

Torbay's Drug and Alcohol partnership

Annual update

Background

A new national 10-year drug strategy, 'From Harm to Hope' (2021) has been published that seeks to deliver the findings and recommendations of Dame Carol Black's landmark independent review. The 10-year drug strategy sets out three core priority areas:

1. Break drug supply chains
2. Deliver a 'world-class' treatment and recovery system.
3. Achieve a shift in the demand for drugs.

Each priority area has several commitments which provide a breakdown of the areas of activity partnerships will be required to address for these priorities to be achieved. There are 18 commitments the partnership has been developing plans around over the past 12 months.

The expectations of how the whole of Government and public services will work together and share responsibility for delivery against these core strategic priorities is outlined within the 'Guidance for Local Delivery Partners', released in June 2022.

Following publication of the Government's strategy ministers set up the National Combating Drugs Unit and requested the formation of localised partnerships, referred to as Combating Drugs Partnerships, to be developed to monitor progress against the strategy's aims and objectives.

In Torbay a decision was made to deliver our local partnership across a Torbay footprint with the Director of Public Health assuming the role of Senior Responsible Officer for the first year. It was agreed that the Torbay partnership would include alcohol within its scope and be called the Torbay Drug and Alcohol Partnership (TDAP).

The Role TDAP

At a local level, success is reliant on partners working together to understand the Torbay population and how drugs are causing harm across the bay area, including any challenges in the local system and the changes that are needed to address them.

The partnership commits to working together to deliver the objectives outlined within the drug strategy, providing a focused point of reporting and scrutiny, thereby ensuring an open and transparent partnership with clear ownership, responsibility, and accountability. Members of TDAP have a responsibility to share information and intelligence relevant to these objectives to support joint strategic and prioritisation planning.

Responsibilities include but are not exclusive to the following:

- Development of a local Delivery Plan to capture Torbay activity against the three Priority Areas / supporting Commitments and monitor national outcomes and supporting metrics.
- Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a joined up local strategy, agreeing the appropriate steps needed to meet the needs identified.

- To influence the development and implementation of strategies and commissioning intentions that have the potential to impact the drugs strategy.
- To identify and escalate system risks via the relevant strategic and/or operational governance group for follow up / action.

TDAP was formed in August 2022, and the first meeting took place on the 28th September 2022. Over the past year the partnership has met frequently, helping to generate a Torbay wide shared understanding of the key areas of underperformance or concern, that specifically link to the priority areas identified within the drug strategy. A breakdown of the TDAPS's key achievements have been listed below.

Milestones

The key milestones achieved to date have been:

- The formalisation of how TDAP operates, including membership, terms of reference, it's governance as well as the outlining the roles and responsibilities of the group.
- Completion of the partnership's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, developed with contributions from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the Probation Service, Devon and Cornwall Police, Office of Health Improvement, and disparities (OHID), Childrens Services, Children's Society (Young Persons substance misuse service), Community Safety, Torbay and Devon's Public Health teams. This document being used to identify key TDAP priorities for action which informs the TDAP Delivery Plan
- Establishing TDAP's outcome metrics, identifying areas of improvement and best practice. These metrics will help steer the delivery plan and identify subsequent task and finish groups.
- Completion of TDAP's annual membership review, ensuring the right individuals are present and can contribute to TDAP's progress.
- A mapping exercise has identified 17 existing groups currently working in some way towards the commitments outlined within the drug strategy, whilst also highlighting gaps.
- The creation of task and finish groups focused on the gaps identified from the mapping exercise.
- The successful completion of all national audit requirements for the 2022/23 reporting period.

Progress against Core Priority areas - examples

Break drug supply chains

Devon and Cornwall Police

Devon and Cornwall police have been working under the direction of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) drug strategy to deliver key activities aimed at disrupting the supply of drugs, both at a peninsular and local level.

Torbay's local policing team have been working closely with National Police Proactive teams to complete dedicated operations (including county lines intensification weeks) targeting the trafficking and supply of drugs coming into and being circulated within Torbay. Working in

collaboration national proactive teams has maximised intelligence sharing and allowed Torbay's police force to target the highest threats related to county lines. resulting in the successful disruption and closure of key County Lines.

Several dedicated operations remain underway that are targeting County Lines into Torbay, focusing specifically on securing cash and commodity.

Devon Prisons

Local prisons (HMPS Channing's Wood and HMPS Exeter) have invested in measures to reduce the trafficking of illicit substances into prison custody, including the introduction of a Rapiscan machine that will identify if paper has been laced with illicit substances and a body scanner that is able to detect prisoners attempting to conceal illicit substances / mobile phones on entry into prison.

The drug strategy lead at HMP Channing's Wood reports a significant increase in the number of seizures following the implementation of this equipment, increasing disruption to the supply of drugs entering the prison estate. The ability to send off substances seized to the seizure diagnostic team has also helped improve the prisons awareness as to which substances are in circulation, shaping the response taken by the prison to manage this.

Deliver a world class treatment and recovery system.

Increasing numbers in treatment

In line with the Government's commitment to increase numbers accessing substance misuse treatment, work has taken place to improve pathways between the drug and alcohol service and Torbay's Criminal Justice partners i.e., prisons, police custody and the courts to develop new pathways into treatment from prisons and police custody. Latest data reports (the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System) show an increase of 92 additional people entering drug and alcohol treatment and a 21% increase in the number of people leaving prison and engaging with community treatment when compared to the same reporting period last year (Q1 2022/23 v Q1 2023/24, Domes data).

Broadening of substitute prescribing options

Torbay's Drug and Alcohol treatment provider, Torbay Recovery Initiative (TRI) are working in partnership with Torbay Council's community safety team, public health and the OPCC to pilot a new treatment medication called Buvidal.

Buvidal has been found to be an effective alternative treatment option for individuals who have previously experienced difficulties with staying in drug treatment. The Pilot is due to go live from November 2023.

Achieve a shift in the demand for drugs.

A lot of scoping work has taken place regarding this commitment to help understand what is currently in place and where the gaps remain. The focus of this priority area relates to the identification of vulnerable adults / children most at risk of substance use and/or exploitation, whilst ensuring the consequences are sufficient to reduce the likelihood that individuals would choose to

engage in drug use and or criminal activity. An example of this work is how schools support individuals with substance use and their exclusion policies to support individuals maintaining an education and finishing school.

The healthy learning webpage for teachers across Torbay has recently been updated with additional information and resources to support them in understanding the prevalence of drug and alcohol use within Torbay, the factors likely to increase risk of drug and alcohol use in young people, along with resources they can adopt as part of their curriculum and where they can direct young people for support should drugs and/or alcohol be an issue requiring specialist intervention.

A collaboration between community safety and public health has seen funding provided to co-commission a young person's substance misuse outreach worker to deliver place and education-based support, and despite some initial challenges with recruitment, this post has now been filled and is operational.

Torbay Youth Justice Service has developed a prevention service for children who have not entered the formal justice system to provide targeted early help.

Strategic Approach

Year 1 has solidified the partnership and provided a foundation and structure for the TDAP to operate. TDAP members have a good understanding of the drug strategy priorities and have demonstrated a commitment to work together to share knowledge and expertise across their disciplines to help generate a joined-up response and action.

The membership is under no illusion as to the challenges linked to the aims of this strategy, however, recognise the cross-cutting nature of the issues presented and the need to work together as a collective if they are to succeed.

The partnership has developed some key resources (e.g., joint needs assessment, delivery plan and its outcome metrics) which in partnership with the new data sets provided by OHID, has generated a good awareness of Torbay's system strengths and areas for further development. This places the partnership in a strong position as it moves forward into Year 2.

For Year 2, the TDAP will focus on three main areas. Firstly, the review of the projects that have been implemented to date from the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) to support the ambitions of the 'From Harm to Hope' strategy and plan for Years 2 and 3. Secondly, developing the TDAP performance dashboard and using this to monitor impact and finally, to target the gaps against the commitments as identified from within the mapping exercise which will see an increased in focus on Torbay's Young People, Mental Health and Family-Centred recovery.