

North Yorkshire Council
Health and Adult Services
Executive Member Meeting

12th January 2024

REPORT TO Executive Member for Health and Adult Services in consultation with Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services and Director of Public Health

Draft North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy: Proposed Public Consultation

1.0 Purpose Of Report (required)

To approve the proposed public consultation plan for the North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy.

2.0 Executive Summary

The draft North Yorkshire all-age substance use strategy has been developed by several partner agencies working together to reduce the harms associated with substance use (drugs and alcohol). Approval is being sought to run a non-statutory, formal public consultation from **2nd February 2024 to 30th April 2024 (12 weeks)**. The proposed consultation will allow members of the public, and those in the targeted groups identified, to find out about the strategy and feedback their thoughts and views. We have identified a range of performance, policy and risks associated with the consultation, but proposed mitigations enable the consultation to progress as deemed low risk.

3.0 Background

The draft North Yorkshire all age substance use strategy has been developed by several partner agencies working together to reduce the harms associated with substance use. The proposed Substance Use Strategy for North Yorkshire (**Appendix A**) advocates a public health approach to reduce harms associated with substance use. We believe in the value of prevention - of use of substances; harm reduction – for people using substances; and recovery – from harmful patterns of substance use. People who use substances and people who experience harmful patterns of substance use are citizens of North Yorkshire. The North Yorkshire Substance Use strategy aims to balance our law enforcement responsibilities with compassionate leadership, policy, and practice.

In December 2021, the Government introduced a 10 Year drug strategy to reduce crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system. The National Strategy is in part a response to the review, which was completed by Dame Carol Black, delivering the key recommendations to improve the system. As well as the strategy there has been significant government financial investment in the treatment sector.

Approval is being sought to run a non-statutory, formal public consultation from **2nd February 2024 to 30th April 2024 (12 weeks)**.

The consultation will gather views and feedback from:

- The public (adults and young people)
- People with lived and living experience of harms associated with substance use be that themselves, family members, a loved one or friend
- Workforce and professionals
- Armed forces and veterans
- Specifically, we need to ensure that we hear from people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people that identify as LGBTQ+, women, rural residents or people that have a disability to ensure a good representation of views from different groups of people as highlighted in our equality impact assessment (see section 12).

The proposed consultation will allow members of the public, and those in the groups identified to find out about the strategy and feedback their thoughts and views on this.

4.0 Issues

The vision for the North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy is that we will reduce harms associated with substance use across North Yorkshire – putting people, health, and communities at the centre. The strategy outlines the plan for action over the next two years which shows how we will take a public health approach.

The Substance Use Strategy is an all age, all substance strategy that recognises that the harms associated with substance impact individuals, families, and communities. The strategy is divided into 9 chapters covering each of the areas which the North Yorkshire partnership will priorities in the coming years. The chapters include breaking drug supply chains, developing a world class treatment system, creating an Intergenerational shift in demand, harm reduction, comms & engagement, research & development, place-based action and workforce development and protective factors.

Issues/ risks relating to the delivery of the strategy consultation are detailed below in section 11.

5.0 Performance Implications

Working together across the partnership to deliver on our shared priorities within the strategy should impact positively on performance in several areas:

- Reduce supply of illicit drugs by police
- Improve treatment services by commissioned services
- Reduce demand for substances (prevention)

Through consultation we may hear feedback from people about their experience of individual services. Any feedback of this nature will be collated and used constructively to support services to develop and improve.

6.0 Policy Implications

There are a range of other policies and strategies that feature substance use and its associated harms that are cited within the Substance Use Strategy (section 6). These include:

- **North Yorkshire Council workplace substance use policy** - North Yorkshire Council strives to provide a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all staff, visitors and service users.
- **North Yorkshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** The draft strategy references factors that contribute to substance use and harmful patterns of substance use, and there is a specific aim: “to identify people who experience drug and alcohol dependence as a key ‘inclusion health’ population group.” It outlines a joint commitment across partners to improving their access to healthcare and other systems to improve their health outcomes.
- **North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership:** All the priorities within the strategic plan have links to substance use and its impact, whether it be supporting individuals and communities, or at times enforcement; our cross-partnership arrangements must be strong and robust
- **Police Drug Strategy:** The vision of the strategy is to reduce harm from and reduce supply of illicit drugs in North Yorkshire by embedding the principles of Prevent, Prepare, Protect and Pursue.

- **Community Mental Health Transformation Programme - Complex Emotional Needs/ Trauma workstream:** of the Community Mental Health Transformation aligns very strongly to the North Yorkshire substance use strategy. It is estimated that around 78% of people who have Complex Emotional Needs will have some level of harmful use of substances, the majority of whom will have experienced at least one form of trauma
- **Probation Drug Strategy:** The Probation Service is committed to working in partnership with the courts and North Yorkshire Horizons to deliver a 20% increase in Drug/ Alcohol Arrest Referrals
- **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Women's Whole System Approach:** The VAWG Strategy includes an objective to deliver a Women's Whole System Approach, with the aim of offering an effective approach to working with women with multiple unmet needs, and those who have been victims of, or at risk of, violence or crime. Many women who use substances often have multiple unmet needs and work with multiple agencies.
- **Housing Strategy:** Preventing and Tackling Homelessness and Supporting Communities through Neighbourhood Renewal and Regeneration. Preventing and tackling homelessness, meeting supported housing needs and the needs of specific groups, ensuring that communities are sustainable and inclusive. Working with Health and Social Care colleagues to meet the need of vulnerable residents and to deliver affordable housing to those with a variety of needs.
- In addition, there were links with the Armed Forces Covenant, NY Early Help Strategy, NY Council Plan, Being Young in Yorkshire, Domestic Abuse Strategy and Serious Violence Duty

7.0 Alternative Options considered

Substance use impacts individuals, families and communities of all ages and is not substance specific so the North Yorkshire Substance Use strategy is an all-age strategy and covers both alcohol and other drugs collectively.

Whilst there is no legal requirement to complete a statutory consultation with the public, there is a reasonable expectation that this strategy and its content will be of interest to the public and therefore it is recommended that we complete a formal 12-week consultation. The proposal follows best practice in terms of consultation length and approach. The consultation separates its approach used with both adults and young people, recognising different engagement requirements.

8.0 Financial Implications

The strategy includes several elements that are likely to have positive financial implications. The strategy is based on a strong partnership approach, making best use of resources by joining up across agencies. The strategy includes clear priorities relating to investing in treatment for people who experience harmful patterns of substance use, which is recognised to reduce the economic and social costs associated with drugs and alcohol. The independent review of drugs led by Dame Carol Black (2021) [Independent review of drugs by Dame Carol Black: government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-drugs-by-dame-carol-black) reinforced that investment in drug and alcohol services has reduced significantly over the last decade nationally. In response, central government has placed increased priority on drug and alcohol services, implementing significant additional (Universal and SSMTRG Section 31 grant) investment over the period 2021-2025. North Yorkshire has so far received, invested, and benefited from over £1.4 million additional funding, and is due to receive £1.2 million additional funding in 2024/25. Furthermore, several proposed actions within the strategy are preventative in nature or focus on early intervention (for example with children and young people), which supports best value for money across public sector organisations. More widely, the strategy will have a positive economic impact through the priority focus on protective factors, including education and employment.

The strategy consultation will be completed using existing resources within the council as well as support to complete via other partner agencies involved in the design and delivery of the strategy.

9.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising in respect of consulting on the Substance Use strategy, however, Office of Health Improvement and disparities (OHID) required all Local authorities to develop a local Substance Use strategy as a local response to the National Drug strategy: [From Harm to Hope](#), published in December 2021 and the strategy should therefore be considered a key strategic document. The national strategy sets out the government's 10-year ambition to ensure as many people as possible can get the treatment they need by significantly increasing the number of treatment places and recovery services. OHID have developed a new set of local and national outcomes frameworks to measure progress against our key strategic aims through which government and public services can be held to account at both national and local levels.

10.0 Impact on other services/organisations

Successful implementation of the strategy and its consultation requires commitment from a range of partner organisations:

- North Yorkshire Council departments – Health and Adult Services (Public Health), Children & Young Peoples’ Services, Community Development (housing and economic development) and Local Engagement departments (including communications, web team, localities team).
- North Yorkshire Horizons, North Yorkshire Rise
- Criminal & Youth Justice: Police, Office Police Fire Crime Commissioner, Youth Justice service, Operation Choice
- Armed forces / agencies working with armed forces.
- Agencies working with those identified with protective characteristics
- Schools, colleges, other education providers,
- Wider community & voluntary sector
- Employers, businesses, and organisations within the community

11.0 Risk Management Implications

Risks in relation to the consultation:

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Several consultations / engagements are ongoing over <u>similar</u> time periods – potential for confusion or lack of engagement.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Strategy Consultation • North Yorkshire Housing Options process (live) • Joint Health and wellbeing strategy consultation 	<p>This consultation will start 2nd February 2023 so consultation periods will not fully overlap, however residents could have consultation fatigue and we may see reduced engagement. Proactive and targeted communications will be a mitigation to this.</p>
<p>The EIA has highlighted potential barriers to reaching individuals with one or more protected characteristics with the consultation, and the importance of their voice. Groups identified include women and girls, LGBTQIA+</p>	<p>The consultation group have identified key stakeholders and groups that can support with extended reach. Variety of methods</p>

<p>communities, neuro diversities, people using substances and those facing multiple disadvantages.</p>	<p>to cater for different preferences – written strategy document, video and visual infographic (young people), surveys online and in-person, accessing groups that people are already attending.</p>
<p>Given the consultation will be taking place over the winter season, there is a risk that poor weather may impact on attendance at events</p>	<p>There will be a varied way for people to engage with the consultation including virtual methods for those that don't feel able to travel in the winter months. The consultation will be available for people to complete in their local communities such as library, citizens advice centre etc.</p>
<p>People may disclose personal challenges with substance use or its effects on their lives.</p>	<p>This will be mitigated by the types of questions that we will ask (specific to strategy content). We will also ensure that at the end of the survey there is information for participants on local specialist support available to them should they know someone or require further support.</p>

12.0 Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the draft strategy and consultation is underway. This draft can be found at **Appendix B**. The Equalities Impact Assessment will also be available for the public. Key points to consider are:

- Ensuring the voice of people from the targeted population groups is captured such as those identifying as; LGBTQ+, ethnic minority background, women, have a disability and those in the armed forces or veterans.

13.0 Climate change implications

A Climate Change Impact Screening Assessment has been completed for the draft strategy and consultation which will be available to the public on request.

The strategy covers an initial period of 2 years which means there is limited impact on climate change. Overall, the long-term ambition for the government and council would be that there will be a reduction in substance use, which would then result in a reduction to waste and pollution from products associated with substance use (syringes, bottles, and other items linked to substance use).

14.0 Reasons for recommendation/s

15.0 Recommendation (required)

To complete a formal 12-week consultation for the Substance Use Strategy using a variety of mediums and methods to ascertain the views of the public.

Name and title of report author (required)

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Appendices

Appendix A - Draft strategy

Appendix B – EIA

Appendix C - Consultation Plan Overview