



Safe Newcastle's drug related work

Safe Newcastle acts as the Drug Action Team for Newcastle and as such is responsible for delivering the National Drugs Strategy at a local level. The 2008 Drugs Strategy (called Drugs: protecting families and communities) was issued in March 2008 and includes four areas of action:

- Delivering new approaches to drug treatment and social re-integration
- Preventing harm to children, young people and families affected by drug misuse
- Protecting communities through robust enforcement to tackle drug supply, drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour
- Public information campaigns, communications and community engagement

The National Drugs Strategy identifies how success in these areas link to a number of policy areas led by different government departments including public health, social inclusion, Every Child Matters, crime reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Safe Newcastle has created and resourced a number of staff posts that facilitate and manage the drug-related work of the partnership. The posts are hosted with various employers but work together as Safe Newcastle's Drug Support Unit in the Commissioning Division of Adult Services Directorate.

Contact: Safe Newcastle's Drug Support Unit

Email: safenewcastle.drugs@newcastle.gov.uk

Tel: 0191 278 8125

Fax: 0191 278 8232

Delivering new approaches to drug treatment and social re-integration

This area of work aims to provide high quality, easy access services for people who have problems with their drug use. Safe Newcastle uses earmarked funding streams and mainstream resources to commission/provide a number of different services that provide treatment and support to people over 18 who have problems with drug use.

These include:

- A first point of contact for over 18s to access help.
- Harm reduction services.
- Structured day time activities.
- Counselling and other psychological support.
- Substitute prescribing.
- Community and inpatient detox
- Residential rehabilitation
- Other interventions that help people move away from a life dominated by drugs, for example, getting and living in their own home; getting a new job; rebuilding family relationships; and, finding new interests.

Work is taking place to:

- Help drug users and their families have their say about drug services so that we can work with them to make improvements.
- Make sure services work together as a single system, so that people can quickly and easily get the right range of services for their individual needs.
- Introducing protocols across all services to standardise and strengthen clinical governance, management of risk and public protection.
- Focus more on those services that help people move on from a life dominated by drugs, for example becoming abstinent; getting and living in their own home; getting a new job; rebuilding family relationships; and, finding new interests.
- Make sure these services are accessible to all people living in Newcastle whatever their background.
- Make sure that people who work with drug users have the right skills and knowledge to provide excellent services.

Preventing harm to children, young people and families affected by drug misuse

Safe Newcastle works in conjunction with the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership to identify need and use a range of mainstream and grant resources to commission/provide services that aim to reduce the chance that young people will develop problems with drug use and with drink.

- Schools and many youth services provide opportunities for young people to learn about drugs and alcohol and the harm they cause.
- D'n'A provides drug and alcohol services for young people. The service works with young people who are more likely to be in a situation where they take drugs or drink. This includes young offenders, children in care and those not attending school. The service also provides counselling work with young people who have started to take drugs or drink. Medical treatment is available if necessary.
- Opportunities have been developed for young people to get involved in activities, such as sport, music and drama. These activities aim to reduce the likelihood that young people will take drugs or drink.

Safe Newcastle/Children and Young People Strategic Partnership also commissions/provides services that work with children affected by parental drug or alcohol use and with parents coping with drug or alcohol use of their child. This could be work with one individual or work with a whole family.

Work is taking place to:

- Help young people and their parents have their say about drug services so that we can work with them to make improvements.
- Continually improve the drug and alcohol education available in schools and in youth services
- Promote D'n'A and help it to expand over time to provide a greater range of help about drugs and drink for young people.
- Develop more activities for young people, such as sport, music and drama, so that they are less likely to take drugs or drink.
- Make sure that teachers, youth workers, Connexions staff and others that work with young people identify young people who take drugs or drink and get them the help they need.
- Develop services to help children who have a parent who takes drugs or drinks.
- Improve support for adults who are affected by the drug or alcohol use of a family member or close friend.

Protecting communities through robust enforcement to tackle drug supply, drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour

Safe Newcastle is an intensive site for the Home Office's Drug Interventions Programme (DIP). The programme works to identify drug using offenders and help them to get treatment and the other services they need to move on from a life dominated by drugs. This work takes place in all parts of the criminal justice system - in police custody cells, in courts, during community sentences, in prisons and when people return home from prison.

Northumbria Police leads the work to reduce the supply of drugs on the streets. Information from local people and partner agencies is very important to the police in carrying out this work.

Agencies who work within Safe Neighbourhoods (including Police, Neighbourhood Wardens, Neighbourhood Management, Housing Management and Ward Co-ordination) are ideally placed to find out about local drug related crime and anti-social behaviour and make sure work takes place to address them. This may include:

- Organising services to do outreach work with particular groups of people.
- Quickly removing drug related litter, such as discarded injecting equipment, and working to prevent it.
- Using enforcement powers; for example, the police have the power to temporarily close premises where Class A drug use or dealing is causing a nuisance to the neighbourhood.
- Providing information about services.

Work is taking place to:

- Improve the way we work with drug using offenders and make sure we have the right services in the city to meet their needs and reduce their offending.
- Improve information available to the police so that they know more about drug supply and use in Newcastle, understand how dealers link with each other and, as a result, target drug operations where they will make the most difference.
- Make sure that drug operations run well and involve other services if needed.
- Make sure that people who work at a local level, particularly those involved in SNAPS groups, have the skills and knowledge they need to understand and address drug related problems.

Public information campaigns, communications and community engagement

This area of work aims to inform families, communities, organisations and businesses about drugs and drug related work and involve them in it.

Areas of activity include:

- Providing information and training about drugs; about how to reduce the harm caused by drugs; and, about work that is taking place to address drug issues.
- Developing ways to help people have their say about local drug issues so that improvements can be made.
- Feeding back about the work that has taken place to address the concerns people have raised.
- Improving policies in organisations and businesses so they can deal with drug use amongst staff and drug related incidents around their premises.