

Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/03/13

Decision Date - 03/05/23

Key Decision - Yes



Substance Misuse Commissioning

Executive Member(s): Cllr Adam Dance - Lead Member for Public Health and Equalities

Local Member(s) and Division: County Wide

Lead Officer: Alison Bell Public Health Consultant

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Summary / Background

1. Somerset Council Public Health currently commissions an all-age drug and alcohol treatment service in Somerset, called Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) provided by Turning Point a national voluntary sector provider of specialist drug and alcohol services.

In December 2021, Government published [From harm to hope: a 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#) and to support its implementation the government has allocated additional funding over a 3 year period 2022/23 to 2024/25. This supplemental funding is to support improvements in the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment and is subject to plans being submitted annually and approved nationally.

2. In year two, 2023/24, Somerset has been awarded £880,280.

In line with the spending requirements, our submitted 2023/24 plan is focused on maintaining the growth in the capacity of the commissioned drug and alcohol services workforce to deliver drug and alcohol treatment to individuals and families affected by their loved one's use. The third year is subject to HM Treasury annual confirmation and achievement of performance targets, for Somerset this could mean up to an additional £1.44m in 2024/25.

An outline plan for the three years 2022/23 to 2024/25 alongside a detailed plan for 2023/24 was submitted and approved nationally. There was as before a detailed menu of interventions against which the bid had to be written.

3. The additional funding asks local areas to deliver the following outcomes over the 3 years:
 - To have stretch targets to increase the numbers of adults in structured treatment by 20% and young people by 50%.
 - To reduce drug and alcohol related deaths.
 - To improve access to treatment for individuals referred from the criminal justice system.
4. The plan submitted sets out a stepped approach to reach these aspirations, with particular focus on increasing the number of dependent alcohol users in treatment who may not traditionally seek help with their drinking. It also seeks to consolidate for a further year the additional staffing employed through the additional drug and alcohol treatment grants began.
5. A requirement of the national drugs strategy is that areas either establish a Combating Drug and Alcohol Partnership group on its own geography or join with other areas to form this partnership.

Somerset has agreed to operate its Partnership based on the geographical boundaries of the County of Somerset.

The rationale being that this mirrors the Somerset Integrated Care System footprint and has one Specialist Substance Misuse Treatment provider, commissioned by the Local Authority Public Health team. The Police Force and Probation Service both have an area commander/head of delivery unit for Somerset who are engaged in the Partnership and are supportive of this approach, as are the Department of Work and Pensions, whose work ultimately supports people's recovery and contribute to the health of Somersets economy.

6. The additional funding is awarded to Somerset under a Memorandum of Understanding from The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care acting through the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) which is part of the Department of Health and Social Care. There is a set of outcomes that will be monitored nationally and locally which will supplement our existing performance framework that is used to manage the contract of the specialist drug and alcohol service.

7. The spend plan for the 2023/24 additional allocation covers three areas:
 - 1) Continuation of posts established with additional funds since 2022 including increased outreach and harm reduction workers, criminal justice posts to support community sentences, recovery workers for adults and young people; and continued additional funding of treatment/harm reduction interventions. These posts/interventions are with the commissioned specialist substance misuse service – Turning Point.
 - 2) Continuation of a post to support the Somerset Drug and Alcohol Partnership and a local authority public health behaviour science post that support this high-profile agenda.
 - 3) Continuation of the Women’s Worker role with The Nelson Trust aligned to Turning Point as the drug and alcohol treatment service provider.

The funding template required consultation with our existing commissioned service to discuss our strategic intentions over the additional funding and to cost additional posts within the financial envelope that would be available to Somerset.

The spend plan template was an agenda item at the Somerset Drug and Alcohol Partnership meeting 2nd February 2023. Amongst partners we discussed and approved a paper on the 23/24 grant and areas of work to be progressed on, before the grant allocations for 2023-24 were announced on 16th February. There was agreement amongst the Partnership to continue with previous menu of interventions.

8. The contract for the Somerset drug and alcohol all age service was awarded in April 2019 for an initial 5-year basis with the option to extend for a period of 48 months (2 years + 2 years). The 5 years ends March 2024, one year before the last year of the additional funding is awarded, hence we are seeking to utilise the option to extend the contract for 24 months in the first instance.

The reasons for this are:

- 1) To prevent destabilising the system and workforce whilst additional investment from the spending review is coming to Somerset.
- 2) To retain the local workforce.
- 3) To enable a planned approach to future commissioning of Somerset drug and alcohol treatment service, once we know the resource envelope, post the additional grant funding award.
- 4) To undertake effective consultation with users and families who are the ultimate customers of any service and other local and regional partners to co-produce future provision.

Recommendations

9. The Lead Member for Public Health and Equalities:
 1. Approves the spending plan of the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Funding 2023-2024
 2. Authorises the Director of Public Health or their Deputy to sign the contract variation with the existing supplier of drug and alcohol treatment provision on behalf of the Authority.
 3. Delegates responsibility to the Director of Public Health and / or their Deputy to finalise commissioning arrangements associated with the grant, including the continuation of the women's worker role.
 4. Approves the use of the option to extend the drug and alcohol service contract for a period of 24 months (2 years).

Reasons for recommendations

10. There is an existing commissioned service for the delivery of specialist drug and alcohol treatment services across Somerset which is in top quartile nationally in term of performance against Public Health Outcome Framework Indicators. This additional allocation of funds builds on these indicators and aims to continue to improve services.
11. The use of the first 24-month extension option to the contract for the specialist drug and alcohol service allows for the additional national grant funding to be used in a timely manner up to March 2025 without disruption. Grant funding must be used in the year it is granted and subsequent years are not guaranteed.
12. The additional grant funding is subject to national government agreement, and HM Treasury sign off to release. Starting and concluding a tender process mid 3-year grant funding would cause disruption and failure to meet ambitions, therefore jeopardising any future allocations in next spending review. Additionally, it would be impossible to identify the resource envelope and write a service specification for the recommissioned service in the middle of this 3-year grant award.

Other options considered

13. Other options were not considered as the service is performing well. Although this is potentially year 2 of three years, a plan must be submitted annually against indicative amount which HM Treasury approves release of annually. It is therefore not viable to go to market as the funding is set to enhance what core services are already in place.

Links to Council Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

14. Drug and Alcohol Services contribute to the ambitions outlined in the County Plan for Somerset around being:
 - A healthy and caring Somerset: These services support the health of clients, their family, friends, and the wider community and seek to ensure they get the care and support recovery from dependent alcohol and drug use.
 - A flourishing and more resilient Somerset: These services support clients and their families to gain and maintain employment and to access education and skills to contribute to Somerset's economy and be active citizens. This helps develop people's resilience to alcohol and drug use.
 - Enabling vulnerable people access information and services to live drug and alcohol-free lives in their community.
 - A fairer ambitious Somerset: These services seek to reduce the inequalities and stigma that are experienced by dependant alcohol and drug users and their families by targeting support to groups of the population who are struggling the most.
15. The additional funding allocational to drug and alcohol service provision is intended to boost the local areas response to addressing the impact of drugs and alcohol and enhance how we respond to the needs of vulnerable people and families.

Financial and Risk Implications

16. The Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Funding 2022-2025 is an additional central government grant. It is revenue only. For the 2023/24 year the Council has had to revise the outline plan set out in 2022/23 against a menu of interventions. This plan had to be approved by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) before any action can be taken locally.

17. OHID has given the Director of Public Health an indication of future years potential additional allocation but are clear any additional funding is subject to HM Treasury approval. On this basis there is no financial implications beyond 31st March 2024 in this proposal for the new unitary authority.
18. Somerset will be performance managed by OHID against targets expected from allocating additional funding. This will require significant staff time investment to keep on top of the target trajectories and the quarterly reporting against the grant in addition to existing management of the contract to achieve best value for Somerset.
19. Similarly, when the contract award for specialist drug and alcohol treatment service was made it included the option for 48 months (2 years plus 2 years) extension. This is funded from the Public Health Grant and any disinvestment would impact on the additional grant being made to the county.
20. Discussions with Commercial and Procurement have been undertaken and confirmed that the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Funding 2023-2024 can be accommodated within the existing contract as the financial variation tolerance of the additional activity is in scope of the original contract brief. The variation we will make to the existing contract is regarding any changes to the scope (not material) in terms of any specific tasks or KPIs related to the additional money. The reporting back to OHID includes financial returns and the spend will be monitored in detail as is the existing contract.

Likelihood	1	Impact	5	Risk Score	5
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Legal Implications

21. As a condition of this award of funding SC have been required to sign a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding.

HR Implications

22. Any staff recruited will be employed by the external provider and so there are not thought to be any HR implications.

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

23. In discussion with the Equalities Manager, as the use of the additional funding will be used to extend existing service delivery the Equalities Impact Assessment conducted at award of the contact does not need to be re-done at this stage.

We have agreed however by end of December 2023 with the support of the Equalities Manager to revisit the Equalities Impact Assessment to review delivery of the contract since April 2019 (over 4 years) with the provider and service users to inform any future decision on contract extensions.

To assist this process, we have undertaken the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Further the due regard detailed at the services initial contract award stands.

Access: the service specification has sought to increase the physical presence of specialist staff within existing services through co-location and joint working; and to increase the use of technology to assist access to, participation in and support after drug and alcohol treatment.

Equality and Diversity: The outcomes framework for the service will include analysis by protected characteristic to continuously identify both who is accessing services, their outcomes and any gaps and unmet needs as a consequence of the protected characteristic.

Human Rights: the service specification requires the provider to be compliant with all legislation and this was assessed throughout the procurement process in the selection questionnaire. This will not change with adding additional staff through this funding.

Community Safety Implications

24. Drug use and supply have a significant impact on communities in terms of associated crime, anti-social behaviours and distress which results from the chain of supply and use of illegal drugs and alcohol consumption.

The provision of specialist drug and alcohol services have been identified as an effective and cost-effective intervention in the protection of communities, the rehabilitation of individuals and the reconciliation of families.

The additional funding that will be allocated will enhance existing services especially the links with Probation and the Integrated Offender Management response. This multi-disciplinary team response means close and intensive work with shared clients and the offer of community rehabilitative sentencing options for Somerset courts on alcohol and drugs treatment requirements.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

25. This money will be awarded to an existing SC provider, whose sustainability credentials were assessed as part of the contract award.

Additionally, since the pandemic, more of SDAS services are now delivered remotely, which reduces the need for car journeys for both clients and staff, reducing the carbon footprint of services.

Health and Safety Implications

26. This key decision when taken will award SC funding to a Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated provider, who is required to comply with all the necessary health and safety requirements for both clients and staff.

The Care Quality Commission inspects services against the regulated activity framework, a particular aspect of which is patient safety. Additionally, this provider reports back through Somerset Council Public Health Clinical Governance Assurance process, which identifies patient or staff incidents and what the organisation has done to respond to the individual incident and put in place to prevent future incidents occurring.

This decision does not represent an increased risk for Somerset Council, above the risk of awarding the original contract to provide specialist drug and alcohol treatment support.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

27. This service area will have a:
- Significant positive impact on health and wellbeing on the individuals, families and communities using the service – for example protecting children from the harm caused by drug/alcohol dependent parents; and enabling individuals to access treatment requirements in the community as an alternative to custodial sentences (especially short custodial

sentences) and seek to prevent reoffending by addressing underlying vulnerabilities.

- Significant positive impacts on preventing ill-health (physical and mental health). Both areas are requirements in the specification to pro-actively engage service users to adopt a healthy lifestyle - as part of the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) approach for example to quit smoking, be physically active and eat healthy; and the expansion of the use of Naloxone to prevent opiate overdose.
- Significant positive impacts on reducing health and social inequalities for example increased access to employment through the skills and experience service users develop being a part of the peer mentor programme and acting for example as Peer Naloxone Champions.

Social Value

28. This key decision is awarding additional funding to a provider who has been through an SC competitive tendering process in which its 'Social Value' as a provider was assessed. This provider is a not-for-profit provider, who utilises workers based in Somerset and provides significant training and career development opportunities. Additionally, a central tenant of the service is its recovery model and as such, the service utilises previous clients in the role of peer supporter, after they have undertaken additional training. This provides a pathway into employment for some individuals, who may have struggled to gain employment immediately after completing treatment.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

29. Briefing and discussion undertaken on 19th April 2023 with Adults and Health Scrutiny Chair prior to decision meeting with Cllr. Dance.

Cllr Slocombe gave her support to the paper. She was supportive of agenda and agreed to Public Health setting up a session for Adults & Health Scrutiny committee members with the staff from the drug and alcohol service and peer mentors and/or people with lived experience to increase awareness of what the service can offer and people's experience of seeking treatment and support.

Background

30. In December 2021, Government published [From harm to hope: a 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#). It has four main areas:
- a. Break drug supply chains.
 - b. Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system (incl. alcohol)
 - c. Achieve a generational shift in the demand for recreational drugs.
 - d. Local partnerships and accountability

As an example, relevant to this decision paper, the ambition for a world class treatment system is:

- **Delivering world-class treatment and recovery services** – rebuild local authority commissioned substance misuse services, improving quality, capacity, and outcomes.
- **Rebuilding the professional workforce** – develop and deliver a comprehensive substance misuse workforce strategy.
- **Ensuring better integration of services** – making sure that people’s physical and mental health needs are addressed to reduce harm and support recovery, and ongoing delivery of Project ADDER to join up treatment, recovery, and enforcement.
- **Improving access to accommodation alongside treatment** – access to quality treatment for everyone sleeping rough, and better support for accessing and maintaining secure and safe housing.
- **Improving employment opportunities** – employment support rolled-out across England and more peer support linked to Jobcentre Plus services.
- **Increasing referrals into treatment in the criminal justice system** – specialist drug workers to support treatment requirements as part of community sentences so offenders engage in drug treatment.
- **Keeping prisoners engaged in treatment after release** – improved engagement of people before they leave prison and better continuity of care into the community.

It draws on the work of Professor Dame Carl Black who was commissioned by the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care to undertake a 2-part independent review of drugs, to inform the government’s thinking on what more can be done to tackle the harm that drugs cause.

[Part one](#) was published on 27 February 2020 and provides a detailed analysis of the challenges posed by drug supply and demand, including the ways in which drugs fuel serious violence. [Part 2](#) was published on the 8 July 2021 and focuses on drug treatment, recovery, and prevention.

The report's aim is to make sure that vulnerable people with substance misuse problems get the support they need to recover and turn their lives around, in the community and in prison. It contains thirty-two recommendations for change across various government departments and other organisations, to improve the effectiveness of drug prevention and treatment and to help more people recover from dependence.

Following government response to Professor Dame Carol Black review, the harm to hope 10-year plan was published; and to support its implementation the government announced additional allocations of funding over a 3-year period 2022/23 to 2024/25. The decision paper here is the use of the first year of funding to develop a world class treatment system.

There is additional funding with the Constabulary and Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle drug supply networks.

Background Papers

31. From Harm to Hope; A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime & Save Lives - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

Professor Dame Carol Black – Independent Review of Drugs:

Part One - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-one-report>

Part Two - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report>

Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-adder>

Somerset Alcohol Needs Assessment 2021 [Somerset Alcohol Needs Assessment 2021 \(somersetintelligence.org.uk\)](https://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk)

