



Tower Hamlets Substance Misuse Needs Assessment 2017/18

Executive Summary
November 2018

Conducting a Substance Misuse Needs Assessment is important to treatment planning and commissioning as it reviews service demand, offers comparison to relevant baselines and assesses local partnership performance over time.

The previous two needs assessment have informed the process of re-commissioning and implementing the current Reset services. The Reset services are operating for some time now and the purpose of this document is to support current treatment delivery. However, findings will also inform the next re-commissioning process as current contracts will come to an end in October 2019.

This assessment has reviewed the needs of the Tower Hamlets' substance misusing population to support the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and its wider partnership to respond to future treatment demand. The wealth of quantitative and qualitative data in this document should also help contextualise and support partners in the delivery of the Tower Hamlets Substance Misuse Strategy.

Impact of Reset Drug and Alcohol services

- The Tower Hamlets **treatment system** is **the largest in London** with more than **2,000 clients**
- The treatment system has become more diverse, attracting more women, students and young adults to treatment
- Successful treatment outcomes have much improved since Reset services started in Oct 2016
- **411 clients left treatment successfully** in 2017/18
- Representations rates are comparable low and clients achieve very good rates of abstinence when attending structured treatment
- The introduction of short term treatment episodes has improved engagement with alcohol only and alcohol & non-opiate clients
- The **Blood Borne Virus (BBV) offer is exceptional** and should be maintained

Key issues emerging

Treatment system

- The treatments system has been established successfully, but more can be done to improve some areas outlines in this document
- While client diversity has increased, treatment uptake of LGBTQ and Somali residents can be improved
- Treatment outcomes are improving, but further improvements are possible, with more residents benefiting from local services
- Unmet need remains above national average for opiate and/or crack users in the borough

- More clients from the criminal justice system would benefit from effective treatment
- Residential rehabilitation remains a under-used resource open to suitable clients

Future need and service demand

- Prevalence of opiate and/or crack users remains high indicating need for services responding to complex clients
- **3,400 Alcohol depended residents** indicate high unmet need
- The opiate treatment population is ageing while the deaths related to substance misuse remain above the national average
- Service users and treatment naïve users continue engaging over-proportionally with health and enforcement agencies
- Alcohol related harm remains high based on hospital admission, alcohol related deaths, ambulance call outs and alcohol related ASB
- Local residents continue to experience regular drug dealing and drug related crime and ASB, negatively impacting on their quality of life and perception of the Borough
- Mental health needs are high in the treatment population. Clients with mental health episodes in hospital are often drug and alcohol related indicating an unmet demand
- Rough sleepers and hostel clients remain a key target group requiring specialist support
- Service user engagement remains underdeveloped. Service user input remains crucially in diversifying the treatment system

Moving forward

- Support women accessing treatment, improve suitable treatment spaces and treatment outcomes for female opiate users
- Utilise “Don’t bottle it up” Audit C online tool as an opportunity to engage treatment naïve clients including young professionals and students
- Improve collaboration and partnership work between Reset services
- Improve pathways to housing and education, training and employment
- Ensure assertive outreach with Somali population
- Re-establish partnership working between Reset treatment and Ambrose King focusing on Chemsex and LGBTQ clients
- Reset Treatment service to work closer with Tower Hamlets Mental Health (IAPT)
- Services providers to develop stronger Service user involvement and co-production
- Work closer with CCG and develop better understanding of ageing client cohort and related co-morbidities
- Develop better intelligence about health issues of clients in drug and alcohol treatment
- Outreach team started to engage with local traveller community in Bow and identified needs around alcohol.
- Improve partnership work and information sharing between DIP and key prisons to improve treatment engagement.
- TH DIP service to assess DRR and ATR clients and ensure that those clients are engaging with Reset treatment
- Reset treatment to improve support for suitable clients applying for residential rehabilitation. DAAT to deliver additional training to reduce barriers and increase demand.
- DAAT to investigate if there is locally a link between drug related deaths and prison release

- Develop pathway between Royal London Hospital and Reset Treatment to increase successful referrals

Re-commissioning

- Re-commissioning and implementing a new treatment system can be disruptive to clients and staff, impacting negatively on partnership outcomes. Implementing successful services takes time and the current re-commissioning cycle of 3 years is too short to avoid the negative disruption of service implementation. It is recommended to move to longer service contracts.

Value for money - Why invest?

- Investing in treatment services to reduce drug and alcohol misuse and dependency will not only help to save lives but will also substantially reduce the economic and social costs of drug and alcohol related harm.
- Research has shown that every £1 invested in drug treatment results in a £4 benefit to society.
- Drug treatment in Tower Hamlets in 2016/17 prevented around 46,000 criminal offences and reduced crime by 32%
- Drug treatment reduced social and economic cost by around £18m in 2016/17
- Alcohol treatment in Tower Hamlets in 2016/17 prevented around 425 criminal offences and reduced crime by 32% Alcohol treatment reduced social and economic cost by around £340,000 in 2016/17

Further information

This Substance Misuse Needs Assessment was produced by the Tower Hamlets Drug & Alcohol Action Team. The document was written by Matthias Schnepel (Tel: 020 7364 4612.)