

Commissioning a Community Alcohol Service (CAS) in County Durham - a whole system approach

Authors: M English - C Sullivan

Aims:

Reduce the harm caused by alcohol to individuals, families and communities in County Durham while ensuring that people are able to enjoy alcohol responsibly.

Key Issues:

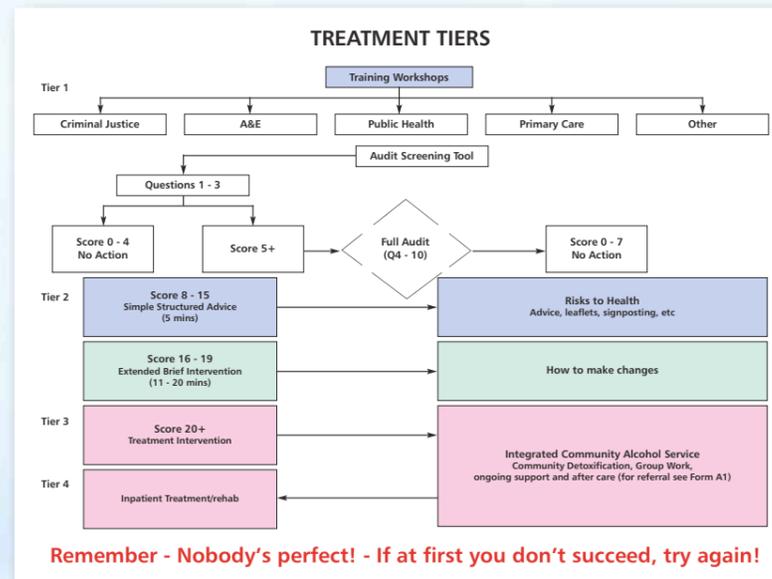
- Prevalence of binge drinking is estimated to be 26% in County Durham, significantly higher than the estimated 18% of adults who binge drink across England
- Admission rates for alcohol specific conditions is significantly higher than national rates for both males and females.

Easington Integrated Alcohol Team - A Pilot Study

In 2006, £349k Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was secured in the District of Easington to pilot an Integrated Community Alcohol Service. The service was developed in line with the national models of care for alcohol misuse.

The initial scoping realigned existing providers and the new multi-agency team consisted of nurses, social workers, counsellors, trainers/primary care link workers & aftercare and support workers. Staff was employed by a range of statutory and voluntary agencies with a service manager appointed to manage the team.

The model places emphasis on Brief Intervention (BI's) using the Audit-C Screening Tool. The pathway is designed for frontline practitioners to screen, provide BI's for hazardous and harmful drinkers and then refer appropriately into CAS.



Community Service includes:

- Clinical – Nursing Staff and Consultants
- Social workers
- Aftercare and support
- Counsellors – both for individual and couple counselling
- Trainers
- Early Intervention Team (children)
- 16 week alcohol rolling programme delivered by Probation – relapse prevention
- Programme for women only - 12 months pilot
- Accredited Volunteering Course for service users.

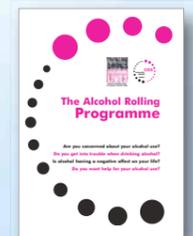
Between Oct 08 and Dec 08
The Community Alcohol Service (CAS) received **602** referrals.

Prevention, Treatment and Control are the 3 overarching aims that form the County Durham Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

Alcohol Treatment Requirements:

The Criminal Justice Act, 2003 (Section 212), brought into force Alcohol Treatment Requirements as a sentencing option for offenders aged 18 or over, committing offences on or after 4th April 2005. These requirements can be attached to Community Orders or suspended sentences for a minimum period of 6 months and a maximum of 3 years.

- For the alcohol rolling programme pilot in Easington
- 57 ATRs have been made for offenders living in the Easington area
- 6 have been revoked to date
- 2 offenders have been transferred out
- 12 successful offender completions
- 4 breaches of an ATR
- 33 ATRs are ongoing
- County wide roll out from April 2009.



Future Challenges:

- Implementation of a locally enhanced service in primary care for alcohol
- Securing resources and implementing Phase 3 of staffing complement
- Implementing a fully integrated Patient Management IT System – POPPIE
- Identifying and implementing performance indicators and targets
- Stakeholder satisfaction
- Review of the effectiveness and impact with Durham University.

"Thank you for all your hard work and for making the opportunity to get my life back on track happen. It hasn't gone unnoticed and it is certainly very much appreciated." Quote from client (thank you card)

"You have been an angel, a soul mate, a confessor, a supporter in times of need". A truly professional service" Quote from family member of client (thank you card)

"Thank you, I couldn't have done it without you." Quote from client (thank you card)

