

### **Proposed Community Drug Service Premises Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent**

This paper has been completed by Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership in response to the objections raised to the Planning Department of the City Council in relation to the citing of a drug treatment service within the Tunstall area. It is intended to alleviate concerns, addressing the issues highlighted particularly within the objection letter from Staffordshire Police.

- The Home Office National Drug Strategy provides evidence that drug treatment reduces crime, helps families to stay together and prevents antisocial behaviour. Ensuring services operate close to where people live and work enables individuals and their families to easily access support to address drug problems and improve health and social situations. It also increases life choices by addressing underlying problems that impact on the ability to deal with drug problems, routes people into education, training and ultimately employment, and enables them to contribute to society as positive members of the communities in which they live.
- The model for drug treatment services, signed up to by the Safer City Partnership's joint commissioning group (comprising membership from City Council, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Probation Service and NHS Stoke) is based upon a hub and spoke principle; a central base supported by a number of smaller operational arms in the north and south of the city. This adheres to principles of ease of access and equality of opportunity. Currently, the central base for drug treatment is Hope Street, Hanley with the smaller operational arms being Festival Park, Etruria and Sandon Road, Meir. This leaves the north of the city without an operational arm, leading to geographical inequality and incomplete delivery of the commissioning vision. The Partnership has been looking for appropriate premises in the north of the city for approximately 4 years. This site is seen to be the most suitable to date.
- The drug treatment centre in Tunstall is designed to support community members, the police and the local authority in making Tunstall and the surrounding areas safer and more pleasant environments in which to live. The drug treatment service will not cater for individuals from across the city; it will provide services for local residents / drug users. As indicated, it would form one of a number of drug treatment centres within Stoke-on-Trent, operated by Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI). Other drug treatment centres are located on Hope Street, Hanley, Festival Park, Etruria and Sandon Road, Meir.
- Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) is an experienced drug treatment service provider, delivering support to individuals to overcome substance misuse problems and live healthy, stable, crime free lives. They work successfully with the Police, the Local Authority and NHS Stoke in other areas of the city and with other partnerships across the

country, and have a proven track record getting people into treatment, retaining them in treatment and helping them to make positive changes to their lives. They have also worked with communities where similar objections have been raised and now have positive relationships with community members who were initially averse to services being developed.

- Data held by Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership shows that almost a quarter of people (23%) currently in drug treatment live in the north of the city. 78% of these people are heroin users. This is the second highest cohort of people accessing drug treatment within Stoke-on-Trent. 23% of service users who travel to Meir Community Drug Service and 23% of service users who travel to Hanley Community Drug Service come from the north of the city. Therefore, rather than encouraging / bringing criminals / drug users into Tunstall, the stats indicate that a significant proportion of the city's drug misusers are residents of the north of the city.
- This correlates with Tunstall Policing Unit executing the highest number of drug warrants within Stoke-on-Trent. There is also a high incidence of burglary and shoplifting in the Tunstall area; these crimes are regarded as trigger offences associated with drug misuse. A Staffordshire Probation Service needs assessment also shows that drug misuse is a strong factor influencing offending behaviour (71% of offenders in Stoke-on-Trent have misused drugs at some point in their lives).
- The high incidence of crime in the Tunstall area could, in part, be attributable to a large number of people living in Tunstall and the surrounding areas in the north of the city with drug problems not accessing drug treatment. In addition, many people who live in the north of the city have to travel relatively long distances to access drug treatment which makes it more likely that they will drop out of treatment without sustaining the resulting benefits. Therefore, by attracting drug users into treatment, dependency can be addressed and reduced thus removing the need for people to commit crime to support their drug habits and breaking the cycle of drug misuse and crime. This is one of the strong supporting factors in situating a drug treatment service in the area.
- Although existing community drug services operate across the City of Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire Police have not received any evidence of anti social behaviour, increased crime or any of the issues highlighted in the letter in the surrounding areas.
- This is due to in depth planning, professional management, regular review and partnership working. Expectations concerning service user behaviour within and in the immediate vicinity of the drug treatment service are explained on the first visit to the service. Deviations from these acceptable standards can result in a temporary or permanent

ban from the service. Additionally, controlled entrance, alarm systems and sometimes CCTV are installed to assist safety, building and behaviour management.

- The premises could be used by multiple partners, although this would require careful thought and negotiation to secure complementary service provision. If a further youth facility is required, Youth Services could be jointly approached.

I hope this helps to allay fears and demonstrate that we can work in partnership with residents, the Police and other agencies to build on the efforts of Tunstall residents to reduce crime, improve community cohesion and make Tunstall a safer place to live.

If you require additional information or clarification, please contact Vicki Yates, Adult Drug Treatment Programme Lead or Jennie Hammond, Drug and Alcohol Lead (01782 235708).