

TITLE	Substance Misuse Service
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 24 th September 2020
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Matt Pope, Director of Adult Social Care, and Carol Cammiss, Director of Children's Services
LEAD MEMBER	Cllr Charles Margetts, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services, and Cllr UllaKarin Clark, Executive Member for Children's Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The current provider of Wokingham Borough Council's drug and alcohol substance misuse service has decided that it can no longer provide the commissioned service for Wokingham Borough Council. This is a mandated service and approval is sought to have a new contract in place by June 2021. The contract value will increase by £150k per annum to meet the expected needs and cost of the service.

The re-commissioning of the Wokingham substance misuse service will enable residents to recover in the community, reduce the harms associated with substance misuse, protect children and families from potentially problematic/dangerous situations associated with substance misuse and help residents recover to a healthy lifestyle.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agrees to:

- 1) increase the current substance misuse annual contract value of £492k for the incumbent to allow for a sustained delivery of a mandatory* (*required by law or mandate; compulsory) service until 30th June 2021 whilst a new procurement exercise is completed (as allowable within PCR2015);
- 2) the re-commissioning of the Wokingham substance misuse service. This will start with publishing a Prior Information Notice for early market engagement and awareness of the upcoming re-procurement of the substance misuse service relevant to a contract of estimated £4.5 million. (£642k per annum);
- 3) increase the contract value in the tender to meet the anticipated demand and cost of the service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local authorities have a mandated responsibility for providing, planning and funding alcohol and drug treatment and prevention services. The current service (Provider is SMART) is a fully integrated drugs and alcohol recovery service delivered in line with an evidence based practice model that attracts and engages substance misusers into

treatment and promotes full sustained recovery from drugs and/or alcohol. The service supports children, adults, young people, families and carers with substance misuse issues within/across a community setting(s).

In March 2020, SMART served Wokingham Borough Council with notice. SMART stated they had been subsidising the service from its charitable reserves since at least 2017 and they could no longer sustain this position. Benchmarking took place and WBC finance met with SMART to identify the shortfall each month which was agreed at £7,000. It was subsequently agreed that WBC would pay SMART an additional £7,000 per month until the end of the contract in June 2021 thus allowing WBC strategy and commissioning to procure a new service. In order to procure a service that meets the requirements of residents and be seen as an attractive opportunity to prospective bidders it is suggested the current budget of £492k be increased by £150k (circa £642k) per annum. This additional funding would be provided from the Public Health grant and not from council funds directly. If the service is not adequately funded we run the risk of the tender being advertised and no providers bidding therefore resulting in a mandated service not being offered to residents. The increase in the contract value would allow for a redesign of the service (previously designed in 2014) this will incorporate an outreach service not previously commissioned, prevention work with a focus predominantly on young people and education (previous funding from children's was withdrawn in 2018) and therefore will make the service available to more people. By attracting more people to the service and raising awareness of substance misuse both to clients, residents and WBC employees this will provide better value for money as the service will be used to its full capabilities.

BACKGROUND

Local authorities have a mandated (required by law or mandate; compulsory) responsibility for providing, planning and funding alcohol and drug treatment and prevention services. The current service is a fully integrated drugs and alcohol recovery service delivered in line with an evidence based practice model that attracts and engages substance misusers into treatment and promotes full sustained recovery from drugs and/or alcohol. The service supports children, adults, young people, families and carers with substance misuse issues within/across a community setting(s). The current service supported 376 residents into accessing services and providing treatment and interventions. Of the 376 residents 73 were young people (under 18) and 303 were adults.

The current service provider, SMART, have been providing substance misuse treatment services in Wokingham since October 2014. They were brought in on a caretaker basis when the previous provider, KCA, was deemed to be offering an unsafe service particularly for young people. At that time Smart operated a number of services in the South East, including Bracknell. The service went out to tender in April 2017 and Smart won the contract on a 3 years +1+1 basis with the service due to end on 31st March 2022 and the process for re-procuring the new service had begun.

Typically substance misuse treatment services are run by not-for-profit charitable organisations. Over recent years the market has changed with smaller organisations merging together or with bigger corporate providers in order to allow them to continue to operate in an ever-increasing competitive market. Smart continued within the sector as a sole provider and has lost market share. Wokingham is the only area where they are offering a fully integrated substance misuse service. This has meant their overhead costs and their ability to negotiate cost-effective terms with other key partners, such as GPs for shared care, for which they rely on to operate services has been compromised. Additionally, that has been an extraordinary increase of 700% in the cost of Buprenorphine (illicit drug substitute) which has been borne by the provider.

On the 10th March SMART served Wokingham Borough Council with notice. SMART stated they had been subsidising the service from its charitable reserves since at least 2017 and they could no longer sustain this position. Benchmarking took place and WBC met with the provider to identify the shortfall each month which was agreed at £7,000. It was subsequently agreed that WBC would pay SMART an additional £7,000 per month until the end of the contract in March 2021 thus allowing WBC to procure a new service. In order to procure a service that meets the requirements of residents and be seen as an attractive opportunity to prospective bidders it is suggested the current budget of £492k be increased by £150k (circa £642k) per annum. This additional funding would be provided from the Public Health Grant and not from the Council Revenue. If the service is not adequately funded we run the risk of the tender being advertised and no providers bidding therefore resulting in a mandated service not being offered to residents.

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES

Drugs and alcohol present a wide range of social and health issues. Their misuse can have serious consequences for individuals, family members and whole communities such as crime, domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, family breakdown, physical and mental health problems and homelessness. Estimates show that the social and

economic costs of alcohol related harm amount to £21.5bn, while harm from illicit drug use costs £10.7bn. These include costs associated with deaths, the NHS, crime and, in the case of alcohol, lost productivity. The evidence shows that drug treatment reflects a return on investment of £4 for every £1 invested, increasing to £21 over 10 years.

Wokingham has comparatively low prevalence rates of substance misuse, see table below. The rate of drug use in Wokingham, per thousand of the population, is below the region (South East) and National Rate. The prevalence for the South East has been provided in line with the benchmarking data provided further in to the report.

Prevalence measures the proportion of individuals in a defined population that have a disease or other health outcomes of interest at a specified point in time (point prevalence) or during a specified period of time (period prevalence).

National and local prevalence estimates and rates per 1,000 population aged 15 to 64 with 95% confidence intervals (CI) - 2016-17

Local authority	15-64 population	Number of users			Rate of use per thousand of the population		
		OCU	Opiates	Crack cocaine	OCU	Opiates	Crack cocaine
Wokingham	102,615	373	307	249	3.63	2.99	2.43
West Berkshire	100,340	645	512	350	6.43	5.10	3.49
Windsor and Maidenhead	94,173	525	446	362	5.57	4.74	3.84
South East	5,697,624	35,135	29,176	21,891	6.17	5.12	3.84
ENGLAND	35,457,660	313,971	261,294	180,748	8.85	7.37	5.10

Whilst prevalence remains lower in Wokingham than neighbouring local authorities it is understood the hidden harm within Wokingham is higher than neighbouring LA's. **Hidden harm** is **harm** or abuse that is usually **hidden** from public view occurring behind closed doors, often not recognised or reported. For example this is believed to be professionals within Wokingham who are employed outside of the Borough and consuming alcohol / drugs in their leisure time / evenings and weekends. Additional funding will also allow the provider to tackle this area of unmet need. The outreach work which will be included within the newly designed service specification is one area which the provider will be expected to work with this cohort of residents.

It is anticipated by increasing the current annual contract value by £150,000 it will allow WBC to provide additional outreach services to residents affected by the impact of COVID-19 detailed further in the report. COVID-19 will increase the demand on the current service capacity and is expected to impact on services post March 2021.

The harmful effects of substance misuse are not isolated to the individual; it extends its reach wider to those in the family, the children, carers and friends.

The potential harms to children in particular are pronounced, studies have shown that children who grow up in a household where substance misuse is a factor (or any other adverse childhood experience) are more likely to experience substance misuse issues and bring up their children in a household where adverse childhood experiences are a factor. The new service specification includes working with parents and carers and increasing their awareness of the impacts of substance misuse on young people both directly and indirectly. This will be provided in a number of ways but one expectation is to deliver at parents evening and through partnership working with our schools.

The effect on family members and partners can be just as troubling; nationally it is acknowledged that there are also strong links and interdependencies between substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health. Families that are living with substance misuse are at increased risks and so should be supported, and professionals should remain vigilant to any additional needs.

Young people's drug and alcohol misuse can have a major impact on their education, health, family life and their long-term life chances. At this point in time there are 13 young people in treatment with 38% of these being young 13-14 year old teenagers. Substance misusing young people have a number of additional vulnerabilities and for Wokingham over 50% of these young people present with issues - including being looked after, mental health, self-harm, NEET, ASB/criminal activity and affected by others' substance misuse. Five of the young people have parents who also misuse substances and there are concerns that these children may be hidden and their needs not met.

Some Key Statistics:

- In 2019/20, 189 adults engaged in drug treatment, with the main age band being 30-34 years at 22.2% of all clients.
- In 2019/20, 114 adults engaged in alcohol treatment, with the main age bands being 35-39 years at 15.8% of all clients.
- Over 50% of adults in drug and alcohol treatment are parents and it is well recognised that children of substance misusing parents features in a large number of cases open to Children's Social Care.
- There were 7 drug related deaths between 2016 and 2018 for Wokingham.

We know most drug related deaths happen to those not in treatment so investing in treatment helps to reduce drug related deaths via prescribing, harm reduction (needles / blood borne viruses), social contact, etc. Drug related deaths are usually the homeless and unknown who do not access mainstream services but access social security for benefits and numerous visits to a & e. Impact on family is the loss (emotional) and dysfunctional family networks / connections. Investing in treatment addresses all these areas for an individual.

The re-commissioning of the Wokingham substance misuse service will enable residents to recover in the community, reduce the harms associated with substance misuse, protect children and families from potentially problematic/dangerous situations associated with substance misuse and help residents recover to a healthy lifestyle. The clients who engage in services largely have chaotic lifestyles and attending services is not a preferred option for them. Therefore, the redesign of the service allows for workers to visit the service user whether that be at a home address, coffee shop or other this will ensure improved engagement and ultimately better outcomes for the client.

COVID-19

The current public health crisis around COVID-19 raises serious additional concerns for the wellbeing of people who use drugs, ensuring service continuity for those with drug problems, and the protection of those offering care and support for this population. Because of the prevalence of chronic medical conditions, many will be at particular risk for serious respiratory illness if they get infected with COVID-19. Because COVID-19 (like any severe infection of the lung) can cause breathing difficulties, there may be an increase in the risk of overdose among opioid users.

People in the UK are **drinking differently as a result of coronavirus**¹. But our research shows that we aren't all responding in the same way. Changes in drinking habits are happening in two directions. Some people are drinking more often. Around one in five drinkers (21%) are drinking **more frequently** since the lockdown. This suggests that around **8.6 million UK adults** are drinking more frequently under lockdown. Since the service design in 2014 there has been a huge change in the amount of alcohol consumed nationally and one area of the redesign allows for targeted work with local establishments to publicise the harm caused by excessive drinking and the information on how to access services available to our residents.

There are also risks beyond the individual. It is estimated one in 14 adults feels that alcohol makes the tension in households worse since lockdown. If this is applied to the Wokingham adult population we can infer that more than 9,000 adults are living in households where alcohol has exacerbated tension in the household.

The figures are even higher for households with children. One in seven people with children under 18 living in their household feel that alcohol had increased tensions. For Wokingham this could be directly affecting over 4,000 children, while only 4% feel alcohol had lessened tensions (approx. 1,200).

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

The most significant risk will be the failure of Wokingham Borough Council to provide a mandated service to residents with substance misuse issues along with the subsequent impact on:

- Disruption in service provision to vulnerable members of our community and their families
- Failure of Wokingham Borough Council to deliver a mandated service
- Reputational risk within Berkshire and the wider South East region to manage this extra-ordinary situation
- Extra burden on social care services, particularly for children, housing, mental health, police and benefits
- The current contract allows for a 3 month notice period, which will be lengthened in the new contract following reprocurement

PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

Due to the value of the contract exceeding £663k for the full contract period it is subject to OJEU procurement rules and regulations and therefore set timescales which cannot be amended. A comprehensive project plan has been completed and agreed with

¹ <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/covid19-drinking-during-lockdown-headline-findings>

procurement and if authorisation is given by executive to procure the new service will be in post to commence on the 1st April 2021.

Term of the Contract:

The term of the contract will be on a 5+1+1 basis which is standard within the industry and recommended good practice to enable a service to become well established within the community. The initial 5 year term will encourage more competitive bids.

Funding:

Funding for the service is financed through the Public Health Grant.

Link to Service or Corporate Objectives

The service fits within the principles from the Wokingham Borough Council's vision of looking after vulnerable people and improving health, wellbeing and quality of life for the residents of Wokingham Borough. Drugs and Alcohol Strategy Group is a subgroup of our multi-agency Community Safety Partnership and thus is sat within a wider community placement.

This service aligns with the draft Borough Plan in a number of ways, supporting strategic values, principles and plans:

Values	
Being Ambitious	The service will be linguistically, ethnically and culturally relevant, and able to meet the needs of residents of Wokingham Borough who misuse drug and/or alcohol.
Customer Focussed	Commissioning a service that works for the community, ensuring there is equity of access to the service.
Taking ownership	Understanding needs and addressing these e.g. support adults, young people, families and carers with substance misuse issues within/across a community setting(s).
One team	Listening and being open and honest with residents and our community in terms of what is feasible with the resources.
Principles	
Customer enabling	Demands for substance misuse services are increasing and we need to find new ways to manage this. We need to promote self-care by helping customers meet their own needs through community support and technology.
Customer self-service	Ensure the maximum amount of information is available on the providers website and customers can access online training and support. Access and engagement with the service will require the provider to have lean processes, digitised and e-enabled.
Focused customer case work	Both straightforward and more complex clients will be managed in the smartest way we can. Where clients have chaotic and complex lives ways of holding and managing these clients need to be innovative to provide a quicker and smarter outcome. The new service has also been adapted to consider outreach work in the community to provide a flexible approach to accessing the service.

Specialists	Commissioned to promote and enhance partnership working and manage the Substance Misuse contract to ensure clients maximise opportunities for positive outcomes and recovery
Commissioning	Commissioning quality services in line with the latest evidence-based practice, ensuring the service is up-to-date, innovative and provides good value for money
Future Model	Improving substance misuse services for Wokingham Borough residents and visitors, with robust governance and oversight demonstrating value for money and quality services
Plan	
Support at vulnerable times and Health and Wellbeing	Enable people to have a good quality of life and equal access to services and the information they need
	Provide safe, high quality and value for money service
	Ensure effective support for vulnerable learners, for example children and adults with special educational needs or disability
	Improve emotional and mental health, reduce self-harm

The service also supports the following priorities within the developing Children & Young People's Plan:

- Priority 1 – Early Intervention and Prevention
- Priority 2 – Emotional Wellbeing
- Priority 3 – Contextual Safeguarding
- Priority 4 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The service also aligns with the 'reducing inequalities' priority from the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Project Specific Objectives, Appraisal of Options and Project Timetable

Substance misuse services represent a significant proportion of the spend of the public health ring-fenced grant, and affects a range of [Public Health Outcome Framework](#) (PHOF) outcomes, including:

- Admission episodes for alcohol related conditions
- Successful completion of drug/alcohol treatment

Commissioning of this service will meet the mandated and local needs by developing a specification:

- using the Care Act 2014 and statutory Care Act guidance to ensure commissioned services meet the mandate
- using the Wokingham substance misuse needs assessment to tailor the specification
- using the National Strategy and policy guidance for example Modern Crime Prevention Strategy 2016 – Alcohol Chapter

The integrated substance misuse service aims to improve substance misuse outcomes by:

- Ensuring that support planning and delivery is co-produced with the customers
- Delivers high quality care and support to achieve the aims of the service
- Is sensitive to the needs of an individual customer and non-discriminatory in the delivery of the service
- Accessible so that it can provide services when needed to all customers within its normal operating hours
- Promotes the safety of customers and that of their carers, staff and the wider public

- Offers choices which promote independence
- Well-co-ordinated between all staff, stakeholders and partners
- Delivers continuity of care and support for as long as this is needed
- Empowers and supports staff
- Properly accountable to its customers and their carers

Service objectives:

- Maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the residents that use the service
- Effectively manage offenders in partnership with other agencies to reduce their offending rates
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour related to drug and alcohol misuse
- Support the Youth Offending service to reduce levels of re-offending in the under 18 cohort and reduce the number of entrants into the criminal justice system.
- Support children who are impacted by parental substance misuse
- Support people who misuse drugs and/or alcohol to access education, employment or training in conjunction with existing services in Wokingham, gain suitable accommodation and maintain it and improve their health and wellbeing
- Increase the knowledge of generic workers to increase the early identification of substance misuse
- Provide alternative solutions to the delivery of substance misuse services which are not service based

Spending on drug treatment is reported to lead to a wide range of benefits including:

- Making communities safer by reducing crime, drug litter and street prostitution and troubled families stabilised.
- Protecting public health by preventing drug-related deaths, restricting blood-borne viruses (HIV, hepatitis C) and reducing the burden on the NHS.

In actual cost terms, it is calculated² that:

- Every £1 spent on drug treatment saves £4.00 in costs to society.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Please see “Other Financial Information” below	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)		Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)		Yes	

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest>

Other Financial Information

We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise to see how substance misuse spending in Wokingham compares to other comparative neighbours. We have been challenged by Public Health England for the past two years as we spend the lowest proportion of our grant on substance misuse services. The table below shows that Wokingham is currently spending less on this mandated services and therefore an additional £7,000 per month has been agreed with the service provider. Therefore the spend for 2020/21 will in fact be £576,000.

Summary - Using 2018/19 Data

	RBWM	West Berks	Wokingham
Population (2018)	150,906	158,527	167,979
New presentation	258	204	205
All in treatment	494	449	298
Spend per person	£ 5.02	£ 5.31	£ 2.93
Budget	£ 758,000	£ 842,290	£ 492,000

The service redesign will be conducted in the context of needing to achieve improved outcomes along with increased value for money e.g. offering online advice services, requirement for value-for-money service level agreements with pharmacies. As detailed in the report and within the Corporate objectives the additional funding will allow Wokingham Borough Council to meet the ever changing needs of a complex and challenging cohort of residents.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

A Prior Information Notice was published on the 30th June 2020 to ensure providers are aware of the upcoming opportunity. A provider event is planned for the 19th August 2020 to stimulate the market to promote a competitive tender.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Wokingham Borough Council must not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual and is required to foster good relations. This has been considered as part of the overall approach to this re-procurement. A further Equality Impact Assessment will be completed on the new service specification once it has been finalised and after full consultation with key partners and communities affected. The new service will seek to address inequalities and ensure equitable provision of services in the future. No detrimental impacts are anticipated.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

This will have a neutral impact.

List of Background Papers

None

Contact Natasha Jones

Service Adult Social Care

Telephone

Email Natasha.jones@wokingham.gov.uk