

**TO: ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTING PANEL
17 JUNE 2014**

**ALCOHOL BRIEF INTERVENTION IN SOCIAL CARE
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out details of a new programme aimed at facilitating the delivery of alcohol brief interventions by staff working in social care settings.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel:

- 2.1 Note the establishment of the new alcohol brief intervention programme and progress made to date.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Alcohol misuse is a significant factor in up to 60% of social work case loads (Alcohol Concern, 2014) and alcohol misuse can often play a role in a range of difficulties that people using social care services experience.
- 3.2 The time people have in contact with social care staff presents an opportunity for discussion of alcohol consumption and related issues. Evidence suggests that if a specific 'brief intervention' protocol is followed by staff then a significant and positive impact on alcohol related harm can be achieved.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Alcohol misuse is a significant factor in up to 60% of social work case loads but the role alcohol misuse plays in a plethora of difficulties can be overlooked (Alcohol Concern, 2014). For example, alcohol often plays a role in the development or exacerbation of mental health problems, as well as issues such as family breakdown, homelessness, unemployment and financial problems.
- 5.2 While the causal link between alcohol and social problems is often unclear, alcohol misuse will usually need to be addressed if a person is to successfully overcome the social problems they are facing.
- 5.3 In 2012 the British Association of Social Workers produced a pocket guide on Alcohol and Older People. It recognised that Social Workers are on the front line of health

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and social care provision for older people and as such are in a prime position to work with them on their alcohol use.

- 5.4 A key part of efforts to reduce alcohol related harm have been 'alcohol brief interventions' which, to date, have traditionally only been delivered in healthcare settings. Brief interventions are relatively short, structured conversations within which an individual is invited to discuss their drinking, its impact and strategies for reducing that impact.
- 5.5 Rather than simply being advice giving sessions, the focus is on a 'person centred;' approach that encourages the individual to take ownership over any actions or plans that are developed. As such, brief interventions deliberately avoid a communication style that may be interpreted as 'preaching' or 'nagging'.
- 5.6 Key features of alcohol brief interventions include the use of standardised assessment tools and the action of linking individuals up to further sources of support and information at the end of the session.
- 5.7 There is a robust evidence base for the effectiveness of brief interventions in reducing alcohol consumption (Kaner et al. 2007) and alcohol related harm (Havard et al. 2008).
- 5.8 Bracknell Forest Council has recently made a successful bid to the Innovation Fund Programme at Bracknell & Ascot CCG. A total of £8520 was awarded to deliver a programme of alcohol brief intervention training for social care practitioners such as Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Support Workers and Housing Staff. The training will be delivered by specialist substance misuse professionals
- 5.9 Following the training staff will be in a position to complete a standardised assessment tool (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test - AUDIT) in respect of the people in receipt of social care and housing services where there is a concern with regards to alcohol consumption. Depending on the outcome of the AUDIT they would be able to offer brief advice and information which would include signposting into community alcohol services where required.
- 5.10 Enthusiasm for the project has been high among staff members. At the time of this report, 49 staff members have been trained from a range of backgrounds and departments.
- 5.11 In respect of evaluation, an evaluation of the immediate effect of the brief intervention levels on individuals will be made. This will include a brief assessment of individuals' awareness of their alcohol related risk and their motivation to reduce alcohol consumption.
- 5.12 In order to prospectively evaluate the effectiveness of the brief intervention the Audit would also ask each person if they would be willing to be contacted at a future date by staff from the Community Alcohol Services to complete a brief questionnaire on the impact of the intervention delivered. Those contacted will be asked to report on their levels of drinking, as well as any visits to healthcare services that may have been a result of alcohol consumption (these will be compared with a baseline level of alcohol related service use assessed during the brief intervention).

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The contents of this report are noted.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The costs of this programme will be met by funding of £8,520 provided by the Bracknell & Ascot CCG.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 This project is designed to address health inequality in respect of alcohol related harm among individuals engaged with social care services.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Clinical Commissioning Group and Primary Care partners. This project is also in line with consultation responses in respect of the Health & Well-Being Strategy, in which addressing alcohol (including via brief intervention) came up as a key theme.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Presentations and meetings.

Representations Received

- 7.3 None

Contact for further information

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