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**ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE MISUSE RELATED EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report outlines the existing provision and planned developments for educating children and young people in Darlington about alcohol and drug misuse. In so doing the report summarises key developments relating to the prevention and treatment of associated problems.

**Summary**

2. We are working with schools to improve education about alcohol and drug misuse. This work is linked to achieving Healthy School status and will be supported by a Drug and Alcohol Education post based in the School Improvement Team from later this year. Classroom based education will be backed up by a communications campaign which will challenge inaccurate beliefs held by young people, in order to undermine the influence of peer pressure. Depending on need, we are in the process of ensuring that secondary schools also receive additional staffing resource to tackle these issues outside of normal teaching, e.g. two new Senior Youth Workers with an alcohol remit.
3. Work in schools is complemented by activity designed to ensure that staff across the Children's Trust workforce can identify alcohol or drug related problems and offer brief intervention early on. Targeted multi-agency projects are underway on weekends as a direct response to underage street drinking and we have invested in developing a specialist service to cope with the level of demand for structured treatment which we know exists in Darlington.

**Recommendation(s)**

4. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) Members note the content of the report and comment on the existing and proposed activity.

**Murray Rose,  
Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

5. On behalf of partners, a comprehensive response to young people's alcohol and drug misuse in Darlington is detailed in the DAAT's Young People's Treatment Plan 2009/10, which is available on request.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The links between alcohol, substance misuse and young people committing crime are well established. We work closely with the Youth Offending Service and CDRP to address this.
Health and Well Being	Alcohol and drug misuse is directly linked to poor health outcomes; a key priority in the next public health plan is young people and alcohol.
Sustainability	This is addressed through the creation of a skilled workforce across partner agencies rather than the reliance upon one central team
Diversity	There is a need to ensure effective services for young people, services must be inclusive and target groups who are thought difficult to engage. Further needs analysis work is ongoing in support of this.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	DAAT
Efficiency	We are working across the Children's Workforce to ensure that efficiencies are achieved in terms of creating an effective network of professionals trained to deliver early intervention for alcohol and drug misuse.
Key Decision	NA
Urgent Decision	NA
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Healthy Darlington: Tackling the specific causes of ill-health in Darlington, linked to inequalities in lifestyle choices, including high incidence of smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, poor diet and poor sexual health

## Information and Analysis

### Existing provision and planned developments

#### 6. Curriculum based education:

Drug and Alcohol education is delivered in schools across Darlington. Proof of this work is required in order to achieve Healthy School Status, which all schools are working towards in Darlington (though only one secondary school has achieved the status to date). It is acknowledged that this work is not consistent across the borough and accordingly a Drug and Alcohol Education post has been created within the Council's School Improvement Team. The post will be advertised in June 09.

#### 7. Social Norms

We are working with secondary schools to tackle inaccurate beliefs held by young people about local levels of alcohol and drug misuse. The approach works specifically to challenge peer pressure and undermine a sense that misuse is 'normal'. The first campaign will begin at the Education Village in July 09, using posters and leaflets with key messages, school assemblies, and form group discussions.

**8. Targeted prevention in schools;**

The borough has excellent examples of school based preventative intervention, particularly in Hummersknott School and Eastbourne Academy. To complement this, we are recruiting two specialist Youth Workers who will address alcohol and drug misuse and be aligned to at least two other secondary schools. A review of targeted services for young people who do not meet the criteria for specialist intervention is underway. The review seeks to improve outcomes for these young people, reducing the numbers who go on to need specialist help and creating clearer accountability for better prevention.

**9. Stay Safe**

Delivered in partnership with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), Operation Stay Safe targets young people drinking on weekends. A multi-agency team is deployed to hot spot areas on Friday and Saturday nights, ensuring young people most at risk are taken to a place of safety and reducing the potential for anti social behaviour. As these operations develop we will see improved follow up work with identified young people and their families (linked with the wider review of targeted provision).

**10. Information and advice at the point of need:**

Up until recently, young people who needed support for drug or alcohol issues in Darlington were sign-posted to one central team (with some exceptions). We are now in the process of moving to a new structure where the responsibility for addressing this issue is shared across the Children's Trust workforce. An ongoing programme of training is underway to up-skill staff across agencies to deliver drug and alcohol sessions for those young people showing early signs of requiring additional support. This is complemented by a specialist team (known as SWITCH) which will cater only for those young people who need care planned / structured intervention. The new model of delivery will provide quicker access to information at the point where a young person needs it and improved access to specialist treatment.

**11. Specialist Team (SWITCH):**

Through the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) partners have invested in developing the SWITCH team over the last year. Developments are based on clear evidence of a vulnerable population of young people who are not accessing the required level of support. The new service design will cater for the increased demand for this service as the number of referrals increases following improvements to identification across the children's workforce.

**Outcome of Consultation**

**12. Not applicable**