



Community Cohesion and Safety Scrutiny Task Group Final Report

“Support services for Young People affected by Drug misuse”

Report of Councillor Hall, Task Group Leader

Task Group Members: Councillors Hall, Bayford, Desai, Gill, Glover, Grant, Marriott, Naylor, Potter, Manish Sood, and Thomas

1 Summary

- 1.1 This final report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board with the findings, comments and recommendations of the Task Group’s investigation into ‘the range and extent of substance misuse amongst young people in Leicester and a review of the level and quality of support services available to this group’,
- 1.2 This was the Task Group’s first review and the Group aimed to identify the extent of drug misuse amongst young people and the level and quality of support services available to these young people.
- 1.3 The review was carried out through Members receiving a series of presentations that gave statistical information, and a range of informed views and opinions from service providers and users; there was also a site visit to a support service provider.
- 1.4 The Task Group was formed in response to “drug use and young people” being a regular issue for Councillors. It is hoped that the work of the Task Group and this final report will support a greater level of understanding by Councillors and other key decision makers about the issues and the effects of drug abuse by young people across the city. The outcomes will include providing young people with the opportunity to play a healthy and meaningful part in society.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1. The Community Cohesion and Community Safety Task Group recommends that the Overview Scrutiny Management Board forward this report to Cabinet and that they endorse the following recommendations:
- 2.2. There is a clear need for a medium to long term strategic action plan to be developed which will address the current funding and staffing level issues experienced by all service providers. This will be based against real need and ensure a continuity of services to both young people directly affected by their own or someone else's use of illegal substances and the associated problems faced by their communities.
- 2.3. That a mechanism for monitoring the results of the Ofsted annual school survey which covers the use of substances be created, and that this be fed into the planning and commissioning of services.
- 2.4. That the over representation of young people in the offending system in certain areas of the city is referred to the relevant community meetings for noting when they draft their ward action plans
- 2.5. That the Children, Schools and Young People Services department be asked to look into the suggestion that drug education would be better delivered in the humanities curriculum area, rather than under the current science curriculum.
- 2.6. That the Children, Schools and Young People Services department clarify the range of people who can access the basic Tier 1 drugs education training, and carry out a scoping exercise to explore the possibility of extending this provision to other bodies including teaching assistants, school governing bodies and councillors.
- 2.7. That the joint commissioning board be requested to ensure that all private education providers have, implement and monitor appropriate drug protocols and policies.
- 2.8. That the appropriate findings and recommendations of this report are included in the developing alcohol strategy currently being written by the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team

3 Contents

1. Summary
2. Recommendations
3. Report Contents
4. Background
5. What was reviewed?
6. How the Review took place
7. The findings

8. Conclusions

4 Background

- 4.1 The rationale for a review by a Community Cohesion and Community Safety Task Group came about because of several factors. Drug misuse and young people was, and is, a regular issue for councillors and is a local and national issue. There is evidence suggesting strong links between drug abuse amongst young people and crime and other social problems and that drug abuse fragments families and communities.
- 4.2 As a result of the above, all non-executive members were invited to take part in a task group to consider ways to strengthen the current delivery of substance misuse services to young people in the city with the intention of reducing substance misuse amongst young people.
- 4.3 The proposed method was to carry out a mapping exercise to collate existing information as to the extent of use of illegal substances by minors (those under 18); and to identify the range of information and support services available to this group and their families.
- 4.4 As a result of the invitation from the Task Group leader Councillor Hall, ten other Councillors - Bayford, Desai, Gill, Glover, Grant, Marriott, Naylor, Potter, Manish Sood, and Thomas agreed to form the first Task Group.

5 What was reviewed?

- 5.1 The review aimed to examine the extent of misuse of illegal substances by young people through the receipt of statistical data and the informed views of those involved either through the use or via the provision of support services. The review also aimed to examine the breadth of support services available to both young people misusing drugs and alcohol and those affected by it.
- 5.2 This was with a view to identifying a range of recommendations that would positively impact on the support services and thereby empower young people to play an active role in shaping their own future and that of other young people as well as strengthening social and community cohesion both within communities and across the city.

6 How the review took place

The review took place over a series of six meetings and a site visit; the key points of each meeting and the feedback from the visit are outlined below

Meeting 1

- a) At the first meeting of the task group on 22nd August 2007, Councillors Hall, Desai, Gill, Glover, Grant, Marriott, Naylor, Potter, Manish Sood, and Thomas

considered and agreed the terms of reference (Appendix 1) and the work programme (Appendix 2).

- b) They then received a presentation from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team that outlined the 'Overview of Current Provision for Young People and Substance Misuse'. It was reported that the Drug and Alcohol Action Team is the strategic partnership responsible for the implementation of the National Drug Strategy.
- c) The local membership for this consists of Leicestershire Constabulary, Leicester City Primary Care Trust, Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service, Leicester Youth Offending Service, Safer Leicester Partnership, Supporting People, Prison Service and the following Council representatives: Adults and Housing, Children and Young People's Services and Community Safety Team.
- d) The presentation explained that The National Drug Strategy is a 10-year plan, which comes to an end March in 2008 and the process of consultation for the next plan was already underway. Funding for these services comes through the young persons Substance Misuse Planning Grant and this had been cut by 9.6% in 2007/08.
- e) Members expressed concern over the limited resources and timescales. It was suggested that longer term funding was needed to sustain staffing levels.
- f) Members heard that it is estimated that 1700 young people are taking drugs across the city, with 56% taking cannabis and 8% using heroin. It was also noted that cannabis and alcohol were the biggest problems in the city.
- g) Members felt that alcohol abuse in under 18s was a growing problem and agreed that they would like to include alcohol in their investigation. It was advised that a number of agencies are working to tackle this problem such as the police and the licensing authority.

6.2 Meeting 2

- a) At the second meeting Councillors Desai, Hall, Marriott, Potter and Manish Sood received a second presentation and report from the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team that presented figures from the National Schools Survey 2006 regarding the number of under 18's taking drugs and using alcohol. The statistics demonstrated that alcohol was the most widely used of all substances and gave examples of some of the ways in which young people were obtaining it.
- b) The presentation also reported that data overall suggested that Leicester might have lower substance use amongst young people than many other areas in the country, but clarified that high levels of substance use were most likely to occur

amongst vulnerable young people, including people excluded from school, truants, young people that were looked after and young offenders.¹

- c) It was noted that judged by the standard 'matrix'-modelling tool used by the DAAT, they were just short of halfway at meeting the treatment needs of the city. The requirement for the 2007-08 National Performance Indicators is to have 14% of all drug treatment to be with young people, an increase on 2006-07 where the requirement was 7.1% .It was noted that judging by the first quarter results Leicester had 7.9% of all drug treatment supporting young people.

6.3 Meeting 3

- a) At the third meeting in October 2007 Councillors Desai, Gill, Glover, Grant, Hall, Naylor, Potter and Manish Sood considered an amendment to the terms of reference from an investigation into "the range and extent of substance misuse amongst young people in Leicester" to an investigation into "the range and extent of the evidence around substance misuse amongst young people in Leicester ". This was agreed as it allowed the members to better focus on developing achievable recommendations.
- b) Member then received a presentation and report from the Youth Offending Team that explained that the Youth Offending Service is managed by the local authority who works with various organisations such as Health, Police and the Probation Service to help prevent young people from coming into the Justice System.
- c) It was noted that that all young people who come into the Justice system were screened for drug problems with up to 200-250 people being screened per quarter. It was stated that the aim was to talk to young people and identify their behaviour. If it was ascertained there was a substance misuse problem they would be referred to the specialist substance misuse workers in the Youth Offending Service. This equates to approximately 35% of young people coming through the Youth Offending Service needing an assessment.
- d) The Task Group was asked to note that that the factors around drug abuse were complicated and that a range of circumstances had to be taken into account including young people's physical environment, how they thought, their social elements such as if they had committed crime, relationships with friends and family, and their employment and prospects.

a) ¹ Following this presentation the Ofsted Tell us 2 survey (published Nov 2007) of 1600 young people from year 6,8 and 10 in Leicester schools indicated that drug use amongst young people was within the national average; that the overall numbers of young people drinking were lower than the national average, but that 'binge drinking' for those that do drink was higher than the national average.

- e) The presentation revealed that there are three main areas of intervention, education and risk reduction, psychological treatment, and diversionary activity and practical interventions. The presentation stated it was important to offer change to the individual's current lifestyle and work with parents to make sure specialist advice was given to them about drugs. It was noted that the specialist workers at the Youth Offending Service provided education and treatment, and that there were 2.4 full time equivalent substance misuse workers, a public health nurse who worked half time, a Charnwood Mental Health Service Psychiatric nurse and a Counsellor who operated an open door policy.
- f) Information with examples of benefits was presented on the Resettlement and Aftercare Project where professional mentors take individuals with serious misuse problems, and together they write a plan outlining how the young people can change their lives.
- g) It was stated that there are more young people from the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields ward in the offending system than anywhere else in the city. It was also noted that there are a considerable number of young people in the criminal justice systems from Aylestone, Eyres Monsell, Freeman and Beaumont Leys.
- h) It was stated there is an increasing number of young people under 16 requiring assessment and intervention and that there is an over representation of young white males with substance misuse problems with the most misused drugs being alcohol and cannabis, sometimes being used in combination.
- i) It was noted there is a rise in the usage of drugs such as Ecstasy, Crack Cocaine and in Solvent Abuse. Heroin and Opiates were very rare cases with only a reported average of two people using them each year with the users most likely being young women who had left the care system.
- j) A Member of the Panel queried why young women were using hard drugs and what support was available to them. The response was noted that those in the care system were more vulnerable and therefore more susceptible to substance abuse.

6.4 Meeting 4

- a) At the fourth meeting in November 2007, Councillors Hall, Desai, Gill, Glover, Grant, Naylor, Potter and Manish Sood received a presentation from a member of staff and a young user of the Leicestershire Community Projects Trust, a third sector partner organisation.

- b) Members heard that the project is funded through the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and that young people who used the service did so in a voluntary capacity. A breakdown of users indicates an equal split between young men and women, and that users come from all backgrounds. It was noted that alcohol misuse is one of the projects biggest concerns.
- c) Members heard that the service worked in a young person centred way and tried to schedule meetings with the person in an environment where they felt comfortable. It was noted that the first priority of the service was risk reduction.
- d) A member of the Task Group asked the young person how they had found out about the LCPT. He stated that he had gone with his sister to Connexions and they had been introduced to the project. It was noted that the project takes referrals from 20 different places and that young people can also self-refer.
- e) A member of the Task Group asked the young person whether being involved in the project was worthwhile. His response was positive and he stated there were improvements in his relationship with his family. He added that he accessed the project weekly. The project worker explained that there was an open ended element to their work with a young person and that the work with each young person was determined by need
- f) A member of the Task Group asked the young person what schools could do to further help young people. He responded saying that that he didn't find that school had really helped. however, he had learnt a lot from the project.
- g) Members then received a joint presentation from Licensing, Trading Standards and the Police on Test Purchase Prosecutions and Review Application.
- h) Members were asked to note that since 2002 the police had been working with young people under 18, who, with full support, visit retailers of alcohol and carry out test purchases. It was stated that of the 502 premises tested, 290 had failed. This represents 58% throughout Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- i) The methods of selecting young people for test purchases and the safeguards were explained: All children carried proof of identity for the test purchasing. It was noted that the Test Purchasing Code of Practice was compliant with the Human Rights Act so the trader's rights were not compromised. A member queried whether young people were paid for carrying out the test purchases. The response was they were given book tokens

- j) It was noted that the Government was publicising the Challenge 21 policy to encourage all retailers selling alcohol to take the policy into consideration. This requires retailers to request appropriate identification from those potential purchasers of alcohol who appear to be younger than 21 years; the evidence can be a passport, a Citizen card or a photographic driving licence. It was also noted that some retailers were getting abuse from customers when they asked for identification. It was suggested that the Police could ask to see the refusal logs kept by retailers to show they have been enforcing the policy. It was commented that if there were two underage sales by a retailer during one management period then a review of the licence would be sought.
- k) A member of the Task Group asked if all the supermarkets were implementing the Challenge 21 policy, as there was concern that many were selling to underage people. It was also suggested that some young people were sending older looking people to purchase alcohol on their behalf. The member felt that the challenge 21 policy should be made law for supermarkets. The police officer commented that he felt making the challenge 21 policy a law would be a good idea. A member questioned how they would go about changing the law so that it would benefit communities.
- l) Concern was raised regarding individuals drinking alcohol in the street who were accompanied by younger children. It was queried whether the current outdoor drinking law could be extended to community areas. The police stated that the designation of alcohol free zones was in the hands of the local authority.
- m) A member commented that it could make the job of the police easier if the city was an alcohol free area. After discussion the task group agreed that this issue should be further investigated.
- n) Trading Standards gave a presentation on Underage Sales of Alcohol, outlining Trading Standards' responsibilities in enforcing law relating to underage sales. It was noted that the police had the power to instantly close premises if they had been caught selling alcohol to someone underage on three occasions.
- o) Trading Standards informed the Task Group that they test premises based on complaints through members of the public and they also conduct random tests.
- p) A member felt there should be advertising discouraging proxy buyers and that action should be taken if council houses were involved in the sale of alcohol.
- q) A member also pointed out that a local corner shop had been selling illegally obtained alcohol. Trading Standards stated that most people did not complain as it was cheaper alcohol and it was difficult to get prosecutions.

- r) Members also asked for concern to be noted as to how easy it is to purchase alcohol on self-service checkouts in supermarkets.
- s) The Licensing Team commented that premises that sold alcohol to under age people generally had poor management and tended to have other problems as well. It was noted the Licensing are responsible for all licensed premises and would be keeping an eye on self-service tills.

6.5 Meeting 5

- a) At the fifth meeting Councillors Hall, Desai, Gill, Glover, Naylor and Potter received feedback from the members who attended the site visit to Leicestershire Community Projects Trust. It was noted that the Trust offered support both directly and over the phone and that approximately 1,000 people had been helped to date. Members who had been on the site visit raised the following issues they had become aware of as a result of the trip: the ease of buying drugs online; the increasing amount of new “designer drugs” and the lack of long term and/or adequate levels of funding for the Trust and other support services for young people affected by the misuse of illegal substances.
- b) The Task group received a presentation from the Children, Schools and Young People department focussing on the “Healthy Schools” programme. It was noted that there are two documents that advised schools on the curriculum and the current issues in regards to substance misuse for young people, one was from Personal Social Health Economic Education (PSHEE) and the other was from the National Healthy Schools Standard.
- c) It was stated that all schools were expected to deliver drug education, which involved teaching young people about being safe in regards to drugs. It was also mentioned that drug education should cover all drugs, and alcohol education needed to be developed further as well with inclusion of information on how schools could contribute to making Leicester safer. The form this education should take was to be based on the pupil’s views and it should be the responsibility of the schools to deliver and not voluntary organisations. It was also noted that schools in Leicester had generally performed to a satisfactory standard in regards to drug policy as all schools have a policy and this meets the National Healthy Schools requirements.
- d) The importance for all teachers to receive drug awareness training and for substance misuse information to be viewed as core business for any Children and Young People Organisation was noted.

- e) It was noted that there was no core funding from the City Council in relation to substance misuse and that most of the funding came from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team or other services.
- f) A member of the Task Group queried what services in relation to substance misuse were in place in Children and Young People's Services. The response was there was only one post.
- g) A member of the Task Group asked which curriculum area drug education fell into. The response is that it is currently taught within the science curriculum and the Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE). However from September 2008 there was going to be a new curriculum. A member of the Task Group commented that they felt the curriculum was delivered in the wrong subject area.
- h) A member of the Task Group questioned why young people who were referred for substance misuse treatment were going to private providers for exclusion/pre-exclusion work. It was noted that sometimes it was cheaper to use private providers and the City Council had a duty to provide support. This point raised a number of concerns and discussion arrived at the decision that there needs to be a requirement made to ensure that private providers had a drug policy.
- i) It was noted that the Home Office funded the Drug and Alcohol Action Team.
- j) It was reported that some schools were very good with recognising the issue and performing early intervention where young people had substance misuse problems. However concern was expressed that some schools, particularly those located in areas with known substance misuse problems, were not receiving many referrals.
- k) A member of the Task Group questioned whether young people would benefit from T1 (counselling and psychotherapy) training and said he would like to undertake the training himself; it was agreed there was a need to offer T1 training for people in communities and councillors as well.
- l) It was suggested that an assessment be undertaken noting resource implications to deliver the training, it was agreed that an investigation as to the existence of a policy regarding T1 training in any department and suggested that this should be extended to other sections as well.

7 The Findings

- 7.1 From documents considered and the information received from the presentations and the site visit, members found that the key area for concern

within the review topic is that of alcohol misuse. Members also acknowledged that the prevalence of cannabis use needs to be addressed

- 7.2 Members found that a lack of consistent, long term funding was a common problem amongst all the projects they consulted, and this is a major issue that needs addressing to ensure a strategic city wide approach to tackling both current and emerging issues.
- 7.3 Members have commented that many of the issues raised also impact on the Health Scrutiny Committee and there needs to be some way of sharing information across both scrutiny committees and departments.
- 7.4 Members agreed that a secure core of citywide Drug and Alcohol workers who are centrally based is needed to ensure that support for young people affected by the use of illegal substances is available where it is needed.
- 7.5 The range of evidence received from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team, the Youth Offending Team, the Leicestershire Community Projects Trust and other bodies tackling the issues, strongly suggests the need for a strategic city wide drugs and alcohol action plan which addresses the issues of funding and staffing levels and which ensures that Leicester continues to meet its National Performance Indicator requirements.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1. The issue of substance misuse among young people has attracted considerable public attention in recent months. Indeed, hardly a day passes without media revelations about acts of particularly severe violence committed by young people (or groups thereof) within some part of the UK. Invariably, these revelations highlight the role of substance abuse (of various, sometimes multiple, types) as a contributory factor to such acts.
- 8.2. The fear of such violent disorder taking place on a regular basis on the streets of Leicester is a significant worry to the city's residents and many of its elected members, and therefore presents a considerable threat to community safety.
- 8.3. As a consequence, the issue was an appropriate topic for the newly-established Community Cohesion and Safety Task Group to consider. Although the original intention was to investigate the effect of the misuse of illegal substances (cannabis, heroin etc) among young people, a consensus quickly emerged to extend our remit to cover alcohol misuse as well.
- 8.4. Although the Task Group's investigation found little evidence of widespread use of illicit drugs among young people in Leicester, we do not believe that this should be used as an excuse for complacency among those who are responsible for monitoring the issue on a day-to-day basis. As our recommendations indicate, more needs to be done to improve inter- agency co-operation and to develop a longer-term funding strategy which will enable the relevant services to operate with greater stability and therefore to greater effect.

- 8.5. However, the Task Group is particularly concerned about the impact caused, both on the long-term health of users and on the community as a whole, by the levels of alcohol misuse. There are many contributory factors to this problem, not least the incessant glamorisation of alcohol by the tabloid media (often the same tabloid media who report alcohol-related crimes), its widespread availability in supermarkets and off-licences, and its price decrease in real terms over recent years.
- 8.6. It was a matter of considerable frustration to many of the Task Group to discover that many of the ideas discussed as a means of preventing alcohol-related problems lie outside the remit of the Group and indeed the Council.
- 8.7. However, although an outright ban on the consumption of alcohol on city streets, which some members enthusiastically recommend, is neither feasible or legally enforceable, we would support further investigation into a city-wide designated public places order, such as that currently in operation in Coventry and other parts of the West Midlands, which give local police greater powers of intervention to prevent alcohol-related disorder.
- 8.8. In particular, we would request that the Cabinet liaises with the local police to discuss how such a scheme could operate in Leicester, and reports back to OSMB within three months.
- 8.9. The commitment by the government to raise alcohol duties by 2% above the rate of inflation, not just in the current budget but in future ones, is to be welcomed as a step towards deterring the excess alcohol consumption which has often been associated with crime and violent disorder.
- 8.10. However a range of other measures will also be required, including tougher penalties for those outlets found to be selling alcohol to underage customers. This issue has been identified by the Task Group as a priority and members felt it was important that all parts of the Council give appropriate weight to it in their broader activities.
- 8.11. I would like to thank all those members, officers, outside bodies and individuals who contributed to the work of the Task Group, and hope that they will consider that those contributions have had a positive and lasting effect towards what will remain a significant area of Council policy.

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