



**Combating Drugs Partnership
Progress Report
July 2023**

Foreword by the Chair

As Chair of the Combating Drugs Partnership, I am pleased to present the first stage report on work the partnership are undertaking at a local level to deliver the Government's 10 Year Strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. It is worth emphasising that delivery of the strategy is not the sole responsibility of any one agency but will require collaboration from across a variety of partners to enable successful delivery and make a real difference to the communities of Cumbria.

It is expected nationally that each area of the country will have a Combating Drugs Partnership in place to deliver against the three main aims of the 'From Harm to Hope' strategy:

- Break Drug Supply Chains
- Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system
- Achieve a generational shift in the demand for drugs.

In Cumbria the function of a Combating Drugs Partnership sits with the already established Safer Cumbria Partnership, where all responsible authorities to the strategy are present along with wider stakeholders. This provides the ideal platform for a truly joined up approach for service delivery. This is further strengthened through the operational arm of the partnership and the Cumbria Addictions Board which is Co-Chaired by Public Health and Cumbria Police. This group widens stakeholder involvement even further with the inclusion of third sector partners and in particular the significant benefits of a Lived Experienced organisation which has been invaluable to the successful interventions we have put in place, the details of which are included later in the report.

Significant work has taken place to identify the issues specific to our rural county of Cumbria, which can differ greatly from some of the larger urban areas of the country. Through understanding our need we can ensure that we direct resources from across our organisations to achieve maximum benefit and by working collectively we can alleviate the risk of duplication.

I would like to recognise that the successful delivery of the 'From Harm to Hope' ten year strategy can only be achieved through considerable support of all the organisation involved in the partnership. I would therefore like to thank everyone involved for their efforts, commitment and enthusiasm for this important work.

Peter McCall

Chair, Safer Cumbria Partnership
Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria

Vision

For a county with lower-than-average levels of drug and alcohol misuse, a world class treatment and recovery system, and where individual and social harms of addictions are minimised, especially where these impact on children and families.

Following the Dame Carol Black independent review of drugs in 2020 and 2021, the Government responded with the national drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope' – a 10 year strategy for combating drug related crime and reducing drug related harms.

From Harm to Hope focusses on reducing supply and demand for illegal drugs and delivering a high-quality drug treatment and recovery system. The priorities are to :

Break drug supply chains

Deliver world class treatment and recovery services

Achieve a generational shift in the demand for drugs

Government required local areas to respond to the national strategy and guidance stipulated

- The nomination of a senior responsible owner to be nationally accountable for the work
- Formation of a multiagency Combating Drugs Partnership
- To produce a Joint Strategic Drugs Needs Assessment
- To produce a local delivery plan

Prior to the publication of the national drugs strategy and requirements for local areas, multiagency partnerships groups were already established in Cumbria.

The Safer Cumbria Partnership provides a platform for organisations to deliver a coordinated approach to criminal justice, the serious violence duty and counter terrorism, and therefore is well placed to offer governance and strategic oversight as the Senior Responsible Owner to be nationally accountable for the work. In these terms, the Safer Cumbria Partnership is Cumbria's local Combating Drugs Partnership.

The Cumbria Addictions Board held its inaugural meeting in December 2021, formed as a multiagency forum to develop a joint, strategic approach to tackling addictions in Cumbria. The Board also delegates work to subject specific subgroups. This Board provides the operational function to deliver the work on combating drugs, and is jointly chaired by Cumbria Police and Public Health.

The organogram at Appendix 1 shows the Combating Drugs reporting structure and subgroups.

Safer Cumbria Drug and Alcohol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

To inform the local response, data was reviewed to provide a baseline along with highlighting several areas for improvement and focus.

Drug related harms



The rate of Cumbria deaths from drug poisoning were more than twice the England average.



Alcohol related death rates have increased and are worse than the England average.



Hospital admission rates for drug and alcohol related causes are all worse than the England average, but are improving.

Drug demand, misuse and treatment



Misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines is higher than average.



82% of Cumbrian adults with alcohol dependence are not in treatment.



The proportion of service users successfully completing treatment in Cumbria is below the England average.

Drug and alcohol related crime



Baseline levels of drug related crime are lower in Cumbria than the national average.



Alcohol related incidents of crime decreased during the pandemic but have recently increased by 19%.

Using findings from the JSNA and acknowledged areas for improvement, a series of recommendations were identified and developed into a delivery plan.

These recommendations and actions are progressed through the Cumbria Addictions Board with lead partners providing quarterly updates.

Priorities in Cumbria are

- Reducing the number of drug related deaths
- Increasing the number of people in treatment, and successfully completing treatment
- Reducing the number of county lines operating in Cumbria and their associated impacts

How will we measure success?

As a partnership data will be monitored at local and national levels, and pieces of work will be evaluated. Overall success would show:

- Visible recovery in our communities – an increase in people accessing treatment and support services
- A reduction in drugs/substance misuse deaths
- A reduction in crime linked to county lines activity

Progress so far ...

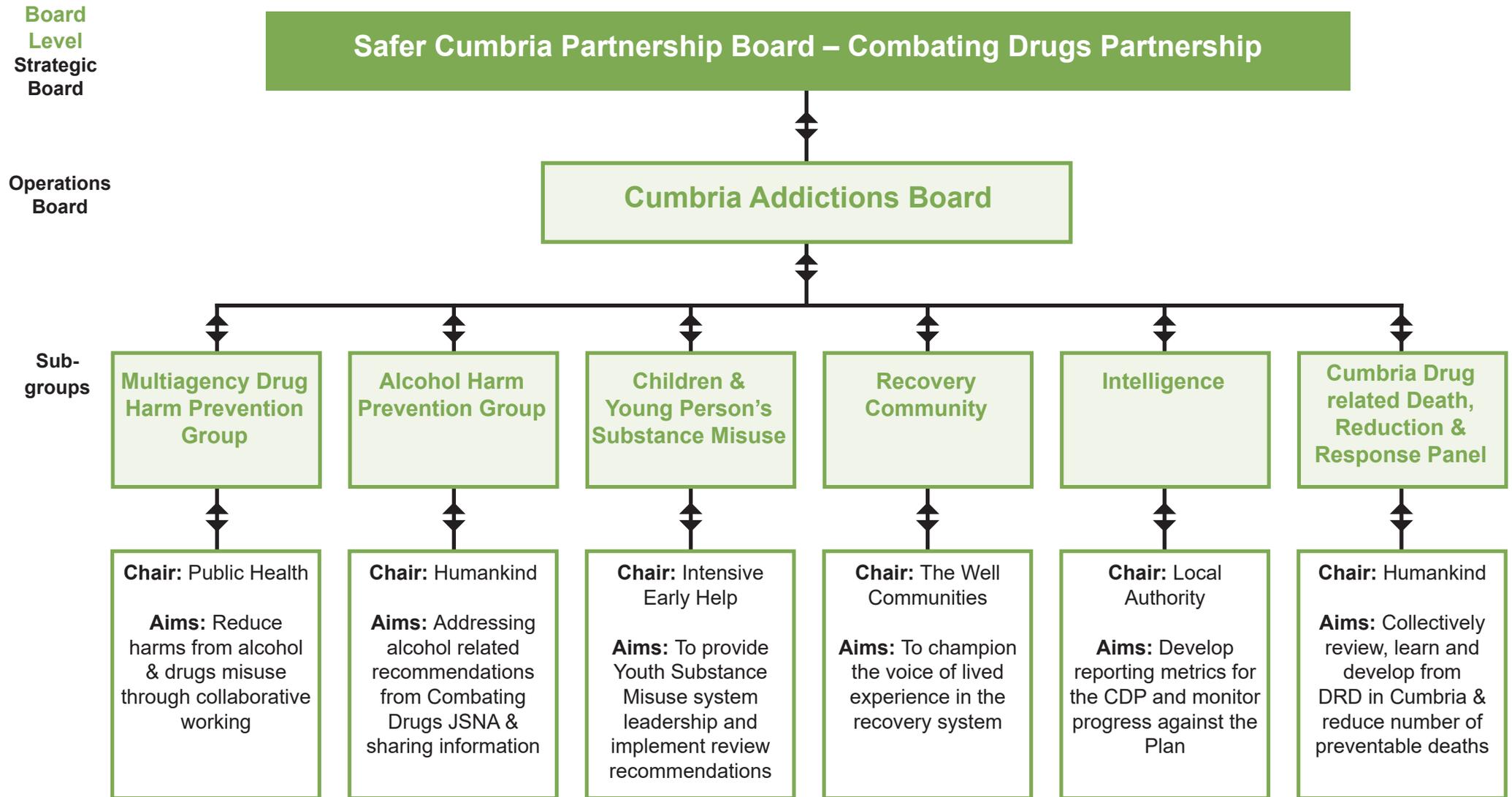
An overview of the 1CLIC pilot project is attached at Appendix 2. Future progress reports will feature themed overviews of work that is addressing priorities in Cumbria. A selection of work to date that contributes towards our aims is below:

- Dedicated posts to support Combating Drugs work
- Alcohol Subgroup launched in March 2023
- Children & Young People's Substance Misuse Subgroup established in May 2023
- Introducing a drug related deaths surveillance system
- Roll out of naloxone training to services and community organisations
- Consistent harm reduction advice
- Review of the Cumbria Youth Substance Misuse System complete
- Over 300 young people were supported by the Youth Substance Misuse System during 2022-23
- Trauma Informed Westmorland & Furness
- Launch of CLEV (Cumbria Lived Experience Voices) in May 2023
- Hospital in reach to encourage patient engagement with addictions services
- Number of people completing treatment and alcohol detoxes are both increasing
- Positive outcomes from psychosocial interventions
- Continuity of care rates (treatment after prison release) are increasing
- Work around pathways into treatment
- Monthly harm reduction training sessions including using naloxone
- Naloxone training delivered to 51 frontline Probation Officers
- Wound care training available to all staff across Recovery Steps Cumbria

Next steps

The Cumbria Addictions Board will continue to work with partners to progress the strategy aims, continually monitor data, and will be holding a workshop event for partners later in the year.

Appendix 1 - Combating Drugs Partnership Structure



Appendix 2 - 1 CLIC (County Lines* Informed Cumbria)

The 1 CLIC Pilot operates in Barrow in the south of the county and is currently funded by the Cumbria Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. The project identifies vulnerable people who are most at risk of being approached by County Lines gangs and provides dedicated support to enable them to move away from potential criminal behaviour and to make positive life decisions.

**'County Lines' is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phones lines or other forms of 'deal line'.*

The Problem:

- Embedded County Lines issues within the south of the county
- Most drug deaths as a percentage of population within Europe
- County Lines gangs using a network of local offenders/victims to facilitate their activity in Cumbria

Prevent – An effective form of attack:

- Funding provided through the PFCC to assign a single officer to the role of Prevention and Diversion Officer.
- Links to dedicated data from the Police to task the Prevention and Diversion Officer.
- The Prevent role to remain flexible, to respond immediately to vulnerable individuals as risk of exploitation to offer immediate support through working closely with partners.

Partners:

- Relationships built with partners to enable access to services more effectively
- Information Sharing agreements put in place quickly and the ethos of a multi agency approach developed
- Simple referral mechanisms put in place which has resulted in an increase in referrals
- Co-location for ease of partnership working.
- Training provided to partners to help spot the signs, including student Police Officers

The Intervention 1 CLIC:

- 1 CLIC is a partnership between Cumbria Police and the Well Communities, Lived Experience Organisation
- The Prevention and Diversion Officer works with a dedicated staff member from the Well Communities in response to County Lines and those affected
- The Well Communities Staff member has lived experience around substance misuse, this has helped to break down barriers
- 1 CLIC has allowed increased access to the Well Communities to facilitate and support social engagement and a simplified way to access required services
- Vulnerability visits have quickly identified persons at risk of being cuckooed and support put in place
- Frequent visits to premises and hot spots have deterred County Lines activity pushing it out of areas
- Actively visiting persons connected to County Lines and gaining them support has removed some of the most embedded nominals
- Additional security measures provided at vulnerable people's homes to allow push back from approaches
- Documentation left to show Police have visited to make premises unappealing for County Lines to operate from.

Outcomes:

- Significant reduction in the number of County Lines in South Cumbria
- High number of Vulnerability Visits to the most vulnerable in the community
- In year one 45 individuals received a minimum of 2 visits per week, plus 81 individuals supported in the community
- In order to make young people aware and prevent future risk, input was provided to schools/ colleges capturing over 850 students
- Successful outcomes for individuals involved, as outlined in the case studies below.

Case Studies

Case Study 1:

Young Male dismissed from his job due to failing a drugs test at work, his life was spiralling out of control with the individual using approximately £1000 of cocaine weekly – while no longer in employment he was on the fringe of criminality.

Multiple visits were made to his home to offer support and referrals made for substance misuse and housing needs. Treatment was arranged at The Well Communities and he was picked up and taken on his first day, as was nervous about attending. Initially attendance at treatment dropped off, but further visits were made through 1 CLIC which provided the support to reengage with the treatment provision.

Now fully engaged in treatment, has a new circle of friends from the residential program that he spends time with at night-time. He has provided numerous negative drug tests, is no longer using and has been clean for over 90 days. He is now looking at ways to finish his apprenticeship for future job opportunities.

Case Study 2:

Adult Female who has been a Class A user for over 20 years having served several custodial sentences for drugs offences. The individual had previously housed County Lines members and had been engaged in their activity.

Upon release from her last sentence she had experienced three overdoses in a short time frame and was again involved in County Lines activity and was providing positive drugs tests and was looking likely to be recalled to prison, or was at risk of serious health issues or even death. Multiple visits and engagement was applied to provide support and build trust.

Treatment was provided but out of her home town. She returned to her home town and treatment appointments were arranged, with a change in medication and transportation to treatment and housing providers were arranged.

The individual is currently clean for over 90 days and has provided numerous negative drugs tests and is engaging well and no longer in contact with County Lines nominals.

Service User Experience

“What was different this time was they came to see me as soon I got out and offered support and practical help. They supported me to get housed and help with appointments, they actually took me and supported me at appointments. That was a big help in itself.”

“I suppose the catalyst was losing my job. I was driving drug deals and if it hadn't been for the individuals involved in 1 CLIC I would have probably committed suicide. I had lost friends and those close to me, was using cocaine and just running my life into the ground. I was degrading my life and heading towards death or jail.

I think the big thing was the empathy they both showed me. They saw my problem from my point of view and offered to help me. As a team they are the perfect mix, so you have The Well Communities member who has lived my life and the Officer who I wanted to admit my wrongs to.”

“I knew the police officer from the drugs squad over the years and him and The Well Communities have been brilliant, you know the Officer is straight up with you – I feel comfortable and there is no judgement. With the Well Communities it is the same, and I have respect as he has been there himself.”

“I would recommend them (the team) to everyone. For the first time I have been clean for two months and after six months I am going to buy myself a present and then my plan after a year of being clean is to buy myself a little dog. I am about to be a grandmother and I have things to look forward to. I am excited about seeing my grandchild and I have never felt so positive and have real hopes for the future. I can actually visualise a future now and that's down to 1 CLIC”

