

Partnership Working

Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership is a multi-agency partnership made up of NHS Highland, Highland Council, Scottish Police Highlands & Islands Division, Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service. HADP work collaboratively to coordinate policy and actions to tackle drug and alcohol related harm across the Highlands. The work of the partnership is very wide ranging and spans from prevention through to recovery. Some examples of activities include:

- Initiatives to prevent young peoples use of drugs and alcohol
- Ongoing enforcement to curb availability and address anti-social and criminal Behaviour associated with both drugs and alcohol.
- Early intervention to support families affected by drugs and alcohol
- Provision of services to support people change their behaviour and reduce their use of substances
- Moving people on to mutual aid, employment and educational opportunities to aid their recovery

HADP meets on a regular basis to coordinate the above activities and monitor their effectiveness and holds an annual stakeholder event to update partners and the public on progress and consult on the course of action for addressing issues and concerns.

Prevention

HADP have funded development of a Substance Misuse Toolbox for schools. The purpose is to provide a range of resources that will be used to ensure quality and consistency across the substance misuse sessions delivered by outside agencies. Alcohol and drugs and NPS's will form part of the information provided to pupils during the sessions that will be delivered once a year in secondary schools by multi-agency groups made up of the school nurse, police, YAS and Action for Children. The toolbox will also contain a range of resources to support lesson plans as part of the Curriculum for Excellence. AfC and YAS regularly participate in events such as Safe Highlanders providing opportunities to communicate risks associated with substance misuse and promote stay safe messages to over 2000 young people. AfC have use of a camper van that will be deployed to 'hot spot' areas where workers engage young people in street-work activities as a diversion from substance misuse.

YAS and AfC are about to offer Highland secondary schools a substance misuse input in the run up to the festive season. The sessions will highlight the potential risks and harms from substance misuse and promote strategies for staying safe and encouraging positive choices.

Partner agencies collaborate with Police Scotland annually to organise Rock Challenge as a large scale diversionary event. Schools from across highland participate and are invited to attend prevention workshops during the course of the event.

HADP has also recently funded development of a social marketing initiative that will consult with young people to find the most effective way of communicating prevention messages related to substance misuse. The initiative will promote a family focused approach and encourage parents to proactively communicate with young people on the risks associated with substance misuse as this is a known protective factor. Parents may also be urged to consider the impact of the behaviour modelled to young people in relation to excessive drinking.

Awareness Raising

Partner's runs awareness raising campaigns via MFR adverts to communicate alerts and promote stay safe messages, most recently in the run up to Belladrum and the forthcoming festive season. Social media are also being increasingly used and a Facebook chat organised earlier this year on the dangers of New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) prior to Rockness reached a projected audience of 14,000. NHS staff attended both Rockness and Belladrum to support welfare provision and to ensure festival goers were provided with accurate information on risks associated with substance misuse. Two leaflets have been produced in the last year. One targeted at party-goers over the festive season and distributed mainly in Inverness by Scottish Police and Street Pastors. Another leaflet was targeted at teachers and parents as a useful resource for informing discussions they might have with young people on substance misuse. The leaflet contained useful advice for parents that was well received.

Intelligence Sharing

Partners regularly share intelligence and circulate information on drug alerts including NPS's (legal highs) to ensure those working at the front-line are aware of trends. A variety of networks are also used so that young people and drug users can be informed of the associated risks and dangers to avoid coming to harm. As drug use is an illegal activity, it is important to utilise local knowledge and communication systems and not rely solely on traditional media.

Training

CREW 2000, STRADA, NHS Highland and Highland Council have delivered several training sessions on substance misuse over the past couple of years. The Youth Action Service supported a local member of staff to take on a NPS training role which was very responsive to local needs. STRADA regularly provide a range of training opportunities across Highland. The Young People and Substance Misuse and an Introduction to Working with Substance Misuse courses provide good coverage of the key issues and have been well evaluated.

Service Development

A scoping exercise has recently been initiated to establish local baseline intelligence on prevalence and trends and the impact on services in order to inform strategies to prevent NPS usage, strengthen available support and enhance front-line practice. The scoping exercise involves reviewing relevant research, policy and practice literature to identify themes and emerging issues

from a national and local perspective. Relevant qualitative and quantitative information from appropriate partner agencies across will be collated and analysed and the views of NPS users will be included to ascertain their experience in relation to preferences, access, availability, affordability, impact on mental and physical health and support needs. A report will be produced in 2014 setting out prevalence and trends and recommendations for action to improve responses to the challenges of NPS's.

Availability

Police Scotland and Trading Standards are working in close collaboration to overcome the challenges of NPS's and to find workable solutions to the complicated situation surrounding the current 'legal status'. Highlife Highland are also alert to the potential to use library computers to order NPS's on-line and are monitoring the situation. Police Scotland deliver ongoing initiatives to tackle underage drinking e.g. Operation Round Up and the sale of alcohol to those underage through ongoing test purchasing initiatives.

Individual and Family Support

Where a young person may be struggling with NPS's and other substance misuse or offending issues they can access one to one support through the YAS or partner agencies such as AfC. Parenting courses are also being held across Highland and include guidance and support on substance misuse and techniques for creating a constructive dialogue with teenagers on these issues.