

West Cheshire Together

Working in Partnership for local people

Report title	The future of the Cheshire Drug Action Team
Description	
Document purpose	The purpose of this report is to allow partners to comment on the options for the future development of this group.
Circulation list	West Cheshire Together Local Strategic Partnership
Decision/Action required	Partners are asked to note the report and determine on the options and pressing issues outlined above.
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Target audience	West Cheshire Together Local Strategic Partnership
Cross reference	

Background

Cheshire Drug Action Team (DAT) is a non statutory partnership between: CW&C, Cheshire East, the Primary Care Trusts (PCT), Probation, Prisons, Cheshire Police and the voluntary sector. The purpose of the DAT is to implement the National Drug Strategy in Cheshire, and since 2007 has been required to work in partnership to jointly commissioning Integrated Drug Treatment Services in HMP Styal. The DAT covers the former County Council area, and was considered a shared service in 2009-10. It is proposed that the Cheshire DAT continues as a partnership outside the formal shared service arena for 2010-11. The PCT boundaries are not co-terminous with the new unitary council boundaries.

Finance

The DAT is a commissioning body for drug and some alcohol services. The total amount of commissioned activity across CW&C and Cheshire East is circa £6million. The majority of the DAT funding comes from the National Treatment Agency (Department of Health) and the PCTs' budgets for adult and young peoples' specialised treatment. The Home Office also provides a grant of £343K for the Drug Intervention Programme specifically targeting criminal justice clients. The CW&C Area Based Grant supports the DAT with £40K towards management and administration. Cheshire East provides the same amount. Posts for the DAT staff team are hosted by Cheshire Police, NHS Western Cheshire, Cheshire East Council (formerly Cheshire CC post) and Turning Point. CW&C receive a contribution from the DAT of £46K towards 1.5 FTE social work posts and £75K towards residential rehabilitation.

NHS Western Cheshire (PCT) act as host and the accountable body for the Adult and YP Pooled Treatment funding. The Drug Intervention Programme is held by Cheshire Police – the accountable body. The accountable body for IDTS is Cheshire East and Central PCT.

Performance

Cheshire DAT is regarded as a high performing DAT by the NTA. It is worth noting that the DAT spends only 5% of its costs on management and administration – by comparison Halton DAT spends some 30% on M&A.

The DAT commissions services for 2,202 people in drug treatment (2008-9) including 1,937 problematic drug users across the former County Council area. Data for the period April-Dec 09 shows that there are about 1180 adult clients in the CW&C area, with about half of those being resident in Chester. Heroin is the most commonly reported primary problematic substance. When performance data is separated out for CW&C, challenges to performance are revealed, including:

- planned discharge rates in Ellesmere Port and Chester
- shared care arrangements with GPs in Ellesmere Port
- Arrest referral service

Current situation – priorities

The role of the DAT is to improve and expand the drug treatment system with the goal of getting more drug misusers into treatment, helping them recover from dependency and reintegrating them into the community. This will lead to better health outcomes and reduce offending. Families and communities benefit too, because drug misusers in treatment commit less crime, pose less of a health risk, and are more likely to hold down jobs, be responsible parents, and engage with society.

The priorities for 2010-2011 include:

- Involvement in Integrated offender management
- Engagement with Think Family and Safeguarding agendas to ensure “all

drug misusing parents with treatment needs have ready access to treatment”¹

- Development of “recovery” communities
- Robust information management to be able to report on effectiveness to the partners to inform future planning.

Risk

The DAT is largely centrally funded, and is subject to the rigours of comprehensive spending reviews and changes in political direction. There is no indication at this stage of any significant change to the Adult Pooled Treatment budget. However if the Drug Intervention Programme grant was to be split to the two local authority boundaries, there is a risk that it would be regarded as too small by Government agencies, and could be withdrawn.

Options for 2011 onwards

1. Retain the DAT as a shared arrangement across Cheshire
2. Have two separate DATs based on the boundaries of CW&C and Cheshire East

Proposal

The proposed partnership arrangement can be relatively easily established for 2010-11. A Partnership board for the DAT is in place chaired by ACC Phil Thompson. The NTA, Liverpool JMU and the DAT Information Manager are working on disaggregating the DAT data, and this should be available to support decision making for Sept 2010. Therefore, the DAT should be retained for 2010-11, with a decision on configuration post-2011 being required by Sept 2010 to inform future planning and commissioning decisions.

A review of treatment services including current contracts and problematic performance is taking place and the DAT Board is actively managing the situation.

The pressing issues relate to governance and operational oversight of the DAT in 2010 – 11.

1. Governance: the LSP should indicate which thematic partnership should oversee the DAT
2. CW&C should determine departmental ownership of the DAT

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¹ HM Government: *National Drugs Strategy “Protecting Families and Communities”* 2008-2018