

UPDATE ON THE SUNDERLAND ALCOHOL STRATEGY 'CALLING TIME: IT'S TIME TO RETHINK DRINK' AND SUPPORTING ACTION PLAN

Report of Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Sunderland Alcohol Strategy 'Calling Time: it's time to rethink drink' and supporting action plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 Alcohol is a complex issue within society and no single approach to reduce alcohol harms will be successful in isolation, therefore it requires commitment and contributions from a range of partners across the city. Alcohol remains one of the main drivers of health inequalities and one of the key causes of premature death.
- 2.2 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 and Social Care. It impacts upon the workplace, through lost productivity and absenteeism and on education, through non-attendance and disruption.
- 2.3 The majority of Sunderland's alcohol-related harm outcomes remain worse than the England average, these are highlighted in our alcohol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)¹.

3. Sunderland Alcohol Strategy 'Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink'

- 3.1 'Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink'² was developed via the Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group and outlines the collaborative approach and collective vision to reduce alcohol related harms. The strategy was officially launched in July 2023 to coincide with Alcohol Awareness Week, and received positive press coverage including Sunderland Echo and a feature on ITV X.
- 3.2 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. Our ambition within the strategy and supporting action plan is to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for Sunderland whilst creating the conditions for economic growth.

¹ [Sunderland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - Sunderland City Council](#)

² [FINAL_ALCOHOL_STRATEGY2.pdf \(sunderland.gov.uk\)](#)

3.3 The priorities are all important in addressing alcohol harms and form the basis of our partnership action plan. 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.

3.4 **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.

3.5 **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.

3.6 **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.

4. Developing the action plan

- 4.1 The Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group led the development of the action plan. The Partnership comprises of key stakeholders who work together across Sunderland to tackle alcohol and drug related harms and is chaired by the chair of the Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet Member for Healthy City.
- 4.2 Strategy implementation groups were formed based on each of the three objectives via membership or nominations from the partnership. The action plan was then coproduced with a wide range of partners including South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust, Northumbria Police, commissioned drug and alcohol treatment and recovery providers, ICB, Sunderland City Council and those with lived experience. There was also further consultation with internal partners such as Licensing, Trading Standards, Safeguarding, Housing, and wider Public Health Mental colleagues alongside an internal directorate session for officers. The strategy implementation groups also ensured alignment to strategy and action plans across the wider system.
- 4.3 The final action plan (appendix one) was agreed by the partnership and is now a live working document that partners and stakeholders input into. Updates are provided to the Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group on a regular basis.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is recommended to receive progress on the Sunderland Alcohol Strategy 'Calling Time: it's time to rethink drink' and endorse supporting action plan.

Appendix one:

Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink' action plan

| Objective One: Prevention and early intervention | Action | Measure | Outcome | Lead Agencies |
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| Promote the management of licensed premises through effective implementation of the licensing act (2003) ensuring Public Health involvement as a responsible authority. | Contribute to future updates of the Statement of Licensing Policy and ensure that relevant health data is used when developing the policy. | Public Health Input into Statement of Licensing policy | Published SOLP | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Licensing, Sunderland City Council |
| Promote the management of licensed premises through effective implementation of the licensing act (2003) ensuring Public Health involvement as a responsible authority. | Licensing & Trading Standards enforcement of existing legislation | Number of visits undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Licensing, Sunderland City Council Trading Standards, Sunderland City Council |
| Promote the management of licensed premises through effective implementation of the licensing act (2003) ensuring Public Health involvement as a responsible authority. | General on/off alcohol sales compliance - undertake compliance visits/investigations and respond to complaints & requests and take appropriate enforcement action as required. Working in coordination with Police, HMRC & other Regulatory partners. | Number of intelligence submissions received. | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Licensing, Sunderland City Council Trading Standards, Sunderland City Council |
| Promote the management of licensed premises through effective implementation of the licensing act (2003) ensuring Public Health involvement as a responsible authority. | The Responsible Authorities Group will continue to work with licensing and regeneration so they have the relevant insight and intelligence to consider the impact of alcohol in the design and regeneration of our city centre. | Responsible Authorities group work plan | Quarterly Reports | Responsible Authorities Group |
| Contribute to the reduction of the availability and supply of counterfeit alcohol and raise awareness of harms to reduce demand. | Undertake inspection visits to retail premises searching for illicit/counterfeit alcohol products and targeting hotspot areas in partnership with HMRC, Northumbria Police and Border Agencies. | Number of Inspection visits undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Trading Standards, Sunderland City Council |
| Contribute to the reduction of the availability and supply of counterfeit alcohol and raise | Carry out alcohol test purchase exercises including proxy sales and report findings. | Number of test purchases undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Trading Standards, Sunderland City Council |

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| awareness of harms to reduce demand. | | | | |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | 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. | Drug and Alcohol treatment and recovery services embedded in social prescribing model links for life Number of referrals into Aspire | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Wear Recovery, CGL |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Increasing the proportion of the local population which is aware of the links between alcohol and various health harms | Increased knowledge of alcohol harm identified via the Balance public perception survey | Balance Public Perception Survey Results | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance Northeast |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Through the Better Health at Work programme, support employers to develop their own organisational policies around alcohol. | Number of employers with drug and alcohol policies | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Promote an Alcohol Free Childhood with continued work with Balance North East | DAHRG engagement and involvement in balance promotions and initiatives | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance North East DAHRG Members |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Promote engagement with Balance North East | DAHRG engagement and involvement in Balance promotions and initiatives | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance North East DAHRG Members |

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| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Continue to advocate for evidence-based action at a national level, particularly in relation to the price, promotion and availability of alcohol and no /lo products | Number of national consultations completed. Advocacy Initiatives undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance North East DAHRG Members |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Work with Balance North East to support regional approaches to advocate change and encourage the Government to prioritise the interventions which decrease the affordability of alcohol – such as Minimum Unit Price (MUP). | Advocacy initiatives undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance North East DAHRG Members |
| Promote harm reduction messages for the reduction of alcohol intake. | Work with Balance North East to support regional approaches to advocate change and encourage the Government to introduce restrictions on alcohol marketing to protect children and vulnerable people and should be aligned with the restrictions proposed for 'unhealthy food and drink' in the Health and Care Bill, including a 9pm watershed on TV and on-demand services | Advocacy initiatives undertaken | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Balance North East |
| Increase early identification and support for these affected by alcohol harms across the life course | Ensure alcohol brief intervention training is embedded in relevant council frontline services and within NHS frontline service such as the midwifery services. | No, of front line staff trained | Quarterly Reports | Wear Recovery, CGL Public Health Midwife, STSFT |
| Increase early identification and support for these affected by alcohol harms across the life course | Raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol during pregnancy by promoting relevant campaigns | No. of campaigns promoted | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |

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| Increase early identification and support for these affected by alcohol harms across the life course | 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. | Training embedded on NENC Programme for Alcohol Studies No of Referrals/Screens | Training Embedded Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Increase early identification and support for these affected by alcohol harms across the life course | Expansion of the community outreach element of the Youth Drug and Alcohol Project to allow early identification of under 18's needing support. | No. of YDAP referrals | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Increase early identification and support for these affected by alcohol harms across the life course | 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 | No. of new street pastor volunteers | Quarterly Reports | Sunderland Street pastors |
| 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 | Ensure professionals supporting parents with substance misuse and alcohol related issues receive effective training. | Numbers of those receiving drug and alcohol training | Quarterly Reports | Wear Recovery, CGL |
| 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 | Work with colleagues across the North East to develop a local alcohol harm reduction educational offer to ensure a consistent approach is being used within educational settings and isn't influenced by industry. | Numbers of those attending Wear Recovery alcohol awareness events Number of adults entering drug and alcohol treatment | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |

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| Objective Two: Providing specialist interventions to promote a quality treatment and recovery system | Action | Measure | Outcome | Lead Agencies |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|

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| Ensure that individuals, families/carers and wider partners have access to high quality information on support and treatment options. | Promotion of In-Patient Detoxification referral pathways amongst partners | Number of IPD referral | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Wear Recovery, CGL |
| Ensure that individuals, families/carers and wider partners have access to high quality information on support and treatment options. | 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. | Commission alcohol insights campaign | Publish findings March 24 | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Ensure that individuals, families/carers and wider partners have access to high quality information on support and treatment options. | Promote and signpost individuals and their families / carers to wider services, support and resources including Links for Life Sunderland, the NENC MECC website and Live Life Well Sunderland. | Numbers engaged in services | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Build capacity across the system for those providing support to individuals and their family/carers | Promote the A Life Worth Living suicide prevention training delivered by Washington Mind and encourage up from frontline staff. | Services accessing training can be identified through contract management arrangements | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Build capacity across the system for those providing support to individuals and their family/carers | Ensure effective pathways to primary care and embed knowledge across the system | Numbers of GP referrals | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Build capacity across the system for those providing support to individuals and their family/carers | CGL to link in with other groups/partnerships to promote their services, share insight and raise awareness of substance misuse and the correlation to wider determinants of health. | Numbers in treatment Numbers accessing training and awareness raising | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Provide effective and quality specialist treatment and recovery services in Sunderland. | Exploration of regional opportunities for In-Patient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation providers. | Establishment of regional IPD facility Numbers referred into IPD facility | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |

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| Provide effective and quality specialist treatment and recovery services in Sunderland. | 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. | Substance related death quarterly reports to DAHRG | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |
| Provide effective and quality specialist treatment and recovery services in Sunderland. | Develop effective pathways and information sharing protocols to link criminal justice enforcements requirements with housing and treatment and recovery services | Information sharing protocol signed by all partners | Protocol Signed by all agencies | Wear Recovery, CGL |
| Provide effective and quality specialist treatment and recovery services in Sunderland. | Develop effective pathways and information around physical activity offer within Wear Recovery/CGL ensuring link with Active Sunderland | Numbers accessing Physical Activity offer | Quarterly Reports | Wear Recovery, CGL |
| 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. | Ensure the evaluation of the year two grant is communicated to all partners via the drug and alcohol harm reduction group and the findings shape future delivery Work | Dissemination and presentation of report via the Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Group Commission Year 3 SSMTR Grant Evaluation | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Office for Health Improvements Disparities Wear Recovery, CGL |
| 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. | 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 | Meet the targets reported on NDTMS Local Outcome Framework for SSMTR Grant Meet targets identified on Pentana | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council |

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| Work with partners and STSFT to develop our hospital Alcohol Care Team. | Integrate alcohol specialist advise and support into wider heath and care system and NHS multi-disciplinary team processes | Monitor ACT delivery targets | Quarterly Reports | Wear Recovery, CGL ACT Team, STSFT Public Health, Sunderland |
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| Objective Three: Protecting children, young people and families from alcohol related harm | Action | Measure | Outcome | Lead Agencies |
|---|--|--|-------------------|--|
| Contribute to the effective safeguarding of children, young people and adults where substance misuse is a factor, alcohol related harm and death, those at risk of domestic abuse and exploitation. | 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. | Number of young people engaged in the intervention | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council. Northumbria Police. Violence Reduction Unit. Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. |
| Contribute to the effective safeguarding of children, young people and adults where substance misuse is a factor, alcohol related harm and death, those at risk of domestic abuse and exploitation. | Continue to support the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board and contribute to Safeguarding Adults Review process | Number and Outcomes of SAR process | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Safeguarding Adults Board, Sunderland City Council |
| Provide effective responses for those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage substance misuse, offending, homelessness, mental health, long-term chronic conditions. | Use the results of the commissioned Health Related Behaviours Survey for young people in Sunderland in 2023 to identify future initiatives and projects to reduce alcohol harm amongst children and young people. | Data and findings from completed survey Number and outcomes of identified initiatives | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council. |

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| Provide effective responses for those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage substance misuse, offending, homelessness, mental health, long-term chronic conditions. | Continue to support Changing Futures Northumbria programme and ensure pathways with wider treatment and recovery services | Number of people accessing the programme | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council. CGL. Wear Recovery Changing Futures Northumbria Programme |
| Strengthen an integrated approach to providing support for children, young people and families affected by parental alcohol use. | Continue to work with Sunderland Safeguarding Childrens Partnership and Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board to develop effective interventions to support children, young people and families affected by alcohol harms by continued contribution to the Safeguarding Adults Review process | Outcomes of SAR process | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council. Community Safety and Safeguarding, Sunderland City Council |
| Strengthen an integrated approach to providing support for children, young people and families affected by parental alcohol use. | Continue to support pathways between children's services and commissioned drug and alcohol services through SSMTRG funding | Number of parents engaging in services | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Wear Recovery, Change Grow Live Together for Children, Sunderland City Council |
| Strengthen an integrated approach to providing support for children, young people and families affected by parental alcohol use. | Continue to support pathways between Domestic Abuse services and commissioned drug and alcohol services through SSMTRG funding | Number engaging in services | Quarterly Reports | Public Health, Sunderland City Council Wear Recovery, Change Grow Live Wearside Women in Need |