

TITLE OF REPORT: Short Case Study – Impact of Alcohol on Crime, Disorder and Community Safety

REPORT OF: Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment

Summary

Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be presented with an overview of the impact of alcohol on crime and disorder in Gateshead (and includes a summary of issues highlighted in the Substance Misuse Strategy, key performance information linked with alcohol misuse as well as examples of the activities that are being undertaken by Council services and partner agencies to mitigate the impact of alcohol on residents and localities). In addition, a short Case Study will be provided to help demonstrate its impact on individuals, their families and wider society.

Background

As a reminder for members, we have a Substance Misuse Strategy for Gateshead, which was approved by the Community Safety Board in April 2017 – and includes a wealth of actions around three key themes linked with alcohol:

- Reduce demand/prevention across life course: to ensure a co-ordinated ‘whole family’ approach is taken for initiatives working with children and young people, working age, older people, individuals, families and communities protecting those most affected by alcohol.
- Restrict supply / protection and responsibility: to ensure all sections of the trade promote responsible retailing that supports a reduction in substance misuse related harm, mitigating the role of alcohol in fuelling crime, anti-social behaviour, violence and domestic abuse.
- Build recovery/health and wellbeing services: to ensure evidence-based health and wellbeing focussed prevention, treatment and recovery approach is employed to address the needs of service users and their families experiencing substance misuse-related issues.

The Substance Misuse Strategy is underpinned by a detailed multi-agency Action Plan which sets out the activities that will be undertaken by the Community Safety Board to address drug and alcohol misuse in Gateshead. The Substance Misuse Strategy Group is a multi-agency forum that meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by Consultant in Public Health and is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Substance Misuse Strategy and the Action Plan. It is complemented by a number of operational meetings – including the Crime, ASB and Confidence Group, Operational Planning Group as well as various Task and Finish Groups.

Context

We know alcohol misuse places a profound burden on the social fabric of the UK. In addition to the extensive healthcare costs, lost productivity and premature deaths, there are a range of crime, disorder and community safety problems associated with excessive consumption of alcohol. This includes alcohol-specific crime, such as

being drunk and disorderly in public, criminal damage and, drink driving. Many other offences can take place under the influence of alcohol, such as alcohol-related violence, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, property damage and arson. It is well evidenced that alcohol consumption is a risk factor for many types of violence, including child abuse, youth violence, intimate partner violence and elder abuse – and evidence shows that individuals who start drinking at an earlier age, who drink frequently and who drink in greater quantities, are at increased risk of involvement in crime as both victims and perpetrators.

Presentation

The presentation will provide Committee with:

- a summary of the issues highlighted in the Substance Misuse Strategy;
- key performance information linked with alcohol misuse to help demonstrate the impact of alcohol (including comparisons, where appropriate to national, regional and local performance);
- examples of activities that are being undertaken by Council services and partner agencies to mitigate the impact of alcohol on residents and localities; and
- a short Case Study to help demonstrate the impact of alcohol on individuals, their families and wider society.

Recommendation

Committee are asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of the presentation/report;
- (ii) Comment on and scrutinise the approaches undertaken locally to tackle alcohol misuse and its impact on community safety, and
- (iii) Agree to receive further updates at a future Committee.

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