Briefing note - The City of London Drugs Action Team

Introduction

The Government’s National Drug Strategy: Protecting Families and Communities covers four main areas

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

The Home Office has overall ownership of the drug strategy and is responsible for co-ordinating delivery of its constituent strands, which are owned by a number of different departments, including the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

In common with other areas of government activity, drugs policy is subject to Public Service Agreements (PSAs). At a local level public service agreements are monitored by Local Authorities and central government monitors how well local areas are delivering to these indicators and targets through the Regional Government Offices. In the case of drugs treatment this is done through the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse. Local agencies work in partnership to ensure that the drug strategy is being effectively implemented locally. Many areas do this through a Drug Action Team (DAT).

Drug Action Teams are partnerships that have the responsibility of implementing the national drug strategy within a local area. Key partners include the local authority, the PCT, the police and probation.

In the City, the DAT is supported by a small team located in the Security and Contingency Planning Group, which is based in the Town Clerks Department. The Safer City Partnership support team is also part of Security and Contingency Planning as is the London Drugs Policy Forum. The co-location of these units provides synergy between the planned outcomes of the Safer City Partnership and the development and delivery of activities that reduce the harm caused by drugs and the associated crime and disorder.

Work areas
At the beginning of the year the DAT developed a delivery plan that has been designed to discharge its responsibilities under the National Drugs Strategy. For 2010/11 the broad areas of work are as follows:

- Commissioning of drug and alcohol services for residents – this includes a community drug service, a community alcohol service and access to detoxification.
- Provision of the Drug Intervention Programme throughout the City’s criminal justice institutions. – Five drug workers are based in Bishopsgate Police Station and the City of London Magistrates Court where they assess drug using offenders and refer them into treatment services. Much of the work of the City’s Drug Action Team is linked to crime reduction, in that each activity in some way reduces the harm caused by drugs within the City and seven out of twelve posts are funded by the Drug Intervention Programme grant from the Home Office. The Drug Intervention Programme is a criminal justice initiative that aims to divert drug using offenders from crime into treatment.
- Provision of specialist drug outreach service – Engagement with residents and rough sleepers who are in need of drug treatment but are not engaging with services.
- Provision of care management for drug and alcohol users – This service ensures a consistent level of care for each client and helps these individuals to access detoxification and rehabilitation, social security benefits, and housing.
- Provision of a meaningful occupation service – This service enables individuals to access training, education, employment, volunteering and other meaningful occupations which can aid their recovery.
- Provision of diversionary and educational activities for young people who live or are educated in the City.
- Training sessions for the City of London Police Officers
- Development of annual needs assessment and treatment plans
- Provision of harm reduction services such as needle exchanges

Link with Community and Children’s Services:

The principal links between the work of the DAT and the Community and Children’s Services Department fall in the following areas:
- The Care Manager for Substance Misuse is commissioned by the DAT and the post is situated within Adult Social Care.
- The Community Alcohol Worker is commissioned by the DAT from the Drug and Alcohol Service for London but the post is located in Adult Social Care.
- There are several areas of joint working with the Street Population Coordinator and Broadway.
- There are several links with CoL Housing including the Tenancy Support Officer and the Allocations Team
- Youth and Play Service – The DAT provides their drug education
- Children’s Social Care – There is collaboration over safeguarding

DAT Staffing (all post are funded through the DAT’s grants – see below):
Support team (Security and Contingency Planning, Town Clerks) -
- Co-ordinator/ Commissioner
- Development Officer
- Administrative Support Officer

Arrest Referral and Outreach Team (Security and Contingency Planning, Town Clerks) –
- Senior Arrest Referral Worker
• Arrest Referral Worker x 2
• Arrest Referral Outreach Worker
• Restriction on Bail Officer

Commissioned Services
• Care Manager for Substance Misuse (Adult Social Care, DCCS)
• Meaningful Occupation Service Worker (Security and Contingency Planning, Town Clerks)
• Community Alcohol Worker (Drug and Alcohol Service for London)
• Clinical Nurse Specialist (City and Hackney Community Health Services)

Finance
The City DAT has three funding streams;

The Pooled Treatment Budget (PTB) – is a central government funding stream for drug treatment that replaced separate drugs budgets for local agencies e.g. Police, Local Authority and Probation. In 2008 the Pooled Treatment budget was announced as a non-inflation proofed standstill budget with a new allocation formula. The PTB is initially allocated to the City and Hackney PCT from which some is forwarded to the City DAT according to a formula. The PTB contributes 30% of the funding for the City DAT.

The Area Based Grant (ABG) is a large pot of funding into which funding streams such as the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund have been mainstreamed. Local Authorities are free to use this funding as they see fit. Around 7% of the City DAT funding comes from the ABG

Drugs Intervention Programme (DIP) Funding – All DAT areas receive DIP funding which comes directly from the Home Office to the Local Authority – this is to cover the costs of providing the DIP programme to the required level. In the City of London DIP funding accounts for just over 60% of the total funding for the DAT.

Prepared by:
Ian Harrison
Head of Resilience and Community Safety
ian.harrison@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Tel: 0207 332 3541