
SMST Leicestershire & Rutland Comprehensive Substance Misuse Needs Assessment (Adults & Young Persons) 2012/13

Executive Summary

The 2012/13 adult and young person's comprehensive substance misuse needs assessment aims to provide a whole system evidence base for substance misuse locally; to assist in strategic planning, the identification of gaps and risks and to provide recommendations for the coming financial year.

Summer 2011 saw the implementation of a new treatment system across Leicestershire and Rutland for both non-criminal justice services (Swanswell) and criminal justice services (Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Trust). This followed an extensive period of service review, consultation, redesign and procurement. Not unusually following such a major change, 2012-13 was a challenging year, and some priorities and initiatives identified within the Strategic Summary have not progressed as speedily as planned. These priorities will be reviewed alongside the findings of the Needs Assessment and an updated Strategic Summary completed by March 2013. Through the production of the needs assessment a number of key themes have been identified and will form the focus of additional developments during 2013/14.

Whilst progress has been made in the numbers of substance misusers successfully leaving treatment, it is fair to say that some of our planned recovery initiatives have been slower to progress than intended. We will ensure that visible recovery is a priority in the coming year.

Significant progress has been made in the rebalancing of the treatment system to encompass both drugs and alcohol and provide an integrated service, with our community treatment caseload now 57% drug clients and 43% alcohol clients. The baseline prior to the re-commissioning of services was 80% drugs and 20% alcohol. We need to better understand this change and the causal factors such as better access for county clients and this is something that will form part of the SMST strategic plan for 2013/14. We need to have greater focus on prevention and early intervention and begin to analyse the increasing number of clients being seen through Tier 2 brief interventions.

The wider provision of treatment across Leicestershire and Rutland was a fundamental aspect of the service review and redesign. Data currently available from Swanswell has identified over 70 locations where appointments have been attended across the County and Rutland during 2012/13, utilising both Swanswell spoke locations and a range of community settings. This is a vast improvement in terms of accessibility, which was identified as a key concern during the engagement phase of the review. Going forward commissioners and providers will ensure that services are responsive to need with on-going review and change.

It has been recognised that there has been a fundamental shift in recreational substance misuse. The advent of novel psychoactive substances has changed the face of the drug scene remarkably and with rapidity. The range of substances now available, their lack of consistency and the potential harms users are exposed to are now complex. The amount of internet shops selling NPS's has increased by 300% since 2010, with 693 online stores now selling the products, against 170 recorded in 2010. Locally we ensured that our commissioned treatment services adapted effectively to trends and have worked extensively on harm minimisation and preventative initiatives around NSPs, which included the launch of the Legal Highs Lethal Lows campaign in 2012. Going forward we have plans in place for collaborative working alongside our services at music events and university fresher's fairs, particularly focusing on the risks of NSPs, alcohol consumption and high risk behaviour.



We have made some headway during 2012/13 with hard to reach groups, which were identified as a priority within last year's assessment. Initial meetings have been attended with the multi-agency traveller unit and dreamers young refugees/asylum seekers. We need to formally agree data transfer from these organisations but this work is underway. Hard to reach groups continue to be an area of priority for 2013/14.

Supporting individuals with a mental illness and substance misuse problems remains one of the biggest challenges facing frontline health services. The complexity of issues makes diagnosis, care and treatment more difficult, with service users being at higher risk of relapse, readmission to hospital and suicide. The three Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups are working collaboratively to commission improved services for patients with so-called "Dual Diagnosis", i.e. mental health and substance misuse problems, from Leicestershire Partnership Trust. Historical inadequacies in accessing acute or crisis care are recognised by all stakeholders. The re-design of the Acute Adult Mental Health pathway beginning with a Single Point of Access now makes explicit provision for these patients albeit providing they are not acutely intoxicated as assessed by the referrer. However, there remains a need to monitor performance and to gather patient, carer and Primary care feedback about the pathway.

In terms of young people, activity reported by the specialist treatment agencies to the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) represents only a small part of the total activity in substance misuse interventions with young people. In the last year there has been increased investment in initiatives which provide information, advice and guidance to young people without the need to enter specialist treatment. A team of workers from the Youth Service provide a detached service which is able to identify individual and groups of young people who require advice relating to substance misuse. Through this service we have been able to begin to collect 'grassroots' and anecdotal data on levels of drug use, types of drug use and early identification of potential 'hotspots' throughout the County. Information gained through this service shows that the substances most commonly used by young people in Leicestershire are: alcohol, cannabis and Novel Psychoactive Substances (Legal Highs). Leicestershire's Children and Young People's Service is in the process of re-organising to provide an 'Early Help Service' which is designed to identify and intervene appropriately in a range of problems at an early stage of development. Many of these responses will involve a 'whole family response' for which there is strong evidence of effectiveness.

The focus for continued development of responses to young people's substance misuse over the next two years will be around prevention and early intervention services which will address issues long before they have developed to a level which will require a specialist substance misuse intervention. Staff in the wider children and young people's services will be trained and supported in screening young people and providing appropriate information and advice. Substance misuse by young people is one a range of health risk behaviours which rarely exist in isolation. Work is being developed locally to deliver projects which will be effective in preventing multiple risk behaviours alongside the continuation of specific projects addressing substance misuse.

