

# Protecting communities from harm caused by alcohol and drugs

Waltham Forest's Partnership Framework & Delivery Plan for Alcohol and Drugs, 2023–2025

**This framework outlines our approach to reducing the harms caused by drugs and alcohol misuse to individuals, families and communities in Waltham Forest.**

It has been informed by the Waltham Forest Combating Drugs (and Alcohol) Needs Assessment 2023, the Substance Misuse chapter of the JSNA, and SafetyNet's Crime & Disorder Needs Assessment.

This is a living document that will be reviewed and refreshed periodically. It will be supported by a series of delivery plans, overseen by the **Combating Drugs Partnership** and delivered through working groups as required. It addresses the misuse of both drugs and alcohol and takes a life-course approach.

# Introduction

## Our Vision

**Waltham Forest residents live free from the health and social harms of alcohol and drugs with fewer people having alcohol and drug-related problems. All those who need support are identified early, treated with dignity and respect, and are easily able to access the support and recovery they seek from evidence-based, high-quality services.**

**Our local approach to protecting communities from harm by alcohol and drugs is divided into three 'pillars':**

### 1. PREVENTION

Taking universal, targeted action to reduce the number of people using substances and experience (or are at risk of) substance-related harms

### 2. SUPPLY

Relentless disruption of drugs markets and tackling the harm they cause in communities

### 3. TREATMENT

Prioritising evidence-based, cost-effective interventions to prevent people from developing substance misuse problems

We understand the intersecting nature of the factors that impact substance misuse, such as mental wellbeing, domestic abuse and gambling, and we know that our vision can only be achieved with collaboration and coordinated efforts cross-multiply-disciplinary services.

## Why we care about alcohol and drugs:

- Alcohol is the main (leading) cause of ill health, disability and death among people aged 15 to 29 in England.
- Alcohol contributes to over 200 medical conditions, such as circulatory and digestive diseases, liver disease, several types of cancers and depression.
- It is estimated that there are more than 3,100 alcohol-dependent drinkers in Waltham Forest, with the majority of dependent drinkers not accessing support.
- The illicit drug market is estimated to be worth £19bn nationwide, while the total cost to society in terms of health harms, costs of crime and wider impacts is considered more than twice as high.
- Nationally it is estimated that around half of all theft, burglary and robbery offences are linked to addiction to opiates and crack cocaine.
- Drugs are a major driver of serious violence: it is estimated that around 4,000 teenagers across London are being criminally exploited through county lines.
- There are an estimated total of 19,105 users of any illicit drug in Waltham Forest (ages 16 to 59), including around 1,440 opiate and/or crack users.
- We know that our residents' perceptions of crime and violence are impacted by drug-driven anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

# What does the local drug and alcohol landscape look like?



Residents place **drugs and drug-dealing** among their **top 3 crime concerns**



**70 deaths related to drug misuse** between 2011 and 2021



In 2021/2022, there were over **2,974 alcohol-related hospital admissions**



**Alcohol-related mortality** was **28.9 per 100,000 residents** in 2021, 11% below the London average



**470 hospital admissions** where **drug-related mental and behavioural disorders** were a factor



**859 residents in treatment for drug use** at the end of 2020/21



**313 licensed premises per 100,000**, below the London average of 384.



Higher than average alcohol-related mortality from **chronic liver disease (4th worst rate in London)**



Almost **4 in 5 drug offences** related to the **possession of cannabis** in 2022



**Rate of drug offences** (5.5 per 1,000 residents) **10% higher** than the London average in 2022



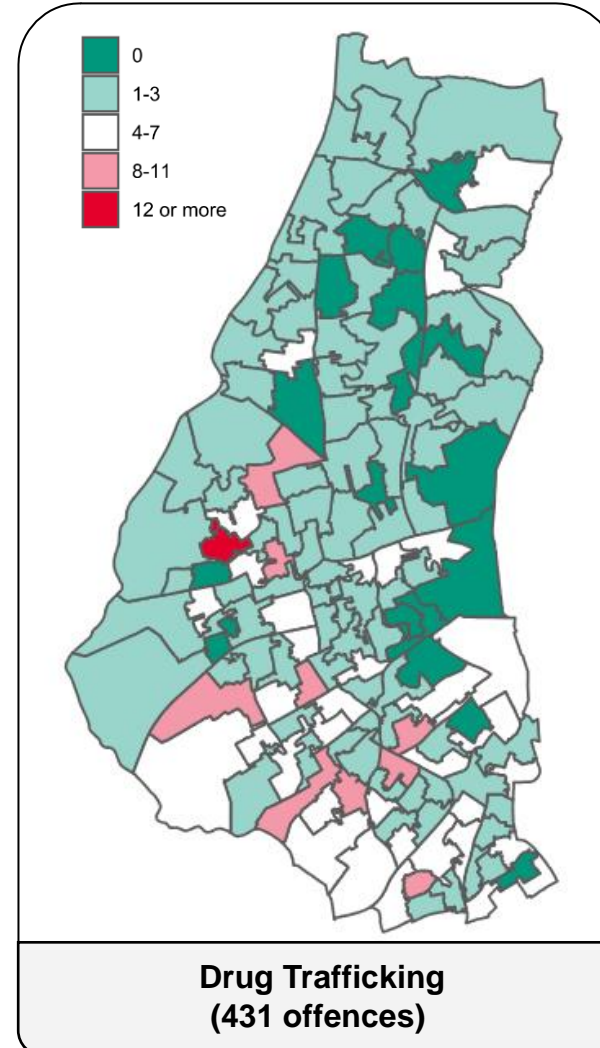
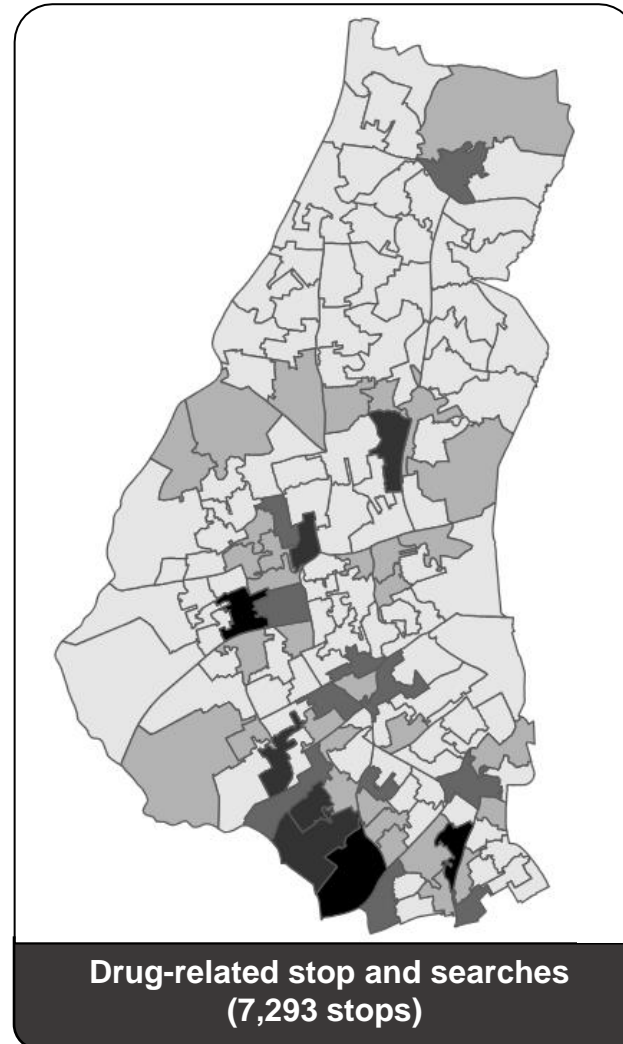
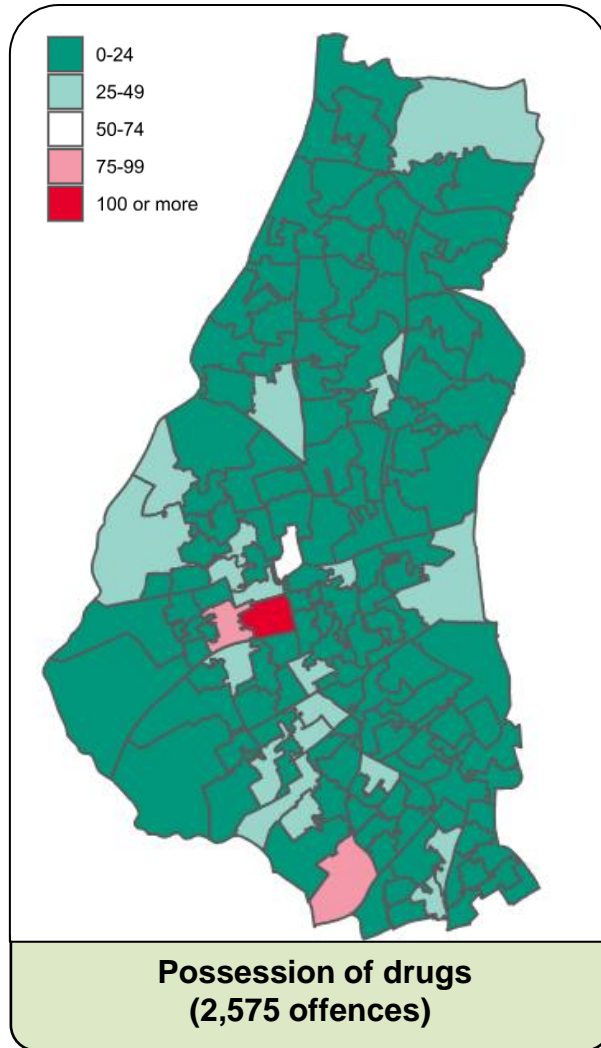
**Fewer residents (15.6%) drinking over 14 units** per week compared the rest of England (22.8%)



Just under **1 in 5 dependent drinkers** estimated to be **in treatment** in line with national pattern



# What does the local drug and alcohol landscape look like?



- Between April 2021 and March 2023, there were more than five times as many offences for the possession of drugs than for drug trafficking.
- Offences related to the possession of drugs are strongly correlated with police stop and search activity.
- Leyton and High Street wards are particular hotspots both for drug-related stop and searches and possession offences.
- Drug trafficking offences are more evenly distributed around the borough and any particular hotspots will be related to police operations at a point in time.

*\*Drug offences are sub-categorised into 'possession' and 'trafficking' offences. Trafficking includes all offences related to the production or supply of controlled drugs, including possession with intent to supply.*

# What we want to achieve

**We can only achieve our vision and outcomes by working holistically to address all three areas together.**

**This includes:**

- working with those affected by to ensure lived experience is at the heart of our services and partnership working
- ensuring inequalities in substance misuse are monitored and addressed
- developing joint working with partners to take a holistic approach, focusing on the person as a whole
- identifying and relentlessly tackling the organised criminal groups that drive drugs supply and the associated violence and exploitation
- undertaking a harm reduction approach, alongside prevention, supply and treatment
- empowering individuals and communities to have resilience, with partners
- taking a trauma-informed approach to supporting people and acknowledging the impact of adverse childhood experiences
- utilising the levers within the criminal justice system to improve outcomes with offenders
- regularly reviewing evidence, innovation and best practice and ensuring learning is incorporated into our local work
- stronger integration across the pillars and agencies (capitalising on the opportunity of Project ADDER)

## How will we make this happen?

### **National policy**

In line with the Government's 10-year drugs strategy, 'From Harm to Hope', we have a clear and accountable delivery plan.

### **Lived experience**

A crucial element of this framework is fully involving people who have experience of drug-related harm including people who use (or have used) drugs, their family members, family members of those who have died or been killed as a result of involvement in drugs and, more broadly, local residents or businesses affected by drug related harm.

### **Recognising intersectionality**

Embedded collaboration of the Strategic Partnership Boards has resulted in effective partnership working through shared priorities. Our joined-up work across community safety, safeguarding and wellbeing means that the intersectional nature of alcohol and drug related harm is fully addressed. This also enables a focus on wider determinants.

### **Governance**

Implementation of the recommendations and progress against actions will be monitored through a working group under the local Combating Drugs Partnership who will meet regularly to review and assess progress..

### **Funding**

Much of what we want to achieve is possible by various funding streams such as grant projects from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

### **Communication**

Communicating what we do as a partnership and what difference has been made is key to re-building the trust and confidence of our residents.

# What we want to achieve

## PREVENTION

**Fewer children, young people and adults are harmed by drugs and / or alcohol**

**Information and advice will be made readily available to the public and professionals about drugs and alcohol risks and where to get help, including tailored packages for higher-risk groups and venues, by:**

- Delivering consistent and regular universal prevention messaging about substance use across the partnership to ensure messages are shared widely.
- Developing and delivering a targeted public information and advice offer for venues which may be higher risk for certain forms of drug-taking behaviour.
- Integrating drugs and alcohol prevention messages across wider health promotion activities and communications to the public and professionals.

**Work with children, young people and families to reduce the risks of young people misusing drugs or alcohol, including exploring evidence-based interventions around resilience / risk taking by:**

- Auditing existing mentoring, life skills and resilience training across schools, comparing these against best evidence and national good practice, and identifying opportunities to improve equity of access to high-quality interventions.
- Using new youth Space4All venues to engage with young people around substance use as part of a wider holistic offer around health and wellbeing.

**Ensure that vulnerable children and families, including those affected by parental substance misuses, are identified and provided with appropriate support, adopting a whole-family approach by:**

- Working with teams delivering statutory and non-statutory assessments with young people, including care-experienced children and those with adverse childhood experiences, to ensure that consideration of vulnerability to substance use and misuse are included within these, and that appropriate referral pathways to support are in place.
- Strengthening local referral pathways to parent champion programmes and other forms of family support for those affected by substance use, including those with caring responsibilities.
- Driving up referrals into local Hidden Harms provision.

# What we want to achieve

## PREVENTION

Fewer children, young people and adults are harmed by drugs and / or alcohol

### Strengthen diversionary and early intervention activities for those in contact with the criminal justice system by:

- Ensuring that intervention and pathways for out of court disposals for young people and adults include a comprehensive substance use prevention offer.
- Building on learning from Project ADDER, including remote booking of substance use interventions as a means of increasing engagement.

### Enable professionals in Waltham Forest to be confident in identifying those at risk of substance misuse, providing brief advice and helping people to access support, by:

- Continuing to deliver and promote the Making Every Contact Count training, ensuring that professionals from across a broad range of services and venues are engaged with this training.

### Identify and develop new routes of insight to inform our understanding of changing prevalence of alcohol and drug use in the local population through:

- An analysis of substance-related death for those not known to treatment services, to understand key patterns and drivers in substance-related harms.
- Exploration of opportunities for gathering local insights about prevalence of substance use, including population surveys and qualitative insights.

### PREVENTION: How we'll measure success

- Rate of drug-related hospital admissions
- Rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions
- Proportion of the population using drugs (explore possible proxy indicators)
- Number of high-priority venues offered tailored advice and information to support their service users/the public
- Number of professionals trained in MECC
- Number of those accessing drugs and alcohol campaigns

# What we want to achieve

## SUPPLY

### Fewer communities are affected by drugs and alcohol-related crime and behaviours

#### Underpin our supply reduction efforts, building a deeper understanding of drugs markets and investing in our capability to drive proactive operations by:

- Gathering local intelligence to develop a problem profile and further enhance existing analytical products by January 2024.
- Implementing a dedicated team: one inspector, one sergeant, one constable to tackle the supply and harm of drugs through Project ADDER to advance disruptions of drug markets and tackle the harm caused within the communities by January 2024.

#### Relentless disruption of drug dealers and the networks which support them by:

- Targeting drug-related activity in and around housing estates through building trust with residents and improving community links that helps to gain information and intelligence for informing police activity / disruptions through targeted quality call backs, open invite for IAG to see police work in action and providing regular updates to the communities through ward panels / social media / newsletters.
- Utilising the tools and resource of Operation Clear, Hold, Build as outlined in 'A New Met for London'. Pursue high-harm gang members, stabilising affected areas through increased visibility and improved community relations to prevent re-establishment of gangs.
- Increasing proactive use of civil criminal orders, i.e. Criminal Behaviour Order, Gang Injunctions, Alcohol Tagging.
- Proactive operations utilising overt and covert police activity, e.g. Operation Carseland – targeted overt police operation focusing on specific areas to disrupt open drug dealing in the streets. Further covert operations will be deployed in support of more visible police operations. These operations will be operated in partnership with Local Authority enforcement teams.

#### Tackle the harms associated with public space drug use and drug dealing by:

- Strengthening our problem-solving approaches for tackling ASB and drug / alcohol activity within public spaces to inform a local operating model and joint proactive operations.
- Carrying out proactive activity around high-harm gangs who are involved in county lines.
- Tackling drugs supply markets that cause disruption and negatively impact communities.



# What we want to achieve

## SUPPLY

Fewer communities are affected by drugs and alcohol-related crime and behaviours

### Identify at an early stage vulnerable persons being exploited in their home by substance misusers and drug dealers by:

- Building on the work previously delivered through Operation Monkash to further enhance processes for the identification of vulnerable persons who are exploited or vulnerable to being exploited to aid drug consumption / supply which is shared with partners for detection / safeguarding.
- Develop closer partner links and integration of services to develop improved intelligence and action at pace to prevent harm to the most vulnerable.
- Use of data from across services to identify those potentially at risk to provide safeguarding measures at the earliest opportunity.

### Robustly tackle drug-related offending by:

- Utilising police tools / methodologies to target repeat offenders who are committing drug / alcohol-related harm in the community.
- Implementing more effective processes for high harm groups and county lines nominals to be considered for a civil / criminal order, i.e. Gang Injunction / Criminal Behaviour Order.
- Progressing the use of alcohol tagging through Magistrates for offenders convicted for alcohol-related crime and disorder.
- Implementing a triage process to identify those offenders who cause the most harm to communities.
- Effectively sharing information with partners to ensure timely support is provided to divert and prevent crime.
- Committing to use of criminal justice touchpoints to refer people into treatment earlier; police will work with Public Health and CGL to develop and introduce a simple referral pathway to access treatment / diversion for individuals who cause harm within the communities by December 2023.

### SUPPLY: How we'll measure success

- Number of drug related organised criminal gangs operating in Waltham Forest (*Met MO2 monthly*)
- Targeted geographical quality call backs as follow up to complaints of drug affected areas (*questions relating to joint response*)
- Number of county / London lines closed per month (*Met MO2 monthly*)
- Number of civil and criminal orders obtained, i.e. CBO / Gang Injunctions (*Police – NE BCU*)
- Number of drug related ASB reports (*council; Police – NE BCU*)
- Number of referrals made for treatment / diversion targeting individuals deemed to cause harm to communities through drug / alcohol abuse (*council; Police – NE BCU*)

# What we want to achieve

## TREATMENT

All young people and adults with substance misuse problems are supported into effective, high-quality treatment services, and achieve good recovery outcomes

**Reduce the proportion of those with substance misuse problems who are not accessing treatment (unmet need), with a particular focus on opioids by:**

- Investing in:
  - capacity of substance misuse services, including increasing caseload capacity and roles focused on engaging more people with substance misuse problems into treatment.
  - capacity of hospital-based drugs and alcohol liaison workers to increase referrals from hospital into community treatment.
  - detox and rehab places, and reducing barriers to access for complex clients (e.g., new detox/rehab pathway for rough sleepers).
  - an outreach team for rough sleepers with substance misuse problems, to increase treatment engagement among this cohort.
- Working with criminal justice partners (including the police and probation) to increase the number of high-quality referrals into community substance misuse services, including ensuring drugs testing on arrest pathways are utilised to maximise engagement with drugs treatment.

**Increase the proportion of those with substance misuse needs who are released from prison and successfully engage in community substance misuse services (continuity of care) by:**

- Investing in capacity of substance misuse services, including creating a criminal justice substance misuse team.
- Developing and implementing a substance misuse criminal justice improvement plan.
- Implementing a borough-wide resettlement panel to coordinate the partnership response to supporting those with substance misuse needs in moving from prison to community treatment.
- Undertaking a partnership continuity of care self-assessment and implementing any recommendations arising from it.

# What we want to achieve

## TREATMENT

All young people and adults with substance misuse problems are supported into effective, high-quality treatment services, and achieve good recovery outcomes

### Deliver excellent quality and outcomes within substance misuse services, including continually reviewing and improving quality through:

- a self-assessment against the new Quality Commissioning Standard, developing and implementing an action plan based on the findings, including consideration of investment into any areas requiring improvement
- Regular review of current evidence (e.g. OHID menu of interventions) to ensure substance misuse services are evidence based and new interventions are considered

### Reduce the number of drug and alcohol-related deaths through:

- Investment in harm reduction resource within substance misuse services
- Development and implementation of a harm reduction action plan
- Expanded provision of naloxone among opioid users, and increased provision of naloxone training
- Identifying best practice for reducing drugs-related deaths from Project ADDER, and considering need / benefits of implementing a similar approach locally

### Deliver better-integrated services, ensuring people's physical and mental health needs are addressed to reduce harm and support recovery by investing in:

- capacity and roles to support those with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse problems (including co-location and partnership working)
- capacity to work with primary care to support those with substance misuse problems
- local recovery communities, including design / input from those with lived experience of substance misuse.

### TREATMENT: How we'll measure success

- Rate in treatment (unmet need) (opioids; non-opioids; alcohol)
- Treatment outcomes after 6 months (opioids; non-opioids; alcohol)
- Deaths in drug treatment (opioids; non-opioids; alcohol)
- Number and rate successfully completing treatment (adults; young people)
- Prison continuity of care

# Appendix



- [From Harm to Hope – a 10 Year Drugs Plan to cut crime and save lives](#)
- [Guidance for local delivery partners](#)
- [Strategic Partnership Board priorities 2023-25](#)