

Walsall Council – Health and Wellbeing Board

12 December 2023

Walsall Alcohol and Drugs Strategy

For Discussion

1. Purpose

This report is a presentation of the Walsall Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2023-2028 (**Appendix 1**). This is for discussion, with a particular focus on implementation of the strategic commitments by members of the board, as well as to ensure the Health and Wellbeing board is informed of both the need and activities in Walsall to address substance misuse.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That board members agree to champion collaborative working in the area of Alcohol and Drug misuse and to work with their respective organisations to deliver the aims and objectives of the Walsall Alcohol and Drug Strategy.
- 2.2 That board members are cognisant of the Alcohol and Drug Strategy and take the Strategy into consideration when planning or developing activities in their respective areas, particularly in relation to examples of partnership activity outlined in this report.

3. Report detail

- 3.1. The Walsall Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2023-2028 details the agreed partnership strategy to address Alcohol and Drug substance misuse needs in Walsall. It firmly links with our We are Walsall 2040 ambitions to be a safe borough, to reduce all types of crime, narrow the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy and be the most improved borough in the West Midlands.
- 3.2. The needs in Walsall are summarised in the Strategy (**Appendix 1**) and more detail can be found in the Walsall Drug and Alcohol Needs assessment 2022 (see Background Papers). Drug and alcohol-related deaths in Walsall are similar to the national average, but this average is increasing. Walsall alcohol related deaths are also increasing, and drug-related deaths have plateaued at almost twice what they were in 2008 – 2010.
- 3.3. There is a high unmet need for alcohol with only 20% of those in need receiving support. This figure is lower for drug-related unmet need, with approximately 45% of people in need receiving support. Walsall benchmarks well with regard to supporting people who are leaving prison back into treatment services, and we are also increasing the number of individuals being sent for rehabilitation support. The numbers of young people in

treatment are rising, but we have further work to do to increase the number of adults accessing services, following a downward trend since the end of 2021.

- 3.4. The Strategy introduces the Walsall Combatting Alcohol and Drug Misuse Partnership, who developed, and is now leading on the delivery of the strategy. The Partnership is accountable to the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and reports into the Health and Wellbeing Board for health partnership input.
- 3.5. The strategy proposes to address needs across Walsall through work to Prevent, Engage and to support Treatment/Recovery:

Prevent

- 3.6. Prevent substance misuse through improved awareness and informed communities, with a particular focus on alcohol-related unmet need.
- 3.7. Limit drug supply - reducing exposure to illicit substances.
- 3.8. Drive changes in the market and manage substances at risk of being misused to reduce access.
- 3.9. Use policy levers to systematically address alcohol and drug-related harm.

Engage

- 3.10. Actively engage with under-represented communities, to support their awareness of alcohol and drug harms and of the services available to them.
- 3.11. Engage service users and recovered service users in designing and delivery of services.
- 3.12. Improve partnerships across the Borough in reducing substance misuse and its related harms.

Treat and Recover

- 3.13. Support those engaged in substance misuse, to drive behaviour change as well as addressing environmental factors contributing to substance misuse, with a focus on recovery and factors which facilitate positive outcomes.
- 3.14. Address wider needs; support all of those who need it, including carers, family, and friends.
- 3.15. Reduce drug related morbidity and mortality through effective harm reduction and overdose prevention interventions.

Partnership Work

- 3.16 Partnership work is essential to successful delivery of the strategy. Actions pertinent to Health and Wellbeing Board partners include:

Increasing referrals from partner agencies where alcohol or drug substance misuse is identified or suspected (for both adults and young people).

Supporting campaign activities to promote understanding of the harms of substance misuse, give harm reduction messages and ensure people are aware of support available to them.

Development of Dual-diagnosis Pathways with NHS mental health services

Ensuring safeguarding pathways are in place and are used appropriately, where substance use may feature.

3.17 Success in delivery of the strategy will lead to:

Reduced	Increased
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alcohol and Drug use• Alcohol and Drug related Crime• Alcohol and Drug related Morbidity• Alcohol and Drug related Mortality• Alcohol and Drug related relapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uptake of Alcohol and Drug treatment• Alcohol and Drug treatment completions• Wellbeing for those engaging in or with a history of Alcohol and Drug misuse.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

4.1 Delivery of the Walsall Alcohol and Drug Strategy is a partnership working approach developed by those partners to coordinate the delivery of a cohesive and aligned approach to Alcohol and Drug substance misuse prevention, engagement, treatment, and recovery.

Financial implications:

4.2 No financial implications for the Health and Wellbeing board over and above public health grant use, and additional national funding which has been made available through the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) to support the delivery of activities until April 2025. Further national funding beyond this period will be linked to national policy decisions.

Legal implications:

4.3 No legal implications.

Other Resource implications:

4.4 Partners organisations are asked to collaborate with the partnership to drive a cohesive and common approach to this work. Further to this, actions will be developed with a range of Health and Wellbeing Board, considering what can be delivered within existing resources, or where additional resource may need to be sought (for example through use of SSMTRG funding).

5. Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities - impact:

- 5.1. HWBB priorities linked to the Alcohol and Drug Strategy work include both Mental Wellbeing and Children and Young People.
- 5.2. Mental Wellbeing is both a major contributor to and majorly impacted by substance misuse.
- 5.3. Those engaged in Substance misuse are at extreme risk of exclusion and experience significant inequality.
- 5.4. All 6 Marmot policy objectives are connected with the work across Alcohol and Drug substance misuse prevention, support and treatment:
- 5.5. Give every child the best start in life – through tackling parental substance misuse and supporting children and young people who experience this “hidden harm”.
- 5.6. Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives – through supporting those children and adults engaged in substance misuse.
- 5.7. Create fair employment and good work for all – through providing employability training, job support, and volunteering experience for people engaged in substance misuse services.
- 5.8. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all – through reducing substance misuse.
- 5.9. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities – through work to reduce the harms linked to substance misuse, to include domestic violence, and wider crime and disorder.
- 5.10. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention – substance misuse increases the risk of ill health, reducing misuse reduces these risks.

Background papers

Walsall Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment 2022 (walsallintelligence.org.uk) - <https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2022/12/Walsall-Drug-and-Alcohol-Needs-Assessment-Aug-2022.pdf>

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Walsall Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2023



Walsall Alcohol and
Drug Strategy 2023

Author

Name – Theo Grace, Senior Public Health Development Manager
Organisation – Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

☎ 01922 653057

✉ theo.grace@walsall.gov.uk

Name – Nadia Inglis, Interim Director of Public Health
Organisation – Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

☎ 01922 650722

✉ nadia.inglis@walsall.gov.uk