

DRUG DEATHS TASKFORCE: MINUTE OF MEETING EIGHTEEN

Wednesday 1 December 2021

Virtual via Zoom

10:00 – 13:00

Taskforce Members:

Catriona Matheson (Chair)	University of Stirling
Neil Richardson (Vice Chair)	Turning Point Scotland
Carole Hunter	Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Scotland)
Colin Hutcheon	Families Lived Experience Representative
Fiona Doig	Borders ADP and Health Improvement
Gary Rutherford	Scottish Ambulance Service
Jason Wallace	SDF - Lived Experience Representative
Rebecca Wood	Lived/Living Experience Representative
Alison Munro	Academic Representative
Anthony McGeehan	Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Rebecca Lawrence	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Diane McCulloch	Social Work Representative
Linda Jones	Scottish Police Service
John Mooney (deputy)	Public Health Scotland

Attendees:

Henry Acres	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Lauren Ross	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Kim Paterson	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Orlando Heijmer-Mason	Scottish Government: Deputy Director for Drugs Policy Division
Roz Currie	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Trish Tracey	Turning Point Scotland
Thomas Hobbs	Turning Point Scotland
Karen Melville	Lead Pharmacist – NHS Scotland
Elise Wilson	Scottish Police Service
Kenny Leinster	Scottish Recovery Consortium
Gillian Shorter	Queens University Belfast
Andrew McCauley	Glasgow Caledonian University

Apologies:

Tara Shivaji	Public Health Scotland
Ewen Stewart	Royal College of General Practitioners

Introduction

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to the eighteenth meeting of the Taskforce.
2. The Chair introduced guest speakers to the meeting, Trish Tracey and Thomas Hobbs from Turning Point Scotland, Karen Melville from NHS Scotland, Elise Wilson from Scottish Police Service, Gillian Shorter from Queens University Belfast, along with Andrew McCauley from Glasgow Caledonian University.
3. It was highlighted to members that the focus of today's meeting is Non-Fatal Overdoses and many of these guest speakers will be presenting on this. The Taskforce needs to consider how they will develop a recommendation and share learning as more evidence emerges.
4. The group confirmed they are content with the minutes from the Taskforce meeting in October
5. Secretariat can now publish the October minutes to the Taskforce website.

Public Health Surveillance Update

6. The Chair, Catriona Matheson passed over to John Mooney from Public Health Scotland (PHS), in place of Tara Shivaji to provide a verbal update to the group.
 - There was no verbal update to be given at this stage.
 - Further information will be provided at the January Taskforce meeting.

Update from Glasgow Overdose Response Team (GORT) Test of Change

7. The Chair handed over to colleagues from Turning Point Scotland who work in the Glasgow Overdose Response Team, Trish Tracey and Thomas Hobbs, to provide an update on the Test of Change.
 - A presentation was shared on screen to members to highlight what the Overdose response team does and some key learning.
 - During the period October 20-October 21, there were 733 referrals in Glasgow.
 - From July 21-October 21 Lanarkshire had 68 referrals
 - From Sept 2021-present, there have been 30 referrals in Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
 - Some key learning includes: the need for referral routes and Freephone, rapid responses, drug trend awareness, out of hours provision, referrals for families and also gaps identified within hostel and B&B accommodation services.
 - The team at GORT were able to provide training on naloxone and how to handle Non-Fatal Overdoses (NFOs) for staff in hostels/hotels and B&B accommodation. After this a member of staff did have to administer naloxone and saved a life.
 - The team work closely with SFAD and the Scottish Ambulance Service.
 - Recruitment and funding post September 22 were highlighted as key challenges.
 - The team will do an independent evaluation with an interim report in January/February then a final report in December 2022.

ACTION – For Scottish Ambulance Service and GORT staff to link up for further discussions around data sharing.

Update from Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) on ‘The Continuum of Recovery for Near-fatal overdose’ (CORNFO) project.

8. The chair passed over to Kenny Leinster (KL) from SRC to provide an update on the CORNFO project.

A paper was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The presentation and discussion included:

- A longer lead in time due to challenges with recruitment.
- The need for multi-disciplinary assessment.
- The projects three phase approach. Phase One – referral and assessment, including choice about placement; Phase Two – support during their residential rehab; and, Phase Three returning to the community and how people are supported to return.
- Engagement with families and recovery communities.
- Full referrals will be taken from January.
- Members explored whether any of the referrals were following a non-fatal overdose, this information will be provided to members.
- Members discussed whether availability was a factor in placement decisions. KL highlighted that a number of factors are considered including suitability, choice and availability.
- Members reflected on an opportunity to link in with pharmacies, especially over weekends.

ACTION – CORNFO to provide an update on the numbers that have come to the service from a NFO and to update the Taskforce on progress of discussion with pharmacies.

Dundee Non-Fatal Overdose initiative

9. The Chair handed over to Karen Melville and Elise Wilson to provide an update to the group. Although this work is not funded by the Taskforce, the model has been running for a while and there are lessons from it which will be important for the Taskforce.

- Pathway set up with Tayside and Police Scotland, following the Dundee Drug Commission Report. A short term working group was set up to share information between each other.
- The team received information once a week from SAS, however, depending on date received sometimes would create a week's delay. The team wanted to receive information more frequently so set up a six-week test of change.
- Data sharing was a challenge but this was overcome as part of the test.
- The multidisciplinary meetings were maintained after the test and have now been operation more than two years.
- Since its creation, Dundee has dealt with 1048 incidents, which relates to 538 people, with 197 people having repeat incidents accounting for 707 incidents.

- Over the two year period the group has seen a shift in the male to female ratio in respect of total incidents, with males observing a slight increase each year.
- Benzodiazepines are still featuring very highly in cases.
- Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays still seem to be key days identified for incidents, this may be related to pay days.
- Services remain in contact and work together and ensure every approach taken is person centred.
- Future developments include – similar approach for wider vulnerabilities pathway, full time co-ordinator role to be recruited, desktop exercise to develop a similar approach for mental health and substance use hub, Emergency department and general practitioner services to follow up on outcomes.
- Perth and Kinross and Angus are taking forward a similar model adapted to suit local need.
- Members welcomed the presentation, they felt the evidence spoke for itself and reflected that this sort of multi-disciplinary working should be the norm rather than the exception.

Presentation on Findings and a Summary on Glasgow consumption Van

10. Gillian Shorter from Queens University in Belfast and Andrew McCauley from Glasgow Caledonian University provided the group with a presentation on the findings and a summary on the Glasgow Consumption Van

- 894 injection events have been recorded since opening, with individuals coming numerous times. The average age was around 35 years old, mostly males attending.
- Many of the individuals attending were living in hotels during the pandemic.
- 9 overdose events where van volunteers attended, all which survived. In the event of an Opioid overdose, naloxone was used.
- It was noted that a large proportion were injecting powdered cocaine, at around 60%. There was a higher percentage in males, with females using heroin more than powdered cocaine. Higher percentage in males mixing both.
- A lot of individuals attending were engaged in treatment and receiving methadone or buprenorphine.
- A key benefit was reducing stigma and shame for individuals around the community, which led to subsequent positive changes for individuals.
- Members asked if drug checking was available in the van, GS confirmed it was not but it would be a good enhancement to the service.
- GS confirmed to members there were strict rules in place around sharing drugs and injecting others.
- Both speakers offered to discuss further if members have questions.

ACTION – For a small group of Taskforce members to develop a recommendation on models of Safer Drug Consumption Facilities based on the available evidence.

Discussion with members on the Non-Fatal Overdose presentations

11. The Chair opened discussion on non-fatal overdose evidence:

- Members raised concerns about the differences between health boards around outreach services. The Chair confirmed this could be something to be picked up with ADP chairs directly.
- The quest of consistency was raised as an area of difficulty, as well as the ability to interconnect with other services. This fed into a wider discussion on national vs local commissioning.
- It was highlighted that many people did not know what services or pathways were available in their area.
- There are concerns that people aren't seeing change quickly enough and that in particular family work needs more focus.
- Members were very positive about the multi-disciplinary approaches highlighted and agreed to discuss how to share this learning most effectively.
- 7 day services, was highlighted as a key challenge by members as most statutory services are not 7 days. Recommendations should incorporate the need for 7 day provision.

ACTION – Small group of members to develop the Taskforce's recommendation on Non-Fatal overdose pathways. This should including sharing learning as we go and perhaps some form of briefing document about what has been learnt so far, including identifying gaps nationally.

ACTION – Scottish Government Analyst team to replicate the previous survey on the coverage of Non-Fatal overdose pathways nationally.

Summary and Any Other Business

12. The Chair raised some additional business with members.

- The Women's Report is now finalised and has been published to the Taskforce website today, along with a podcast from two women on the women's group. There will be four podcasts in total over the coming weeks. Encouraged members to listen to these, look at the report and website piece and share with their networks.
- Members were updated on the complaint received.

December 2021