



**Coventry**  
Health and Wellbeing

# Coventry Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017-2020





# Contents

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Foreword .....	2
Coventry's vision.....	3
The current position .....	4
Emerging themes.....	6
Strategic Priority 1:.....	8
Prevent people from taking drugs or drinking harmful levels of alcohol and intervene early to minimise harm	
Strategic Priority 2:.....	10
Support those with drug and/or alcohol problems and for those with multiple complex needs	
Strategic Priority 3:.....	12
Promote sustainable recovery and enable people to live healthy, safe and meaningful lives	
Delivering the strategic priorities .....	14

# Foreword

Alcohol is the most widely available drug in the UK and is used sensibly by the majority of the population. It is part of our social fabric and a major contributor to the economic vibrancy of the community.

Drinking is most common among many of Coventry's more affluent communities, but those who drink at the greatest levels (and suffer the greatest health harms) live in some of the city's most deprived neighbourhoods.

Whilst most people do not use drugs, drug misuse can be found across all communities in society. From heroin and crack use among adults, to cannabis use amongst young people, to the use of new psychoactive substances by clubbers, drugs are available and misused by a wide range of people.

Alcohol and drug misuse are significant issues for individuals, families and communities alike. The harm caused by excessive drinking and drug taking is complex and wide ranging. Using drugs or alcohol may cause or exacerbate existing problems; harm may be acute or chronic and issues may arise from recreational use or binge drinking as well as problematic use or dependency.

Alcohol and substance misuse can be found amongst homeless populations and those with mental health problems. Problematic alcohol and drug use is associated with unemployment, domestic abuse, poor living conditions, ill-health and safeguarding concerns.

Some drug and alcohol concerns are familiar and long-standing – for example inter-generational substance misuse and the negative impact of parental drug and alcohol misuse on children – however there are new concerns as well, especially around young adults and the purchasing of drugs over the internet.

Building on the emerging local themes, partners in Coventry have identified three strategic priorities:

- Prevent people from taking drugs or drinking harmful levels of alcohol and intervene early to minimise harm

- Support those with drug and/or alcohol problems and those with multiple complex needs
- Promote sustainable recovery and enable people to live healthy, safe and meaningful lives

These priorities and the actions set out in this strategy aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Reduce the number of people drinking at harmful levels and misusing drugs
- Reduce the health, social and economic harms caused by alcohol harm and drug misuse, for both the individual user and wider society
- Reduce the health inequalities associated with misusing drugs and drinking at harmful levels
- Reduce the prevalence of alcohol and drug-fuelled crime
- Provide the multi-faceted help needed by people with multiple complex needs, empowering individuals to enable them to build their confidence and self-esteem
- Reducing the risk of people developing multiple complex needs (focus on adverse childhood experiences), prioritising prevention and early intervention.

The purpose of this strategy is to bring partners together to transform health and wellbeing in Coventry, prevent drug and alcohol misuse, and support people to recover and to build healthy, fulfilled lives.

I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to the development of this strategy including Cllr Ali and Cllr Clifford; stakeholders, partners, providers, members of the Drug and Alcohol Management Group, members of the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Group, Police and Crime and Health and Wellbeing Boards.



**Cllr Kamran Caan**

# Coventry's Vision

Coventry's vision is to reduce the harms caused by alcohol and drug misuse and make Coventry a healthier, wealthier and happier place to live, where less alcohol and fewer drugs are consumed and where professionals are confident and well-equipped to challenge behaviour and support change. This means developing a recovery system that not only focuses on getting people into treatment, but also supports people to make permanent changes to their lifestyle to improve their health and wellbeing and to successfully contribute to society.

Alcohol and drug harms are not evenly spread across the country and as an urban, industrial city with more residents living in neighbourhoods that are amongst the 10% most deprived in England, the harms of alcohol and drug misuses are greater than many other local authority areas.

Coventry's vision is to:

- Take a holistic approach that focuses on the whole person and whole family
- Support people to choose not to drink alcohol at harmful levels and take drugs
- Reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on others
- Empower individuals and communities to have resilience and strength
- Focus on diversion, early intervention, treatment and recovery
- Identify, challenge and prevent substance misuse where possible
- Provide treatment and help for people when they want it
- Help people recover fully and rebuild healthy, positive lives

Partners across the city will work collaboratively to minimise the number of people starting to drink at harmful levels or to use drugs, and to identify those with multiple complex needs and provide them with appropriate support. Through making changes at a city-wide level, a community level and an individual level, partners will support people not to drink alcohol at harmful levels or take drugs, to change their lives and to successfully contribute to society.

# The Current Position

Coventry has a population of 345,400, with an average age of residents of 33 years. This is lower than the average age for the UK, mainly due to the growing student population, which itself leads to considerations with the night time economy. Coventry is also a diverse city, with a growing percentage of residents of Black and Minority Ethnic Group (33.4% in Coventry, higher than the national average). Coventry's life expectancy at birth is 82.3 years for women and 78.6 years for men, lower than the national average. There is however a wide inequality gap: a man from the most deprived area can expect to die 9.4 years younger than a man from the least deprived area; and for a woman, the difference is 8.7 years.

The 2016 Coventry Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment found that nationally, there has been a fall in the proportion of men and women who are frequent drinkers over the last ten years, and the number of alcohol related deaths is decreasing.

Coventry has a considerably larger abstinent population than many other areas. Almost 21% of the adult population do not consume alcohol. Trend data across the city also indicates that drug use is falling, and the proportion of Coventry school children who reported trying drugs fell from 20% to 10% over the last 15 years. Offences where alcohol is a factor has also shown marked falls in recent years in Coventry.

However, there are still sections of the population who are drinking at harmful levels. Coventry's Household Survey shows an increase in older adults drinking five or more days per week, with men three times more likely than women to drink on at least three days per week. Coventry's rate of hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions is significantly worse than the average for England, but similar to comparable areas of deprivation, and has reduced year-on-year for the last three years faster than the national average.

Approximately 14,000 people in Coventry are high risk drinkers, however only 6% of high risk drinkers access treatment services. In addition, it is estimated that only 46% of opiate and/or crack users in Coventry are in treatment, which is below the national average (52%), and there are indications that the average age of those accessing treatment services is increasing.

Although the number of people using alcohol and taking drugs is reducing nationally and locally, the needs of alcohol and drug users are becoming increasingly complex, and there is a strong link between high risk substance misuse and deprivation. There is evidence that problems of alcohol and drug dependence are significantly less prevalent in the population working full time than in the unemployed and economically inactive, and many higher risk drinkers come from fractured family backgrounds, with a history of alcohol abuse in the family. There are also strong links between homelessness, offending and substance misuse, and Coventry has a significantly higher than average prevalence of people experiencing multiple complex needs.

In addition, while the use of opiate and crack substances is falling, the use of new and emerging substances, such as new psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids and anabolic steroids are on the rise. Nationally synthetic cannabinoids were most likely to leave people needing to seek emergency medical treatment, and in 2014, the number of drug poisoning related deaths was the highest since records began.

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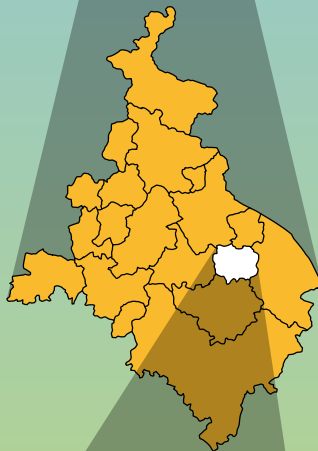


# Emerging Themes

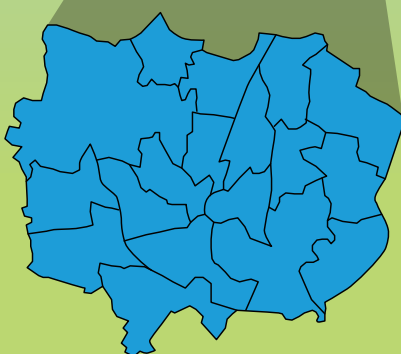
## National



## Regional



## Local



## National

### Reducing alcohol related harm

The national Alcohol Strategy, published in 2012, outlined the government's ambitions in addressing alcohol-related harm. The strategy includes a number of areas for action, including for people to understand that it is not acceptable to drink in ways that could cause harm to themselves or others and partnership working and supporting people to change. In Coventry, preventing alcohol related harm, intervening early, facilitating partnership working and integrated services are priorities for both the treatment services and partnership strategy for the next three years.

### Providing recovery focused treatment

The national Drug Strategy, published in 2010, outlined the ambition to provide recovery-focused treatment in the UK rather than a maintenance programme focused on harm minimisation as previously advocated. It also strengthened the focus on families, carers and communities, to build recovery in the communities. It recognises that the causes of dependence are complex and solutions need to be holistic. In Coventry, promoting recovery and empowering families, carers and communities are priority areas for both the treatment services and partnership strategy for the next three years.

## Regional

### Working together to reduce the burden of mental ill health across the West Midlands

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has identified poor mental health and wellbeing as a significant issue for the region, not only in terms of the effects for individuals and families, but more widely on their communities and the economy of the area. The WMCA Mental Health Commission Report, launched in 2017, has several suggested actions including supporting people into work, providing safe and stable places to live and engaging the community. Several areas within the Drug and Alcohol strategic priorities align with these actions, which will contribute to supporting the recovery of those taking drugs or drinking at harmful levels who also have mental health issues.



# Local

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To ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board maximises the health, wealth and happiness of residents in Coventry, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Coventry (2016 –2019) focuses on three priorities:

## **1) Working together as a Marmot City to reduce health inequalities**

Since 2013, partners across Coventry, including the Council, Police, Fire Service, NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group and the voluntary sector, have been working together as a Marmot City to reduce health inequalities, and are committed to continue to do so until 2019. Through a number of different projects and interventions, and different ways of working, partners are improving the health, wellbeing and life chances of Coventry's most vulnerable residents and are contributing to a reduction in health inequalities.

The harms from alcohol and drug misuse are greatest in the more deprived areas of the city. Intervening early, with 'at-risk' groups and when people are in greatest need of support is critical to successfully empower individuals to take control of their own lives. As well as the population in more deprived areas, 'at risk' groups also include a diverse range of individuals who are particularly susceptible to either the physical or psychological harm of drug and/or alcohol misuse and are more likely than others to experience adverse outcomes of alcohol and/or drug misuse.

Having the Marmot principles embedded into this strategy (as well as core functions of the council and its partners) will support proportionally targeted interventions, which will help to reduce health inequalities in Coventry.

## **2) Improving the health and wellbeing of individuals with multiple complex needs**

By working in partnership we will enable people with multiple complex needs to manage their lives better through services that are person-centred and co-ordinated. This will contribute toward improving the health and wellbeing of individuals with multiple complex needs. This will also lead to a reduction in offending, anti-social behaviour and demand for services. Through managing demand, delivering better co-ordinated services and empowering and enabling individuals to maximise control over their lives, this work can deliver financial savings for public services, as well as improved outcomes for the most vulnerable people in Coventry. By working together we will be better able to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns with children and vulnerable adults.

## **3) Developing an integrated health and care system that provides the right help and support to enable people to live their lives well**

The Coventry and Warwickshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan aims to deliver the NHS Five Year Forward View and make health services sustainable for the future. Preventing people from becoming ill and intervening early to manage conditions are crucial to managing demand. Preventing alcohol related hospital admissions, working across the health and care system to deliver alcohol interventions and brief advice and delivering this drug and alcohol strategy will help to prevent long term conditions and improve health and wellbeing, reducing the pressure on health and care services and contributing to the delivery of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

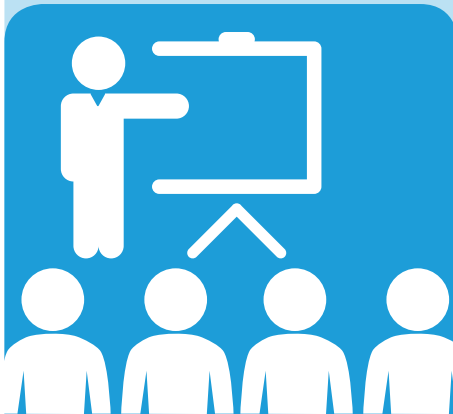
These local priorities align with the vision in the Council plan 2016 – 2024, which is for Coventry to become a Top Ten City by, amongst other factors, improving the quality of life for Coventry people (other indices that allow the city to be compared include the gross value added of the city's economy, perceptions of the city as a good place to live and the city's reputation and representation on the national and international stage).

# Strategic Priority 1:

## Prevent people from taking drugs or drinking harmful levels of alcohol and intervene early to minimise harm

The early identification of people engaged in drug or alcohol related risky behaviour is a key first step in delivering effective interventions, and the promotion of positive and responsible behaviours around alcohol and drug misuse is crucial, enabling individuals to make informed choices.

Targeted prevention services are central to this approach in Coventry. Information will be provided to those at risk of drug and alcohol misuse through skilled frontline workers who are able to have challenging conversations about harmful levels of use and addiction.



### Provide targeted and comprehensive education and training

- Train front line professionals working with young people to spot the signs of alcohol and drug misuse in young people and raise awareness of potential risk factors and what action to take.
- Increase awareness of what support is available including services and community support
- Ensure education and information reaches all groups, including schools, universities and employers
- Educate people about the impact of their behaviours, especially on their families
- Develop Coventry population wide understanding of alcohol and substance misuse



### Transform Coventry's culture in relation to drugs and alcohol

- Engage with communities to build strength and resilience at a local level, and work in partnership, including with the community, to promote safe drinking and prevent the use of drugs, using appropriately targeted campaigns and licensing powers as appropriate
- Control the supply of alcohol and promote safe drinking environments.
- Map alcohol and drug related health incidents along with licensed premises, to inform the provision and density of licenses in key locations and to identify the need for targeted licensing control
- Challenge the public perception of services and of drug and alcohol problems

- Work together to change cultural and social norms in relation to drugs and alcohol
- Work with the universities to tackle students drinking in harmful ways
- Adopt a zero alcohol in pregnancy approach



### **Tackle alcohol and drug related crime**

- Work with all partners, including the community, to gather intelligence and restrict the supply of illegal drugs
- Work in partnership to tackle supply and drug-dealing in Coventry, particularly in the city's deprived areas, including working with businesses in the night-time economy to take a zero-tolerance approach to drug use on the premises
- Use Conditional Cautioning for those drug-offenders (18 years old and over) that are deemed suitable, offering the offender a rehabilitative condition. For those under 18, manage the offender appropriately to look at rehabilitation or education, rather than a court appearance
- Reduce substance misuse related crime and re/offending



### **Reduce the risk of people developing multiple complex needs**

- Prevent adverse childhood experiences through supporting parents and developing robust safeguarding pathways
- Intervene with younger children identified as being at risk of substance misuse, poor sexual health, poor or abusive relationships and teenage pregnancy to prevent problems escalating
- Monitor the changing patterns of drug use, including new psychoactive substances and problematic use of medicines and use multi-faceted responses
- Identify and work with those at risk of developing multiple complex needs

# Strategic Priority 2:

## Support those with drug and/or alcohol problems and those with multiple complex needs

**The misuse of alcohol and drugs can have a detrimental effect on a person's physical and mental health and wider wellbeing. It accounts for poor health outcomes, health inequalities and significant demands on the resources of many public services.**

**Re-commissioning of drug and alcohol services in Coventry will enable a robust approach to outcome based and recovery focused services from November 2017. The new service model will have four integral parts, consisting of Adults Drug & Alcohol Recovery; Young Person's Substance Misuse (to be commissioned separately post April 2018); City Centre Late Night Triage; and Prevention, Advocacy & Family Support.**

**Services will be characterised by the ability to motivate and support people to achieve both short and longer term recovery goals through evidence based and innovative approaches. Recovery will be explicit in everything done to support people to make the changes they need to lead purposeful and fulfilling lives. The services will support people to recover and to live happy and healthy lives free from harmful drug and alcohol use.**



### Person centred and accessible support

- Professionals from a wide range of services aware of the support available and delivered to encourage engagement and not create barriers to any sections of the community
- Significant city centre presence, with additional community based services including active outreach, community venues and home visits for people in crisis, co-locating services with partner agencies where appropriate
- Services will be welcoming and non-judgemental, with clearly visible information about the support and services available.



### Reducing harm

- Use Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) to reduce drinking among people consuming alcohol at increasing risk levels
- Train front line professionals to identify and support young people that may turn to drugs or alcohol
- Support those that have the greatest influences on young people to prevent harmful drinking. Work across the board to increase engagement and keep people engaged
- Provide a street-side, mobile injury service in Coventry city centre to reduce the number of non-emergency alcohol-related attendances at A&E and the ambulance trips needed and to prevent drug and alcohol related deaths

- Work with the Alcohol Liaison Nurse to improve the pathway from hospital to community treatment
- Educate individuals, families and carers on the risks of overdose and how to respond in an emergency (including the use of naloxone by those trained) to prevent drug related deaths

### **Continuously improving and developing services**

- Encourage all providers and staff to make best use of local services, both statutory and voluntary agencies, as well as community groups and faith organisations, so that individuals are aware of, and can access, a full range of local support
- Work collaboratively to continually develop and improve the local recovery system in line with local need and the health and wellbeing strategy priorities
- Develop good working relationships with community based statutory and voluntary services to support delivery of positive outcomes
- Commit to innovation, service development and continuous improvement to provide the best treatment and support possible for the people of Coventry.
- Develop and adhere to a clear transition pathway between adults and young people's treatment services

### **Supporting individuals with multiple complex needs**

- Improve links between services to support those with multiple complex needs (for example homelessness services, probation, youth offending services, domestic violence services, sexual health services, sexual violence services, safeguarding and mental health services)
- Provide outreach in homeless shelters
- Automatically discuss referrals to substance misuse services for offenders with a known history of substance misuse
- Establish clear and robust pathways into and between services, including, but not limited to, safeguarding, domestic violence and mental health services
- Implement any future recommendations from Coventry's Health and Wellbeing Strategy to improve outcomes for people with multiple complex needs.



# Strategic Priority 3:

## Promote sustainable recovery and enable people to live healthy, safe and meaningful lives

Recovery is a pathway through which an individual is able to progress on from their problem drug or alcohol use, towards a life as an active and contributing member of society. It incorporates the principle that recovery is most effective when individuals' needs and aspirations become the central core of their care and treatment. Recovery is an aspirational, person-centred process.

In practice, recovery will mean different things, at different times to each individual person. The 'road to recovery' might mean a combination of developing the skills to prevent relapse, rebuilding broken relationships, forging new ones or actively engaging in meaningful activities.



### Provide specialist treatment to help people to recover

- Focus on helping and providing specialist treatment for people to recover and live healthy and happy lives, free from harmful alcohol and drug use
- Improve the health and well-being of family members and carers affected by someone else's substance misuse
- Enable the family to have a role in supporting the individual and promoting resilience to reduce future problematic drug, alcohol and substance misuse issues
- Facilitate peer support and mutual aid networks so that communities become empowered and individuals who have exited services can continue to receive support that enables them to sustain their recovery.



### Support people into employment

- Enable individuals to become work ready (supporting them to access employment services, education or training) and capable of sustained employment
- Advise and support employers to have the confidence to offer work to individuals in recovery
- Work with employer organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and The Employer Hub (Job Shop) in order to increase employers' knowledge about alcohol and drug recovery, as well as associated mental health issues



- Increase opportunities for work placements and volunteering for individuals in recovery
- Support employers to identify employees at risk and encourage these employees to engage with the available services, to keep employees in work



### **Provide skills to enable financial stability**

- Facilitate successful integration into the community by providing financial support, and linking in with appropriate community organisations to provide a seamless pathway to the individual going through recovery



### **Support access to suitable and sustainable accommodation**

- Ensure service users move away from sleeping on the streets and in unstable accommodation and access more stable accommodation
- Tenancy support to be offered to people moving from recovery into sustainable housing provided by registered social landlords
- Enable access to Safe and Well Checks by West Midlands Fire Service for vulnerable people



### **Support the development of a robust recovery community**

- Help people who are on their journey through recovering from drug and alcohol misuse to sustain their recovery, through developing and supporting the recovery community
- Provide a range of peer support options and groups, building capacity to do more to support people at every stage of their journey, and utilising Recovery Champions
- Support with peer mentoring and volunteering opportunities
- Take an asset-based community development approach to mobilising existing assets
- Deliver activities around and beyond the treatment system, which help individuals to build personal, social and community recovery capital

# Delivering the strategic priorities

Alcohol and drug issues and the associated positive outcomes that have already been achieved will be strengthened by continuing to make the best use of resources by working together across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Police and Crime Board are accountable for delivering this strategy in partnership with other organisations across the city. By utilising innovative approaches to tackle alcohol harm and drug misuse we can ensure that Coventry expands on the successes of our services to date.

An action plan will be created to successfully deliver the vision and strategic priorities set out in this document, in line with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Through this action plan, partners in Coventry will:

- Ensure health, and the conditions which affect health, are considered in all policies and decision making across Coventry City Council and other organisations in Coventry.
- Commission in new ways, which maximises health outcomes and social value from investments.
- Enable and empower local people, communities and groups to use and develop their own skills and potential to take control over their own lives.
- Target resources based on need, and targeting interventions in the right places
- Prioritise prevention and early intervention.







