

**SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**17 March 2023**

**SUNDERLAND ALCOHOL STRATEGY: CALLING TIME: IT'S TIME TO RETHINK DRINK**

**Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request endorsement of the Sunderland Alcohol Strategy: Calling Time: It's Time to Rethink Drink.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Alcohol is a complex issue within Sunderland and causes significant harm to our communities. No single approach will be successful in isolation; therefore, it requires commitment and contributions from a range of partners across the city. Alcohol remains one of the key drivers of health inequalities and one of the key causes of premature death.

**3.0 Sunderland Alcohol Strategy: Calling Time: It's Time to Rethink Drink**

- 3.1 Alcohol use has health and social consequences borne by individuals, their families, and the wider community and impacts upon a range of frontline services including the Council, NHS, Police, Ambulance, Licensing and Social Care. It impacts upon the workplace, through lost productivity and absenteeism and on education, through non-attendance and disruption.
- 3.2 The majority of Sunderland's alcohol-related harm outcomes remain higher than the England average, these are highlighted in our alcohol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Sunderland has a number of outcomes which are in the worst top ten in the country, this includes alcohol related hospital admission rates which are the third highest in England, under 18's admission episodes and alcohol specific mortality.
- 3.3 Covid-19 has impacted on drinking levels. Alcohol consumption increased during lockdown. In March 2020, nationally sales of alcohol increased by 30 per cent and around 20 per cent of adults were already drinking at harmful levels before the pandemic. Although those from affluent backgrounds were more likely to drink and drink at high levels, there was a greater impact from alcohol related diseases on those from lower income backgrounds.
- 3.4 The strategy has been developed via the Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group. Membership includes Northumbria Police, Wear Recovery (Adult substance misuse and alcohol treatment provider), South Tyneside and

Sunderland Foundation Trust, Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP), lived experience representatives, Balance North East, Gentoo and NERAF. The strategy has also been to various Boards for consultation across Sunderland such as Safer Partnership, Living Well Delivery Board and Health and Care Alliance.

3.5 There are several key priorities in the strategy, these are:

- Promote an alcohol-free pregnancy
- Promote an alcohol-free childhood
- Create a culture where people drink less alcohol
- Reduce availability of cheap alcohol
- Promote the responsible sale of alcohol
- Reduce the harms that alcohol currently causes

3.6 The strategy adopts a universal proportionalism approach ensuring resources and services are allocated proportionately to population need. It focuses on delivering our Healthy City Plan, using local data and intelligence to inform programmes work, building on the community response to the pandemic to ensure diverse and under-represented groups' voices and experiences are heard.

3.7 In order to mitigate the impact of alcohol harms, the following objectives and next steps have been agreed:

3.7.1 **Objective One: Prevention and early intervention**

- Promote the management of licensed premises through effective implementation of the licensing act (2003) ensuring Public Health involvement as a responsible authority.
- Contribute to the reduction of the availability and supply of counterfeit alcohol and raise awareness of harms to reduce demand.
- Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake.
- Increase early identification and support for those affected by alcohol harms across the life course.
- Improve the quality and consistency of awareness raising campaigns and education programmes in all settings and improve the quality of treatment services via effective workforce training and development.

**Next Steps**

- Ensure alcohol brief intervention training is embedded in relevant council frontline services and within NHS frontline service such as the midwifery services.
- Ensure professionals supporting parents with substance misuse and alcohol related issues receive effective training.
- Raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol during pregnancy by promoting the Superbabies Campaign
- Embed an alcohol in pregnancy local maternity system pathway and screening tool at local level through STSFT Maternity Services, supported by the Best Start in Life action plan.

- Contribute to the developing model for Social Prescribing and scope how we can best support the system to prevent alcohol harm and signposting to the Aspire service.
- Through the Better Health at Work programme, support employers to develop their own organisational policies around alcohol.
- Support our local Street Pastors scheme via funding a volunteer recruitment drive to support an expansion of the service to deliver targeted support to vulnerable groups
- Contribute to future updates of the Statement of Licensing Policy and ensure that relevant health data is used when developing the policy.
- Expansion of the community outreach element of the Youth Drug and Alcohol Project to allow early identification of under 18's needing support.
- Continue to work with City Development to consider the impact of alcohol in the design and regeneration of our city centre.
- Continue to work with Balance North-East to support regional approaches to advocate change, explore ways to reduce accessibility of alcohol such as minimum unit pricing and support an alcohol-free childhood.
- Develop effective alcohol messaging in risk taking education packages are agreed amongst partners to ensure a consistent harm reduction offer in educational settings. Ensure this is without alcohol industry intervention.

### **3.7.2 Objective Two: Providing specialist interventions to promote a quality treatment and recovery system**

- Ensure that individuals, families/carers, and wider partners have access to high quality information on support and treatment options.
- Provide effective and quality specialist treatment and recovery services in Sunderland.
- Monitor outcomes for service delivery via the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, public health outcomes framework and the targets identified in the Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant.
- Work with partners and STSFT to develop our hospital Alcohol Care Team.

#### **Next Steps**

- Promotion of In-Patient Detoxification referral pathways amongst partners
- Exploration of regional opportunities for In Patient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation providers.
- Continue to monitor outcomes for service delivery via the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, public health outcomes framework and the targets identified in the Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant.
- Evaluate the projects funded via the Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant and use these findings to continue to develop effective and sustainable projects for the future funding periods.
- Establish a partnership Substance Misuse Related Death Inquiry Panel to gain a better understanding of substance-related deaths in Sunderland with the aim of preventing future deaths.

- Develop effective pathways and information sharing protocols to link criminal justice enforcements requirements with housing and treatment and recovery services.
- Continue to effectively communicate the effects of alcohol related harms so individuals can make informed choices about their alcohol consumption, with a focus on the effects of drinking at home.
- Integrate alcohol specialist advice and support into wider health and care system and NHS multi-disciplinary team processes.

### **3.7.3 Objective Three: Protecting children, young people and families from alcohol related harm**

- Contribute to the effective safeguarding of children, young people and adults where substance misuse and is a factor, alcohol related harm and death, those at risk of domestic abuse and exploitation.
- Provide effective responses for those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage substance misuse, offending, homelessness, mental health, long-term chronic conditions.
- Strengthen an integrated approach to providing support for children, young people and families affected by parental alcohol use.

#### **Next Steps**

- Applying a Focused Deterrence Model in partnership with Northumbria Police and the Violence Reduction Unit to target young people who are disproportionately responsible for serious and violence related crime. This will involve working with partners to identify the wider determinants of the root causes which will support individuals to make lasting changes and reduce risk taking behaviours, problematic substance misuse and alcohol use and reduce exposure to further harm.
- Commission a HRB Survey for young people in Sunderland in 2023, use the results of this survey to identify future initiatives and projects to reduce alcohol harm amongst children and young people.
- Continue to work with Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership and Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board to develop effective interventions to support children, young people and families affected by alcohol harms.
- Ensure effective pathways between services supporting those experiencing alcohol related harms.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

### **4.1 Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:**

- a) endorse the Sunderland Alcohol Strategy: Calling Time: It's Time to Rethink Drink;
- b) engage in the delivery of the strategy through the Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group; and
- c) support receiving progress updates on the delivery of the strategy via the Living Well Delivery Board.