

**SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE UPDATE: SUPPORT TREATMENT AND RECOVERY IN DARLINGTON  
THROUGH EMPOWERMENT (STRIDE)**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update to Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee members on the current performance, provision and composition of STRIDE specialist substance misuse treatment and recovery services delivered within Darlington.

**Summary**

2. This report details the work undertaken locally in delivering against the National Drug Strategy: From Harm to Hope and the utilisation of the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant funding allocated to Darlington in order to support the attainment of an accessible, high quality, effective, person-centred alcohol and drug treatment and recovery system.
3. The report outlines current governance arrangements, local performance against key metrics within the National Drug Strategy and describes the current treatment and recovery system, highlighting key aspects of local delivery. It also highlights a recent visit from Dame Carol Black who carried out the independent national review on drugs which led to the 10-year strategy From Harm to Hope, alongside Andrew Brown, Head of Drug and Alcohol Improvement and Darlington's inclusion as a case study site for the independent evaluation of the Drug Strategy Investment in Treatment and Recovery (D-SITAR) research.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report and agree to receive further updates as required.

**Lorraine Hughes**  
**Director of Public Health**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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Council Plan	This report contributes to the priorities agreed in the Council Plan
Addressing inequalities	This report highlights work undertaken with socio-economic deprived population, inclusion health and vulnerable groups
Tackling Climate Change	There are no implications arising from this report
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report supports the efficient use of resources through shared partnership priorities
Health and Wellbeing	This plan supports the priorities set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report highlights the pathways/linkages with criminal justice partners both in reducing crime and disorder and promoting community safety
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no implications for the Budget or Policy Framework
Key Decision	No Key Decision required
Urgent Decision	No Urgent Decision required
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report references support available and/or provided to Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Following the publication of the **National Drugs Strategy**; From Harm to Hope in December 2021, the Government published guidance for local delivery partners in May 2022 outlining the recommended steps that local areas should take to help deliver the three main priorities of the Strategy: breaking drug supply chains; delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system and achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs.
6. In response to the National Drugs Strategy Darlington and Durham have established a Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (CDAP) for which the Police and Crime Commissioner is Chair and Senior Responsible Owner. This partnership reports into the Darlington Community Safety Partnership and Safer Durham Partnership and has responsibility for oversight of the delivery of the Grant Plans as part of the wider Combatting Drugs Action Plan.
7. In August 2022 the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities published the '**Commissioning quality standard**: alcohol and drug treatment and recovery guidance' which supports the national drug strategy aim of having accessible, high quality, effective, person-centred alcohol and drug treatment and recovery systems.
8. To support the improvements described in the National Drug Strategy, three years (confirmed annually) of additional ring-fenced funding for treatment and recovery have been allocated to local areas in the form of the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) 2022 - 2025. A condition of this grant is that Local Authorities

maintain or build upon their existing core Public Health grant investment in drug and alcohol treatment in line with their RO3 outturn for 2020-21.

### Current Position and Performance Outcomes

9. Funding allocations for Darlington’s treatment system are detailed below and have supported the increased rollout of Naloxone, long acting Buprenorphine and the development of the ACCESS (Assertive Community Connection, Engagement and Support) service in 2022/23 and increased clinical/non clinical capacity, enhanced pharmacy supervision/dispensing arrangements, increased treatment capacity for Young People, commissioning of a DACT (Drug and Alcohol Care Team) within TEWV NHSFT and development of our community recovery offer and ‘Dayhab’ programme via Recovery Connections in 2023/24. Developments within 2024/25 have focussed on increasing capacity within Young People’s team, increased detoxification and residential rehabilitation capacity, development of a team to build treatment capacity, which will be embedded within key organisations to support identification of individuals with unmet treatment needs (e.g. primary care, social care, Criminal Justice etc.). There has also been the development of ‘dayhab’ provision and further development of our local LERO (Lived Experience Recovery Organisation) with a variety of additional posts to deliver a comprehensive recovery offer, such as Volunteer Coordinator, Prehab Coach, Wellbeing Coach and Lived Experience Harm Reduction Worker. Both WithYou and Recovery Connections have also been successful in bidding independently for an additional three Mental Health Wellbeing Practitioners to enhance the work we are doing in developing better access to mental health support.

Darlington SSMTRG/IPD Allocations 2022/25	£
<b>2022/23</b>	
Drug strategy allocation	£316,193
Inpatient detoxification allocation	£27,021
<b>2023/24</b>	
Drug strategy allocation	£518,179
Inpatient detoxification allocation	£27,021
<b>2024/25</b>	
Drug strategy allocation	£1,000,006
Inpatient detoxification allocation	£27,021
<b>Total additional SSMTRG Investment over Initial 3 years of Drug Strategy</b>	<b>£1,915,441</b>

10. Current ‘consortia’ arrangements for IPD (Inpatient detoxification) are in place with Redcar & Cleveland as the ‘lead’ authority for the L.A.3 (Darlington, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland) providing access to a range of detoxification facilities and a potentially expanded offer, which would provide care closer to home, linked to the new residential rehabilitation facility within Brotton led by South Tees Public Health.

11. Our clinical provider WithYou, following a request from Dame Carol Black to their CEO for examples of good practice nationally, put forward the partnership in Darlington as an excellent example of how this can work well with positive outcomes for service users. Dame Carol, who carried out the independent national review on drugs which led to the 10-year strategy From Harm to Hope, alongside Andrew Brown, Head of Drug and Alcohol Improvement, came to visit Darlington on 11th September to see in practice how an effective partnership can make a real difference in enhancing the delivery of treatment and recovery services. They met with delegates from DBC, treatment and recovery workers and people who have previously/are currently receiving support, whilst visiting both Tubwell Row and Coniscliffe Road sites. Feedback received from both Dame Carol and Andrew Brown referenced the great way that DBC work with our Provider Managers and their teams to create a very integrated treatment and recovery system. They also expressed their appreciation for the open way that we approached the visit and acknowledged the challenges we've got, that it was apparent our ambitions remain undimmed and that the OHID team stand ready to offer any support we might need to help us achieve them.
12. Drug Strategy Investment in Treatment and Recovery (D-SITAR) - RAND Europe and partners at King's College London National Addiction Centre, The University of Manchester and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust have been awarded funding through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR205228) to conduct an independent evaluation of the first three years of the treatment and recovery (T&R) portfolio of the 10-year drug strategy, From Harm to Hope.

This study is looking at the funding provided to LAs by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and other departments to improve treatment and recovery services for people who use alcohol and other drugs. This research will help the government find out what does and does not work in relation to the (T&R) portfolio and may inform how the portfolio is implemented after the first three years of funding.

Darlington has been selected as a case study site for the independent evaluation of the D-SITAR and we will have research staff visiting Darlington on 18<sup>th</sup> November for a week of interviews and focus groups. Case study sites have been selected to provide variation in terms of geography, rurality/urbanity, populations, treatment needs, and services/support that have been implemented through the drug strategy. The purpose of case studies is not to rank LAs, or to identify high and low performing LAs in terms of their implementation of the portfolio, but to maximise diversity in terms of how LAs are using the Drug Strategy funding to improve treatment and recovery services.

The D-SITAR study will also include five evaluations of priority areas within the portfolio that have been selected by DHSC and OHID:

- Support for accessing housing through the Housing Support Grant
- The workforce transformation programme for people who provide treatment and recovery support
- Integration of lived experience recovery organisations (LEROs) in treatment and recovery pathways
- Collaboration between mental and physical health services (service integration)

- Treatment of opioid dependence using depot buprenorphine.

13. As part of the national performance expectations within the Drug Strategy, local areas have been asked to set local ambitions/stretch targets to deliver the combined outcomes required. This includes increasing access to new high-quality drug and alcohol treatment places across a range of substances, enhanced pathways with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to ensure effective continuity of care arrangements and the provision of a treatment place for every offender with an addiction. There is also an expectation that we develop effective systems, harm reduction interventions and treatment options which deliver a reduction in drug related deaths, as well as significant increases in the numbers achieving and sustaining long term recovery from addiction, to achieve a 30-year low, cutting levels of drug use to the lowest since 1991.
14. Local performance against the main areas of national focus is detailed below and whilst progress has been slower than expected, our numbers in treatment performance have been impacted with the change in local information management systems. Continuity of care has seen reductions which are consistent with regional figures since the implementation of the 'early release from custody' initiative, and we are working with national providers to ensure that all detoxification and residential rehabilitation activity is recorded, as current activity is not fully reflecting commissioned activity.

Numbers in Treatment	Baseline (March 2022)	Latest Performance	Change from Baseline	Year 3 Ambition 2024/25
All adults "in structured treatment"	877	891	24	1100
Opiates	415	415	0	450
Combined non-opiate only and non-opiates and alcohol	170	149	-21	260
Alcohol	292	327	35	390
Young people "in treatment"	55	62	7	90
Continuity of care (% of prison leavers with a continued treatment need picked up within 3 weeks)	Baseline (March 2022)	Latest Performance	Change from Baseline	Year 3 Ambition 2024/25
Local planning (%)	60%	60%	0%	80%
Res. Rehabilitation	Baseline (March 2022)	Latest Performance	Change from Baseline	Year 3 Ambition 2024/25
Local planning (number)	0	1	1	22

15. Our STRIDE engagement activity, delivered via ACCESS, has seen the development of multiple pathways into treatment services and the team providing rapid initial assessment of individuals and facilitation of timely access to specialist treatment and recovery provision, as well as wider community resources with the aim of reducing substance related harm and

building pathways of recovery for the benefit of individuals, families and the wider community. This will ensure individuals are offered fair access to services and where it exists, challenge stigma, discrimination, and less favourable treatment, as well as help individuals to navigate existing systems and identify any barriers they face to accessing their preferred treatment/care pathway. The team deliver time limited person-centred support, tailored to an individual's needs/strengths and which facilitates engagement into structured treatment, with the aim that they are enabled to successfully complete treatment and sustain long-term recovery. Some of the more recent pathways include:

- Criminal Justice - working closely with probation and the Integrated Offender Management Unit (IOMU) to increase numbers into treatment and undertaking more joint work to engage people who may be reluctant to access support. ACCESS have also undertaken some prison 'in reach' alongside Recovery Connections to complete assessments prior to release from custody, which has enabled access to residential rehabilitation directly upon release.
- Social care - joint working with Social Care to identify individuals where safeguarding concerns are raised in relation to self-neglect via Social Care. ACCESS attend joint visits to support engagement in treatment and recovery services alongside colleagues within Social Care.

16. Our STRIDE harm reduction, clinical services and psychosocial interventions delivered via WithYou has seen increased numbers trained in the use of Naloxone as well as numbers accessing treatment, and work is continuing to develop pathways into treatment throughout Darlington. WithYou's service in Darlington has achieved micro-elimination of hepatitis C, which is a first for the organisation and is one of only two services within the North East to have achieved this: a huge step towards NHS England's target to eliminate the virus by 2025. The achievement of micro-elimination, is defined as:
  - 100% of clients in structured treatment are offered a hepatitis C test.
  - 100% of those with a history of injecting have been tested.
  - 90% of current and previous injectors (at risk) have a hepatitis C test date within the last 12 months.
  - 90% of clients who've tested positive for hepatitis have commenced treatment.
17. Complex clinical, harm reduction and prescribing provision is now well established and delivering services out of Tubwell Row, with all new opiate referrals and those accessing harm reduction/needle exchange services being seen at this site. This includes the dispensing of medication to a small cohort of individuals under Home Office licence who require an enhanced treatment offer and greater supervision.
18. Our STRIDE recovery provision delivered via Recovery Connections has seen a welcome expansion to recovery activity within the borough and has resulted in a rapid uptake of these services, which has surpassed performance expectations and gives a clear indication of the level of pent-up demand for these services. The visibility of our recovery communities has given us a real opportunity to demonstrate the positive impact of treatment, and that recovery is a real possibility for the people of Darlington.
19. Recovery Connections has recently begun delivering community recovery support groups from Willow Road. This has generated the space to accommodate our 'dayhab' provision from a central location, which will be in operation by the end of October. The dayhab will

run abstinence groups five days per week, alongside weekend support and will have the same rules as a residential rehabilitation setting, whereby anyone who uses a substance whilst engaged in dayhab will be supported back into the community groups to protect the integrity of the programme and keep other members of the group safe.

20. Recovery Connections also provide our Individual Placement Support, which supports people looking for employment at the earliest opportunity, using trained employment specialists alongside treatment for substance misuse as part of a multi-disciplinary treatment team, rather than separately provided by the generic Jobcentre Plus or Work and Health Programme. There is a high prevalence of unemployment among people with illicit drug and alcohol dependence and many of the people in this population can and want to work but struggle to access the open job market and achieve stable employment. For many years now it has been an aim of successive governments to support people to go from substance misuse treatment into paid employment. There are good reasons for this; employment is associated with improved treatment outcomes as well as a range of other personal gains, such as greater independence, financial resilience and new social networks. All these gains can strengthen the benefits of treatment for an individual long after the treatment ends.
21. Our STRIDE Young People's provision has undergone reconfiguration and strengthening to both bolster our prevention and early intervention activity and ensure we have an enhanced offer for young people within the borough. The service now has a full time Team Leader to support the wider team and deliver care to those with greater complexity/care needs alongside the addition of both a dedicated young people's engagement and outreach as well as lived experience posts to strengthen and add capacity to increase engagement and support. Some recent developments include:
  - a) Schools - educational sessions are being carried out in various schools (secondary), these educational sessions are taking place in a classroom setting with approximately 15 pupils to maximise engagement, covering topics from drug/alcohol awareness to exploitation involved in substance use. Teachers are also being offered substance awareness training and regular drug alerts circulated within STRIDE and forwarded to the appropriate school contact.
  - b) Young People's Engagement and Justice Service (YPEJS) - currently the Young Person's Engagement Worker 'hot desks' from Central House once a week, this offers immediate support and guidance to YPEJS staff and allows rapid assessments of individuals who are difficult to engage.
  - c) YMCA - drop-in sessions are scheduled to be held weekly from Middleton Street, providing support for older YP clients and those in the transitional support age range (16-21)
  - d) Looked after throughcare team - educational sessions have been held with all workers at Pease House, fortnightly drop-in sessions are being held to engage challenging clients.
  - e) Residential Children's Homes - regular drop-in sessions are being held at various Children's homes to create a regular presence for both clients and staff, this provides a great format to discuss current themes and trends with staff.

- f) Promotional events - Both college fresher events were attended to provide promotional material and information for students and staff.
- g) College (awaiting start date) - A request from Darlington Technology College to carry out monthly substance awareness sessions with students as part of their health & social care qualification.