

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children and Young People Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	26th March 2019	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Support and Services for the Children of Alcoholics	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This paper builds on the report discussed at the Panel on the 18th September 2018 where the Panel asked for an update on this Council's position in relation to *A Manifesto for Change* (signed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group)
<http://liambyrne.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Children-of-Alcoholics-A-Manifesto-for-Change-pages.pdf>
- 1.2 When the Council motion was passed the Council Members requested that the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) 'comment on the Council's support offer for the children of alcoholics' and for this comment to be shared with the Panel. The position has been shared with NACOA's Chief Executive and we await their feedback. Verbal feedback will be shared with the Panel if available at the time of the meeting. If this is not available it will be shared as soon as is possible.
- 1.3 The paper also seeks to assure the Panel that relevant 'policies, procedures and strategies recognise and address the needs of children of alcoholics' and furthermore sets out examples of the services and programmes commissioned to support children and young people who have a parent / carer who has problematic alcohol use.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel are asked to note the content of the report which provides assurance that the Council does focus on supporting children and young people who have parents/carers with problematic alcohol use.
- 2.2 The Panel are asked to decide whether they want to receive a further update once the feedback has been received from NACOA?

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 None

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 There is no specific statutory guidance on this however the Children and Families Act 2014; Children and Social Work Act 2017; Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 are some of the relevant legislation which sets out the Councils responsibility to protect children from significant harm.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report sets out the following:

- The 10 Manifesto points and a local response to these. Included within the responses are the local strategies (from which the policies and procedures are developed) which are relevant to children and families where alcohol adversely affects their lives.
- Provides additional information on commissioned services and tools available to support children and practitioners in their day to day work.

5.2 A Manifesto For Change – B&NES position in relation to the ten point identified for action by the All Party Parliamentary Group:

5.2.1 Point 1: Government needs to take responsibility for children of alcoholics and Point 2: Create a national strategy for children of alcoholics

The Manifesto highlights the need for Government to recognise children of alcoholics within existing alcohol policy and mental health services and create a national strategy.

B&NES has a number of existing Strategies which recognise the need to support children of parents who misuse substances and which have a specific focus on this. Please note the list below which provide assurance that the impact of parental alcohol is embedded in the work of the Council and partner agencies:

- **Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2014 – 2019**

B&NES has a multi-agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Steering Group which delivers the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. A key outcome is that children grow up free from alcohol related harm. Throughout the Strategy parental alcohol misuse is referenced and on page 17 there is reference to support services being commissioned as a result of the previous plan. These have

continued to be commissioned. An example of the most recent work of the group includes training staff in the early identification of risk of foetal alcohol syndrome and alcohol awareness campaigns (Dry January and Alcohol Awareness Week).

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Public-Health/alcohol_harm_reduction_strategy_2014-2019.pdf

- **Children and Young People Plan 2018-2021**

Priority 5 of the Children and Young People Plan is *'Increase the proportion of children and young people experiencing good emotional mental health, wellbeing and resilience'* and includes direct access to interventions which are referenced later in the report. It is implicit in the actions to achieve the priority that supporting children and young people with parental alcohol misuse is an area of focus. One of the key principles and commitments of the Plan is ensuring a Think Family Approach is taken. This is a common theme and shared focus running through all Strategies and Plans going forward. A multi-agency Think Family workshop was convened earlier in the year to take forward the work on articulating what Think Family means in B&NES.

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Children-and-Young-People/ChildProtection/children_and_young_peoples_plan_2018-2021.pdf

- **The Early Help Strategy Improvement Plan (2018 - 2019)**

This Plan also sets out the actions to develop our local Think Family Approach. One of the actions identified in this Plan is *'Identify and ensure that children and young people and families exposed to ... substance misuse... have access to coordinated early help if not receiving statutory support.'* The Plan also has the following action *'Pilot adult drug treatment and children's centre services working jointly to ensure children of parents in treatment have access to targeted early help.'* The Early Help Board oversees the Plan and reports in to the Children and Young People sub-committee and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

- **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation Plan (Oct 2018)**

Whilst the Plan doesn't have a direct action about alcohol misuse it sets out the preventative, targeted and specialist support for all young people including children who are distressed by their parents alcohol misuse. Page 17 references targeted Early Help Services providing support to children aged 5-13 years and page 56 identifies that parental substance misuse as a risk factor influencing the development of mental health problems and mental disorders in individuals (particularly children).

The link to the Plan is at the bottom of the following webpage:

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/strategies-policies-planning/children-and-young-peoples>

- **LSCB Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

This Plan also sets out its commitment to Think Family Approach in line with the other strategies mentioned above. This Plan focusses on prevention of harm to children (elements picked up through the work of the Early Help Board and Strategy) but also ensures those at risk or suffering harm are supported. There is a specific action included in it:

Assurance that children at risk experiencing the following are identified early and safeguarded: Children living with parents with mental health, domestic abuse and substance use (focus on hidden harm, disguised and non-compliance)

The LSCB undertook a piece of research to assure itself that children at risk of the complex trio were supported as mentioned in the previous report. The research identified a set of recommendations which have been approved and actioned by the LSCB and Local Safeguarding Adult Board to improve joint working.

https://www.safeguarding-bathnes.org.uk/sites/default/files/lscb_strategic_plan_on_a_page_2018-21_.pdf

The LSCB also has a **Protocol for Joint Working Across Adult Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services and Children's Social Care (Sept 2017)**. The Protocol sets out the pathway when there is a concern about the impact parental mental health and/or substance misuse on children or an unborn child. The LSCB also audit cases where the complex trio is identified and reports on the effectiveness of multi-agency working.

https://www.safeguarding-bathnes.org.uk/sites/default/files/lscb_protocol_for_joint_working_across_mental_health_drug_alcohol_services_and_csc.pdf

- **Finally Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Parenting Strategy (2016-2018)**

This Strategy emphasised the principle of a 'whole family approach with children and young people at the centre' by 'addressing wider (adult) issues such as substance misuse...' (p7). It goes on to say that 'Parents and carers will best be able to meet their overall needs of their children and families when their own needs, including ... substance misuse... are met.' (p8). Finally it states 'All staff working with adults need to consider the impact of the issues they are addressing on any children.' (p8). The Strategy includes the support available and this is referenced later in the report.

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Children-and-Young-People/ChildProtection/bnes_lscb_parenting_strategy_2016-18_nov_2016.pdf

The Strategy awaits a refresh however this has been paused whilst B&NES articulates the Think Family Approach mentioned above.

If a national strategy is delivered the Council will respond to this however in the meantime the information above provides evidence of this issue being addressed in B&NES.

5.2.2 Point 3: Properly funded local support facilities; Point 4: Increase availability of support for families battling addiction to alcohol and Point 10: Take Responsibility for Reducing Rates

5.2.2.1 A range of support services are available in B&NES for both children and parents.



The **Early Help** App and associated toolkit helps individuals and agencies identify the most appropriate support if there is concern about an emerging problem or risk factor, such as substance misuse (note if people cannot access the App the information is available through B&NES Council website). If there is a concern then either a direct referral to a support services can be made or a 'Request for Support' form can be completed which is considered by the Multi-agency Early Help Allocation Panel which meets fortnightly and is administered by the Council Connecting Families team. An Early Help Assessment (previously known as Common Assessment Framework CAF) may have already been recommended or be recommended, to assess the level of support needed. Support could be provided through either universal services or targeted support at the Early Help stage.

Available through Early Help are specific family support and play services for families. These services work alongside parents where parental issues are affecting family life (including alcohol misuse). Set out below are examples of some of these services:

1) Southside Family Support and Play services in partnership with Bath Area Play Project offer the following:

- Information about Help Lines, information and publications from NACOA including "Some mums and dads drink too much and it's frightening...."
- 1-1 sessions with children and young people are provided which include encouragement to remember the Three Cs – I didn't cause it, I can't control it, I can't cure it, I can take care of myself, I can communicate my feelings, I can make healthy choices.
- A therapeutic space for children and young people to work on and express their feelings using play and art therapy and sessions with therapeutic play workers
- Young Advocates Project for children/young people 12 years and above. Peer support for children to express their feelings and appreciate they are not alone.
- Family sessions that focus on the issues that affect the children in the family and positive goal setting (this is available for parents who misuse alcohol).

2) Children Centres (pre-birth to 5 years). The Council directly deliver Children's Centre Services which works alongside Developing Health and Independence Service (DHI) deliver a 'Families in Recovery' programme, specifically aimed at supporting parents who would not (or find it difficult to) take up other alcohol or substance-misuse services. Here, parents are encouraged to better understand their alcohol consumption (including how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) might impact on this), the potential impact on their children and to develop strategies to reduce their consumption and address associated health needs. The programme is for 10 weeks and is free of charge, it runs twice per year and parents develop goals and plan their way forward. A free children's group runs alongside this, it is staffed by qualified and skilled trauma-aware and 'Theraplay' trained Early Years Practitioners. At the end of each session parents and children are brought together to share in therapeutic Theraplay intervention. Feedback from one parent about the programme was as follows, *'Hearing the truth about the consequences for children was an eye-opener.'*

Children's Centre Services also offer groups for parents affected by other issues which often present alongside alcohol misuse. This includes Pebbles, a 10 week group for parents affected by parental mental health. This group also offers a free 'nurturing children's group' to reduce parents being deterred from attending.

The Council also directly deliver Connecting Families Service which work with families with children of alcoholics either those identified or receive referrals as this is one of the key criteria for the team. All of the staff are trained to use:

- Drink Think Tool (DHI – Project 28) is a tool used in relation to children's drinking
- Audit C for Adults (a tool which helps identify the level of and associated risk of alcohol consumption)
- Blue light training (helps practitioners develop new skills to work more effectively with people drinking at a harmful level)

Staff are also aware of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and can intervene appropriately. They work in a multi-agency way and will invite the most relevant professionals to the Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings / make referrals to other agencies as required such as to DHI, GP support for adults and other services such as Off the Record, School Nurse, Young Carers and / or Project 28 depending on the issues presented for the children and young people in the family home.

Connecting Families staff have used other services such as National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) helpline and phone counselling or Focus counselling or on line help such as Kooth (online support for young people) or the FRANK drug line. All of their interventions are carried out using motivational interview techniques so the families take control of their own choices therefore staff provide a tailored made package of support to work towards positive outcomes. However if parents do not engage staff will escalate their concerns to Children's Social Care so they are kept safe.

Early Help Case example

A mother living with her two children with a history of severe depression and alcohol dependency. Her eldest son had left school with no plans to continue education/ employment. The youngest son had low attendance at school and the mum is at risk of being prosecuted by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences.

The Connecting Families Team supported mum to engage with DHI and she started her six week detox programme. As a result she became more confident in her outlook and ability to stopping using alcohol altogether.

Mum was struggling to manage her youngest sons challenging behaviour, especially at bed times and morning routines on school days. The Connecting Families Key Worker (CFKW) explored anger through a creative graffiti and angry volcano activity, the outcome of this showed he was angry at night time because he was being sent to bed and was not tired, but grumpy in the mornings due to lack of sleep.

The CFWK explored with mum the family's diet and routines. It became apparent that the youngest son had a very high sugar intake and a poor diet, so they supported mum to be able draft a healthier eating plan, reducing the amount of sugary drinks and healthier meals and in setting in place a structured bedtime routine. This has made a huge difference to the child's behaviour; he is sleeping in his own bed and at an appropriate time. The mornings are much calmer now and mum is happy and more relaxed.

The CFWK supported the eldest son to apply for a Carpentry Course at the local college, which he has been accepted for and helped them to apply for financial help with the fees and equipment. They assisted for him to open up a bank account too.

The CFWK liaised with the youngest son's school to improve school and home links.

Mum feedback on the support she received. She said *"For the first time I am thinking about doing a course or even getting a job, now I can look forward – thank you so much for everything you're doing."*

This family have not been known to Social Care since closure in March 2018.

3) DHI Project 28 whilst primarily working with children who themselves misuse drugs and alcohol do offer brief intervention (1 session) for children who are affected by parental alcohol use.

4) Off the Record are also commissioned to provide school based and community based 1-1 counselling support for 11-18 year olds and school nurses are also commissioned to provide physical and mental health support for pupils. Both of these include support to children who are affected by parental alcohol use.

5) Midwifery Services have also incorporated aspects of Audit C if adults disclose issues with alcohol. They are then referred onto the Lotus team of midwives for more targeted support in this area.

5.2.2.2 When agencies feel that the need for a child is so great that the threshold may have been met for Council **Children’s Social Care** intervention a ‘Request for Service’ form is completed and sent to the Children Duty Team for consideration. This form asks the referrer to identify all presenting issues. Alcohol misuse is individually collected in order to capture this as a specific issue at the point of the referral and links are provided to support awareness and initiate referrals to appropriate support services straight away. Professionals are also encouraged to identify how this issue impacts on the child or young person at this stage. Below is the relevant section of this form.

Presenting Issue (please state whether adult or child or young person)	Please tick the main issues	How does the issue impact on the child, young person or family? Please provide evidence.
Alcohol misuse Audit C Screening Tool Drink Think Tool	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Once the Request is received questions are asked within the subsequent holistic assessment that then takes place. If a Plan is required Children Social Care will lead this and a Family Group Conference could be convened to bring together family and extended family in order to support the children and their parent/s who are experiencing difficulties. The Plan will identify which support services and actions are needed to ensure children are safe and emotionally supported (such as a referral to counselling support) and also the support the parent will need to keep their child safe – this can include residential or community drug and alcohol support.

There are clear guidelines on the South West Child Protection Procedures regarding this as well which staff refer to:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/banes/p_ch_par_misuse_subs.html?zoom_highlight=alcohol

Where the impact of the alcohol use is too great and children are at risk of significant harm it is possible the children will be cared for by the Council or other suitable carers. B&NES Children Services Permanence Team support kinship carers, special guardians and others who have taken on the care of children as a result of parental alcohol misuse.

Children Social Care captures information from all of the following points to help identify issues and respond appropriately:

Contact/ Request for Service Issue Alcohol misuse	Contact Issue/ Request for Service Substance drug misuse	Single Assessment Factors identified - Alcohol misuse	Single Assessment Factors identified - Substance drug misuse	CIN Plan Identified Substance/drug misuse	CP Plan Identified Substance/ drug misuse
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5.2.2.3 The Manifesto states that the Government needs to pay more attention by way of providing support facilities for those children alongside treatment facilities for existing alcoholics to reduce the prevalence and generational alcoholism.

B&NES commissions services from DHI and AWP Statutory Drug and Alcohol Service to support people with alcohol problems and to reduce the prevalence. These services are routinely monitored and are well established. They include community and residential treatment.

Children who are themselves misusing alcohol are also offered support which seeks to intervene at the earliest opportunity or when acute use is taking place; including via Project 28 and Youth Connect. Drink Think tools support awareness raising and staff at the project work directly with individuals and with groups of young people in their centre. Where there have been areas within the local area that are believed to be used by groups of young people using substances or alcohol, outreach support workers have been tasked by the project to disrupt behaviours, prevent exploitation opportunities of these young people and seek appropriate supports to enable sustained change.

In relation to reducing generational alcoholism this is picked up in the section below on awareness.

5.2.3 Point 5: Boost education and awareness for children and Point 6: Boost education and training for those with a responsibility for children

Below is a list of some of the education, training and awareness raising activities:

- An alcohol awareness session was created and available to all secondary schools for PHSE lessons.
- The CAMHS Transformation Plan (p16) notes that Mental Health resource packs for schools being developed and printed mental health resource packs for KS3, KS4 and 6th Form pupils. The resources were developed by the School Improvement team and the CAMHS participation team of young people. Following training in their use, hard copies of the resources have been distributed to all secondary schools and settings such as Project 28 (substance misuse service), Off The Record (Participation, Advocacy, Youth Forum provider), Connecting Families (Complex families service) etc. Mental health resource packs for KS1 and KS2 pupils were updated and re-launched during January 2017. Every Primary school has received a pack. The packs are now available on the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (CAMHS) website and schools will continue to be signposted to them via the Public Health Programme for schools and relevant training courses. These packs include reference to alcohol use.
- Secondary and Primary Schools also participate in the SHEU survey in 2017 and this is being conducted again in 2019. Whilst the survey doesn't ask questions on parental alcohol use it does ask children about their own use and this is a helpful indicator in respect of tackling generational alcoholism.
- Alcohol Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) training this was delivered by Public Health colleagues on a bespoke basis to health visitors, midwives and

community Paediatricians. The training was about getting families early help by identifying parental alcohol use and offering brief advice or referral as appropriate; it aimed to help staff learn how to raise the issue of alcohol with parents and enable the parents to have an honest conversation about how much they are drinking and the impact. It was also offered through the Childrens Workforce training to all agencies working with children.

- Childrens Drinking Working Group completed a number of actions in 2017/18 relating directly training practitioners and undertaking activities with children to raise awareness on alcohol (they did additional actions but they are not included in this paper):
 - Training event held for over 50 representatives of the children's workforce in B&NES
 - Alcohol lessons & activities for KS3 & 4 developed for schools & youth settings (YR10/11)
 - School Nursing alcohol screening tool question changed
 - Training has taken place at the RUH for nurses on the children's ward including alcohol misuse, CSE and safeguarding
 - Curo staff (including Pathways/Foyer staff) trained in alcohol identification and brief advice and blue light harm reduction approach
 - Development of training session for frontline staff in South West Ambulance Service Trust on alcohol misuse and safeguarding
 - Alcohol training included on the Children's workforce training programme for 18/19 (as mentioned above)
 - Training delivered to youth service staff in Southside
- The LSCB and Children Workforce Training programmes have the following training available for professionals:
 - Parental Substance Misuse, safeguarding and Child Protection courses – this is a one day course for those looking to refresh and build on their knowledge and skills to support children and families living in environments where parents or carers use of alcohol or drugs impacts on their parental capacity.
 - Complex / Toxic Trio, Safeguarding and Child Protection course - this is a one day course for those looking to refresh and build on their knowledge and skills to support children and families living in environments where parents or carers experience poor mental health, misuse substances and issues of domestic abuse impact on their parental capacity.
 - Complex / Toxic Trio Awareness, Safeguarding and Child Protection course - this is half day course for those looking to gain an awareness of how children are affected by the experience of living in environments where parental or carer capacity is affected by issues of poor mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.
 - IBA Training (Think Family – Alcohol identification and brief advice for parents) – as mentioned above
 - Working with the family of change resistant drinkers - this half day training course has been adapted from the one day training session developed by Alcohol Concern and Adfam to roll out the materials in the Blue Light for Families toolkit.

- Drugs alcohol & risk taking behaviours - this course is designed to examine some risk taking behaviours which can impact on an individual's sexual health.

5.2.4 Point 7: Develop a plan to change public attitudes

The Council supports awareness raising campaigns such as Dry January and Alcohol Awareness Week help to change public attitudes. This is included in the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

5.2.5 Point 8: Revise the national strategy to tackle alcohol harm to focus on price and availability and Point 9: Curtail the promotion of alcohol – especially to children

When the national strategy to tackle alcohol harm to focus on price and availability is revised the Council will respond accordingly and ensure its compliance.

The Council Trading Standards team attend the Licensing Enforcement Group meetings that take place with the Police and Council Licensing team; Trading Standards also undertake underage Test Purchasing operations when we receive intelligence from the Police and respond accordingly.

All new licensing applications are referred to the Council Safeguarding and Quality Assurance team for review on their potential impact on children.

The activities taking place in PHSE lessons and via the SHEU survey also help children to understand the risks associated with alcohol misuse.

5.2.6 Point 10: Take responsibility for reducing rates of alcohol harm

In addition to the work outlined above which demonstrate the Council and partner agencies are taking responsibility to reduce rates of alcohol harm, B&NES Council and Virgin Care (through the sub contracted arrangements) review and monitor rates of alcohol use and treatment outcomes of the DHI and AWP (SDAS) services.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 None required

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None required

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Colleagues from partner agencies have contributed to the content of the report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Not required for this report

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Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	