

# **DRUGS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS**

## ***THE FACTS***

**22,500 heroin and crack cocaine users in the West Midlands** are estimated to be **costing the area at least £1.4bn a year.**

The average heroin or crack cocaine user not in treatment **commits crime costing £26,074 a year.** The **annual cost of each problematic drug user is estimated at £62,320** when considering only four indicators: drug-related crime; health service use; drug-related deaths; and social care.

**Half of all burglary, theft, shoplifting and robbery** is committed by people who use heroin, crack cocaine or powder cocaine regularly. This represents **one in five crimes reported to West Midlands Police** and tens of thousands of victims.

There were **701 discarded needles** recorded by local councils in the West Midlands in 2016 alone, which is likely a fraction of the total number found on our streets.

Of all prisoners who report using heroin, **one in five of them tried heroin for the first time while in prison.**

**Every three days in the West Midlands somebody dies from drug poisoning,** with a **death every four hours in England.** This has been rising since 2010 and for four years in a row has been the **highest since records began.**

An estimated **22,500 children in the West Midlands have a parent or parents with serious drug problems.**

**Most organised crime groups in the West Midlands are heavily involved in the drugs trade.** Those organised criminals involved in drugs are more likely to be operating internationally, and more likely to have links to firearms. Organised criminals in the West Midlands are **profiting from a drug market worth approximately £188m.**

Facts found in SPCB 'substance misuse' report 05/09/2017. Any further questions address to Ben Twomey.



## **STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD**

### **5<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

#### **Substance Misuse Report**

*Report from the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's office on a recent scoping exercise conducted to identify the scale and impact of substance misuse in the area.*

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide a high-level summary of the scale and impact of substance misuse and related harms in the West Midlands Police force area.
2. To detail the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) principles and vision for tackling substance misuse.
3. To stimulate discussion among Board members, partners and the public on our approach to substance misuse.

#### **BACKGROUND**

4. The Police and Crime Plan identified substance misuse as a priority issue with regard to reducing reoffending and protecting people from harm. In order to support this priority the West Midlands PCC sought to conduct a scoping exercise to provide a better understanding of the drug situation and policy context locally, nationally and internationally.
5. There are clear links between substance misuse and other priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, highlighting the significance of drugs as a cross-cutting theme in crime, policing and justice strategy. This includes links to organised crime, victims, violence, mental health and the criminal justice system. There are also links to more specific priorities such as child exploitation, hidden crimes, stop and search, safer travel and economic investment.
6. This report is related to controlled substances as scheduled in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA). There is however a cross-over with our approach to other drugs, including alcohol and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), formerly known as 'legal highs'.

7. Alongside partners, West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) dedicate significant resource and effort to tackling the illicit drugs trade and to tackling drug-related offending. The current approach to substance misuse in the West Midlands also includes funding of the Drug Intervention Programme, which is active in custody blocks to engage drug-misusing offenders in formal addiction treatment and support to attempt to break the cycle of offending.
8. The recently released Home Office Drug Strategy, alongside the latest data relating to drug-related deaths, make this a timely moment to step back and clarify the principles and vision by which we aim to serve the people of the West Midlands when tackling substance misuse.

## **PRINCIPLES AND VISION**

9. Drug policy, as with any policy, must be developed with regard to the principles, values and vision of the West Midlands PCC and West Midlands Police. There are nine key principles, set out below in the ‘principles grid’, to which any approach to tackle substance misuse should give regard:

<b>PRINCIPLES GRID</b>		
<i>West Midlands PCC</i>	<i>West Midlands Police</i>	<i>General</i>
Intervention/diversion at the earliest opportunity	Preventing crime	Harm-reduction
Tackling organised crime	Protecting the public	Evidence-based policing
Supporting recovery for those addicted to drugs	Helping those in need	Opportunities for partnership working

10. The Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 has a section dedicated to substance misuse that calls for “interventions with those on the path to addiction [to] take place at the earliest opportunity, preferably well before they come into contact with the criminal justice system”.<sup>1</sup> The Plan goes on to state that “organised criminals must not be allowed to profit from the misery and desperation of people suffering from addiction”.
11. The PCC expresses in the Plan an intention to “make these shared goals across the public sector and criminal justice system”, ensuring “more people get the support they need for substance misuse” and “there is a reduction in the number of young people entering the criminal justice system.”
12. Drug policy must also be considered under the broader pillars of West Midlands Police; “Preventing crime, protecting the public and helping those in need”.<sup>2</sup> The current change programme at West Midlands Police is predicated on a move towards more proactive policing, meaning simply reacting to the harms of substance misuse once they have manifested themselves would not be in line with the policing vision.
13. Both the West Midlands PCC and West Midlands Police are committed to evidence-based policing, which is applied in their approach to tackling problems and understanding outcomes.

This is coupled with an emphasis on ‘harm-reduction’, as part of a wider model of policing that prioritises resource and effort based on ‘threat, risk and harm’.

14. There is also a commitment to partnership working and integrated services, demonstrated by the revival of a Local Criminal Justice Board, chaired by the PCC, as well as engagement on the wider economic agenda of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Partners are crucial in the drug policy arena, so this emphasis on collaboration is highly relevant.
15. While the Home Office encourages local services to work together to develop the best services for local people, they retain an interest in such efforts to tackle the harms of substance misuse. The Home Office approach was most recently set out in their 2017 Drug Strategy, categorised into four key pillars of ‘reducing demand’, ‘restricting supply’, ‘building recovery’ and ‘global action’.<sup>3</sup>
16. There are broad similarities between the West Midlands principles referenced above and those outlined in the Home Office Drug Strategy. The grid below shows where the nationally set principles are most clearly incorporated into our local strategy. Despite not being directly linked, the themes of protecting the public, harm-reduction and evidence-based policy are present throughout the national Drug Strategy and therefore remain in line with government ambitions for tackling this issue.

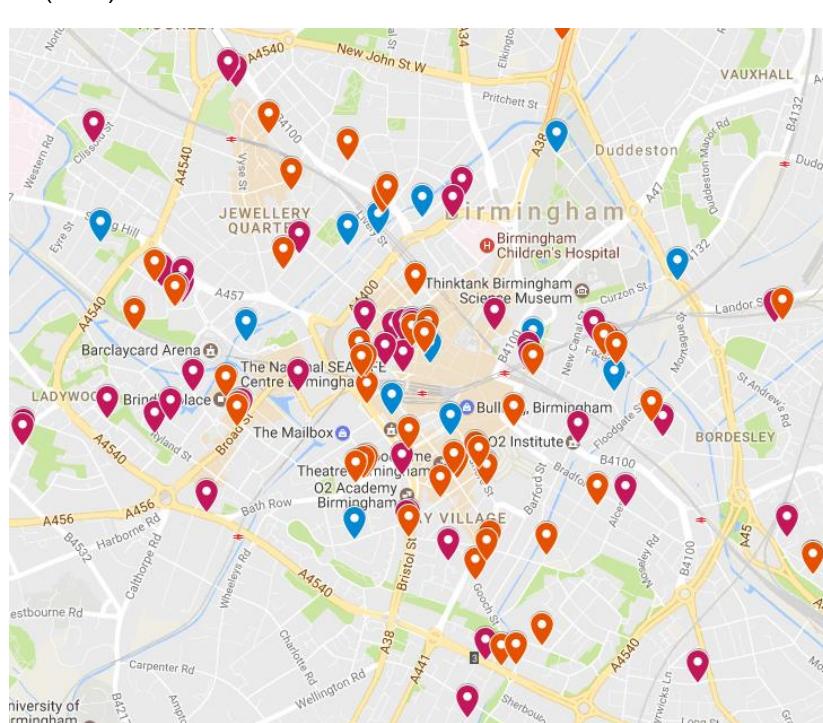
PRINCIPLES GRID – LINK TO NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY		
West Midlands PCC	West Midlands Police	General
Intervention/diversion at the earliest opportunity <b>REDUCING DEMAND</b>	Preventing crime <b>REDUCING DEMAND</b> <b>RESTRICTING SUPPLY</b>	Harm-reduction
Tackling organised crime <b>RESTRICTING SUPPLY</b> <b>GLOBAL ACTION</b>	Protecting the public	Evidence-based policing
Supporting recovery for those addicted to drugs <b>BUILDING RECOVERY</b>	Helping those in need <b>BUILDING RECOVERY</b>	Opportunities for partnership working <b>GLOBAL ACTION</b>

17. The Home Office principles are in line with those already active in the West Midlands, with the above grid outlining the clearest connections, while those ‘unconnected’ remain prescient overarching principles that are referenced throughout the Drug Strategy 2017:
18. In summary, all activity by West Midlands Police and the West Midlands PCC aimed at tackling substance misuse should contribute to the realisation of some, if not all, of these principles.

## SCALE OF DRUG USE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

19. Establishing the scale of drug use is challenging as it relies on self-reporting.<sup>4</sup> In the West Midlands force area it is estimated that amongst adults in the last year:
  - 150,000 used any illegal drug (6.7%), of which 117,000 used cannabis (5.2%).

- This means that roughly four in every five adults (78%) who used drugs in the last year in the West Midlands were users of cannabis.
20. Relying on self-reporting from household surveys presents a particular challenge as some small groups who are known to have relatively high rates of drug use, such as prisoners or rough sleepers, are not represented. Those with more severe substance misuse problems are also less likely to respond to a survey due to chaotic lifestyles. Other sources are therefore used to estimate the prevalence of opiates and/or crack cocaine use.<sup>5</sup> In the West Midlands force area it is estimated that amongst adults in the last year:
- There were 22,500 opiate and/or crack users. (1.2%).
21. Fewer young people are using drugs than their parents did at their age, but one in five still report using drugs. The proportion of 16-19 year olds reporting using drugs has fallen by more than 10% between 1996 and 2012, from 32% to 20%.<sup>6</sup>
22. The estimated number of people using drugs has not fallen for eight years. Although drug use has declined since 1996, in particular reflecting the fall in cannabis use between 2003 and 2007, overall drug use has stabilised at current levels since 2009/2010.<sup>7</sup>
23. Despite levels of use stabilising, the harms associated with substance misuse have increased in recent years. UK drug-related death rates are among the highest in Europe and are increasing - reaching record levels for the last four years in a row.<sup>8</sup> This is discussed further below.
24. A good indicator of the scale of the issue of substance misuse is the number of discarded needles found on our streets. Needles are discovered daily across the West Midlands, with 701 recorded by six local councils in 2016 (excluding Dudley, which does not record).<sup>9</sup> While major concentrations of needles appear common in city or urban centres, it should be noted that those recorded are likely a fraction of the total number found on our streets. As an example, the map below shows locations of discarded needles found in recent years around Birmingham city centre.<sup>10</sup> This map includes needles found in 2015 (orange), 2016 (purple) and from January to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 (blue):



25. The issue of discarded needles is exacerbated by the increasing number of rough sleepers in Birmingham city centre, many of whom are injecting drug users. Rough sleeping has in fact more than tripled since 2010 in the West Midlands, with a six-fold increase in Birmingham.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, addiction can be both a cause and a result of homelessness.<sup>12</sup>

## **DRUG-RELATED CRIME**

26. There are a number of drug offences captured in West Midlands Police recorded crime, including possession and distribution offences of which there were 4,733 in 2016/17.<sup>13</sup> However, there is a wide range of drug-related offending (from acquisitive crime to fund a drug habit to violence related to drug supply) that may not be flagged as involving drugs. Data on drug-related offending are not required by the Home Office and are difficult to capture, making it challenging to give an overall picture of the impact drugs has on crime and policing.
27. The volume of drug-induced acquisitive crime committed by a heroin injector is estimated at 200-260 offences a year.<sup>14</sup> The annual cost of each problematic drug user is estimated at £62,320 when considering only four indicators: drug-related crime; health service use; drug-related deaths; and social care.<sup>15\*</sup> On this assumption, the estimated 22,500 heroin and crack cocaine users in the West Midlands cost £1.4bn a year.
28. Whilst heroin use is not shown to be associated with violent crime, the distribution and supply of heroin by organised crime groups is connected with threatened and actual violence, as well as a range of other serious offences.<sup>16</sup>
29. An estimated 48% of acquisitive crimes (such as burglary, theft, shoplifting and robbery, but excluding fraud) are committed by people who use heroin, crack cocaine or cocaine powder at least once a week.<sup>17</sup>
30. Applying the estimates above to West Midlands Police recorded crime data suggests that 43,625 acquisitive crimes were committed in 2016/17 by people who use heroin, crack cocaine or cocaine powder at least once a week – this represented 21% of total recorded crime in the West Midlands.
31. A major source of serious drug-related crime is the link of supply to organised crime, urban street gangs and violence, including murders in the West Midlands. Links to the exploitation of children are also prevalent. These are discussed later in the report.
32. The nature of the drugs trade is changing. As cyber-crime is the fastest growing criminal enterprise it has inevitably developed links to the drugs trade, particularly in the increasing prevalence of the ‘dark web’ for the supply and demand of controlled substances. This transforms and complicates the nature of the policing response to tackling the drugs market.

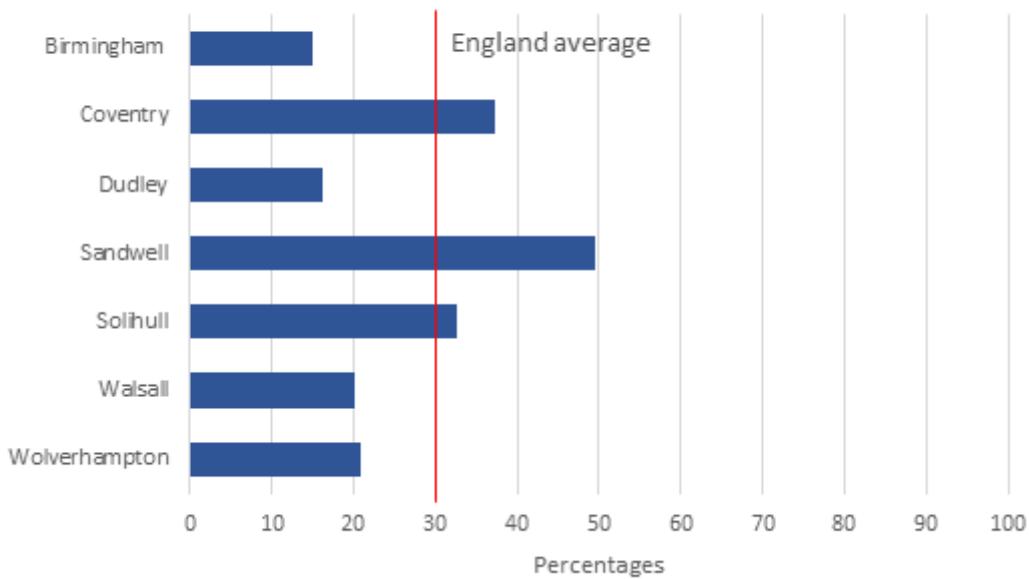
## **SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

33. Under the Drugs Act 2005, a drugs test can be carried out on people entering custody. This is a significant part of West Midlands Police’s Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) which aims to

break the cycle of substance misuse and offending by offering routes out of crime and into treatment. In the West Midlands in 2016/17, 10,466 drug tests were administered on arrestees who met the required conditions. Of these tests 64% were positive.

34. According to Ministry of Justice data, one in five prisoners who reported ever having used heroin said that they had used heroin for the first time in a prison.<sup>18</sup>
35. Offenders are more than twice as likely to be reconvicted within 12 months of release from custody if they are a known drug user. 62% of those who had used drugs in the four weeks before custody were reconvicted within a year compared to 30% of those who had not.<sup>19</sup>
36. Not only are the risks of reoffending higher in the immediate days and weeks after release from prison, but the risks of death by overdose are also significantly increased.<sup>20</sup> Ensuring that treatment and harm-reduction continues ‘through the gate’ can reduce the likelihood of both of these risks becoming a reality.
37. In the West Midlands force area in 2015/16, 21% of adults with a need for substance misuse treatment successfully engaged in community-based structured treatment within 21 days following release from prison.<sup>21</sup> The average for England was 30%. This leaves 2,427 individuals with an identified substance misuse treatment needs not receiving treatment within 21 days of release from prison. Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton were all significantly worse than the England average:

Adults with substance misuse treatment need who successfully engage in community-based structured treatment following release from prison, 2015/16



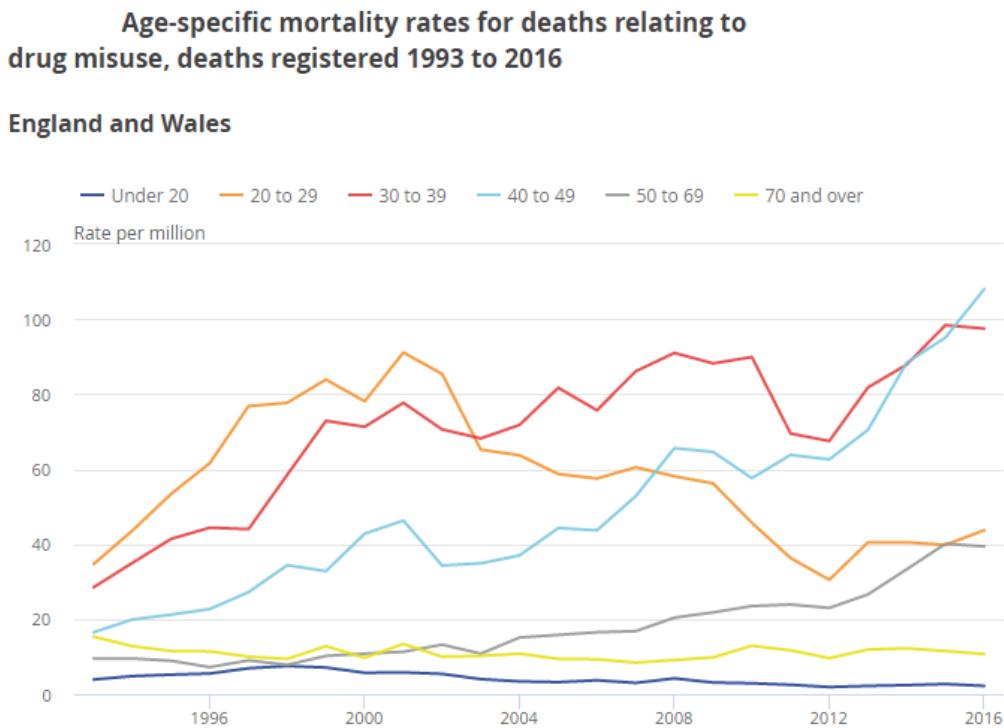
38. The prevalence of New or Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in prisons remains of concern, despite synthetic cannabinoids such as ‘spice’ and ‘mamba’ being rescheduled earlier this year into the Misuse of Drugs Act. The inability to test for any NPS in police custody suites is leading to a failure to engage users with treatment, or to fully understand the scale of the harm caused by these drugs. NPS is also causing major issues for the homeless and rough sleeping population in the West Midlands, and Public Health England locally have referred to NPS harms

as a “public health crisis”. There is an opportunity to address the cycle of homelessness and drug addiction through partnership working, including with PCC and police representation on the Mayor’s Homelessness Taskforce.

## **ADDICTION AND TREATMENT**

39. Poor housing, lack of employment and deprivation are all indicators correlated to addiction. Any heroin or crack cocaine user not in treatment commits crime costing an average £26,074 a year.<sup>22</sup>
40. Evidence has shown that rehabilitation, including treatment, housing, employment and positive social networks can cut crime significantly, preventing an estimated 4.9 million crimes nationally every year.<sup>23</sup> Housing and employment in particular are closely tied to the PCC’s ‘economic development’ agenda, recognising the wider drivers of crime.
41. For every £1 invested in drug treatment, there is an estimated net benefit of £2.50 generated to society in reductions in crime and health needs, alongside the positive outcomes associated with employment, good housing and supportive family relations.<sup>24</sup>
42. Across the 40 wards in Birmingham, those with the most clients in treatment are focused around 5 of the most deprived areas; Ladywood, Lozells, Soho, Shard End and Sparkbrook.<sup>25</sup> These five wards account for over 20% of the total ‘in treatment’ population. It is worth noting that Ladywood, Lozells and Soho are part of the focus of the PCC’s Gangs and Violence Commission.
43. Although the numbers of drugs users from BME communities continues to increase, treatment services have recently found it more difficult to engage BME drug users into treatment.<sup>26\*</sup>
44. The majority of substance misuse treatment is funded through the Public Health grant to local authorities. While the general grant itself is ring-fenced (although this is currently confirmed only until the end of 2017/18), substance misuse treatment services are not mandated for local authorities. Instead they must “have regard to the need to improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services.”<sup>27</sup>
45. The number of people dying from drug overdoses has increased to record-breaking levels for the last four years, with over 2,000 deaths in England each year since 2014.<sup>28</sup> The average number of deaths related to substance misuse annually in the West Midlands since 2014 is 119. This means on average that someone is dying from drug poisoning every 74 hours in the West Midlands metropolitan area, or roughly every three days. This over double the number of people dying in road traffic collisions.<sup>29\*</sup> Last year in England, someone died from drug poisoning every four hours, with six lives lost a day or 42 a week.
46. DrugWise states that the unprecedented purity levels in heroin, cocaine, crack and ecstasy, driven by competition among drugs gangs, are contributing to rises in drug-related deaths.<sup>30</sup> The government indicates instead that the primary reason for an increase in deaths is “a cohort of heroin users getting older, more ill and who are more susceptible to overdose death”.<sup>31</sup>

However, it should not be forgotten that in 2016 drug poisoning accounted for roughly one in six deaths among people in their 20s and 30s.<sup>32</sup> The below graph gives a fuller picture nationally:<sup>33</sup>



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

47. The principles discussed earlier in the paper clearly recognise the importance of early intervention, with the Police and Crime Plan emphasising the need to provide support and divert young people from entering the criminal justice system. This approach is supported by evidence on the age of onset of drug use. For example the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS)<sup>34</sup> found that for prisoners the mean age of offending onset was 14.2 years, and the mean age of drug use onset was 16.2 years. Other research has shown a relationship between truancy and drug use, with pupils who had truanted from school more than three times as likely to say that they had taken drugs in the last year compared with pupils who had never truanted.<sup>35</sup>
48. Further to issues around drug use in children and young people there is also the issue of children and organised crime. The National Crime Agency (NCA) states that children under the age of 18 continue to be exploited by gangs for drug-related activity.<sup>36</sup> They assess that gangs “utilise vulnerable children because they are a relatively inexpensive resource and easily controlled.” Noting the cross-over between the cannabis trade and human trafficking, the NCA’s Strategic Assessment argued that with Urban Street Gangs “this form of criminality almost always involves the exploitation of children and young adults.”<sup>37</sup>
49. The NCA admits that they “do not know the true scale of child exploitation by gangs and it is likely that many children fail to be safeguarded.” Although Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is often not the driving factor for drug dealing gangs exploiting children, the NCA state that there is a clear link.

50. In 2016, Lifeline Project conducted research into substance misuse amongst 18-24 year olds in Sandwell.<sup>38</sup> The research identified a cohort of young non-user dealers, involved in drug dealing networks from as young as 12. For these non-user dealers, involvement was economically motivated rather than driven by dependence, reflecting anecdotal evidence shared with the PCC by prisoners at YOI Brinsford in April 2017. This reveals a need to challenge the pull of criminal opportunity by supporting the more positive opportunities of education, training and work.

51. Further harm to children and young people comes from the experience of those living with parents suffering from addiction. In 2011 the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) estimated that there were 200,000 - 300,000 children in England and Wales whose parent or parents have serious drug problems (around one per problem drug user), representing approximately 2-3% of all children under 16.<sup>39</sup> Today, this would mean around 22,500 children under 16 in the West Midlands have a parent with serious drug problems.

## **ORGANISED CRIME AND THE DRUGS TRADE**

52. The majority of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) in the West Midlands are involved in drug-related crime.<sup>40</sup>

53. While the figure changes constantly, on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 there were 84 OCGs being tracked by West Midlands Police. It is possible to track the primary, secondary and tertiary concern for the police for the type of criminality an OCG is involved in, such as drugs, firearms, money laundering or organised theft. In this respect 31 OCGs were primarily involved in drug-related criminality, 18 involved as a secondary flag, and five marked with drugs as a tertiary concern. This means that 54 out of the 84 OCGs (64%) are *significantly* involved in drug-related crime. Note that other OCGs may also be involved in drugs as a fourth, fifth or sixth concern and so on, but this data is not available at force-level.

54. OCGs tracked by West Midlands Police are ranked as priority or significant, with priority status reserved for those of the highest possible threat level. Only four of the 84 OCGs were marked priority, *all* of which were involved in firearms and drugs as their primary and secondary concerns.

55. OCGs significantly involved with drugs are more likely to have an international footprint. 27 of the 84 OCGs tracked were known to have a geographic impact outside of England. Of these, 19 (70%) were involved in drug-related crime as a primary, secondary or tertiary concern.

56. The criminality of OCGs involved in the drugs trade are not limited to manufacturing and distributing drugs alongside intimidation and violence. In the West Midlands, many OCGs involved in drugs have a range of other interests including involvement in the firearms trade, organised theft and burglary, sexual offences, human trafficking and money laundering. Like the violence and profiteering of the drugs trade, all of these forms of criminality are a serious priority for West Midlands Police.

57. In 2010, the value of the illicit drug market in England and Wales was estimated at £3.3bn.<sup>41</sup> Factoring in inflation and applying population weighting would suggest that organised criminals in the West Midlands are profiting from a drug market worth approximately £188m.<sup>42\*</sup>

## ENFORCEMENT

58. The Government has recently concluded that a myth has developed in relation to drug use that requires addressing. The myth suggests that more arrests and more prosecutions for drug use will reduce the number of people using drugs. The Government is now clear that this is not the case. Their 2017 evaluation of the 'Drug Strategy 2010' concluded that "there is, in general, a lack of robust evidence as to whether capture and punishment serves as a deterrent for drug use".<sup>43</sup>
59. This is supported further by extensive international research confirming that there is no link between levels of enforcement and levels of drug use.<sup>44</sup> The Home Office, under then Home Secretary Theresa May in October 2014, confirmed this in their report, *Drugs: International Comparators*. It acknowledged that "there is no apparent correlation between the 'toughness' of a country's approach and the prevalence of adult drug use".<sup>45</sup>
60. Given the Government's analysis that enforcement does not deter use, we must be more creative in addressing issues of supply and demand for controlled substances and develop a better understanding of approaches that have been evidenced to work, or that show promise, in reducing supply and demand.
61. Despite the question of deterrence, there remains a clear role for policing to continue to keep our communities safe. This role is confirmed by the number of victims of drug-related crime as well as the organised criminals involved in the trade. The police will continue to respond to crimes where they occur, while recognising that preventing crimes from happening in the first place is the best way to protect people.

## CONCLUSION

62. The harm and cost to the West Midlands of substance misuse remains vast, suggesting current efforts have not achieved lasting improvements. The scale of the problem, and the implicit policy failures revealed by that scale, are most clearly outlined as follows:
- (a) Approximately 22,500 heroin and crack cocaine users in the West Midlands are estimated to be costing the area at least £1.4bn a year.
  - (b) There were 701 discarded needles recorded by local councils in the West Midlands in 2016 alone, which is likely a fraction of the total number found on our streets.
  - (c) Half of all burglary, theft, shoplifting and robbery is committed by people who use heroin, crack cocaine or powder cocaine regularly. This represents one in five crimes reported to West Midlands Police and tens of thousands of victims.
  - (d) Any heroin or crack cocaine user not in treatment commits crime costing an average £26,074 a year. The annual cost of each problematic drug user is estimated at £62,320 when considering only four indicators: drug-related crime; health service use; drug-related deaths; and social care.
  - (e) Of all prisoners who report using heroin, one in five of them tried heroin for the first time while in prison.

- (f) Every three days in the West Midlands somebody dies from drug poisoning, with a death every four hours in England. This has been rising since 2010 and for four years in a row has been the highest since records began.
  - (g) An estimated 22,500 children in the West Midlands have a parent or parents with serious drug problems.
  - (h) The majority of organised crime groups in the West Midlands are heavily involved in the drugs trade. Those organised criminals involved in drugs are more likely to be operating internationally, and more likely to have links to firearms. Organised criminals in the West Midlands are profiting from a drug market worth approximately £188m.
63. There are a number of key messages that have been highlighted by scoping work:
- (a) Despite efforts around enforcement and generational trends in drug taking, substance misuse remains an important issue with potentially devastating impacts on the health individuals.
  - (b) Evidence shows a clear link between drugs and offending both in terms of drug-related offending to fund drug consumption but also in terms of serious organised crime and its associated violence.
  - (c) Serious rethinking is needed for the way that offenders with substance misuse problems are treated by the criminal justice system.
  - (d) The existing approach to deterrence in the UK is recognised by the Government as ineffective in reducing harm and crime.
  - (e) Drug intervention needs to start with children and young people to break patterns of drug use and drug harm among families.
64. The principles set out in this report provide a clear foundation on which to develop our approach to substance misuse. It is against these principles that we expect the public to hold us to account for our activity.
65. It is clear that this is not an issue that we or West Midlands Police can tackle alone. Local Authorities are the key partners in tackling addiction and thereby reducing associated criminality, while the PCC's role in the wider criminal justice system offers opportunities to improve joined up working with prisons and probation.
66. However, existing support remains under constant financial pressure. The knock-on effect to policing and the criminal justice system that could stem from an under-funded drug treatment and recovery service would be significant. This remains a very real risk as funding is not ring-fenced and local council pressures continue to increase.
67. A vast number of people in the West Midlands are working hard to keep young people from the wrong path, to support recovery for people suffering from addiction, and to bring to justice the organised criminals that are profiting from misery. Their efforts should be commended while we continue to seek new and innovative ways to better use their talents.
68. To conclude, this report has outlined the principles of drug policy and the scale of substance misuse in the West Midlands and its impact. This report is consciously limited to outlining the nature of the problem to be addressed, with the expectation that our approach will be developed with partners and any proposals and new initiatives will be brought to a future session of the Strategic Policing and Crime Board.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

69. This report refers to the costs of substance misuse across the West Midlands and how public sector organisations are involved in drug prevention activities. However there are no direct financial implications of this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

70. The police and local authorities each have various legal enforcement powers available for tackling substance misuse, which must continue to be operated within. The key domestic statutes directly relating to the policing of controlled substances are as follows:

- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- The Drugs Act 2005.
- The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

71. There are also a number of international treaties that remain of particular significance to the policing of controlled substances, and tie into the Home Office's agenda for 'Global Action' on this issue:

- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961.
- The Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971.
- The Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1972.
- The Convention Against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988.

72. The Misuse of Drugs Act and the Psychoactive Substances Act in particular should be monitored for their impact in either facilitating or detracting from the ability to pursue a drug policy based on the principles outlined in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

73. The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

74. The Board is asked to endorse the principles highlighted in this report as the foundation for local policy development, and support the need for a new approach as evidenced above.

75. The Police and Crime Commissioner is asked to consider hosting a summit to bring together partners and the public with the common goal of reducing the harm of substance misuse in the West Midlands. Such a summit would drive lasting change to our collective approach, seeking meaningful solutions that are evidence-based.

## **Presented by:**

*Ben Twomey, Policy Officer, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner*

**Authored by:**

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*Ernie Hendricks, Board Member, Strategic Policing and Crime Board*

<sup>1</sup> D. Jamieson, 'Your Police Your Priorities: The West Midlands Police and Crime Plan', 2016-2020.

<sup>2</sup> West Midlands Police, People Deal, <http://peopledeal.west-midlands.police.uk/>, accessed on 22 August, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Home Office, '2017 Drug Strategy', July 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-strategy-2017>, accessed on 21 August, 2017, p.6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Home Office, 'Drug misuse: findings from the 2015 to 2016 CSEW second edition, *Drug misuse statistics, Alcohol and drug statistics and Crime statistics*', July 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>, accessed on 10 August, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Public Health England, 'Drugs and Alcohol: Facts and Figures', <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/facts-prevalence.aspx>, accessed on 22 August, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>

<sup>7</sup> Home Office, 'Drug misuse: findings from the 2015 to 2016 CSEW second edition, *Drug misuse statistics, Alcohol and drug statistics and Crime statistics*', July 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>, accessed on 10 August, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), 'Drug misuse deaths by local authority', 2 August 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/drugmisudeathsbylocalauthority>, accessed on 10 August, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> B. Twomey, Analysis of discarded needle and syringe data from local authorities, August 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Birmingham City Council, Data table for deposits of discarded needles, March 2017.

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