued way.
- 5.9 On meeting with officers responsible for the Children's Substance Misuse Service, again the TFG sought reassurance that the service was well-connected with partner agencies and ensure that comprehensive assessments are undertaken for our young people. This includes taking a whole-family approach and continual assessment of risks and vulnerabilities. The team works closely with local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as well as others such as Spectrum who deliver local Sexual Health services and Centrepoint who provide local Homeless support services. For young people, the service provides a mix of brief and ongoing interventions in line with national best practice as required and Support Workers are continually looking for creative ways through which they can engage clients. Support is also in place for parents who contact the service concerned for their young person and help is given to assist them in understanding the cycle of change and reassure them that they are not alone.
- 5.10 The group were encouraged that a lot of work was done to ensure a smooth transition from children's to adults' services and this pathway was well-designed and flexible depending on the needs of individuals. Work is also done to ensure a smooth pathway for young people moving out of the area to ensure they receive continued support in their new location. Links have been built and trust developed amongst local agencies which is enabling an increased number of referrals to the service. The challenge however continues to be the complexities involved with young people often having multiple vulnerabilities.
- 5.11 As the Children's Substance Misuse Service is small, a lot of work is done to provide training to other agencies, especially those who may already have relationships with the young people; therefore are better placed to provide interventions. The TFG questioned whether there is an offer for community groups to access training in relation to substance misuse and were advised that this is available through Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB).
- 5.12 In relation to schools, the TFG were keen that children and young people are being taught appropriately about substance misuse in schools to ensure that opportunities to prevent issues developing are being maximised. The TFG were advised that all schools have access to government funding for this as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum; however this is not necessarily prioritised and delivered in all schools.
- 5.13 Due to recent changes, it was highlighted to the TFG that the Children's Substance Misuse Service is currently undertaking a consultation in relation to a new name for the service. Members were advised that local children and young people were being involved in this; therefore once this was decided would be undertaking a service re-launch.

5.14 The TFG welcomed the information that the Council had continued to provide investment in Substance Misuse Services; however due to austerity, acknowledged that these services had received a reduction in funding. Additionally, the TFG also recognises that some financial support is provided from Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for these services. The group were also informed that for 2020 a new Substance Misuse Strategy is being developed by the Council which would be an opportune time to review local arrangements.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Throughout the investigation, the TFG members made a number of suggestions and recommendations regarding the work being undertaken as well as were able to provide detailed information of other services available in local communities and funding streams which the services were able to consider. In addition to these suggestions, the TFG recommends the following:

6.2 Recommendation 1 ACROSS ALL TFGs: A Multi-Agency Conference is held in relation to addressing the complex needs in our communities covering Housing, Substance Misuse and Adult Mental Health

A common feature of the OSC TFG's undertaken in 2018-19 on Social Housing, Substance Misuse and Adult Mental Health is the close, cyclical links between them. Each service area has raised challenges in relation to accessing the other services, difficulties in sharing information between them, as well as demands on services which could be avoided. It is therefore recommended that a large conference is held for those working at both a strategic and operational level in these and partner services to come together and develop an action plan to address some of these issues.

6.3 Recommendation 2: An All Member Information Briefing (AMIB) is held on the structure and function of the Safer Neighbourhood Service including the Hub as well as our local Substance Misuse Services (following the re-launch of the Children's Service)

Members of the TFG found the information provided on the Safer Neighbourhood Service invaluable in helping them to better understand how local agencies are connected and priorities driven forwards. Having learnt about the substance misuse services, the TFG Members are now more confident in their knowledge and ability to refer people to the services. This would also provide an opportunity for the sharing of knowledge in relation to activities available in local communities and upcoming events Substance Misuse Services could attend. Members would also welcome receipt of any promotional materials such as posters and leaflets they could display in local community centres. Finally, it is important that Members and local community groups are aware of the free training available in relation to substance misuse through the BSCB.

6.4 Recommendation 3: Humankind increase proactive outreach work and visits to people in their own homes

The TFG welcome and recognise all of the good work being done by the service to support people with substance misuse. The group however raised concerns that given the often multiple and complex vulnerabilities of people requiring the service that more needs to be done to take services out to people, rather than requiring them to make their way to services.

6.5 Recommendation 4: Local employers are encouraged to ensure they have effective substance misuse policies and procedures in place which support staff to access treatment services

Given the number of people who are in employment but require substance misuse support services, the TFG would like to highlight the importance of employers being proactive and supportive of their staff. Humankind have delivered specific support to some of our local employers for staff, which has resulted in positive outcomes both for the individual and the employer.

6.6 Recommendation 5: Barnsley Schools Alliance undertakes specific work to identify and share good practice in relation to substance misuse prevention work through the PSHE curriculum and that this is delivered to ALL Barnsley pupils

The TFG are cognisant of the pressures which schools are under to deliver a rounded curriculum to pupils and maximise their education attainment. Given the importance of maximising the health and wellbeing of our young people to prevent them from developing problems in future and achieving their potential, the TFG advocate that this element of the curriculum is critical and work is done to seek reassurance in this area. Our young people's substance misuse service also welcome the opportunity to provide support to schools in developing appropriate and effective substance misuse policies.

6.7 Recommendation 6: OSC Members are consulted on the Substance Misuse Strategy Refresh and local partners take the opportunity to review their contribution to these vital preventative services

Throughout the investigation, it is evident that there are a number of partner agencies involved in dealing with substance misuse, either in taking enforcement actions or providing support services to those in need. The TFG welcomes the continued support which has been allocated to substance misuse services however recognises the importance of investing in preventative services which are of lower cost than dealing with the crisis end of care such as A&E attendance.

The TFG would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided information, attended meetings and assisted with the TFG's investigation; it is much appreciated.

7. Implications for local people / service users

7.1 The investigation undertaken by the TFG as well as the recommendations made are in support of improving health outcomes for people in Barnsley. The TFG recognises the importance of people's physical and mental health in all aspects of their life and the negative impacts substance misuse and poor wellbeing can have on individuals and communities.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no specific financial implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the financial implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

9. Employee implications

9.1 There are no specific employee implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the employee implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

10. Communications implications

10.1 The TFG are keen to promote the availability of and access to local substance misuse services both for young people and adults. The TFG welcomed the additional knowledge

they gained in relation to services which they recommend is shared with other Elected Members and our communities.

- 10.2 Given the vulnerabilities of people in our communities who would benefit from access to services, the TFG also recommend that where possible substance misuse services are increasingly proactive out in communities to access clients.

11. Consultations

- 11.1 Consultations have taken place with: the Substance Misuse TFG Members; the OSC; Councillor Jenny Platts; Council Officers from both the Communities and People Directorates; Humankind Substance Misuse Service; SYP; and the Council's Senior Management Team.

12. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

- 12.1 As outlined in the Corporate Plan, the three priorities for Barnsley are: a thriving and vibrant economy, strong and resilient communities; and citizens achieving their potential. Positive physical and mental wellbeing are central to achieving all of these priorities; therefore it is essential the Council and its partner organisations work together to support these aims, in particular by preventing and supporting those involved in substance misuse.

13. Promoting equality & diversity and social inclusion

- 13.1 The TFG is keen to ensure that all Council services and activities are accessible to all its communities. Throughout the TFG's involvement in this work they have specifically referred to making sure that services are accessible to all, particularly given the vulnerabilities of those requiring substance misuse support. As highlighted in the report, often those with complex and unmet needs are those most likely to turn to substance misuse and are in need of support services.

14. Tackling the impact of poverty

- 14.1 Encouraging people to have healthy lifestyles and avoiding substance misuse can help in tackling the impact of poverty. There are strong links between poverty, deprivation, widening inequalities and problem drug use. It does not mean that all those facing these challenges will develop problems; however the most vulnerable in our society such as the homeless are most at risk.

15. Tackling Health Inequalities

- 15.1 There are large health inequalities between Barnsley and England, and within Barnsley itself. Improving people's mental wellbeing and reducing health inequalities will help local people to reach their full potential. The investigation undertaken by the TFG and recommendations made are in support of improving services across the borough; with recognition that additional work may be required in specific communities to help address health inequalities.

16. Risk management issues

- 16.1 This issue relates to the following risks currently logged on the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR), as follows:

- 3025 – 'Failure to Safeguard vulnerable service users'
- 3026 – 'Failure to achieve a reduction in Health inequalities within the Borough'

- 3047 – ‘Failure to protect the health of the population from preventable health threats’

16.2 It is likely the recommended activities detailed in this report will contribute further to the effective mitigation of these risks, and it would be appropriate for any follow-up report to be cognisant of these risks.

17. **Glossary**

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| A&E | Accident & Emergency |
| AMIB | All Member Information Briefing |
| BMBC | Barnsley Metropolitan borough Council |
| BRIC | Building Recovery in the Community |
| BSCB | Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board |
| CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services |
| CCG | Clinical Commissioning Group |
| OSC | Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| PSHE | Personal, Social, Health and Economic Curriculum |
| SNS | Safer Neighbourhood Service |
| SYP | South Yorkshire Police |
| TFG | Task and Finish Group |

18. **Background papers and useful links**

- Humankind – Barnsley Recovery Steps:
<https://www.humankindcharity.org.uk/service/barnsley-recovery-steps>

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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