

Derby City New Psychoactive Substances Partnership Strategy 2015 – 2018



Derby City Council

Foreward

The UK has experienced a rise in the use of novel or New Psychoactive Substances – NPS. Some of these, most famously Mephedrone (known as MCAT), have been banned under changes to the Misuse of Drugs act 1971 making them now illegal. The temporary banning of others based on emerging harms has taken place over the last 4 years, but largely they remain legal and are thus commonly referred to as ‘legal highs’. The Government plans to pass new laws in 2016 banning all ‘legal highs’, but as we have seen with drugs that have been illegal for years, this will only go so far in reducing the harms caused to individuals and society.

Regionally prisons are reporting significant issues with NPS use in their settings, with associated increases in physical and mental health problems as a direct result. Across Derbyshire there have been a number of deaths where NPS involvement is suspected to have been a contributory factor.

Derby City Council and its partners have therefore taken the step of developing a multiagency partnership strategy aimed at tackling the problem of NPS at every level, from education and prevention to regulation and enforcement. A comprehensive action plan underpins this strategic approach.



Councillor Asaf Afzal

Cabinet Member for Cohesion and Integration

Local context

Both adult and young person's substance misuse treatment services are reporting an increase in the number of individuals seeking help and support following 'legal high' use. This is similarly reflected in hospital admissions where a growing number are attending with physical and emotional harm. Anecdotal information from health agencies, schools, the police and other community services supports growing concerns around the availability, consumption and a lack of credible information relating to NPS. Young people in particular, especially those deemed vulnerable, are at an increasing risk of experiencing poor academic achievement, social exclusion and offending behaviour in addition to physical and emotional damage. It is our duty to safeguard all people engaged in the use of legal or illegal substances.

Availability of NPS in Derby city is currently no different to any city across the UK. Legal highs can be bought by over 18s in some shops and are readily available over the internet. Fortunately we do not have 'on street drug selling of NPS' and therefore the perception by the public is somewhat different to illegal drugs and their link to crime. Any strategy aimed at addressing the harms cause by NPS use needs to be flexible and responsive, especially in light of the imminent Psychoactive Substances Bill 2015 which will criminalise offences such as importation, distribution and supply of so called 'legal highs'.

Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to begin to bring together the key strands required to co-ordinate an effective response to the emerging harms caused by NPS use by the key agencies. However the effective delivery of the strategy is not only contingent on health, criminal justice and the local authority but also wider partners: schools, third sector and voluntary agencies such as the street pastors and night shelter, who all have a role to play in developing and shaping the response required to tackle the emerging harms caused by NPS use.

The strategy will have the following strategic outcomes:

- 1. To reduce the illicit supply of NPS in Derby City by 50%.**
- 2. Ensure all individuals have access to suitable treatment interventions within 21 days of identification.**
- 3. To make all vulnerable children aware of the harms caused by NPS use.**

Governance arrangements

It is intended that the local NPS three year strategy will be governed by existing frameworks that already draw on multi-disciplinary arrangements across key partners. A bilateral approach with a focus on Criminal Justice and Local Authority governance would see strategic implementation being monitored by the Police Countywide Reducing Drug Availability Group and the Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Group – and ultimately the Health and Wellbeing Board, which comprises of Chief Officers and politicians for Derby city. Governance in respect of safeguarding will be overseen by both the Derby Children's Safeguarding Board and the Vulnerable Adults Board. Constitution of the strategy group will be flexible but have a core component of Public Health, Police, Probation, Substance Misuse Treatment Services, Housing, Community Safety, Trading Standards and Children and Adult Services.

The NPS Partnership Strategy Steering Group will oversee the delivery of the strategy with membership made up of key stakeholders and critical partners. A partnership action plan has been formulated to underpin the three themed areas:

- A. Intelligence, Regulation and Reducing Supply**
- B. Treatment**
- C. Prevention and awareness**

Each themed area will have a sub group chaired by a representative from the NPS Partnership Strategy Steering Group, who will report progress against the designated action plan theme to the steering group.

The requirement to safeguard both children and vulnerable adults is integral to the delivery of these aims and the delivery of the three themed areas.

A. Intelligence, Regulation and Reducing Supply

There are two strategic aims for this thematic area -

- To gather community information on the physical and emotional health harms, local trends around NPS use.
- To co-ordinate the response by agencies in order to protect the public and wider communities from harm, as a result of the sale and distribution of NPS.

Item	Objective	Action
1.	Gather local NPS information to inform local strategic delivery plans	To record all NPS information on a centralised database
2.	Develop community and Police information sources to educate and inform professionals working with NPS use	To develop a local Professional Information Network to enable agencies to report and share the latest information on NPS use

B. Treatment

The aim of this thematic area is to ensure effective treatment for NPS use is available, for those who need it, in a range of community locations.

Item	Objective	Action
1.	To ensure all agencies working with and treating NPS users have a 'person centred approach' to patient care	To develop local guidance for the management and care of those under the influence of NPS use
2.	To ensure harm reduction advice and information is available for NPS users at a range of community locations	To ensure professionals working with NPS users are trained to deliver 'opportunistic' brief interventions and other evidence based therapies

C. Prevention and Awareness Raising

The aim of this theme is to develop a consistent approach to the 'prevention' messages given on NPS use to professionals within educational settings, to enable young people to make informed choices about the risks of NPS use.

Item	Objective	Action
1.	Ensure that all children and where necessary parents receive appropriate drug education and information	To use the Public Health Nursing System (from April 2016) to influence health and drug education programmes in schools
2.	Ensure suitable harm reduction messages are available for those who are identified as 'vulnerable'	To develop harm reduction messages to be communicated via schools and other educational settings.