

Report to Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board

Item No: 9

Report title: Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership Annual Report

Date of meeting: 03 December 2025

Sponsor: Suzanne Meredith, Acting Director of Public Health,
Norfolk County Council

Reason for the Report

Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnerships (NDAP) 2024-2026 priorities were endorsed by the board in 2024. This report provides an update on progress and outlines work undertaken by the partnership in relation to the identified local priorities. These activities aim to support the wider goals of the national From Harm to Hope Strategy. [Go to Gov.uk to read the from harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives in detail.](#) The HWB is asked to endorse the current work and agree to continued commitment and engagement with the partnership.

Report summary

Over the past year, NDAP has continued to grow, delivering targeted activity aligned to its 2024-26 priorities. This includes awareness-raising campaigns, proactive responses to emerging risks, and strengthened partnership working. A newly developed outcomes dashboard now enables the Strategic Group to monitor and evaluate progress effectively. Highlights of activity:

- **Continuity of care** between prison and community treatment: rates continue to increase, with new processes established and in place.
- **Workforce development** has developed a comprehensive training package for the partnership/wider workforce, with over 1000 training places provided to professionals from a wide range of organisations attending the sessions provided.
- The **Drug and Alcohol Related Death Panel** has evolved to reflect the purpose of multiagency review and learning.
- **Complex and unmet needs** are being addressed through the development of the Reducing Harms Group, including a new focus on women's access to treatment.
- **New and emerging trends:** considerable progress has been made with NDAP focussing on ketamine and synthetic substances. An awareness raising campaign, synthetic response plan and a conference are planned for March 2026.
- **Lived experience** is being embedded and utilised throughout the partnership, with peer research and focus groups being used to hear the voices of lived experience.
- **Exploitation** and specifically the development of a toolkit for cuckooing is a focus to reduce harms from drug supply chains.

- A coproduced **dual diagnosis** strategy is undergoing organisational ratification, and implementation of a mental health/substance use pathway is beginning.
- Action on vapes containing illicit substances.

Numbers in treatment have increased, alongside greater provision of naloxone. Continuation of additional funding has been confirmed for three years, with allocations expected before the end of the year.

A brief overview of work undertaken by Suffolk's Combatting Drugs Partnership (SCDP) is provided in Appendix 3.

Recommendations

The HWB is asked to:

- a) Acknowledge and endorse the current progress of NDAP's workstreams.
- b) Continue its commitment to NDAP and support the campaign and conference through ensuring their organisation has representation at the conference.
- c) Support their organisations to utilise the workforce development opportunities to build knowledge across sectors to reduce the risk of drug and alcohol related harms and deaths.
- d) Acknowledge the contributions that other partnerships and strategies make to NDAP's agenda, for example Health and Wellbeing Partnerships, Serious Violence Duty Programme Group and the NHS 10 year plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 Established in 2022, the NDAP strengthens local responses to drug and alcohol misuse across the county, aligning with the national *From Harm to Hope* strategy. The Partnership is co-ordinated by a tri-funded Partnership Manager (Public Health, Police and Crime Commissioners Office and Norfolk Constabulary). The NDAP 2024-2026 priorities were endorsed by the HWB in 2024, and those priorities continue to drive NDAP's workstreams and activities.

2. Context

- 2.1 NDAPs current priorities for 2024-2026 are:
 - Embedding the voice of **lived experience** across the partnership.
 - Developing a multiagency response to improving outcomes for those with **complex and unmet needs**.
 - Responding to the changing **emerging drug trends** in the county (e.g. from ketamine and synthetic substances).
 - Joint priority with SVD: **tackling exploitation**, e.g. from County Lines and cuckooing.
 - Continuing work on **dual diagnosis** pathways.
 - Continuing to improve rates of **continuity of care** from prison to community.
 - Continuing multiagency and system-wide **workforce development**.

2.2 Nationally synthetic substances (nitazenes, xylazines etc) continue to pose an increased risk of drug related deaths and harm; NDAP is leading the local response to this. Ketamine use in Norfolk has been identified as a key focus for NDAP, with NDAP co-ordinating work between partners including the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and drug services, etc.

2.3 **Partnership Activities:** Activities continue to address both the strategic ambitions of *From Harm to Hope* and local priorities:

- The partnership is established and continues to draw on a range of organisations, with over 30 working collaboratively across the workstreams.
- **Lived experience** is embedded into NDAP through Together for Mental Wellbeing who are commissioned to carry out peer research and building a recovery community. Mechanisms have been developed for the voice of lived experience to feed into, influence and collaborate with NDAP's workstreams.
- NDAP continues to evolve (see NDAP structure in Appendix 1): a new Reducing Harms Group, currently focused on women and alcohol-related harms (an identified theme from the DARD Panel) supports the **complex and unmet needs** priority.
- The drug and alcohol related death (DARD) panel process was reviewed and refined to ensure a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary review of cases.
- On **dual diagnosis**, a coproduced strategy has been drafted and is undergoing organisational ratification, and implementation of a mental health and substance use pathway is beginning.
- The Children and Young People group reviewed the Flourish survey outcomes and is taking actions forward, with an initial focus on vapes containing illicit substances.
- Cuckooing is a joint priority for **tackling exploitation** with the Serious Violence Duty Programme Group, with a toolkit in development to support consistent multi-agency safeguarding, enforcement and professional training.
- Through NDAP, Norfolk Constabulary secured Serious Violence Duty funding to pilot drug testing on arrest for violent, non-trigger offences.
- A countywide synthetic substances response plan has been developed and is due to be risk assessed by the Norfolk Resilience Forum.
- Norwich City College students are creating a range of assets to be used as part of a ketamine awareness raising campaign.
- A conference is planned for March 2026 to raise awareness of Norfolk's **emerging trends**, with a focus on ketamine and synthetic substances. The

conference will launch ketamine campaign assets and the synthetic response plan.

- A Power Bi dashboard has been developed based on the outcomes framework and local priorities, allowing NDAP's progress to be monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Strategic Group.
- NDAP has supported the Home Office's Safer Streets Summer Initiative by contributing monthly partnership updates to the national report.

2.4 **Spotlight on ketamine:** Ketamine use can lead to overdose and severe impacts on the bladder which may require repair or removal. A four-tier Ketamine Action Plan for Norfolk has been developed, based on Greater Manchester's best practice, focusing on prevention, engagement, treatment and recovery. Workstreams in the action plan were shaped by lived experience, professional input and a review of local and national resources. Current priorities include addressing gaps in pregnancy advice (with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System), developing roads policing briefings on drug driving and training key professionals. NDAP is developing a countywide ketamine awareness campaign with City College's Media Learning Company, which will be launched at the regional conference planned for March 2026, with ketamine being the focus of the morning.

2.5 **Regional and National Activities:** NDAP is represented at both regional and national Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) meetings and actively responds to calls for evidence. The NDAP Partnership Manager is working with colleagues in the eastern region and OHID on the development of a Regional Ambulance Data Dashboard, to enable detailed analysis of overdose callout trends to inform future responses and identify any trends of concern that need escalation.

3. Key Statistics

3.1 **Headline metrics from the *From Harm to Hope* Outcome Framework:**

- Numbers in structured treatment has continued to increase since 2022, with 4971 adults in structured treatment, which is a 21% increase since 2023. This includes a 7% increase from 2024 to 2025.
- 86% of those in treatment for opiates in Norfolk have been provided naloxone, above the national average of 80%.
- The Matthew Project Unity Service worked with 234 young people.
- 78% of young people exited the service in a planned way.
- Continuity of care rates have increased to 42% (May 2025) from a baseline rate of 25% in March 2022.

3.2 **Local measures:**

- Young people were accessing support for one or more of the following primary substances: cannabis (79%), alcohol (41%), ketamine (18%), MDMA (15%), cocaine (10%).
- Progress has been made in the numbers engaging in treatment for non-opiates with treatment numbers increasing by 35% since 2024.

- To date, over 1,000 training places for professionals have been provided on drug and alcohol training, with 38 training sessions held and a further 24 sessions scheduled between August and December 2025.

4. Updates on NDAP workstreams

4.1 Updates on specific NDAP workstreams are provided in Appendix 2.

5. Funding update

5.1 Norfolk currently receives the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG), administered by OHID and funded by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). This consolidated grant includes:

- Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant
- Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG)
- Housing Support Grant
- Inpatient Detoxification Grant.

5.2 Previously awarded annually with confirmation late in the financial year, OHID has now confirmed future funding will be issued as a 3-year award, with allocations announced in November 2025.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

Officer name: Diane Steiner

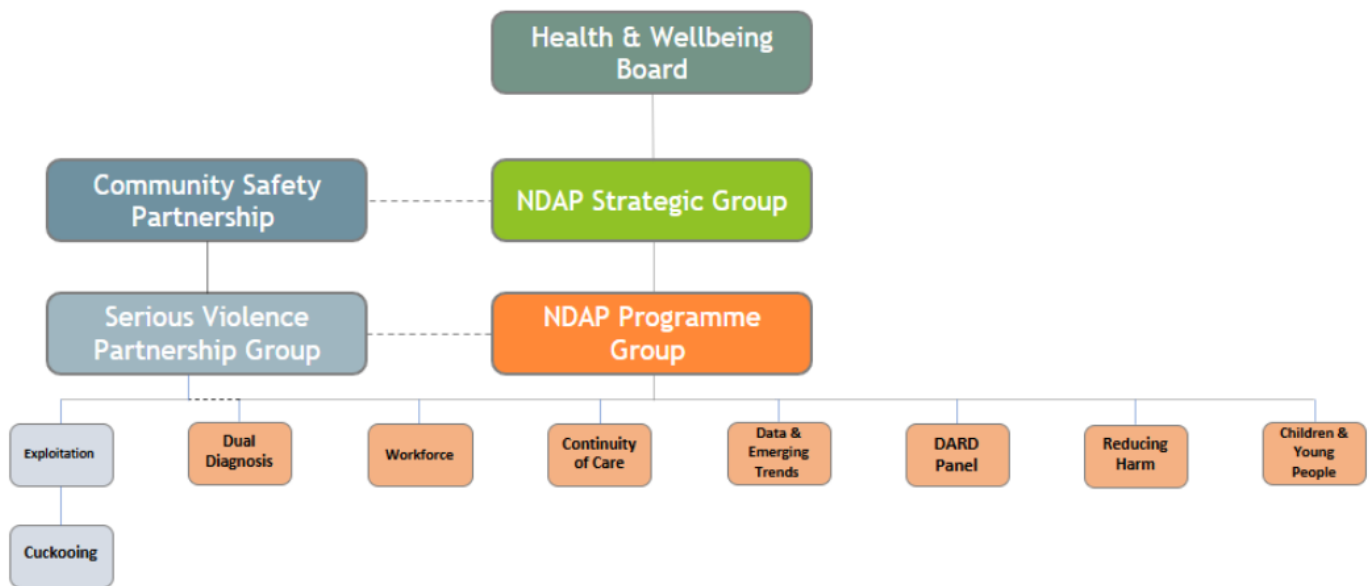
Telephone no.: 01603 638417

Email: diane.steiner@norfolk.gov.uk



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Appendix 1 – NDAP Governance Structure



Appendix 2 – Workstream Updates

Dual Diagnosis:

Purpose: to develop pathways that support engagement, treatment and recovery for people experiencing both mental health and substance misuse issues

Update:

- Guiding principles to support partnership working have been drafted and signed off
- A coproduced strategy has been drafted and is undergoing organisational ratification
- Together for Mental Wellbeing is now delivering experts by experience input across the programme
- A range of co-occurring drug/alcohol and mental health training has been developed and delivered to the wider workforce
- Implementation of a mental health and substance use pathway is beginning.

Prison to Community Continuity of Care (CoC)

Purpose: to ensure that those moving between prison and community treatment do not fall through the gaps at a particularly vulnerable time.

Update:

- A new role – prison in-reach worker – is fully embedded within HMP Norwich, supporting pre-release planning and post-release engagement.

- A codeveloped release booklet, to assist prison leavers as they transition to community treatment, has been developed and is in use.
- Workshops have been held to focus on data, improvements and co-development of pathways and processes.
- Relationships have been strengthened between community providers and HMP Norwich, HMP Peterborough and HMP Wayland.
- CGL have produced packs for people being released from prison without accommodation. Packs include a basic mobile phone with a small amount of credit (used to receive drug alerts and appointment reminders) and other wellbeing products.

Workforce Development

Purpose: to identify if staff have access to appropriate training and if gaps are found, to develop appropriate packages of training

All age workforce development update:

- **Workforce Engagement:** Questionnaire distributed in March, with 102 responses received
- **Comprehensive Training Programme (2025):** Developed using the responses from the workforce engagement questionnaire and made available to the wider workforce across Norfolk.
- **New Training Sessions Developed from Feedback:**
 - Blue Light Training
 - Alcohol and the Older Person
 - Drugs and Alcohol: Brief Intervention and Screening
- **Organisations attended training** included but not exclusively: Norfolk Police, East of England Ambulance Service, James Paget University Hospital, HMP Probation Service, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norfolk and Waveney Mind.
- **Training Delivery:**
 - 12 different courses delivered from January to August
 - 23 training sessions delivered
 - Locations included King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Norwich and Wymondham.
- **Attendance Figures:**
 - January - August: 397 attendees
 - Drug and Alcohol Roadshows: 100 attendees
 - CGL Drug and Alcohol Training and Naloxone Training to organisations: 693 people
- **Special Events:** Two Drug and Alcohol Roadshows—exploring drug and alcohol use, how this can interact with mental health difficulties and what treatment is available.
- **Upcoming plans:** 24 training sessions currently scheduled between August and December 2025.

Children and Young People Specific Workforce Development Update:

- **Workforce Engagement:** Questionnaire distributed for 5 weeks in February and March 2025, with 146 responses from a wide range of professionals.
- **Training Session: Impact of Drugs and Alcohol on Adults and Young People**
 - 15 sessions delivered, 341 professionals attended
 - Participants included: ADHD nurse specialist, specialist education support, family support worker, family time supervisor, intensive support worker, highly specialist speech and language therapist, peripatetic outreach worker, trainee educational psychologist, social workers, housing support staff, trainee nurses, GP safeguarding leads, targeted youth support.

Drug and Alcohol Related Deaths (DARD) Panel

Purpose: A multiagency panel to review case studies, where the death has been attributed to drugs and/or alcohol. Learning and best practice identified, resulting in actions and activities for the partnership to help meet the Government's National [*From Harm to Hope*](#) commitment to preventing 1,000 drug-related deaths by 2024 to 2025.

Update:

- To date, there have been 8 multi-agency Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Related Deaths Review Panel meetings.
- Reviewed the DARD panel process and adapted it, to reflect that of the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) process, to ensure a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary review of cases.
- Case studies discussed in 2025 so far have included drug related deaths of 4 young people presented by the Child Death Overview team.
- Increased the membership of the Professional Information Network (PIN) who receive and share intelligence on substances of concern (issues with strength, contaminated batches) through the Local Drug Information System (LDIS)
- Expanded the existing Real Time Drug Related Death Surveillance data to new partners
- Established a reducing harms working group to identify trends and themes in high-risk behaviours
- Work with districts to reduce harms at large music events/festivals.

Data and Emerging Trends Group

Purpose: To bring together operational data on the presenting drug and alcohol issues facing the partnership, to raise awareness and identify key activities for the partnership.

Update:

- Information sharing and intelligence gathering on new emerging drug trends within Norfolk, the region and nationally.
- Collating and analysing trends and themes within Norfolk's ambulance overdose data, to share information and review.
- Information shared on drug trends within the secure estate to support those who work with those on their release.
- Discussions around the increased prevalence of synthetic opiates and unusual presentations of some service users to professionals.

Exploitation / Cuckooing

Purpose: to strengthen and enhance the county's multi-agency response to exploitation in order to identify and reduce vulnerability of those at risk of or being exploited, and to increase exploitation awareness of key stakeholders, professionals and public.

Update:

- Exploitation sits across both NDAP and the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) Programme Group.
- Separate Cuckooing Subgroup established to focus on cuckooing.
- Review of best practice; current local and national resources also collated and reviewed.
- Definition of cuckooing developed and agreed for all partners to use.
- A Norfolk cuckooing toolkit in development for identifying, supporting and safeguarding cuckooing victims and targeting perpetrators of cuckooing.

Ketamine Task and Finish Group

Purpose: To address increasing negative impacts from misuse of ketamine in the county, including often severe altered bladder function, through awareness raising and targeting unmet need

Update:

- Group established with joint chairmanship from NDAP and Public Health, bi-monthly meetings well attended by partners.
- Four Tier Ketamine Action Plan developed looking at: Prevention, Engagement, Treatment and Recovery. Enables a targeted approach to the group's activities.
- Scoping exercise completed to ascertain data, what is being actioned across other areas of the UK, and identifying areas of focus for the group, including targeting cohorts for campaign messages.
- City College Norwich have been chosen to develop a media awareness campaign for the partnership between October 2025 and January 2026. This will involve the input of those with lived experience.
- Training and awareness sessions for GPs developed and delivered during 2025 by CGL and NNUH

- Regional conference for health professionals focussing on ketamine and synthetic response being arranged for March 2026, hosted in Norwich and bringing together research and clinical expertise from Norfolk and across the UK, and launching the media campaign materials.

Children and Young People Group

Purpose: to support a multiagency response to drug and alcohol issues that are affecting children and young people.

Update:

- Identification of illicit substances in vapes as an issue that poses a risk to children and young people.
- Plan to develop awareness raising and harm reduction materials in relation to illicit substance vapes for a range of audiences.
- Engaged with the Norfolk Road Safety Operational Group to support their awareness raising activities in relation to the risks related to children and young people's drug driving.

Appendix 3 – Suffolk Combatting Drugs Partnership Update

- The overall number of adults in drug and alcohol treatment in Suffolk has reduced slightly since peaking this time last year. This appears to be due to the numbers in treatment for opiate only and opiate/crack use continuing to decrease despite other substances continuing to grow. Work is underway to address this including increased outreach and placing recovery workers within the criminal justice system – prisons, courts, Police Investigation Centres and probation – as well as seeking increased referrals from other partners.
- Following on from this work and expected to shape the future work around improving treatment offer and increasing those accessing treatment, as well as the future focus of the Suffolk CDP, Suffolk commissioned a report into the lived experience of people who use drugs in Suffolk. The report focusses primarily on three main target cohorts identified for performance improvement, continuity of care, dual diagnosis and opiate users. The report was due to be received by the Suffolk CDP in late August 2025. Suffolk continues to see improving performance with continuity of care, sitting in line with Norfolk and regional partners, however, continues to strive towards the target of 75% set as a national ambition.
- Work is underway to increase the numbers of young people in treatment, with positive results, and the pioneering of reaching more young people by being professional friends regarding substance use to those already closely working with young people.

- The Suffolk partnership is also taking action to respond to the threat of synthetic opioids in line with national guidance. Suffolk is at draft proposal stage of an updated incident response plan should it be faced with a significant wave of serious harms from contaminated drugs. Partners continue to come together to support with the development and testing of this incident response.
- The Suffolk CDP is working alongside the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership on a Suffolk Multi-Agency Substance Use Guidance document and plan which will be used to support professionals working with parents and carers using substances to give them confidence in making sure the children under their care are safeguarded from all potential harms.
- Suffolk has seen a continual decrease in the number of deaths in service in the past year.
- Suffolk are also piloting an initiative that tests the use of assertive outreach with Adult Community Social Care Service Teams in Waveney who have reported concerns relating to increasing demand and complexity of people accessing ASC services, seeing an increase in clients with drug and alcohol use a factor in some cases. The focus is on engagement, stabilisation and bringing people into treatment. Social care and health professionals are being offered training on substance use to enhance their confidence in conducting conversations and making appropriate referrals to the service.