



Committee and Date

People Overview Committee

3 March 2020

Item

Public

Young people's Substance Misuse Services

Responsible Officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 The 2017 Drug Strategy is clear that young people's specialist substance misuse services should be integral to wider children services. In Shropshire this has been achieved through the work of the specialist service and their participation at both strategic and operational level. This report will provide an overview of the service and the level of vulnerabilities they work with.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended Committee Members note the contents of this report and the service available to support young people and their families in Shropshire.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 As part of a large specialist charity in substance misuse the service is able to share learning and respond to needs quickly. As with all charities there are additional opportunities to apply for funding that is not available to local authorities and We Are With You have been successful in some national bids. Although Shropshire has not been cited to receive funding, it does benefit from the learning from those projects.

3.2 Workforce is a major risk within all substance misuse services and is been recognised nationally. To date the young people's substance misuse service has managed to recruit to any vacancies, however, this is not the national picture. The service is currently at capacity and has periodically had to introduce waiting lists when waiting to finish the recruitment process.

3.3 If the service continues to experience an increase in the number of people entering treatment capacity and waiting times will become an issue. Under the national quality standards no one (young person or adult) should wait more than three weeks from referral to first assessment. The service capacity will be closely monitored to ensure the needs of young people can be met safely.

4.0 Financial assessment

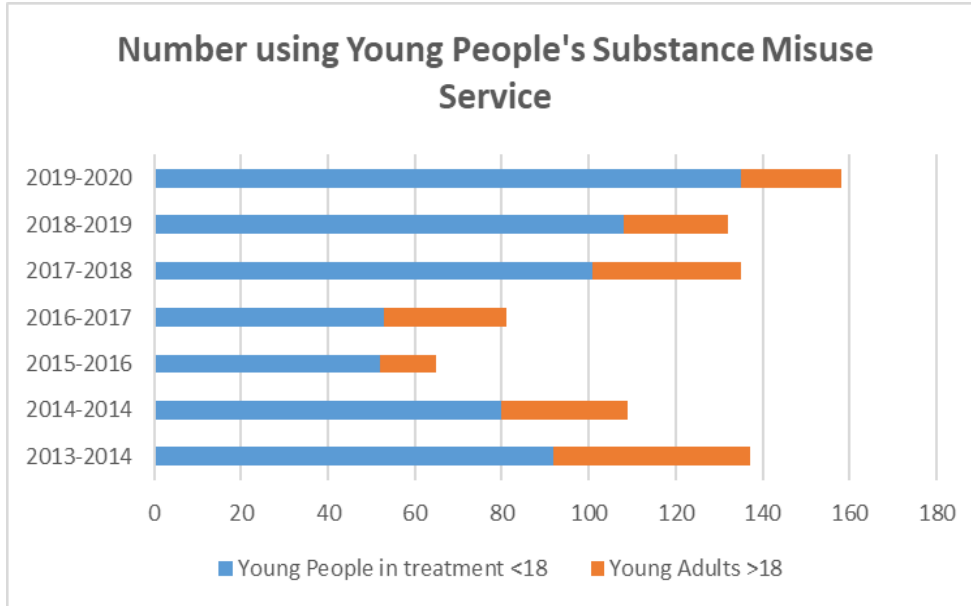
- 4.1 There are no financial considerations at this point, however, if numbers in treatment continue to rise further, investment in capacity may be needed to ensure the quality of the service delivered is maintained.

5.0 Report

- 5.1 The National Drug Strategy 2017 sets out that young people's substance misuse specialist services should be closely linked to the wider children's workforce. In Shropshire this service is provided through We Are With You (WAWY), a national charity with 50 years' experience in the field, they also provide the adult community service.
- 5.2 We Are With You Young People's Service (WAWYYPS) provides a confidential service to young people aged 10 to 18 years of age and their families who are experiencing problematic drug and alcohol use. The service also offers support to young adults who have been looked after by the local authority and those with special educational needs until they are aged 21 years. In some circumstances they will not transfer young adults into the adult service when they come of age if it is assessed their needs are better met in the YP service, otherwise transitional support is provided
- 5.3 The majority of young people who seek help from the service are not usually dependent, however their substance using behaviour will be impacting on their education, relationships and longer term life chances. Offering early interventions, harm reduction, structured one to one and targeted support the service works with the young person to move them towards positive activities, building resilience and enabling them to make informed choices.
- 5.4 The service does not have a base, young people are worked with in any setting they choose, this could be at home, at school or in another community building of their choice. During the pandemic the majority of the service has been undertaken using media platforms. The service is also very visible on a number of social media platforms, using them to promote harm reduction messages therefore increasing knowledge of harm.
- 5.5 A dedicated confidential helpline is also available for parents who may have concerns about their young people regardless of whether the young person is engaged in treatment.
- Treatment Population*
- 5.6 Following a decrease in the number of young people coming into treatment during 2015 – 2016 the young people's team reviewed its referral process. In 2017 the SMARTER screening tool was launched to support early identification. Adopted by the safeguarding partnership, the team have supported the roll out the tool training a range of children and young people's service staff across both health

and social care. Since the launch of the tool referrals into the service have increased (Graph 1), this bucks the national trend that has seen a decline in the number of young people entering treatment during the same period. Access to treatment has been further strengthened by the introduction of the single point of contact.

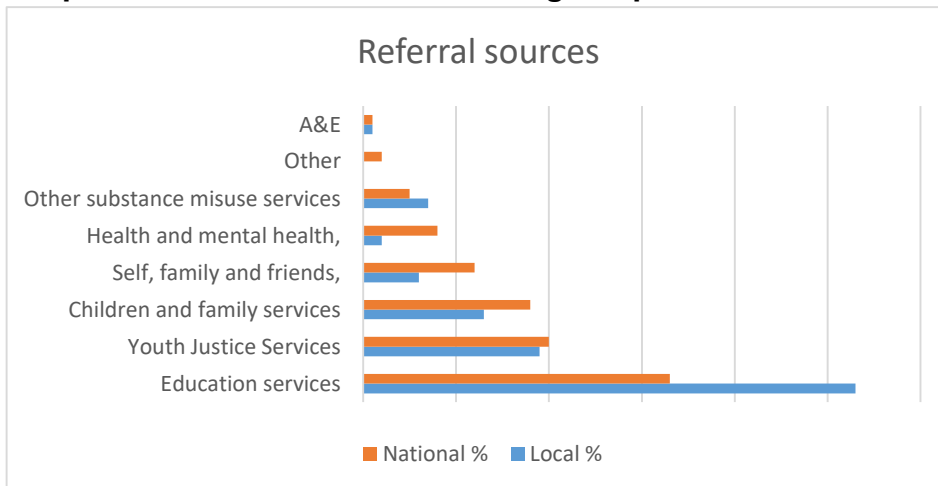
Graph 1: Number of Young People in treatment from 2013 -2020



PHE Commissioning Pack 2013-2014 to -2020-2021

5.7 The majority of local referrals come through the education route. This is encouraging as it means young people are been identified before issues escalate, it also demonstrates the close working relationship the service has with education colleagues. It is acknowledged further work is needed to improve the pathway with SATH and young people’s mental health services.

Graph 2 Referral sources into Young People’s services 2019-2020



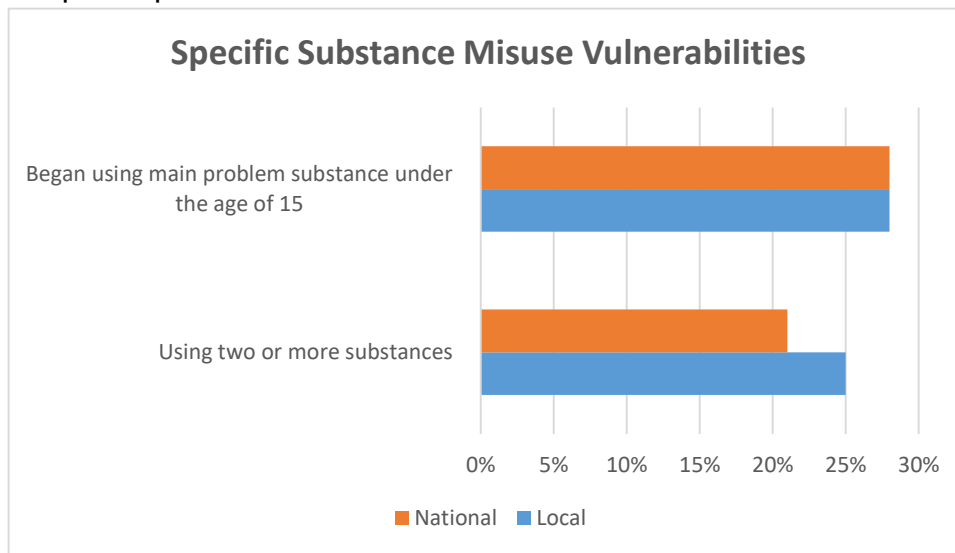
PHE Commissioning Pack 2020-2021

5.8 Many young people receiving specialist interventions for substance misuse have a range of vulnerabilities. The types of vulnerabilities and risks young people

disclose at the start of treatment can include domestic abuse, not in education or training, self-harm, poor mental health and exploitation. In 2019 -2020 47% of young people who entered service identified they had a mental health need, of which 55% were receiving help for this. Where young people require mental health specialist support the team will make appropriate referrals for service, if the young person is already receiving support the team works closely with the allocated worker and any other involved services on the young person care plan.

5.9 Two specific vulnerabilities associated with substance use is the number of substances being used and the age when regular use began (Graph 3). Early onset of drug and alcohol use is a predictor of problematic later life use.

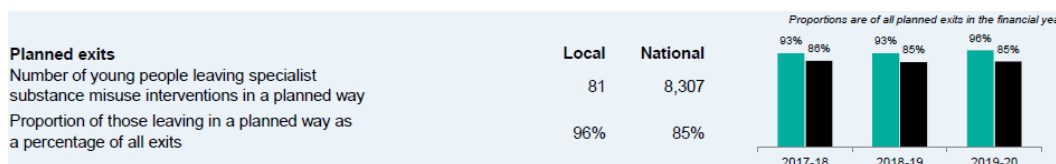
Graph 3 Specific substance misuse vulnerabilities 2019-2020



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5.10 The main substance of choice continues to be cannabis both locally and nationally. Research undertaken by WAWYYPS found cannabis to be a favoured drug used by gangs in criminal exploitation. The graph below illustrates the substance using profile of the young people who entered treatment during 2019-2020. A concerning feature at both the local and national level is the use of heroin, whilst numbers are very small it is a substance for a number of years young people did not use.

5.11 The majority of young people (96%) leave treatment do so in a planned way.



Local ● National ●

PHE Commissioning Pack 2020-2021

6.0 Partnerships

- 6.1 To support young people effectively there needs to be a holistic approach. WAWYYPS works in partnership with a range of agencies and services to ensure the young person is getting the right level of support at the right time. The team is a member of the exploitation panel and has supported the work within schools to raise the issues of exploitation to parents. Exploitation is a key area of work for the team and they are very accomplished working with young people, their families and other children and education services. The presentation accompanying this report will provide a case study of the work they do in this area.
- 6.2 In respect of wider strategic planning to prevent problematic drug and alcohol issues there are two key work streams currently in progress led by public health and supported by the young people's service. The first is the work around the hidden harm agenda that is focused on identifying children and young people who may be affected by parental or others substance misuse. A joint working protocol was adopted a few years ago by the safeguarding board and is currently under review.
- 6.3 The second is a piece of work is the review of the drug and alcohol schools policy for schools with a particular emphasis on safeguarding and exploitation. This work is in response to the increasing number of exclusions in the county where drug and alcohol is a factor. It supports the wider strategic work of the exclusion and exploitation group of the Shropshire Safeguarding and Community Partnership.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Young people's substance misuse service in Shropshire form an integral part of services available to support young people. The team offers a range of interventions to meet needs and is flexible in their approach. Supporting a wider partnership approach is the strategic work underway to prevent and reduce further drug and alcohol misuse in young people.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

[2017 Drug Strategy](#)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Dean Carroll

Local Member

Meeting, date: Report heading

All

Appendices