

**Report Title: Sefton’s Combating Drugs Partnership – Annual Update**

Date of meeting:	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024		
Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board		
Report of:	Director of Public Health		
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

**Summary:**

This report will provide an annual update on the progress of Sefton’s Combating Drugs Partnership (SCDP). It will include an overview of the partnership’s development and its achievements in relation to national milestones.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. The Health & Wellbeing Board to note the content of the report and the progress made by the Partnership this year.
2. The Health & Wellbeing Board to continue to strengthen the Partnership by recommending participation of any further key members.

**1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations**

Local governance structures require the Health and Wellbeing Board to have oversight and reporting from the Sefton Combating Drugs Partnership via the Senior Responsible Owner.

Quarterly updates are provided as part of the sub-committee report to the Board and an annual report will be submitted.

## **2. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications.

## **3. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications.

## **4. Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications.

## **5. Staffing HR Implications**

There are no staffing HR implications.

## **6. Conclusion**

No risks to report.

## **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

None.

### **Equality Implications:**

There are no equality implications.

The CDP will focus on addressing inequalities as identified in the JSNA. It acknowledges that the greatest impacts of substance misuse are experienced in our most deprived communities.

### **Impact on Children and Young People:**

The National 10-Year Drugs Plan, alongside the local delivery plan, is designed to support young people and families most at risk of substance use or criminal exploitation. It focuses on coordinating early, targeted interventions to reduce harm within families, ensuring that support is tailored to the specific needs of individuals and families, while addressing the underlying causes of risk.

### **Climate Emergency Implications:**

The recommendations within this report will have a neutral impact.

The operation of the CDP does not generate additional impacts on the climate emergency

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7860/24.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5960/24....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Not applicable

### Implementation Date for the Decision :

Not applicable.

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### Appendices:

Combating drugs partnership terms of reference (TOR).

### Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## 1. Introduction/Background

1.1 As a response to the publication of the 10-year National Drugs Plan the Home Office issued local guidance which provides a framework for how local delivery partners can work together to address the priorities. '*From harm to hope: A 10 year plan to cut crime and save lives - June 2022*' outlines how local areas in England should deliver the transformative ambition they set out and provides clarity on the mechanisms that central government will draw upon to track and support delivery.

1.2 SCDP brings together a range of local partners including enforcement, treatment, recovery, and prevention to work together to deliver the national drugs plan priorities:

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

## 2. Sefton's Combating Drug Partnership

- 2.1 Since its establishment in 2022, SCDP has hosted ten meetings, each meeting has a spotlight session on a local priority area. Focused discussions encourage members to contribute ideas, share experiences, and offer insights. The aim is to produce actionable interventions that improve Sefton's outcomes towards the national targets.
- 2.2 The nominated local Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is the Director of Public Health, Margaret Jones who reports to the national Joint Combating Drugs Unit (JCDU) and has overarching responsibility for the local drugs delivery plan.
- 2.3 To support the delivery of the national drugs plan priorities the government outlined key actions and milestones for the first year of establishing CDPs. These included a local JSNA, Delivery Plan and Performance Framework all of which were completed within the proposed timetable.
- 2.4 The panel's membership is regularly reviewed to maintain its effectiveness and relevance, while ensuring it remains inclusive, diverse, and representative of the community. This review process helps the partnership identify gaps and bring in new stakeholders who can support the evolving goals and challenges of the community.

### **3. Governance**

- 3.1 In accordance with national guidance, SCDP maintains visibility and accountability for its actions to both residents and central government.
- 3.2 The SCDP is accountable to the Health & Wellbeing Board and reports to the Safer Sefton Together Partnership and the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The SRO participates in quarterly meetings with the PCC's office where quarterly CDP update reports are submitted.
- 3.3 In accordance with national guidance SCDP has sub-groups that focus on specific issues, these sub-groups include lived experience, community engagement and treatment effectiveness. Incorporating these groups ensures that interventions reflect experiences of those directly affected.

### **4. Developments**

- 4.1 All Local Authorities are in receipt of the final year (2024/5) of the 3-year supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant (SSMTRG). SCDP provides oversight of the annual plan to ensure the funding is utilised as intended. The 2024/5 funding has sustained the expansion in workforce capacity of the previous two years and the continuation of interventions delivered by services as previously reported.
- 4.2 New areas of investment and development in 2024/5 include addressing physical and mental health needs of service users; the expansion of young person & family's provision; addressing unmet need (based on OHID data) and enhancing recovery & Lived Experience support.

- 4.3 It should be noted that the continuation of SSMTR Grant beyond March 2025 is unconfirmed. The cessation of this funding in Sefton would undermine critical progress in drug and alcohol treatment, specifically in relation to recovery housing, mental health support, and health screening services which in turn will impact the health and wellbeing of our residents. To mitigate these risks, contingency plans have been developed with services. Public Health continues to liaise with OHID with regards to future planning and has engaged with stakeholders to plan and address potential challenges
- 4.4 Recent guidance from OHID outlines how local commissioners and service providers can effectively prepare for and respond to incidents involving potent synthetic opioids such as nitazenes or fentanyl. Sefton's Synthetic Opioid Preparedness Plan is now in place and follows the guidance for local areas on planning to deal with potent synthetic opioids covering the four elements to prepare, monitor, treat and enforce.
- 4.5 The Local Drug Information Systems (LDIS) was embedded within Sefton to provide a structured approach to responding to drug-related issues. The early warning network helps to track emerging drug trends, including new synthetic drugs and allows for rapid responses to potential public health threats, such as spikes in drug-related deaths or hospital admissions.
- 4.6 Sefton is now part of the Cheshire and Mersey LDIS Model led by LJMU Public Health Institute Intelligence Team. The purpose of this wider model is to address threats and emerging issues across the geographical boundaries drawing more efficiently on expertise and resources and providing access to testing. It will also present greater opportunities for learning from examination of more cases and the exploration of common themes and issues.
- 4.7 Partnership members convened to review unmet needs data in Sefton and discuss ways to address barriers to accessing services and deliver more targeted interventions. An action plan was derived and sent to OHID northwest.
- 4.8 SCDP in conjunction with Sefton CVS undertook community engagement work to identify barriers to accessing services for local residents who may benefit or know others who may benefit from support for their drug and alcohol use. The engagement aimed to provide valuable insights into the experiences, perspectives and needs of individuals with recommendations to be considered as part of future plans to address drug and alcohol use in Sefton.
- 4.9 Recent campaigns funded by SCDP aimed to provide harm reduction advice specifically focussing on nitrous oxide and ketamine. The Young People Service provided harm reduction posters and delivered educational workshops to schools and communities to raise awareness about the risks of ketamine and other drugs.
- 4.10 Since February 2022, Sefton has been one of four areas nationally participating in the diversion programme 'Re-Frame'. Funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, the programme aims to help young people avoid criminalisation through supportive engagement. Re-Frame is available to young people (under 18) who come to the attention of the police due to their use of Class B or C substances. Between 10th February 2022 and 21st August

2024, 193 young people in Sefton were referred to Re-Frame, with the majority (88%) successfully engaging in the programme. Sefton YP service 'Rise Up' has now taken over this valuable work initiated by Re-Frame.

4.11 The SCDP monitors local implementation of the National Drugs Plan, tracking progress to show where investments have been allocated and the impact they have made. This year, Sefton's local delivery plan was reviewed and updated to reflect completed actions

Figure 2 below provides a summary of key actions outlined in the local delivery plan.



## 5. Performance

5.1 Since the completion of Sefton's Substance Use Strategic Needs Assessment, the SCDP has been monitoring drug and alcohol outcomes in a quarterly dashboard.

5.2 The dashboard reviews data from the NDTMS local outcomes framework as well as locally sourced metrics.

5.3 The dashboard indicators relate to the 3 strategic outcomes - reducing drug use, reducing drug-related crime, reducing drug-related deaths and harm as well as the 3 intermediate outcomes - reducing drug supply, increasing engagement in treatment and improving recovery outcomes.

5.4 Through this monitoring several emerging trends have been identified as detailed below:

- For the 12 months ending June 2024, the number of adults in treatment was 24% higher compared to March 2022 and new presentations were up by 54%.
- The number of young people in treatment in the 12 months to June 2024 was double the number in the 12 months to March 2022.
- The number of alcohol users in treatment has increased by 48%.
- The number of opiate and/or crack users in treatment has reduced since March 2022.
- Sefton's residential rehabilitation has improved between November 2023 and June 2024 however remains lower than the March 2022 baseline.
- Sefton's treatment clients (opiate users in particular) spent longer in treatment and that successful completion are lower for these users than seen nationally.
- In the 12 months to June 2024 Sefton's treatment population were showing substantial progress.
- CDP monitoring has shown that deaths in treatment tends to fluctuate at around 1.5% for Sefton. In recent months the proportion of those dying in treatment has increased to 1.8%.
- In the 12 months to March 2024, 63% of Sefton prison exits with a treatment need were picked up in the community within 3 weeks.

5.5 As outlined in the 2022 government guidance, at least once a year, CDPs should take stock of their progress in reducing drug-related harm, reporting against the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework and additional local metrics. Partnerships were advised to complete and submit a progress report which should be visible to local residents and national government. Sefton's CDP progress report was submitted to the JCDU on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2024.

## 6. Moving forward

6.1 Sefton's CDP website serves as a central hub for information, enabling residents, stakeholders, and service providers to access up-to-date information related to drug prevention and treatment. Access Sefton Councils webpage: [Combating Drugs Partnership \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/combating-drugs-partnership).

6.2 The SCDP will continue to track performance against the Combating Drugs Outcome Framework and report on the partnership's progress and outcomes to central government, the Merseyside PCC, and the Health & Wellbeing Board as needed.