

MONDAY, 31ST JULY, 2006

DRUGS ISSUES IN BIRCHILLS

Information was requested on what action was being taken and are there any figures available highlighting involvement in youth provision on an ethnic basis.

Information has been obtained as follows:-

Drug Interventions Programme

The Drug Interventions Programme was rolled out in Walsall in November, 2004. The aims are to divert drug using offenders into treatment. This Programme is commissioned by the Drug Alcohol Action Team who now form part of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership.

Since the beginning of the Programme, over 180 clients have entered structured treatment in Lantern House and begun to take control of their lives. A further **** remain in Addaction, the tier 2 services accessing counselling, acupuncture and relapse prevention.

The expansion of this Programme in Walsall now incorporates '*Tough Choices*', which includes:-

1. Drug testing on arrest.
2. Assessment at the point of arrest for specific offences.
3. Restrictions on bail.

There have been a number of key developments:-

1. An increase in workforce as Addaction increase the numbers of drug workers in cell blocks and courts.
2. Police, Probation Service, Court officers and treatment providers working more closely.
3. Increased opportunity for offenders whose offending is linked to substance misuse to access treatment.
4. More resources into the existing treatment services.

The Drug Interventions Programme gained momentum on March 31st when:-

The courts were given additional powers to divert offenders into treatment whilst on bail.

In the short to long term, the Walsall community should begin to notice the impact of these measures on crime figures as more and more offenders begin to engage and stay in treatment.

This will reduce the harm that drugs and offending behaviour have, both on the community and themselves.

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T3 Young People's Substance Misuse Service

As from April, 2006, Crime Reduction Initiatives with its T3 Young People's Substance Misuse Service are now commissioned to offer a service in the Walsall and Borough area.

T3 are a team of qualified staff with drug/alcohol and young person knowledge and training will provide an initial comprehensive assessment of need, access to specialist prescribing pathways, structured care planning, therapeutic interventions and motivational support.

Our aims will be to identify appropriate care pathways to treatment, support and education, which reflect individual need and also to reduce the harm caused to the individual service users and the wider community through substance misuse and associated crime and anti-social behaviour.

The service will offer:-

- Open access/drop in/appointment based services
- Written and verbal information
- Advice and support
- Harm minimisation advice
- Advice and support on sexual health
- Education, skills and training assessment
- 1:1 support/interventions
- Specific pre-treatment group work programmes
- Targeting of young street drinkers
- Community support
- Peer education programmes
- Targeted activity in local hotspots
- Links to CJS and YOS

We will also offer:-

- Primary health and BBV screening
- Clinical assessment
- Community prescribing
- Crisis intervention services
- Symptomatic prescribing
- Detoxification

Obviously, being a relatively new service of only 2 months, and comprising a full team compliment of 6 staff, our time has been spent organising meetings and sending out literature so as to promote this new service to other agencies in the Walsall and Borough area.

Contact has been made with all schools in the St. Matthews, Birchills and Leamore area and meetings have taken place with appropriate staff to discuss referral pathways and targeted work with vulnerable young people whether on a 1:1 or group work basis.

105 young people have had contact with T3 staff in the St. Matthews, Birchills and Leamore area and 6 individuals are currently accessing 1:1 intensive interventions.

We are currently looking into initiatives with Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Police, targeted work alongside the Youth Service, raising awareness and delivering some drug/alcohol education in schools, drop-in sessions at hostels and some targeted work with young street drinkers within the community. We are also piloting a text advice and information service to young people who may not feel ready to access face to face services.

Contact and appropriate meetings have been made in the Walsall area, inclusive of St. Matthews, Birchills and Leamore, with all Secondary Schools, youth services, hostels, community wardens, NACRO, CAMHS, Social Services, GP's, Connexions, Police, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Positive Futures, Positive Activities for Young People, The Map and Education Welfare.

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