

## ***West Cheshire Together***

### ***Working in partnership for local people***

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| Report title             | Cheshire West and Chester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy   |
| Description              | <p>In September 2009, the Local Strategic Partnership established a cross-cutting, multi-agency West Cheshire Alcohol Strategy Group to develop an outcome focused Alcohol Strategy and Action Plan for West Cheshire.</p> <p>The aim of the strategy is to reduce the harm caused by alcohol, including harm associated with chronic and acute ill-health, crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the impact of alcohol on ill-health and life expectancy;</li> <li>• To ensure that those who drink alcohol in Cheshire West and Chester are able to do so safely and responsibly;</li> <li>• To reduce alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour;</li> <li>• To reduce the harm caused to children and young people by alcohol use</li> </ul> |
| Document purpose         | The purpose of this report is to outline the development of the Cheshire West and Chester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and to present to the Local Strategic Partnership the completed strategy for endorsement and implementation by the Partnership.   |
| Circulation list         | West Cheshire Local Strategic Partnership   |
| Decision/Action required | <p>The Local Strategic Partnership is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endorse the Cheshire West and Chester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy</li> <li>• endorse and support the implementation of the action plans within the strategy</li> </ul>   |
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| Target audience          | West Cheshire and Chester Local Strategic Partnership   |
| Cross reference          |   |

## **AN ALCOHOL STRATEGY FOR THE BOROUGH**

### **Introduction**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to outline the development of the Cheshire West and Chester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and action plans and to present to the Local Strategic Partnership the completed strategy for endorsement and implementation by the Partnership.

### **Background**

- 2 Alcohol plays an important and positive role in local culture. It is often part of our social and family life, and can enhance special occasions and time spent with friends. However, more needs to be done to promote safe and sensible drinking as excessive alcohol consumption amongst some sections of the population is a cause for growing concern. It is linked to violent crime, antisocial behaviour, chronic and acute ill-health.
- 3 Across Cheshire West and Chester around 90% of adults drink alcoholic beverages. Alcohol related health problems and use of health services has been increasing year-on-year. It is estimated that around 7,957 people across Western Cheshire are dependent on alcohol, whilst 64,335 people drink alcohol in sufficient quantities to put their health at risk. Of these, around 14,905 are classified as higher risk drinkers. The North West Public Health Observatory estimates that 18% of people in Western Cheshire binge drink and a third of attendances at Accident and Emergency departments are alcohol related. Between April 2007 and March 2008 there were 6,264 alcohol related admissions to hospital across Cheshire West and Chester, a direct age standardised rate\* of 1582/100,000 which is significantly worse than the national average.
- 4 There is a well established link between alcohol misuse and crime and disorder. Across Cheshire West and Chester there were 2,199 assaults with injury between April 2008 and March 2009. Temporal evidence shows that most of these crimes occurred on weekend evenings. In addition, incidents of actual bodily harm in Chester and Northwich correlate strongly with areas of high concentrations of licensed premises. During the same time period there were 1,564 incidents of domestic abuse reported, of these, 23.5% were classified as being at high or very high level of risk. Anti-social behaviour refers to intimidating or threatening behaviour that scares or badly affects quality of life. Between April 2008 and March 2009 there were 22,726 incidents of anti-social behaviour reported in Cheshire West and Chester. Of

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\* Direct age standardised rate for an area is the number of admissions per 100,000 that would occur in that area if it had the same age structure as the standard European population.

these, over half were classified as rowdy, loutish or drunken behaviour. Locally, alcohol remains a significant cause of death on our roads, with 28.6% of road deaths attributed to alcohol in the last year.

- 5 The social impact of alcohol related harm is difficult to quantify but alcohol misuse has a significant impact on families and community life. It is widely recognised that alcohol misuse has a negative impact on marriage and relationships which in turn, affects the health and wellbeing of children and young people. In addition, alcohol misuse is associated with worklessness, homelessness and can lead to social exclusion. Across the North West of England, people with low mental wellbeing are significantly more likely to be Higher Risk Drinkers and are significantly less likely to drink at a sensible level.
- 6 The importance and relevance of alcohol misuse as a key issue for individuals and communities across West Cheshire, has been highlighted and reinforced through a number of surveys and reports published in recent years. The results of the first Comprehensive Area Assessment, published in December 2009, highlighted that West Cheshire has significantly more hospital stays for alcohol related harm than most other parts of England, and recognised that partners had recently started to work together to tackle these alcohol issues. As the West Cheshire self assessment report is developed over the coming months for the 2009/10 assessment, it will be important to highlight to the Audit Commission the progress that partners have made on this agenda.
- 7 West Cheshire Together for Health and Wellbeing is developing a health inequalities action plan in response to the Comprehensive Area Assessment findings, this programme for action will set out plans to tackle health inequalities over the next five years. One of the themes identified within the plan is “to reduce the gap in life expectancy between the most deprived two quintiles (the most deprived 40% of our local population determined by the index of Multiple Deprivation) and the rest of the population” and covers lifestyle-related aims, including a reduction in the harm caused by alcohol. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cheshire West and Chester has been used to develop the action plan and highlights that health inequalities are widening locally, particularly amongst men.
- 8 The emergence of alcohol as both national and local priority areas requires greater co-ordination of partnership working and a clear understanding of how alcohol affects our local community.

### **Strategy Development and Progress to Date**

- 9 Whilst the causes and effects of alcohol related harm have been identified as priorities for action across West Cheshire, the borough needs a local response to the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy – “Safe, Sensible,

Social". As part of this work, a stakeholder event was held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to:

- bring together partnership agencies, from across Cheshire to agree priority areas; and
- consider the structures and processes required to facilitate the development and implementation of a alcohol harm reduction strategy.

The event confirmed a need for a strategic, partnership approach to alcohol harm reduction within Cheshire. The consensus of those present was that separate groups for West and East Cheshire should be established and that the Local Strategic Partnerships should take overall ownership of the alcohol agenda.

10 In order to progress the development of more specific proposals for West Cheshire, the Local Strategic Partnership Director met with representatives of three of the five thematic partnerships – Safer and Stronger Communities, Health and Wellbeing and Children and Young People. The recommendations arising from this discussion were endorsed by the Local Strategic Partnership Thematic Leads and presented to the Local Strategic Partnership they included:

- The establishment of a new cross-cutting, multi-agency West Cheshire Alcohol Strategy Group comprising experts and commissioners from each thematic area.
- The West Cheshire Alcohol Group to be charged with developing an outcome focused Alcohol Strategy and Action Plan for West Cheshire.
- The West Cheshire Alcohol Group be chaired by the Director of Public Health, NHS Western Cheshire.

11 The Western Cheshire Alcohol Strategy Group was established and first met in September 2009 and over the last six months it has developed the attached strategy. The aim of the strategy is to reduce the harm caused by alcohol, including harm associated with chronic and acute ill-health, crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The objectives of the strategy are:

- To reduce the impact of alcohol on ill-health and life expectancy;
- To ensure that those who drink alcohol in Cheshire West and Chester are able to do so safely and responsibly;
- To reduce alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour;
- To reduce the harm caused to children and young people by alcohol use.

The document provides both a strategic direction and Local Action Plans based on three key themes

- Developing information, education and communication
- Effective and accessible evidence based interventions and treatment
- Improving community safety by combating alcohol related crime and disorder.

A full copy of the strategy and action plans can be found Appendix A.

- 12 Action plans have been developed for each of the themes within the strategy, these contain a wide range actions which together, will significantly reduce alcohol related harm across Cheshire West and Chester. High impact actions include:
- Developing a multi-agency intelligence group.
  - Amplify messages from the national Know Your Limits campaign across the partner organisations and the local population.
  - Frontline staff in all organisations to be trained in alcohol screening and brief advice.
  - Promote and introduce work-based alcohol policies for local employers starting with partner organisations.
  - Develop legislation to introduce a minimum cost of alcohol per unit across the Borough.
  - Introduce home safety checks for high risk and dependent drinkers.
  - Improve the availability of temporary housing for homeless people with alcohol problems.
  - Identify and introduce a consistent range of City/Borough safe initiatives
  - Increase the number of alcohol free zones and fixed penalty notices.
  - Develop and commission a tier two alcohol service and introduce alcohol liaison nurses into secondary care.
  - Actively promotion of health and wellbeing across partner organisations and the local population.

Full details can be found in appendix A.

- 13 Performance monitoring of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy will be undertaken using the following Local Area Agreement indicators:
- N115 Substance misuse by young people will be used as key performance indicators
  - NI20 Assault with injury crime rate
  - NI21 Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
  - NI39 Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
- 14 Engagement work for the Strategy was undertaken during February and March 2010. This included: circulating the draft Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy across the Local Strategic Partnership, running focus groups to gain the views of children and young people and the Western Cheshire Big Drink Debate, which captured the view of over 600 local residents. The data and information provided, together with the feedback from children and young people have been used shape the final version of the strategy.
- 15 The strategy is a commitment to work together across professional and community boundaries to create a safe and thriving environment, where alcohol is used sensibly. By adopting the strategy we are confident that

Cheshire West and Chester will demonstrate progress in reducing alcohol related crime and ill-health over the next three years

### **Recommendations**

The Local Strategic Partnership is asked to:

- endorse the Cheshire West and Chester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy
- endorse the implementation of the action plans within the strategy