

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 12th January 2012
Report of: Head of Health Improvement
Subject/Title: Alcohol Harm Reduction initiatives in the North West, Cheshire & Warrington
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Janet Clowes

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of initiatives underway across the North West, Cheshire and Warrington to try to reduce alcohol related harm and the health, social and financial impacts of that harm.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 That the Committee consider the report and endorse the actions underway.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To raise the awareness of the Committee of work under way and to secure the support of the Committee for that work.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications including – Carbon Reduction - Health

- 6.1 Alcohol is one of the leading causes of ill health amongst our local population. Around one third of our population are drinking at levels above the recommended limits. The health impacts of alcohol misuse include an increased use of general practice consultations, increased attendance at A&E, ambulance call outs, out- patient and hospital admissions. The chronic effects of alcohol use include cirrhosis, coronary heart disease cancer and stroke.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to this report. However, the cost to the Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT of dealing with alcohol misuse is £31,500,000 per annum, currently increasing by at least £500,000 a year. The costs to the Police in dealing with alcohol related incidents is significant (for example £600,000 cost for arrests for being drunk and disorderly in 2008-2009 just for those processed through the Middlewich Custody Suite). In addition the Fire Service and local authority have costs associated with clearing up after fires, accidents and anti social behaviour incidents, there are costs to the social services as a result of alcohol causing family breakdown or contributing to an individual's vulnerability. There are also costs to local businesses and the public sector due to days lost through alcohol related sickness.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 There are no legal implications specific to this report. Legal Services are involved in the ongoing work in relation to Minimum Unit Pricing.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 N/A

10.0 Background

- 10.1 The Cheshire and Warrington Health Commission was established in 2009 following local government reorganisation and the review of the sub-regional architecture. Cheshire East is the lead authority for the Commission providing the lead officer and Chair (currently Councillor Domleo).
- 10.2 The Commission is made up of representatives from the local authorities (CEC, CWAC, Halton and Warrington), PCTs, Police and Fire Services and the voluntary and charitable sectors. It reports through to the sub-regional Management Team and sub regional Leadership Board. At an early stage the Commission identified alcohol harm as a major issue across all four authorities and one for which there was potential to have a positive impact by working effectively across the sub-region.
- 10.3 Each local authority area and PCT has concerns about alcohol consumption levels and the impacts of these. **Appendix A** covers some key facts that helped inform the Commission in its priority setting.
- 10.4 As a result of making the reduction of alcohol harm a priority, Officers began to consider key actions that might start to make a difference. At the same time the Chief Executive made contact with Drinkwise Northwest who were initiating a large scale change programme within the North West to reduce alcohol harm. This led to the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Large Scale Change group that has become an informal sub-group of the Commission.

11.0 Progress to date

- 11.1 The Year Two action plan is centred upon progressing the work to reduce alcohol harm. An Alcohol Strategy Group chaired by Chief Inspector Peter Crowcroft has been established to co-ordinate work across the Health and Wellbeing and the Criminal Justice and Community Safety Commissions. This includes representatives from health, the probation service, magistrates, the Police and local authorities to ensure all aspects of alcohol related harm are considered.
- 11.2 The Large Scale Change programme is driving the majority of ongoing actions. The Primary Driver Diagram (**Appendix B**) shows the five key objectives.
- 11.2.1 Leadership – The Northwest local authority Chief Executives have nominated a lead CEO for each sub-region who have regular telephone conferences to update on progress and drive the programme. Through their networks they are building the support from other organisations. In Cheshire East we have held two Large Scale Change Workshops with a wide range of public sector organisations. These have identified a number of areas where more effective collaborative working can make a difference, for example in data sharing. In addition the CEOs are developing key messages that can be used to demonstrate the impacts and costs of alcohol harm.
- 11.2.2 Calculate the costs – one of the objectives of the Large Scale Change programme is to reduce by 5% costs related to alcohol harm. Work is underway across the region to effectively capture the current costs at both the macro and micro level. Some of the national and Regional costs are referred to in Appendix A. More locally there is work ongoing to capture incident related costs, so for example an alcohol related accident and emergency hospital admission at Macclesfield hospital that involved the Police helicopter being called out and an alcohol related arson incident in a children's play area. The intention is to use these to demonstrate some of the hidden costs and impacts that alcohol related harm can lead to and the impacts on others that this might have.
- 11.2.3 Public Sector Workforce – across the North West there is a large public sector work force. Through raising awareness of alcohol harm and helping staff understand the impacts of alcohol harm, there will be benefits to both our customers and clients, but also to the workforce. As an example Identification and Brief Advice training is being piloted with officers from the Police, the Fire Service and Cheshire East Council participating. This is designed to help staff deliver 'behaviour change interventions' that prevent later more costly referrals into services. This may involve appropriate literature being given out, or signposting to a support network.

Through a better understanding of alcohol related sickness absence, appropriate responses can be developed to help people back to work.

- 11.2.4 Children and Young People – There is particular concern regarding the levels of alcohol consumption of young people in the North West and the harms caused to young people as a result of others, parents or carers for example,

consuming too much alcohol. In Cheshire and Warrington we have alcohol related hospital admissions for under 18s that are worse than the national average. The Authority has recently signed up to the NHS North West 'Pledge to young people' (see **Appendix C**). Directors of Children's Services across the North West are being engaged in this work.

- 11.2.5 Tackle the causes – The programme is looking at ways to build support for Minimum Unit Pricing of alcohol, with clear evidence that the introduction of a MUP would significantly reduce alcohol related harms and costs. With the Scottish Parliament currently considering the introduction of MUP in Scotland, there will be implications for the Region if the Bill is passed. Clinicians locally are very supportive of MUP. Local MPs are involved in discussions to raise the issue in Westminster and the Prime Minister has recently been reported as being supportive of a minimum unit price. Local Authorities are considering their responses with many, including Halton, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East agreeing in principle to Minimum Unit Pricing and seeking further information on the implications of implementation to allow an informed decision to be made in due course. Officers across Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire and Warrington are working together to ensure a co-ordinated approach.
- 11.3 Other ongoing actions include Communications leads from the different organisations working together to develop evidence based messages that support the need to reduce alcohol related harm. The Health and Wellbeing Commission is also ensuring an ongoing link with the Criminal Justice and Community Safety Commission and will look to work with the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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