



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Reducing Reoffending and protecting people from harm

Title: Substance Misuse Report, Drugs Policy Recommendations: Two Years On

Presented by: Megan Jones, Policy Manager

Report on the progress of the eight drug policy recommendations

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Strategic Police and Crime Board (SPCB) with an update on the work undertaken against the eight drug policy recommendations, published in February 2018.
2. The report will also set out ideas for next steps.
3. To stimulate discussion among Board members, partners and the public on our approach and progress to tackling 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. In December 2017, [a report](#) was conducted to identify the scale and impact of substance misuse in the area and was presented to Board.
6. The report highlighted a number of key 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

£62,230 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.

7. Following the report on the scale of drugs in the West Midlands, the PCC put out a call for evidence.
8. There were 64 submissions, it was open for two months and the two key questions asked where:
 - 1) What are the costs of drugs and/or drug policy (human and/or economic) as you see it in relation to the capacity in which you respond?
 - 2) What practical new initiatives or changes to drug policy could be introduced to prevent harm and/or reduce crime?
9. The call for evidence responses were from a wide range of organisations and individuals, with varied perspectives and experiences. However, there were a number of clear themes that developed. To be clear, these were ideas suggested to the PCC, not endorsed by the PCC.

Call for evidence submission themes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion • Underlying issues or multiple needs • Drug Consumption Rooms • Mental health • The need to work together • Education and early intervention • Decriminalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Through the gate' support from prisons • Maintaining funding for treatment • Different treatment options • New Psychoactive Substances • Not in Education, Employment or Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legalisation • Heroin Assisted Treatment • Adverse Childhood Experiences • Stigma and shame • Naloxone • Needle litter • On-site testing of drugs at festivals or nightclubs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling organised crime differently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical cannabis • Homelessness
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10. In February 2018, following the call for evidence and a summit, the PCC published eight recommendations for a new approach to drug policy. This approach recognised that despite the good work of many, collectively the approach to tackling drugs was failing.

11. The PCC states the following in the foreword:

“All public policy should be informed by open debate. I organised the West Midlands Drug Policy Summit as an opportunity to invite open thinking and create a space for that sensible and mature discussion. On 15th December 2017, organisations involved in drug policy from across the region attended the summit. They were also given the opportunity to share their views and shape the agenda through a prior consultation.

The following recommendations are based on ideas proposed to us in our consultation and at the summit. There was consensus that, at the very minimum, these ideas were worthy of being closely looked at for their ability to reduce crime and prevent harm.

Despite the good work being done by many, collectively drug policy is failing. This failure means the public put up with more crime, public services are put under more strain, and not enough is done to reduce the harm of those suffering from addiction.

The effective provision of mainstream treatment and harm-reduction services is the foundation of good drug policy. These services, like the police and wider public sector, have faced significant cuts to their funding in recent years. The knock on effect of these cuts is becoming clear, with drug related deaths at an all-time high for the fourth year in a row, burglary and violent crime on the rise, and an estimated 22,500 children in the West Midlands growing up with a parent or parents suffering from serious drug problems.

Current services have not prevented this from happening, and so this report’s recommendations set out a number of new ways in which we can all work together to reduce the crime and harm of drugs in the West Midlands. There are a number of crucial links between drugs and the economic development of the region. If people are at risk of falling into addiction or choosing to deal drugs, we need to ensure alternatives are available so they can instead pursue positive opportunities for themselves and enter legitimate work. Scenes of public injecting, overdoses and needle litter reflect poorly on a region’s reputation and ability to attract investment”.

12. The eight recommendations are as follows:

1) Diverting people away from the Criminal Justice System: A formal scheme to divert those suffering from drug addiction away from the criminal justice system into proper treatment, building on the success of West Midlands Police’s Turning Point pilot. Those suffering from addiction should be treated as having a health problem, not just as criminals.

- 2) **Regional Drug Interventions Programme:** Currently funding for drugs interventions is dispersed between Community Safety Partnerships, West Midlands Police and Public Health teams in local councils. Funding should be joined up to increase efficiency and ensure all funding is supporting the same goals.
 - 3) **Heroin Assisted Treatment:** Prescribe heroin in a medical setting to people suffering from addiction who have not responded to other forms of treatment. This will take the market away from organised criminals and reduce crime to fund people's addiction. Work with the Home Office, who have championed the benefits of Heroin Assisted Treatment.
 - 4) **Drugs Early Warning Programme:** To reduce harm, a comprehensive regional warning programme should be established to make the public, outreach workers and medical professionals aware of the danger of emerging drugs and reduce the number of deaths.
 - 5) **Safety testing of drugs in night time districts or festivals:** To reduce the number of deaths at night time economy venues, city centre testing of drugs should be introduced. This can reduce harm, by making people aware of the dangers they face and increasing intelligence on the nature and identity of drugs in circulation.
 - 6) **End the postcode lottery of naloxone provision:** Train and equip first responders in the application of naloxone, and make naloxone consistently available in places where overdose risks are higher, such as bail hostels. Naloxone is a medication used to block or reverse opioid overdoses. It has little effect if opioids are not present, so is safe to be administered by first responders such as police officers.
 - 7) **Drug Consumption Rooms:** Consider the benefits of Drug Consumption Rooms to see if they would add value to current services in the West Midlands. Drug Consumption Rooms are clinical spaces in which people suffering with addiction can access clean equipment, medical support and drug treatment services. This support is typically targeted at hard to reach homeless people. Improving their access to treatment while taking their injecting and needle litter off the streets.
 - 8) **Taking money from organised criminals to improve drug services:** Those profiting from the misery of drug addiction should pay for treatment. All the organised crime groups of the greatest concern to local police are involved with drugs and firearms. West Midlands Police is seeking to maximise the money it seizes from large-scale drug dealers. The extra money seized relating to drugs should be re-invested into helping those suffering from addiction.
13. More information on the recommendations can be found [here](#).
14. The PCC has provided funding to enable progress in this area. This has included investment in diversion options, commissioning a new force-wide arrest referral service, supporting the development of heroin assisted treatment, funding for festival drug checking at MADE festival, supplying officers in Birmingham City Centre with lifesaving naloxone and investing in a team of financial investigators to target criminals who make profit from the misery of others.

15. The set of eight recommendations have received national and international recognition. The recommendations are seen as broad, bold and ambitious, making significant headway into tackling the cost, crime and harm from drugs. The PCC and team have been asked to speak at a number of very high profile events, to share best practice and the journey to date.
16. The PCC has enabled a space for a sensible, mature discussion on drugs policy with politicians, leading academics, the third sector, policing and individuals who have lost loved ones from drugs or experienced addiction themselves.
17. Other forces and PCC offices around the country have since adopted one or more recommendations to implement in their own areas, proving the need for a new approach.
18. Significantly, this work has changed the public discourse around addiction, as needing to be treated first and foremost as a health issue rather than a criminal justice one.
19. It is clear that when tackling drug policy, these recommendations reach much wider priorities, this approach will deal with the causes of crime and harm. Therefore, the impact on organised crime, homelessness and rough sleeping, county lines and the increase in knife crime is apparent.
20. The purpose of the following section is to provide an update on each recommendation by setting out actions undertaken as well as next steps

Recommendation	Action	Next Steps
<p>Diverting people away from the Criminal Justice System: A formal scheme to divert those suffering from drug addiction away from the criminal justice system into proper treatment, building on the success of West Midlands Police's Turning Point pilot. Those suffering from addiction should be treated as having a health problem, not just as criminals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a pre-arrest drug diversion programme which will act as a preventative tool and help engage individuals in treatment or education. - New Chance Rollout for Female Offenders from April 2020. The New Chance Programme has proven to significantly reduce the reoffending rate of female offenders by tackling the causes behind criminality. Following success in a number of the local authority areas, the programme will be rolled out across the West Midlands force area. - Offender to Rehab Programme delivery. A scheme to divert prolific shoplifters into rehab when appropriate. This programme reduces demand on policing, helps an individual recover from addiction and reduces crimes on our business community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of the pre-arrest drug diversion programme in April 2020 - Monitoring of the new chance programme - Continuing to support and enhance the offender to rehab programme in 2020 to develop the evidence base. Discuss future funding for sustainability with key stakeholder partners.

<p>Regional Drug Interventions Programme: Currently funding for drugs interventions is dispersed between Community Safety Partnerships, West Midlands Police and Public Health teams in local councils. Funding should be joined up to increase efficiency and ensure all funding is supporting the same goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A review of the Legacy of the Drug Interventions Programme took place in 2018 and was shared with partners. - Decision to fund a new West Midlands wide Arrest Referral Service, ending five years of fragmentation since the national programme ended. - Commissioning of the new service, Cranstoun awarded the contract - New Cranstoun Arrest Referral Service went live from 1st January 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of the new Cranstoun Arrest Referral Service. Evaluation of the outcomes for offenders
<p>Heroin Assisted Treatment: Prescribe heroin in a medical setting to people suffering from addiction who have not responded to other forms of treatment. This will take the market away from organised criminals and reduce crime to fund people's addiction. Work with the Home Office, who have championed the benefits of Heroin Assisted Treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmental discussions with partners to seek funding and assess the need. - Local authority area identified and a project group set up to deliver a pilot. - Evaluation to sit alongside the pilot which will also assess the impact on organised crime for the first time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heroin Assisted Treatment to be piloted in one of the local authority areas in the West Midlands in 2020. - Evaluation of the pilot to be completed.

<p>Drugs Early Warning Programme: To reduce harm, a comprehensive regional warning programme should be established to make the public, outreach workers and medical professionals aware of the danger of emerging drugs and reduce the number of deaths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with Public Health England to review the regional early warning programme - Co-hosted a workshop with PHE for local authorities alerts - Significant developments and service offer from the early warning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continual review of the effectiveness of the regional early warning programme.
<p>Safety testing of drugs in night time districts or festivals: To reduce the number of deaths at night time economy venues, city centre testing of drugs should be introduced. This can reduce harm, by making people aware of the dangers they face and increasing intelligence on the nature and identity of drugs in circulation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot at MADE festival in Birmingham (28th July 2018) - MADE Festival evaluation complete - New project group set up to deliver drug checking in the night time economy, led by public health and substance misuse partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver drug checking in the night time economy in 2020.
<p>End the postcode lottery of naloxone provision: Train and equip first responders in the application of naloxone, and make naloxone consistently available in places where overdose risks are higher, such as bail hostels. Naloxone is a medication used to block or reverse opioid overdoses. It has little effect if opioids are not present, so is safe to be administered by first responders such as police officers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-authored with Public Health England an ambition document for the West Midlands to become the leading region in the country for naloxone provision – signed up to by 24 agencies across the public and third sector, among the most wide-reaching partnership initiatives in the West Midlands. - West Midlands Police were the first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete evaluation of the pilot for officers in Bham City Centre - Deliver training and supply of naloxone to the firearms (quick response) teams and explore potential to train teams in other town and city centres in the West Midlands via First Aid training. - Continue to increase availability of

	<p>force in the country to introduce officers carrying naloxone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Birmingham City Centre teams were trained and supplied with nyxoid (nasal spray naloxone). - Naloxone Learning Event took place in September 2019 to share this practice with other forces and OPCCs and interested partners and organisations. 	<p>naloxone across the West Midlands by working with partners and organisations/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify sustainable funding source for roll out of Nyxoid across the force area.
<p>Drug Consumption Rooms: Consider the benefits of Drug Consumption Rooms to see if they would add value to current services in the West Midlands. Drug Consumption Rooms are clinical spaces in which people suffering with addiction can access clean equipment, medical support and drug treatment services. This support is typically targeted at hard to reach homeless people. Improving their access to treatment while taking their injecting and needle litter off the streets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A scoping report specific to our region will assess the benefits and challenges of Drug Consumption Rooms, adding to the already significant international evidence-base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The report on DCRs is to be published shortly. - Recommendations from the academic report to be approved and signed off by the relevant stakeholders. - Multi agency steering group to be set up to deliver implementation.
<p>Taking money from organised criminals to improve drug services: Those profiting from the misery of drug addiction should pay for treatment. All the organised crime groups of the greatest concern to local police are involved with drugs and firearms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business case developed for a new Financial Investigation team in West Midlands Police. The team of three Financial Investigators and one analyst focus on those who profit the most from the drug market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation and performance to be shared with the SPCB. - If additional funds are seized from criminals, this should be used to support drug treatment and therefore

<p>West Midlands Police is seeking to maximise the money it seizes from large-scale drug dealers. The extra money seized relating to drugs should be re-invested into helping those suffering from addiction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PCC committed to fund the team for two years - Team went live in Summer 2019 	<p>undermine both demand and supply.</p>
<p>Additional</p> <p>Support of a Safe Space in Birmingham City Centre, the Arcadian: Birmingham is very proud to be home to a thriving night time economy, but this also comes with its own risks and vulnerability. The Safe Space has been set up by partners including the Arcadian, St John Ambulance and with support from Southside Business Improvement District and Public Health England to reduce vulnerability, reduce demand on policing, A&E admissions and ambulance service demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding provided to help set up the safe space within the Arcadian on Friday and Saturday evenings from midnight until 0530am. - Early results indicate huge savings to policing, A&E admissions and ambulance service demand. This means that individuals have been kept safer as a result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation to be complete in early 2020.

CONCLUSION

21. The work developed under the eight recommendations have created a space for a mature conversation about drug policy and the failings under the current approach.
22. The work delivered against the eight recommendations in the West Midlands has been ground-breaking, innovative and helped shape the narrative nationally on how to tackle drug policy.
23. Other police forces and PCCs have begun to implement some of this approach in their own areas, recognising the evidence base and success in the West Midlands.
24. There will be an opportunity for partners, organisations and individuals to continue to shape this debate at a follow up Drug Summit: Two Years On, taking place in March 2020. This will also provide an opportunity to celebrate some of the key successes with partners who have worked so hard to deliver change in the West Midlands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The board is asked to note the progress made by the OPCC, WMP and partners during the last two years on delivering against each of the eight recommendations.
26. The board is asked to discuss and note the considerations for next steps which will be explored further with partners at the PCC's follow up Drugs Summit: Two Years On.

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