

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **8 March 2010**
By: **Director of Children's Services**
Title of report: **Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young People**
Purpose of report: **A review was undertaken in February 2008 that examined the range of policies and initiatives in place at a local and national level aimed at informing and educating children and young people about the dangers of alcohol misuse. This is an update on progress.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to consider the update and conclude that this agenda is being well addressed within East Sussex, particularly given the limited budget made available to deliver a designated response.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The funding allocation process and performance management framework for this agenda is provided jointly by Children's Services and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team. The Local Authority receives a substance misuse allocation specifically for young people and produces an annual needs assessment and associated plan for a 1 year period. We have recently been notified that the local grant award will be reduced by approximately £60,000 over the next two years as a result of a new formula implementation by the Department of Health. The total national grant award is £493,324. However, the overall expenditure is £735,585 with additional monies secured largely from Adult Health Commissioning and the Home Office sources. The Home Office allocation of £138,000 for the local alcohol arrest referral scheme will not be available next financial year and at this time, this service has no secure funding future.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The current 2010/11 needs assessment and treatment plan that outlines the current local picture pertaining to drug and alcohol use in East Sussex is currently being updated and will be published by mid March 2010. This document will inform the treatment plan for the forthcoming year.

2.2 The focus of 2009/10 has been upon alcohol related services and prevention measures; furthermore, it is noteworthy that East Sussex is regarded as a high performing local authority in relation to the delivery of young people's substance misuse treatment services. The recent Alcohol Concern reported needs assessment made specific reference to the robust systems that are in place for responding to alcohol related needs within local young people's services.

2.3 The current 'best value' review, being undertaken within East Sussex Children's Services, will highlight that in relation to cost effectiveness, the local service is clearly out performing other Local Authority area services; for example, East Sussex has the 3rd highest rate of identification and treatment activity and receives half the expenditure grant of the top 2 reporting Local Authorities – Kent and Lancashire. Furthermore, successful treatment discharge rates in East Sussex are 78%, Kent 65% and Lancashire 67%. Hence the Department of Health and Government Office South East cite the East Sussex model as a good practice model in commissioning for this agenda.

3 Update on Scrutiny Recommendations

3.1 A scrutiny review of the effect of 'Alcohol Misuse amongst Children & Young People' was completed by the Scrutiny Committee in February 2008. An initial report from the

department on the actions being taken in response to the recommendations in this report was received by the committee in March 2009. **Appendix 1** provides information on the recent action that has been taken.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 The original scrutiny review report made a number of recommendations designed to strengthen the delivery of effective prevention messages and early intervention with children, young people and their families. The concerns highlighted within the review report are generally in line with those raised within the National Youth Alcohol Action Plan and addressed within the recently received expert guidance.

4.2 East Sussex has a nationally recognised Under 19's Substance Misuse Service that sits at the centre of a robust system of screening, identification and response from within Children's Services, for alcohol related problems amongst young people. Recent developments within the safeguarding responses to parental harm caused by alcohol and drug misuse have also been recognised by Government Office and the National Treatment Agency as innovative practice within a very challenging sector of targeted service delivery.

4.3 The greatest challenge we now face is that of maintaining the current levels of response to this agenda given the financial challenges outlined within section 1 of this report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

1. Alcohol Concern East Sussex Needs Assessment
2. East Sussex School's Drug and Alcohol Guidance
3. Family Substance Misuse Service – Initial Evaluation

Update on actions which relate to scrutiny review recommendations

1. Recommendation 1: Communications to young people

The Scrutiny Review Board recommended that: East Sussex County Council:

- *Voice its concern to Central Government and the Local Government Association to address the mixed messages being given out at a national level about alcohol;*
- *Recommend that Central Government reconsider the way in which 24 hour drinking is marketed and implement tighter controls on the advertising and marketing of alcohol (to more closely align them with those now applied to smoking); and*
- *Recommend that, as part of the marketing campaign highlighted in the 'Safe. Sensible. Social. Strategy', Central Government uses British sports stars taking part in the 2012 British Olympics as a platform to promote an anti-alcohol misuse message.*

1.1 Since the initial review was undertaken the Government launched the National Youth Alcohol Action Plan which seeks to address the problem of young people drinking in public places and to tackle the issue of underage sales.

1.2 National guidance has also been produced (December 2009) by the Chief Medical Officer, regarding messages to young people and parents/carers on alcohol consumption and risk. This information will imminently inform a National communications campaign, entitled "Why let drink decide". The campaign is led by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the initial advertising will focus upon the impact of alcohol upon young people's vulnerability and its impact upon decision making. East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership and Children's Services have planned a local response utilising the stakeholder resources that are available as part of the national campaign. The National campaign will receive a TV and radio launch in February which will run until late March. The campaign will then restart in May via a press and on line activity response. This comprehensive communications campaign is the first to target children and parents.

2 Recommendation 2: Education responses

The Scrutiny Review Board recommended that: the PSHE Team assist and encourage schools to put in place a system for obtaining feedback from young people on a regular basis to assess their views on the quality of the alcohol lessons that they receive. This information would then be used by schools, the PSHE Team and the Neighbourhood Schools Team at Sussex Police to ensure that individual classroom lessons on alcohol misuse continue to remain as effective as possible as trends and attitude to alcohol change over time.

2.1 The information below outlines the response to the problem of alcohol misuse amongst young people in East Sussex. It should also be noted that within the mainstream context of reported alcohol use, the Tell Us 3 survey (a national school's survey undertaken in 2008), is also reporting some useful information regarding the local context of need.

For example:

- East Sussex has a better than national average rate of young people reporting no alcohol use
- East Sussex has a statistically significant, better than national average, reported delivery of alcohol advice and information
- East Sussex has a 1% worse than national average reporting of young people getting drunk once within the last 4 weeks

2.2 In October 2009 the East Sussex PSHE and Healthy School's Team in conjunction with the Under 19's Substance Misuse Service produced the revised Drug and Alcohol Guidance for School's. The guidance addresses a broad range of matters relating to drugs and alcohol; from how school's best deliver dedicated PSHE sessions on this topic; to what they should do if they suspect or experience a drug related incident within the school.

2.3 The guidance encourages the school to contact the Under 19's Substance Misuse Service when they are concerned about students reported or suspected use, enabling early intervention alongside a school based response. The numbers of referrals directly from schools (this does not include extended school services or alternative education provision) is 22% of the current treatment population, this figure in itself is a measure of the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's guidance in the majority of local school's.

2.4 Within the national context the DCSF "Drugs: Guidance for schools" is currently out for consultation and includes the recommendation that PSHE including the drug and alcohol curriculum is made compulsory within schools from September 2011.

3 Recommendation 3: Needs assessment and Local Strategy

The Scrutiny Review Board recommended that: Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to continue to monitor how current initiatives by East Sussex County Council on personal safety and early intervention work and work by Sussex Police has impacted on:

- *Local priorities to reduce the harm caused by alcohol misuse as outlined in the East Sussex Safer Communities Plan 2007-10*
- *Reducing the numbers of children who are victims of crime (Local Area Agreement target 1.3.1)*
- *Increasing participation of problem drug users in drug treatment programmes (Local Area Agreement target 17.4.1)*
- *Reducing the number of anti social behaviour incidents*
- *Reducing the numbers of young people presenting at A&E who are under the influence of alcohol*

3.1 The current draft needs assessment "East Sussex Young People and Substance Misuse" 2010, reports upon information regarding the identification of alcohol misuse and responses. At 14 July 2009, levels of alcohol misuse presenting as a primary drug of misuse, within all referrals to the Under 19's SMS were as follows:

ALCOHOL TYPE	11-15 YEARS	16-18 YEARS	19-22 YEARS	TOTAL
ALCOHOL UNSPECIFIED	76	92	27	195
BEER/CIDER	5	18	4	27
MIXTURE OF ALCOHOL	12	28	13	53
SPIRITS	5	16	3	24
WINES	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	99	154	47	300

3.2 Alcohol also presented as a secondary substance of use amongst 145 young people and a tertiary substance of choice for a further 15 young people. Overall 74.4% of the total number of young people in treatment at July 2009 (618 young people under 22 years) were misusing alcohol. This is slightly higher than the 2008 data (73.3%) and reflects a slight shift in the most reported substance of misuse from cannabis (69.9%) to alcohol.

3.3 The other main indicator of alcohol related harm amongst young people that is nationally deployed is that of "The Local Alcohol Profiles for England" which highlighted the following:

- Hastings is ranked in the "worst" 3 Local Authorities in the South East for 10 of the 14 Local Alcohol Profile indicators.
- Eastbourne is ranked in the "worst" 3 Local Authorities in the South East for alcohol specific hospital admissions for people under 18 (both male and female).
- Rother records high rates for alcohol specific hospital admissions for females under 18 years old.

3.4 The Health and Education identification of alcohol related need is further enhanced by the public perception of its impact upon anti-social behaviour (ASB) problems within the

County. In 2009, the **CSYA** survey showed that people thought alcohol related anti-social behaviour was the most important ASB type to tackle.

3.5 It is within this context of need coupled with the strong partnership response to substance misuse the County was awarded in 2009/10 the status of a Home Office young person's alcohol arrest referral pilot area. The pilot is now reporting a six month evaluation period and there are some interesting findings contained within this initial report. For example; a previous treatment naive group of 93 young people have now entered treatment for substance misuse. This cohort were reporting in excess of 15 units per week; offending behaviour and school/college attendance problems were evident in the presenting behaviour at assessment. Findings regarding the impact of the project include a significant reduction in offending (83.5% no further offence commission), reduction in alcohol/drug misuse and improved rates of school/college attendance. The pilot was only guaranteed a 1 year Home Office funding; at present, despite the success of the initial pilot, there is no secure funding available for next year's local delivery.

3.6 A further alcohol specific service development this year is the response to the under 18s alcohol related hospital admissions. There is a new referral pathway in place that is shared with child and adolescent mental health services. Since September 2009 this pathway has resulted in the notification of 23 young people to a specialist nurse. All parents/young people are contacted and offered a follow up visit. Where young people are known to other agencies, the lead professional is contacted and a brief intervention delivered through an alternative Children's Service.

3.7 The combined list of specific service interventions, targeting previously un-referred groups has undoubtedly resulted in the significant increase in the numbers of young people in treatment. At September 2009 there were 302 young people in treatment, a significant increase from the 155 at April 2009. There have been 171 new presentations since April 2009. It is important that East Sussex can effectively respond to the significant numbers of young people in need of a specific service response.

3.8 In the recent 2009 jointly commissioned needs assessment of alcohol related provision and risk within East Sussex the independent author (Alcohol Concern) reported on the robust and extremely positive response that East Sussex is delivering in respect of young people and alcohol misuse.

"An analysis of the numbers of Under 19 clients in treatment reported to the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) per 1000 of the population was undertaken. The per capita analysis allows for the differences in the size of the population of young people which is not available from the NDTMS website itself. The per capita rate of referral for England as a whole is 1.6. The rate for East Sussex is 3.4. **This is consistent with the positive comments received about the service locally and nationally.**"

4 Recommendation 4: Targeted work with parents and carers

The Scrutiny Review Board recommended that: East Sussex County Council and its relevant partners to develop future initiatives, as and when resources become available, that target parents and carers by providing information on:

- *the impact that alcohol misuse can have on health,*
- *harm reduction information (including information around physical safety and sexual health matters); and*
- *support and signposting for parents and carers on how to tackle the issue of alcohol misuse*

4.1 The aforementioned national communications campaign will also aim to target dedicated messages to parents/carers regarding the need to talk to children about alcohol; encouraging parents to consider the role they play in informing a child's view of alcohol and its consumption.

4.2 In relation to responses within the safeguarding arena, East Sussex has a recognised innovative service that is jointly commissioned by adult and children's sectors.

The performance in relation to adult drug/alcohol treatment is evidently positive with reduced use; positive discharge rates for parents in treatment and improved access to treatment particularly for women, who are parents. The service success within the drug/alcohol sector has resulted in the intent to achieve the same benefits for the safeguarding and adult mental health agenda within the next 2 years.

4.3 Another aspect of this specialist service development that has proven beneficial to the Children's sector, relates to the enhanced response to the broader safeguarding agenda by adult sector services. The adult substance misuse service has developed a Children's Services compliant parent assessment, they routinely use the Children's Index/Contact Point, and are working towards the deployment of adult drug/alcohol staff resources within Children's Centres. This coupled with enhanced work force training in relation to the safeguarding and parental substance misuse agenda and commissioning specifications that require audit and review of shared safeguarding policies all result in a more sophisticated and robust response to the Think Family Agenda than that achieved within other thematic areas at this time.