

Appendix 2

Health of Children in Care Substance Use

Background

The CLA Drugs Project post in Social Services has been funded by Southwark's Drug & Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) in some form since 2001/2, in response to the targets outlined in the Government's 1998 National Drug Strategy.

Targets in relation to looked after children have since been refined, and reporting formalised in *Every Child Matters: Young People & Drugs (2005)*, with Key Performance Indicators required for OC2 returns since Sept 06/07. The KPI's are:

1. The number of children looked after for at least 12 months who were identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year ending 30 September.
2. The number of these children who received an intervention for their substance misuse problem during the year.
3. The number of these children who were offered an intervention but who refused it.

The CLA substance misuse post moved to line management by Adolescent & After Care Service in January 2007 after the re-alignment of the CLA service to serve 13 year olds plus.

Over the last 16 months, the current post holder has developed a training module and screening tool for use by social workers, incorporating education, harm reduction and motivational interviewing techniques. The tool is useful as a Tier 1/2 intervention in its own right, as well identifying those in need of higher Tier interventions. CareFirst systems have also been updated to include provision for requiring and recording the above KPI's for all 13 to 17 year olds in care for 12 months or more.

Service Activity

Screening Training

15 out of 47 staff have attended substance use screening training (1 day).

23 out of 47 staff have attended basic drugs awareness training (1 day)

Both courses need to be completed prior to screening young people. 12 (of 25) Social Workers are able to screen.

The training that social workers received included basis drugs awareness, as well as exploring why it is useful to have these conversations with young people, and some tools to consider in using to increase motivation in young people to change their behaviour. In particular motivational interviewing opening strategies were included as part of the training.

Workers are also given a pack of HIT drug cards that are provide another tool to start the conversation, which have information on the back relating to risks, effects, law and so on.

1 to 1 sessions on screening have also since been provided to that most SW's can now screen.

Screening

All 13-17 year olds in care for 12 months are now flagged on Carefirst as requiring an annual screening by 30th September each year.

A Southwark screening tool was developed and piloted for use by social workers with young people. The tool includes questions that are aimed at assessing how risky their substance use is, as well as helping us in gathering some base line data about when they started or experimented with various substances.

Other questions and techniques include motivational interviewing, which can be helpful in getting young people to at least contemplate some of the not so good things about their substance use (or any risky behaviour), as well as the good things; and how they would know if they or a friend's use was problematic.

Rescreening or follow-up to be done if required after consultation with post holder.

So, apart from identifying which young people have a substance use issue, the training and tool also enables workers to provide early intervention at the time of screening ie education, harm reduction ideas, how to use more safely if they choose to continue, and use motivational interviewing techniques to help them think more fully about the pros and cons of their use, and how this affects their chosen goals. This is important, because most young people do not identify themselves as having a problem, and do not usually want to see a specialist substance use worker. The specialist worker is therefore available to support workers in their direct work with young people.

In some instances, young people allowed the carers to be involved in the screening. The feedback from these carers is that it was a very valuable learning experience for them, making them realise what young people may be exposed to, and helping them to feel more confident about discussing the issues.

Young people were asked to feedback about how useful they felt the exercise was, and most found it moderately to very useful. Some found it was not useful either due to their high level of knowledge, or that did not use drugs and had no intention to do so. Others were particularly impressed with the HIT cards, requesting a pack of their own.

The feedback from workers has been that it has been "an eye opener" with some young people knowing about or using a lot more substances than they ever expected. Some sexual health questions included in the screening have also helped them to realise that some young people were needing education in this area, and/ or referral to the LAC nurse.

Consultation

Consultation, advice, and support is offered to SW's on any matters related to substance use, including attendance at LAC reviews and professionals meetings. This service is increasingly used by staff.

Direct Work

- Referral forms, and assessment forms have been developed.
- Foster carers are also offered 1:1 support via phone or home visits.
- Types of direct work on offer to clients include: education, harm reduction, ear acupuncture, motivational interviewing, relapse prevention, cognitive behavioural techniques (including manualised and evidence based CBT/MI Preventure Program, and Adolescent Cannabis Check Up). Cognitive hypnotherapy also now offered.

Group clinical supervision and limited 1:1 sessions are currently provided by a family therapist/substance use specialist from Blackfriars Dual Diagnosis Unit, funded by DAAT.

Interagency

The post is part of a virtual young person's drug team, FILTER, which includes other DAAT funded posts in CAMHS, YOT, CDEP, Turning Point ACAPS.

Shaftesbury Homes

Consultation recently undertaken with staff with a view to developing targeted education for staff and residents regarding Cannabis and the Law. To involve Safer Neighbourhood team and peer educator.

Stress management workshop for residents proposed for the July 2008.
Some screening of residents being done by Shaftesbury Health worker.

CAMHS – joint work is undertaken with CAMHS/YOT worker on case-by-case basis.

Future Work 08 / 09

Care Matters: Time for Change (2007)

As a result of this White Paper, expectations surrounding the health assessments of children in care and the subsequent health plan will be updated and clarified through statutory guidance. In particular, the need to address substance misuse and its causes through early identification and assessment.

Young Southwark: Children & Young People's Plan (06/07-08/09)

As part of this plan's vision, and underpinned by the five Every Child Matters, choosing not to take illegal drugs is a key to the "Be healthy" outcome.

CLA Business Unit Plan 08 / 09

A key component of service delivery for the Adolescent & After Care Service is to deliver specialist partnerships to address issues regarding youth offending, substance abuse and sexual health. This is to be addressed through new and more holistic screening systems for vulnerabilities, and tracking of intervention plans and therapeutic support for those using or vulnerable to substance abuse, and a health and advice consultation line for Southwark carers.

The main priorities for 08 / 09 will be:

- All social workers are trained
- 100% of CLA (13+) are screened
- Review screening tool
- Increase links with YOT via regular discussion with CLA/YOT worker and bi-monthly joint tracking of YOT/CLA cases
- Deliver full recording on CF
- Focusing interventions on high risk CLA group
- Developing DAAT workers toolkit via other agencies and continued training
- Involvement in foster carer newsletter with a view to increase uptake from foster carer requests for advice / support.