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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	29 March 2022	Agenda Item	3.3
Report Title	Update on Substance Misuse within Western Bay		
Report Author	Keith Reid, Executive Director of Public Health		
Report Sponsor	Keith Reid, Executive Director of Public Health		
Presented by	Keith Reid, Executive Director of Public Health		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	This paper provides an update on matters reported verbally to the Committee at its last meeting and on key recent developments in the provision of substance misuse regionally.		
Key Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Area Planning Board has embarked upon a service review in response to key concerns raised during Q3 of 21/22 and highlighted to the meeting of this Committee. 2. The proposed Independent Drugs Commission for Western Bay is moving forwards following the identification of Co-Chairs to lead this work. 3. Work will start shortly on a process to recommission substance misuse services in Western Bay with a view to commissioning through an Alliance model. 		
Specific Action Required <i>(please choose one only)</i>	Information	Discussion	Assurance
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response to the serious concerns raised at the APB and that future reports will feedback on the outcome of the strategic review; • The intention to undertake work to develop an Alliance approach to contracting for substance misuse services commissioned by the APB; and • The recruitment process underway for the Expert Advisory Panel / Independent Commission into Drugs 		

Substance misuse

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides a high level update on actions taken by the APB in response to serious concerns raised at the APB meeting on and reported back to the Quality and Safety Committee at its meeting of 21st December 2021.

Additional brief updates on the progress of the Independent Commission on Drugs for Western Bay and on the implementation of the previously agreed public health approach to an integrated response to substance misuse are provided.

2. BACKGROUND

Serious Issues Raised within the APB

Swansea Bay UHB acts as both a joint commissioner (through the Area Planning Board, APB, mechanism) and a provider of substance misuse services delivered through Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service Group and via primary care. The APB is a collaborative board which comprises a number of regional organisations with responsibilities in commissioning substance misuse services, Welsh Government, the criminal justice sector (regulated via the UK Home Office) and representation from provider organisations as well as user voices.

Performance management of APB commissioned services is through the Commissioning, Finance and Performance sub-Committee of the APB (CFP) who scrutinise data returned by services and receive exception reporting and escalation of issues from services. In response they raise concerns both directly with services, with Welsh Government (who are an APB member) and with the APB. Welsh Government also receives direct reports in relation to a number of KPIs based on data submitted directly by provider organisations. Locally an Independent Review Panel meets to consider each substance misuse death and to identify learning to share with the wider system. A similar process of review is undertaken for each non-fatal drug overdose locally.

As part of the CFP meeting in October 2021 three issues relating to substance misuse were discussed and the conclusion of the meeting was that these issues were of serious concern and required escalation to the APB for further consideration. SBUHB provider representatives on the CFP expressed some concern over this course of action considering that, in relation to the waiting list concerns, further exploration was merited prior to escalation.

The APB convened a special meeting to discuss these issues, previously reported to the Q&S Committee, which was held on 11th January 2022. This meeting was required for a timely consideration of the issues as there had not been sufficient time to consider them at the previous scheduled APB meeting.

The issues raised were three fold.

Firstly, the ongoing status of Western Bay as an outlier in relation to drug related deaths with rates significantly higher than anywhere else in Wales and no evidence that current actions were successfully reducing these rates. There is some disappointment locally that concerted and evidence based action in relation to harm reduction approaches, such as the widespread provision of naloxone, had not resulted in a halt or reversal of the underlying increase in drug related deaths. Locally there is a recognition that multiple factors increase the risk of substance

misuse and drug related death and not all of those are within the control of current treatment services. However, there is not a good understanding as to why circumstances which also exist elsewhere in Wales (such as poverty, poor educational attainment and high levels of deprivation) are associated with substantially higher rates of substance misuse and drug related deaths in Western Bay.

Secondly, there was concern expressed over the waiting lists for access to some services. There was some discussion over the data and historical reasons for waiting lists, including changes in funding arrangements. It was noted that previously funding had been placed with some services to address waiting lists successfully but that this funding had not been sustained. The impact of COVID on capacity of services to respond to need was also raised.

Thirdly, the levels of testing for blood borne viruses in people who inject drugs was at a very low level. The reported change in testing activity was not directly attributable to COVID associated disruption. A high prevalence of blood borne viruses, including Hepatitis C in particular, within the Region meant that this testing is an important harm reduction measure.

The outcome of the meeting was a decision by the APB that a service review be undertaken. This review is now underway with the following objectives and will report in early Q2 FY22/23:

1. to understand the current system in its entirety
2. to understand what the current issues and deficits are
3. to understand if service users are positively benefitting from the services they receive
4. to understand what works well and what can be built on
5. to provide details of a proposal that will improve the current situation
6. to examine the funding that may be available to deliver a new model

The Health Board has put in place a range of measures to resume BBV testing and to capture any tests which may have been undertaken but not reported appropriately. It also indicated that a catch up programme of testing would be undertaken on existing clients as well as opening testing routes for those clients who had been unable to be tested by their key worker. Access to immunisation against Hepatitis B was also to be provided. Reporting on the impact of these measures has not yet been reviewed by the CFP Sub-Committee.

Progress in Establishing an Independent Expert Advisory Panel / Western Bay Drugs Commission and towards commissioning via an Alliance approach

Regional partnership groups have previously (in 2019-20) endorsed a proposal to reorganise local services using an 'Alliance' type approach where commissioning for outcomes is undertaken. This approach formed a key part of a proposal to implement a "Public Health Model for Substance Misuse" across the Region. The APB is developing a plan to commission work to support the production of a specification for an Alliance approach and to understand the ongoing work in moving to an Alliance model of service delivery.

An 'Alliance' model of service delivery is one where two or more individuals or entities enter into an agreement stating that the involved parties will act in a certain way in order to achieve a common goal. Critically it does not use structural reform or reorganisation in pursuit of the agreed goal(s). Instead, an alliance contract creates

a collaborative environment without the need for new organisational forms. By operating under one alliance contract, all parties are working to deliver a common set of outcomes and are measured against a common set of criteria. Typically there is a risk share across all parties and any 'gain' or 'pain' is linked with good or poor performance overall and not to the performance of individual parties. Further information is available at [Alliancing and alliance contracting » LH Alliances](#)

One key aim of moving to such an approach is that it provides for more seamless provision from a service user perspective: identified needs can be addressed without inter-agency referrals being required. It also creates more freedom and autonomy for action by service providers while also removing service demarcations. However, to be truly effective an Alliance approach will require all providers to participate and the change in service delivery will take some time to implement. Ultimately the pace of change will be dictated by the willingness of service providers to participate, the extent to which current services require re-modelling and the statutory processes required to initiate, approve and implement change across participating organisations.

An integral part of the "Public Health Model" was the concept of an Expert Advisory Panel to provide independent support and guidance as well as critical scrutiny of local service provision and development proposals. This approach has been agreed by the APB and an external agency commissioned to undertake the necessary recruitment and development work based on the approach adopted by the Dundee Drugs Commission.

A search has been underway for some time to identify individuals to lead the work of the Panel / Commission. Two Co-Chairs (designate) have now been identified and work is underway to recruit to the Panel in order that it can begin its work. A prospectus for the work of the Panel is included as an Appendix to this report.

3. GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES

There are concerns over the governance and risk associated with the establishment of an independent commission. These concerns are widely held among partners and in particular that the work of the commission, if truly independent, will sit outside existing governance arrangements.

However, the risk is that the commission will identify and report on performance and system issues or deficits in comparison with external standards and existing Welsh Government expectations. The selection of the commission members, terms of reference, factual checking of the report prior to issue and independent nature of the commission (its report is not binding on local agencies) act as partial mitigations for this risk. In taking evidence in a public forum there is a risk that there will be a focus on substance misuse issues leading to adverse comment and publicity. The current poor performance regionally in reducing drug related deaths is a matter of public record.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to **NOTE**:

- The response to the serious concerns raised at the APB and that future reports will feedback on the outcome of the strategic review;
- The intention to undertake work to develop an Alliance approach to contracting for substance misuse services commissioned by the APB; and
- The recruitment process underway for the Expert Advisory Panel / Independent Commission into Drugs

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives (please choose)	Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
(please choose)	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
This report refers to issues where services may have departed from quality and safety norms but there is currently no evidence of individual patient harm as a consequence. The actions outlined will likely identify where harm may have occurred and the extent of any such harms.		
Financial Implications		
There are no direct financial implications of the report. Any service developments arising from actions outlined in the report will be the subject of appropriate business cases.		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
There are no identified legal implications associated with this report.		
Staffing Implications		
No identified staffing implications of this paper.		
Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)		
<p>Briefly identify how the paper will have an impact of the “The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, 5 ways of working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long Term – The move to Alliance working informed by the work of the Commission is aiming to create a sustainable and repsonsive service environment that will assist in reducing long-term and inter-generational harms associated with drug use. ○ Prevention – A key element of the work of the commission will be the generation of local insight to direct local work with vulnerable groups and individuals to reduce the risk of drug use. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integration – The move to an Alliance model allows for participating public sector bodies to align their approach in a way that enhances the system’s ability to generated wellbeing. ○ Collaboration – The foundation of an Alliance approach is one of collaboration and the Commission’s work will assist in identifying current and future good practice as well as barriers to joined-up working. ○ Involvement - The work of the Commission and move towards an Alliance model create further opportunities for drug users and their families to be engaged in service developments regionally. 	
Report History	A verbal report on the serious concerns issues was made to the Committee at its meeting of 21 December 2021.
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Briefing paper