

Health Scrutiny Panel

Stronger Communities Update

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Multi-agency work currently being undertaken to reduce drug related deaths and opioid dependency in Middlesbrough

As well as all the great work that our Public Health Team are doing relating to substance misuse we are also looking at this from a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) perspective too

Public Health are looking at commissioned services and joining this up through an integrated commissioning model that will join up homeless services and substance misuse services (not part of my update however Wardens have a significant role to play in identifying and engaging with vulnerable people and referring to commissioned services)

Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership is a statutory body made up of representatives from Police, Probation Service, Local Authority, Youth offending Service, Health and the Fire and Rescue authority and they produce a community safety plan that is reviewed every two years.

Community Safety Plan

The recently reviewed Community Safety Partnership plan has identified the following priorities:

Priority 1—Perceptions and Feeling Safe

We will aim to better understand and improve the public perception of safety and crime in Middlesbrough
Tackling crime and ASB head on

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences
Trauma Informed approach

Priority 3 - Locality Working, Inc. Town Centre

Reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations and the community. Encouraging and supporting collaborative approach and building capacity within the community.

Create a safe town centre environment to live, work and visit



Community Safety Plan

Under each of the three priorities, these are the areas of focus relating to substance misuse

Develop a strategy to divert young people away from child **criminal exploitation and county lines**

Respond to issues in a timely manner, identify perpetrators and **bring to justice. (including drug dealers)**

Deliver the right care at the right place at the right time with a **co-ordinated trauma informed care plan**
approach

Strengthen families to **reduce** the number of **children becoming looked after**

Reduce mental health and substance misuse related crime and ASB by **early identification of mental health**
issues.

Identifying vulnerability and **put safeguarding measures** in place to prevent further harm

Reducing offending behaviour and **increase access to support services**

Locality Working Pilot in **Newport and North Ormesby**

Dedicated **multi-agency town centre team**



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Examples of the cases dealt with by the Street Wardens and Council's Homelessness Team and the outcomes achieved. The growing experience of working with those addicted to prescribed opioids, whether it's felt that this is a growing issue or not, if so, is it felt the necessary initiatives in place to address it.

Neighbourhood Safety Wardens carry naloxone kits - a drug that reverses the effects of an overdose. By administering the drug the wardens, who are also trained in first aid, have already saved the lives of 9 people since December 2019.

Wardens, who are also accredited by the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police, regularly gather intelligence and share information with the Police relating to drug dealing so that appropriate action can be taken. This has resulted in drug raids taking place in communities.

Council's Neighbourhood Safety Officers regularly build a portfolio of evidence to support an application to the courts for a house closure where we have evidence of ASB, crime and drug dealing in a property. (we have had success in this area and we are working with Police to look at more ASB related house closures)



2018 Example with Community Safety (Assertive Outreach)

homeless, sleeping on the street and begging in Middlesbrough town centre, is a heroin user and wasn't engaging with any services. He had benefits in place but couldn't access them as he didn't have a fixed address for the bank card to put it out to. S couldn't gain housing in Middlesbrough as he had "burnt his bridges" with landlords.

Weeks after S started to engage with the community safety team he was housed in temporary accommodation. He continued his engagement with the team and was able to find a more permanent address with 2020 properties. He is now attending all of his medical appointments and is now in receipt of Housing Benefit. His landlord has no complaints and has said he is 'doing well'. He has held down his tenancy and pays his rent on top up and he now has a bank card and can therefore easily access his benefits.

The team organised an assessment at CGL, which S attended, allowing him to be put on a methadone script. The team later supported him to attend Foundations and he has not used heroin since and is now feeling much healthier. He wanted to stop begging so the Town Centre Team arranged for him to start selling the Big Issue magazine as he attends Recovery Connections once a week.

S has moved out of the town centre and sells the Big Issue in the Linthorpe area.

S now feels ready for a DISC referral to support him into securing a permanent tenancy. He has asked the team if they can also help him look at his mental health once he is settled.

S has messaged the team on several occasions, here are some quotes

"Thanks, I wouldn't have been able to do this if it was left to me, so thank you very much it means a lot"

"I wouldn't have known where to start without your support"

Example from November 2020 Town Centre Wardens

X

X had been homeless for 12 months when the Town Centre Wardens started to engage with him. He was a prolific beggar in the town centre and was sleeping in shop doorways within the main precinct area, which was of concern to town centre businesses. Although X had benefits in place, he was misusing substances which was the reason he was also begging. He had 'burnt bridges' with housing providers but he said he wanted to change and stop living like this.

After a number of calls and discussions with the Homeless Team eventually a landlord agreed to give X a tenancy and he was placed into a private rented property. X was supported to set up his Housing Benefit claim by the homelessness team.

A community award scheme was successfully applied for to provide him with white goods, household furniture and clothing.

X is continuing to work with the team, he has also started to sell the Big Issue and is now ready to address his substance misuse and will be supported to make links with the relevant agencies for ongoing support. It is recognised that X still has a long way to go but he is making small steps in the right direction. Below is a quote from X

"Thank you, I wanna make changes and I wouldn't have been able to do this much without you"

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views on what interventions are needed to better support people in their recovery from opioid dependency over the next 5 years.

People don't choose to live a challenging life, they often find themselves in a situation that gradually builds up on them. Individual circumstances and life experiences can lead to people being in a certain environment that can lead to harmful behaviours.

Every drug user is someone's brother, sister, mother, daughter, son and they deserve another chance and support to change their behavior when they are ready for it.

If their behavior is causing harm to the community, they need to understand that that it is unacceptable and their actions will have consequences. Therefore enforcement does have a place to

Also think we would benefit from more assertive outreach to support people to make small, positive steps to changing behavior

Thank you

Do you have any questions?

