

Meeting: Safer Communities Executive Board

Date: 23 June 2008

Report Title: Update from the Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board

Report of: Marion Morris, Drug and Alcohol Partnership Manger

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide the Board with an overview of some of the new initiatives and developments being commissioned in the year ahead.

2. Background

- 2.1 The 2007/08 DAAT Annual Needs Assessment identified some key gaps in terms of service provision and/or areas that were in need of improvement. This report will focus on the key four of these new developments:

- Free-Phone Helpline
- Cannabis Awareness Campaign
- Street Outreach Plan
- Carers Counselling Service

3. Free Phone Helpline

- 3.1. Whilst all of the substance misuse treatment services provide advice and information on drugs and their affects and most offer low threshold drop-in services – there is no central advice and information/referral service for people wanting to access drug/alcohol treatment. From a service user point of view it can be difficult to know where to get the most appropriate form of help/or seek advice about the effects of drugs.
- 3.2. To address this, the DAAT have commissioned a pilot free phone helpline, which will run from 23 June 2008 – 31 March 2009. It will act as a central point of access for information and advice on drugs and their effects and refer residents to the most appropriate form of drug/alcohol treatment in the borough – depending on the issue that is presented.
- 3.3. The launch of the helpline will be supported by a targeted advertising campaign, details of which are:

- **23 June – 17 August: free phone helpline advert will be inside 100 buses (leaving Tottenham and Wood Green depots) – with focus on ones that stay longest in the borough**
 - **8 September – 2 November: free phone advert on 10 spaces on escalators - Wood Green Tube**
 - **10 November - 7 December: Free phone advert on rear of 30 buses (focus on route 29).**
- 3.4. In addition the free phone helpline will be promoted on 20 lamp post banners for three weeks leading up to the Tottenham Carnival. Posters will also be on display in Police custody suites.
- 3.5. The free phone helpline will be closely monitored and evaluated throughout its operation. An evaluation report will be presented to the January 2009 meeting of the Joint Commissioning Group where a decision will be taken as to whether to continue to commission this service next year.

Success will be gauged on the:

- Number of people entering treatment via the helpline
- Number of people who have sought telephone support
- Number of people who have used the helpline to get information on drugs and their effects
- Number of people who have accessed helpline to get information on drug treatment.

The artwork for the free phone helpline can be seen in appendix 1 of this report.

- 3.6. Other more qualitative data will also be collated, such as nature of the call - drugs discussed, gender, etc.

4. Cannabis Awareness Campaign

- 4.1. Haringey has above the London average of people presenting to drug treatment with cannabis problems (17% compared to London average of 10%), the main age range is 18-24. In response to this emerging demand the Drug Advisory Service Haringey were commissioned to provide cannabis support groups last year. These are well attended and much in demand.
- 4.2. We also know from both the Youth Offending Service and our specialist young persons treatment service (Involve – Haringey) that cannabis users make up a high percentage of their case loads – and that usage begins much younger than 18. Given the potential for mental health and other problematic health/social problems that can develop as a result of heavy cannabis use, it is critical that accurate information and support services are in place.

- 4.3 In addition there is confusion amongst users and professional alike as to the legal status of cannabis (which will be further compounded by the Government's recent decision to reclassify cannabis from a Class C to Class B status) coupled with misinformation on the short and long term effects of cannabis use/ and a need for accurate information on different types of cannabis and their strengths.
- 4.4. To address the above issues the DAAT will be running a targeted adverting campaign, which will use the same free phone helpline number and again act as a reliable source of information on cannabis and its effects and refer people to most appropriate forms of help. For example, under 21's will be referred to Involve, and over 21's to DASH's cannabis support groups.
- 4.5. The cannabis awareness campaign will run from 23 June – 17 August and adverts will be placed on the inside of 100 buses leaving Wood Green and Tottenham depots. This will be monitored over the summer months – with an evaluation report ready by the autumn. **The artwork for the cannabis campaign can be seen at Appendix 2.**

5. Street Outreach Plan

- 5.1 As part of a further push to increase numbers accessing drug treatment and to provide a coordinated and comprehensive street outreach programme – the DAAT will be reviewing existing outreach provision, to ensure that it is co-ordinated and targeted towards the specific needs of main client groups e.g. sex workers, young people etc. If possible, it is envisaged that we will move towards having street outreach services 5 nights per week.
- 5.2. A purpose designed outreach van will also be purchased this year – which will mean that more services can be offered, and that workers safety and client confidently is increased. It will also provide important harm minimisation services to 'harder to reach clients.' The monies to purchase the van were received from Haringey TPCT, in response to a proposal put to them to increase numbers entering treatment (NI40 and part of the Vital Signs).

6. Carer's Pilot

- 6.1. Finally a detailed piece of work undertaken with 'carers' of people with substance misuse problems in 2007/08 identified that they were a hidden group - who through the perceived stigma/ illegal nature of substance misuse were not accessing mainstream carers services. They were often struggling with huge financial and emotional issues whilst trying to keep some form of order in their families.
- 6.2. A pilot support group which run in 2006/07 – identified that carers would appreciate having the space to talk to someone to help them attend to their own needs and not just focus on the 'sick' person in the family.

- 6.3. A pilot carers' counselling service has been commissioned for this year (2008/09). It is staffed by qualified counsellors and is already being well used. The free phone helpline will also act as a means of publicising this service.

7. Other Potential Projects - Drug System Change Pilots

- 7.1. Haringey, Plymouth and Lincolnshire DAAT have been working with the Royal Society of Arts on a proposal to be one of the potential pilot sites for personalised budgets for drug users. This is part of the Government's commitment to examine a much wider roll-out of individual budgets for treatment and wider support – including access to housing, training, employment. The RSA have secured funding from the Tudor Trust to undertake the first part of this project, which will be to survey service users' needs.
- 7.2. We are now in the process of trying to get buy-in from the National Treatment Agency that they will either give consideration to these three projects being part of the proposed six national pilots or at the very least take its findings into consideration when formulating policy on personalisation in drug services. The Tudor Trust has made this one of the conditions of their funding.
- 7.3. The Director of Adults, Community, Culture and Leisure has been briefed on this as has the Head of Policy within the Council. The Board will be kept informed of progress.

5. Recommendations:

- 5.1. Note timetable of marketing campaign.

APPENDIX 1

**Concerned about the effects drugs/alcohol ?
have on you or someone you care for**

for **free** and **confidential** advice and information ring:

0800 988 9907

 

Monday–Friday 9.30–5.30 A service for drug/alcohol users, their families, partners and friends

APPENDIX 2

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF?

Arrest Final Warning Criminal Record Prison



For confidential advice call freephone
0800 988 9907
Monday to Friday 9.30 to 5.30pm



CANNABIS IS STILL ILLEGAL
...and can seriously damage your health

