

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE AND PARTENRSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE**

**28 MARCH 2011**

**DRUGS AND ALCOHOL MISUSE REVIEW INTERIM REPORT**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To report the discussion at a recent meeting of representatives of the DAAT Board, provider organisations and County Councillors regarding the review of functions and effectiveness of the Drugs and Alcohol Team.

**2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The North Yorkshire Substance Misuse Partnership Board is responsible for strategic substance misuse commissioning across North Yorkshire. The North Yorkshire Substance Misuse Commissioning Team is hosted and employed by NHS North Yorkshire and York and supports the 'Board' to co-ordinate and deliver the commissioning plans for alcohol and drug treatment for adults.
- 2.2 On 24 February, Members of this Committee and the Care and Independence Overview Scrutiny Committee which is taking the lead on the review, met with representatives of the Board, the Commissioning Team, providers and Directors of Public and Mental Health.

**3.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 3.1 Care and Independence Scrutiny Members had previously considered progress against the recommendations of an independent review into performance and governance of the Board and the Commissioning Team. All agreed at the meeting that progress against the recommendations had continued to be both impressive and timely.
- 3.2 Representatives of the Substance Misuse Board, the Commissioning Team and provider organisations shared the view that this progress had been sustained. A more harmonious relationship existed; contractual discussions in particular had gone well. The Countywide Misuse Forum was now up, running, and promoting engagement across organisations, users and carers. It was much more proactive to the solutions and challenges.

3.3 Provider organisations confirmed this view and the general atmosphere was collaborative and “collegiate”.

3.4 The Members present believed this therefore concluded the “first phase” objectives of the Committee’s review. Work would now turn to the balance between drugs awareness and treatment and that for alcohol misuse, focussing especially on how to reduce alcohol related harm.

#### 4.0 **Alcohol Related Harm**

4.1 Understanding the impact of commissioning efforts to tackle the effects of alcohol misuse needs to be considered against a backcloth of changed structural arrangements within the National Health Service. The question was how to reallocate resources to intervention and preventative services, especially on combating alcohol abuse, which then benefits other services 'upstream' (especially Health).

4.2 There were many comments at the meeting about the risk factors associated with drinking, its impact upon healthcare services and the wider society. Alcohol misuse is a causal factor in many medical conditions but excessive drinking contributes to increased risky sexual behaviour, accidents, absenteeism, violence and drug misuse.

4.3 A profiling report had concluded that the level of alcohol related harm across the region had increased considerably over the last 6 years. The argument in support of public health initiatives to reduce the level of alcohol related harm was overwhelming.

4.4 The Substance Misuse Commissioning Team was currently working on a countywide partnership strategy on combating alcohol misuse and related harm.

4.5 The purpose is to set out an agreed approach to reducing alcohol-related harm in North Yorkshire and York amongst local partners. It will provide direction for commissioning and delivering treatment, prevention and harm reduction interventions in line with the priorities of partners.

4.6 Principles underpinning this strategy would include:

- Prioritise investment upstream to prevent harm (whilst recognising that ‘clearing up’ activity still has to take place)
- Plan and commission jointly for improved efficiencies and outcomes
- Prioritise evidence-based interventions

- Continually improve relationships and communication

4.7 Expected benefits include:

- A reduction in the increase in alcohol-related hospital admissions
- A reduction in alcohol-related crime
- An increase the proportion of dependent drinkers in treatment

4.8 When completed, Members believe that this should be part of your work programme so that you could decide how, with the support of partners; the County Council might assume leadership of this agenda.

**BRYON HUNTER**  
**SCRUTINY TEAM LEADER**

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