

North Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board

21st March 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Substance Misuse Needs Assessment	
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

To outline the approach to developing the substance misuse needs assessment as part of the work programme of the Northamptonshire Combating Drugs Partnership.

2. Executive Summary

A substance misuse needs assessment led by Public Health commenced in 2022 to inform the recommissioning of substance misuse services and the priorities of the Northamptonshire Combating Drugs Partnership.

The needs assessment used information from different sources. Quantitative data from national and local datasets was used to identify risk factors, prevalence and trends in the use of drugs and alcohol, impact of substance misuse on the local community, and use of substance misuse services.

Qualitative information was obtained from two separate workstreams. The University of Bath and Manchester Metropolitan University were commissioned to undertake a system mapping exercise for harm reduction. This involved identifying organisations involved in harm reduction in Northamptonshire, their interactions, and stakeholder priorities. Over 70 stakeholders took part in workshops held over 2 days. The second workstream involved 1:1 semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 86 adults who were current or former users of substance misuse and recovery or parents and carers of young people in substance misuse services. Key

themes were identified from both workstreams. These findings, combined with the quantitative data analysis identified priorities for future years. A multiagency steering group was established to review sections and contribute data and intelligence to the development of the needs assessment.

The key findings from the needs assessment and recommendations were presented at a Combating Drugs Partnership stakeholder day in December 2022. The resulting stakeholder discussion on the findings of the needs assessment and recommendations informed the Combating Drugs Partnership development of the delivery plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Board note the development of the substance misuse needs assessment as part of the work programme of the Combating Drugs Assessment and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

4. Report Background

In October 2022, Northamptonshire established a Combating Drugs Partnership to deliver the strategic priorities of the national 10-year drugs strategy, From Harm to Hope, launched in December 2021. National guidance states that Combating Drugs Partnerships should produce a needs assessment to inform their local delivery plan. A needs assessment led by Public Health had commenced earlier in 2022 to inform the department's commissioning priorities. This work was formally brought under the remit of the Northamptonshire Combating Drugs Partnership when it became established.

The output is designed to meet the requirements of the Combating Drugs Partnership and to inform commissioning intentions of individual organisations. This includes commissioning of substance misuse treatment services, a responsibility of Public Health departments in councils, and plans for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) substance misuse grants. Therefore, the needs assessment took a broad approach, focusing on both alcohol and drugs, and the impact of the many factors contributing to increased risk of ill health from substance misuse. The key findings from the needs assessment are presented in the accompanying presentation. The intelligence informing the needs assessment were obtained from the following sources:

1. **Northamptonshire Police Supply report.** This report contains intelligence related to drug supply in Northamptonshire and recent trends. The findings were presented at a Combating Drugs Partnership workshop in December 2022. The recommendations from this report are included in the first section on breaking drug supply chains to provide all recommendations relevant to the work of the Combating Drugs Partnership in one report.
2. **Health needs assessment – identifying health needs.** Led by the Public Health departments and supported by a multiagency steering group, this work analyses routinely collected data to identify the needs of the local population, groups at high risk, access to substance misuse treatment services and

outcomes. A comparative approach was used where possible, comparing Northamptonshire to England and other similar geographical areas. Data from a wide variety of national and local sources were used, including routine public health datasets on risk factors, hospital admissions and deaths; use of treatment services; social care on assessment; health data on attendance at the emergency department and Criminal Justice System data. Where local data was not available, national reports and research articles were used to identify likely patterns in the local population.

3. **Health needs assessment – system mapping.** Understanding local assets and building on these strengths (or addressing deficits) is an important part of determining priorities within a local strategy. Many organisations in Northamptonshire are involved in responding to issues related to substance misuse and together they form an interconnected system. Funded by Public Health and commissioned by the adult treatment provider Change Grow Live (CGL), the University of Bath and Manchester Metropolitan University undertook systems mapping for harm reduction in Northamptonshire. Workshops were held over 2 days in July and August 2022, attended by over 70 stakeholders. Those working at operational and strategic level attended the event along with individuals with lived experience. The workshops were used to map the local system, and identify the main themes related to harm reduction and to identify the main priorities for addressing local challenges.
4. **Health needs assessment – qualitative research.** Understanding the experience of those with problematic substance misuse and their family /carers is an important part of identifying gaps in the system and priorities. Public Health commissioned a qualitative study to understand this experience, using a mix of focus groups and semi-structured 1:1 interviews with adults and parents or carers of those who have used substance misuse services. A total of 86 people took part in 1:1 interviews and focus groups. Thematic analysis of the discussions taking place over the 4 days identified the main areas of concern and suggested recommendations for addressing these areas. This work was undertaken in November 2022.

The needs assessment had input from a wide range of partners including Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board, Northamptonshire Probation Service, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, West and North Northamptonshire Council departments – Housing, Adult Social Care, Children’s Trust and Public Health.

The findings were presented at a Northamptonshire Combating Drugs Partnership event in December 2022 and attended by over 40 stakeholders. Stakeholders discussed the findings and identified priorities to inform the development of the Combating Drugs Partnership delivery plan.

The findings are available in an executive summary and full report and will be included on the list of products on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The findings from the needs assessment are being used to inform the recommissioning of substance misuse services and the priorities of the Combating Drugs Partnership.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no funding implications arising from the substance misuse needs assessment. The findings will be used to inform the funding priorities for recommissioning the substance misuse services, the OHID substance misuse grants and the priorities of the Northamptonshire Combating Drugs Partnership.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 Not applicable

6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.5.1 Not applicable

6.6 Climate Impact

- 6.6.1 Not applicable

6.7 Community Impact

- 6.7.1 Not applicable

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None