

Harrow Alcohol Strategy

Executive Summary

Background

Reducing alcohol related harm and encouraging sensible drinking is a key national and local priority. At the request of the Safer Harrow Management Group a multi-agency alcohol strategy has been developed with input from the alcohol subgroup of the Drug and Alcohol Steering Group.

Content

The strategy sets out the key local and national drivers for action, local needs and current services. It identifies gaps in current services and makes prioritised recommendations for multi-agency action.

Key points

- Alcohol misuse has a significant impact on individuals, families and communities. Its impact can be measured financially, in health terms and in terms of violence and crime and fear of crime. It also has a significant impact on those agencies that have a responsibility for the outcomes of alcohol misuse including health, local authorities, police and voluntary organisations
- Accurate data on alcohol consumption is scarce but figures from the General Household Survey 2004 suggest that in London 32% of men and 15% of women drank above sensible levels of drinking. These figures are less than England as a whole. The survey also demonstrated that people from most but not all ethnic groups were on average more likely to be non-drinkers and less likely to drink above sensible limits and binge drink than the general population
- Links between drinking and deprivation are complex and those people most likely to drink are those who are unemployed and those on high incomes
- Harrow and Wealdstone Town Centres are hotspots for alcohol related crime incidents
- In Harrow it is estimated that 30% of domestic violence is alcohol related
- Local audit suggests that 1 in 6 attendances at A&E are alcohol related
- There are a range of interventions led mainly by the council and the police to reduce alcohol related crime through the anti-social behaviour unit. These include Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and the proposed Controlled Drinking Zone

- There are alcohol education programmes in the majority of Harrow Schools as part of the Healthy Schools Standard
- Trading Standards conduct under age test purchase operations on a regular basis
- Alcohol counselling and treatment services are provided through voluntary organisations and Central and North West London Mental Health Trust
- An alcohol diversion worker has recently joined the Harrow Drug Intervention Programme
- There are service gaps around sharing of information about services and referral pathways into counselling and treatment
- There is no accurate and joined up multi-agency information and there is no accurate information from A&E departments
- Much of the alcohol related work in Harrow addresses the consequence of alcohol rather than education and prevention
- The strategy makes a number of recommendations. These include:
 - To develop a multi-agency alcohol forum
 - To deliver increased education and prevention programmes in schools
 - To establish a Pub Watch Scheme
 - To increase training for pub and club door staff, A&E staff, primary care staff and others
 - To develop clear information on available services for professionals and service users and improve links between different services
 - To develop referral pathways for counselling and treatment
 - To develop a brief intervention service in Primary Care
 - To develop multi-agency data collection